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NEGOTIATION OF MIGRATORY AND EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES OF POLISH FAMILIES IN ATHENS

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary migrations are becoming a common process for people who want to improve their material living conditions and to provide better economic security for themselves and their families. Immigration is currently high up the political agenda in most European countries, including Greece, as they struggle to deal with the increased flow of illegal immigrants. In this context it becomes necessary to examine diverse aspects of migration. In the following dissertation we focus on the processes of migratory and educational strategies’ negotiation of Polish families residing in Athens. Migrant families and children of migrants make up a large and increasing share of the Greek population, and it seems that over the next few decades they will constitute a significant section of Greek society. Yet, research on the topic is far from being complete. Our project enquires how migrants negotiate their educational and migratory strategies, how this negotiation is influenced by the crisis, as well as other factors. We ask about what the educational and migration strategies and factors influencing the process of their negotiation are. We look into the implications of children’s education for the process of family strategy formation. Characteristic of the Polish community in Athens seems to be liquidity of their strategies: their educational and migratory projects were often changing and being modified. Migratory and educational strategies seem to emerge as a response to everyday life and various obligations, constraints, but also opportunities. Economic factors proved to be the most relevant with regards to family strategy negotiation. We acknowledge that the economic situation in Poland and associated problems of job insecurity, low wages and unemployment in the regions that respondents came from, combined with the specific education and skills of the researched group might be the reason why Polish families remain in Greece regardless of economic difficulties caused by the crisis. Results of the present research show that for the investigated group parents have a great influence on decision-making around educational trajectories and spatial strategies of families. The presence of children seems to be central to the families’ decision-making processes, and children fundamentally shape the nature and course of families’ migration experiences.

Key words: strategy, Polish migrants, migrant family, family decision-making, EU policy
ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Οι σύγχρονες μεταναστεύσεις αποτελούν μια συνήθη διαδικασία για τους ανθρώπους οι οποίοι θέλουν να βελτιώσουν τις υλικές συνθήκες διαβίωσής τους και να παρέχουν καλύτερη οικονομική ασφάλεια για τους ίδιους και τις οικογένειές τους. Η μετανάστευση είναι αυτή την περίοδο υψηλά στην πολιτική ατζέντα των περισσότερων ευρωπαϊκών χωρών, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της Ελλάδας, καθώς πασχίζουν να αντιμετωπίσουν την αυξημένη ροή των παράνομων μεταναστών. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, καθίσταται αναγκαίο να εξεταστούν οι ποικίλες πτυχές της μετανάστευσης. Στη διδακτορική αυτή διατριβή εστιάζονται οι διαδικασίες της διαπραγμάτευσης των μεταναστευτικών και εκπαιδευτικών στρατηγικών των πολωνικών οικογενειών που κατοικούν στην Αθήνα. Οι οικογένειες μεταναστών και τα παιδιά των μεταναστών αποτελούν ένα μεγάλο και αυξανόμενο μέρος του ελληνικού πληθυσμού, το οποίο φαίνεται ότι τις επόμενες δεκαετίες θα αποτελέσει ένα σημαντικό τμήμα της ελληνικής κοινωνίας.

Αυτή η αύξηση της ποικιλομορφίας απαιτεί την κατανόηση των εκπαιδευτικών πορειών των παιδιών που προέρχονται από διάφορες εθνικές ομάδες, καθώς και των προτύπων κινητικότητας των οικογενειών των μεταναστών. Ωστόσο, η έρευνα αφορά σχετικά με το θέμα απέχει πολύ από να χαρακτηριστεί πλήρης. Το ερευνητικό αυτό έργο εξετάζει πώς οι μετανάστες διαπραγματεύονται τις εκπαιδευτικές και μεταναστευτικές στρατηγικές και ποιοι είναι οι παράγοντες που επηρεάζουν τη διαδικασία της διαπραγμάτευσης τους. Η διαπραγμάτευση έχει επηρεαστεί από την κρίση και τις συνεπείες της εκπαίδευσης των παιδιών για τη διαδικασία της δημιουργίας οικογενειακής στρατηγικής. Χαρακτηριστικό της πολωνικής κοινότητας στην Αθήνα φαίνεται να είναι το ρεύμα των στρατηγικών τους: τα εκπαιδευτικά και τα μεταναστευτικά σχέδια συχνά αλλάζουν και τροποποιούνται. Οι μεταναστευτικές και εκπαιδευτικές στρατηγικές φαίνεται ως αναδεικνύονται με την καθημερινή ζωή και την αναπόσπαστη συνεργασία των παιδιών. Οι οικονομικοί παράγοντες αποδεικνύουν ότι είναι οι πιο συναφές, σε σχέση με τη διαπραγμάτευση της οικογενειακής στρατηγικής. Αναγνωρίζεται ότι η οικονομική κατάσταση στην Πολωνία και τα συναφή προβλήματα της εργασιακής ανασφάλειας, των χαμηλών μισθών και της ανεργίας στις περιοχές από τις πολωνικές κοινότητες σε συνδυασμό με την εξειδικευμένη εκπαίδευση και τις δεξιότητες
της ερευνήσασας ομάδας, μπορεί να είναι ο λόγος για τον οποίο πολωνικές οικογένειες να
παραμένουν στην Ελλάδα, ανεξαρτήτως των οικονομικών δυσχερειών που προκλήθηκαν από την
κρίση. Τα αποτελέσματα της παρούσης έρευνας δείχνουν ότι για την διερευνήσασα ομάδα, οι
gονείς έχουν μεγάλη επιρροή στη λήψη αποφάσεων γύρω από τις εκπαιδευτικές πορείες και
χωρικές στρατηγικές των οικογενειών. Η παρουσία των παιδιών φαίνεται να είναι στο επίκεντρο
tων οικογενειακών διαδικασιών λήψης αποφάσεων, και τα παιδιά διαμορφώνουν ουσιαστικά τη
φύση και την πορεία των οικογενειακών μεταναστευτικών εμπειριών.

Δέξεις-κλειδιά: στρατηγική, Πολωνοί μετανάστες, οικογένειες μεταναστών, οικογενειακή λήψη
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I. INTRODUCTION

Mobility is a complex and dynamic process that has shaped and continues to shape the image of modern Europe affecting many areas of social and economic lives of European countries. The right to move freely for work, study, family purposes, and retirement within the European Union is one of its foundational principles. For many years the number of people exercising this right has been steadily increasing. The unprecedented scale of contemporary migration has also affected many Polish families who have experienced it directly, as their spouses, children or more distant relatives emigrated, or indirectly – through media. The various forms of family-led mobility have been for some time a major component of migration intakes worldwide: family-related mobility has been named the main channel of legal entry into the EU as well as to other, traditional immigration countries, such as Australia, Canada and the United States (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008).

From May 2004, the year of Poland’s accession to the European Union’s structures, the emigration of Polish citizens has increased greatly, bringing about many new possibilities and opportunities and, at the same time, radical changes in the lives of Polish migrants and their families all over Europe. For Polish citizens, leaving their country has been a way to overcome socio-political problems and find higher standards of living. But not exclusively; they often saw migration as a part of a path of personal development or simply a response to curiosity about the world. For many Poles globalization has changed the word migration into travel. After 2004, the migration destinations have changed, which was related to new labour markets’ appearance. This contributed also to the largest to date Polish emigration - especially of the young Poles and resulted in thousands or millions of Polish citizens leaving their country. It was estimated that by the end of 2006 outside the Polish borders there were approximately 1,950,000 Polish people (about 1m in 2004, and 1,450,000 in 2005), with more than 1,600,000 in Europe. The majority of Polish emigrants reside in the European Union Member States – 1,550,000 in 2006, and this number has doubled since Poland’s accession to the EU. The publication of the GUS\textsuperscript{1} report coincided with the announcement of the EU’s statistical office Eurostat on migration in the EU for 2006 which showed that Poles were the largest group of migrants in the EU (before the Romanians and

\textsuperscript{1} GUS – Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Polish Central Statistical Office.
Moroccans). Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated that in 2013 approximately 2.5 million of Poles resided only in Western Europe (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, 2013). 2014 was another year when the number of Polish migrants increased. GUS informs us that at the end of 2014 there were 2,320,000 Poles residing temporarily outside of Poland, with the vast majority in Europe (approx. 2,013,000) and 1,901,000 in EU countries. The majority of Poles – 685,000 - lived in the UK; in Germany – 614,000, Ireland – 113,000, in the Netherlands – 109,000 and Italy 96,000. GUS estimates that there were approximately 9000 Poles in Greece in 2014 (Central Statistical Office of Poland, 2014).

Though some Poles were settling in Greece earlier than that, the first flow of Polish immigrants came to this country about 40 years ago. They were mainly women that got married to Greek citizens. The second and, so far, the biggest flow of Poles came to Greece in the 80s, the period of radical regime changes in Poland, when thousands of Poles were forced or decided to leave their country due to political reasons. Between 1987 and 1991 more than 200,000 Poles were in Greece, most of them in Athens. They treated Greece as a transit country on the way to Canada. However, many of those immigrants, once coming to Greece, decided to stay there for longer and some of them still live in this country. Even though currently Polish citizens are not the largest group of migrants residing in Athens, and the majority of them left Greece due to the economic crisis\(^2\), their presence evoked our research interest, since not many scholars have so far investigated migratory patterns of Poles in Greece. Generally, reliable data indicating the number and characteristics of Polish migrant families in Greece are impossible to find. No-one, not even the Polish Embassy in Greece or the Greek authorities have ever accurately estimated the amount of Polish minority members, mainly due to the fact that the majority of them stayed in Greece illegally and also because the rotation of Polish citizens is generally big. Currently it is very difficult to estimate even the number of Polish citizens residing in Athens partly due to their mobility patterns and partly because of the aforementioned lack of reliable statistical calculations. Poles were and are coming to Greece mainly in search for work and better living conditions than those they had in Poland. The differences between Polish and Greek wages still keep Polish workers in Greece, regardless of the crisis. Compared to other nationalities, Poles outside the Polish borders are a

\(^2\) There are no estimations of how many Poles actually left Greece, but both: representative of the Polish Consulate and the Polish priest informed us that only about 1/3 of Poles remained in Athens after 2013.
well-organized minority; Polish migrants and their descendants create organizations and associations that cultivate Polish identity. The Polish community in Greece is also a well-organized group of people with the same backgrounds, problems and needs (Lazaridis & Romaniszyn, 1998).

Even though migration is becoming an increasingly important matter all over the globe and there are many studies concerning different aspects of this issue, there have been few that have examined the Polish community in Greece and even fewer that would concern family-related issues. Therefore, the presence of Poles in Greece is not fully recognized phenomenon - the subject literature shows a lack of qualitative studies carried out among the Polish migrant community that would use techniques such as narrative interviews, focused interviews, and observations to investigate migrant families. Such projects aim to look into the world of the migrants’ lives and focus on the conditions determining their conduct and the process of adaptation to a new environment. It provides an important source of information concerning the barriers and problems with reality with which migrants struggle.

At the present level of knowledge we can find many research papers concerning emigration, bilingualism and multiculturalism, as those issues become more and more important in the changing Europe and world and, therefore, attract the attention of academics. There are statistical data that evaluate mobility in every country of Europe yearly. However, this project wants to go further. It was planned mainly to investigate family strategies towards migration, education and the future plans of Polish workers residing in Athens. Moreover, it examines the European policies on mobility and education as well as checks their implementation into one of the European countries, mainly Greece. Similar research has never been done.

Although studies researching Polish citizens in Greece are few, we found a couple that refer to this minority group. Among the most important researches on the Polish citizens in Greece there is Krystyna Romaniszyn’s study (1996) which investigated Polish networks in Greece 20 years ago. Romaniszyn’s project was based on a case study of the formation and operation of ethnic networks and describes how Polish immigrants, despite their very uncertain status, managed to gradually form and sustain a community in Athens. Scholar refers to this specific group as to invisible community, constructed from a loose network of non-legalized institutions operating in Athens that enabled illegal Polish immigrants to feel and be self-sufficient.
In the present paper we refer to research by Anastasia Christou “Agency, Networks and Policy: The Case of Poles in Greece” (2008) in which a very interesting description of the Polish migrants in Greece is given. Christou’s study was based on fieldwork conducted with the Polish migrants in Athens aiming to explain how migration patterns of Poles have been shaped and affected by existing migration policies. “Polish immigrants in Greece” by Michaela Maroufof (2009) is another study that looks at the Polish minority in Greece. In the present dissertation we refer to this research as it provides a great deal of data on the Polish community. Maroufof presents review of Polish immigration to Greece from the 1980s until the first years of the new milieu. Interesting is the use of different sources, both quantitative (data from the National Statistical Service of Greece, the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Social Insurance Institute), and qualitative (interviews with Polish migrants and representatives of Polish associations and organizations). Scholar focuses on the changes that occurred after 2004, the year of Poland’s insertion to the European Union. Relevant for the present case study was the research by Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas “Immigration to Greece: The case of Poles” (2006). This report provides an overview of immigration to Greece of the turn of 20th and 21st centuries: the size and composition of the immigrant population, but also the main developments in Greek immigration policy since 1990, the insertion of immigrants in the Greek labour market and social welfare system. Special attention is paid to the specific case of the Polish immigrants in Greece. Some more relevant insight on the Polish community in Athens, especially with regards to employment-related issues, we found in the study of Gabriella Lazaridis and Krystyna Romaniszyn (1998) “Albanian and Polish Undocumented Workers in Greece: A Comparative Analysis”.

In the present research we refer to studies on Polish migrants in various European countries, often in the Great Britain. It is because this specific destination has been recently very popular among Polish emigrants, but also scholars, and there is a great deal of research on variety of aspects of Polish migrant lives done there. It is relevant to mention that we have started our PhD studies and began the research on Polish migrant family strategies in 2010 and in 2013 Louise Ryan and Rosemary Sales published their paper “Family Migration: The Role of Children and Education in Family Decision-Making. Strategies of Polish Migrants in London”. This research became a point of reference for our study to which we have reached in the final phase of our research. It explores variety of Polish family migration strategies and factors that inform Polish migrants’ decisions to
bring their families (especially children) to the UK or to leave them in Poland. Another relevant study is one done by Louise Ryan, Rosemary Sales, Mary Tilki and Bernadetta Siara – “Family Strategies and Transnational Migration: Recent Polish Migrants in London” (2009). This project was based on qualitative research of Polish community in London and explored the varied dynamics of family relationships, including caring, support and obligation. Scholars examined how families may be reconfigured in different ways through migration, what is the role of transnational networks and splits within families in migratory experiences.

There have been many other studies that have concerned Polish families and their migratory and educational strategies in Europe from which we have learned a great deal; for instance a few, there has been the research by scholars such as Louise Ryan (Ryan, 2011, 2010), Anne White (White, 2011, 2009b, 2009a), Izabela Grabowska-Lusińska and Marek Okólski (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2009, 2008), John Eade (2007) and Monika Gacek (2013) and many others. In the context of mentioned publications our empirical research is novel since it explores issues not presented in the previous research; it investigates a group that has never been investigated before, additionally using qualitative techniques which provide an individual insight into the researched matters. We believe that the earlier mentioned tendency of Poles emigrating from their homeland and settling mainly in various countries of the European Union, including Greece, requires exploration in order to mitigate any negative effects of migrations. These movements nowadays include all the families and often children are ones that suffer the most. Children of immigrants constitute a significant percentage of the European Union’s population. Their integration into the receiving society is a basic requirement for these youngsters to become citizens able to contribute to the advancement of their countries and to use fully the benefits of the host society (Fülöp et al., 2007, p. 331). One of the major arenas of integration are schools, where immigrant children might have several disadvantages and where their families might also need different kinds of social support in order to participate equally in the educational system. Schools provide young people with basic knowledge that can be used for their integration into society as well as to prepare them to life in a multicultural society. This all makes school choice, and more generally families’ strategies towards education, of such importance and that is why the general area of this research concentrates around education and not only migration.
The present dissertation includes theoretical and research parts. The first one introduces the context for the practical research; we dedicated the initial subsections to the theoretical discussion in order to be able to interpret data from our case study on Polish migrant families and their educational and migration strategies. We begin with migration theory; in search for the answers regarding the process of educational and migratory strategy negotiation for Polish families residing in Athens we reached out to three relevant perspectives - economic, network and transnational theories.

The second section of the present study concerns strategies of migrant families. We explain how we conceptualized the notions of strategy and family in the present research, and we focus on family strategies with an emphasis on the educational and migratory ones.

The following part of the theoretical discussion is devoted to geographical and labour mobility in the European Union. We define mobility and explain how this term differs from migration and how we utilize it in the present project. Mobility might be regarded in a twofold way – as a geographical phenomenon, horizontally, and as a social phenomenon, vertically. In the present research we focus on the geographical approach to mobility, flows of people beyond the territory of their origin society for work, family relationships, life change seeking and so on.

In the abovementioned section of the present dissertation we also describe the background for our research; we briefly discuss the history of European movements, mobility trends in Europe, and the EU policy towards mobility. We also describe different types of mobility with a focus on labour and family ones. Since the present research concerns Polish migrants in Greece, at the end of this chapter we briefly describe the history of Polish migrations and centre of Polish immigration to Greece.

The next section of the study concerns Greece and its policy towards migration. We focus on country’s implementation of the EU policy and its results for the lives of migrants. EU educational and integrational policies were investigated within a qualitative framework. At the national level, we analyzed the implementation of the EU policy in Greece. At the European level we examined discussions about the EUs’ resolutions on abovementioned matters. Analysis of the available literature undergone on the issues connected to the mobility of families within Europe, education of migrant children, migratory networks and transnationalism, whose results are
presented below led us to the formulation of specific scientific interests and creation of research questions.

The research part contains description of the practical research, its findings and the way data was analyzed and categorized. The main research problem was investigated on the basis of a qualitative perspective. The chosen method and techniques, sampling procedures, and explanation how gathered material was analyzed, but also limitations of the study and avenues for future research, are described in Methodology section. Since we were interested in understanding individuals’ personal experiences and strategies we used research techniques such as focus groups and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with members of Polish families living in Athens. The interviews and focus groups addressed the family strategies towards education and the future of children, as well as the migration experiences, European Union and plans of family members. Topic guides were produced for each phase of fieldwork and these were open-ended, enabling new themes to be raised by participants. The experiences of young migrants are not only valid but they are often different from those of adults and need to be considered in their own right. We carried out 32 individual interviews with both parents and the young people with a range of family situations, migration history and personal characteristics; these explored personal and family strategies and experiences of migration, aspirations for the future, particularly in relation to migration and/or settlement, the role of various social networks, education-related strategies and more. Supplementary sources of information were interviews with individuals involved with Polish migrants with knowledge of the recent Polish community in Athens, including the priest, the representative of the Polish Consulate in Athens and two members of the School Council at the Polish School in Athens, who were also fathers and participated in our research. Individual interviews were preceded by four focus groups. We used purposive and snowball sampling to recruit participants. The matters discussed during focus groups were developed on the basis of the previous literature review on migration, families, networks, integration and transnationalism as well as the researcher’s earlier project combined with experiences in Polish migrant community in Athens. Focus groups were held in order to gather initial, rather general information from which we induced topics for interviews.

The concluding part of the dissertation presents the synthesis of all data sources and the identification and discussion of key findings in relation to our study, with the intention of (a)
identifying the educational and migratory strategies of Polish families and factors influencing them (b) introducing policy context and its relevance for family strategy formation, and (c) drawing out the implications of our research for policy and practice.

Statement of the Problem

The current state of the research in relation to our research problem confirmed the need of precise investigation of EU’s intra-European mobility policies and their implementation in Greece and the role they have on the process of family strategy formation. After a broad scan followed by a focused review of literature that were undertaken in order to fix on research topic and research problem, we realised that never before had a similar study been done. The relevance of family related considerations in migratory decision-making has been proved in the contemporary research. In the present dissertation we test it for the group of Polish families from Athens. Our research investigates family strategies towards migration, education and the future plans of Polish workers and their families who live in Athens. We look into the process of family strategy formation in order to find factors that influence it. We analyze what role the family members have in the process of negotiation of migratory and educational strategies of Polish families. Thus, our research covers broad themes including families’ migratory and educational strategies, reasons for migration, reasons for choosing particular school, attitudes to living in Greece, economic crisis, plans for the future and eventual return to Poland as well as involvement in the social networks. Moreover, we examine the European policies on mobility and education as well as checks their implementation into one of the European countries, mainly Greece. By answering questions of legal bases and the current situation of EU mobility policies we hoped to build and advance beyond the current research and contribute to existing knowledge. The present research examines EU migrant and educational policy in the context of the intra-European mobility. We analyze policy aims and test their implementation in the case of Polish migrant families living in Athens in order to see how they influence the processes of family strategy formation. Investigation of the European migratory and educational policies helped us to discover steps that can be taken to mitigate any negative issues and plan actions that could be introduced within civil society or through policy changes at the provincial, national and international – European - levels. Thus, we discuss the
policy context of immigrant integration and education at two different levels; at the European level we examine discussions about EU resolutions on education, language and the integration of immigrants. At the national level we look into the implementation of EU policy in Greece in respect to the above-mentioned matters. We understand that the existing literature fails to deal adequately with our research problem, which made us realise how important it would be to carry out the proposed research.

Objectives of the study

This dissertation investigates the negotiation of migratory and educational strategies of Polish families residing in Athens. In particular, we enquire how migrants negotiate their strategies, how this negotiation is influenced by the crisis as well as other factors. We ask what the educational and migration strategies and factors are that influence the process of their negotiation. We look into the implications of children’s education for the process of family strategy formation. The general area of this study concentrates on the family strategies including their influence on the lives of the youngest generation of migrants and their parents. Based on a qualitative case study of recent Polish migrant families in Athens, the research explores the dynamics of family relationships, such as support, obligation and caring. This research takes into consideration the various experiences of Polish migrant families in Athens and the different ways in which family networks, connections and obligations may influence migration and educational strategies. We centre on the educational and integralational strategies of families, addressing families as a dynamic constellation of individuals. Another level of research refers to the role of individuals within the family. We ask if family decisions in terms of the place of residence and school choice were dictated by the interests of all the members of the family and to what extent family members were able to fulfil their own aspirations and desires.

Referring to the economic crisis that has recently struck Greece this study analyzes how, within the context of the family, individuals adapt their actions, respond to changing circumstances, and how families accommodate their behaviour to the new social context within which they have to operate, what they do to improve their situation, what processes preceded these
attempts, and where they see themselves in the future. We also explore the relation between crisis and families’ decisions about the duration of their stay in Greece.

The present case study covers broad themes including families’ migratory and educational strategies, reasons for migration, reasons for choosing a particular school, attitudes to living in Greece, plans for the future and potential return to Poland, as well as involvement in social networks. Within the entire dissertation the scope of the assumed family strategy was a following issue: whether these family strategies were short-term survival strategies (coping strategies), or rather intended to secure a long-term improvement in status, perhaps for the children more than their parents.

This research aims to gain a greater understanding of the personal experiences of Polish migrant families in Greece, and to explore the process of strategy formation in order to identify migratory and educational strategies and factors influencing their negotiation. Moreover, the study investigates the EU mobility and educational policies and how they are implemented in Greece. Thus, in order to achieve the research aims our objectives were to:

1) Analyze literature on family strategies with a focus on migratory and educational ones, theoretical approaches to migration, geographical and labour mobility in the European Union as well as the policy of Greece towards migration in order to understand the context of being a Polish migrant in Greece, and to be able to interpret data from the study.
2) Learn about the educational and migration strategies of Polish migrant families in Athens.
3) Find what the factors are that influence Polish families’ strategy formation.
4) Identify how Polish migrant families negotiate their strategies.
5) Ascertain the role of family members in the process of migratory and educational strategies’ negotiation.
6) Pinpoint how family strategies change in the face of the economic crisis.
7) Check the possibilities that the EU educational and mobility policies create in the context of the Polish migrant families’ strategy formation.

In the present research we are concerned with the interaction between the three levels of the migration phenomenon - macro, mezzo and micro. The macro level refers to economic and
political variables, as well as structural factors, mezzo level to social networks and micro level to individual factors. To do that, we utilize as a tool the personal narratives and experiences of Polish migrant families in Athens. We investigate how migrants make sense of the institutional environment of the host country and which strategies they use in order to cope with this environment when seeking employment and improving their living conditions, more so in the difficult times of economic downturn. We highlight the micro-level of the migration phenomenon and the dynamic relationship between policy design, implementation and migrant strategies. The interactive development of immigrants' plans and adaptation strategies and the host country’s implementation of the EU policies and practices becomes a particularly interesting subject for research.

**Research Questions**

Analysis of the subject literature presented in the above subsections of the theoretical framework led us to the specification of research interest which was translated into the formulation of research questions. Empirical research is driven by research questions which guide investigators’ thinking and are of great value for organizing the entire research study (Punch, 2005, p. 33). Our main research question, formed after the identification of the research area and specification of research interests is as follows:

*What are the educational and migratory strategies of Polish migrant families in Athens and how do families negotiate them?*

The following analysis raises and partly considers three questions; firstly, what are the factors which make it more likely that a family will migrate, what are the consequences of the family's decision on the education of their children and their lives in general, as well as what role do the EU educational and migration policies play in the process of strategy formation of Polish migrant families. Thus, additionally, on the way to answer the abovementioned primary research question, secondary research questions emerged:
1. What are the factors influencing Polish migrant families negotiation of their migratory and educational strategies?

2. What role do family members have in the process of negotiation of migratory and educational strategies of Polish migrants in Athens?

3. How do family strategies change in the face of the economic crisis?

4. What possibilities do the EU educational and migration policies create in the context of the Polish migrant families' strategy formation?

The abovementioned additional questions are considered relevant for the present case study since only by answering them will we get a full picture of the process of strategies negotiation of Polish migrant families residing in the capital of Greece.

Significance of the Study

Through this research we hope to contribute to the existing knowledge base needed to provide effective solutions to the problem of intra-European mobility and its results, as a response to a changing European situation. It is our intention that the research will inform public debate in the area of Polish migrant families’ strategies towards migration and schooling. The exploration of migrant experiences and expectations, along with investigation of policy developments, may help us understand the Polish migrant family and its place in the Greek community. We hope that our project will help all the people interested in the issues of migration and intra-European mobility with its effects on societies, especially receiving ones, such as local authorities working with migrant families, organizations working with migrant children, academics, service providers communities and media representatives.

The significance of our research area is of a great value for the sake of children that will become respectful citizens of Europe in the future. The young generation’s education seems to be among the most important issues that every society handles. The right to a proper education is one of the basic principles stated in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, proclaimed in Nice on 7th December 2000. According to this document summarizing the common values of the European Union’s Member States children have not only the obligation, but also the right to attend schools that will meet all their needs.
Even though family migration is becoming a more and more interesting subject to look into and the role of women and children in migration processes are nowadays being often investigated, this aspect of mobility continues to require more thorough research, especially in the context of family strategies’ formation. Research on migration has tended to focus on primary migrants, typically men, and to pay less attention to families, which has resulted in a restricted picture of the impact of mobility experiences. Our case study examines the presence and participation of families and children in the process of migration decision-making within the specific context of intra-European mobility. Based on a qualitative case study of migration and educational strategies of Polish families in Athens we explore the changes in family structures and migration patterns that may result in new migration and educational behaviours.

In this project we want specifically to extend understanding of mobility experiences and their influence on strategy formation by focusing on the social arena of the family. We make a connection between people’s mobility experiences and the family, since the family has long been recognized as an important context for social studies. Yet, the complex roles of families in migration strategies and decision-making have been so far undervalued. Since families’ strategies towards migrations, education and future in general are of increasing importance in the contemporary mobility literature, the general area of this study concentrates on family strategies with regards to migration and education of children, trying to find factors informing those strategies and their influence on the lives of Polish families in Greece. Our dissertation shows that European policies assist the struggle of living abroad for the Polish migrant families.

The relevance of solving these aforementioned issues is of great value to bilateral relations between Poland and Greece both at the political and social levels, and even superior to the more general background of the European Union. The candidate has a particular motivation for posing this question as she is a Polish emigrant herself and thoroughly understands the problems of the Polish minority in Greece.

The present thesis covers broad themes, including EU migratory and educational policies, families’ migratory and educational strategies, reasons for migration, reasons for choosing particular schools, attitudes to living in Greece, plans for the future and eventual return to Poland, as well as involvement in social networks. The study provides empirical evidence about social and
educational integration as well as EU policy document analysis supplemented by a wide-ranging literature review on the aforementioned themes.

We chose to discuss negotiation of educational and migration strategies as we thought that the juxtaposition of both types of strategies could create a new and interesting perspective and give better insight into the investigation of family strategies. The present dissertation argues that family strategies need to be conceptualized as a result of compromises made among family members in the course of decision-making, often a product of a lengthy process of negotiation. It also provides interesting insights into migration networks and their role as a cause and mechanism of migration and connections between changing gender roles and migration and how those roles evolve within families in parallel with migration strategies. A wealth of information is also provided about the lives of Polish people living in the capital of Greece. The study additionally underlines the relevance of transnationalism for the case of migrant families. Transnational lenses used in this project provide useful empirical approaches concerning mobility within the European Community.

Limitations of the Study

The main objective of the research process except discovering new knowledge is to confront assumptions and explore what we do not know. Unbiased and honest discussion of study limitations represents a crucial part of any scientific research since each study cannot be accomplished without certain limits. Acknowledging implications of limitation is necessary to prevent misunderstandings and supports interpretation of data, and in order to make suggestions as to how to avoid bias in the future research. That is why in the present subsection we shall infer how limitations could have affected the present case study’s design, findings and interpretations.

Methodological Limitations

Limitations of Qualitative Research – one of the limitations connected to the choice of qualitative approach for the present dissertation was the time needed for analysis and interpretation as well as the volume of data gathered. Still, devoting a long time to the research we managed to gather information presenting a full picture of the lives of Polish migrant families in Athens and the process of family educational and migration strategies’ formation.
Sample - first, by focusing on members of Polish families in Athens, significant homogeneity was introduced into the sample population, not only in terms of its ethnic background, but also age, socio-economic status and length of stay in Greece.

Sample size - the number of the units of analysis we have used in our case study was dictated by the type of research. We have decided to speak to a few Polish families in order to find how they negotiate migratory and educational strategies. It proved really difficult to find Polish families willing to participate in our study, so end in end we spoke to 32 participants. Surely it would be advantageous including a larger sample in the future research; still we believe that our sample enabled us to gather relevant insight.

Lack of prior research studies on the topic – even though there are many various research on Polish migrant families in Europe, especially in the UK, there are almost no studies concerning Polish migrant families in Greece that could have helped to lay a foundation for better understanding of investigated issues. We found relevant insight about the Poles in Greece in the works of Krystyna Romaniszyn (“The Invisible Community: Undocumented Polish Workers in Athens”, 1996), Gabriella Lazaridis and Krystyna Romaniszyn (“Albanian and Polish Undocumented Workers in Greece: A Comparative Analysis”, 1998), Anastasia Christou (“Agency, Networks and Policy: The Case of Poles in Greece”, 2008) and Michaela A. Maroufof (“Polish immigrants in Greece, 2009”). This limitation shows the need for further research on Polish families in Greece.

Self-reported data - contain several potential sources of bias and is limited by the fact that it rarely can be independently verified: we had to take what people said in interviews and focus groups at face value. On the other hand, in the present research we are more interested in the ways people think about their lives and migratory and educational experiences as well as choices rather than investigating what actually happened. Of course, gathering information from 32 participants and comparing them to what we have found in the subject literature as well as information we received from the Polish Embassy, school and priest from the Polish parish helped us get a picture of certain events and situations.

Limitations of the Researcher

Access – our case study depended on having access to people, institutions (Polish School, Embassy), and certain documents (school and ORPEG’s statuses, reports of Polish ministry on the
Polish School in Athens). Access was sometimes denied (in case of specific documents at Embassy and Polish Ministry reports) or otherwise limited (school documents). Full access to those data would have facilitated a better understanding of some major events regarding the functioning of the Polish School in Athens and reasons for changes that started to take place around this educational institution. Moreover, more access to data from the Polish Embassy in Athens would have made it easier to create a picture of a current Polish minority in Greece. In the future research we shall try to get the direct access to abovementioned institutions and documents.

Longitudinal effects - the time available to investigate research interests was constrained by the due date of our dissertation. That is why we had to narrow down those interests so that they would not require an excessive amount of time to complete the research. It would be of great advantage to devote efforts and time into a future research that could check what actually happened to investigated families: did they leave Greece eventually or stayed as they planned and informed us? What kind of educational path was chosen by children?

Nationality - we recognize that the fact that researcher herself is Polish might have impacted study’s design as well as its conduct. Yet, we would like to underline that the author had always kept objectivity and distance towards the research and its participants. Being Polish, on the other hand, helped the author gather the research sample and create a friendly atmosphere during the interviews and focus groups that enabled respondent to speak freely and openly about their experiences.

Fluency in a language – our research was written in English, which is not author’s mother tongue. Deficiency was overcome by proof reading done by a native speaker who read dissertation before its final submission. Also due to the fact that interviews and focus groups were done in Polish there might have been issues regarding translation of some specific expressions in Polish that could not be translated into English. In those cases we used descriptive explanation rather than just translating the phrase.

Data Limitations

There are limits to how accurately the movements of people within the European Union can be measured. First, demographic tools such as national censuses are better equipped to measure static population sizes (migration ‘stocks’) rather than capture dynamic movement between countries (mobility ‘flows’). Second, because EU citizens can cross borders and stay in other
Member States for a short period without registering with the local authorities, both stocks and flows data may underestimate the true extent of intra-EU mobility. Finally, countries collect different types of data and may define migrants differently. Therefore, the data offered by various publications are not always exact. Providing the exact numbers of EU migrants in Europe and Poles in Greece proved difficult in the theoretical part of the present research and we had to provide roughly numbers.

Abovementioned limitations of the study, that are the result of the subjective choice of author, are at the same time avenues for future research. The phenomenon of migrant family strategies is very broad with variety of dimensions and it would be impossible to discuss it fully and comprehensively in one research. Alternatively, we choose to focus on certain aspects leaving the rest for the future, planned, post-doc research.
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Migration theory

De Haas (2010) implies that the first scholarly contribution to migration was made by the nineteenth century geographer – Ravenstein, who formulated “laws of migration” (in 1885 and 1889). Since then various theories of migration have tried to explain the social, cultural, economic and political reasons as well as consequences of movements. Empirical studies supported by different theories and models of migration reflect the variety of causes and impacts of migratory movements. This, combined with diversity and complexity of the migration process, difficulty of separating migration from other socio-economic and political phenomena and to combine macro-mezzo and micro-level theories of migration, as well as the fact that migration is embedded in societal rules and norms of both: home society and society of arrival, led to research investigating migration agree that there is no single, comprehensive migration theory, but rather a fragmented set of theories (de Haas, 2010; Thieme, 2006; Massey et al., 1993). Massey and colleagues implied that “a full understanding of contemporary migration processes will not be achieved by relying on the tools of one discipline alone, or by focusing on a single level of analysis. Rather, their complex, multifaceted nature requires a sophisticated theory that incorporates a variety of perspectives, levels, and assumptions” (Massey et al., 1993, p. 432).

In the last century several theoretical perspectives on migration emerged. In the subject literature the major division between them focuses mainly on causes and impacts of migration distinguishing classical migration research and theories explaining the perpetuation of migration (King, 2012; Thieme, 2006; Massey et al., 1993). Classical migration research includes the neoclassical economics (‘push-pull theory’), the new economics of migration, the dual (and segmented) labour market theory, and the world systems theory. Those theories try to explain the reasons of migration. Susan Thieme (2006) indicates that abovementioned approaches see migration processes as a uni- or bidirectional movement brought about by emigration, immigration or return migration caused by isolated factors, such as economic or political ones. The latter group of theories - theories explaining the perpetuation of migration - includes network theory, theory of cumulative causation and transnational migration theory and attempts to explain why migration
continues once it started. These theories approach migration as an integral part of life for many people and a continuing social process. They also focus on forces sustaining migration.

In order to be able to interpret data from our case study on Polish migrant families and their educational and migration strategies, migration theories together with social scientific theories need to be discussed. That is why we dedicate the first subsection to the theoretical discussion. We start with an overview of neoclassical economics, network theory and the theory of transnational migration. The choice of those specific perspectives was made based on our previous research (Rerak-Zampou, 2012; Rerak, 2010), as well as on the suggestions that came from the review of the relevant literature. As social networks proved to be relevant to researched field, we discuss them and refer to social capital as additionally important aspect for the research on Polish migrants in Athens. We also refer to transnational perspective, as this approach is of growing relevance in the contemporary research on international mobility and proved importance in our above-mentioned earlier projects on Polish migrants in the capital of Greece. The knowledge of mentioned theories’ premises is essential for better understanding of the complexity of researched group – Polish migrants residing in Athens who came to this country in a result of migratory processes and had lived immigrant lives for many years. Only after 1st May 2004 did they achieve EU citizenship and their experience from migratory ones turned into intra-European mobility, entailing new rights and freedoms. Reference to mentioned theories will additionally enable us to more thoroughly interpret data resulting from our case study.

a. Neoclassical theory

This theory, also referred to as ‘push-pull model’, is a dominant paradigm in explaining causes of migration. King (2012), indicates that neoclassical theory is based on principles of utility maximisation, rational choice, factor-price differentials between regions and countries, and labour mobility. The underlying assumption is that migration is initiated primarily by rational economic considerations of relative benefits and costs (mostly financial). At macro level, neoclassical economics focuses on differences in returns to labour across markets. Significant are divisions in wages and employment conditions between countries: individuals from the low-wage countries move to the high-wage regions. The neoclassical theory also pays a great deal of attention to macro-level migration costs (e.g. brain drain). The neoclassical macro-level analysis can be
transferred to the micro-level model of individual choice. This approach is named the human capital theory of migration (Kurekova, 2010), and approaches migration as an individual decision for income maximization. At micro level, neoclassical theory looks at the increase of wage levels of individual migrants assigning them a key role in the process of migratory decision-making. Migration is conceptualized as a form of investment in human capital. Potential migrants take into consideration the costs and benefits of moving to a different region and choose to migrate to regions where a positive net return from movement can be expected. From this perspective, individuals maximize utility: they search for the new settlement country that maximizes their well-being. Rational individual is in the centre of interest of micro-level neoclassical economics.

The relevance of human capital approach in the context of neoclassical theory is that it introduces the socio-demographic characteristics of migrants: skills, age, marital status, gender, occupation, and labour market status as well as preferences and expectations, assigning them importance as determinants of labour migration. The fact that migrants differ is a key issue that impacts migratory processes from the decision to move, the choice of destination country and mobility pattern.

Neoclassical model sees migration as self-correcting: wage differences make people from countries with low wages move to countries with high wages, and a result of this movement is that the supply of labour decreases and wages rise in the capital-poor countries. At the same time the supply of labour increases and wages fall in the capital-rich countries. Migration research (King, 2012; de Haas, 2010; Thieme, 2006; Massey et al., 1993) believe that this leads to a kind of new equilibrium where migration no longer occurs because wage rates are equalized. It is relevant to notice that the extended neoclassical models approach migration decision with regards to the expected rather than actual income. Earnings weighted by the probability of employment are the most significant factor (Massey et al., 1993).

Neoclassical migration theory offers a simple and compelling explanation of international migration. It seems to be the right approach for the investigation of Polish migrant community in Athens as it emphasizes the economic aspects of migration and reasons for it. Our previous research on the integration of Polish youngsters in Athens, as well as one on negotiation of migrant family strategies indicated that even though immigrants are influenced by the mix of socio-demographic features: complicated interactions of care responsibilities, impacted by network
support in the sending country and the environment of the host country with family considerations, especially education of children and plans connected to their future, still the most important factor were economic considerations. Yet, contemporary mobility literature indicates that neoclassical migration theory might be oversimplified as migration dynamics cannot be explained only by the differences in wages. Critique also concerns too individualistic and rigid approach not able to deal with the complex and diverse realities of the migration and development interactions (de Haas, 2008). The neoclassical theory of migration is blamed for ignoring the effects of home and host states and of leaving out the importance of politics and policies for migration. That is why, in order to embrace multifaceted nature of migratory processes and understand as fully as possible contemporary migration’s character we shall combine this theory with network and transnational perspectives. Moreover, the relevance of EU policies for mobility applicable to the case of Polish families will be discussed in the following chapters.

b. Migration Network Theory

Migrant networks have a rich tradition in sociological research: they were referred to in one of the most important migration ‘classics’ – *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918-1920), as well as in the early studies of chain migration (King, 2012, p. 21). Migration network theory derives from social and anthropological sciences (Castles & Miller, 2009). Granovetter (1973, p. 1360), who studied social networks over 40 years ago, suggested that the analysis of social ties is a bridge that connects micro and macro levels of sociological theory. In the more recent subject literature Monica Boyd and Douglas Massey are indicated as those, who begun to formulate a new approach to the sociology of migration on the basis of networks. Their research is a starting point for many contemporary studies investigating the role of networks in the process of mobility, including the present paper.

i. Networks and ties

Mobility literature widely recognizes social networks as an important force for perpetuating and forming migration (van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013; King, 2012; Castles & Miller, 2009; Haug, 2008; Thieme, 2006 after: Portes, 1989; Spittel, 1998; Massey et al., 1993). It is the major concern of migration network theory, which does not look so much into the reasons for
migration, as into the factors sustaining and reproducing this process through time. Networks are recurrent webs of interpersonal relations, which connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants “together within a web of reciprocal obligations that can be drawn upon to facilitate entry, adjustment, and employment at points of destination in origin and destination” (Spittel, 1998, p. 1 after: Massey, 1987; Boyd, 1989; Portes, 1995). In other words, networks connect individuals in the sets of kinship, friendship and shared origin. The narrow conceptualization of social networks focuses on community or kin relationships. For more comprehensive view various agents need to be involved in the destination, but also origin countries. Researchers on the international migration see that currently technology interferes with network dynamics: people have better access to information and assistance via various sources, especially Internet, which makes individuals less dependent from networks. This perspective enables other agents to be involved in migratory experiences of individuals that no longer rely to large extent on family and community networks, but on different types of institutions, and also internet communities and social media (van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013). Migratory networks can be differentiated according to locations (origin or destination, internet communities), linkage (e.g. family, friends), and function (e.g. school, workplace). Ethnic economies or ethnic enclaves and niches are examples of networks in receiving countries. Thieme (2006, p. 39 after: Light & Karageorgis, 1994 and Portes, 1998), explains that “ethnic economy exists whenever any immigrant or ethnic minority maintains a private economic sector in which it has a controlling ownership stake (…). Ethnic niches emerge when a group is able to colonize a particular sector of employment in such a way that members have privileged access to new job openings, while restricting that of outsiders”. In case of ethnic economies and niches, employment opportunities are typically network-driven since their members find jobs for others and often someone from ‘outside’ might not be accepted. Closed migrant communities are natural phenomena.

The role and the nature of the ties together with structure of the network are in the core of interest of migration network theory. Migration can be defined as a network-creating process in which strong ties between places of origin and destination are created. Network theory approaches migration as ‘a social product’, a result of individual decisions made by individual actors combined with economic or political parameters (Spittel, 1998). This perspective emphasizes on the social forces that are involved in the migratory processes.
Migrants create and use social networks in various ways, depending on different profiles and migration motives. Migration is comprehended as continuing social phenomenon, embedded in societal rules and norms at sending and receiving ends, but also as an integral part of life for many people, both migrants and non-migrants. For example, knowing someone with migratory experience at specific destination, thus having a social connection to such an individual, has been proved as an important mobility trigger (e.g. Spittel, 1998; Massey et al., 1993). Social networks in the new destination provide information and assistance of different kind: economic, psychological, regarding employment, schooling or housing, provision of new social ties, etc. Migrant networks contribute to lowering migration costs over time and reduce selectivity (van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013). In this way they trigger and sustain migration. Social networks at the place of destination are a pull factor, but social networks at the place of residence might be regarded as push factor (Haug, 2008). This happens, for example, when relatives in the home country induce individuals to go abroad. The subject literature has already proved that networks trigger migration to specific destinations: they encourage circular migration and reduce migration risks. Networks also help to explain why migration continues even when the initial reasons for the movement changes, like in the times of crisis when, even though wages are cut and unemployment among immigrant rises, immigrants persist to stay in the receiving society, or chose re-migration.

Relevant literature indicates that networks play an important role in the chain migration. King (2012) suggests even that in more recent studies, network migration has been used to describe the process of actual chain migration. Chain migration indicates that moves were encouraged and basically took place because of the individuals already present at the destination. Existing migration facilitates the flow of information back from the place of destination to the origin, which triggers migration decision of individuals in the host societies (King, 2012). Networks in the receiving country are especially relevant in case of greater distance or and the costs of migration.

An interesting approach towards network theory was found in the research by Granovetter (1973). According to this scholar, social networks relate small-scale interactions, e.g. interpersonal ties, into large-scale, macro-phenomena as social mobility and social cohesion. Scholar meant that even the personal experience is closely connected to large-scale aspects of social structure. Granovetter (1973), differentiated ties into strong and weak ones according to degree of social relation: friendship was an example of strong, and acquaintances – of weak ties. Strong ties have
the ability to condense the network. Granovetter defined the strength of an interpersonal tie as “combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize a tie” (1973, p. 1361). Researcher implied that weak ties are often neglected, but they are indispensable for individual’s integration into communities. He also noticed that there is a class difference between networks with regards to the strong and weak ties, with lower-class networks relating to strong ties the most often. Better educated migrants tend to rely less often on ties than their co-migrants with lower education or skills. In addition, the former group uses more often formal institutions in the country of destination when it comes to acquiring relevant information about job openings or educational opportunities, while the latter group tends to rely on informal channels, e.g. kinship ties and loose co-ethnic associational ties. Differences were also noticed in destination’s country language acquisition: better educated migrants tended to more often speak the language of their new country. In his research Granovetter additionally focused on dynamics of networks: due to the specificity of migrants’ situation they are formed quickly and easily, but they vanish in the same way. Another characteristic is that they are also highly localized. Granovetter’s theory of strong and weak ties and the role of social class in creating them seem interesting and we plan to verify it in the group of Polish migrants. The present study reaches out also to the research by Krystyna Romaniszyn (1996), who investigated Polish networks in Greece almost 20 years ago. Her research was based on a case study of the formation and operation of ethnic networks. Romaniszyn described how Polish immigrants despite very uncertain status managed to gradually form and sustain a community in Athens, which she names an invisible community. Scholar believes that this community was constructed from a loose network of bodies operating in the city, which “serve undocumented workers' needs, and to some extent, they enable them to feel and be self-sufficient. Those bodies operate without being legalised, are as temporary as their clients' presence in Greece, and may disappear virtually overnight. Nevertheless, for the last few years they have been existing, functioning, and serving the undocumented population well without overtly manifesting their presence in the city […] without the necessity of learning Greek or mingling much with Greeks” (1996, pp. 327-329). Romaniszyn’s study also emphasized the role of Polish church in sustaining and shaping networks. The majority of Polish citizens tended to visit it on a regular basis to pray and to receive moral support, they got married and baptized their children there, organized meetings with co-patriots,
the Polish Ambassador to Greece or other Polish VIPs. Additionally, kindergarten and school rooms were created under the auspices of the church. Nowadays situation of Polish migrants residing in Athens seems to be almost unchanged since the early 1990’s, the time when Romaniszyn underwent her research.

ii. Networks and system approach

Except the emphasis on the importance of networks for perpetuating migration, another advance of the networks theory is that it introduces a systems approach to migration. From this perspective, migration changes the social, cultural, economic, and institutional conditions in the sending and receiving countries, and basically shapes the developmental space within which migration processes operate (de Haas, 2009). In system approach migration is conceptualized as a dynamic process, a sequence of events that occur over time. King (2012), indicates that systems approach has been recognized as comprehensive framework for studying migration due to its multiple analytical focus on structure, linkage and process. In general, this perspective emphasizes interdependency between various forms of mobility. Moreover, as King (2012, p. 20) implies, system approach “enables the conceptualization of migration to move beyond a linear, unidirectional, push-pull movement to an emphasis on migration as circular, multi-causal and interdependent, with the effects of change in one part of the system being traceable through the rest of the system (Faist 1997a: 193). Hence systems can be self-feeding (like chain migration), self-regulating (correcting themselves in response to a ‘shock’ to the system) or self-modifying (e.g. shifting to different destination when one is blocked off)”.

Migration systems link individuals, their families, and communities over space in what contemporary mobility literature names - transnational communities. System approach, therefore, focuses attention on both ends of a migration flow with interconnectedness of the system in the core of interest, which basically means that one end is sensitive to changes in other end.

iii. Social capital, networks and migration

Numerous contemporary studies have proved that networks pay a significant role in the lives of migrants. Kinship, informational networks, and transnational communities have been conceptualized as a form and source of social capital stretched across migrant space. Social capital is a conceptual model that can be used to explain how social networks operate (Spittel, 1998). In
the core of this model lies the premise that individuals migrate to maximize returns on their investments in human capital and, drawing upon the social capital embedded in their interpersonal networks at the same time (Spittel, 1998). Massey and colleagues (1993) emphasized that network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain various assets from. According to Haug, (2008 after: Portes 1995b, 1998) social capital approach in migration sociology has strong links with the economic approach in sociology.

Social capital is a set of norms and values shared by members of a group, such as truthfulness, honesty, principle reciprocate, trust, etc. This kind of capital is also described as a network of connections and dependencies, which together form a structure that enables and facilitates functioning of individuals that belong to a specific group. It describes circumstances in which individuals can use membership in groups and networks to secure specific benefits (Sobel, 2002). Social capital is a powerful form of learning as it provides a range of social settings in which one can observe, practice and develop various skills (Field, 2005). It is believed that the notion of social capital was introduced systematically into the sociological literature in 1970’s by Pierre Bourdieu, and then utilized by James Coleman and Robert Putnam. These three names are referred to as the intellectual triumvirate of social capital (Law & Mooney, 2006). Still, they understand and define this concept differently. Even though all of them believed that social capital is a resource, they stated different functions for it: Coleman refers to social capital as to resources available to individuals and families to achieve social mobility; Putnam saw it as foundation for civil society important for economic growth and establishing democratic institutions; Bourdieu believed that social capital is about power and inequalities and how they are reproduced in social networks (Dwyer et al., 2006).

In his theory, Pierre Bourdieu discussed the various types of capital: economic, social (places and relations in social groups), cultural (skills, customs, habits, styles), and symbolic (the ability to use symbols to validate other types of capital). These forms of capital can transform one into another, but in a limited way. The “capital” of individuals is primarily their habitus, a synthetic expression of all the resources at disposal. Bourdieu (1986, p. 51) stated that social capital “is an attribute of an individual in a social context. One can acquire social capital through purposeful actions and can transform social capital into conventional economic gains”. For Bourdieu, social capital is a collective asset shared by members of defined group, with clear boundaries, obligations
of exchange, and mutual recognition (Lin, 2001, p. 22). Bourdieu wrote that: “Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Mansfield & Cartwright, 2001, p. 119). Thus, we could say that social capital has two components: a resource connected with group membership and social networks. Bourdieu believed that the volume of the social capital of an individual depends on the size of the network of connections he/she can effectively mobilise and on the volume of the capital possessed in his/her own right by each of those to whom he/she is connected (Bourdieu, 1986). It is suggested that Bourdieu’s concept is linked to his theoretical ideas on class and the reproduction of power relations (e.g. Walseth, 2008; Morrice, 2007; Lin, 2001; Siisiäinen, 2000). His notion of social capital was inseparable from economic and cultural capital to reproduce the social relations between classes and maintain the social hierarchy (Morrice, 2007). It is socially powerful to construct social capital that depends on the normality of practices of inequality and social closure. The social closures provided by certain kinds of institutional educational structures, such as select schools, enable families and kinship networks to reassemble and reassert their social power. Bourdieu’s conception of social capital can be thus regarded as an axis of unequal power resources (Law & Mooney, 2006). In Bourdieu’s theory the lack of familiarity with the tacit rules, norms, expectations and traditions associated with the new systems in which immigrants live means that they are disadvantaged from the outset: the *habitus* they occupy ensures that they will feel like ‘fish out of water’ when trying to access and integrate into mainstream education or work systems (Morrice, 2007, p. 166 after: Bourdieu, 1977). We could transfer this view to the situation of children of Polish migrants in Athens. This underprivileged group is not socially powerful, thus it does not have a full access to mainstream social capital. Another thing is the Polish School in Athens which is one of the main educational choices for Polish community in this city (Rerak, 2010). Due to its unique character as a Polish institution in the Greek society, in some way it seems to lead to inequality as it keeps Polish students in Polish reality, creates and strengthens networks among Poles, regardless of the fact that they function in Greek society that they should integrate into. After finishing schooling those students are neither purely Greeks nor Poles, they are socialised for being Polish in a Greek society. Similar observations were made in the contexts of Greek schools in Germany (Damanakis, 2011; Grigoropolou, 2011). Greek immigrant community
in Germany has for decades had the option of sending their children to Greek schools where the curriculum is set by the Greek state and where Greek is the language of instruction. Grigoropolou (2011) claims that during that first phase of Greek migration into Germany Greek children were facing big problems: they were growing up in ‘ghettos’, always stayed at home, were isolated from other children and had no contact with German children. Grigoropolou concludes that these children were growing up in isolation to the German society but at the same time their relationship with Greece was only indirect as well.

According to Siisiäinen (2000), Bourdieu believed that membership in groups and involvement in the social networks developing within these and in the social relations arising from the membership could be used in efforts to improve the social position of actors in a variety of different fields. Taggart and Kao (2003) argue that immigrant parents are marginal members of host society due to their disadvantage resulting from their native language and different social customs. This is why children of immigrants and minority families are likely to have less social capital (Taggart & Kao, 2003). The existence and importance of migrant networks have been documented in migratory systems throughout the world (Massey & Aysa, 2005). Findings of Zhou and Bankston (1994) indicate that strong positive immigrant cultural orientations can serve as a form of social capital. Analysing ethnicity as a social capital is not unilateral as one could see ethnicity as both a positive and/or a negative form of social capital (Dwyer et al., 2006). Immigrant children may react to their disadvantaged status with different strategies. One of them is relying on social capital available in their own ethnic community to actively fight for acceptance by the larger society (Zhou, 1997a).

Another part of the intellectual triumvirate of social capital - Coleman - believed that social capital is rather intangible because it exists in the structure of relations between individuals. He wrote that “it is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – within the structure” (Coleman, 1988, p. 98). In his theory, Coleman based social capital in the setting of families and surrounding communities and stressed their impact on the development of young people. He discussed three forms of social capital: a) obligations and expectations (e.g., doing favours for and receiving favours from other people), b) informational channels (e.g., sharing useful information that may inform some future action), c) norms and effective sanctions.
Coleman identifies social capital as a resource that has value for a young person’s development and that reside both: within the family - it inheres in the structure of intergenerational relationships, especially between parents and children; and outside, in the community - relations outside the family which come together to create a dense social structure of norms, trust and obligations (Coleman, 1988, p. 113). This sociologist also underlined the importance of social capital for educations of youngsters. In his later work, Coleman has defined social capital of children’s development as “the norms, the social networks, and the relationships between adults and children that are of value for the child’s growing up” (Coleman, 1990, p. 334). According to Dwyer et al. (2006, p. 5), Coleman’s findings suggest that “economic disadvantage can be compensated by a strong form of social capital in the form of family norms, values and networks, as well as a broader set of community values and networks”. Adopting this idea to the situation of Polish families in Athens we could assume that their disadvantaged situation might be equalized by the social capital they get from their families and communities.

For Robert Putnam social capital consists of three main components: moral obligations and norms, social values (especially trust) and social networks (especially voluntary associations) (Putnam et al., 1993). Each of these features has its particularity when children and young people are concerned (Tomanovic, 2005). In later works Putnam (2000, pp. 22-24) distinguished between bonding and bridging social capitals. Bonding social capital means relationships between members of one social group, such as friends, close family members, neighbours and work colleagues. Bridging social capital refers to networks between people who might be different from one another, e.g., more distant acquaintances from other circles, groups or social classes, people belonging to different communities, or people belonging to another ethnic group. When we discuss these two social capitals we should remember that they are not “either/or” categories, but rather that many groups bond along some social dimensions and bridge across others (Walseth, 2008). Putnam stated that ‘bonding is good for “getting by”, but bridging is crucial for “getting ahead”’ (2000, p. 23). Additionally, bridging social capital seems to contribute to societal integration, while bonding social capital might be exclusive and can produce strong out-group antagonism. Bridging social capital can be regarded as pointer of social integration (Rerak, 2010). Active participation in civil society (e.g. in voluntary organizations such as membership of social clubs, memberships
in Trade Unions, etc.) is regarded as one of most common indicators of bridging social capital, as it helps build social networks and develop as well as enforce social norms (Wallace & Pichler, 2007; Harper & Kelly, 2003). Other include: civic participation - defined as individual involvement in local and national affairs, and perceptions of ability to influence those; social participation - defined as involvement in, and volunteering for various organized group; and voluntary work - an important indicator of people’s willingness to undertake activity that benefits others and the wider community (Harper & Kelly, 2003). Among other indicators of bridging social capital there is a notion of generalized trust, e.g., trust individuals have in others, those they know and do not know, as well as trust in formal institutions. Trust is seen as being closely linked to social capital, either as a direct part of it or as an outcome (Harper & Kelly, 2003). The bonding social capital can be measured in relation to such pointer as social networks or social support. In case of social networks relevant literature provides three different measures of social network capital: frequency of contact with friends, work colleagues and neighbours. Wallace and Pichler, (2007), define social support as a specific indication of the strength of bonding social capital. It refers to the extent to which people give or provide services of different kinds within informal networks, or at a neighbourhood level. Social networks and social support could be measured on the basis of:

- frequency of seeing/speaking to relatives/friends/neighbours
- extent of virtual networks and frequency of contact
- number of close friends/relatives who live nearby
- exchange of help

Based on Putnam’s notion of social capital we could find how social networks (e.g., friendship relations) influence sense of belonging to communities of Polish migrants as well as their social integration. Another thing is a mutual relationship between bonding and bridging social capital within the group of Polish migrants. As Halpern (2005, p. 261) refers, there is a study from Amsterdam that compares different immigrant groups. It found that groups with more associations of a bonding nature had also stronger bridging ties to the larger community and were better integrated into the social and political life of the Netherlands. Sociologist Alejandro Portes predicted that too strong ties of social capital, in particular in its bonding form, may have several negative consequences including the use of coercion by the group, limiting the freedom of
individuals operating within particular network of social capital or an exclusion of persons not belonging to the group. The negative aspects of both bonding and bridging capitals could have even greater results in case of Polish migrants living in Athens and their strategies. In case of bonding capital exclusion of persons not belonging to the group (e.g., the group of Polis citizens in Athens), could lead to even greater feelings of rejection and loneliness. It could be due to the fact that in the settlement country there are not too many groups that one could belong to. Also low levels of bridging capital, which might show the connections of Polish citizens to the Greek community, may influence their strategies.

As shown in scientific research, children's social networks are generally informal (Tomanovic, 2005). Their uniqueness lies in the fact that they are mostly based on friendship, but can be also based in smaller scale on family members and neighbours. Similar case considers adolescents: the majority of their social networks is still informal, based on friends and acquaintances. It is believed that the social capital that children possess in their social networks of friends is bonding one (Tomanovic, 2005). When it comes to children that live in multicultural community of foreigners, they cumulate also bridging social capital. At their schools and after them they meet and make friends with peers from different countries and have a chance to learn about their customs, traditions, and habits.

To sum up the discussion about the social capital, we could most broadly describe it as the norms and networks that facilitate a variety of social transactions and help individuals and groups to fulfil mutually held goals (Schafft & Brown, 2003). Although differences arise among users of the term in relation to a precise definition, there is broad agreement that trust, norms (of reciprocity) and social sanctions are in the core of the concept. Social capital is also strongly connected to power: a person’s social capital can provide them with networks of advantage linking them to skills, ideas and knowledge which they can then use to their own advantage (Morrice, 2007). There are different sources of social capital: family, school, a person met on commuter train and buses, classmates, neighbourhood association one belongs to, civic organization one is member of, internet chat group, etc. Adding up all these different forms creates a single, sensible summary of the social capital. We could divide the forms of social capital into formal: e.g., actions linked to authorities, organizations, and informal (Putnam, 2004, pp. 7-10): people playing football, gathering in one pub, family dinners.
Social capital is a form of capital that could both raise social cohesion and fight with social exclusion. Bourdieu understanding of social capital as a way of reproducing the social relations between classes and maintaining the social hierarchy, together with his notion of *habitus* have implications for immigrants. We can apply Bourdieu’s, but also Putnam’s works to research the ways in which social capital keeps and strengthens the marginalization of ethnic minorities. Putnam and Coleman provide a framework for regarding ethnicity as a social capital; an ethnic group might have shared networks, norms and trust which might enable participants to act to pursue shared objectives (Dwyer et al., 2006). As we have already said, Coleman’s findings suggest that economic disadvantage can be compensated by a strong form of ethnic social capital. Disadvantaged situation of Polish migrants in Athens might be equalized by the social capital they get from their families and communities. Participation in networks seems to be important for overall adaptation and integration processes of immigrants in mainstream society.

King (2012) mentions social capital as third, next to material and human capitals (education, skills, knowledge), crucial migration resource in enabling and inspiring people to migrate. It lowers the costs and risks of migration (e.g. housing, employment, and social interaction), increasing in this way likelihood of the movement to the destinations where social contacts are already established. Massey and colleagues (1993, p. 448) argue that social networks increase the likelihood of international migration because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration. Haug (2008, p. 591) observed that every new migrant increases the social capital at the place of destination for the potential successors diminishing in this way the migration risk. Since every migrant reduces the risks and costs of migration this leads to more migration and in this way this process perpetuates and sustains itself on the basis of social networks (Haug, 2008), which further expands the networks, and so on (Massey et al., 1993).

The existence of prior migrants from a source country facilitating additional migration from that source by reducing transaction costs, providing information and enhanced job opportunities, offering desired services, and so on, is so-called ‘network effects’. Network effects explain the perpetuation of migration.
iv. Concluding remarks about the network theory

Migration network theory belongs to the group of theories explaining the perpetuation of migratory processes. It also focuses on the factors that cause and shape this process. Thus, this theory has power and tools to help find the answer to the set of questions about the reasons for migration, its sustaining and perpetuating, choice of specific destination, the way migrants settle in the host country and find employment, why immigrants remain in their country of settlement, but also why they leave to go back to home country or chose re-migration, as well as why they remit earnings to the home country. Thus, this theory provides an insight into understanding the complexity of migrants’ strategies. Networks help migrants to settle in the new country providing sets of information and prompting more people to participate in mobility, but they might be also exclusionary for people not belonging to particular social or kinship groups. Networks decline in strength and extent since they cannot go on expanding indefinitely (King, 2012). We believe that migration network theory will be a key to understand the specificity of Polish migration to Greece with its contemporary shape. This conceptualization helps capture the changing form of mobility, and we think this is a necessary approach toward a dynamic process that migration is. This approach is necessary to fully understand the complexity of contemporary migration.

c. Transnational migration

Another theory, whose premises will be utilized to some extent in the present research, is the theory of transnational migration. Transnational approaches are located within a broader paradigm shift in the social theory towards perspectives attempting to harmonise actor and structure approaches (de Haas, 2008, p. 39). Transnationalism derives from postcolonial, postmodern-inspired anthropology (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997, p. 549) and questions traditional, linear (migration as a one-way journey), push-pull model (Portes, 2003) as well as the notions typical of assimilationist models and other well-established immigration paradigms, such as "old country" and "new world", "sojourner" and "settler" (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997, p. 549) altering in this way migration theory. On the other hand, transnational perspective privileges such notions as hybridity, long-distance nationalism and de-territorialisation, fluidity of boundary-crossing activities to capture migrants’ lived realities as embedded in more than one nation state.
Scholars (e.g. King, 2012; Ryan, 2011; Boccagni, 2010; Glick Schiller, 2010) claim that the framing of international migration as a transnational process has currently dominated the field of migration studies. However, this trend has been present in the subject literature for more than two decades now: transnationalism started to appear as a relevant approach to migration in the early 1990s. Similarly, the subject literature indicates that since 1990s a growing interest in the role of social networks in facilitating transnational migration can be noticed (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 673 after: Faist and Ozveren, 2004). Transnational migration is the third perspective, next to the new economics and network approach on migration, that have coincided with a relevant trend in migration studies, so-called “transnational turn” in the study of the settlement and integration of migrant communities in receiving countries (Ryan, 2011; Faist, 2010; de Haas, 2008). As Faist (2010, p. 11) indicates, ‘transnational turn’ brought migrants ‘back in’ as important social agents. Additionally, social scientists have started to emphasize that discussing immigrant experiences only within the context of the host country is not enough, since migrants sustain interaction with their homeland rather than breaking those ties after moving abroad.

The two fundamental studies of transnational paradigm were Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration (1992) by Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Green Basch, Cristina Szanton Blanc and Nations Unbound (1994) by Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, Christina Szanton Blanc (King, 2012, p. 25). Nina Glick Schiller and Linda Basch were among the first academics to theorize about the concept of transnationalism and the ways in which migrants maintain links between countries of origin and destination (Mazzucato, 2010).

i. Definitions and typologies of transnationalism

The subject literature abounds in various definitions of transnationalism that started to emerge in the early 1990s, after introduction of this concept into academic discussion. Various explanations reflect the different disciplinary backgrounds of scholars attracted by this concept. In its most common definition, transnationalism involves migrant activities which take place in the transnational social spaces - recurrent practices across national borders requiring a regular and significant commitment of time. Those activities might be economic, political, sociocultural and
religious. Thus, through transnational mobility, various types of relations are extended through space and time. In the transnational literature very popular is early definition elaborated by mentioned pioneers of transnational approach: Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc who explain it as “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multistranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and of settlement” (Boccagni, 2010, p. 186; Mazzucato, 2010, p. 206). Another explanation of transnationalism often referred to by scholars investigating this perspective is one developed by Steven Vertovec, who indicates the relevance of people within networks and explains transnationalism as “multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states” (Vertovec, 1999, p. 1). Portes and colleagues (1999, p. 219) describe transnationalism as “occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation”. Faist’s (2010, p. 11) defines transnationalism more broadly as “everyday activities of migrants engaged in wide variety of practices, including, among others, reciprocity and solidarity within kinship networks, political participation not only in the country of emigration but also of immigration, small-scale entrepreneurship of migrants across borders and the transfer and re-transfer of cultural customs and practices”. According to this scholar, transnationalism deals with networks in the country of origin and, at the same time, with incorporation of migrants into the regions of destination. Further on in his study scholar defines also derivatives of transnational approach, namely transnational spaces, fields and formations as “sets of dense and continuous social and symbolic ties” which consolidate all kinds of social phenomena (Faist, 2010, p. 15). Nina Glick Schiller (2010, p. 112) defines transnational social fields as “networks of networks that link individuals directly or indirectly to institutions located in more than one nation-state […] means of locating individual migrants within territorially situated social relationships”. Those fields are influenced by social forces in countries of origin and settlement. Such conceptualization of field, which is common for research on transnational migration, does not build on Bourdieu’s notion of fields as discrete domains of power, but its social construction is explained in relationship to transnational networks, and is based on the theorization of classic social anthropology and social geographers (Glick Schiller, 2010, p. 112). Dahinden (2010, p. 51) provides a simple explanation of transnational formations and sees them as results of the combination of two dimensions: transnational mobility (understood as the physical movement of people in transnational space) and
locality in the sending or/about receiving country. Other scholars focus on the flow of immaterial things such as ideas and feelings of solidarity across boundaries (Mazzucato, 2010, p. 207). Thus, transnational social spaces, fields and formations mean all the material and symbolic interactions generated through migrants’ and non-migrants’ engagements in transnationalism. The fact that migrants occupy ‘transnational social spaces’ means that migrants live transnationally and adopt transnational identities (Ho Thi Thanh Nga, 2012; de Haas, 2008). The international circulation of people, goods, and ideas creates not only spaces, but also new transnational cultures, identities, and community spheres (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997, p. 549 after: Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994; Kearney 1995; Rouse 1991). As Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila sustain, the new cultures and hybrid ways of life are various from both: those in the place of origin and those in the place of destination since migrants need to bridge the differences between receiving and sending countries. On the other hand, globalization reduces differences between home and host societies, spreading a global culture.

All the definitions of transnational practices and their derivatives mentioned above can be summarized and condensed as emphasizing the connections between individuals (migrants and non-migrants) living in different countries that bond people together. In the centre of the interest there is a migrant, a member of a larger whole of transnational space that goes beyond the nations’ borders together with his activities and networks. Such a conceptualization of transnationalism requires methodological rigor: the most relevant unit of analysis needs to be network, or transnational community. Term transnational community was introduced into academic discourse in the 1990s (Bruneau, 2010, p. 43) to characterize sets of reciprocal ties among migrants and non-migrants spread among multiple localities whose engagement in those real networks “is neither mythical nor visionary; it is lived through practices of everyday life” (Weinar, 2010, p. 76). Ryan (2011, p. 87) argues that theorizing transnational migration one needs to bear in mind that migrants do not live their lives only in transnational spaces, in contrary – locality is very important for them. All the activities connected to living, working, educating children and socializing take place in localized spaces. Also involvement in ethnic organizations, for instance church, or community associations, which may have transnational dimensions, in fact takes place at a local level. With the time spent in new country migrants may develop local sources of support, lowering reliance on transnational families. Thus, discussing transnational migration researchers need to take under
consideration the complex, multifaceted, and shifting interactions and interconnections between the local, national, and transnational spaces. We shall follow this perspective and focus our research on the Polish migrants activities that take place locally, to see if and how they are transnationally connected to the sending society.

Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec (2003) emphasize that there are significant diversities when it comes to transnational migrants’ in the sectors, levels, strength, and formality of their involvement. Scholars refer to *comprehensive* and *selective* transnational practices of migrants. Those individuals whose transnational practices involve many arenas of social life (like remittances, enterprise, political activity, regular visits, keeping in touch with families and friends back home on a regular basis, voting in elections, etc.) engage in the "comprehensive" practices, while others, who take part in only a few practices (e.g. only rare visits and phone calls), are more connected to "selective” ones. With reference to this, we plan to check whether transnational practices of Polish migrants in Athens are comprehensive or selective. Another thing is that also the strength of transnational ties varies with regard to their frequency or intensity: some migrants are intensively transnational whilst for the majority of individuals transnational practices are periodic or occasional (Levitt et al., 2003, p. 570). Discussing transnational practices Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec (2003) point to their *subjective* and *objective* dimensions, both of great importance for transnational identities and spaces. The first one includes activities such as voting or investing. The second, objective dimension focuses on more vogue, difficult to observe and measure phenomena, such as religious and family life.

Thomas Faist (2000) has presented three types of transnational social spaces: transnational kinship groups, transnational circuits and transnational communities, deriving this typology from primary resources embedded in social ties, such as reciprocity, exchange or solidarity. Scholar emphasized on the dynamic nature of these three types of transnational social spaces, describing them as evolving, non-static “combinations of ties, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that reach across the borders of multiple states. These spaces denote dynamic social processes, not static notions of ties and positions” (Faist, 2000, p. 191). Characteristic for transnational kinship groups, transnational circuits and transnational communities is that they manifest at a various levels – macro, mezzo and micro (Binaisa, 2011, p. 6).
Another scholar who theorized about the typology of transnational practices is Dahinden (2010, p. 53), who spoke about four different ideal types of the transnational activities referring to locality and mobility. Locality means possessing sets of social relations at specific places, either settlement or origin, being connected to those destinations emotionally, economically and/or politically. Dahinden refers to an ideal type as to abstract, constructed for the purpose of theory-building. Researcher’s typology includes the following models (Dahinden, 2010, pp. 53-60):

1. **Localised diasporic transnational formations.** Characterized by low physical mobility combined with high levels of local anchorage in the receiving country and low levels of local anchorage in the country of origin. Migrants and their offspring are settled in the host country and may have been there for generations and typically do not circulate between the settlement country and the homeland. Those ‘localised’ migrants are generally socially and economically integrated in the new country.

2. **Localised mobile transnational formations.** This type simultaneously combines high physical mobility and high locality in both: sending and receiving countries and designates integration into networks within both countries. Migrants maintain ties with their countries of origin, making home and host societies a single arena for social action by regularly moving back and forth across international borders for holidays, family obligations, business, etc. Usually those migrants have a property or land (or both) in the country of origin. On the other hand, they are naturalised in the new country which is their principal residence, where they live, earn money and raise their children. Still, migrants’ transnational practices are conducted mainly through the family networks.

3. **Transnational mobiles.** This type includes people who are highly (often permanently) mobile and have a low degree of local anchorage. Mobility becomes an integral part of migrants’ life strategies for maintaining or improving quality of life. Rather than on strong family or ethnic ties, their social capital is based on weak relations: friends and acquaintances. They need to develop networks with local actors and institutions within their circulatory spaces to stay mobile.

4. **Transnational outsiders.** A group of migrants who display both low mobility and low degree of local anchorage (e.g. asylum seekers, undocumented migrants or recently arrived migrants from non-EU countries). Due to their legal status those migrants on one hand do not circulate between sending and receiving countries (which often indicates being cut off from their families) and, on
the other, have limited access to jobs and other resources in the new country, which forms an obstacle to local embeddedness. Thus, they are not able to build up stable transnational fields between the country of origin and the new country.

Dahinden’s typology is novel and interesting as it assumes that all immigrants are in fact engaged in transnationalism. Scholar’s conceptualization is in contrast with rather popular in transnational studies perspective of Alejandro Portes, who implies that transnationalism is grounded on the activities of only a minority of the members of immigrant population.

ii. Transnational ties

Sustaining transnational ties means having networks dispersed over a wide geographical area. Boccagni (2010, p. 186) theorizing transnational social tie explains it as any kind of social relationship and practice ‘at distance’ connected to the identity orientations that those networks build on. Ties enable immigrants to impact significantly on the social lives of those left behind and, vice versa: activities of those left behind have an impact on the lives of migrants. Discussing transnational ties, Ryan and colleagues (2009) divide them into social networks and kinship ties. The first ones tend to be founded on friendship and are loose, fluid and informal. The latter type includes more formal, long-lasting, dense ties and hierarchical relationships among family or kinship. Kinship networks are characterized by expectations of family support and reciprocity, and are based on loyalty and trust but also on obligation (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 63 after: Jordan and Du¨vell 2003: 75). The subject literature proves that transnational ties among relatives and friends are sources of informational and emotional, sometimes financial support.

Ryan (2011, p. 99) claims that strong reliance on transnational ties might be of temporary nature, especially in the early stages of migration when networks in receiving society might not yet be created. However, scholar’s study on Polish migrants in London, who had lived there for six or seven years, indicated that their transnational networks were very dynamic. Strong reliance on transnational ties might also be connected to family life cycle, and more specifically - to taking care of children or elderly parents or other relatives that need support.

Literature points at inconsistency in migrant’s transnational status in the sending and receiving countries. King (2012, p. 16) indicates that migrants may purposely demonstrate themselves as wealthy and successful during their visits back home, communicating frequently or
by remitting money, maintaining and enhancing status in the eyes of the home community. This all might often be in contrast with rather miserable life and status of the same immigrant in the host country. To confirm his claims King refers to the Nieswand’s study (2011) of Ghanaian labour migrants in Germany, in which researcher observed this status paradox as mainly valid for migrants who are neither perceived to be skilled in the country of destination nor unskilled in their home country.

Mobility literature indicates that migrants do not simply abandon their homeland and social ties back home, but they rather use sets of strategies to sustain links to their origins while negotiating the values and norms of their host societies and forming new social ties. Migration rearranges meanings of family, parenthood, kinship and friendship to accommodate spatial and temporal separations. Transnational families break the idea of rather simplistic constructions of the family as a conjugal unit with co-residency and physical unity as the basic demands for family life, separating the notions of family and household and enabling conceptualization of family as social group geographically dispersed. From this perspective, kinship ties are reinforced across space and time. Transnational parents, who leave their children (or sometimes only one of them) behind, try to combine caregiving and guidance with breadwinning. Thus, since breadwinning may require their long-term and long-distance absence from home, they attempt to sustain family connections by showing emotional ties through frequent visits, calls, texts, gifts, and remittances (Ho Thi Thanh Nga, 2012). Thus, transnational parents maintain their responsibilities by both: earning money, and also by communicating and guiding across national borders. Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila (1997, p. 557) describe transnational mothering as radically rearranging mother-child interactions and requiring reshaping of the meanings and definitions of mothering. Mothers remain physically separated from children, but maintain mothering connections and financial obligations. Ties might be fostered and sustained by the exchange of emails, letters, photos, and phone calls. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila’s study on transnational motherhood suggests that transnationalism, an achievement in economic or political terms, might be accompanied by rather high emotional costs: alienation, anxiety and constant sacrifice of mothering characterized by long temporal and spatial distances (1997, p. 567). Ryan and colleagues (2008) describe a common practice among Polish families in London to rely on

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3 For more information please see chapter Migrant families and strategies (pp. 59-108).
transnational networks for help with childcare: relatives, usually parents, came to London on extended trips to help look after children.

In the present paper we utilize the term *transnational family* to refer to a traditional family that has adopted a deliberate strategy of living in two or more countries forming spatially dispersed webs of relationships in order to maximize opportunities for employment, education and social advancement of family members. In this way transnational migration may split and reconfigure families. In adopting this definition we follow the studies of Ho and Bedford (2008) as well as Ryan and his co-researchers (2011; 2009, 2008).

### iii. Factors influencing lives of transnational migrants

With time migrants often change their transnational ways of being: they can settle down in a new country or move somewhere else and these changes affect the ways in which they are transnational. The subject literature indicates that simultaneous commitment to two or more societies means that it is impossible to speak about clear-cut dichotomies of ‘origin’ or ‘destination’ (de Haas, 2008, p. 38). Still, scholars claim that characteristic of contemporary transnational migration is its temporality and circularity (Nadler, 2009), strong material and cultural links with sending countries (King, 2012; Ryan, 2011; Nadler, 2009; Levitt et al., 2003; Portes, 2003), and a shared imaginary of “belonging” (Ho & Bedford, 2008). On the other hand, a part of subject research indicates that circulation and the indeterminacy of migrants’ settlement is overestimated and that actually the permanency of settlement is what characterizes transnational migrants – they tend to stay long term in destination country (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997, p. 550). We shall investigate which conceptualization is closer to the Polish community in Greece, whether their presence in Athens is rather permanent or temporal.

Engagement in the sending country may not necessarily depend on potential future return of individual, but can be fostered through various ways. Transnational perspective recognizes and emphasises the importance of technology that has been evolving rapidly and radically, improving possibilities for migrants to sustain more frequent, stable and more intimate links with their relatives, but also societies of origin, enabling cheap, everyday contact via internet (emails, Skype and other communicators that provide video chats) as well as texts and phone-calls. Thanks to (and via) regular telecommunications transnational links with people from the country of origin may
continue to play a supportive and informative roles. Additionally, migrants can watch native TV and listen to radio, travel cheaply, easily and quickly back and forth between the countries, often only for a weekend. They can send money through globalised banking systems or specialized companies (Smart Transfer, MoneyGram, WesternUnion, Sami Swoni, Chequepoint). In the EU new bank transfers are introduced to make remitting not expensive and quick, for instance SEPA system. Migrants transnationally involved buy properties in their homelands or start business there, vote in elections and invest in their country of origin. All this increasingly enables them and their families to pursue transnational livelihoods, to foster double loyalties, to relate to people, and to work and do business simultaneously in distant places (de Haas, 2008, p. 38 after: De Haas 2005; Guarnizo et al 2003). Thus, as it has been showed, the concept of transnationalism implies more than sustaining a regular contact with the country of origin. Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec (2003, p. 567) indicate that “transnational migrants are embedded in multi-layered social fields and that, to truly understand migrants’ activities and experiences, their lives must be studied within the context of these multiple strata”. Scholars indicate that individual transnational experiences of immigrants need to be investigated taking into consideration wide context of their families and households, their participation in political, religious and community organizations, as well as their relation to the national and international policy regimes within which transnational activities take place at sending and receiving ends.

Faist (2010, p. 14) indicates that in case of transnationalism, a kind of triangular social structure is created which includes country of origin, country of destination and migrants with their significant others (mobile or not). For Portes and colleagues (1999, p. 217) transnational livelihood means “dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders”. From this perspective, not many of Polish families residing in Athens are actually transnational, as Polish migrants do not speak Greek well, often do not run separate households in Poland and Greece, or their contact with country of origin is rather occasional. But, if we take into consideration narrower explanation of transnationalism present and widely utilized in the mobility literature, according to which members of one family live in various countries and are connected economically and emotionally to both: country of origin and destination, situation is different. Such a conceptualization of transnational ties, more precisely motherhood, can be found in the study of Latina immigrant women who work
and reside in the United States while their children remain in their countries of origin, by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila (1997). Thomas Faist (2010, p. 9) investigating diaspora and transnationalism distinguishes between narrow and wide theorizations of the later concept referring the narrow one to migrants’ durable ties across countries and the wide one to communities, as well as all sorts of social formations, such as transnationally active networks, groups and organisations. From this perspective, the present case study utilizes the narrow perspective of transnationalism, following much of resent transnational literature (e.g. King, 2012; Ryan, 2011; Ryan et al., 2009; Ho & Bedford, 2008; Ryan et al., 2008). Initial research on Polish migrants in Athens (Rerak-Zampou, 2012) indicates that families whose parents or one of them lives in Greece, whilst children and/or spouse in Poland are not uncommon examples in this community. Some of them have plans to build a house in Poland, already started building one, or plan to buy property at some point in the future, but this, typically, would mean giving up their home in Greece. The actual extent of transnational living of Polish migrants in Greece needs to be carefully examined and researched, and we plan to do this in the present research. According to Portes and colleagues (1999), the best way to research such a topic is to involve case studies of individual migrants and their networks (in our case – families, friends and acquaintances). Portes (2003, p. 888) indicated that case studies have numerous merits, including “the capacity to uncover realities beneath appearances and to provide rich descriptions of particular social phenomena”. Ryan (2011, p. 84) agrees with Portes that the nature, extent, and also limits of transnationalism can be studied through an exploration of migrant networks, since “networks can provide a means of assessing the extent to which transnational ties may change in form and intensity over time as migrants’ needs and circumstances change”.

The subject literature indicates the relevant role of religion in transnational migration. Religion influences both: the way in which migrants are connected to their countries of origin, but also the ways in which they are incorporated into receiving societies. Religion crosses borders and creates a relevant part of migrant identities, networks (organizational and social) and culture. It links migrants to their homelands, but also to their fellow believers in the countries of settlement. More generally, global religious movements unite members with others around the globe. Thus, religion has power and possibilities to shape relations of transnational communities.
Religion has already been proved as an important part of lives of Polish immigrants settling in various regions, including Greece (Rerak, 2010; Maroufof, 2009; Marchlewski, 2008; Ryan et al., 2008; Romaniszyn, 1996). In the present case study we shall focus on how religious practices are related to everyday lives of Polish migrants in Greece, whether or not they influence migratory strategies and play role more generally in family decision-making processes. We shall pay closer attention to transnational dimension of religion to see how it is connected to migrants’ livelihoods, whether it influences the choice of the destination country and how it is important for the immigrant community in the receiving country.

Another relevant aspect of transnationalism is connected to gender. Contemporary research emphasizes on the gendered nature of migratory networks (van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013 after: Hagan 1998, Curran and Rivero-Fuentes 2003), and the active role of women in developing and sustaining personal networks. Significance of gender as a key organizing principle of migrant life is recognised, and literature indicates that transnational migration affects men and women differently (Ryan, 2011; Ryan et al., 2009; Ho & Bedford, 2008; Levitt et al., 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997), modifying relations between them.

Ryan and colleagues (2009) claim that transnational migration influence women and men in gender-specific ways and women are those who take up more responsibility. Results on scholars’ study on Polish migrant families in London indicate that more women than men were actively involved in providing care transnationally. Thus, women are often burdened with double caring responsibilities: looking after family members in the countries of origin and destination. Early evidence of Polish migratory patterns in Greece suggests that Polish men and women might be affected variously by migration. In the present case study we shall look into the gender aspect of transnational practices of those actors to limited extend.

Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec (2003) emphasize on the strong influence on transnational migration of states’ policies, factor that is present and widely discussed in mobility literature. For example Ryan (2011, p. 86 after: Riccio, 2008) claims that “the shape of the migrating family and decisions about who goes and who stays behind and the possibilities for reunion are partly determined by immigration legislation”. Research shows also different ways in which states reconfigure themselves and redefine national membership to maintain ties and to profit from their transnational constituencies (Levitt et al., 2003, p. 568). Transnational approach seems a right
perspective for studies concerning intra-European mobility. However, due to the character of this supranational body, transnationalism in the EU is rather specific. As Bruneau (2010, p. 45) puts it: “the EU has created a transnational civilian society in which national, provincial, religious and professional networks compete and interact among themselves, thereby promoting the logic of supranationality”. Since Europe is enlarging, gradually accepting new states into its structures, mobility patterns of EU migrants have started to change. Open borders for EU citizens entail possibilities not only to bring relatives to the country of settlement, but also to sustain transnational ties. Thus, the dynamics of transnationalism is closely related to the mobility policies of European states. The absence of travel restrictions within the EU combined with declining real costs of transportation and communications have enabled transnational activities to expand. Growing mobility across European borders fosters and alters caring roles and responsibilities of different family members, it may also increase family expectations of regular visits and caring (Ryan, 2011, p. 97). Transnationalism in the context of European Union incites debates about migrants’ integration and European citizenship, relationships between sending and receiving Member States and the role of EU policies within this context.

Faist (2010) argues that emergence of transnational perspective in the early 1990s started the discussion on immigrants’ integration. Scholars began to question whether transnational migrants strived to social integration (assimilationist models) in receiving societies or whether a kind of complementarity between their engagement in host and origin countries could be noticed. De Haas claims that “it has long been assumed that migrants’ integration would necessarily coincide with a gradual loosening of ties with societies of origin” (2008, p. 39). With reference to the character of transnational spaces which current migrants sustain, de Haas notices that integration in receiving societies and commitment to origin societies can be complemented, and not substituted. He also claims that transnational livelihoods challenge both: assimilationist models of migrant integration, and the modernist political construct of the nation-state and citizenship (2008, p. 38). Similarly Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec (2003) indicated that host country incorporation and transnational practices can occur simultaneously. Among the determinants that impact the balance between transnational involvement and integration into host society scholars name: kinds of activities in which migrants participate, the institutional arenas where these activities take place, the class resources to which they have access, and their life-cycle stage (Levitt
et al., 2003, p. 571). Portes (2003, p. 887) indicates that immigrants who are educated, well-connected, better established, and, what comes next, more secure in the host country are the most engaged in the transnational activities, especially with regards to enterprise and political activism. Scholar believes that this type of activism may offer novel forms of simultaneous integration into the host society of immigrants and their offspring. In her book White (2010) suggests that transnationalism and integration are compatible and can even be mutually reinforcing.

iv. Concluding remarks regarding transnationalism

In the conclusions of the International Migration Review, Vol. 37, No. 3, (Transnational Migration: International Perspectives, Fall, 2003), Alejandro Portes, one of the pioneers of transnational perspective, who thoroughly investigated this approach its dimensions and derivatives, summarizes the empirical and conceptual points on which specialist literature in the field of transnationalism reached a consensus. He presents the following five conclusions that are a part of this consensus (2003, pp. 874-870), which basically summarize the above discussion on transnational practices:

1. Transnationalism represents a novel perspective, but not a novel phenomenon.

Discovery of transnationalism as a scholarly phenomenon was fostered by the innovations of technologies in transportation and communications which enabled quick, easy, frequent and affordable contacts across national borders. This “gave a push” towards transnational perspective, even though examples of transnationalism can be traced in the earlier history of immigration. Thus, it is important to comprehend that even though the concept of transnationalism is relatively new, circumstances it describes are not: scholars have been noticing the examples of transnational practices for years. Bruneau (2010, p. 44) gives example of Russian Jews and Italians who maintained family, economic, political and cultural connections to their home societies, sending remittances and keeping up their ethnic allegiances at the turn of the twentieth century. At the same time those immigrants were developing ties within their destination society in New York. Comparing to modernity that makes it much easier to sustain and perpetuate such ties, back then it was much harder to achieve it, still it was done.

2. Transnationalism is a grassroots phenomenon.
Portes calls for distinction between the cross-border activities of private grassroots actors, including immigrants (transnationalism approached "from below,") from those of large bureaucracies, governments and multinational corporations and other institutions that are a part of the global scene (transnationalism approached "from above"). Researcher claims that the concept of transnationalism, as used in the contemporary research literature, refers primarily to the former group. Present dissertation follows this trend.

3. Not all immigrants are transnationals.

Portes implies that transnationalism is grounded on the activities of only a minority of the members of immigrant population. As we have already mentioned, the concept of transnationalism proposed by this scholar means more than sustaining a regular contact with the country of origin (Ryan, 2011) Portes et al (1999): for Portes and colleagues (1999, p. 217) transnational livelihood means “dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders”. This wide conceptualization is in contrast with contemporarily popular narrow perspective of transnational practices discussed above. From this perspective, it is interesting to compare Portes’ theorization with Dahinden’s four ideal types of the transnational activities, which basically mean that all migrants are transnationally engaged.

4. Immigrant transnationalism has macro-social consequences.

Actions of regular transnational activists combined with the occasional activities of other migrants (and non-migrants) create a relevant process with economic and social impact on communities and entire nations. Remittances together with culture transferred by migrants traveling back and forth between countries of origin and destination, when multiplied by the large numbers of people who participate in mobility, just like in the recent case of Polish individuals in the UK, have an impact on economies, the value systems and everyday lives of regions and entire states. Another thing is macro-social consequences of transnationalism in the light of social integration of immigrants, discussed in above sub-sections.

5. The extent and forms of transnational activism vary with contexts of exit and reception.

Transnational activities are quite heterogeneous and differ across immigrant communities, both in their popularity and in their character. The contexts of exit and reception of particular groups is one of the key determinants of this differentiation. Portes indicates that for example immigrants who escaped violence are more eager to integrate with host society, while those that come from
countries at peace tend to engage to a larger extent in transnational political and civic actions in support of their home communities. Another thing affecting immigrants’ propensity to engage in transnational initiatives is the way they were incorporated into the host society. Portes claims that dispersed immigrants prefer inconspicuous presence, which protects them from discrimination, and they are less eager to participate in transnational practices. Highly concentrated immigrant communities create multiple opportunities for transnational engagement. Additionally, experiences of discrimination in the host society significantly increase some forms of transnationalism (Portes, 2003, p. 887). With regards to this conclusion we shall investigate what is in the core of Polish migrants’ transnational practices. Is living transnationally a deliberate choice created by e.g. the need to stay connected to their country of origin because of the feeling of responsibility for ones left behind? Or are Polish individuals made sustain their transnational ties due to the lack of networks in the host society, ties that would bond them to their country of settlement?

Currently, new technologies enable simultaneous engagement in sending and receiving countries, which makes it possible for linkages to tighten between dispersed people, new livelihood opportunities to emerge, social institutions to change and hybrid identities to develop (Mazzucato, 2010, p. 207). Kamarianos and Spinthourakis (2007) emphasize that the use of new technologies differentiate European citizens’ daily lives. The growing number of studies on transnational migration present the various ways in which migrants and their families and friends, as well as entire communities, live their lives within and across the borders of the EU Member States, in *European transnational space*. Studies on transnationalism traditionally addressed economic, political, sociocultural and religious issues at different levels of social organization. In the recent years a shift can be noticed towards research on transnational families (Ryan, 2011; Ryan et al., 2009; Ho & Bedford, 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997).

Transnationalism builds on perspectives of migration networks and the concept of social capital. One of its basic premises is that ties, engagements and enactments can appear in both material and symbolic forms. Thus, return visits and return migration, remittances, transnational enterprise as well as investments and civil society involvement in origin countries, such as political activism, are all expressions of the transnational character of migrants’ lives. As we have shown,
the subject literature proves that the most important aspects of transnationalism are simultaneity and networks. Transnational perspective recognizes that social processes are spread among multiple localities and focuses on networks, ties and connections. This perspective relies on and facilitates networks manifested through variety of ties, including institutional, associational, family and kinship. Still, it is important to pay attention to sources of tension and discord among family members which transnational family strategy is likely to encounter (Huang & Yeoh, 2005, p. 380).

We believe that transnational perspective may provide significant lenses through which we could look at the Polish migrant community in Athens. Our study refers to this approach when we are investigating the role of transnational spaces, or ties, in the process of migratory and educational strategies negotiation.

d. Summary

This presentation of the most relevant migratory theories indicates that migration is enormously complex and diverse phenomenon that needs to be investigated thoroughly combining various approaches, which makes research conceptually as well as empirically challenging. Migration literature indicates that up to 2004 EU enlargement research on Polish migration was dominated by the neoclassical theory of migration which meant that the greatest impact and interest were placed on the economic factors – wages, income differentials and probability of employment. These factors were approached as the main predictors of the behaviour of migrants. The main, and often only, actor of migratory process was a male breadwinner. Contemporary mobility literature, as well as our own past research on Polish community residing in Athens, emphasize that economic forces, even though they do play a key role in migration, as people tend to move to places where the standards of living are better and earnings are higher, let alone are not able to portray the actual shape of migration patterns (King, 2012; Haug, 2008; Massey et al., 1993). Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach linking economy and sociology is necessary to embrace various aspects of migration and include different actors, often larger units of related people – families, households, friends and entire communities. Social networks, transnational spaces, cultural and historical factors combined with various institutions, organizations, and entire states create new migration patterns – in case of European Union – new mobility configurations.
As we have said, income, actual or expected, even though a relevant predictor of individual choices for migration, cannot explain migration dynamics itself. A broader context is necessary including social and human factor. That is why we lean towards network theory, which introduces the socio-demographic characteristics of migrants’ ties ascribing them importance in migratory experience. Transnational perspective, which importance in the contemporary research on intra-European mobility keeps growing, broadens horizons of planned research and we strongly believe that it might help to answer some questions and explain phenomena that would be rather difficult to describe referring only to neoclassical and network theories. Referring to our earlier studies we believe that economic approaches to migration are incomplete in explaining migration motives and processes of Polish minority in Athens: analysis based only on the neoclassical theory of migration might be de-contextualized and oversimplified. Scholars in the field of migration theory argue that, since there is no single, comprehensive model of migration, it is possible and advisable to combine and integrate different theoretical perspectives, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive (King & Skeldon, 2010; de Haas, 2008; Massey et al., 1993). That is why in the present research we decided to combine neoclassical theory with network and transnational perspectives. We believe that such a synergy may help to advance migration theory in order to enhance theoretical clarity and concreteness of research on Polish migration. The mix of paradigms proposed in the present section seems to fit best as mentioned approaches, especially network and neoclassical perspectives, have already been proved in the broad mobility literature as converging and overlapping.

2. Migrant families and strategies

In the following subsection we focus on the concept of family strategies applied to the context of migration. The purpose of this section is to present and analyse the most relevant conclusions of recent research regarding aforementioned topics. This review derives from the thorough literature review undergone after a broad literature scan, which were undertaken in order to investigate the current state of research on migrant family strategies as well as formulate our research problem and theoretical framework. The review, which encompassed literature from the
last 15 years, exposed complexity and depth of strategies referring to the migrant family life and education of children, but also revealed issues that need for deeper investigation in order to acquire more and detailed knowledge. This is especially visible in the case of research on recent Polish mobility, where we find detailed studies regarding the Polish community moving to the UK after the accession of Poland into the EU structures in 2004. Still, not many studies discuss Polish individuals moving through other European countries.

The literature review helped us plan and develop the proposed case study and find the best approach for investigating the issue of Polish families’ migratory and educational strategies. Rather than presenting its results linearly, this section is planned to critically analyse the existing body of knowledge in order to elaborate on a comprehensive theoretical approach for our field research. In the following chapter we shall present chosen conceptualizations of (mostly) contemporary researchers in the field of family strategies, and more precisely, migratory strategies of families, and the place of education in the family negotiations, which is at the core of our interest. We plan to analyse why the concept of strategy is of importance in modern sociology and how its relevance is reflected in the context of migrating families. The chapter is designed to provide an introduction into the world of strategy and an explanation of the most relevant terms and issues. The aim is to focus on strategies referring to the family and discuss their educational and migratory dimensions. This section includes a presentation of selected examples of strategies in the context of migration. We examine the status of family members, emphasizing the place of women and children in the process of migratory strategies negotiation. A relevant aspect of our investigation is the school choice as a part of family strategy with its impact on migratory decisions.

a. Family strategies

During the course of literature review on the concept of strategy for the present research, we came up against a variety of its depictions and notions. The dictionary definition of strategy is originating from the Greek stratē gia, which means generalship, and describes it as a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim (Oxford Dictionary, 2011). This definition, often modified, discussed, reshaped and renegotiated, has found itself a profound place in numerous scientific disciplines, for instance sociology, anthropology, history, economics, logics, medicine,
The concept of *strategy* is used in relation to various approaches including: economic, demographic (including migration) and social ones. Social scientists have realized that *strategy* is a promising, but at the same time very complex concept that requires a careful approach combined with methodological clearance and rigor.

*Strategy* refers to the way groups and individuals interpret and manage their specific life circumstances and conditions (Christensen & Larsen, 2008, p. 59), and indicates that their conscious actions lead to recognizable and repeatable patterns in their lives. Morawska (2001, p. 53), investigating Polish labour migrants has emphasized that “strategies are informed by past experience and memories adjusted to present situations and projected outcomes in the future”. Strategies are rather hypothetical constructions that imply planning and consistency. Engelen Kok and Paping (2004b, p. 249) looking into family strategies argue that “strategies do not emerge in a vacuum” and that no actor is able to make completely autonomous decisions. People’s environment together with upbringing, various experiences and even behaviour of previous generations is what individuals draw upon and are limited by. This is an important aspect of the concept of *strategy*, which implies that individuals and their rational calculations are not the only determinants of strategies, but that a variety of factors and actors impact on the processes of revealing strategies. Along with the factors mentioned above, it is important to also include customs, traditions, and unconscious motives. In her research on networks and social capital in labour migration Osipowicz (2002) claims that people are subject to the limitations of existing structures but have at the same time the ability to modify them. Strategies are not arbitrary instruments; they can be adopted only in certain circumstances as influenced by historical, social and cultural factors, specific to each individual (Engelen et al., 2004b, p. 250).

We can assume that in certain cases *strategy* might be a result of a rational choice and in others, a consequence of a life necessity and/or obligation. The first type of strategy is negotiated by an intermediate and long term vision, in which individuals can predict certain results of their actions, or act in order to achieve specific goals. Engelen, Knotter, Kok and Paping et al (2004a, p. 125) discussing family labour strategies reveal that the concept of *strategy* suggests that human behaviour is based on well-defined motives and clear choices. Engelen and colleagues (2004b) theorization, implies that within the concept of *strategy* historical actors deliberately choose from a set of options and are guided by rationality. In the second case strategies result from each day’s
necessities. The subject literature warns that the notion of strategy might be problematic due to possible exaggeration of the contingency of human actions, which, in turn, suggests an unlimited freedom of action for historical actors (Baud & Engelen, 1997).

As we can see, strategy is a complex, multifaceted concept that has found an important place in the sociological literature. The conceptualization of strategy makes it a theoretically attractive concept, but often the question remains about its practical application. According to Engelen and colleagues (2004b, p. 239), strategy has to do with nothing other than answering certain questions, such as: “How did people respond to changing circumstances? What did they try to do to improve their situation? What processes of negotiation preceded these attempts? And, how did individuals alter their social environment as a result of their actions?” Answering those questions may shed a greater light on the case of strategies. Still, when it comes to our proposed project and its subject matter, we need to focus more thoroughly on specific strategies of families in respect to migration and education. These are the issues that the following subsections shall analyse.

i. Household or family?

As we have already indicated, the concept of strategy is being used in the literature in relation to various approaches: demographic, social and economic ones. Within family history the social and demographic approaches have been supplemented by the study of the economic basis of households (Engelen et al., 2004a, p. 125). Recent mobility literature indicates that both theory and research emphasize the relevance of household as the core decision making unit in migration (Moskal, 2011; Santacreu et al., 2009; Bonin et al., 2008; Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2008; Vandenbrande et al., 2006). These strategies are results of consensual decisions or might be imposed by some household members against the opinions of other individuals within the household (Itzigsohn, 1995).

In their study about gender perspective in transnational household strategies Willis and Yeoh (2000) describe household strategy as a useful concept due to numerous activities needed for household maintenance and decisions that have to be made within this unit. These scholars (but also others, e.g. White & Ryan, 2008; Cooke, 2007; Engelen et al., 2004b; Baud & Engelen, 1997; Itzigsohn, 1995) indicate that intra-household power relations might not be equal and that the
distribution of power between different members of the household needs to be taken under consideration when investigating household strategies. Hyman, Scholarios, and Baldrys (2005, p. 706) believe that the concept of household strategies was introduced by a British sociologist Ray Pahl (*Divisions of Labour*, 1984) and had rather economic connotations since it referred to all decisions made by households over the domestic division of labour and the maintenance of income. Generally, households are said to develop strategies to increase wealth and income. Yet, at the same time they are also revealed to help avoid risks to households’ economic well-being (Massey, 1990, p. 17). In his study on household strategies Massey (1990, p. 5) indicates that household decisions are affected by local socioeconomic conditions, which are, in turn, impacted by evolving political, social, and economic structures at the national and international levels; and that these interrelationships are connected to one another over the time.

The concept of household strategies has been criticized due to the problematic definition of the notion *household* (White & Ryan, 2008; Engelen et al., 2004b; Engelen et al., 2004a; Willis & Yeoh, 2000; Baud & Engelen, 1997). The literature review has indicated that the majority of researchers tend to treat families as synonyms of households and that household and family strategies often discuss the very same issues; it is just the nomenclature that differs. Willis and Yeoh (2000, p. 254) explain, for example, that the concept of *household strategies* is an alternative to *family strategies* and comprises the ways in which members of domestic units organize the economic, physical and social maintenance of the unit. It does not necessarily include, however, the co-residence of household members, but rather focuses on the belonging, inputs into decision making and contributions to the domestic unit. As Willis and Yeoh put it, the concept of *family strategies* suggests a more diverse, kin-based set of decisions. In the present study we argue that it is important to differentiate between the concepts of household and family and, after reconsidering the aim and scope of our research, we decided that we mostly agree with the latter notion and thus we decided to utilize it in the present case study. As migrant literature reveals, families may adopt “spatially extensive survival strategies incorporating multiple members in diverse places” (Creese et al., 1999, p. 3). Both the contemporary subject literature, as well as our own initial research on the Polish migrants in Greece and their children’s social integration, made us realize that the narrow conceptualization of individuals constructing a household is not advisable. In both cases it became evident that for Polish migrants family is more than only those individuals they stay with,
but includes such next of kin as grandparents, siblings, cousins, etc. Thus we chose to focus on the concept of family, which is wider as it includes also those members that are specially dispersed. However, in the present study we sometimes refer to theorizations of scholars who spoke about household, which may be explained by the earlier mentioned tendency to use notions of family and household as synonyms: often *household* describes activities of members of domestic units, which are actually family members. The relevant difference is that in the present project we utilize broaden, renegotiated definition of family which includes wide networks of kin-based relations such as parents, children, siblings, cousins, grandchildren, grandparents as well as relatives-in-law, etc.

ii. Family strategy or strategy of family members?

The subject literature makes it clear that family must be acknowledged as a decision making unit. One of the advantages of thinking in terms of strategies is that the researcher faces the need to identify the individual motives of families (Engelen et al., 2004b, p. 245). Referring to the concept of family present in the subject literature, two possibilities can be identified that is family as the context within which individuals pursue their own strategies or family as an independent with its own, common strategy. The standard explanations of family strategies may assume that these units behave rationally and harmoniously. However, this approach has met criticism. Crow (1989 pp. 2, 6–7) argued that for some scholars it is not sure whether “collectivities such as households and families can be treated as social actors”. Similarly, feminists refer rather sceptically to the treatment of a household as a harmonious unit with one common strategy (Engelen et al., 2004a, p. 127 after: Folbre, 1987; Morris, 1990, pp. 17–21). Baud and Engelen (1997), emphasize that within families differences in power, interests, and possibilities among the individuals exist and should be taken into consideration. Thus, approaching families as harmonious units would be rather unrealistic. When discussing family strategies one must give a careful consideration to the power relations within families finding a “balance that reflects the interests of both the individuals and the family” (Engelen et al., 2004b, p. 246). Massey (1990) argued that critics of the individual decision making model conceptualize migration as a collective decision made in the course of formulating broader strategies for family sustenance and improvement. In
this context, the appropriate unit of migration decision making analysis is the household, or the family, but not the individual (Massey, 1990 after: Harbison, 1981).

Based on the subject literature we can infer that family decision-making is influenced by complex and interwoven family dynamics, socio-cultural expectations and power relations. Households and families have proven differences in interests and power interactions between its members; parents dominate children, men hold patriarchal positions over women and children, boys and girls are raised differently and with diverging expectations (Baud & Engelen, 1997). Cooke (2007, p. 51) explains this dynamic with reference to resource theory, which argues that since the husband brings more valued resources to the marriage, he often holds more power than the wife and therefore has more to say in major family decisions (such as migration). Thus, discussing family strategies it must be taken into consideration that some decisions are the result of positions of power held by individual family members. On the other hand, family strategies might be regarded as a product of a lengthy process of negotiation or as a result of compromise achieved among the family members in the process of decision-making with the notion of compromise as one of the central to the concept of family strategy. Cooke (2007, p. 48) indicates that the knowledge about the ways in which families make their decision as well as about factors that inform, enable and limit these decisions is still insufficient. In the present research we shall focus on family dynamics in order to find whether we can discuss family strategies, or maybe rather strategies of family members. Power relations within family are interesting, though fragile, and it is difficult to trace aspects of the negotiation of strategies. We shall pay a closer attention to this issue in the case of the investigated group of Polish families in Athens. Last, but not least, we plan to investigate importance of migrant networks, including spatially dispersed family, but also friends and acquaintances, for the negotiation of Polish migrant family strategies.

iii. Family strategies - theoretical approaches

The concept of family strategies is quite often examined in the subject literature. Scholars approach it investigating a variety of topics, including but not limited to mobility, family dynamics, power relation and decision-making processes. According to Cai (2003, p. 473), family strategies reflect a set of pre-existing perceptions, practices, and tacit agreement among individual family members, impinged upon by the constraints, opportunities and objectives of people around them.
and, in particular, by the needs and resources of families. "Family strategies involve explicit or implicit choices families make for the present, for the immediate future, and for long-term needs” (Engelen et al., 2004a, p. 127 after: Goldin, 1981). Engelen and colleagues (2004a, p. 124) believe that the concept of family strategy was created when social and economic structures started to be regarded as guiding forces or even as the environment within which rational actors shape their lives. Thus, as scholars suggest, this concept is rather new as it was widely acknowledged at American Social Science History Association’s conference in 1986 (Engelen et al., 2004a after: Moch et al., 1987) and since then has been incorporated into and discussed in numerous studies.

As we have already mentioned, the concept of strategy is popular in various scientific disciplines, and this also applies to family strategies. Yet, family strategy theory is dominated by economic considerations (Engelen et al., 2004b; Engelen et al., 2004a; e.g. Cai, 2003, p. 473; Itzigsohn, 1995). According to Ryan and Sales (2013, p. 3), “conventional migration theory has been framed within the neoliberal paradigm which assumes that decisions are based on narrowly economic calculation”. From this perspective, family is just an extension of the individual actor. The literature review on the concept of family strategies has revealed that a popular type of strategy present in the mobility literature is that of labour strategy. Engelen and colleagues (2004b) for example used the concept of family strategy to find how, within the context of the family, individuals adapt their actions to take account of those of other family members and of economic opportunities, so as to ensure present and future income. Researchers have focused on the labour and income strategies of families, treating families as a dynamic constellation of individuals and investigated the sources and methods that can be most successfully used to identify family strategies.

One of the main aims of labour strategies, if not the key one, is to produce income. Labour strategies designate conscious acts that lead to recognizable and repeatable patterns in the organization and allocation of work and the labour relations (Engelen et al., 2004a). Engelen and colleagues (2004a, p. 128) imply that labour strategies “involve goal-oriented decisions on issues that are sometimes mutually related, such as choice of occupation, labour deployment, and migration”. Labour strategies require family, as a social unit, to make conscious decisions in response to macroeconomic conditions (Engelen et al., 2004a, p. 125). Observation and investigation of collective processes caused by the interaction between structural change and
family choices regarding labour may bring about some interesting conclusions regarding family dynamics. To get the insights into labour strategies of specific families, general information about the behaviour of the family both the resources available and the goals set has been used in the subject literature (Paping, 2004). Mih (2004) explains that leaving to work abroad is not so much an arbitrary option as a consequence of a life strategy. It involves both subjective and objective causes:

- subjective cause: social, economic and political phenomena (their effects might act as a ‘push’ factor in the decision to leave one country and settle in another);
- objective causes: those phenomena that act at the societal level, enabling the emigration and immigration of human capital (these causes have endogenous determinations, relating to the country of origin, or exogenous ones that can be found in the destination society) (Mih, 2004, p. 358).

In the case of family strategies not only economic considerations matter, but the interaction of economic, social and cultural factors and this has been shown in the subject literature. In their study Kosic and Triandafyllidou (2003), for example, integrate three sets of features: socio-demographic factors, support networks and the institutional environment of the host country, which influence migrant family strategies, into an agency perspective that considers an individual possessing social, economic and cultural resources prompting him/her to achieve his/her aims. These scholars describe an immigrant “as a socially embedded agent that actively (re-)constructs her/his life chances and relations with other social actors, individuals or institutions, using the resources that are available” (Kosic & Triandafyllidou, 2003, p. 998). Larsson (2005) is another researcher examining family strategies. His study aimed at increasing the knowledge about what strategies parents use in mastering families’ time pressure and analysing these regarding structural conditions. Grigorieva (2009) focuses more on the shape of the students’ family, especially future families, and presents brief review of researches and surveys of youth family strategies in Russia. She concludes that family behaviour strategies differ among different groups of young people and one of the sources of these differences is education. Education is generally a prevalent subject in respect to research on family strategies, which we will discuss more thoroughly in the following subsection.

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4 Economic context of strategies will be discussed more thoroughly in the following subsection.
The relationship between short- and long-term strategies is an important matter in research on family strategies (Engelen et al., 2004a). In Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara (2009), for instance, migratory strategies were either short term – just to enable people to gather enough money to, for example, build a house in Poland, or longer-term, which was based on permanent settlement. Long term strategies are often connected to short-term ones in the way that families spending their income in the present, make at the same time choices for the future (Engelen et al., 2004a, p. 129). It is only in extreme cases, for example when poor families are struggling to survive economically, that the main priority is to bring income and expenditure into line; and thus there is little scope for future-oriented concerns (Engelen et al., 2004a, p. 129).

Even though the subject literature tends to differentiate between long term and short term strategies, Hyman et al., (2005) caution that modern life makes it difficult to separate long-term strategic choice from short-term ones. He introduces the notion of coping devices, which help people to get by on a day-to-day basis whereas strategy in his description is a part of the attempt to reach long-term goals (Hyman et al., 2005, p. 707). With reference to family Engelen and colleagues (2004a) explain that long-term strategies, created with the focus on the future, may be associated with investment in the training and occupational careers of parents and children, but also with social mobility. This is why some researchers refer to these as mobility strategies (Engelen et al., 2004a after: Roberts, 1991: 139; Schminck, 1984: 91). Yet, in the present research we conceptualize mobility strategies as ones connected to spatial and not social flexibility. Short-term strategies, often referred to as coping strategies, tend to relate to economic survival or at least to the need to generate sufficient income to meet the family’s immediate expenditure needs (Engelen et al., 2004a, p. 129). The strategy of short-term migration might be termed an incomplete migration, aimed at earning as much as possible, but spending a major part of income in the sending country where the cost of living is much lower. For this reason, migrants are often not accompanied by family members and their households stay in the home country (Ryan et al., 2009).

The literature review on the concept of family and migrant strategies revealed that many scholars focus on the concept of coping strategies (Sheppard, 2009; Christensen & Larsen, 2008; Datta et al., 2006; Engelen et al., 2004a; Reiboldt & Goldstein, 2000; Carver et al., 1989). Coping, or adaptive strategies are a way in which individuals or groups of people cope with their environment in order to survive. Moen and Wethington (1992) regard adaptive strategies a
metaphor of family response to structural barriers and stressful events. They discuss three theoretical models that help to locate family strategies of adaptation: a structural approach, which emphasizes the ways in which larger social structural forces constrain the repertoire of available adaptations; a rational choice approach that underscores the role of choice within the structural constraints in an effort to maximize family wellbeing, and a life course approach, which emphasizes the importance of historical time, life stage, and context in delimiting both family problems and the possible strategies to deal with them (Moen & Wethington, 1992, p. 234). Cai (2003, p. 473) suggests that the flow of remittances, which is often a central component of family survival strategies (Sana & Massey, 2005), is clearly consistent with the idea that migration is often a family decision. According to Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1989, p. 280), some theorists believe that differences in coping style are intrinsically tied to personality differences, whilst others assume that people tend to adopt certain coping tactics as relatively stable preferences, developed either from personality, or for other reasons. According to Christensen and Larsen (2008, p. 59) “coping means that people are co-producers of their life chances and life circumstances”. Scholars explain that even though groups or individuals possess the same amount of material resources they may have very different preferences, backgrounds, and conditions for carrying out their strategies. We shall discuss more thoroughly coping strategies with reference to migration in the following subsections.

b. Family strategies in the context of migration

We have already indicated that the traditional theories of migration that have been framed within the neoliberal paradigm generally treat migration as an individual matter, decision and action taken by a sole breadwinner, typically male and based on narrowly economic calculations. Such an approach explains that people migrate when their personal benefits exceed the costs (Cai, 2003). However, more recent migration theories start to point out that becoming and being a migrant involves more than that. First of all, mobility entails making a set of relevant decisions. Secondly, with accordance to social capital theory, individual decision-making is embedded in wider contexts, such as those of families, kin and ethnic communities (Vandenbrande et al., 2006 after: Massey et al, 1994). Thus, mobility decisions, likewise, are not isolated resolutions, but are

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5 For more information please see the chapter Migration theory (pp. 27-59).
taken within a predefined relational context and are impacted, among others, by family-related considerations. As Lauby and Stark (1988, p. 477) indicate: “the decision to migrate and the choice of migration patterns are often not made by the individual alone but rather are determined by family resources and needs”. Migration is a part of family adaptive strategy, which aims at diversifying the family’s pattern of labour use, reducing risk and dependence on a single economic activity and maximization of family rather than individual welfare (Cai, 2003 after: Stark and Bloom, 1985). Osipowicz (2002) also sees migration not as a strategy of optimization of individual benefits, but rather optimization of the common benefit (of family members) and then redistribution of those benefits between individuals. On the other hand, the benefits conferred by a family member living away from home need to be compared with what the opportunity costs are associated with the migrant’s absence from home. It often happens that when the migrant has a family, his/her actions are oriented towards transferring the entire household to the host country, and his/her decision-making process regarding new employment aboard will be premeditated and planned in order to achieve, in the long term, the maximum return on capital invested in migration (education, gaining professional experience, migratory efforts).

Even though the subject literature regards migration as a relevant family strategy (Waters, 2006; Sana & Massey, 2005; Mih, 2004; Ryan, 2004; Osipowicz, 2002) which might provide access to income and other resources, the interest in family migration strategies has developed relatively recently (Ryan & Sales, 2013; Ryan, 2011). The transnational course in which migrants take part results in them developing strategies for dealing with such structural elements of society as the state, the family, citizenship, the market, and education, all of which are factors in the creation of social identification (comp. Popov, 2010, p. 82). Migrant families develop strategies to deal with both material and emotional difficulties that life in a foreign country brings about. Thus, we can refer to two sets of decisive factors in the process of decision-making about migration, the economic and non-economic ones. As we have already suggested, migration can be approached as an example of a family labour strategy. This is due to the fact that migration decisions are often taken for economic motives. Some migrant families turn to income-earning strategies that could enable them to earn money and care for their children at the same time. Massey (1990) sees migration as a household economic strategy and an effective way of capitalizing on the household's labour power. Still, scholars, including Engelen and colleagues (2004a), suggest that in order to
understand an individuals’ possibly irrational decisions to migrate researchers should look beyond simple cost–benefit analyses. There are various aspects of family life and economic conditions that might affect the migratory decision and patterns. For example, Cai (2003, p. 473) notes that the act of migration per se is not the ultimate outcome of the family adaptive strategy. It is rather the pooling and sharing of income that labour migration includes that manifests such a strategy. Even though the decision to migrate is a response to various motives, migrants tend to concentrate on the search for better life chances (comp. Lyberaki, Triandafyllidou, Petronoti, & Gropas, 2008).

Sana and Massey (2005, p. 524) state that according to recent transnational migration perspective migration “arises from the lack of opportunities in the home country and mostly conforms to a survival strategy”. In their view remittances are a central component of family survival strategies and especially those of low-income. This idea has been identified by other researchers as well (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Cai, 2003). In Sana and Massey’s (2005, p. 54) studies on Dominican migration to the United States, remittances acted as a means for family maintenance or income supplements based on household needs (2005, p. 524). In the case of Dominican Republic, remittances “seem to simply follow a survival strategy, serving as supplements or even as the main source of income for a large share of Dominican families” (Sana & Massey, 2005, p. 525). On the other hand, family adaptation strategy uses household perspective to explain remittances (Cai, 2003, p. 473). From this perspective, the act of remitting is an individual, not common behaviour and some migrants choose not to remit in spite of the needs of the family in the origin country (Cai, 2003, p. 473).

Contemporary migration research indicates that families are more likely to have combined trajectories of mobility than others; in their case the decision to go abroad is complex and the possible economic advantages of mobility are often not the principal decisive factor. Research indicates that migration decisions of families are made on the basis of conscious family strategies and are strongly influenced by the employment opportunities in the destination communities (Paping, 2004, p. 160 after: Rosental, 1999), as well as social ties, education and structural factors. The timing of migration is closely related to the family life cycle and major events over the course of immigrants’ lives (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008). Different family relationships may be important at different stages in the life course such as for young, single people, siblings and cousins may be influential in migration strategy-making. That is why when discussing mobility it is important to
approach family in the broadest sense including not only members of the household units but also kinship networks and trans-generational relations. Even though migrants may go abroad alone, they are often involved in complicated webs of relationships and family networks both in the host country and back home. This transnational facet of migration has been discussed in one of the subsections of the present research.

According to the subject literature, the mobility decision is usually influenced by the participation in networks that provide different kinds of support. Social support networks represent a family adaptive strategy. Kinship networks (local and transnational) assure the practical support such as child care, material support such as money to finance moves and start the life abroad and shelter, informational support including job information and contacts, information about social services as well as emotional support, important especially at the beginning of the migration but relevant all the way through this experience.

De Jong (2000) has identified a few concepts relevant for the study of migration decision-making, namely, expectations/values, perceived family migration norms, gender roles, residential satisfactions, migrant networks, and direct behavioural constraints and facilitators. Based on those concepts scholar has constructed a model of migration decision-making. This model corresponds with the present case study, but, based on our previous research on the Polish migrants to Athens (Rerak, 2010), we decided to somewhat reconstruct it, for example to also include the education of children, a concept identified to be relevant for the Polish citizens in Greece. Initial research on the Polish families residing in Athens indicated a few concepts relevant for the formation of long-term family strategies, namely networks, education, residential satisfaction and migratory plans (Rerak-Zampou, 2012). Figure 1 presents an altered model of migration decision-making applicable to our case applicability of which will be tested in the present research:
i. Factors influencing family migration strategies

According to Engelen et al. (2004b, p. 250) “family strategies can only be studied as part of a repertoire. The normative aspects of the decision-making process must be taken into account as well as how families are placed within their networks”. Scholars believe that reconstructing exactly what motivated actors is not possible. We could get an approximate picture by studying not only families’ decisions and motives, but also including a wider context of society with norms, customs, traditions, etc. In order to achieve their objectives families need to utilize specific resources and there are some factors, which determine how much of those resources are necessary, for example the occupation of the head of the family, the stage in the family cycle, and the general situation of the family. Moreover, as Ryan and colleagues (2009, p. 264) imply, “family strategies need to be contextualized within migration structures and institutions”. According to Ryan (2011, p. 87) factors impinging upon family migration strategies are “formed by the interplay of local opportunities, national policies, and international possibilities. […] The interactions and interconnections between the local, national, and transnational are complex, multifaceted, and
shifting”. Thus, we can assume that family strategies are influenced by at least three sets of features, socio-demographic (e.g. age, education, family status, stage in the family cycle), support networks such as co-nationals, kinship support in the country of origin, the institutional environment of the host country (e.g. employment opportunities, (im)migration policy, welfare benefits and overall socio-economic integration into the host country) and the relations with nationals of the host country (Kosic & Triandafyllidou, 2003). Family migration strategies can be additionally impacted by double caring responsibilities: transnational ones and those in the destination country. These obligations may prompt or hamper migration strategies (Ryan, 2011).

Nowadays, technological management of family relations has been made possible through regular communication via increasingly affordable telephone and/or Internet communicators (e.g. Skype). This communication strategy results from the disability of engaging in frequent face-to-face visits. Şenyürekl and Detzner (2009) argue that transnational families use communication technology to maintain intergenerational relationships over distance and time. The easiness and availability of communication technology connected to possibilities of cheap and quick travels within Europe additionally influence family strategies.

Migration strategies are connected to various, complex and shifting considerations of family needs, career aspirations and lifestyle choices (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 69). Migration strategies in host countries are determined by the complexity of many factors including access as well as restrictions to access to the labour market or sector, gender, nationality and migrant networks (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2008, p. 87). Results of Ryan and colleagues (2009), indicate the importance of transnational family networks as on-going sources of practical and emotional support. For young, single people, siblings and cousins may be particularly influential in migration decision-making while, for older people, issues such as ageing parents and the emotional attachment to grandchildren may constitute more important considerations (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 74). Thus, as we have already implied in previous subsections, certain decisions might be made, or strategies introduced, based on the theory of family life-cycles. Engelen and colleagues (2004a, p. 128), refer to Oppenheimer (1974, 1982) and Hareven (1978) who indicated what they found to be the three most important moments in the life of a family.

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6 The impact of education on family strategies is discussed in a separate subsection (Family strategies and education, pp. 95-100).
a) At which tensions emerge between the income of the male head and household expenditure;

b) When the family is being established, in the years when the children are not yet generating income, and

c) As the parents reach old age.

These moments force individual members of the family to undertake actions in order to balance the family’s income and expenditure and avoid a variety (not only economic) of risks.

It has been suggested that strategies change in response to the modifications in network dynamics. White and Ryan (2008, p. 1473) infer that migrants’ decisions whether to stay or go depend largely on the networks; weakening networks in the sending country push migrants towards longer-term emigration, simultaneously entangling them in new networks in the receiving communities. With regards to the importance of networks for negotiation of migratory strategies, White and Ryan (2008, p. 1473) indicate that the outcomes of maintaining Polish networks in the receiving community may be quite paradoxical: on one hand Polish networks seem essential baggage in preparation for eventual return to Poland, with one of the main reasons for returning to the homeland being a longing for the country, for family and friends left behind. On the other hand, making migration emotionally easier, social networks may also extend the duration of the migration. Likewise the presence of the migrant’s family members in the host country may impede the decision to return to the homeland. This is especially evident for those migrants who brought their children to the destination country who, making decisions about returning or staying, need to take into consideration children’s schooling and their adaptation to the new environment. The use of networks abroad for finding jobs, housing and information about schools and other services appears to be a common, while still not universal, strategy (Creese et al., 1999). According to Creese and colleagues (1999, p. 16), “such networks take many forms that extend or blur the boundaries and meanings of family and disrupt notions of a linear immigration process”. Datta McIlwaine, Wills, Evans, Herbert, and May, (2006), see mobilizing community networks and social capital as a survival strategy. They distinguish the use of networks to share information about accessing work as an important community-based strategy. In the case of migrants ethnic networks are important in that they help to find jobs but also reduce the cost of housing and consumption spending (as a source of information about bargains, etc.).
Personal experiences gained during living abroad have a huge impact on decision-making about the future migration; those who once migrated decide to do it again relatively easily. For some migrants living abroad has become a livelihood strategy (Osipowicz, 2002). The implications for the migratory strategies of migrants and their families are uncertain and likely to be contradictory (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 262), but are definitely very complex.

Researchers assume that information, or even expectations about actual or planned policies may serve as central factors influencing migration patterns and strategies (Lyberaki et al., 2008). Immigration regulations are regarded as critical when it comes to influencing the migrants’ labour market strategies (Raghuram, 2004, p. 309). Ryan (2011, p. 86 after: Riccio, 2008) suggests that immigration legislation influences the shape of the migrating family and decisions about who goes and who stays behind as well as determining the possibilities for reunion. Ryan and colleagues (2009 after: Kofman et al. 2000) suggest that joining migrant relatives in destination country is limited by migration policies and legislation. However, even with no legal or immigration drawbacks migration strategies may be impacted by family dynamics and individual preferences. Still, the role of legislation and various policies in the process of family strategies creation is underlined in the subject literature. We also plan to look into this interdependence to investigate to what extent, if any, Polish, Greek and EU policies influence the process of family strategies formation in case of Polish migrant families in Greece.

Among the factors impacting goal-achieving strategies of Polish immigrants in a new (Western) context Ewa Morawska (2001) names macro- (political and economic) and micro-level (social support networks) structures, general knowledge about the conditions in the destination countries and familial coping schemas and resources. Morawska (2001, p. 59) has explained a relevant resource that Polish immigrants possess and use, namely to play against the structures [...] “in a set of international schemas and practices, deeply habituated in citizens of former Soviet-bloc countries, that had informed everyday life under communist rule and have survived its demise. Centralized political management combined with the notorious inefficiency of state-socialist economies in providing and distributing consumer goods fostered a popular entrepreneurial culture of the opportunistic-debrouillard (rather than modern rational) kind by forcing citizens to use "unofficial" (extra-legal) means and "crony" support networks to make everyday life possible. These coping strategies, based on ‘dojścia’ (‘ins’) and kombinacje (informal or shady
arrangements as in wheeling and dealing) and informed by beat-the-system/bend-the-law attitudes toward the official structures, had become ubiquitous social practice normatively sanctioned by popular opinion”. Such a resource proved to be a relevant practice for immigrants in a new country, enabled them to settle in the new environment, often without the knowledge of language or conditions in the destination countries. Morawska claims that in the pursuit of their projects more recent migrants have transposed the habituated Soviet-styled beat-the-system/bend-the-law strategies from the past to the new economic and political circumstances.

Literature review undertaken on the concept of migrant family strategies has revealed variety, complexity and interdependence of factors influencing those strategies. We plan to investigate which aspects and dynamics have the greatest impact on the process of revealing migratory and educational strategies for the Polish families residing in Greece.

ii. Migration as a risk-diversifying strategy

The subject literature depicts migration as a risk-diversifying strategy based on the development and growth of migrant networks (Solimano, 2008; Light & Bhachu, 2004; Massey, 1990). Scholars (Solimano, 2008; Light & Bhachu, 2004; Chen et al., 2003; Sabates-Wheeler & Waite, 2003; Massey, 1990) see migration as beneficiary in terms of risk diversification. Approach that theorizes migration as a risk diversification strategy started with Stark and Levhari who suggested that migration as a strategy seeks to reduce income risks related to market failures (Sabates-Wheeler & Waite, 2003, p. 18). Solimano (2008) implies that in the context of migrant families such an approach assumes that the family develops rational strategies to prevent risks. Uncertainty and constant exposure of income keeps the family united and all its members in common effort to reduce these risks. The decision to migrate in this model is derived from risk diversification, a result that is consistent with the theory of investment in the financial economics (Chen et al., 2003). If its resources and informational capabilities enable, family sends abroad some of its members to more prosperous and more stable economies of higher productivity, in order to reduce economic risks and increase the income level of the family. With accordance to Light and Bhachu (2004, p. 27) “international migration diversifies risk because international borders create discontinuities that promote independence of earnings at home and abroad”. In addition Massey (1990) argues that families develop economic strategies in order to both: maximize household
earnings and minimize risk to family income. Similarly, Sabates-Wheeler and Waite (2003, p. 4) explain that migration decisions are often made due to the need to manage risk and secure livelihoods.

According to Massey (1990, p. 17) risk diversification provides a theoretical rationale for the analysis of household strategies. The strategy of risk diversification assumes that households are free to send members outside the community on a temporary basis, where they remit part of their earnings back to the family. The approach of migration as a risk diversification strategy hypothesizes that migrant will send remittances to contribute to the overall income level of the family. Sabates-Wheeler and Waite (2003, p. 17) indicate that, from this perspective, migration is a preventive strategy: family reduces vulnerability through income diversification (earning from sending country and wages from host country). In the World Bank definition, vulnerability is explained in terms of risk in relation to income and consumption instability (Sabates-Wheeler & Waite, 2003, p. 5). Solimano (2008) notices that migrants face various sources of vulnerability coming from labour market, health, legal and other risks. Scholar (2008, p. 16) indicates that the relationship between international migration and risk is twofold: “on the one hand, international migration can be conceived as a way to spread and diversify labour market risks in the home country. On the other, migrants face a variety of risks and vulnerabilities that stem from being foreigners in the foreign country”.

One of the greatest risks affecting individual and family welfare in the home country is related to cuts in jobs and wages – so called economic risks: losing a job, a cut in incomes due to recession, or losing the value of assets by a financial crisis. Other risks might be related to health (illness, accidents), the loss of property, natural disasters (earthquake, floods, etc.), legal aspects (uncertain status) and longevity aspects (associated with an unanticipated increases in life expectancy, due to improvements in health that can lead to a shortfall of pension’s income to finance expenditure at the retirement age) (Solimano, 2008, p. 18).

According to Massey (1990, p. 10 after: Taylor, 1986) the development and growth of migrant networks is another factor promoting international migration as a risk reduction strategy: “When migrant networks are well-developed, they put a destination job within easy reach of most community members, making it a reliable and relatively risk-free economic resource (Massey et al., 1987). Thus, the self-feeding growth of networks that occurs through the progressive reduction
of costs also occurs through the progressive reduction of risks”. Also Solimano believes that various risks can be mitigated through a variety of family and network support. Light and Bhachu (2004, p. 27) argue that international migration offers an effective risk-diversification strategy, especially when migrant networks already exist as those networks are in power to reduce the economic risks of immigration. Massey (1990) implies that even new migrants are able to expand the network and reduce the risks of movement for their relatives, eventually making it riskless and costless to diversify household labour allocations.

iii. Examples of migrant family strategies

Literature review that was undergone on the concept of family strategies revealed a vast number of studies investigating those in case of Polish migrants in Europe. Based on a qualitative study of recent Polish migrants in London, Ryan and colleagues’ (2009), for example, have explored the varied dynamics of family relationships. Their study has explained the complex ways in which family considerations together with caring and care-giving, influence the migration strategies, which are bound up with varied, tangled and shifting issues of family needs, career aspirations and lifestyle choices. Authors investigate how families may be reconfigured in different ways through migration and examine transnational networks as well as splits within families. The results of this study indicate that migrants’ planning and decision-making are often implicated in complex family relationships and considerations (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 74). Research undergone on Polish families in Britain revealed two strategies followed by many Polish families: some Polish migrants decide to leave their country alone in order to support family members back in Poland, whilst others decide to reunite their families in London. Eade’s (2007) as well as Ryan and Sales’ (2013) studies on Polish migrants showed that a substantial number of them planned long term or indefinite stays in destination country. On the other hand, research undergone on the behalf of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), a UK’s think-tank, pointed out that due to the boost of Polish economy, return migration to this country started to advance. These migrant strategies were based on the multifaceted processes of negotiation and decision-making. Earlier mentioned more recent study on Polish children in London primary schools done by Ryan and Sales (2013) has revealed that the age of children was usually a relevant factor in family migration decision making. Similarly to their earlier study (2009) Ryan and Sales (2013, p. 7) refer to two types of
strategy popular within Polish migrants: one parent coming to Britain while his/her partner and children remain in Poland (short term sacrifice for longer term gain) and the strategy of relocating the entire family to London (higher living costs and less saving, but the family remains together). In some cases economic factors were clearly the most important ones in decision making, but in other parents chose family reunion regardless the fact that it was more “expensive” choice. Ryan and Sales’s study (2013) combines results of earlier mentioned research (Ryan, 2009) to prove the variety of family migration strategies and indicate the factors that inform migrants’ decisions to bring their families (especially children) to the UK or to leave them in Poland, as well as explain some of the policy implications of scholars’ findings. Both projects were relevant benchmarks for the proposed case study, as they consider similar interests of Polish migrant families and the process of strategies’ negotiation and emphasize the role of family members, and especially children, in this process. However, with reference to the literature studied, there is a great distinction between the immigrant communities in England and in Greece, including various socio-demographic origins, levels of education, time of migration, etc. Thus, results of proposed case study may significantly differ from ones described above.

Migrant families’ decision making and strategies are shaped by variety of limitations. One of them is connected to caring and family responsibilities which migrants often maintain both in their home country and the destination country. In the subject literature a growing recognition of the importance of caring responsibilities as a factor in shaping migration strategies has been observed. Scholars (e.g. Ryan & Sales, 2013 after: Ackers, 2004 who talks about the invisibility of care in migration theory), suggest that those responsibilities have an influence on the initial migration decision but also on the plans to stay in the countries of immigration or return to home countries. Wall and São José’s research (2004) explored immigrant families’ strategies towards work and care for young children in four European countries: Finland, France, Italy and Portugal. Their findings indicate that immigrant families use various work and care strategies, for instance extensive delegation of care, negotiation of care within the family, mother-centeredness, child negligence and the superimposition of care upon work (Wall & São José, 2004, p. 591). The strategy of negotiation of care within the family includes both partners sharing care responsibilities as well as older child taking care of younger (shared parental care or shared familial care). The strategy of extensive delegation of care concerned other members of kin: grandparents, living-in
family members, but also child minders and nannies taking care of children. Mother-centeredness was a strategy within which mothers did not work or worked part-time to take care of children. Cooke (2007) indicates that women employment or career choices are often dependent on their husband’s career and their children’s welfare, ending in women not working or working part-time only. Child negligence described situation in which children were left alone at home (self-care) or were looked after by other young children. The superimposition of care upon work related to strategy of taking children to work. Wall and São José emphasize that migration patterns have a large influence on work and care strategies in a way that highly qualified migration is more associated with extensive paid delegation (often private and high-cost), marriage migration with mother-centeredness, and unskilled worker migration with low-cost solutions supplemented by workplace care, older child care and negligence (Wall & São José, 2004, p. 591).

In 2006 report was conducted by the Institute Crone (Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism) at Roehampton University and the University of Surrey, which was financed by the British Council for Social and Economic Research, in which an attempt was made to divide Polish migrant workers in London on account of their migration strategy. The author of this report - John Eade - has distinguished following strategies (2007, pp. 33-34):

- **Storks** – circular migrants, occupying low-paid jobs (catering, construction industry, domestic service, seasonal workers) for whom migration is only a capital-raising activity. They mostly arrange employment and accommodation through their co-native relatives or friends and tend to be clustered in dense Polish social networks. This strategy starts with short-term, often seasonal migration, but commuting behaviour of storks often changes into a long-term strategy.

- **Hamsters** – their strategy concerns single, long-term migration, which aim is to save as much as possible and resettle back to the sending country and to invest the collected resources there. They also tend to cluster in particular low-earning occupations and are often embedded in Polish networks and see their migration as only a capital-raising activity.

- **Searchers** – mainly young, individualistic and ambitious migrants that occupy a range of positions from low-earning to highly skilled and professional jobs. They emphasize strategy of intentional unpredictability towards their migratory plans. Searchers focus on
increasing social and economic capital, both in Poland and the UK, and prepare for any possible opportunity such as pursuing a career in London, returning to Poland when the economic situation improves or migrating elsewhere. According to Eade, ‘searchers’ are characterized by adaptation to a flexible, deregulated and increasingly transnational, post-modern capitalist labour market.

- **Stayers** – a settlement strategy with the intention of staying in the receiving country for good, pursuing a career and adopting cultural patterns of the host country. This group is represented by respondents with strong social mobility ambitions.

Referring to this division Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski (2008), scholars who have investigated global migration strategies as well as individual strategies of migrants, claim that in case of Polish contemporary migrants in the UK preponderant strategy seems to be the strategy of ‘intentional unpredictability’ or, in Eade’s terms – ‘searchers’. It entails keeping all options open: starting migration, continuing migration, termination of migration and return to the home country, changing jobs within the sector, changing jobs between sectors, career advancement in the country, career advancement abroad, etc. Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski indicate that due to the control of the foreign labour force flow with work permits and visas for workers this strategy was impossible to implement in the pre-accession period. Thus, it is a post-accession phenomenon, characterized by the dynamics of the influx of Polish citizens and flexibility of migration of people working abroad. Strategy of ‘intentional unpredictability’ is supplemented by so-called ‘on spec strategy’: when migrants come to work in a receiving country without finding jobs, accommodation etc. in advance.

Another interesting synthesis of strategies of Polish citizens immigrating to the UK provides Paulina Trevena (2011, pp. 10-13) who discusses three types of migrants in respect to their strategies towards employment and labour market. She divides Polish labour migrants based on the perceived aims of migration into:

- **Drifters** – they pursue other goals than professional advancement or gathering savings for investment. Decision to migrate was rather spontaneous, a quick answer to opening European labour markets after 2004, often dictated by the desire to improve language skills. They are usually young, single, with no family obligations, most often do not have good knowledge of English. Their main goal of going abroad is to live a full, entertaining life,
go out and travel, which seems to be more important than starting and pursuing a professional career. For that reasons they often work in low-skilled jobs that would earn their keep, mainly in catering, cleaning and construction. This group is characterized by horizontal mobility and a frequent job rotation in some cases. Their strategy is no strategy; they just ‘suspend themselves in temporality’. Trevena argues that drifting is typical for the initial stages of migration, and in the course of the migration the definite majority of respondents would move towards the category of career seekers.

- **Career seekers** – migrated seeking to advance, start, develop or change their professional career abroad. Part of them began with low-skilled jobs, but their consequence in taking advantage of circumstances and opportunities created by multicultural labour market led to upward professional mobility and long-time employment. Those initial, not very prestigious, menial jobs enables career seekers to gather additional cultural and social capital as migrants improve their language skills, gain qualifications in receiving country, establish contacts and networks. This type of migrant searches for various possibilities within labour market in order to pursue a planned carrier path. Yet, they can also jump at the opportunity for occupational change in any vertical direction. Necessary in the process of building new careers and at the same time characteristics of career seekers are: self-determination in overcoming further levels of social and professional advancement; networks within local population, good command of English language; qualifications that can be capitalized on the host market, efficiency, self-confidence and knowledge.

- **Target earners** – these are economic migrants whose main intention of going abroad is to earn and save money for future investments in home country. Their migration is typically a temporary experience, most left their families in Poland. They do not have qualifications desired in the labour market, so they find employment taking on the easiest accessible and best paid employment the most often in the low-skilled sectors: in catering, cleaning, and construction. Trevena argues that most of them would initially act as drifters, and with time decide that making savings would be their main goal. Still, they enjoy their lives abroad, spend money on entertainment and travel.
Trevena indicates that typology she provides is not a fixed categorization since migrants may move to different categories as they change their goals and in the course of the migratory experience.

White and Ryan (2008, p. 1471) differentiate between two categories of Polish migrants with regards to their motivation for going abroad: the classic labour migrants, and people searching for adventure and life experience. The first group, typically low skilled, comes from small towns and villages, stagnant places with a limited range of livelihood strategies that offer no career prospects’. The later one consists of young adventure seekers, taking advantage of opportunities for mobility conferred by the EU enlargement. The preliminary research on Polish community in Athens indicates that the interest group of present studies may relate to the first type described by White and Ryan, namely classic labour migrants.

Adding to discussion on strategies in broader context Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski (2008, pp. 85-120) differentiate other types of migratory strategies of Polish migrants after 2004: sectorial strategy, the strategy of delayed spatial dispersion; strategy of implicit depreciation of skills, the strategy of exit from the shadow economy; strategy of ‘greediness of work’ and the duration of migration, and family strategy. We shall briefly discuss those strategies as we plan to use this differentiation in order to compare proposed strategies with those revealed by the group of Polish migrants to Athens.

**Sectorial strategy**

It refers to the sectorial changes in the labour market. Researches on the Polish migrants in the UK indicate that they prefer specific sectors in which they started to dominate: construction, hotels and restaurants, agriculture and food processing industry. The main sectors of employment of Polish men in the UK were: construction (19.1% of all employed men), hotels and restaurants (10.9%), additional transport activities and tourist industry (9.6%); women most often find employment in hotels and restaurants (14.1%) as well as health and social work (12.6%) (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2008, p. 91). Scholars indicate that these are specific examples and preferences of Polish people regarding industries where they are employed, which vary in respect to various countries and their demand for working force. The case of the Netherlands, for example, shows that Polish citizens dominate in following sectors of the Dutch economy: the horticultural sector (65%), agriculture (12%), the production (7%), and butchery (4%).
Strategy of delayed spatial dispersion

It concerns spatial distribution of Polish people in destination countries. In the context of Great Britain, Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski (2008) notice that in the initial phase of migration Polish citizens tended to locate in the capital cities: London and Dublin. Only after some time, a spatial dispersion or even decompression was observed, which scholars associate with sectorial strategy analysed above. This peculiar release of migration into various destinations, from the capital to the regions surrounding it, and then the periphery, reflects development of migratory networks between migrants and employers, as well as an increase in demand for foreign labour in local labour markets which was satisfied by Polish immigrants. Peripheral destinations indicate the interconnectedness of sectorial and special strategies of migrants: even though migratory flows concentrate around metropolises, the level of spatial concentration depends on the location of the sector. Thus, workers in the construction sector are located where the constructions sites are, workers in the food sector - where the factories are, workers of tourist services - where large hotels, agricultural workers – where the farms are (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2008, p. 103). On the other hand, special dispersion is again specific for various countries. In case of Spain migratory flows have not dispersed beyond traditionally main cluster – Madrid. Similar situation can be noticed in Greece, where the majority of Polish population is concentrated in Athens (Marchlewski, 2008).

Strategy of implicit depreciation of qualifications

It is related to the work under formal qualifications, which might designate occupational degradation. Mass migration of Polish citizens, no need of knowledge of English language (or basic knowledge), fast speed and availability of work in selected industries and sectors caused a greater interest of Polish migrants of low-skilled sectors, where the natives usually do not want to work due to low wages and low work prestige. Since finding a job in low sectors became relatively quick and easy, many Polish migrants, regardless of qualifications, agreed to work in these sectors. Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski combine this strategy to earlier discussed strategies of ‘intentional unpredictability’ and ‘on spec strategy’, often employed by Polish individuals residing in Great Britain. Scholars indicate that given the relatively good level of education of Polish migrants, depreciation of skills can be observed. Polish individuals seem to accept this type of degradation as temporary situation, treating it as a first step to a better job and a more comfortable
life in the future. Still, often migrants who have a job at hand, often requiring no qualifications, take it without hesitation, and, hoping for better employment in the future, are often stuck in jobs below their qualifications for longer periods of time (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2008, p. 111).

**Strategy of exit from the shadow economy**

It is connected to the strategy of qualifications’ depreciation, and refers to the post-accession change of migratory status from illegal to legal. It refers to the abolition of restrictions on access to the labour market and the right to obtain the status of an EU citizen. Enlargement of the EU, the abolition of restrictions on access to the labour markets of various European countries has encouraged employers to recruit foreigners with so far illegal status from the new Member States. Additional advantage of leaving the shadow economy, apart from the obvious change in status, may also be an increase in wages and better allocation of accumulated money.

**Strategy of ‘greediness of work’ and the duration of migration**

It concerns the analysis of the dominant type of Polish citizens’ post-accession migration, namely the labour migration, and labour participation of Polish people living abroad. This strategy is also linked with the period of the stay abroad and stresses the importance of seasonal migration.

**Family strategy**

Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski refer this strategy to analysis of the status of Polish people in selected target countries and structures of their households. Migrant household may consist of, for example, a variety of family units: couples with children, couples without children cohabiting as well as persons unrelated to household members. Scholars indicate the existence of multiple households, created by unrelated individuals. Often households abroad are created with more than one family unit. Post-accession migration is dominated by single people in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the Netherlands - only approx. 1/3 of Polish migrants are married. In the case of Polish women, their migration is often associated with marriage to other nationals (28% of Polish women and only 3% of Polish men residing in the UK) remaining in a stable relationship with a partner of another nationality. Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski claim that after the 2004 enlargement the number of marriages taken abroad has risen, so has the number of born children.

In their book about the post-accession Polish migrations Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski (2009) provided analysis of migration strategies from the perspective of the migrant as element of
the labour market of host country, mainly the UK. They have singled out four types of migration strategies with accordance to duration of stay, the type of migrant family strategy, use of qualifications, sectorial and spatial placement as well as recruitment form and return perspectives. We are going to present those strategies in the following part of present thesis, as they, together with strategies put forward by John Eade and Paulina Travena, will serve as a point of reference for our study’s results.

*Strategy of seasonal (circular) migration*

Circular migrants with family left back in the home country. The level of qualifications used in the labour market is rather neutral, sometimes positive. Migrants enter foreign labour markets through the bilateral agreements and through the middle-men, work agencies etc. They settle typically in the rural areas or places characteristic for their job sector, which is agriculture, hotels, restaurants and construction. This strategy is brought into force mostly by people for whom mobility circulation seems optimal from the perspective of their family needs, with lack of work opportunities, or unwillingness to take low-paid jobs in the domestic labour market. In this case, migration creates employment opportunities that involve skills and qualifications gained by individuals in their earlier stages of lives.

*Strategy of intentional unpredictability*

Unmarried or living in partnership engagement migrants who left their countries without prior arrangements to find employment in hotels, restaurants, construction, food processing, but also sectors that require high qualifications: IT and finances. Sectorial and spatial placements are characterized by dispersion, which can be associated with the formation of new networks in the receiving country. The level of qualifications they use in the labour market is rather negative to neutral. Their return to the homeland is intentionally unpredictable.

*Long-term strategy*

Migrants, whose arrivals at the receiving country were a planned recruitment or work transfer. Their family stays with them in destination country, children go to school there. They find employment in IT, pharmaceutical, biotech, financial sectors, and their usage of qualifications is positive. Their return to the homeland is probable, but not sooner than they achieve specific targets related to their migration (e.g., career advancement, education of children).
Settlement strategy

In case of this strategy the process of migration is often meticulously planned and carefully considered, both in relation to the person migrating and his/her family, which typically follows migrants to the country of settlement. In case of this strategy migrants’ usage of qualifications is positive. Migrants find employment often in advance, through planned recruitment or work transfers, in sectors such as: IT, pharmaceutical, biotech and financial. They settle in location of their employment and often buy property there. Return to the homeland is unlikely.

Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski indicate that a real phenomenon of Polish post-accession migration is the strategy of intentional unpredictability, ‘going with the flow’; a spontaneous, individualized migration, focused on meeting the priority needs of a migrating individual. People following this type of strategy can be described as unpredictable migrants, as their migration processes may end up as quickly as they started, or they can take a very long time, be indefinite.

iv. Coping strategies of migrants

In the previous subsections we have signalized some of the issues concerning short-term or coping strategies of migrants. In the present part we pay closer attention to this issue.

Ewa Morawska (2001, p. 57) implies that the coping strategies are *schemes and resources mobilized by the prospective migrants*. Kosic and Triandafyllidou (2004, p. 1415) name short-term strategies *'adaptation' or 'survival strategies'* and indicate that they designate the complex and dynamic character of immigrants’ projects, which develop as a response to new circumstances and opportunities, and not the intentional a priori elaboration of strategic plans concerning for example entry and settlement in the country of destination. Migrants are likely to quickly adjust their coping strategies to the changing situation, which could be observed during economic recession in the dawn of the first decade of 21st century.

It is believed that in order to survive in the settlement country migrants must develop certain coping strategies. Due to common uncertainty of their work as well as scanty wages and poor work conditions, migrants devolve coping strategies on various levels: in the workplace and beyond, at individual (household, family) and community scales (Datta et al., 2006). Reiboldt and Goldstein (2000) point to migrant culture, focus on education, family, and children and their reliance on a close-knit community as an important coping strategies used by the families and at
the same time strengths that have sustained them. Migrant families adapt their plans and develop coping strategies in response to social and institutional environment of the country of destination (Kosic & Triandafyllidou, 2003).

With regards to typologies Engelen and colleagues (2004a) divide short-term strategies into expenditure strategies and income strategies. Datta and colleagues (2006, p. 5) have elaborated on this division and proposed the following kinds of coping strategies:

- Expenditure-minimizing or negative strategies, e.g. changes in diet, cutbacks in use of utilities, etc.
- Income-maximizing or positive strategies – focusing on gathering additional sources of earnings, e.g. working extra hours, enabling more household members enter the labour market.

With reference to expenditure-minimizing strategies, White (2009a, p. 68) refers to active and passive strategies, stating that the later one could be for example refraining from having another child or cutting back on consumption. In Datta and colleagues (2006) study individual income-maximizing strategies in the workplace were one of the main coping strategies developed by migrants in London. Workers negotiated their labour market position in terms of the types and number of jobs they were engaged in, and making the most from the jobs which they had managed to secure through various types of intensification. A common strategy developed by migrants was de-skilling - individuals were accepting jobs that did not match their educational and skills levels. Other frequent coping strategies created to maximize earnings were to work longer hours, to move between jobs trying to find the optimum working conditions, or developing range of non-work based income-maximizing strategies, such as gaining British qualifications. According to Datta and colleagues (2006, p. 15) migrant household-based coping strategies are also relevant as they support individual income-generating as well as minimize consumption and expenditure. The majority of household coping strategies focused on consumption-minimizing which meant careful budget-management of shopping and spending patterns, eliminating luxury items, searching for bargains, sharing housing with other families, etc. and multi-earning - an important strategy of additional income. Women were the ones to take care of consumption-minimizing strategies.

Strategies mentioned in Datta and colleagues’ study (2006) were generally short-term, reactive strategies. Nevertheless, researchers also notice migrant workers trials to create more
long-term coping strategies that could improve their lives beyond the immediate receipt of wages and daily survival, for example establishing own small businesses.

Coping strategies have been also classified in Sheppard’s research (2009) on families who were unsuccessful applicants of Children’s Services. This study was based on baseline interviews with the use of the COPE questionnaire, developed by Carver and colleagues (1989) - a well-founded, theoretically and empirically derived, instrument widely used in a range of coping research (Sheppard, 2009). Sheppard (2009, pp. 54-56) divides the coping strategies into:

- **Engagement Strategies** - designed to engage with the problem positively in an effort to ameliorate or solve it. They have two basic components:
  - Direct Action - undertaken by the people themselves when they engage their problem-solving abilities to manage particular situation. It involves the areas of active coping, planning and suppressing competing activities by the individual.
  - Seeking Social Support - the person seeks to engage with the problem, but tries to elicit the help of others in order to do so (include support for instrumental reasons, support for emotional reasons, and expressing emotions).

- **Avoidance Strategies** - characterized by actions, which primarily seek not to engage with the problem due to the threat presented by the situation and its emotional consequences (for individuals problem might be too vast to involve themselves in Engagement Strategies). Avoidance strategies involve two basic components:
  - Denial and Disengagement - pretending that a problem has not occurred, avoiding thinking about it or giving up trying to deal with it. Disengagement, simply separating oneself from a problem, could be either mental or behavioural (or both).

An example of denial and rejection strategy, a social-psychological survival strategy that helps make sense of the world, undertaken by migrant families, is when illegal immigrants reject any personal responsibility for their status and attribute responsibility to the political system and complex bureaucratic procedures (Kosic & Triandafyllidou, 2003, p. 1012).

- **Acceptance.** One of the discrete coping actions. It involves learning to live with a situation, even though it is not desirable, and, in the process, reducing the stress associated with it. In general, this is characterized by a pessimistic view of capacity to change things positively.
• Self-Learning and Support Strategies - focus not directly on the situation but on the individual under stress. These strategies are generally designed to strengthen the self, as a result, enabling a person to engage with the situation. They are essentially self-directed and their consequences are likely to be psychologically positive, helping people to feel more robust and that they have better understanding of the situation. The components of these strategies are:

  ➢ Restraint, Reinterpretation and Personal Growth
  ➢ Turning to Religion (another discrete coping action: praying or religious advice, and, through this, seeking to gain a form of ‘symbolic support’).

Hyman and colleagues (2005) divide coping strategies into work or domestically initiated. Household coping strategies for these scholars “reflect the interconnectivity between home, work and family life in which ‘the “public” sphere of work and institutional regulation is not separate from the “private” sphere of domestic reproduction and self-provisioning, but rather overlapping and interdependent” (Hyman et al., 2005, p. 707, p. 707, after: Jarvis, 1999).

Short-term or coping strategies are sometimes regarded as equivalent to livelihood and survival strategies (White, 2009a). In her study, White (2009a) focuses on livelihood strategies, stating that adjective livelihood seems to be more helpful than coping or survival commonly used in its position. White agrees with Shevchenko (2002, p. 844) who criticizes usage of adjective survival for its connotation of exceptionality and extremity. In White’s study the notion of livelihood refers to strategies put not only into economic terms, but rather relating to the social and cultural capital of migrants. Basically, migration itself can be regarded as such strategy for many individuals. The literature on migration as a livelihood strategy originates in development studies and social anthropological literature (White & Ryan, 2008, p. 1471). According to White and Ryan, term livelihood is used to express the idea that making a living is not only about earning money but involves exploiting individual and social capital. Also networks are of importance in this context, “as determinants of livelihoods, and also a product of the search for new livelihood strategies” (White & Ryan, 2008, p. 1471, p.1471). Livelihood strategies are based on families’ decisions made about moving abroad but also on the importance of the wider quality of children’s lives to these plans. People construct livelihoods from their perceptions about themselves and locally appropriate behaviour. White and Ryan suggest that migration decisions can only be taken
in such contexts. Stereotypes about gender roles may serve as an example - in some societies they may hinder the process of moving abroad for women.

According to White (2009b, p. 2) the concept of *livelihood* tries to cover all the migrant experiences understanding the multiple connections between the migrant and society. White and Ryan suggest that livelihood strategies are created by existence of networks and traditions: “networks are both a determinant of livelihoods, and also a product of the search for new livelihood strategies” (2008, p. 1496). The subject literature implies that livelihood strategies of migrants might be, for example, strategy of building networks in the new destination countries, migrating alone (and at the same time separation from the family for economic purposes) or dual location household. White (2009b, p. 3) suggests that “adopting and then employing a new livelihood strategy in a foreign country involves a migrant making a sequence of decisions about what feelers to put out to the receiving country and what ties to make there, at the same time letting go of certain support lines to the sending country”. Thus, livelihood strategies change in response to pressures connected to weakening networks in the sending country by entanglement into new networks in destination countries (White & Ryan, 2008, p. 1473). Other scholars, however, see the maintenance of strong links with home as relevant element of the survival strategies of households, especially for temporary migrants. Ryan and colleagues (2009) imply that these relations can be more important than close relationships in the host country.

v. Women and migratory strategies

Due to the prompt feminization of labour migration throughout the globe (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009, p. 254), the body of literature on migrant families and their strategies more and more often presents a women’s voice in discussion on migration strategies of families (Ryan & Sales, 2013; Vullnetari, 2012; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Ryan, 2004). Scholars indicate that family reunion, developing as family members join partners who had initially migrated alone, is a new stage of migrations (Ryan & Sales, 2013, p. 6 after: Lopez Rodriguez, 2005). This tied migration, conceptualized as gendered phenomenon (Cooke, 2007; Halfacree, 2004), describes migration in terms of family reunification and results of labour market strategies of men and women within a household, with tied migrants as those who accompany or join partners who are labour migrants (Raghuram, 2004, p. 304). Traditionally, most migration studies are focused on the movement of
men, on the assumption that men are typically the decision makers in the migration process and tied migrants are presumed to be women (Ryan & Sales, 2013; Cooke, 2007; Raghuram, 2004; Lauby & Stark, 1988). Scholars admit that in most cases husbands migrated first and wives and children joined them later. However, more and more studies present women not as simply followers, but rather depict various motivations for their migratory strategies, making their decisions on the basis of long-term considerations, including economic, personal and social ones. Thus, contemporary research challenges simplified version of women as tied migrants who follow their partners (Ryan & Sales, 2013; Ryan, 2009; Cooke, 2007). Women migrant make decisions to migrate based on a complex mix of economic, emotional, practical and social factors. Ryan’s and colleagues (2009 after: Kofman et al., 2000) imply that women’s reasons for migration are more complex than men’s and are often bonded with family migration strategies. Lauby and Stark (1988, p. 473) indicate that “since women perform different roles from men in society, the economy and the family, the reasons for their migration may also be different”. Women migratory behaviours may be influenced more than those of men by familial considerations (Lauby & Stark, 1988, p. 473). Migrant wives tend to believe that entire family should migrate together. These decisions very often involve balancing the conflicting priorities of different family members (Ryan & Sales, 2013, p. 17).

Vullnetari (2012) emphasizes contribution to the family’s income-generating strategy of women which takes place through the reproductive as well as productive labour and according to this researcher it is nowadays crucial and indispensable during migration of the families. Throughout these experiences women are often the most important pillar for supporting the family migration strategy (Vullnetari, 2012) bearing “the brunt of anxieties, social isolation, responsibilities and sacrifices” (Cooke, 2007, p. 59, p. 59, after: Lee et al., 2002). Datta and colleagues (2006) implied that women are ones responsible for household survival. This might be explained by women’s strong devotion to their families and their considerable willingness to sacrifice a lot for the sake of family well-being.

In her research Fresnoza-Flot (2009) presents transnational and gender perspectives on the study of motherhood among migrant women. From this perspective, migrant mothers face the need of redefining their motherhood and adopting various strategies to negotiate their absence from home (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009, p. 254). Among nurturing alternatives available to migrant women
and, at the same time, characteristics of transnational mothering are: referring to local, national and international networks and contacts (Creese et al., 1999, p. 4) sending remittances and gifts, making telephone calls (so-called commodification of love and technological management of family relations through regular communication) and turning to their extended family to care for their children (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009, p. 255).

Migration as family livelihood strategy is impacted by the changing gender roles. Pessar and Mahler (2003, p. 827) assume that migrant women tend to develop personal and household strategies consistent with long-term or permanent settlement abroad. For female migrants life abroad is often connected to double caring responsibilities: taking care of family members in new location, and also ongoing transnational caring for relatives back home (Ryan et al., 2009). Studies of migrant women tend to indicate the difficulties posed by such a transnational childcare (Ryan, 2011). Researchers talk about the gendering of migration decision-making (Hoang, 2011; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; e.g. Halfacree, 2004; Waters, 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). Even though female voice is more and more hearable in the context of family migration and migratory decision making, they are often still ones ‘who make labour market compromises’ (Raghuram, 2004, p. 307). In the present case study we shall pay attention to the position of women in the family and their role in developing migratory and educational strategies.

vi. Migration culture

Literature review undergone on the family strategies in the context of migration indicated that scholars (White, 2009a; Elrick, 2008; Hedberg & Kepsu, 2003) tend to refer to migration culture. Discussion about migration in a cultural perspective is based on the rationale that the decision to migrate, formed by individual and collective values and practices, is a part of an individual’s identity (Hedberg & Kepsu, 2003, p. 68). White implies that in order to understand migrant survival strategies their identities as well as migration cultures need to be explored (2009a).

Hedberg and Kepsu maintain that a sign of distinctive cultures of migration can be found in the difference in migration behaviour between groups (2003: 68). Migration culture is made of individuals’ personal experiences and expectations of past, present and future events (Hedberg & Kepsu, 2003, p. 77 after: Halfacree and Boyle, 1993), but made in the transnational space, between
and within sending and receiving countries. The growing number of people emigrating from one specific destination may lead to changes of values, tastes, motivations, symbols, goods and technologies as well as cultural perceptions of migrants within their networks. Elrick (2008) explains that with time migrant communities transfer into culturally ‘transnationalised’, incorporating ideologies, practices and expectations from the sending and receiving countries. This leads to formation of culture of migration, distinct from the culture of both: sending and receiving societies.

The main roles in the constitution of migration culture play certain repetitive decisions, taken also by the family (White, 2009a). As White (2009a, p. 68) puts it: “becoming and being a migrant involves making a string of important decisions”. Consequent choices, the core of migration strategy, led to its institutionalization and modification of existing rules (Osipowicz, 2002). Thus, migrants renovating their property, buying a house or a piece of land in their home country foster the positive image of migration as something beneficial and in this way feed the culture of migration (Elrick, 2008, p. 1504). In this sense migration is perceived locally as a desirable strategy for improving one’s standard of living. From this perspective, the concept of migration culture refers to the perception of migration itself. People receive cultural signals that encourage them to move. Those signals are regarded more important precursors for migration than structural variables such as labour markets (Elrick, 2008, p. 1505 after: Fielding 1992). Elrick argues that due to the differences between geographical contexts it is advisable to speak about ‘cultures’ of migration rather than a ‘culture’ of migration.

Hedberg and Kepsu (2003, p. 68 after: Fielding, 1992) believe that migration culture can be approached using traditional methods of enquiry, including quantitative analysis. Even though it is rather difficult to examine cultural elements of migration, scholars argue that some areas within this field of study can be traced, measured and quantified. We shall try to identify whether migration culture can be connected to the process of strategy formation for Polish migrant families residing in Athens.

c. Family strategies and education

Education is a very important factor in relation to migration and the social reproduction strategies of migrants (Moldenhawer, 2005, p. 51). Sociological literature presents education as an
important factor in strategies of many (migrant or not) families (Gacek, 2013; Vellymalay, 2010; Poupeau et al., 2007; Moldenhawer, 2005; Waters, 2005; Reese, 2002). In the subject literature education is being conceived as a social mobility strategy (Moldenhawer, 2005, p. 51) or a part of a wider strategy of capital accumulation within the migrant household (see Waters, 2005). Lean and Huang (2004, p. 28, p. 28) suggest that educational “strategy was conceptualized as the undertaken of a deliberate, aggressive educational effort in accord with parental education aspirations for a child by a parent and for the purpose of enhancement in academic performance of a child”. Family strategies intersect with education both: locally and internationally, showing how families are spatially fluid (Creese et al., 1999, p. 14). Waters (2006) suggests that migration can be seen as an educational household strategy incorporating multiple family members. It is due to the fact that parents have a great influence on decision-making around educational trajectories and spatial strategies.

Among educational strategies we can differentiate: avoidance, promotional, involvement, engagement, self-learning, protective, settlement and support strategies. It has been proved that promotional strategies may be linked with higher levels of student school performance (Reese, 2002, p. 46 after: Reese et al., 2000). Results of Reese’s research indicate that even though in case of adolescent youth the strategy of restriction of activities and friendships was not sufficient to ensure academic success it was still crucial for keeping children on the "right path". Reese’s findings correspond with Clark’s (1983) study on African American young people and their families in which strategy of sponsored independence was associated with greater social competence and higher school achievement (Reese, 2002, p. 32). Scholars have investigated two types of education strategies: cross-district school attendance and parental school participation. Vellymalay (2010, p. 437) has discussed strategies of school involvement and recognized following examples: identifying children’s problems, identifying their homework given by the school, assisting their homework to completion and monitoring their academic performance at school. Vellymalay (2010) also focuses on parental strategies implemented in children’s education at home and at school, namely (among many others) discussion on future planning, discussion on school activities, identifying learning pattern, identifying educational problems at school and at home, motivation, or tuition.
Parental involvement in children’s education has grown an importance in the recent decades. The literature review revealed that researchers in the field of family strategies refer to parental coping strategies (Vellymalay, 2010; Reese, 2002). When it comes to parental protective strategies, they are employed to protect children from physical and moral dangers (Reese, 2002, p. 51). Reese (2002, p. 32) gives examples of such strategies, namely strategy of restriction and strategy of sponsored independence, both aiming at keeping children in school and focused on schoolwork. Baker and Stevenson (1986) confirm that parents select specific strategies in order to help their children go through school. These strategies are a way in which family background influences children's school achievement (Baker & Stevenson, 1986, p. 156).

In their study Poupeau and colleagues (2007, p. 31) explore the hypothesis that educational strategies can only be understood if one analyses how families can adapt their strategies to an educational offer that has specific socio-spatial characteristics. It is crucial to take into the consideration the economic and cultural capital that the families possess. Education in this context should be conceived as cultural capital. Forms of social capital impact education strategies used by families to a various degrees. It is important to understand, that “the accumulation of cultural capital occurs concurrently with the accumulation of other forms of capital within the family unit” (Waters, 2005, p. 366).

In Rambla and colleagues’ study (2011) social and cultural capitals helped middle-class families elaborate sophisticated strategies of school choice. These researchers imply that cultural hierarchies shape school esteem and preferences. Vellymalay’s study (2010) presents a view that better educated parents have the tendency to involve in various strategies at home and at school that boast educational achievement. Scholar claims that a strong relationship between parents’ education and their involvement in children’s education can be seen in the subject literature. However, the findings of this researcher’s own project contradict the abovementioned view: Vellymalay’s research did not detect a strong relationship between parents’ education and the involvement strategies implemented by the parents’ in their children’s education (2010, p. 437). Scholar explains this by assuming that parents might place a high importance on their children’s education since most of them were not highly educated themselves (most of parents’ in his study did not have a higher education). It proves that parents were very rational in adopting the strategies of support for education of their children.
Waters (2005) has investigated the role of education in the family strategies in case of East Asian migrants. Scholar’s research emphasizes the place of education in effecting the transnational strategies of middle-class families. In her study, Waters (2005, p. 360) argues that the acquisition of foreign educational credentials is a part of a more general child-centred familial strategy of capital accumulation involving migration and transnational household arrangements. Author explains the precise nature of the family strategies adopted in response to the educational imperative as inherently spatial strategies, involving migration and the transnational dispersal of household members. Migration and the transnational dispersal of household members have been recognized by Waters (2005, p. 366) as spatial family strategies. Waters concludes that education is a familial and not individual pursuit and should be understood as part of a wider strategy of household capital accumulation (2005, p. 370).

Ryan and Sales (2013) imply that the education and more specifically the stage children have reached in schooling as well as other changing needs of migrant children are important factors in migration strategies. For example, migrants with small children have to consider childcare and schooling while, for older migrants, adult children could both facilitate and complicate migration strategies (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 74). Ryan and Sales’ (2013) research emphasizes the complexity of family strategies and decision making and the role of education in them. Their findings correspond with Ackers and Gill’s study (2008) who have also noted that children’s age and education as well as parents’ expectations about the opportunities available in the destination country may impact on family migration strategies. Parents often do not want to disturb their children’s education and wait for them to finish schools, when they decide either to reunite in migration or come back to homeland. Older children (especially those at secondary school or in college) are “seen as more likely to have their education disrupted by migration whereas younger children were viewed as able to cope with the experience of migration and getting to know a new system” (Ryan & Sales, 2013, p. 9). These children often remained behind to finish school in their country of origin. Younger children were expected to adjust to new environment for the sake of parents trying to improve the economic condition of families or save their marriage from growing apart.

Gacek (2013) describes (not very popular) strategy of career advancement though attendance to courses, language training and other endeavours among Polish migrants in the UK.
The majority of Polish individuals tended to think about their migration as temporary experience, so they did not see much sense in investing their time into learning, time, which they could spend working.

*School choice as a part of migrant family strategy*

Schools provide young people with basic knowledge that is used for their integration into society: it is a setting which transmits norms and values necessary for social cohesion (Todorovska-Sokolovska, 2009). From this perspective, schooling becomes a crucial first step towards successful adaptation to mainstream society for immigrant children and the children of immigrants (Zhou, 1997a) supporting them in achieving social advancement. School environment with its norms, values, and support, plays an important role in facilitating social integration in a broad sense: it has the power and tools to promote positive inter-group contacts within which diverse groups can interact, learn from one another and develop positive attitudes (Papoulia – Tzelepi et al., 2003).

Regardless their ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds, foreign-born parents tend to place great significance on school achievement. Some of them encourage children to view education as a way of avoiding simple, menial jobs (Fuligni, 1998).

School characteristics can promote or hinder opportunities to develop friendships (Vaquera & Cunningham, 2010). Peers are important models of socialization: they shape aspirations, share information, and, in case of immigrant children, they serve additional purpose of assimilation in terms of linguistic fluency and understanding of local, social and cultural norms (Vaquera & Cunningham, 2010). In the process of youngsters’ social integration friends are a critical source of healthy emotional, psychological, social, and academic adjustment (Lasso & Soto, 2005). That is why school choice is of such importance, especially in case of migrant children, for whom creating networks at school constitutes a relevant aspect of social integration into receiving society.

Children’s education as well as parents’ expectations about the opportunities available in the destination country may impact on family migration strategies (Ryan & Sales, 2013; Ackers & Gill, 2008). Ryan and Sales (2013) emphasize the impact of the stage children have reached in schooling as an important factor in creation of migration strategies. For example, migrants with small children have to consider childcare and schooling while, for older migrants, adult children
could facilitate migration strategies (Ryan et al., 2009). Parents often do not want to disturb their children’s education and wait for them to finish schools to decide on family’s eventual mobility. Relevant literature indicates that parents have a great influence on decision-making around educational trajectories and spatial strategies and often they are the ones to have a decisive voice, and tend to remain very rational in adopting the strategies of support for education of their children. The decision of school choice, often made by parents, has an influence and corresponds with the social integration. In her study Rerak (2010) observed the importance of school choice for the social integration of Polish adolescents in Athens, but also relevance of parents with their plans and prospects for the future. When it comes to the choosing school, Polish families in Athens get to select from the variety of educational choices on offer: Greek public and private schools, various international schools and as well as the Polish School. Nevertheless, taking into account the migratory pattern that the majority of Polish migrants present, namely economic emigration characterized by low paid jobs (women - domestic help, cleaners, nannies, waitress, sellers; fathers - construction workers, car mechanics), the actual school choice concerns non fee-paying institutions: either the public Greek schools or the Group of Polish schools at the Polish Embassy in Athens (Rerak, 2010). As school distributes specific values, norms and attitudes preparing students to life in particular society it becomes clear that the kind of school family chooses has important repercussions for the life not only the child, but entire household. It is evident in case of migrants whose livelihood strategies are proved to be impacted by the school choice. This combined with the importance of family as the subject of migration explains the relevance of investigating the role of school choice in the process of mobility decision-making.

d. Summary

In the above subsections we have presented analysis of the literature relating to the migration and educational strategies of Polish families present in the contemporary literature. Research on these subjects is extremely broad therefore we had to target our focus only on some of the issues which we believe have immediate relevance for interesting us matters. Based on this analysis of the subject literature we have built a conceptual foundation for our research: for the perception of migration as a family endeavour with focus on the process of revealing migration and educational strategies. In the following summary part we shall discuss chosen strategies,
approaches to them as well as key notions that will be utilized in the practical part of the present case study.

In our research we employ broaden, renegotiated definition of family which includes wide networks of kin-based and spatially dispersed relatives: parents, children, siblings, cousins, grandchildren, grandparents as well as relatives-in-law, etc. Research suggests that such a wide-ranging conceptualization is necessary as various family members might be relevant at different stages of migrants’ lives. Of course migrants may also choose to combine their livelihoods with specific members of their family according to their personal preferences. We plan to investigate which of the family ties are relevant for the Polish families in Athens, and to what degree, if any, family members impact on the process of migrant and educational strategies’ development.

As we have already indicated in the above analysis of literature on family migration and educational strategies, research emphasizes on the complexity of family strategies and decision making. Literature review undergone on the concept of strategy with emphasis on the family ones, made us realize that they can be differently understood and conceptualized by various authors. In the present research we utilize strategy comprehended as a plan of action designed to achieve a particular aim, kind of pattern in a set of decisions, adopted in specific situation (of migration) that might be a result of a rational choice or just a life necessity. Literature review undergone on the concept of family strategies in the context of migration made us realize that fluidity is in the centre of strategies. Strategy expresses (often long-term) aims, which can be referred to general courses of actions and also describes allocation of resources which are necessary to achieve future goals. We plan to see what the case for Polish migrant families is, whether their migratory and educational strategies emerge as a response to everyday life and various obligations, or are negotiated in advance. As we have already implied in the initial parts of this chapter, strategies are determined by past experience, but regulated by present circumstances and expected outcomes in the future. We shall focus on the determinants of strategies to investigate what and who impacts on the process of their negotiation in case of Polish migrant families. We believe that strategy approach utilized in the present research might help to explore the complex relationship between people and places, which are significant for decisions about migrating, staying in Greece, leaving this country for another state or returning to Poland. Research shows that migrants manifest a wide range of migration strategies; hence there has not been any definite answer to the question of what
the strategies of migrant Polish individuals are, especially in Greece. In this project we ask why people involved in the migration act as they do and not differently, but also about what influences their actions.

Literature review made us realize that discussing issues regarding family strategies family can be approached in a twofold way: as the context within which individuals pursue their own strategies but also as an independent, homogeneous and undifferentiated unit with its own strategy. It is clear that within families differences in power, interests, and possibilities among the individuals exist and must be taken into consideration. Thus, researching family decision-making and specifying the unit of analysis, we decided to approach family as a collective, heterogeneous construct with each of its members possessing a degree of agency that enables him/her to modify and negotiate processes of strategy formation within the family. In this context we plan to look closely into the positions of power held by individual family members in the context of strategy construction and realization. As we have already implied, in the present research we shall focus on family dynamics in order to find whether we can discuss family strategies, or maybe rather strategies of family members. Power relations within family are interesting, though fragile, and difficult to trace aspects of the negotiation of strategies. We shall pay a closer attention to this issue in case of investigated group of the Polish families in Athens. Literature review undergone on the family strategies of recent migrants confirms that on one hand strategies might be results of consensual decisions, on the other they might be imposed by some family members against the opinions of other individuals within the family. We emphasize that family strategies are often a result of compromise achieved among the family members in the process of decision making. We believe that the notions of compromise and negotiation might be central to the present research and we shall meticulously focus on them while investigating the process of strategy formation within Polish migrant families. In the present study we relate to the Moen and Wethington (1992) and their three theoretical models referring to family strategies. We plan to combine those three approaches: structural, which emphasizes the role of large social structural forces together with their constrains, a rational choice that underscores the role of choice within the structural constraints and a life course approach, which emphasizes the importance of family’s life stage. We believe that only the combination of those three models may provide a full insight into the process of family strategies’ formation. Contemporary social theorists (e.g. Bourdieu, 1990) see
structure and agency as complementary forces with structure influencing human behaviour, and humans being able to alter the social structures they inhabit. Observation and investigation of collective processes caused by the interaction between structural change and family choices regarding migration may bring about some interesting conclusions regarding family dynamics. We plan to investigate to what extent the structure influences family strategies, and what is the place for agency in the process of revealing family strategies.

Literature review showed that in some studies, especially in governmental reports, the issue of migration strategies comes down to the questions return? stay? or wait? We believe that such a conceptualization is too narrow, as strategies are more complex. Same thing concerns differentiation of types of strategies. In the present chapter we have presented some of the examples of various types of strategies present in the broad migration research. In the present research we are interested in especially those, whose main focus is placed on the family: educational, migrant, but also labour ones. Migrant families develop strategies to deal with both: material and emotional difficulties that life in foreign country brings about. Strategies concerning migration experiences might be various, referring to each of the sphere of migrant lives. We could distinguish between strategies of entry, various work and care strategies, for instance extensive delegation of care, negotiation of care within the family, mother-centeredness, child negligence and the superimposition of care upon work, strategies of choosing educational institutions for children, strategies of improving living conditions, strategies of achieving or maintaining legal status, strategies of interacting with public authorities, nationals, other immigrants, strategies for coping with the institutional and social context with particular reference to the administrative procedures necessary for legal work and stay, and family reunion strategies. These are just some examples of strategies emerging from the analysis of migratory literature. Various kinds of strategies presented in the proceeding subsections will be used in case of Polish families residing in Athens – we plan to investigate which types of strategies are the most common in case of researched group. We shall refer to strategies explored by Eade (2007), Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski (2008 and 2009), Trevena (2008), but also Engelen and colleagues (2004a) Datta and colleagues, and Sheppard (2009) which will serve as a point of reference for our study’s results. Still, investing the Polish families residing in Athens we will check which additional strategies they develop in order to present our own complete differentiation.
When it comes to proposed project and its subject matter, we need to focus thoroughly on more specific strategies of families with regards to migration and education. Family strategies differ among different groups of people and one of the sources of these differences is education. Education is generally a popular subject in respect to research on family strategies. In the proposed case study we shall look into education in a twofold way: we plan to investigate what is the role of children education in the process of migratory strategies’ formation, but also what impacts on the development of educational strategies of migrant families.

Analysis of the subject literature indicates that the relationship between short- and long-term strategies is an important matter in research on family strategies and it is often difficult to separate long-term strategic choice from short-term ones. Generally short term strategies enable immigrants to gather enough money to, for example, build a house in the sending country. The rather common strategy among Polish migrants to various countries is to collect money to buy an apartment, house, or a piece of land in Poland, start a business or secure financial stability in case of return to their homeland. Long term strategies, typically based on permanent settlement, are often connected to short-term ones in a way that families spending their income in the present, make at the same time choices for the future. Long-term strategies, created with the focus on the future, may be associated with investment in the training and occupational careers of parents and children, or, for example establishing own small businesses. Migrants’ trials to create more long-term strategies could be explained by their desire to improve their lives beyond the immediate receipt of wages and daily survival. In the present study we will look into both: long and short term strategies in order to explore their specificity in the studied group – the Polish migrant families residing in Athens.

With regards to the migration strategies, they are not just one-time choices, but rather results of an on-going process of negotiations that may be re-evaluated and re-considered several times over the life-course, impacted and modified by variety of factors inward and outwards the family. In the present research we shall focus on Polish migrant family educational and migration strategy to investigate those influential factors. In the above subsections we have named a range of factors influencing the processes of family decision-making and strategy-formation that are discussed in the recent literature. It is evident that in case of family strategies economic considerations are very important, but the influential components of the process of strategy
development can only be investigated through the interaction of economic, social and cultural factors. In the present study we relate to the Kosic and Anna Triandafyllidou’s (2003) interpretation, which integrates three sets of features: socio-demographic factors, support networks and the institutional environment of the host country into an agency perspective that considers individual possessing social, economic and cultural resources prompting him to achieve goals. This combined with family life-cycles, care responsibilities (often double/transnational) and legislation (EU and national) are indicated as core in the mentioned discussion. We plan to investigate which of them influence migrant family strategies in case of our researched group, but also we will attempt to detect new ones.

Family life-cycles theory referring to most important moments in the life of a family proved relevant in the subject literature and we shall pay attention to it in the case of the Polish families in Athens. In the present research we plan to investigate which moments in family life should be taken into consideration and how important are those phases for the process of strategy formation. Family considerations together with caring and care-giving influence the migration strategies, which are bound up with varied, tangled and shifting issues of family needs, career aspirations and lifestyle choices. The age of children has been proved as a relevant factor in family migration decision making, especially in respect to schooling. In this context we shall investigate the place of children in the process of family strategies’ formation with regards to their age and already mentioned education, social networking, and their actual impact on the strategies developed by families. Last, but not least, we plan to investigate importance of migrant networks, including spatially dispersed family, but also friends and acquaintances, for the negotiation of the Polish migrant family strategies. The subject literature indicates that migrants’ decisions concerning various issues from the decision to migrate, through choices regarding employment, housing, schooling, and everyday life, depend largely on the networks. We have already stated that the importance of networks for negotiation of migratory strategies may be quite paradoxical and different for various groups and studies. We are interested how networks, including local ties among co-nationals, but also native community and transnational ties, influence the process of strategy development.

Even though it’s rather impossible to reconstruct what exactly motivated actors, we believe that we could get an adequate picture by studying not only families’ decisions and motives, but
wider context of society with norms, customs, traditions, etc. That is why we plan to focus on the impact of Polish and Greek environments on the shape of family strategies.

With regards to the role of legislation and various policies in the process of family strategies creation, underlined in the subject literature, we plan to look into this issue to investigate to what extent, if any, EU policies shape process of family strategies formation for the Polish migrant families in Greece. The subject literature indicates that information, or even expectations about actual or planned policies may serve as central factors influencing migration patterns and strategies. Research also suggests that Europe’s enlargement represents potentially crucial transition in relation to migratory strategies (Ryan et al., 2009, 2007; Raghuram, 2004). The subject literature indicates that migration of Polish families to the EU countries in general, and the UK in particular, has become a popular migration strategy among Polish migrants and their families. Acquisition of EU citizenship has important implications for migration patterns within the Union. This is mainly due to fact that EU membership guarantees a legal access to the majority of European labour markets. In this light the EU enlargement enabled migrants to shift their time horizon for migration from short-term to longer-term planning (Elrick, 2008, p. 1504). Another important aspect is that according to current research, EU citizenship, providing specific rights, may promote a sense of belonging, encouraging more permanent stay (Ryan & Sales, 2013, p. 5 after: Burrell, 2009). Additionally, facing labour shortages, the EU members states modify their immigration legislations in order to attract, or/and keep immigrant citizens in the receiving country. This was visible especially after 2004 enlargement, when, even though the old Member States had the right to regulate access for Central and Eastern Europeans to their labour markets, some of the governments, including the Greek one, decided not to restrict access hoping to fill vacancies in skilled and low-wage occupations. All of this makes more and more of the EU citizens, especially those from countries participating in the two last enlargements (so Polish as well), decide to test their rights to live freely and transfer their careers into another EU country.

In the context of expanding Europe, migration needs to be recognized as a product of a complex negotiation of career possibilities with emerging labour market opportunities and changing immigration regulations in the light of labour shortages, all mediated through household decision-making and individual aspirations (Raghuram, 2004, p. 316). Poland’s accession to the European Union brought many new possibilities and opportunities for Polish migrants in Europe
and impacted significantly their migratory strategies and patterns (Moskal, 2011; Ryan et al., 2009; Strasser et al., 2009; Ryan et al., 2007). We shall investigate to what extant this is true for our investigated group. Such a research regarding current mobility patterns of the EU migrants is of high relevance for the intra-European research as much of the research in Europe has focused on countries from outside the European Union (Ryan & Sales, 2013 after: Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002) and the major part of Migratory patterns are changing and this is noticeable in the case of the Polish immigrants in Europe. Broad research on Polish immigrants to the UK that has been partially analysed in the above subsections proves that while in the 1990s it was common for the husband or wife to migrate and for the rest of the family to stay in Poland contemporary migration is characterized by strong emotional reasons for remaining together. Also in case of return migration when, for example parents (or main breadwinner) have lost their jobs, emotional reasoning is present and translated into migratory strategies as families decide to remain in the host country instead of disrupting their children’s lives by returning to Poland (White, 2010). In this context especially parents of schoolchildren might be a special group as they need to engage in the new society and are more likely to remain in receiving countries. In case of those migrants who brought their children to the destination country presence of migrant’s family members in the host country may impede the decision to return to homeland since they need to take into consideration children schooling and their adaptation to the new environment. There is no evidence of similar behaviour of Polish migrant families in Athens that have been facing the outcomes of economic instability in Greece in the last couple of years. In the contrary, the Polish parents in Greece claim that if they lose their jobs they would either migrate somewhere else or return to Poland (Rerak-Zampou, 2012; Rerak, 2010). It may have to do with the fact that migrants decide to leave one social context for another on the basis of a hierarchically ordered set of values. Therefore, for the labour migrants the economic factors would be decisive in case of migration. Still, more and wider in-depth research on the Polish migrant community in Athens is necessary to investigate how changing circumstances influence the process of migratory strategy formation.

Research that actually discusses EU context has tended to focus on single people and not on the situation of families.

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7 We make this assumption with regards to Anne White’s research (2010) on Polish Families in the UK.
When it comes to family strategies one of the problems is operationalization, namely choosing the right tool to measure strategies with its complexity and vagueness. Analysis of the contemporary migratory literature indicated that scholars lean towards the qualitative methods of analysis, which may help to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the causes that regulate such behaviour with group discussions, observation and reflection, in-depth (semi-structured on unstructured) interviews as well as analysis of documents and materials as recognized methods for gathering such insight.

As it has already been mentioned, the concept of family strategies is very complex and compound, capturing variety of features and being applied widely in the subject literature. In the present chapter we have tried to depictu the state of literature on family strategies with emphasis on migrant and educational ones.

Migration is a family strategy that crosses geographical boundaries. Migratory processes are in their nature very dynamic, especially with reference to decisive processes. We believe that articles and studies present in this section altogether with featured theories give an adequate picture of the state of research on family strategies. Even though the concept of family strategies is quite often discussed in the subject literature, there are still some blind spots to be filled. Knowledge about the ways in which families make their decision as well as about factors that inform, enable and limit these resolutions is still insufficient. We strongly believe that our research will be able to contribute to the existing discussion providing more insight to the discussion on migrant family strategies in the context of the Polish community residing in Athens.

3. Geographical and labour mobility in the European Union

The process of social, political and economic globalization, which spread we are now witnessing, is related to mobility of the individuals all over the world in every possible direction. People leave their countries for various reasons, for instance wars, political and religious discrimination, or unemployment, searching for better life and wishing to ensure a better future for their families. Migrations have been of a vital necessity to humanity at least since the beginning of agricultural activity and made possible populating of the whole planet. The first great migratory
flow probably occurred in Africa about one million years ago. Since then, migrations gradually became more and more popular among people who wished, or were forced, to change their place of stay.

At presence, international migration has reached historically unprecedented rates and it is believed to remain at high levels for the foreseeable future (Zetter et al., 2003). Contemporary migrations are becoming a common process for people who want to improve their living conditions and to provide better economic security for themselves and their families, but also for those who want to experience changes in their lives and exercise their freedom to move and settle in a chosen country. During the first half of the 20th century over 100 million people migrated, voluntarily or forcibly, from one country to another (Aronowitz, 1984). In the 1980’s it was estimated that there were more migrants on earth, both proportionally and in aggregate, than at any time in history, until now. Nowadays, the numbers of migrants has grown even further. The total number of international migrants has increased from an estimated 150 million in 2000 (IOM, 2000) to 214 million people ten years later (IOM, 2010).

Regardless the fact that movements are motivated by various factors, they all are essentially connected to life demands. Historical, political and economic changes, such as wars, physical disasters, unemployment, etc., make people leave their homes and force them to survive often in a completely different sociocultural environment. The decision about migrating is no longer caused only by push-factors, such as unemployment, low wages, raising costs of living in particular country, but also by pull factors, e.g., higher wages, possibility of upgrading qualifications, chance for better life condition, as well as the desire to discover and experience new things. The economic perspectives dominating migration studies result in a focus on the migrant worker as the main economic actor, naming the factors triggering mobility as job- and income-related. Current research shows that there is more to it than that: contemporary mobility is multidimensional phenomenon encountering various actors: workers, students, family members with their individual motivations and strategies towards migration.

In the following sections we shall focus thoroughly on various aspects of intra-European mobility including its geographical and labour types. We start with defining mobility, a key-term for present research, and its utilization in the present study. Then we briefly portray the history of European migration, proving that intra-European mobility is not a recent phenomenon, but a part
of European heritage. Next part considers current European mobility and presents some general trends that were observed in the EU mobility literature. In the following sections we shall discuss the EU legislation concerning mobility, determinants and consequences of those movements, as well as various kinds of migration that dominate the discussion on intra-European mobility, with the focus placed on the labour and family mobility. Researchers infer that in order to understand society and social change it is relevant to get to know the structure of the domestic and kinship relations and to analyse the logic in the behaviour of the different family members. Subsequently, as present dissertation concerns Polish migrants in Greece, we shall describe shortly the history of Polish migration focusing on Greece as destination country. In order to better settle the context we portray situation in Greece with relation to migration.

a. Defining mobility and utilization of this term in the study

In its most basic form mobility can be defined as an ability to move freely and easily. Contemporary mobility is a multidirectional and multidimensional phenomenon, used in the subject literature to designate movements within national borders, international, trans-national, cross border, cross sectorial or even virtual moves, often blurring the distinction between migration and tourism. Mobility can be motivated by employers or individuals, caused and influenced by wide variety of factors: political, economic, demographic, cultural and social or more individualistic, connected to one’s desire to experience new places. Timeframes of mobility can be various as well: it can last a few months or years or almost entire life of an individual.

In the subject literature two main types of mobility are differentiated and discussed – labour and geographical ones. A great part of research on EU mobility traditionally concerns its economic aspects, focusing on labour movements with employment opportunities distributed across Europe. Geographical, or to be more precise, residential mobility, is the concept describing people’s movements from one place of residence to another. In EU documents geographical mobility is discussed as one phenomenon, differentiated into short distance moves (within the same region) and less frequent, long-distance moves (to another region or to another country). More precisely, depending on the sending and receiving places, the following types of geographical mobility are differentiated:

- Regional mobility (another region within the same country)
- International mobility (another country or continent). Within international mobility we distinguish:
  - Intra-EU mobility
  - Inflows into EU from third countries
  - Outflows from EU to other countries.

Bonin and colleagues (2008) suggest that most mobility data available in the literature relate to long term mobility (lasting at least one year), even though high share of actual mobility experiences are short term.

In the present case study we focus on long-distance, intra-European moves of EU citizens – Polish nationals - deciding to live and work in Greece.

b. Mobility in the European Union

Contemporary literature describing the flows of people within and beyond European Union tends to use terms *mobility* and *migration* to describe those moves. However, there has been a transformation of the notion of *migration* within EU area: traditionally it refers to the population movements from one place to another, often beyond country’s boundaries. Commonly *migration* was comprehended, especially by the destination societies, as a negative phenomenon: mainly residents of the old Member States (the ‘EU-15’)

8 The EU-15 refers to Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

f) saw migration as a threat to employment and a burden on welfare benefits.

European Union promotes the movements of its citizens: their free movement is at the heart of the European Union project. EU citizens have the right to work, study, live, and retire in a chosen EU Member State and this right is emphasized and promoted. The EU notices and underlines the free movement advantages: numerous social, cultural, and economic benefits for both: EU countries and their citizens, including more efficient labour markets by upgrading the magnitude of options available to employers and workers, increased cultural exchanges and educational opportunities. Vivid contacts between European businesses and citizens are enabled thanks to the free movement. It also helps create a sense of belonging, of *Europeanness*. Benton and Petrovic (2013) point to small distances, reciprocal tuition fee and financing arrangements,
exchange programs as well as the general ease of moving back and forth between countries as advantages that encourage EU citizens to execute their right to move within the EU. Moreover, it is indicated that intra-European labour mobility is one of the potential cures to the Eurozone crisis (e.g. in Benton & Petrovic, 2013; Martin Kahanec & Kureková, 2013; M. Kahanec & Zimmermann, 2010). Within the ranges of the Europe 2020 Strategy both migration and mobility are relevant for the vitality and competitiveness of the EU.

In reality for the EU intra-European mobility is not a migration issue; more than that, it is an EU’s goal. Therefore, in the context of the EU, migrations of EU citizens, so intra-European mobility, is a positive and desired phenomenon. With regard to this fact, nowadays in the EU literature there is a tendency present to refer to the flows of EU citizens within the EU as mobility, whilst to migration as to movements from outside the EU. However, there are still issues with establishing the definition of a migrant, especially in the context of European Union and European Union’s citizenship. European Union’s citizenship has generally become the critical point in the discussion about the notions of migration and mobility in the context of enlarged Union.

Still, sociological literature often keeps using traditional notion of migration also in respect to the flows of the EU citizens, what was noticed in the broad scan of literature that was undergone for the proposed chapter. In a numerous articles and books Polish citizens moving to other EU countries after Poland’s accession to the structures of European Union are called migrants, and their flows are referred to as migration. So, the past and the experience from the past are still present in the thinking of European researchers. Generally speaking, mobility is a form of migration, so the interchangeable usage of both notions is not a conceptual error, but rather deliberate choice of particular scholar.

In the following project migration processes are conceptualized as an aspect of mobility. In the present research we refer to the Polish citizens in Greece and their inflow as migration, because at the time when they came to Greece Poland was not a Member State of the EU. However, presently Polish citizens have EU citizenship which altered their status and changed their stay in Greece from illegal to legal almost overnight. We will see in the following chapters that Poland’s accession made lives of Polish migrants much easier, and that they tend to take advantage of their altered position.
Migrations of people gain a special character in the European Union. The subject literature reveals that they occur within at least the three basic dimensions. Inside the borders of individual countries we deal with migration of an internal nature. There is intra-European or cross-border mobility that includes movements inside European Union. The last dimension covers mobility of non-EU citizens inflowing to the EU’s Member States. Additionally, in the subject literature commuting is described as a substitute to geographic mobility. It refers to the situation when EU citizens are travelling longer distances to the workplace on a regular basis. There are two types of commuting: cross-border - working in one country while residing in another, and regional commuting - working and living in the same country, but different region. The average rates for cross-border commuting among EU countries remain low.

c. The EU policy towards intra-European mobility

The EU policy is based on three levels: EU, national and regional one. Treaty establishing the European Economic Community has created its own juridical base which became an integral part of the legal systems of each Member State and is enforceable by sanctions. EU law has supremacy over nation laws and its validity cannot be assessed by reference to the national law. This doctrine had no formal basis in the Treaty, but was developed by the ECJ on the basis of its conception of the ‘new legal order’ (Craig & de Búrca, 2011, p. 256).

Literature review undergone on the intra-European mobility and EU policy made us recognize three main rationales behind EU policy on mobility, namely freedom of movement, the Europe 2020 agenda and immigration issues referring to the individuals coming from countries outside of the EU. In this research we focus on intra-European mobility of the EU citizens and that is why attention is not paid to issues of European immigration policy. Instead we focus on the legal basis of various kinds of EU mobility: workers, students, researchers, pensioners, and, most of all, families.

i. Freedom of movement

The first rationale of the EU policy on mobility relates to the freedom of movement. The free movement of the EU workers within the Single European market, an integral part of the Treaty of the European Community laid down in the Article 45 is one of the founding principles of the European Union. It entails the abolition of any discrimination based on nationality between
workers of the Member States in respect to the conditions of work and employment. Since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, citizens of the European Union have enjoyed progressively stronger rights to move freely, reside and work in other EU countries. With time, freedom of movement has become one of the main rights of European citizens. The free movement of EU workers within the European Common Market became possible in 1968 and was the first of the four basic economic freedoms of the European market to be implemented (TNS Opinion, 2010, p. 3). The other principles covering the free movement of goods, services and capital were to follow 25 years later with the emergence of the single European Market in 1993. The freedom of movement belongs to the *acquis communautaire* that has to be adopted by the new EU members and granted reciprocally to citizens from old and new EU Member States (Kielyte & Kancs, 2002). Rights differ somewhat according to mobility type that people represent (e.g. for workers, economically non-active people such as students or retirees). The agreement with the European Union on the free movement of persons was extended by a supplementary Protocol I, effective since April 1, 2006, which accepted ten EU Member States that joined the EU in 2004, including Poland. Since May 1st 2011, EU-8 citizens of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia benefit from the full free movement of persons. The right subsidiarily covers EU citizens’ family members, irrespective of their nationality. The EU right of free movement of persons also applies, in general terms, to the parties of ‘European Economic Area’: citizens of Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

In January 2014 resolution on ‘Respect for the fundamental rights of free movement in the EU” was adopted with overwhelming majority in the European Parliamentary. Free movement is an essential part of the European project, from an economic, social as well as a cultural perspective. Borders between most EU countries particularly do not exist, so travelling to and living in other European countries became easier. Since the introduction of the free movement Europeans, for the first time to such a scale, can interact with one another and they often chose to exercise this right and access the labour markets of the other EU Member States. In this way the free movement agreement of the European Union smoothens the way for labour migration across national borders. Unrestricted movement of labour amongst the EU countries was boasted by the implementation of Schengen agreement (March 1995), which increased the levels of intra-European migration in general. It was concluded at the intergovernmental level by the EU Member States; the initial
participants in the treaty were Germany, France and the Benelux countries. Soon Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece participated in the agreement. Subsequently, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland (Norway and Iceland being non-EU15 states) and consequently ten “newest” members, including several East European countries, have also joined the treaty. The only remaining exceptions, the EU Member States outside Schengen, are United Kingdom and Ireland.

Behind the freedom of movement there is a rich legislation consisting of various articles, regulations and directives that explain every aspect of this rationale. In the following passage we present the most distinctive and relevant examples.

1. Articles 4(2)(a), 20, 26 and 45 to 47 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)


1. Freedom of movement for workers shall be secured within the Union.
2. Such freedom of movement shall entail the abolition of any discrimination based on nationality between workers of the Member States as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment.
3. It shall entail the right, subject to limitations justified on grounds of public policy, public security or public health:

(a) To accept offers of employment actually made;
(b) To move freely within the territory of Member States for this purpose;
(c) To stay in a Member State for the purpose of employment in accordance with the provisions governing the employment of nationals of that State laid down by law, regulation or administrative action;
(d) To remain in the territory of a Member State after having been employed in that State, subject to conditions which shall be embodied in regulations to be drawn up by the Commission.

Regulation No 1612/68 of the Council of 15 October 1968 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community has been substantially amended several times. Regulation No 492/2011 of 05.04.2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union, one of the resent EU regulations codifying abovementioned Regulation (No 1612/68), has underlined that freedom of movement constitutes a fundamental right of workers and their families and that mobility of labour within the Union must be one of the means by which workers are guaranteed the possibility of improving their living and working conditions and promoting their social advancement, while helping to satisfy the requirements of the economies of the Member States. Moreover, Regulation No 492/2011 of 05.04.2011 emphasized on the relevance of equality of treatment in law in respect of all matters relating to the actual pursuit of activities as employed persons and to eligibility for housing, and also that obstacles to the mobility of workers should be eliminated, in particular as regards the conditions for the integration of the worker’s family into the host country. The principle of non-discrimination between workers in the EU was explained by the right of EU nationals to have the same priority as regards employment as is enjoyed by national workers. Additionally, the children of a national of a Member State who is or has been employed in the territory of another Member State are given the right to attain that State’s general educational, apprenticeship and vocational training courses under the same conditions as the nationals of that State, if such children are residing in its territory.

Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States amended Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 and combined all the previous
regulations concerning the right of entry and residence of Union citizens. The purpose of this simplification was to smooth exercising their rights for both: EU citizens and public authorities. Additionally, this Directive limits to an absolute minimum the formalities which Union citizens and their family members must complete in order to exercise the right of residence. When it comes to family reunification, Directive 2004/38/EC extends the definition of ‘family member’ that was formerly limited to spouse, descendants aged under 21 or dependent children, and dependent ascendants and transforms it including registered partners if the host member state’s legislation considers a registered partnership as the equivalent of a marriage (Smajda, 2011). Regardless of their nationality, these members of the worker's family have the right to reside in the same country. Council Directive 98/49/EC of 29 June 1998 on safeguarding the supplementary pension rights of employed and self-employed persons moving within the Community applies to members of supplementary pension schemes and others holding entitlement under such schemes who have acquired or are in the process of acquiring rights in one or more Member States. This directive 98/49/EC is part of the *acquis communautaire* that must be transposed into the legal systems of prospective Member States before they join the EU. According to Article 5 of the Directive 98/49/EC, members and former members, as well as to others holding entitlement under such schemes, in all Member States will receive all benefits due under supplementary pension schemes. The payment of benefits throughout Europe is an essential prerequisite for compliance with the principles of free movement of workers and free movement of capital.

Directive 2005/36/EC defines the recognition of professional qualifications and sets out three systems: automatic recognition for professions for which the minimum training conditions have been harmonized (health professionals, architects, veterinary surgeons), the general system for other regulated professions and recognition on the basis of professional experience for certain professional activities.

This Directive provides for a special scheme for temporary mobility – it enables professionals to work on the basis of a declaration made in advance which also includes provisions on knowledge of languages and professional and academic titles.

To sum up, the free movement of workers entitles EU nationals to: search for employment in another EU country and work there without needing a work permit. It enables EU citizens to reside for the purpose of work in another EU country and stay there even after employment has
finished. The basic principle is that each EU citizen has a right to enjoy equal treatment with nationals with regards to the access to employment, working conditions and all other social and tax advantages, health and social security coverage transferred to the country in which they go to seek work. As it has already been stated, as an addition to EU nationals that are allowed to work abroad in another EU state also their family members have the right to reside and work in that country, irrespective of their nationality. Children have the right to be educated there.

European integration was founded on the principles of the free movement of goods, capital and services and, most importantly, people. From this perspective, the freedom of movement within the EU is a basic premise for the strengthening of the economic and social integration among the European countries and also a symbol of European integration. Europeans highly value the right to move freely within the European Union. This is visible in the results of Eurobarometer survey on geographical and labour mobility which asks EU citizens what the European Union means to them. In the last couple of years the majority of respondents tend to choose the answer ‘freedom to travel and work in the EU’ over the other fundamental aspects of the EU, such as the introduction of the euro or safeguarding peace. Similarly, Favell and Recchi (2005) state that when nationals of different Member States are asked what it means to be a ‘European citizen’, the freedom to move is always cited as the most important right. The same answer was the most often given during MOVEACT project on the civic and political participation of intra-European migrants and their sense of EU citizenship. In this project „freedom of movement within the Member States” was chosen as more important than European heritage, common law and democratic institutions, or the common currency.

Even though free movement within EU is depicted in the subject literature as an obvious asset to the economy of Europe, there are still some political barriers towards it, such as high public hostility, rather fragile support for EU integration or other ‘sociological’ dimensions, such as exclusion and exploitation (Favell & Nebe, 2009). EU introduces important legislative instruments to fight against discrimination: the Employment Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) covers discrimination in employment and the Racial Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) defends the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

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9 See www.moveact.eu.
Free movement of people within the EU, one of the fundamental principles of the freedoms guaranteed by Community law, is perhaps the most important right for EU citizens, and an essential element of European citizenship. Free movement is an economic and not a social concept. Nevertheless, it entails many problems of a social nature, for instance transfer of social benefits and pensions or social security and other benefits. In our case study we shall focus on implications of Freedom for movement on family issues connected to migration, education, housing, and so on. We shall emphasize more on the social perceptions of free movement of workers and their implications than on economic ones, which have been sufficiently discussed in the EU migratory literature in which policy initiatives, legislative provisions and court decisions are concerned with economic and not social consequences. We shall investigate what kind of influence the overlap of EU economic and social policy has on the lives of EU migrant families. It is important to notice that Union citizenship rights are subject to ‘the limitations and conditions’ in the Treaty and secondary legislation, which means that Member States can impose restrictions on the grounds of public policy, public security, or public health. Even though the Court of Justice interprets these grounds restrictively, Member States have possibility of interpreting the EU rights. We shall focus on Greece’s interpretation of EU directives and how this is translated into national migration policy towards EU citizens residing in that country, with attention paid to the case of Polish individuals.

ii. The Europe 2020
The second rationale behind the EU policy on mobility is so-called Europe 2020 – an agenda that is supposed to be an answer to the failure of Lisbon Strategy. Lisbon Strategy (or Lisbon Agenda) for growth and jobs was approved by the European Council in March 2000. On that day the EU set itself a goal to be fulfilled by the 2010: to make Europe the most competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world at the same time preserving or even improving social cohesion and maintaining environmental sustainability. The Lisbon Strategy was the EU’s overarching programme focusing on growth and jobs: it recognized that in light of increasing global competition, knowledge and the innovation are the EU’s most valuable assets. In the middle of the decade evaluations made the Commission conclude that despite of joint European efforts the LS goals had not been reached and expected results had not been fulfilled. The world-wide crisis has additionally influenced LS hindering implementation of its goals. The crisis began in mid-2007 with the drying up of liquidity in money markets and after the collapse of Lehman
Brothers in 2008 it took a turn for the worse. In 2009 a broad economic recession hit Europe which resulted in, among others, the Greek budgetary crisis with the consequent tensions in the EU. Due to the difficult to achieve goals and economic crisis the European economy had not reached the wanted level in terms of productivity, growth, or employment. Some relevant social targets were also missed: social exclusion was progressing in some aspects during the first decade of new millennium (Zgajewski & Hajjar, 2005). Far too ambitious agenda, poor coordination, conflicting priorities, and the lack of determined political action are named the most relevant reasons for the failure of LS. The EU enquiry that was launched to identify why the Lisbon Strategy failed, blamed the EU states for not doing enough to bring about difficult changes and recommended reducing the ambition of the strategy’s targets. After revising the growth and jobs strategy for the period 2000-2010 the EU realized that new strategy is essential if Europe wishes to overcome the recession and move towards a knowledge-based society. It seemed obvious that more reforms needed to be implemented at various levels and Member States should be all the more mobilized to reach the EU’s targets. To make the transformations happen, Europe needed a new common agenda: the EU 2020 Strategy. European Commission has launched this initiative to emerge from the recession and to prepare Europe for the upcoming decade. Europe 2020 is a plan for Europe’s economic renewal which aims not only to lead EU’s economy out of the economic recession by 2020, but also to enable a high quality of life, preserving at the same time Europe’s social model, raising employment, productivity and social cohesion. Aiming to create jobs, and encourage ‘green’ economic growth and creating an inclusive society but also in order to measure progress in developing this strategy and define where the EU should be by 2020, the EU has set five ambitious headline targets - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy:

- Employment: 75% of the population aged 20-64 should be employed;
- R&D: 3% of the EU’s GDP should be invested in R&D;
- Climate change / energy: the "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met (greenhouse gas emissions 20%, 20% of energy from renewables, 20% increase in energy efficiency);
- Education: the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree or diploma. Stamelos and
colleagues (2006, p. 291) infer that the diffusion of current European education policies takes many forms and is deployed along three axes aiming at the creation of (a) the European Lifelong Learning Area (ELLA), (b) the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and (c) the European Research Area (ERA).

- Poverty / social exclusion: at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion

In order to meet abovementioned objectives, which became EU’s priority, actions were designed at all levels: EU-level organizations, Member States, local and regional authorities, and civil society. Abovementioned five main targets of EU 2020 Strategy were translated into seven flagship initiatives:

1. Innovation Union: improvement of framework conditions and access to finance for research and innovation in order to strengthen the innovation chain and boost levels of investment throughout the Union.

2. Youth on the move, which scope is to enhance the quality and international attractiveness of Europe's higher education system by promoting mobility of students and trainees.


4. Resource efficient Europe: making economic growth independent from the use of resources, by decarbonising the economy, increasing the use of renewable sources, modernising the transport sector and promoting energy efficiency.

5. An industrial policy for the globalisation era aiming at supporting the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base able to compete globally.

6. An agenda for new skills and jobs with scope to create the right conditions to modernise labour markets and to enable people to acquire new skills in order to raise employment levels, facilitate labour mobility and the development of skills throughout the lifecycle with a view to increasing labour participation and better matching labour supply and demand in order to advance labour markets.

7. European platform against poverty: to ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society.
Fulfilling the aims of Europe 2020 strategy, the EU and the Member States are expected to deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion in Europe. In the ranges of the Europe 2020 strategy EU states’ progress is being constantly monitored: Member States are obliged to outline yearly how they intend to meet planned targets. These data are submitted to the EU Commission, and the European Council evaluates states’ progress every year. The Europe 2020 strategy requires each member state to translate the common European targets into national targets and trajectories by taking account of its relative starting position and national circumstances (European Commission, 2010). Figure 2 presents scheduled timeline for Europe 2020 strategy.

Figure 2. Europe 2020 - Timeline.
Education, training and lifelong learning play a key role to achieve Europe’s 2020 strategic targets, in particular when it comes to smart and inclusive growth. Investment in education and training for skills development is regarded indispensable for encouraging growth and competitiveness at the European level. According to (European Commission, 2010) two of abovementioned Europe’s 2020 flagship initiatives are particularly linked to education and training: youth on the move and an agenda for new skills and jobs. In the field of education and training ET 2020 pursues four strategic objectives: making lifelong learning and mobility reality; improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; promoting equality, social cohesion and active citizenship; and enhancing creativity and innovation at all levels of education and training. EU understands that investing in high quality, modernised and reformed education and training is a necessity as it will lay the foundations for Europe's long-term prosperity but also, help to respond in the short-term to the effects of the crisis by providing people with more and better skills and competences.

Within the discussion on Europe 2020 agenda there is a noticeable concern present whether it will or not repeat LS’s mistakes. Shortcomings of Europe 2020 include vague objective and the overloaded agenda as well as difficulties to measure actual development of the strategy.

d. Types of mobility in the EU

Mobility literature indicates that there are various kinds of migration types observed in the European context, including labour, family, academic and retirement movements. Unquestionably, the most frequently discussed type is the labour mobility and its popularity is translated into large load of both: theoretical and empiric studies. Similarly, family and academic migration evoke considerable interest among researches and growing interest towards those types of mobility, especially when it comes to family movements, can also be observed. The least popular seems to be retirement migration, probably due its small scale and impact on European community. Still, mobility literature in the EU notices retirement migration and there are quite a few scholars that recognize its relevance, for instance Kuronen (2010), Braun and Arsene (2006) or Favell and Recchi (2005). Nevertheless, in the present study we do not focus on this kind of mobility as it does not apply to the Polish migrants in Greece. We thoroughly discuss the labour and family mobility, as those two types proved relevant for Polish citizens residing in Greece.
i. Labour mobility

As we have already mentioned in the previous subsections, labour mobility has been a dominant feature of post-Second World War European migration. In the following subsection we shall focus on the most recent movements of EU workers, from the beginning of 21st century.

One of the most relevant rationales of the European Union relates to the freedom of movement (discussed thoroughly in the previous subsection), which removed obstacles concerning the flows of people, capital and products within European Union, and is regarded one of the most basic elements of the European integration. It ensures the right to move freely, reside and work in EU countries and abolishes discrimination based on nationality between workers of the Member States in respect to the conditions of work and employment. Freedom of movement introduced a range of political, social and economic opportunities for EU citizens and brought about changes that have significantly altered the European Union.

Current mobility literature shares a view that migrants have a variety of motivations for moving, among which no single factor dominates, but rather combination of reasons including economic, social and family triggers need to be taken under consideration. In the traditional approach employment-related factors, such as higher income and better working conditions, play a key role in deciding about migration. Economic theories of labour market processes tend to assume that people move to where the jobs are in response to changing economic circumstances, such as high unemployment and/or low wages. Traditional pattern for mobility suggests, moreover, that men migrate more often due to work-related reasons whilst women – to ‘family/love’ ones. From an economic point of view, in micro-scale the decision to move is based on the expected wage income from employment, net of migration costs. But not exclusively - future employment and wage prospects as well as non-wage income, such as social security benefits, but also transferability of pension rights, housing costs are additionally relevant economic aspects of migration decision. Mobile workers often get chance for better job and training opportunities abroad than they would have in their native country and period of work experience abroad boosts their career prospects.

The greatest changes of mobility patterns came with 2004 EU enlargement. Beforehand, Western Europe was afraid of “flood of migrants” from the East, who would take the jobs away from nationals and sign up for welfare benefits. That is why twelve of the existing fifteen EU Member States restricted labour inflows from the East. From the very first day new migrants were
able to work in Great Britain, Ireland and Sweden, with the first two countries being affected the most by post-enlargement migration. Spain, Portugal, Finland and Greece (May 1st, 2006), Italy (June, 2006), Holland (May, 2007), Luxembourg (November 1st, 2007), France (July, 2008), Belgium and Denmark (May 1st, 2009), Austria and Germany (May 1st, 2011) subsequently accepted 2004-migrant workers. In most new EU countries there was a rise registered in respect to the average emigration rate to the EU-15. Only in the Czech Republic and Slovenia the changes after EU’s enlargement in emigration rates were rather low (Fic et al., 2011). Post–2004 mobility’s was characterized by substantial propensity to migrate from the new to the old Member States: migrants tended to move into regions with higher wages and better job opportunities. The same situation occurred after 2007 enlargement. Fic and colleagues (2011) indicate that East-West migration flows from EU-8+2 to EU-15 countries created more than 99% of migration flows between the newer and older Member States, resulting in the stock of EU-8+2 nationals residing in EU-15 countries to triple over the period 2003-2009: from approx. 1.6 million to approx. 4.8 million. These scholars (2011, p. 4) estimate that since the 2004 enlargement, about 1.8 % of the EU-8 population has moved to the EU-15, and since 2007, about 4.1% of the EU-2 population has moved to the EU-15. The results of 2004 and 2007 enlargement depend on “the magnitude of emigration/immigration that has occurred relative to the size of the domestic population” (Fic et al., 2011, p. 5). Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania are those sending countries most affected by mobility.

The new labour markets’ appearance resulted in emigration of thousands of Polish citizens. Characteristic for this emigration were young, well educated people, most often graduates from universities. Not only in case of Polish migration, but more generally, the population flows from all of the new member countries since 2004 have been dominated by individuals of working age, particularly within the 15-34 age bracket.
Figure 3. Age structure of mobile EU-8 and EU-2 citizens in the EU-27, average over 2003-2009.

Source: (Fic et al., 2011, p. 23).

Among the post-2004 migration individuals from Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary were reported to possess highest educational attainment (Fic et al., 2011). When it comes to the type of professions of mobile EU citizens living in EU-15 countries, Fic and colleagues (2011, p. 27) assess that approx. 32%, of EU-8+2 nationals worked in elementary occupations, about 54% were employed in occupations that require medium skills (e.g. craft and trades workers, service and sales workers) and only 14% of EU-8+2 nationals worked in high-skilled professions (e.g. legislators, senior officials, managers, professionals, technicians, etc.).

The final arrangements restricting labour migration ended after the 7 year transitional period. From 1 May 2011 labour markets across the EU-27 opened for citizens of the EU-10 who gained a full access to them. Still, nowadays, regardless the fact that the EU labour markets are open, and despite existing wage and unemployment differences between EU countries, intra-European labour mobility remains low (Holland & Paluchowski, 2013; Bonin et al., 2008; Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2008). Legal restrictions on the mobility of workers are not the only factors restraining people from moving abroad. Even when restrictions are eliminated both financial and non-financial barriers to mobility may still be in place, for instance language barrier, fear of losing contact with family and friends, housing costs in destination country, and so on. The attitudes towards migration are various in different countries. As it has been already mentioned in previous subsections, Cypriots do not want to impose big changes on their families, whilst for Polish citizens leaving family behind is not a major discouraging factor when deciding to migrate.
One of the characteristics of current EU mobility is that it is temporary in nature - 10% of EU citizens stated that they had worked in another member country at some point in their lives (Eurobarometer, 2011). Another feature of labour migration is that workers transfer part of their income to the home country.

It is obvious to say that cross-border labour mobility entails challenges as well as benefits. The balance of positive and negative effects of increased intra-European labour mobility depends mainly on the timeframe of migration, more precisely whether mobility is temporary or permanent. In the short run, intra-European mobility may cause labour shortages in sending countries and, therefore, weaken Member States’ economies. Eastern European states (due to accession and opening of labour markets) and, nowadays, Southern Member States are afraid that brain drain to richer European countries, such as Germany or the UK, will lead to the permanent loss of human capital. This selective migration of highly productive and well educated people may hamper long-term income growth and lead to further economic differentiation of EU regions. Nevertheless, as Holland & Paluchowski (2013), claim, the relatively low intra-EU migration makes the macroeconomic effects of the brain drain rather limited. Research indicates that in case of unemployment or under-skilled employment leading to skill loss, brain drain is a better option than brain waste. Therefore, searching for employment opportunities within the EU when there are no such chances in the homeland, may be a solution for higher-skilled workers. Still, in the long run it will become necessary for the EU countries to compete against each other in order to attract the best talents, especially those countries that are now losing skilled labour due to their economic difficulties. On the other hand, the initial losses caused by brain drain might be reduced by returning migrants who, by bringing in capital, skills and new ideas acquired abroad, often also another person, could increase economic growth of their countries.

Benefits of cross-border mobility include higher incomes for the migrants themselves. In macro-scale labour mobility redress unemployment discrepancies and imbalances across regions and countries of European Union, works against economic asymmetries within this supranational system. It works for upskilling of European employees by enabling an efficient matching of workers’ skills with available jobs (Frigyes & Ward-Warmedinger, 2006). Labour mobility is recognized as a relevant instrument to foster fast economic adjustment and growth within the EU.
In the long run, due to returning migrants coming back with capital, skills and new ideas acquired abroad, mobility may increase economic growth of EU countries.

Economic crisis that stroke European markets in 2008 is a relevant aspect in discussion on intra-European labour mobility, which has been translated into many recent publications on this issue. Banking and financial difficulties entailed the collapse of the housing market, a loss of financial market confidence in government solvency, competitiveness losses and a severely restrictive process of fiscal adjustment (Holland & Paluchowski, 2013). Discrepancies among Member States’ markets began to widen: whilst many EU countries started to register record unemployment (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain), elsewhere, demand for skilled workers could not be satisfied (Bräuninger & Majowski, 2011). In this light intra-European labour mobility is seen as an effective way of reducing economic difficulties, a cure for shortage of qualified workers. Migration flows have responded to high unemployment in the euro periphery. On the other hand, a sharp rise in mobility in 2008 was followed by a sharp fall in 2010, and again increase in mobility in 2011, making a conclusive view on the impact of the economic downturn on intra-EU mobility impossible (Holland & Paluchowski, 2013). Interesting seem changes in migration patterns since the crisis: in the pre-crisis period of 2004-2007, due to the EU enlargements, Spain, Italy and Ireland had very high net inflows of migration from the newer Member States. Nowadays, those countries are mentioned among states with the highest emigration rates.

Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and Ireland were countries that have suffered the most because of the economic crisis. The widening divergence within Member States’ economies led to upgraded mobility from abovementioned states. Moreover, more and more nationals from countries experiencing grand consequences of economic crisis, for instance Greece or Ireland, are becoming willing to migrate. Those people are generally young, educated, with good qualifications, as those individuals were hard hit by high unemployment. When it comes to the skill level of the mobile population, workers migrating from Portugal tended to be lower-skilled whilst workers from Spain, Italy and Greece were predominantly high-skilled (Holland & Paluchowski, 2013). Basically, general trend present in the post-crisis intra-European mobility is under-skilling caused by language barriers, and lack of recognition of foreign qualifications. This tendency was present especially in Germany, the UK and Spain (Holland & Paluchowski, 2013).
Facing demographic change, globalisation and more currently, economic crisis, the EU tries to encourage to remain in Europe those individuals who decided to migrate in search for a better life. The EU cannot afford to lose its most educated, brilliant and talented individuals to more traditional migration centres such as the US and Canada. On the other hand, for countries such as Germany experiencing low unemployment together with the shortage of qualified workers, potential immigration of young, educated workforce from neighbouring EU countries is regarded beneficial.

Summing up the discussion on recent labour mobility in the EU countries, it is important to remind that historically, intra-EU migrants have been changing in their social composition: from low-skilled economic migrants (guest-workers’ from South to North) mainly from rural areas to better educated, highly skilled labour migrants, coming from large cities and being drawn from upper-middle class backgrounds. The subject literature indicates that cross-border labour mobility is generally targeted towards Northern European countries: Germany and Great Britain are countries dominated by labour migration. In the intra-EU migration human capital plays important role as low-skilled migrants tend to move from South to Centre Europe, whilst high-skilled – in all directions (Santacreu et al., 2009, p. 25). Migrants from the EU-15 countries are on average older and more educated comparing to the 13 relatively new member countries’ individuals migrating to the EU-15, who still tend to be rather low-skilled and young. Therefore, as migration continues, it has significant consequences not only for labour markets, but also on the age profile of home and host societies.

The research on cross-border mobility in Europe confirms simple relationship, namely that job and geographic movements are positively correlated: more frequent job changes are associated with more frequent geographic moves, and the other way round. This correlation has been most recently proved by the crisis resulting in more EU citizens deciding to migrate from countries characterized by large immigration flow just few years earlier. In the EU there is a general feeling present that mobility is a good thing for the EU’s labour market and economy and, at the same time, a positive individual experience for Union’s citizens. Labour mobility is also recognized as a relevant instrument to foster economic adjustment and growth within the EU. Nevertheless, the need for qualified workers within the EU can be satisfied only partially by the intra-European
labour mobility. Therefore, migration from non-EU countries is additionally beneficial for the EU’s Member States, but it is not the subject of concern in the present case study.

Sectorial skill shortages combined with demographic challenges evoke the need for greater intra-European mobility. The subject literature on cross-border labour mobility emphasizes its potentials of increasing the employment in Europe in the medium to long run, minimizing the costs and maximizing benefits of increase in labour mobility to both sending and receiving countries. Thus, greater intra-European mobility would boast the welfare of the vast majority of Europeans. The free movement of human capital has been described in the subject literature as a strong instrument fostering economic adjustment and growth. Labour mobility decreases market imbalances, improves skill matching, supports investment into education, and increases the level of innovation and entrepreneurship. Important benefit of mobility, especially with regards to receiving countries, is additional income through remittances. Money sent home is often used for investments, which further enhances economic growth.

Cross border mobility is seen both as an opportunity and a challenge for the European Union. The loss of highly skilled employers migrating to countries with stronger economy is a fear that the EU Member States face. However, all in all, from an economics perspective, positive effects of intra-European labour mobility are emphasized, as a higher level of mobility raises combined income of the sending and receiving country due to efficiency gains (Bonin et al., 2008). Additionally, it seems relevant to notice that EU’s objective is to attract highly skilled immigrants in order to realize Europe 2020 strategy.

Intra-European labour mobility’s magnitude depends on the speed at which economically weaker regions catch up with those wealthier ones. Researchers believe that if economic growth and social development replace current negative situation in many European countries, labour migration will most likely decrease.

Analysis of research on labour mobility within the EU in its most current form proved essential for present case study as it pointed out ideas that seem relevant to be investigated in case of Polish migrants in Athens. Polish citizens residing in Greece consist of large group of prior to 2004 enlargement workers. We have already indicated that 2004 and 2007 enlargements proved highly important for economies of EU Member States, the previous one being especially critical for Polish citizens who started to leave their country in mass numbers. We want to check how and
if Polish mobility to Greece changed after 2004. Another thing is economic crisis of 2008 striking Europe and hitting hard on Greece. We aim to investigate the potential changes it might have caused to the Polish workers and their families residing in Athens. General trend present in the intra-European mobility is under-skilling caused among others by language barriers, and lack of recognition of foreign qualifications. We plan to check whether this is the case for Polish individuals in Greece. As we have already mentioned, for Polish citizens leaving family behind is not a major discouraging factor when deciding to migrate. We wish to see if this might be the case for the Polish population residing in the capital of Greece. Last, but not the least, the economic approach underlines the benefits of remittances as sources of consumption and investment in education and businesses. We shall investigate what role, if any, remittances have for Polish migrant families in Athens.

ii. Mobility of families

1. Family: definition and typology

Before we start the discussion about the relevance of family mobility for the social prosperity of Europe and its place in the EU policy it is important to understand the complexity of the concept of family. This difficult to define notion is subject of constant historical, cultural and social change. Family is the oldest and the most stable form of human coexistence that endured throughout the ages, cultures and societies. Family is a universal notion for all human communities, though it may manifest itself through a variety of forms.

The concept of family has gained a great relevance in sociology and is traditionally located in the core of this field. Therefore, one can find its explanation almost in every sociological textbook, publication or internet source. For example Social Science Dictionary (http://www.socialsciencedictionary.com/) defines family as a

“group of individuals related to one another by blood ties, marriage or adoption. Members of families form an economic unit, the adult members of which are responsible for the upbringing of children. All societies involve some form of family, although the form the family takes is widely variable. In modern industrial societies the main family form is the nuclear family, although a variety of extended family relationships are also found”.
It is relevant to add that, according to the *Final Report on the Research on Families and Family policies in Europe* the structures and forms of European families have changed significantly since the 1960s and 1970s and nowadays the nuclear family model is being replaced by various alternative family forms and lifestyles (Kuronen, 2010). Schaefer (2010) characterizes family as “a set of people related by blood, marriage (or some other agreed-upon relationship), or adoption who share the primary responsibility for reproduction and caring for members of society”. Jan Piotrowski observed that family is present ”in every society, from the most primitive and simple, to the most advanced and complex, (...) the family is the basic unit which meets the needs of its members” (Piotrowski, 1970, p. 171).

Due to the complicated nature of the notion of family we could try to define it according to four different approaches: structural, functional, inclusive and universal:

A. **The structural approach** postulates that people are subjects to forces that they cannot control, and of which they are sometimes hardly aware. In family perspective attention is paid to the composition of the group and adopts certain minimum: the family is made of at least one parent and one child who are biologically (or due to adoption) related to each other and have a common place of residence.

B. **The functional approach** emphasizes the goals and functions that the family should fulfil towards both: its members and the society in general. This approach’s definition is of institutional nature and refers to social organization, or group that is considered by the majority of the population as basic group designated to perform the essential functions and to achieve individual and social success. Family is defined as a group with at least one parent and one child carrying out the basic functions of socialization as well as intimacy function, satisfying the physical and psychological needs.

C. **Inclusive (or open) approach** stresses the importance of the relations between the family members: it focuses on the motivations and preferences of individuals involved in personal relations. In this approach the family is understood as an individual and voluntary social group with specific relationships; any group of adults and children that maintain relationships leading to the formation of feelings and family ties that attach them to this
particular group. This definition does not require cohabitation or having children, and neither does it refer to the age of family members.

D. **Universal approach** assumes that the family is normatively defined kinship group, which aims to fulfil the tasks of procreation and socialization. The term "kinship group" in this approach means that family members are related by kinship ties. Normatively defined relationship indicates that the role of society in defining what it means to be a family is emphasized. In this approach childless couples are regarded as a family.

The subject literature reveals that the shape and functioning of the family depend substantially on the social world external to it. Family exists in a broader, non-family social networks and that is why family’s transformations are not only the result of its "inside forces", but are largely impacted by the external structures and processes. Global society influences the family by modifying its structure, functioning, and the mentality of its members: as global society is undergoing intensive transformation, its impact on the family increases and the family is modified to a larger extends.

When it comes to the typology of the family, we can distinguish many types of families, depending on the various criteria, such as (Biernaczyk, 2004):

1. **The number of people in the family:**
   a. Small (two-generation, basic, nuclear) composed of the parents and children. This model was initiated in the nineteenth century and was popularized in the twentieth century, when it became the dominant type of family.
   b. Large (multi-generation) including more than two generations of relatives and in-laws who live together in a spatial concentration. The large family is usually led by the oldest man, typically grandfather.
   c. The clan - includes relatives descended from a common ancestor not only in a straight line, but also in other, „side” lines. The clan may be spatially scattered and is not always led by one person.

2. **The hierarchy of prestige and power in the family:**
   a. The matriarchal family - characterized by dominant importance of women in the family. Matriarchy is considered to be an earlier form of the power governance in the family than patriarchy.
b. The patriarchal family - with a dominant role of a man.

c. The egalitarian family (democratic), in which husband and wife have equal rights and obligations. Such an arrangement is characterized, above all, for contemporary models of family.

The above typologies are closely related to another distinction of the family made on the basis of:

3. Family structure:

a. The complete family - consists of parents and children. In the total number of families this kind dominates.

b. The single-parent family in which a child (or children) is raised by only one parent. Kozdrowicz (1989, p. 15) distinguishes following types of single-parent families: family orphaned by the death of one parent, incomplete as a result of divorce, separation or abandonment of the family, family of unmarried mothers with children. This type includes also the family temporarily incomplete due to: occupational parent, stay in prison, longer treatment in the hospital, extended stay abroad (Kozdrowicz, 1989).

c. The reconstructed family - after transformation of the single-parent family into the complete family, when, following the death of a spouse or after a divorce, the parent enters into a new marriage.

Research on the concept of family, its structure and types, reveals its variability and adaptability to changing social and cultural conditions. Generally, the majority of definitions point out that family is a basic social unit, or even a social institution, united through the bonds of kinship or marriage, defined by its social functions, such as reproducing (both: biologically, through procreation, and socially, through socialization), acting as a major focus of productive work, and protecting children, as well as providing emotional comfort and support for adults. In the social sciences the family is defined paying special attention to two aspects: institutional and group one. According to the first approach, family is treated as a social institution examining how it satisfies priority needs of the global society, the needs of other groups in an environment where it operates as well as the needs of individuals. This approach refers to family functions as the defining factor. The second - group aspect, focuses on the family as one of the most relevant social groups. The
socio-economic status of the family is indicated by the parents' education and occupation, which can be measured by rather subjective feeling of prestige.

In the present study we utilize universal approach towards family looking at it as a social unit fulfilling specific tasks, but including more than two generations of relatives and in-laws who do not necessarily live together in a spatial concentration.

2. Family migrations

Mobility literature often pays attention to individual experiences. Still, migration has for some time now been an experience in which entire families are participating with family members being influenced the most by the movements. A great deal of spouses and children follow husband or wife that decided to emigrate changing their lives on the whole. The various forms of family-led mobility have been a major component of migration intakes worldwide, in case of many countries being the only legal but, at the same time, highly contested means of finding admission. Family-related mobility is named the main mode of legal entry into the EU as well as to other, traditional immigration countries, such as Australia, Canada and the United States (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008). Therefore, it has become essential for mobility to be conceptualized in the broader spectrum of family. This view is not unfamiliar for mobility literature, quite the reverse: many studies on migration concern entire families (e.g. Moskal, 2011; Ryan et al., 2009; Fuligni, 1998). Moreover, as Ryan and colleagues (2009) indicate, discussing family migration, it is necessary to go beyond a household perspective and to appreciate the diversity of transnational and inter-generational relationships.

According to Kuronen (2010, p. 49 after: Wall, 2007: 2253-4) research concerning migrant families has typically discussed four main topics:

“1) The migration decision (insofar as migration is often an ongoing family project, negotiated at the family level and structured around the needs and resources of the households);
2) The forms of family migration (including migration led by male or female partners and whole family migration);
3) The demographic trends (mainly focusing on immigrants’ fertility);
4) The assimilation of immigration families (studying the different modes of integration of family members, including the second generation)”. 

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Social capital theory infers that individual decision-making is embedded in wider, social contexts, such as families, kin and ethnic communities (Vandenbrande et al., 2006 after: Massey et al., 1994). Moreover, as suggested in Kofman’s and Meetoo’s report, (2008, p. 154) the decision to migrate is seldom the product of individual considerations, but “its timing is closely related to the family life cycle and major events over the course of the lives of first and second generations of immigrants, and not necessarily understood as a direct response to labour market opportunities”.

Thus, mobility decisions are not isolated resolutions, but are rather taken within a predefined relational context and are impacted by family-related considerations. Social networks of family have impacted on the traditional explanation of migration as a movement from poor to richer countries making it too simplistic and requiring a more comprehensive approach. From this perspective, the concept of ‘bounded mobility’ illustrating people optimizing their mobility within a predefined context including their families, social networks and cultural context (Vandenbrande et al., 2006) comes into prominence. The importance of family in the process of migration decision making is widely supported in the subject literature (Moskal, 2011; Santacreu et al., 2009; Bonin et al., 2008; Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2008; Vandenbrande et al., 2006; Favell & Recchi, 2005).

Growing interest of family-related migration debates is translated to the development of relevant European legislation as well as actions of European states which transform their family migration policies.

Contemporary migrations are becoming more and more common process for people who want to improve their living conditions and to provide better economic security for themselves and their families. It has been proved that important family ties work as a ‘push’ factor in mobility. Favell and Recchi (2005) indicate that among reasons for mobility, work opportunities were less common than non-work reasons, among which ‘family/love’ (29.7%) dominated over ‘quality of life’ (24%) and ‘study’ (7%). Following figure presents visually the juxtaposition of migration reasons internationally.
Figure 4. International migration by category of entry in selected OECD countries as a percentage of total inflow (2005). Source: Kofman and Meetoo (2008, p. 156).

Even in the case of young, single, childless migrants, family strategies may have an impact on their migration decision-making and planning (Ryan et al., 2009). People attracted by the idea of mobility often report that they are put off by the vision of uprooting their families: fear the loss of contact and support from family and relatives (TNS Opinion & Social, 2010; Vandenbrande et al., 2006). Family commitments prevent people from going abroad, and young women are much more likely to select this reason to stay than young men (31% vs. 19%) (Flash, 2011).

Among family related reasons pushing people towards mobility literature names a wide range of factors, for instance change of partner, movement for marriage, following one’s partner, following children or other relatives that migrated, migration in order to ascertain better education or medical treatment for a family members, etc. In this context, relevant for mobility are family formation, family extensions (children) and family dissolutions. Kofman and Meetoo (2008, pp. 154-156) recognize four different types of family migration: family reunification; family formation or marriage migration; migration of the entire family (concerns a whole-family migration of typically
a nuclear family) and migration of the sponsored family members (not necessarily defined as being of the immediate family). Another typology of family migration was proposed by King and colleagues (2006, cited in: Kuronen, 2010, p. 49), who added to the former classification a separation between family formation and marriage migration, as well as a new category of a split-family formation. Recent literature regards family reunification as the most conventional form of family migration. In the typical form of reunification a male migrant brings in his family to the new country. Nevertheless, research suggests that more and more women take up the primary position: an increasing number of female migrants bringing in male spouses and fiancés from the countries of origin is a current trend related to a more equal gender balance in the second generation (Kuronen, 2010).

As a social unit, the family offers support for its members in accessing resources and services, but also in migrating. In 1990 the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families defined the migrant family as “those who can benefit from its provisions. These are the migrant worker’s spouse, persons in a relationship with the migrant worker that, according to applicable law, produces effects equivalent to marriage, and dependent minors and unmarried children” (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008, p. 157).

As Strasser and colleagues (2009) put it, in specific national contexts, ‘the migrant family’ is determined according to the national and European debates and expressed by their respective rules and regulations. Discussing the phenomenon of mobility it is important to approach the family in the broadest sense including not only household units but also the full range of trans-generational relatives. A wide notion of family should comprise, for example, participants migrating to join siblings, cousins and other relatives as well as parents joining their adult children and grandchildren.

3. Consequences of family migration

Family mobility has been reported to lead to positive consequences for family, especially when it comes to higher earnings. Higher income enhances the level of family life and gives the sense of material security for the family members as well as possibility of professional fulfilment. Nevertheless, EU citizens perceive the family as burdened with the weight of mobility. Vandenbrande and colleagues’ study (2006) implies that geographical mobility is most frequently
regarded as a good thing for an individual, but bad thing for families: only one out of three respondents said that it is a good thing for families. This study has also pointed out that women are more aware of the potential costs of geographical mobility to family ties. Among the negative effects of mobility scholars name affecting the social cohesion through its impact on family structures. If we look at the family in the broadest context, as it has been previously suggested, therefore as group connected by kinship or close emotional attachments, it could be assumed that the relations between the family members that go abroad and ones staying behind inevitably change character: with time, the close emotional attachments transforms into more distant kinds of relationships. Another issue concerns movers settling down in a new country, unfamiliar environment: they become exposed to the possibility of creating new relationships and families. In this way social networks are widening reducing the significance of the relationships with the people that were left behind. As family cohesion becomes a social challenge of mobility children are often the ones to bear the greatest consequences.

Additionally, among the mobility costs relevant literature typically names: dysfunctional family, postponing the decision of marriage and procreation. In case of Polish families, as for the negative impact of family migration, increasing rates of divorces have been pointed. Predictions say that at the current rate of divorces every third family abroad may fall apart. Another problem is children abandoned by one or both parents who left to work in another country. Current numbers of such children is estimated at 45 to 110,000 children. These children tend to be more prone to depression, turning to drugs and alcohol, they have problems at school (Gacek, 2013, p. 114 after: Bera & Korczyński, 2012). As we have already mentioned, migration is associated with economic and social instability for the individual, thus it impacts on the desire of marriage often reducing it. Postponing family formation leads to “negative effects on fertility, and thereby constitutes a negative demographic externality, depends on whether these factors result in either childlessness or a lower family size” (Bonin et al., 2008, p. 64). Economic perspective discusses the negative consequences for migrants and their families pointing at inadequate social position to the expectations and qualifications, employment below qualifications and qualifications’ depreciation influencing the entire families.
4. Women in family migrations

Wall (2007) noticed that there is a gap in the research on international migration when it comes to the sociology of immigrant families. Regardless the fact that mobility has been approached as series of negotiations involving a diversity of actors, including the individual, the family, social and kin networks, the market, and the state, other topics have been the major concerns of classical migration research. Wall (2007) points at political, demographic, and economic conditions of sending and receiving countries as well as at consequences of migration movements for societies, listing them as issues which traditional migration research focuses on. Little attention paid to family in the context of migration might derive from the classical sociological approach which positioned men, a worker, as a key actor in mobility experience. Thus, immigrant family, and more precisely: women and children were generally neglected. Family migration literature often refers to the gender-related differences caused by the different roles that men and women play in the family. According to the Final Report on the Research on Families and Family policies in Europe (Kuronen, 2010, p. 49), the increasing diversity of gender roles altogether with migration strategies and integration outcomes, including independent female migration, and transnational families, has intensified research interest in migrant families. Santacreu, Baldoni and Albert (2009) point to traditional pattern for mobility, which includes men migrating in order to find work, and women – due to family/love – connected issues. Women in mobility literature traditionally tended to be portrayed within narrow domestic and familial contexts, playing supporting roles as wives and home-makers. Their involvement in mobility was basically limited either to those family members who are left behind or simply follow migration of their husbands through family reunification. This tendency comes from the dominance of economic perspectives within mobility literature, an approach that focused on the male migrant worker as the main actor in mobility experience. However, current migration studies give much more attention to women as equally important participant of family mobility experience and, as it has already been mentioned, an active player in the decision-making process. This is largely due to the fact that women migrating as heads of household now make up almost half of global flows and are becoming major initiators of family reunification (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008).

The mobility experience impacts on traditional gender roles: it may reinforce or disrupt them. A part of mobility literature implies that mobility may have a positive influence on women and gender relations as it may result in higher wage-earning and, eventually, “increasing
independence of women, a more flexible division of labour at home, less segregation in public spaces and the increasing centrality of women in transnational families and networks “ (Kuronen, 2010, p. 50). This may explain why women tend to be more reluctant than men to return to their homeland (e.g. Moskal, 2011).

Women are those that take on additional caring and home-making roles, as well as take up the role of adapting family to life in a new environment. For women mobility may lead to taking up double caring responsibilities, looking after family members as they adapt to the new location, but also ongoing transnational caring for relatives (children, parents, siblings) left back home. As it has been mentioned in the section considering family strategies, men’s plans for migration or return are more and more often dependent on the career goals of their wives as well as on the education of their children.

5. Transnational families and kinship networks

Family sociology typically emphasizes proximity as a prerequisite for interaction and exchange within families ignoring family ties that cross borders (Mazzucato & Schans, 2008). Currently this approach is no longer possible, as transnational families became more than visible in the landscape of global mobility: family-led mobility does not always include the migration of the entire household. Therefore, cross-border mobility results in creation of transnational families, an example of extended family households - a family in which some members live in new country and other, often children, remain in the homeland. Thus, transnational mobility extends families and households through space and time. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002: 3, cited in Kuronen, 2010, p. 154) defined transnational families as ones

“that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders”.

The transnational perspective broadens the definition of “family” including spatially dispersed webs of relationships. Members of such families frequently suffer from the emotional consequences of geographical distance.

According to reproduction theories, all individuals inherit a certain amount of cultural capital from their families depending on combination of family background, socioeconomic status, educational level, and income (Bourdieu, 1984). From this perspective, during familial
socialization parents who have experienced mobility transmit to their children so-called *mobility capital*, which broadens youngsters’ horizons and invokes taste for travelling (Hauvette, 2010). Mobility capital and familial background impact migration orientations pushing young people towards mobility. For those youngsters crossing borders seems as part of a “normal” lifestyle. However, as Hauvette implies, familial mobility capital is not an indispensable prerequisite for migration.

Transnational caring is a highly gendered activity with more women actively involved in providing care transnationally. Transnational caring involves migrants in so-called ‘global care chains’ - series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 73). *Transnational mothering* describes situation when women migrants either leave young children behind or send them back to be cared for by relatives.

Literature on transnational families establishes that formation of such a unit is simultaneously a structural and cultural process: migrants form transnational households in response to structural forces of economic globalization and, in doing so, rely on cultural resources such as kin networks. Transnational kinship networks assure the practical support, such as child care, material support (e.g. money to finance moves and start the life abroad, shelter), informational support (e.g. job information and contacts, information about social services) and emotional support, important especially at the beginning of the experience of mobility but definitely relevant all the way through the experience. The subject literature indicates that the mobility decision is usually influenced by the existence of and participation in networks that provide different kinds of earlier-mentioned support (practical, emotional, material, and informational). Ryan (2010) implies that kinship networks of support and financial assistance are more important for migrants from lower socio-economic groups while highly skilled, professional, and affluent migrants are less dependent upon support from familial networks. This indicates that migrants may have varied levels of reliance on transnational family ties, depending on their skills, resources, and access to support in the host country. When it comes to the kinship networks, relevant seems to be also dynamism of relationships over time: in the first generation the family ties are the strongest and the most influential, but they are weakening through the second and third generation (Ryan, 2010 after: Vertovec, 2001).
With regards to kinship networks, relevant literature emphasizes the importance of being involved in the inter- and intra-generational links including a wide range of relatives (siblings, cousins, parents and grandchildren) depending on the specific stages in the life course. From this perspective, different family relationships may be relevant for young, single people: at this stage very relevant seem to be the siblings (or cousins), often the key facilitators in mobility experiences. On the other hand, migrants with small children consider childcare and schooling, so they value help they receive from parents and grandparents. For older migrants, issues such as ageing and the emotional attachment to grandchildren may be the most important considerations.

Currently cross-border mobility in Europe is characterized by situation when people establish and maintain activities and connections in both: the country they come from and the new state where they live. Migrants who keep in touch with their homes in the sending countries actually live between two social spaces: they become embedded in the host society, but also keep close connections to the life in their homeland. This situation supports the concept described by Vetrovec as ‘bifocality’, namely situation when the country of origin remains the source of cultural and social identification, while the host country is a source of material and economic opportunities (Moskal, 2011 after: Vetrovec 2004).

Mobility literature illustrates the importance of transnational family networks as on-going sources of practical and emotional support, facilitated through the availability of new technology that has enabled maintaining transnational ties through regular and affordable communication via: internet communicators, cheap phone calls, e-mails and text messages. Moreover, quite cheap air travel and the absence of travel restrictions across the EU additionally simplify and facilitate taking up transnational caring roles.

6. Family mobility and policy

In policy formulation family mobility has been attributed social significance, whilst labour movements have been ascribed economic value. Admission policies are structured by the three aspects of the construction of family: membership, function and role, dependency (Strasser et al., 2009). Dependency is seen as the key concept in a state's regulations and determination of family migration, family relationship and membership with the distinction between sponsor and the joining migrant being at the forefront of discussion about family mobility with its economic needs as well as needs for personal care.
Strasser, Kraler, Bonjour & Bilger, (2009) refer to the 1960s and 1970s as to the origin of current European family migration policies. According to those scholars, the male breadwinner model, that was the dominant family norm back then, still seem to have an impact on the formulation of current family migration policies in Europe. This traditional understanding of family roles ascribes the public and productive role to the sponsor, and the private and reproductive role to the sponsored.

Historically, family migration has tended to be seen as an instrument of integration (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008). Scholars point to ensuring social integration of migrant workers and their families as one of policy recommendations required for upgrading the levels of mobility (Bonin et al., 2008). Kofman and Meetoo (2008) specify international instruments designed to recognize the right to family reunification as well as family foundation, calling to respect the right to family life. According to this report, the right to family reunification has been included in two human rights conventions: the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular in Article 9, and the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, in particular in Article 44.

European Parliament Report on the protection of families and children (1999) implies that “there is no such thing as a European family policy, even though it is possible to detect some resemblances among our various countries. In fact there is no Community competence in the area of family policy, and it is for the various Member States to implement or decline to implement policies in this field” (COMECE, 2004, p. 15).

Authors of this report infer that if we consider the national cultural and historical differences, the Member States treat family-policy as their exclusive domain. At the same time community regulations in many areas of social protection, working time, gender equality, competition, media-policy, formation and vocational training, health, development policy etc., impact also the families.

Family networks and family life become a subject of the EU interest each time they come into play in a sphere of social life which is covered by EU legislation. The European Union recognizes, for example, the relevance of family units in the mobility experience of European workers and this interest is reflected (to some extent) in the EU policy. Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States.
except from combining all the previous regulations concerning the right of entry and residence of Union citizens also limited to an absolute minimum the formalities which Union citizens and their families must complete in order to exercise the right of residence within the EU. When it comes to family reunification, Directive 2004/38/EC has extended the definition of ‘family member’, which was formerly limited to spouse, descendants aged under 21 or dependent children, and dependent ascendants, and has transformed it including registered partners (if the host member state’s legislation considers a registered partnership as the equivalent of a marriage). As it has already been stated, as an addition to EU nationals that are enabled to work abroad in another EU country also their family members have the right to reside and work in that country, irrespective of their nationality. Children have the right to be educated there. The right to freedom of movement prohibits discrimination of migrant workers and their families in any aspect of social life. Still, in reality EU social rights for mobile EU citizens are not universal and tend to privilege labour migrants (Moskal, 2011). According to Moskal, as unpaid work does not count in work-related legislation, care-related mobility is undervalued in the European Community.

Researchers emphasize the importance of recognizing the value of family-led mobility and the need to make it a priority for the EU research and policy. It is also important to notice that even though at the level of the EU there are some policies designed and introduced to protect the rights of its citizens, including family members, each member state is responsible for its own fulfilment of those policies. That is why some differences can be noticed in the realization of those protective policies among the EU Member States. Additionally, it should be noted that, over time, many countries have recognized the changing ways in which familial relationships have been formed. For example, as World Migration Report suggests (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008, p. 158 after: Cooke, 2005) “an increasing number of states recognize social units akin to the family, such as same-sex relationships, cohabitation, single parents and adopted children”. Still, some relevant cultural differences impacting mobility remain, and it concerns divorce, cohabitation, single parent families, reproductive technologies and same-sex partnerships, which might have direct impacts on migration (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008 after: Bailey and Boyle, 2004).

Intra-European mobility is broadly covered in the subject literature and its influence on migrants’ lives as well as the lives of entire families is often discussed. Until recently, family migration was neglected, both by academics and policymakers. However, nowadays family
mobility is beginning to capture more academic and policy attention with European research showing a growing interest in transnational families.

Families are more likely to have combined trajectories of mobility than others: in their case mobility decision is complex and the possible advantages of mobility, such as enhancement of employment opportunities, greater economic well-being and the prevention of unemployment, are often not the principal decisive considerations. Factors such as being closer to one’s relatives play an important role in stimulating cross-border mobility. In the present case study we will try to find which factors in the process of mobility decision making are the most relevant, and, more generally, what is the place of family members in this process.

The subject literature implies that it is essential to approach ‘family’ in the broadest sense, including kinship networks, rather than focusing only on married couples and household units. Even though migrants may go abroad alone, they are often involved in complicated webs of relationships and family networks both in host country and back home, thus, across locations, but also across generations. We would like to establish the structure of kinship networks of Polish migrants in Athens and investigate their role as both: pull and push factors in the process of migration. Mobility literature emphasizes the role of family composition ascribing each of its elements an important task in the family functioning. That is why we plan to carefully and deeply investigate the family composition trying to establish the constitution of Polish migrant family. Literature review undergone on the family involved in mobility experience made us realize that it is not possible to define ‘the immigrant family’. This would mean that it is a static concept, when actually it is rather a set of complex social relations, which are characterized by unpredictable outcomes. That is why we shall pay great attention to the complexity of social relationships and investigate the factors impacting it, bearing in mind that family-led mobility is an individual experience, a response to the diversity of people’s situations and stories. It seems quite obvious that families may change through migration in a multiple ways. Our study will try to answer the questions about the causes and impulses for the changes, as well as will try to establish their results and impact on members of Polish migrant family.

Migration involves not only joining or reuniting family members but also leaving relatives behind. Therefore, through migration, family networks become divided transnationally. It has been proved that movers feel economic and emotional commitment to family members ‘back home’.
Thus, they remit part of their income and money they send back home constitute a relevant financial inflow to the extended family. Mobility literature implies also that movements give some choices concerning family formation (or split): reunification, transitional ties, but also leaving loved ones behind. The complexity of family strategies and the ways in which families can be split and reconfigured through transnational migration is of various kinds. We wish to investigate this phenomenon paying attention to the type of family formation patterns and see how the family relations are modified by migration. From totally different perspective, migration could also be a result of kind of escape from difficult family circumstances. We shall try to check whether this is the case for Polish migrant workers in Greece.

Relevant literature suggests that if the EU wishes to encourage mobility it should guarantee social security systems that would provide adequate social protection provisions that could help incoming people combine work with private and family responsibilities such as childcare, finding a shelter, etc. In the present study we will seek for the actual examples of the EU protection of Polish migrant workers in their everyday lives. We will investigate to what degree, if any, European policies are assistance in the struggle of living abroad, but also, how European policies are translated into Greek reality. Cross-border mobility is not only hampered by a variety of institutional and legal hurdles between Member States, but also by the fact that the decision to move is affected by social costs of leaving one’s family behind. Another thing is the growing interest in the ways in which women are implicated in transnational families. We will try to establish the role women play in the experience of mobility and their voice in the process of decision-making.

In the global, changing world it becomes more and more important to learn about social changes and try to realize their results and future repercussions. As it has already been said, family migration is a relevant and complex phenomenon that can be addressed from various standpoints and approaches. In Europe the importance of family-led mobility can be explained simply by the fact that it is the main channel of legal entry into the European Union. Still, according to mobility literature, family-related migration remains under-theorized and has been relatively neglected by academics and policymakers. Therefore, it becomes essential to pay greater attention to this issue, and to move beyond the narrow economic approach in order to investigate the changing forms and (re)composition of the family experiencing mobility, to look into the various strategies resulting
from the migration, the composition of family migration, the position of family members, and the implications of policy measures for each participant of mobility experience.

e. Greece and migration flows

It is undeniable that currently immigrants constitute a substantial number of the population residing in Greece, making migration a key concept at the centre of attention of Greek media and public opinion formers. Immigrants support Greek economy and substitute on account of the lack of flexibility in the labour market. It was quite so the nature of the economy in Greece that attracted immigrants: large informal economy altogether with small family businesses, which are very prominent in Greece, require cheap, unskilled or semi-skilled labour force. Moreover, vast numbers of young Greeks used to consider working in menial jobs degrading, therefore immigrants willing to do these jobs relatively easily found employment (Siadima, 2001). Global crisis of the first decade of new milieu has changed this phenomenon: huge unemployment made many Greeks start taking up menial jobs, making the situation of immigrants more difficult.

Research on migration in the last 20 years has been referring to Greece as traditionally emigration country emphasizing the fact that from the end of the 19th century Greece was marked by heavy emigration. Greece was also approached as transit country for migrants and refugees who planned to settle in other countries. Nevertheless, some scholars indicate that Greece has a long history of immigration and has been actually a reception country since long before the 1990s, the decade which started the period of great migratory influxes, non-comparable to the earlier movements. Those researchers refer to the opinion that Greece has become a reception country only recently as to ‘a modern Greek myth’ (Avramopoulou et al., 2005, p. 1) or ‘defensive cliché’ (Roubanis, 2008).

The first wave of immigrants arrived to Greece just after 1922 and was followed by subsequent waves: post WW2, in the 1960s (ethnic Greek immigrants - kin minorities - from Turkey, Egypt, Philippines and elsewhere), the 1970s (mostly from Arab countries – based on bilateral agreements) and 1980s (Avramopoulou et al., 2005, p. 1). At the beginning of 80s, immigrants from Asia, Africa (such as Pakistan, the Philippines and Egypt) and Warsaw pact countries (with Poland as the most important source country) came to Greece and found work in construction, agriculture and domestic services. More recent experiences of mass migration have been occurring since the turn of the 80 and 90 of the last century, impacting largely on the economy
and society. The collapse of the Central and Eastern European regimes in 1989 was a point from which immigration inflows to Greece increased dramatically transforming into a massive, very difficult to control phenomenon. After the fall of communism large numbers of Greek co-ethnic migrants from the Former Soviet Union returned to Greece. Soon representatives of Balkan region: Albania, Bulgaria and Romania emerged as important sending countries. In the 1990s Greece received the highest percentage of immigrants in relation to its labour force within the EU states, regardless the fact that it was at that time one of the less-developed EU states (Rami et al., 2011). Immigration was indicated as the cause of population increase and demographic renewal in Greece in the period between the 1991 and 2001 (Rami et al., 2011). While there were no more massive immigration movements during this decade, inflows have continued not only from the countries mentioned above but also from much more distant ones located in Southeast Asia (Bangladesh and Pakistan) and Sub-Saharan Africa (A. Triandafyllidou, 2009). In the last decade of 20th century the numbers of foreigners in Greece increased to 10% of country’s total population, which translates into 1.15 million foreign citizens, comparing to an estimated total of 270.000 immigrants in 1991 (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004b). Figure 5 presents data from the Greek Censuses on numbers of foreign citizens in Greece.

Figure 5. Number of foreign citizens in Greece according to the Greek Censuses 1951-2011

Source: Parsonoglu (2008) and Greek Censuses (http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE)
Rising numbers of immigrants and asylum seekers in that period can be explained by EU policies (e.g. Dublin II described in previous subsections of this chapter), the fact that Greece was the only EU member state in the Balkan area, the geographical position of Greece (extensive coastline with small islands that are difficult to control and became an entry for irregular immigrants into the EU). The nature of Greek economy was also one of the most relevant pull factors.

According to the 2001 Census, the largest group of immigrants in Greece - 2/3 of the entire immigrant population - came from Balkan countries: Albania (57.5%), Bulgaria (4.6%), and Romania (about 3%). Common borders with these countries facilitate a cyclical form of immigration. It was estimated that approximately 1,000,000 immigrants have moved to Greece from Albania (Giavrimis et al., 2003). Migrants from the former Soviet Union (Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, etc.) comprised 10% of the total migrant population, from the EU countries – about 6% and a heterogeneous group of people from places such as the United States, Canada, and Australia (mostly first or second-generation Greek emigrants returning home), also constituted approximately 6% of immigrant population (Rami et al., 2011). In 2006 Greece ended the two-year transition period for those Member States which entered the EU structures in 2004 and opened the labour market entirely for them. Registration system of foreigners, which arose from migration policies in Greece included the EU citizen residence card.

Immigrants in Greece are generally of working age and find employment in construction, retailing, agriculture and fishing as well as hotels and restaurants, housekeeping and child care. Baldwin-Edwards (2008) identified major differences between the living arrangements of the major immigrant nationalities in Greece dividing them into two types. The first group represents the nuclear family (Albanians, Turkish, Polish and Russians) the second one - multi-member household (Pakistanis, Bulgarians, Georgians and Ukrainians).

The surge of immigration into Greece in recent decades has led to significantly increased numbers of immigrant children attending Greek schools. Since the mid-1990s, the Greek public schools have gradually been faced with ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse school population (Rami et al., 2011). The number of foreign students in Greek elementary schools rose from 10,634 in 1995–96 (Spinthourakis et al., 2001) to 45,598 in 1999–2000 (Giavrimis et al., 2003). During the last decade, there has been an even greater increase noticed in the numbers of
immigrant students in Greek schools, who primarily come from Albania and the former Soviet Union, but also from other European countries and Asia. In 2005-2007, more than 17% of children born in Greece had foreign nationality, in 2008 there were more than 18% of children born of foreign or co-ethnic returnee parents (Rami et al., 2011; Baldwin-Edwards, 2008). Many of these youngsters are raised in houses where Greek is not spoken at all.

Recent research estimates Greece’s immigrant population at about 1.3 million, or 12% of the total population of 11 million (Rami et al., 2011). Migrants in Greece come from more than 120 different countries, but most of them still originate from the Balkans. Traditionally, immigrants in Greece constituting a substantial number of the population supported the Greek economy and substituted on account of the lack of flexibility in the labour market (Siadima, 2001). The situation has changed with emergence of crisis in 2008. Currently, for Greek media and public opinion formers migration issues are key concepts in the centre of attention. Attitudes toward immigration in Greece are generally negative. Greece is often justified as completely unprepared for large immigration inflows lacking legal facilities and policies for the integration of newcomers. Current situation in Greece is being compared to one from 50 years earlier when western European countries were facing the influx of guest workers and post-colonial immigrants.

i. Polish immigrants in Greece

Polish citizens were and are coming to Greece mainly in search of work and better living conditions than those they had in Poland, looking at migration as at a part of their path of personal development. Curiosity and attraction to the country itself, with its climate, culture and traditions, have always worked as pull factors appealing to Polish people. Still, geographical distance and cultural as well as religious differences may restrain Polish people from settling in Greece. Greece has never been one of the main destination countries for Polish emigrants. Still they are among the ten largest immigrant groups, in terms of population size, residing in that country. In the history of Polish emigration in Greece there are some prominent people that extolled the name of Poland and Greece by various achievements. The brightest example is probably Andreas Georgios Papandreou, Greek economist and politician that served three times as Prime Minister of Greece. He was a son of Sofia Mineyko of Polish origin.

The phases of migration from Poland to Greece are related to factors connected to the situation in Poland and their impact on the migratory flows from Poland, but also Greece’s
migratory policies (Maroufof, 2009, p. 18). Some of the Polish citizens were settling in Greece in the immediate post war period and later, mainly due to marriage to a Greek citizen. The first huge inflow of Polish immigrants came in early 1980s after the imposition of Martial Law in Poland. During this phase emigrants following the Solidarity refugees came to Greece as false tourists and then stayed as false refugees (Maroufof, 2009, p. 6) treating Greece as a transit-country on their way to the US, Canada or Australia. Between 1987 and 1991 more than 200 000 Polish people were in Greece, most of them in Athens, and some of them still live in this country. They found work mostly in construction or harvesting – in case of men – and in and the service sector - for women. During their stay in Greece Polish immigrants “managed to create infrastructure for the economic emigrants that followed” (Maroufof, 2009, p. 4).

The next phase of Polish immigration to Greece began with the collapse of the Communist regime in Poland in 1989, after which Polish citizens were free to leave their country. At the same time Greece tightened migratory policy: legal entrance and settlement of foreigners with the purpose of working in Greece became nearly impossible. Following phase of Polish immigration to Greece was characterized by the year 1995 when Polish citizens were not required to possess a visa in order to stay in Greece for a period up to three months.

At the beginning of the new millennium Polish workers constituted the third largest group of undocumented immigrants in Athens (Siadima, 2001) with 80% concentrated in Attica. This situation is an example of ‘migration knot’ gathering of participants of the migration chain in one place (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2008, p. 117). In 2003 the Greek ambassador in Poland estimated that the number of Polish residents in Greece was 40 to 50,000 people (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2006, p. 15). The majority of Polish immigrants belonged to the most productive age groups: 20 to 50 years old (both men and women).

The accession of Poland into the EU’s structures did not change the number of Polish citizens residing in Greece dramatically, as was the case with some other EU countries. Table no 1 presents the numbers of Polish citizens in Greece according to The Central Statistical Office of Poland.
A decrease in Polish population can be noticeable after 2008 crisis that has largely hampered situation of immigrants in Greece making loads of them leave this country in search for better life. Entire Polish families started to re-emigrate to other EU countries (UK, Germany, Denmark), some chose more distant locations (Canada) or returned to Poland.

Currently it is very difficult to estimate the exact number of Polish citizens residing in Greece partly due to their mobility and partly on account of the lack of reliable statistical calculations. Polish residents remain an “invisible community”: their presence in Greece is not easily discernible in the material space of the country, as there are only a few Polish shops and restaurants in specific districts of the major cities in Greece, and rare Polish cultural events organized by the Polish School, Embassy, or some Polish societies. Nowadays social networking sites may provide some information about people leaving in specific destinations. Polish social networking site Nasza Klasa, with about 10 million users in autumn 2013 is operating in a kind of transnational space, between and within Poland and foreign countries. The initial aim of this social networking facility set up in late 2006 and named ‘Our Class’, was to bring together former classmates and school friends. Still, it also serves as a general social networking site through which acquaintances and friendships might be sustained and extended. In January 2016 approx. 5 000 registered users of this website provided Athens as their place of residence10. Of course, this number cannot be regarded as depicting amount of Polish citizens in Athens, yet it shows how many of Polish nationals identify with this city.

Polish migrants in Greece are portrayed as one of the best organised minorities in this country. There are a lot of independent Polish and Polish-Greek organisations that aim at strengthening relations inside Polish community as well as relation between Polish and Greek citizens. Polish newspapers started by the Solidarity immigrants in the mid-1980s with the

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10 According to www.nk.pl.
collaboration of Greek journalists are still published (e.g. “Kurier Ateński”, “Polonia” and “Informator Polonijny”).

Polish population in Greece is concentrated in Attica, with the cultural center in Michail Voda Street, where Polish Catholic Church of Christ the Saviour is located. Around that district a large informal network of Polish private services is organized (including everything from child care, shops, and restaurants to legal offices, doctors’ surgeries, etc.). This area is a meeting place for Polish citizens where they can socialize and exchange information concerning all the aspects of immigrant life in Greece.

An interesting picture of Polish community in Athens was given by the Polish priest we spoke to in February 2014. Every year the priest visits houses of the Polish people living in Athens – this is a Polish Christmas tradition. He informed us that church counts Polish citizens attending masses on one specific Sunday yearly. According to him 2/3 of Poles left Greece gradually until 2014. 2014 was a first year when a kind of stability was noticed and Poles stopped leaving Greece. Until recently there were five masses in Polish every Sunday and since 2014 there have been only three. Another thing indicating that the Polish community in Athens decreased largely is the number of children that were baptized in the church – at the beginning of priest’s residence in Athens in 2006 12 Polish children was baptized every month and about 20 during Christmas. In 2014 not even one child was baptized and during entire year preceding our interview just a few children were given this holy sacrament. As the priest explained, those numbers clearly show how fewer Poles remained in Athens.

Additionally, Polish priest characterized the Polish community as a group of people who lived their lives thoughtless, did not save but rather spend money which they earned in the black market (and according to him they earned a lot of money), they did not think about their future, planned anything. Networks helped them with employment related issues, so they did not need to know Greek. The priest explained also that those Poles who stayed in Greece do not have anything to go back to – the houses they built are in the poor, agricultural areas where there are no jobs available. Also Poles and their children got used to living in Athens, a large city, and they could not imagine living in a small Polish village instead.

School attendance is compulsory in Greece for all children aged 6–15 (Kiprianos et al., 2012, p. 678), regardless whether migrant or not. The formal education in Greece begins at the age
of six, when children enter six-year primary school (Dimotiko). The following three years of compulsory education children spend at lower secondary school (Gymnasio) which they finish with a school leaving certificate at the age of 15. Kiprianos and colleagues (2012, p. 678) explain that in Greece “For those who wish to continue their education, there are a further three years of upper secondary school, with either an academic or a technical-vocational focus, which need to be completed before they can enter tertiary education”. In terms of education Polish families in Athens get to select from the variety of educational choices on offer: Greek public and private schools, various international schools as well as the Group of Schools at the Polish Embassy in Athens (GoSaPEiA). Nevertheless, taking into account the migratory pattern that the majority of Polish migrants present, namely economic emigration characterized by low paid jobs, the actual school choice concerns non fee-paying institutions: either the public Greek schools or the GoSaPEiA.

The GoSaPEiA is one of the biggest Polish schools of this kind outside Poland. It was held for Polish children temporarily residing in Greece. It includes a primary school, a junior high school and a high school. All lessons are in Polish; Greek is thought as a foreign language. School is coordinated by The Group of Schools for Polish Citizens Temporarily Living Abroad, with headquarters in Warsaw. It is funded from the Polish state budget. Since 1997 it has operated according to regulations which are the same for all public schools in Poland, implements entire curriculum for a full program of the Polish school. The complementary curriculum includes Polish, the history and geography of Poland, religion and social studies. Graduates of Polish high school used to take their final exams (Matura) in Poland, in Warsaw. Passing them enabled graduates to study both: in Poland and Greece according to each state’s regulations and requirements. The Greek State recognizes the GoSaPEiA as a foreign school. Thus, if its graduates want to study at Greek universities, they must meet admission requirements common for all foreigners: they must present a translated Secondary School leaving Certificate, possess residence permits, have a medical check-up and a certificate which proves their knowledge of Greek.

Since the school year 2013/2014 changes have been introduced into the functioning of the GoSaPEiA. Due to the regulation of The Ministry of National Education in Poland (Polish: Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej, MEN) the regular teaching mode was withdrawn from the high-school and replaced with distance learning coordinated by The Centre for the Development
of Polish Education Abroad (Ośrodek Rozwoju Polskiej Edukacji za Granicą, ORPEG). ORPEG supports and promotes the education of Polish children abroad through the development of online learning, distance learning, school consultation points and Polonia centers. ORPEG is implementing two educational projects co-financed from the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Operational Programme’s Priority III: ”High quality of the education system”, Measure 3.3: “Increasing quality of education”, Sub-Measure 3.3.3: Modernisation of teaching content and methods. The projects in question are:

**Otwarta szkola** ("Open School") – a support system for migrant pupils involving an online platform that enables them to participate in both lessons and consultation sessions with Polish teachers;

**Włącz Polskę!** ("Switch Poland On") – entailing the development and pilot implementation of innovative teaching programmes that match the national curriculum for general education but are addressed to pupils who are the children of Polish citizens abroad.

In case of high school pupils in Athens they take part in “Open School” project. They attend the GoSaPEiA every day where they have lessons of Polish and knowledge about Poland. Additionally they participate in online courses where they have all the other subject according to the profile pupils chose. In the school year 2014/2015 24 pupils took part in the “Open School” project. Distance learning required them to do most of the work independently, and obliged them to submit a set number of test assignments in different subjects throughout the school year. Assignments were marked and evaluated by teachers in Warsaw. Once all the assignments of a given pupil were submitted that pupil could proceed to take the classification examinations run at the ORPEG headquarters during the school holidays. A positive result at this stage provides for a pupil’s advance to the next class. During the school year, pupils have the chance to participate in online consultations ensuring direct contact with teachers in Poland. School year groups of this kind are run via an e-learning platform. Graduates of high school take their final exams (Matura) in Poland, in Warsaw and alongside the GoSaPEiA’s diploma they obtain a diploma from the Polish “National Education Commission” High School (one of the schools run by ORPEG).

f. Summary

Mobility is a complex, dynamic process that has shaped and continues to shape the image of modern Europe, affecting many areas of social and economic lives of European countries. The
right to move freely for work, study, family purposes, and retirement within the European Union is one of the foundational principles of the European Union. For many years the number of people exercising this right has been steadily increasing. The majority of research on free movement in the past decade has focused on east-to-west movements due to their scale and socioeconomic impact. Still, it is relevant to bear in mind that intra-EU mobility is much more complex phenomenon that captures movements in all possible directions across the EU.

The subject literature proves that intra-European mobility is not only a domain of young people, but it is rather connected to the life course stage: research concerning residential mobility reveals that changes in the life course are related to geographical movements.

The main factor discouraging geographical mobility in the EU is the fear of losing social networks. Mobility literature emphasizes importance of networks in general for migratory experience. We discussed this issue in the present section since in the PhD research project we look into the networks of the Polish community in Greece to verify their relevance and influence on migratory strategies of Polish families.

Mobility research in the context of European Union disputes over the most popular reason for movements: part of scholars indicate that job- and income-related factors triggering mobility are most relevant. On the other hand, more and more scholars assign the greatest importance to the social and demographic factors, emphasizing on the family-related reasons as well as a desire to ‘discover new things’. This is connected to the fact that mobility can be approached from various perspectives: economic, social and demographic one. From economic perspective, intra-European mobility enhances the distribution of skills which facilitates the productive capacity and increases the growth of national economies. Since employment opportunities are unevenly distributed across the European Union, labour mobility can offer a mechanism to reduce these disparities. The social perspective assumes that mobility can advance socio-cultural integration, and, in case of European Union - foster European identity and inter-cultural networks. Demographic aspects emphasize the importance of age, gender, marriage status, education level, employment and job tenure of movers, e.g. factors which shape the demographic structures of European societies, and indicate that mobility is able to counteract the negative consequences of two important demographic trends currently worrying Europe: decline and ageing of population. With regards to the economic, social and demographic aspects of mobility, we wish to investigate how they translate into the case of
Polish migrants in Greece. Preliminary analyses (Rerak, 2010) point out that against the current sociological trends, which place the family in the centre of mobility discussion, for the Polish minority economic considerations are still the key factors deciding on their mobility patterns. We plan to find whether this is true for a bigger and more differentiates sample, representative to the Polish minority in Greece.

The European Union recognizes the relevance of family units in the mobility experience of European workers and this interest is reflected (to some extent) in the EU policy. The discussion about the relevance of family mobility for the social prosperity of Europe and its place in the EU policy is important since the family is in a centre of our PhD dissertation. This is why in the present subsection we clarified the concept of family and its utilization in this research. Provided divisions of family and its various types will help us understand better specificity of life stories of each and every Polish family we spoke to. Since mobility decisions are not isolated resolutions, but are rather taken within a predefined relational context and are impacted by family-related considerations it is necessary to understand what a family is first.

A part of the subject literature confirms that EU movers seem to integrate well in their new country of residence, and feel much more strongly European than the general population. Significantly, their identification with Europe grows with the number of years spent abroad. On the contrary, some researchers sustain that migrant experiences do not necessarily lead to the integration with the host society, quite the reverse: they can cause an intensification of nationalistic feelings for home countries. Thus, the willingness of intra-EU migrants to move might not translate into a willingness to participate in the host receiving community’s life (Favell & Recchi, 2005). With this dichotomy in mind, in the present study we shall investigate which situation is characteristic for the Polish minority in Greece. It is interesting to find whether Polish citizens participate voluntarily in the life of their host society, integrating with Greeks and other nationals, or rather exclusively turn towards Polish networks and culture.

Abovementioned discrepancies in the mobility literature presenting migrants as individuals willing to integrate into host society, or quite the opposite, choosing the nationalistic approach, proves that is very difficult to present the full complexity and manifoldness of the process of current intra-European mobility with its implications for the European Union as a whole. It is due to changeability of various forces shaping contemporary Europe influencing migratory
movements. Within the context of present case study, the changes in the composition and meaning of ‘family’ altogether with the flexibility of movement across the EU as well as altering demographic circumstances in Europe (low fertility, ageing population) combined with the financial crisis provide a context in which mobility patterns and prospects are altering rapidly. In the present project we plan to look into this dynamics for Polish migrants residing in Greece in order to check which forces have the greatest influence on the shape of Polish minority.

Among the benefits of the free movement of people for work, study, family purposes, and retirement efficient labour markets, increased cultural exchanges, better-trained workers, and the opportunity for citizens to broaden their horizons are named. Intra-EU labour mobility has also been presented as panacea to the financial crisis. Still, it is important to comprehend that mobility is not only an opportunity, but also challenge for Europe as it involves both benefits and losses for the individual, in social and economic terms and Europe as a whole. For both: the receiving and sending regions, a high level of mobility is a continuous challenge to social cohesion and economic performance. Therefore, the EU needs to find a balanced solution to these trade-offs in order to reap the benefits of an integrated single labour market and European community. The worldwide phenomenon of immigration creates major challenges to migrating individuals, but also to host countries that must adapt to a multicultural reality. The issue of constantly increasing growth of international migration in recent years has become a subject of interest of many spheres of international relations characteristic for growing number of European countries. Mobility has become a contentious, relevant political issue, attracting attentions of politicians and media. Economic, political and social significance of these international movements need to be recognized by international bodies and national governments so as to find most suitable and most coordinated policies to facilitate social integration of multination communities.

The various forms of family-led mobility have been a major component of migration intakes worldwide. Family-related mobility is named the main mode of legal entry into the EU as well as to other, traditional immigration countries, such as Australia, Canada and the United States (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008). The unprecedented scale of contemporary migration has affected many Polish families who have experienced it directly, as their spouses, children or more distant relatives emigrated, or indirectly – through media. Migrants and their families must learn to deal with the new social situations; it is a part of the strategy of survival. Family migration is of grand
importance for Polish nationals who greatly value family well-being; it is consistently ranked first among the most important values, which guide Polish individuals in their everyday life (CBOS, 2013). According to the research on the contemporary Polish family undergone by Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS, 2013), 85% of Polish national believe that people need a family to be really and fully happy.

All in all, the following section on the geographical and labour mobility in Europe was included into the theoretical framework of the present dissertation since EU mobility issues together with the thematic considering European migration are in the core of the present PhD’s interests. The relevance of mobility research at the European level is explained by the fact that from economic perspective, intra-European mobility enhances the distribution of skills which facilitates the productive capacity and increases the growth of national economies. From a social perspective, intra-European mobility can boast and strengthen socio-cultural integration in the European Union.

Furthermore, all the literature presented in above section helped us organise the field research and analyse its results. In order to discuss the negotiation of migratory and educational strategies of Polish families in Athens it was necessary to firstly understand how those families came to Greece and what made them leave Poland - country of origin and settle in the specific and rather distinct environment. That is why we decided to present the history of European migrations and discuss mobility trends in European Union including Polish migrations and immigration into Greece. Historical evidence of trends, determinants and results of migration in Europe provided sets of relevant information which made it possible to analyse the current state of mobility in Greece. Investigating the history of migration we got to notice changes that had occurred, for example that Poland’s accession made lives of Polish migrants much easier and that Poles tend to take advantage of their altered position. In the present case study we focus on long-distance, intra-European moves of EU citizens – Polish nationals - deciding to live and work in Greece. When they arrived to Greece Poland was not yet a member of the EU, so it was necessary to get familiarized with the migratory situation prior and not only after 2004. Due to the fact that research is situated in Greece we decided to briefly discuss migration flows regarding this specific location as to better understand issues that Polish families were facing when they first came to Athens.
Since the dissertation concerns intra-European mobility we needed to explain the meaning of the term *mobility* and how it differs from *migration*, and clarify utilization of these terms in the present study. In order to do it first we had to find how the subject literature utilizes and conceptualizes both notions.

Due to the fact that the EU policy towards intra-European mobility is of interest for the authors of present research we decided to discuss its most relevant points including freedom of movement, the Europe 2020 and a common European immigration strategy. In this research we focus on intra-European mobility of EU citizens, that is why in the theoretical part of dissertation attention is paid to the legal basis of various kinds of EU mobility: workers, students, researchers, pensioners, and, most of all - families. We thoroughly discuss the labour and family mobility, as those two types proved most relevant and adherent for Polish citizens residing in Greece. Analysis of research on labour mobility within the EU in its most current form proved essential for present study as it pointed out ideas that seem relevant to be investigated in case of Polish migrants in Athens. We wanted to check how and if Polish mobility to Greece changed after 2004 in respect to employment issues. Another thing is economic crisis of 2008 striking Europe and hitting hard on Greece. We aimed to investigate the potential changes it might have caused to the Polish workers and their families residing in Athens. General trend present in the intra-European mobility is under-skilling caused among others by language barriers, and lack of recognition of foreign qualifications. We planned to check whether this is the case for Polish individuals in Greece and that is why relating theory can also be found in the above subsections. Due to all those abovementioned interests it was necessary to first provide relevant theoretical foundations to better understand and analyse trends occurring in the Polish population in Athens.

Additionally, we believe that for the proposed research it is necessary to know the political framework in order to be able to discuss the full range of factors influencing migratory and educational strategies. Only having such knowledge we can understand the choices and possibilities available for Polish migrant families residing in Athens as well as their migratory and educational decisions.

The increasing diversity of gender roles altogether with migration strategies and integration outcomes, including independent female migration and transnational families, has intensified research interest in migrant families. Since we focus on the family strategies presentation in the
theoretical framework of family migration including children and women in them, as well as focusing on transnational families and kinship networks was a must.

Currently cross-border mobility in Europe is characterized by situation when people establish and maintain activities and connections in both: the country they come from and the new state where they live. Migrants who keep in touch with their homes in the sending countries actually live between two social spaces: they become embedded in the host society, but also keep close connections to the life in their homeland. We believe that transnational caring for relatives (children, parents, siblings) left back home in the sending country needs to be elaborated if we want to fully understand contemporary Polish family in Greece. Mobility literature illustrates the importance of transnational family networks as on-going sources of practical and emotional support. As transnational families became more than visible in the landscape of global mobility discussing family migration it was necessary including the theory regarding transnational families as well in order to be able to investigate the diversity of transnational and inter-generational relationships.

The presented section on the geographical and labour mobility in Europe emphasises on the family related issues with regards to mobility. We believe that such a construction is an essential part of the dissertation without which it would not be possible to organise and analyse the planned research. Elaboration of theory tied to empirical work makes resulting estimates more convincing. Provided theoretical foundations surely guided our research while also determined what variables need to be taken into consideration and what correlations and relationships should we pay attention to when investigating the process of negotiation of migratory and educational strategies of Polish families in Athens.

4. Greece and its policy towards migration

a. Immigration policy in Greece

In the following chapter we shall discuss immigration policy of the Greek state in the period between early 90s and 2004. Then we go on to discuss the implementation of EU migratory policy in Greece. This work reviews part of the literature on the aforementioned issue and covers mainly studies
published in English. As immigration policy we understand, after Kiprianos and colleagues (2003, p. 149), “both the legal framework that regulates questions of immigration and the practices of the authorities and their agents with regard to immigrants themselves”. The main objective of introducing migration policies in any country is to facilitate the integration of legal immigrants and their children in the social reality of this particular country. Since Poland was accepted to the structures of the EU in 2004 Polish individuals in Greece were awarded the same rights as other EU citizens (after two-year transitional period). That is why in this chapter we focus on the Greek immigration law up to 2004, and then our focus shifts towards EU migratory directives and their implementation in Greece.

The present chapter is the result of a broad literature review on the Greek immigration policy between 1991 and 2004. We believe that following presentation is necessary to fully understand life stories and migratory experiences of Poles in Greece with whom we spoke and whose testimonies are presented in the research part of this dissertation, and who were coming to Greece in the early to mid-90s.

Mass illegal immigration into Greece in the early 1990s connected to the disintegration of the former Communist bloc made this country face the need of improving the immigration policy. With the noticeable increase in the number of immigrant children recorded in state schools since the mid-1990s Greece has moved into a new phase of immigration-family migration. The subject literature claims that “the response of the Greek State to the immigration pressures has been rather complex and contradictory” (Charalampopoulou, 2004, p. 82). Gropas and Triandafyllidou (2005) even indicate that the beginning of 1990s found Greece without a legislative frame for the control and management of immigration. Deportations were the most common reply to immigration issues. They resulted in 12,291 immigrants being sent back, with the greatest number being Poles, Yugoslavs, Egyptians, Pakistanis and Syrians in the period 1987-1991 (Baldwin-Edwards & Fakiolas, 1998, p. 196). That is why Law 1975/1991, rather hastily prepared, titled meaningfully ‘Entry, exit, sojourn, employment, removal of aliens, procedure for the recognition of refugees and other measures’ came into practice. It replaced Law 4310/1929 and had been the first comprehensive law in the field of Greek immigration policy in effect after 62 years. Up until 1991, with accordance to the regulation of 1929 immigration law, in order to work in Greece a foreigner needed to possess a work permit which could only be obtained in the sending country (from the
Greek consulate) for those who had already found themselves employment in Greece (Kiprianos et al., 2003, p. 156).

Law 1975/1991 together with its subsequent changes and amendments created the basis for the regulation of entrance and exit as well as the sojourn of foreigners living in Greece with the exception of EU-nationals. It focused on fostering the effectiveness of state controls mainly towards third country nationals at the state borders and inside the country. This law brought about strict entry requirements and gave the police more power to check travel documents of people entering and leaving Greece. Illegal migrants could have been deported without a trial. Over 1 million of expulsions were recorded by 1995 (Levinson, 2005, p. 2).

The literature review on the Greek migration policies showed that 1991 Law had numerous flaws: imprecise, hastily formulation as well as its implementation, restrictiveness – focusing on new-coming illegal migrants and taking no account of immigrants already present in the country, defective capacity of the Greek State to respond, the excessive time state agencies took to act and/or provide documentation and processed the applications, but also the fact that it placed burdens on employers wanting to legally hire immigrants. There were even allegation present of xenophobia and a policing philosophy of the 1991 Law (Baldwin-Edwards & Fakiolas, 1998). Baldwin-Edwards (2004a) emphasize that this law was intended for repressive measures to be enacted towards illegal emigrants rather than making any provision for legal immigration routes in Greece. Gropas and Triandafyllidou (2005, p. 2) claim that this “law made nearly impracticable the entry and stay of economic migrants, seeking for jobs”. Kiprianos and colleagues (2003) call this Law a complete failure pointing that its greatest results was massive deportations of tens of thousands of foreigners, mostly Albanians, and the creation of special police units to protect the borders. In the early 1990s also the access to Greek nationality was made more restrictive.

In 1996 Law 2434 passed by the Greek Parliament. A more complete way for the procedures and requirements for legal migrants’ entry work and residence in the country were developed. Law no 2434 extended health care and temporary employment rights to asylum seekers and recognized refugees and contained measures for family reunion, fast-track asylum application procedures and temporary protection status (Baldwin-Edwards & Fakiolas, 1998, p. 190). Also a shift was made in relation to education for the migrants’ children - a wide spectrum of new and
varied programmes and projects was implemented with this Law about intercultural education for Greece (Rami et al., 2011).

Since 1996 the Greek Parliament has passed many “sets of policies in order to better define the requirements for entry into the country” (Charalampopoulou, 2004, p. 83). Still, in 1997 approximately 700,000 immigrants lived and worked in Greece with about 90 per cent of them being irregular immigrants (Apostolatou, 2004, p. 3). In a response to the expansion of the unauthorized migrant population, the Greek socialist government had to find a solution. In 1997 a Committee for the Regularisation of Illegal Immigrants was set up, which received statements and opinions from ministries, trade unions, employer associations and other influential pressure groups (Levinson, 2005; Baldwin-Edwards & Fakiolas, 1998). The first legislation for the regularization of illegal immigrants was initiated in Greece by Presidential Decrees 358/1997 and 359/1997 in November 1997, and its implementation began in 1998. After years of struggling with illegal immigration and mass (illegal) expulsions of mainly Albanians, Bulgarians and Romanians (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004b) Greece made the first effort to stop those practices. Regularization programme demanded that immigrants were given the same legal rights as Greeks.

In the first registration phase of regularisation program a “Temporary Residence Permit Card” was issued - the White Card - an initial six-month residence permit, which was a prerequisite for the second phase - the Green Card – involving the issuance of a limited duration, renewable work and residence permit of 1 to 5 years. Both White and Green Cards gave migrants equal rights to nationals with regards to wages, working conditions and the right to appeal to authorities. Additionally, the Green Card gave the right to leave and re-enter country for a period of two months and the Type B Green Card enabled family reunion of dependents. According to data collected by the Employment Institute (OAED), 44.3% of all foreigners who applied for the regularization of their working and residence status between January and May 1998 was concentrated in the wider metropolitan area of Athens. Of these applicants, 52.7% were Albanians and only 4.5% were Poles, with the majority of female applicants among Polish individuals (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005, p. 3).

The subject literature indicates that the implementation of legalization procedures was characterized by significant inconveniences, was heavily bureaucratic, time consuming, costly for immigrants and generally uncoordinated (Glytsos, 2005; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005;
Baldwin-Edwards, 2004b; Cavounidis, 2004; Baldwin-Edwards & Fakiolas, 1998). From earlier-mentioned approximately 700,000 immigrants that lived and worked in Greece in 1997 the 6-month White Card was granted to 372,000 who applied for the amnesty (65 percent of whom were Albanian) and in the second stage of the process 1-3 year Green Card programme resulted in only 228,000 applicants in 2000 (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005; Levinson, 2005; Baldwin-Edwards, 2004a, p. 13). Due to the large number of applicants the first stage of the regularization programme was the largest regularization programme ever carried out in Europe up to that point in time (Cavounidis, 2004).

In the second stage immigrants applying for the Green Card had to prove legal employment for a period of minimum 40 days since 1st January 1998. Also migrants had to provide a proof of legal employment with social security contributions and many employers refused to formalize hiring migrants. Another serious obstacle was the refusal of IKA, social security agency, to issue booklets to immigrants for the payment of their social security contributions (Baldwin-Edwards & Fakiolas, 1998). This is why 150,000 migrants who received a white card were unable to move onto the second legalization phase (Levinson, 2005). Baldwin-Edwards and Fakiolas (1998, p. 203) indicate that the drafting of the procedures was a specific problem: they excluded immigrants who legally resided in Greece but worked illegally, as it was the often case in the Polish community. This explains a very low application rate among Poles: only 6,894 in the Athens metropolitan area and about 8,500 in the whole of Greece (Christou, 2008, p. 319 after: Psimmenos & Georgoulas, 2001)

The first Greek regularisation resulted in a mixture of semi-regular migrants who had successfully completed the first phase of the regularisation programme, regulars who continued to build the minority of foreigners living in Greece, and irregular immigrants the exact number of whom was not estimated. In addition, programme met huge and difficult to overcome organizational and practical difficulties. Scholars (e.g. Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005; Levinson, 2005) emphasize that the state services responsible for managing it were not prepared to receive and process the hundreds of thousands of applications, and backlogs of up to 14 months have not been uncommon. Regardless its shortcomings this programme is said to have lain the first foundations in Greece for an institutional framework able to deal with immigration. Yet, by the
year 2000 the number of illegal immigrants was at the level of 400,000, including those who were not legalized and subsequent new arrivals (Glytsos, 2005, p. 827).

Law 2910/2001 entitled ‘Entry and residence of aliens on Greek territory. Acquisition of Greek citizenship by naturalisation and other provisions’ was a response to critics who accused Greece of ignoring the immigration issues that the country was facing. It varied from the previous philosophy of police-oriented policies, and for the first time actually created the necessary policy framework to deal with immigration in the medium to long term (Glytsos, 2005; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005). The Law also aimed at harmonising with migration policies pursued by other EU Member States. It also included a second regularisation programme, which commenced in June 2001 and aimed at attracting immigrants to apply: those who had not been able to benefit from the 1998 ‘amnesty’, but also the thousands of new immigrants who had just arrived in Greece. Apostolatou (2004) claims that the decision to implement a second regularisation programme confirms that the first amnesty has failed.

This new Law enabled immigrants to change employers and travel around Greece searching for employment. It gave legal immigrants insured in the social security organizations the right to enjoy the same social security rights as the Greek citizens. Still, even though this Law concentrated on immigrant issues, it was said to be defending the interests of Greek employers and the Greek State (Charalampopoulou, 2004, p. 83). Glytsos (2005, p. 822) explains that even though 2001 Law regulated the short-term work-related residence of previously illegal foreigners, it still kept a “guest worker” approach and it had no realistic mechanism for labour recruitment. Integration into the Greek society and permanent residence were still not the issues of concern. Moreover, the Law forbade all public agencies, organizations of local authorities, public utilities and social security funds from providing services to illegal immigrants. Only the hospitals and other health care facilities for emergency treatment and the treatment of children below legal age were enabled to help illegals (Glytsos, 2005, p. 825).

Law no 2910 also facilitated and eased family unification. However, citizenship still could not be acquired by birth in Greece for children born to foreign nationals. In respect to children of illegal immigrant Law enabled them register in the public schools and obliged them of the minimum schooling same as in case of the Greeks. Moreover, immigrant graduates from Greek
secondary education had access to university education under the same conditions and prerequisites as Greek students (Glytsos, 2005, p. 822).

Even though the 2001 Law was introduced as an answer to rather exclusionary provisions of the 1991 Law and brought about few relevant changes, it was far from completing this aim. Baldwin-Edwards claims that in reality it provided “no realistic mode of legal entry to Greece, and replicated – albeit in slightly different ways – all of the defects of the 1991 Law” (2004a, p. 6). Even though some improvements were made during the progress of this Law through committees, it was widely and heavily criticized by human rights groups and academics. Baldwin-Edwards additionally emphasizes that the final version had no measures to deal with the extensive trafficking and forced prostitution of women and children – a problem, which had escalated out of control during the 1990s.

Law no 2910 prepared the ground for the "Green Card II" regularisation programme that followed, which similarly to the previous one enabled for a six-month residence permit that had to be replaced by a work and residence permit. The extent of the coverage of 2001 regularization programme is unknown, but most probably a significant proportion of the unauthorized migrants present in Greece did not participate (Cavounidis, 2004, p. 39). Registration ran from June 2, 2001 to August 2, 2001 and only those immigrants were eligible to qualify who could prove “either that they had a legal status in the past and had been living in the country continuously since their documents expired, or that they had been living in the country for one year since the date of the law's enforcement” (Levinson, 2005, p. 3 after: Lykovardi and Petroula 2003).

There were many reasons for the failure of this programme including its imprecise formulation and the difficulties which have occurred during its implementation, increased bureaucratic burdens on both employers and immigrant workers and relatively high costs of permits. Due to administrative and organizational deficiencies migrants had to wait in long queues and devote inordinate amounts of time to the attempt to become regularized, which was influencing their work and earnings. Thereby many of them were choosing to omit this situation.

Yet, scholars, including Cholezas and Tsakloglou (2008, p. 4), emphasize that regardless its flaws, “the repetitive nature of the regularization processes indicated a more pragmatic approach adopted by the authorities towards immigration”.

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The following step of the Greek government with regards to migration issues was Greek Action Plan for Integration 2003-2005. It was introduced to facilitate the social integration of immigrants into the Greek society and economic integration into the Greek labour market. It also included measures to ensure immigrants “access to health services, promote cultural interaction and fight xenophobia and racism within the Greek society” (Cholezas & Tsakloglou, 2008, p. 4). It complemented social policies formed by the Greek government, e.g. shortening the time for family unification and citizenship acquisition, legally establishing equal rights in work, and social insurance (Glytsos, 2005, p. 828).

We stop the discussion on the Greece’s immigration policy at this point, since the Laws and regulation after 2004 do not concern Polish people, who became EU citizens on the 1st May 2004. From this point Poles are included into EU Directives regarding EU mobile citizens which Greece needs to implement and follow.

b. Polish migrants in the landscape of the Greek immigration policy

A thought-provoking description of Polish migrants in Greece was found in the study of Anastasia Christou on the agency, networks and policy in respect to Poles in Greece (2008, p. 313):

“Poles are an interesting immigrant group to study because they seem to be resilient to policy changes. Specifically, they do not appear to be particularly eager to legalise their status. They have been moving, with or without a tourist visa, since the late 1980s, and have developed their own institutions and networks (though these pre-existed the arrival of the economic migrants of the early 1990s) to cater for their needs. As regards their integration pathways in the host society they seem to develop a pivotal attitude: namely, they appear to be semi-autonomous as a community but they do not develop the attitude or reality of an ethnic enclave”.

The above citation manages to grasp the most relevant characteristics of Polish minority in Greece describing Poles as individuals not wanting to legalize their status, ones who remained invisible in their destination countries: “the invisible community” as per Romaniszyn’s term (1996).

Prior to Poland’s accession to the European Union Polish immigrants entered Greece both through documented and undocumented pathways with majority coming to Greece with proper documents as tourists. Baldwin-Edwards and Fakiolas (1998) describing the allocation of residence permits to foreign nationals in Greece at the turn of the 80's and 90's imply that the most
dramatic decline was noticed in the number of residence permits for Polish immigrants: from 11,700 in 1989 to 1,400 in 1993. Up until mid-1995 Polish immigrants in Greece were obliged to obtain a tourist visa to visit Greece for stays under 90 days. Since 1995 Polish citizens have been enjoying a visa exemption travel for tourism status and had the opportunity of travelling to Greece legally (Christou, 2008). Those travels were often undertaken with scope of overstay and entry to the labour market. Those facts are emphasized by Christou (2008) who underlines that in the case of Poles their actual conditions of mobility were different from those of several other Eastern European countries. Even though Polish immigrants were aware of and frightened by the internal control policies in Greece still it would not make them leave the country. Christou (2008, p. 322) implies that the effectiveness of the “strict enforcement practices was seriously hampered by the laxity of labour inspections, the great need for immigrant labour in different sectors of the Greek job market”.

In the years preceding the accession of Poland into the EU incipient EU membership might have enabled Polish immigrants to bypass the work permit procedure but still they needed to participate in IKA. This is especially visible when comparing the IKA registrations with permits for dependent employment – there was an inconsistency noticeable over-representation in IKA registrations (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004b, p. 16).

The official accession of Poland into the European Union on the 1st May 2004 meant for Polish migrants that external control policies could be ignored because of the visa free regime. Between 2004 and 2006 Polish citizens had to go through a transition period in terms of their status in Greece. Since May 1, 2006 gradual lifting of labour restrictions towards Polish citizens started in Greece, reinforcing the migration policies for Poles. Those changes in legal and political status did not automatically imply that Poles no longer faced discrimination or exploitation in the workplace (A. Triandafyllidou et al., 2009). Policy problems and shortcomings lied in the implementation of the EU policy: even though Polish citizens should have been considered as EU nationals, this was not often the case in Greece. The lack of coherent approach and information offered by the Greek state and state officials to migrants led to Polish citizens having been denied their rights as EU nationals in relation to the issuing/renewal of their work and stay permits (Christou, 2008, p. 320). Nevertheless, the new EU citizen status was a relief for Polish migrants and it simplified several matters of their everyday life, for instance not spending time and money
for immigration documentation renewal, having easier access to public services and schooling opportunities for children, health care, housing, loans or pensions. EU membership of Poland and the liberalisation of Poles’ free movement as workers within Greece (2006) significantly improved their migration status and the possibility of making plans for the future.

c. Implementation of the EU migratory policy in Greece

The term *implementation* describes an administrative process, a political activity, through which policy decisions or legislations are actualized in society. It scopes to address and rectify or modify a given social situation. Implementation is inherent, it unfolds over time and is both open-ended – in the sense that there is uncertainty over its final outcome, and pre-ordained - as a result of choices made when policy was formulated (Dimitrakopoulos, 2007, p. 2). Implementation involves a significant number of actors each with their own tasks, priorities, operating procedures and institutional repertoires. In case of migratory policy’s implementation those actors cooperate with “a series of national, European and international state agencies, NGOs, migrants’ communities, and organizations in order to manage migration issues and be more effective in their role and responsibilities” (Liapi & Vouyioukas, 2006, p. 12). Since the pattern of implementation’s development changes over time it needs to be conceptualised and analysed as a process rather than an event (Dimitrakopoulos, 2007, p. 44).

Within European context and with reference to European Union’s membership implementation refers to the transposition of European legislation into national law as well as to the enforcement of these legal provisions influencing proper application in the Member States. (Phillips & Ertl, 2003, p. 14) imply that unlike other international bodies, for instance OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), or the Council of Europe, “the European Union rests on a juridical base which can provide for legislation that is binding on Member States, and enforceable by sanctions” (after: Schink, 1993, p. 11). The threat of financial sanctions was introduced with the Maastricht Treaty and it often works as a factor making a particular state follow EU policy. Same concerns “naming and shaming” in the infringement proceeding.

EU membership entails a complex web of processes and actors. EU directives impose specific duties on the Member States and seek to improve transparency and enforce equality of treatment - the two fundamental objectives of the EU’s policy. However, not like regulations,
directives, typically the result of long discussions and elaborate compromises between the Member States, are not directly applicable at the national level, but first they need to be incorporated into the national law.

EU law has primacy over national law (normative rules) of the Member States. This is due to the principle that Member State cannot refer to the national regulations in order not to attain the Community law. The supremacy of EU law together with the requirement that national courts must ensure its practical effectiveness are established beyond question in a consistent line of case law (Craig & de Búrca, 2011). The acceptance and application of the primacy of EU law are solely dependent on the Member States. National courts are required to respond immediately to EU law and to ignore or to set aside any national law, of whatever rank, which could impede the application of EU law (Craig & de Búrca, 2011). It is arguable, however, whether this rule also implies the priority of the Community Law over the constitutions of the Member States. Craig and de Búrca infer that “most national courts do not accept the unconditionally monist view of the ECJ as regards the supremacy of EU law. While they accept the requirements of supremacy in practice, most regard this as flowing from their national constitutions rather than from the authority of the EU Treaties or the ECJ, and they retain a power of ultimate constitutional review over measures of EU law” (Craig & de Búrca, 2011, p. 256). In practice, when differences and discrepancies appear, the constitution of a Member State is being modified. One of the requirements for EU membership is to have proper functioning of the state apparatus.

Even though, as we have already mentioned, transparency and equality of treatment are the two fundamental objectives of the EU’s policy, its interpretation and implementation in each Member States might differ and has to do with a variety of factors which may contribute to effective implementation at various levels of the policy’s transmission. Noncompliance with the EU law is often unrelated to opposition or when Member States failed to assert their interests in the European decision-making process, due to administrative shortcomings, interpretation problems, and issue linkage (Falkner et al., 2004).

With reference to EU efforts regarding migration we could summarize those as follows:

1. One of fundamental pillars of EU is the free movement of labour within EU (with attention to transition periods)

3. 2008 European Pact on immigration and asylum

4. Focus is placed on regulating and facilitating legal economic immigration.

Third country migration remains dominant trend and Intra-EU migration remains modest. Recently, the main migration trends have been deeply impacted by the economic crisis. According to EMN\textsuperscript{11} study (2010) there are two main approaches with regard to the legal framework of migration and asylum issues among EU Member States:

a) Member States adopt one or two general Acts (Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Sweden, or Spain);

b) Member States develop a „package” of Acts, each of them dealing with a certain aspect of migration and asylum (Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Slovak Republic, and United Kingdom). These Acts are regularly amended, also in order to transpose EU Directives. Greece is among countries following this pattern.

Being a member of the EU commonwealth Greece needs to meet a number of criteria relating to various spheres: economic, political, human rights which are set out in the so-called “Copenhagen criteria”, to accept fully and unreservedly the \textit{acquis communautaire} and in particular the principle of the primacy of Community law over the national law. Greece also needs to have an efficient administration and judiciary able to enforce Union and Community acts: Greece’s justice system and administration ensure the implementation and compliance with Community law. Due to Greece’s EU membership with regards to the protection and support of migrants and mobile EU citizens, Greek law has been harmonized with EU legislation. Many changes in the Greek legislation came as a result of incorporating European Conventions and Directives in the spirit of EU policy as outlined in the Maastricht Treaty.

The EU and Schengen memberships lead to significant changes to national asylum and migration policies in Greece. The harmonisation to EU education policy in the current Greek policy discourse results in the situation when European dimension is becoming more apparent, while its traditional “national mission” as a founding stone of the nation state and a mechanism of reproduction and transmission of national ideals is silenced (Stamelos et al., 2006, p. 306).

\textsuperscript{11} European Migration Network.
In Greece in order to manage migration issues and be more effective in their role and responsibilities all state actors cooperate more or less closely with a series of national, European and international state agencies, NGOs, migrants’ communities, and organizations. Liapi and Vouyioukas (2006, p. 12) indicate that the “cooperation between state actors and migrants’ NGOs is rather informal and loose and the latter are not actively and formally involved in consultation procedures and policy negotiation”.

Yet, incorporation of EU legislation into national law proved to be problematic for Greece. In case of migratory law the Greek institutional framework tries to comply with EU directives, but lags behind European legislation. Liapi and Vouyioukas (2006) claim that in case of Greece there has always been a gap between legislation and reality. González-Enríquez and Triandafyllidou (2009) imply that the transposition of EU migratory policies on the Greek ground is left wanting. Scholars underline that in this country migration is still not a relevant issue in the policy agenda. In the European Union Greece is often perceived as one of the laggards of European integration, or even as an ‘awkward partner’ (Dimitrakopoulos, 2007).

Not only European policies, but also funds are transposed and integrated into national policy in Greece. EU initiatives and European Social Fund programs have been playing a major role for migration policy implementation in Greece. According to Kokkali (2011, p. 14)

“EU-funded programs have been important in addressing the media, raising the awareness of both the public and media professionals with respect to issues such as non-discrimination, avoidance of ethnic stereotyping, and an ethical code of reporting on migration related issues”.

Nowadays EU citizens, such as Poles, enjoy full EU citizenship status and free access to the Greek labour market. However, for a couple of years after Poland’s accession into the EU structures Poles were caught in a kind of transition phase: officially they were EU citizens with full freedom of movement rights in EU countries but still they needed to wait for their new status to be fully implemented by the Greek administration (Christou, 2008). Christou emphasizes that the relevance of the EU citizen status is that it brings about a certain guarantee that the stressful days of insecurity are over and also simplifies everyday life of Poles in the way that they do not need to spend time and money for immigration documentation renewal as well as have easier access to public services. In case of Polish immigrants in Greece EU membership improved largely their immigration status and the possibility of making plans for the future (Christou, 2008).
d. Summary

Greece has faced increasing immigration flows since the 1990s due to its geographic location. Suddenly increasing number of immigrants created a situation that the Greek government was not prepared to handle bureaucratically, and the Greek society was not prepared for culturally (Levinson, 2005). The issue was of great priority and led to several new legislative initiatives with a focus initially on policing and subsequently on building reception and integration systems.

It is important to emphasize that the policy of Greek authorities and their agencies towards immigrants has been defined by the obligations and commitments stemming from the membership in the EU combined with the ethnic composition, the economic and social situation of immigrants and their potential integration as well as the attitudes and concerns of Greek opinion towards immigrants and the effects of their presence (Kiprianos et al., 2003).

When it comes to immigration policy in Greece, up to 2004 the efforts and role of the Ministry of Education needs to be noticed, which granted the education rights to all (including illegal) migrant children, and also set up a special task force to look at the problems of minority and immigrant children. Another relevant point is the health services: in the state hospitals large numbers of illegal migrants were treated with some travelling from other countries just for the medical treatment. The government attempted to introduce a migration policy, which, at first, was aiming at stopping the immigrants from getting into the country. The next step was to try to legalise them: taking example from other countries-members of the EU up to 2004 Greece introduced twice (in 1997 and 2001) schemes to legalise the stay of undocumented immigrant. Relevant literature indicates that both attempts had advantages not only for immigrants, but also for the Greek citizens. Kiprianos and colleagues (2003) point to the improving situation of immigrants in Greece, reduction of crime rates and xenophobia as benefits of legalizations. Still, assessment of the regularization programmes suggested that they achieved little: benefited the Albanian community, who have been protected from deportation, and shifted the agenda a little more towards modernizing and accepting the reality of immigration (Baldwin-Edwards & Fakiolas, 1998). Large sectors of the illegal immigrant community, including Poles, had rather minimal involvement with the programme. Baldwin-Edwards and Fakiolas (1998) indicate that with regards to the Polish community the drafting of the procedures, namely that they excluded immigrants legally resident but illegally working, explains their very low application rate.
Regularization programmes were introduced despite strong public opposition. The Greek authorities understood the need to modernize its immigration laws: for the government the potential economic advantages of a legalization programme—primarily social security and tax contributions, together with the rising need for cheap labour in certain sectors, outweighed public opposition (Levinson, 2005, p. 4). But bureaucracy and public sector rigidities led to unsatisfactory results in case of both legalization schemes (Cholezas & Tsakloglou, 2008).

Generally, the Greek pattern of policy response to migration up to 2004 seems to be rather incoherent. Baldwin-Edwards and Fakiolas (1998) emphasize that the role of immigrants in Greek society and economy was underestimated and the fundamental human rights obligations were not taken into account. Scholars claim even that in the late 90s there was actually no real policy or policy objectives on immigration. Little information on all aspects surrounding immigration made the policy extremely difficult to be formulated.

Kiprianos and colleagues (2003) attribute policy incoherency to the hostile attitudes of the Greek society towards immigrants and the fears of public opinion that in the long run immigrants could contribute to the issues with the national integration, regardless the fact that benefits of immigrants for the Greek economy counterbalanced abovementioned issues. Authors also indicate that uncertainty of government’s policy was evident in everyday life. The rather sudden change of Greece into an immigration country in combination with the lack of an effective migration policy had negative impacts on the Greek society and was widely commented by the media, what created xenophobic feelings within Greek society during the first years of migrants’ entry (Charalampopoulou, 2004). An increase in xenophobic behaviour and racism has been noticed since the mid-1990s (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005), with the allegation of criminality towards immigrants and the mass media spreading the stereotype of “dangerous immigrant” particularly with regard to Albanians (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004a). In the opinions of Greek people reflected by Eurobarometer in 1989, non-nationals were too many, they were responsible for raising degree of criminality and unemployment. However, as indicated by Kiprianos and colleagues (2003) this hostile approach towards immigrants was only one of the views spread by the media. The other one, rather contradictory, depicted Greeks as tolerant and hospitable when interacting with non-nationals. Still, this view was not as popular as the earlier-mentioned one.
Migration policy in Greece up to 2004 encountered some distinct issues, such as the great extent of illegal immigration and mess that surrounded the legalisation programmes, incompetent government oversight, and no clear overarching migration management strategy or policy for immigrant integration.

The aforementioned pieces of legislation indicate that the Greek state faced great problems working on the immigration policy since both: authorities and public opinion in Greece failed to accept country’s new status as a major migrant-receiving destination. The situation of immigrants in Greece in that times was very uncertain and unpredictable, that is why the majority of them, including Poles, chose to stay in Greece illegally even though the State was making attempts to legalize their presence. Time, effort and money, not to mention the willingness, were necessary to go through immigration procedures, that often did not end up in gaining a work or stay permit, not to even mention Greek citizenship. In case of Polish citizens it is also important to mention that they generally prefer to rely on other Poles than on Greek institutions, taking information from friends, relatives or informal networks. General acceptance of their undocumented stay, keeping a low profile and continuing to stay in Greece illegally contributed to the naming Polish minority an “invisible community” in the years preceding Polish accession to the structures of the EU.

Literature review undergone on the implementation of the EU policy, with the emphasize on migratory one, made us realize that in case of Greece its institutional framework is characterized by rather low legislative action, fragmentary policy implementation procedures and does not ensure dispersion of functions and decentralization of decision-making. As we have already indicated in the preceding subsections, Greek legislation for a long time was mainly focused on national interests and migration was perceived as an unwanted burden for the country. The government’s core policy objective was to regulate and control immigration flows and the informal sectors of the Greek labour market (Liapi & Vouyioukas, 2006).

Yet, Greece obviously tries to meet the migration challenges in order to comply with EU directives. As it has already been said, EU is also the main framework within which migration laws have to be developed and the EU acquis provides the structures for human rights protection in relation to both asylum seeking and irregular migration control policies (A. Triandafyllidou, 2009). However, as emphasized by Triandafyllidou (2009), an impact of EU legislation on Greek policy started to be visible only after introducing 2005 law, so 24 years after accession of Greece.
to the EU. In Greece, an independent Asylum Service within the Ministry of Citizen Protection was established to ensure the full implementation of the European Charter of Human Rights and the 1951 Geneva Convention; also the Inter-ministerial Committee on Monitoring of Migration Policy and a Consultancy Committee on Migration was set up (European Migration Network, 2010).

Country’s attempts to comply with EU demands prove to be reactionary: Greek law has been harmonized with EU legislation and today’s Greece’s migratory policy is in line with international conventions, EU and national law. Surely, incorporating the relevant EU directives to the Greek legal order has greatly influenced the development of States’ migration and asylum policies. Especially the EU and Schengen memberships led to significant changes to national asylum and migration policies in Greece.

Concluding, it is relevant to mention that the subject literature underlines the EU’s role in forming a more open and integration oriented migration policy in Greece as it has been the main source of information and practices in the political framework. Even though there are criticisms regarding certain aspects of this legislation, it is generally accepted that overall Greek legislation on asylum and refugee status has incorporated all relevant European Legislation (Kanellopoulos & Gregou, 2006, p. 17).
III. METHODOLOGY

In the following section of the dissertation we describe our choice regarding the method and techniques chosen in order to obtain answers to the research questions. We explain what the reasons were for selecting the specific research method and not any other as well as indicating how this choice will help answer the research questions and explain the process of the negotiation of migratory and educational strategies of Polish families residing in Athens. We also present the research sample, procedure implemented in the empirical research and avenues for future research as well as the way in which the obtained results were analyzed.

Research Setting

The main research problem was investigated on the basis of a qualitative perspective. Qualitative perspective emphasizes the phenomenological view, in which reality inheres in the perceptions of individuals (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005, p. 40). It is based upon interpretivist and constructivist paradigms. Studies deriving from this perspective focus on meaning and understanding, taking place in naturally occurring situations (McMillan, 1996). Qualitative research is inductive and aims to understand culture, processes, meanings or experiences within particular social contexts. Rather than theory testing qualitative research is theory building. Qualitative research can provide an explanation of phenomena characteristic for migration processes, but often invisible in statistics. They enable for an in-depth investigation of the motives of migration, migration strategies, as well as the creation of a typology of migrants (Eade, 2007). The findings are bound to specific social contexts and are not generalizable to particular groups or population. Among the techniques of data collection in respect to migration, in-depth interviews with migrants and experts (possessing knowledge about the migration trends in particular country) can be distinguished.

Qualitative research is used to gain an in-depth insight into matters that affect human behaviour. These studies refer to the why and how of decision-making, by studying people's culture, value systems, attitudes, behaviours, concerns, emotions, motivations, aspirations, and feelings as well as to organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena and interaction between nations.
(Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The general purposes for using an inductive approach is to establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data, as well as to develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that were evident in the raw data (Thomas, 2006). The general inductive approach provides an easily used and systematic set of procedures for analyzing qualitative data that can produce reliable and valid findings and a simple, straightforward means for deriving findings in the context of focused evaluation questions (Thomas, 2006).

Since the aim of the case study was to consider the individual perspective of the migrants, hypotheses were not formed prior to the research and the adopted methodology was linked to Florian Znaniecki’s concept of the ‘humanistic coefficient’ (1922). The humanistic coefficient is a methodological principle for data analysis in the perception of their participants, as components of their active experience. This method of conducting social research refers to a way of data analysis that stresses the importance of the perception of the analyzed experience by their participants. In this approach reality can only be studied if the researcher tries to understand the world of the subject of his study.

Our aim was to place the experience of migration within the context of an individual’s life and strategies towards the future. There is now increasing recognition of the role of qualitative methods in recording and understanding migration, and how it can reveal the decision-making process of migrants. Qualitative perspective is a useful means for researchers not only to capture the individual contexts surrounding decisions to migrate, but also to explore how migration can be embedded within many aspects of someone’s life. It can also reveal the impact of migration over time and across generations. Consequently it enables moving beyond using ‘blunt instruments’ such as wage differentials to explain patterns of migration.

Population and sample

The research population for this case study comprised the young and adult members of Polish migrant families in Athens. The size of the sample in qualitative research is determined by the optimum number necessary to enable valid inferences to be made about the population (Marshall, 1996, p. 522). Beginning with five or six participants selected because they seem to have the phenomenon of interest in common, a process called homogeneous sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is common in the
qualitative research. Scholars adapting the qualitative perspective (e.g. Josselson et al., 2003) have emphasized that saturation, so stopping data collection when the results start to become excessive is the key determinant of sample size. As each new respondent has something unique to contribute to the study, real saturation might never occur. Josselson and colleagues (2003) argued that it is usually the researcher who becomes saturated – the most relevant thing is to collect sufficient data to represent the breadth and depth of the phenomenon. Thus, a range between five and thirty participants is typically chosen in the qualitative research. We assumed that our sample must be big enough to assure that we would hear various perceptions that might be important for presented research. Our research sample got gradually larger and eventually consisted of 32 participants - seven families with nine male, eleven female and twelve children (six girls and six boys). Other than members of these seven families we spoke to nine other participants including the Polish priest and a representative of the Polish Embassy in Athens. Fourteen people took part in the four focus groups – (six male, six female) and two children who were girls\textsuperscript{12}. We spoke to all the participants during in-depth interviews.

The choice of such a specific research group of Polish families’ members, including young children, is novel in the research on the Polish minority in Greece. Similar research has never been done. As we have already said, international studies show the growing relevance of family in the mobility decisions and this is the reason why we chose this specific group for our case study. Even though research on families has its tradition, treating all the family members as the subject of research is not reflected in many sociological positions. We believe that including children into the case study will bring about some interesting information and shed new light on elements of the process of strategy formation.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit Polish families - interviewees from a diversity of backgrounds, ages and experiences; migrants who planned short and longer stays, and people in menial (mostly), unskilled occupations residing in Athens. The convenience sample was recruited through gate keepers, flyers and snowball sampling among the Polish community in Athens. Respondents were selected with the help of the parson of the Catholic Church of Christ the Saviour (\textit{Χριστού Σωτήρος}), which is located in the centre of the “Polish district” in the heart of Athens, who spoke to the people gathered on one of the Sunday Masses inviting and encouraging them to participate in our research. This priest also allowed us to give out leaflets with information about the study after the Sunday mass

\textsuperscript{12}For more detailed information about the participants please see the tables no 3 and 4 on the pages 202 and 203.
on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 9\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2014. Gathering samples continued with snowball sampling; we managed to invite a few initial members of the target population thanks to the leaflets that were spread not only around the Catholic church but also the “Polish district” in general (left in the Polish shops, DVD rentals, restaurants, etc.). Then we asked those individuals to provide information needed to locate other members of that population whom they knew.

Since migrants have been identified as a vulnerable research target, particular attention was paid to careful recruitment and close monitoring of the research process. Both parental and personal consent were obtained for the participant below eighteen years old.

In the case of children, the rising numbers of studies on the youngest members of societies present a variety of notions concerning immigrant offspring, such as “contemporary immigrant children”, “second generation”, "new second-generation", and “one-and-a-half generation". The last expression is a term coined by Ruben Rumbaut that characterizes the immigrant children who have arrived in a particular country at a very young age and were raised in the country of settlement (Zhou, 1997a). Until recently, the bulk of research on young immigrants has focused on the "new second-generation", combining first generation, one-and-a-half generation, and children of immigrants under one investigation (e.g. Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut, 1994; Zhou & Bankston, 1994). Such an approach has been also chosen in the present case study for the youngest participants of present research. The children we spoke to represented mainly the second generation immigrants – they were born in Greece – and they were nine young respondents.

The interviewees’ selection process was not random, but intended to ensure that families to be interrogated met our selection criteria, such as:

a) **First-generation of Polish immigrants in case of parents** – we decided to focus on those families whose parents came to Greece at the turn of the 80s and 90s due to the fact that a considerable number of current Polish migrants in Greece came to this country in the mentioned period\textsuperscript{13}.

b) **Families with children** – our research investigates the negotiation of strategies in the case of Polish families. We recruited married couples with children to explore family dynamics with parents, children, and in-laws. We decided to focus on full families, leaving single parents for future investigation.

\textsuperscript{13} Compare with Krystyna Romaniszyn (1996).
c) **Age of children (ten to eighteen)** - initially we planned to focus on families with children between thirteen and seventeen, but due to difficulties with finding such families that would agree to take part in our research, we decided to enlarge the age range including children between ten and eighteen years old.

d) **Polish and mixed marriages** - gathering the research sample we did not plan to investigate only those families, where both parents were Polish, just the opposite: we were open to families with at least one Polish parent, as long as the other parent was not Greek. We decided not including Polish-Greek mixed marriages into the research as we believe that in those cases family strategies, especially migratory once, are formed on the basis of completely different premises than in case of fully foreign marriages. Having said this, during the course of gathering the research sample we did not encountered mixed marriages, all the volunteers were Polish.

e) **Minimum of ten years of living in Greece** – we chose the criterion of ten years to gather rich stories of immigrant lives; we decided to focus our interests on families that had been living in Greece for at least a decade as we believe that such a timeframe is advisable to trace how the process of family strategies’ negotiations develops, changes, and what factors have the greatest influence on it.

f) **Various socio-economic backgrounds** – the criterion of socio-economic backgrounds was left open as we did not want to focus on one specific layer of society, but rather aimed at getting insights from various ones in order to get a broad picture regarding the Polish minority in Athens.

g) **Variation by age, profession, gender, school that children attend** – we decided not to choose our candidates with reference to those characteristics, still due to the chosen age of children and the timeframe for the stay in Greece our adult participants were of similar age – over 40 years old.

h) **Place of residence** – we decided that the research sample would focus on Polish families residing in Athens. As it has already been stated, Athens is the most often chosen place for residence among Polish immigrants in Greece, which has created a strong “invisible” community in this city.
Preparing the research and gathering the research sample we had some ideas that turned out to be rather unrealistic. For example, when it comes to gender we planned to investigate the same amount of mothers and fathers - we wanted to talk to all the members of ten Polish families. It turned out that fathers generally withdrew from the research, and did not want to participate. All in all we ended up with a greater amount of female participants than male ones. Also the planned age of children proved difficult to ascertain. As we have already mentioned, initially we planned to focus on families with children between thirteen to seventeen years old, but due to difficulties with finding such families, we decided to modify the age range including children between ten and eighteen.

We found gathering the research sample very problematic. First of all we tried to gather families via gatekeepers and only succeeded in finding two families in this way that agreed to speak to us. Those participants contacted us with other families that were also willing to be interviewed. We also gave out leaflets with information about our research on two consecutive Sundays – we stood outside the Polish church and gave out leaflets after each mass. Unfortunately, no one contacted us. We spoke to the Polish priest asking him to put us in contact with Polish families, and it was after he spoke about the research during the mass that some people approached us and agreed to take part in the study. After a couple of months of gathering the research sample we managed to find families who agreed to take part in the research, however, those families had younger children than we initially planned including in our research. Another issue was that in the course of interviewing families some of the family members - mostly fathers, but often also children - withheld from taking part in the research. All these difficulties resulted in the specific shape of our research group. We ended up investigating seven families, of which in the case of three families we investigated all the family members; in one case we spoke only to mother and daughter (father did not agree to take part in our research), and in three cases we spoke to both parents and one (of two) children in each family. It was either because the parents did not agree for us to speak to the child (Family D), or the children were adult and lived in Poland (Families B and C). Additionally we spoke to only mothers in three cases, only fathers in two cases, and only children in two cases. This was because even though initially all the family members agreed to be interviewed they either did not show up for the meetings, or cancelled them. Still, we believe that those partial insights we got from the Polish families put together created one greater picture showing the ways in which Polish migrant families’ strategies are negotiated and
renegotiated, what part in the process of strategy formation has education, family ties (with transnational ones) and the most importantly – the economic crisis.

Similarly, when preparing the focus groups we wanted to have three sessions - to speak to fathers, mothers and children separately. We managed to gather a few women who agreed to participate in the focus groups. Even though five mothers agreed, only three came to the meeting. In the case of fathers they refused to speak to us separately from their wives. Thus, the second focus group was a mixed one - three women and four men - three husbands and one Polish man whose wife did not agree to take part in the research took part in this focus group. We tried to organize another session with only fathers – out of four fathers who agreed to participate only two came for the meeting. The same situation was repeated in the case of the focus group with youngsters – five children aged fifteen to seventeen agreed to participate in the focus group session, but on the day of the meeting only two girls came and spoke to us.

Supplementary sources of information were interviews with professionals involved with Polish migrants, including the priest, the representative of the Polish Embassy in Athens and two members of the School Council at the Polish School in Athens, who were also fathers and participated in our research. Additionally, some fieldwork observations of ‘Polish places’ including Polish community centres, shops and the church area became also a relevant source of information about the Polish migrants in Athens.

Instrumentation

Choosing the right techniques used to collect data with respect of the research problem was important to the whole planned work. As for the research techniques that were applied in the proposed case study, these were focus groups and subsequent qualitative in-depth, semi-structured interviews with members of the Polish migrant families. Focus groups were held in order to gather initial, rather general information from which we induced topics for interviews.

Focus group research involves organized discussion with a selected group of individuals in order to gain an insight about their views from personal experience of a specific topic, which is the subject of the research. It is particularly suited for obtaining various perspectives on a specific matter. Focus groups are a unique way to get feedback from a target population that they might not
normally provide, since during them participants may be more candid in their responses due to the fact that the group setting can make them more willing to share their perceptions than if asked a question directly. Moreover, researchers get a chance to learn from actions, body language and other non-verbal communication since they are able to observe the group and participate in the discussion.

Interviews are normally conducted to ascertain perception of groups or an individual. We wanted to gain the opinions of Polish families’ members on migration and education concerning issues, as well as about their plans and dreams regarding the future. Less intrusive and conducted with a fairly open framework, semi-structured interviews enabled focused, conversational, two-way communication. This technique is used to collect qualitative data by setting up a situation (the interview) that gives respondents the time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject. The objective is to understand the respondents’ points of view rather than make generalizations about behaviour. In our opinion it was the right technique to be chosen for investigating Polish families, including young children.

To go into something “in depth” may indicate simply obtaining more detailed knowledge about it, or, more specifically, gaining a sense of how something apparently straightforward is actually more complicated; in other words gaining deep understanding of how little we know about a certain phenomenon (Wengraf, 2001, p. 6). The in-depth interview is qualitative research technique that gives a place for a person-to-person discussion designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participants’ perspective (Milena et al., 2008, p. 1279). It can lead to increased insight into people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour on important issues. The strength of the in-depth interview comes from the fact that through it one may learn about the details of people’s experience from their point of view, and also see how these individual experiences interact with social and organizational forces that pervade the context in which participants live as well as enable discovering the interconnections among people who live in the shared context (Seidman, 1998, p. 130). Due to its unstructured nature, this type of interview permits the interviewer to encourage the respondent to talk at length about the topic of interest. It generally aims to ask questions to explain the reasons underlying a problem or practice in a target group.
The use of qualitative approaches such as focus groups and semi-structured, in-depth interviews seemed appropriate to elicit participants’ thoughts and feelings about their migratory experiences, plans and strategies towards the future and towards the education of their children.

The matters discussed during focus groups were developed on the basis of the previous literature on immigration, families, networks, integration and transnationalism as well as the researcher’s earlier project combined with experiences in Polish migrant community in Athens. Focus groups consisted of six sets of questions, each containing several specific open-ended questions, and covered the following topics: (a) experiences of immigration and settlement, (b) family dynamics, (c) mobility, (d) the EU (integration/ ethnic/national identity), (e) the crisis, and (f) transnational ties. In closing the session, the participants were given an opportunity to discuss any issues that were important to their immigrant lives but the interviewer had not asked about.

Questions that were asked during the focus groups:

- Could you tell me please about the reasons why Polish people decided to come and stay in Greece?
- Where and how do Polish people find employment in Greece?
- What is family?
- What do the social networks of Polish people residing in Athens look like?
- Which schools do Polish pupils attend?
- Have you heard about or participated in any Greek or EU initiatives in the fields of migration, education?
- Has the situation of Polish people in Athens changed in the recent years?
- What will the future of Polish migrants in Athens look like?

As we have already mentioned, focus groups were organized in order to discover the most relevant themes that were later discussed with participants during the semi-structured interviews. Thus, focus groups were a preliminary technique adopted to gather some general information about experiences of Polish families in Athens, as well as their plans regarding the migration and the education of children. By using focus groups we wished to gather general insight into the situation of
Polish migrant families, which was later used to compile the one-to-one interviews. We expected that perceptions of participants of focus groups would reveal some additional information that we could not anticipate beforehand, which would help us design the in-depth interviews that followed them. In the individual interviews we planned to ask respondents more directly about their own experiences. Focus groups were planned and intended to provide general information about Polish migrants in Athens in order to investigate migratory and educational strategies and factors influencing them. We tried to focus on as few (general) questions as possible, hoping that during the focus groups respondents would not simply answer our questions, but start a discussion on the following topics. The interviewer planned to actively participate actively in the discussion and react to other issues that may appear during the focus groups.

In the case of the interviews the elaborated questions were various depending on the age of the interviewee, but also due to the fact that the semi-structured interviews were conducted with an open framework which enabled a conversational, two-way communication. Rather than asking all participants the same set of questions we followed the discussion, still not forgetting the aim of the session and, if necessary, guiding the discussion towards topics into which we wanted to gain insight. At the beginning of each interview we asked participants to introduce themselves and provide information about their age, length of stay in Greece, employment or school and grade they attended (in case of children), education/profession and the size of the family.

Questions that were asked during the interviews:

Parents:
- Could you tell me please why did you decide to leave Poland and settle in Greece?
- What is the importance of your children education?
- What is “family”?
- Whom do you spend your free time with/are in contact with (and how)?
- Has the accession of Poland into the EU structures changed anything in your life (in private and legal spheres)?
- Do you think that the Greek state follows the EU policies?
- Has your life in Athens changed in the recent years?
Where do you see yourself in 10/20/30 years?

Children – 13 years old and older

- What school do you go to?
- Do you like your school?
- Have you ever wanted to attend another school?
- Whom do you spend free time with / keep in touch (in Poland and Greece, how)?
- Have you ever been to Poland? Would you like to live there?
- Do you like living in Greece?
- Could you describe your family?
- Do you take part in decision-making in your family?
- Has the accession of Poland into the EU structures changed anything in your life (in private and legal spheres)?
- Has your life in Athens changed in the recent years?
- Where do you see yourself in 10/20/30 years?

Children – younger than 13 years old

- What school do you go to?
- Do you like your school?
- Have you ever wanted to go to another school?
- Whom do you spend free time with / keep in touch (in Poland and Greece, how)?
- Have you ever been to Poland? Would you like to live there?
- Do you like living in Greece?
- Could you describe your family?
- What do you think, where you will live in the future?

Additionally, both: during the focus groups and in-depth interviews some probes were used when needed. These include:
• Would you give me an example?
• Can you elaborate on that idea?
• Would you explain that further?
• I’m not sure I understand what you’re saying.
• What do you mean?
• Could you please explain it?
• How did it make you feel?
• Is there anything else that you would like to add?

We designed the focus groups and interviews in order to elicit the following information which we believe would provide the answer for research questions stated in the initial parts of this research:

1. Immigration/ settlement
   a. Factors determining the decision to emigrate (push-factors) with attention paid to role that family members play in decision-making (economic, political, personal, etc….)
   b. Factors influencing the decision to migrate to Greece (pull-forces) (with attention paid to role that family members play in decision-making)
   c. Factors influencing the decision to continue living in Greece (impact on support networks in Greece) with attention paid to role that family members play in decision-making.

2. Family dynamics
   a. Power relations within a family
   b. Man/women position (role) in the family
   c. Family decision-making (general)
   d. The influence that the family members have on the lives of respondents
   e. Migration pattern that respondent family presents

3. Education of children
   a. The place of education in the life of the family (school choice)
b. The ways in which education impacts the processes of decision-making and strategy-formation

4. Social networks: local and transnational ties and its role in the life of the family
5. Occupation/employment issues
6. Poland’s accession to EU and its role in respondent family life.
7. Crisis and its role in respondent family life
8. Future plans

Data Collection

In spring and summer 2014 (between March and August 2014) four focus groups and 32 qualitative interviews with Polish families residing in Athens were conducted. The focus groups lasted between 70-105 minutes and the interviews lasted for about twenty to ninety minutes. Two focus groups (one with three mothers and one with two fathers) took place in a quiet room below the Polish church that we could use thanks to the Polish priest. One focus group with three married couples and one father took place in the house of the participant’s family. The focus group with two young girls took place in a coffee shop in the centre of Athens. The interviews took place in houses of respondents, parks and coffee shops in the neighbourhood where the particular respondent lived.

We translated the information sheet about the research into Polish in order to ensure that all research participants understood the objectives of the research and gave voluntary informed consent, but were also aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point in time. For practical reasons, both focus groups and interviews were conducted in Polish.

At the beginning of each session (either focus group or interview) we introduced ourselves and explained the scope of research as well as the fact that it would all be anonymous and only used for scientific purposes. Before each focus group and interview, participants were informed about the general purpose of the study, the format of the interview, and the topics that the questions would cover. We asked if participants agreed for the session to be recorded – everyone agreed except the Polish priest and the representative of the Polish Embassy. We also informed the group that all the names would be changed in the course of results analysis. The exact sequence and wording of the questions varied depending on respondents' personal opinions and characteristics. Additional probes regarding particular subjects were introduced as new topics emerged from the interviews already completed.
Focus groups enabled respondents to express their personal views freely, we were able to learn about new phenomena, discuss their significance with interviewees, and address them in subsequent interviews. Interviews were conducted after initial analysis of the focus groups in order to clarify discrepancies and increase the researcher’s understanding of migrants’ statements. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and offered as much time as needed to discuss freely all the relevant issues. After asking the first questions about their length of stay in Greece and the reasons for leaving Poland a discussion typically started. We used the set of prepared questions, which has been presented in the earlier subsection, only in cases when the adult participant did not discuss matters that we wanted to get their insight on. In case of interviews with children the situation was more complex as some of them were very shy and we needed to ask them a lot of questions in order to gather information about their specific experiences. Topics which had been identified as ambiguous had remained unclear and which needed further elaboration were revisited.

During the focus groups and interviews, only the general content of the answers was interpreted. Notes were kept during the sessions on everything relevant to the topic of investigation, as well as on other contextual factors. All the interviews and focus groups were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim to ascertain the accurate analysis of the data. The data were coded, analyzed thematically and categorized using NVivo computer software. Categorization helped to identify core issues and to capture and classify the variety of topics mentioned. All the names were changed in the course of results’ analysis and are thus fictitious, only reflecting the gender of the participant. In order to distinguish between female and male participants ‘F’ or ‘M’, respectively, were attached to the first letter of each interviewee’s name. Additionally, questions and comments of the interviewer are marked with single capital M.

Analysis

This subsection presents how data were sorted, organized, conceptualized, refined, and interpreted.

Data were analyzed thematically using NVivo computer software. The analysis of collected data was performed by employing the constant comparative method. Many qualitative analytic strategies rely on this general approach which was originally developed for use in the grounded
theory methodology of Glaser and Strauss (1967). The constant comparative method (CCM) together with theoretical sampling constitutes the core qualitative analysis in the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss and in other types of qualitative research (Boeije, 2002). CCM evolved out of the sociological theory of symbolic interactionism. This strategy involves taking one piece of data (one interview, one statement, one theme) and then going through it in search for key issues, recurrent events, or activities, which become categories for focus. Each piece of data is moreover compared with all other pieces that may be similar or different in order to develop conceptualizations of the possible relations between various pieces of data. In this strategy, researchers work with the data to discover basic social processes and relationships. It engages sampling, coding, and stating core categories.

NVivo is a Qualitative Data Analysis computer software developed to improve the quality of research and uneasy analysis of qualitative data leading to more professional results. This software reduces manual tasks, enables to manage various data including interview transcripts, surveys, notes of observations, audio and video recordings, journal articles and more. NVivo enables researchers to classify, sort and arrange data, examine relationships and combine analysis with linking, shaping, searching, modelling and reporting (Hilal & Alabri, 2013).

The analysis of gathered materials was carried out through multiple readings and interpretations of first: focus groups’ and then interviews’ transcripts. We transcribed focus groups and used NVivo to discover axes of research for the interviews that followed. These were the most often discussed issues by our focus groups interviewees. Once the individual interview sessions had been transcribed, major themes regarding the process of negotiation of strategies within families were noted. During the following stage of the analysis, the interviews’ transcripts were re-read and common themes and categories were isolated. Finally, after all the relevant points had been synthesized from the data, the transcripts were read to ensure that all the important aspects of the phenomena had been accounted for. In order to obtain information useful in assessing reliability of the data, informal conversations with the representatives of the Polish school, Embassy and Catholic Church were conducted. Going through this raw data several times and comparing one interview to another as well as one statement to another, when relevant, we were able to find categories common for all of them. We generally found two kinds of categories; the upper-level, so more general ones that were derived from the research’s aims and the lower-level or specific categories that were identified.
from multiple readings of the raw data. Within each category we searched for subtopics, including contradictory points of view and new insights. We selected appropriate quotations that conveyed the essence of a category. The categories might have been combined or linked under a primary category when the meanings were similar.

During focus groups and interviews respondents spoke to us about a variety of components of their migratory reality; employment and education related issues, friends and acquaintances, activities they participated in, politics, customs and traditions, their perception of Poland and so on. Gathering empirical material and analyzing it we managed to identify the most relevant factors influencing the process of strategy formation in case of Polish migrant families residing in Athens. Analysis of the information we gathered from interviews with Polish families, Polish priest and a representative of the Polish school and the Polish Embassy in Athens with the use of NVivo software helped us identify certain categories, thanks to which we managed to gather data regarding the process of strategies negotiation of Polish migrant families residing in the capital of Greece. The table below presents the correspondence between these categories and research questions. We have marked those categories with relation to research question that we believe provide information enabling answer to that specific inquiry:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>What role do family members have in the process of negotiation of migratory and educational strategies of Polish migrants in Athens?</th>
<th>What are the factors influencing Polish migrant families negotiation of their migratory and educational strategies?</th>
<th>How do family strategies change in the face of the economic crisis?</th>
<th>What possibilities do the EU educational and migration policies create in the context of the Polish migrant families’ strategy formation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family dynamics</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment related issues</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration and settlement</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polishness</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Correspondence between the categories of interest and research questions
IV. PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The present case study is qualitative research relying on semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted between the early spring and summer of 2014 with 32 Polish citizens: representatives of seven Polish families in Athens and 9 other participants including the Polish priest and a representative of the Polish Embassy in Athens. We spoke to 9 men, 11 women and 12 Polish children: 6 girls and 6 boys. 14 people took part in the four focus groups: 6 male, 6 female and 2 children – girls. We spoke to all the participants (32) during in-depth interviews.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit Polish families who were approached thanks to the help of the parson of the Polish Catholic Church of Christ the Saviour.

Data that came from interviews and focus groups were coded, analysed and categorized using NVivo software. The analysis of collected data was performed by employing constant comparative method which involved taking one piece of data (one interview, one focus group) and then going through it in search of key issues, recurrent events, or activities, which become categories for focus. Each piece of data was moreover compared with all other pieces so that we could develop conceptualizations of the possible relations between various pieces of data. The method of analysis we used engaged sampling, coding, and stating core categories.

Information we collected from focus groups was used to create axis of research for the individual interviews that followed. The analysis of data gathered from semi-structured, in-depth interviews with all of our participants provided following topics - issues that were most often discussed during interviews (Figure 6). Issues were grouped. In this way we have received following categories: family dynamics, education, employment related issues, crisis, networks, European Union, migration and settlement, Polishness and future.
Figure 6. The most discussed issues by the respondents.
Description of the Population

The sample we chose for investigation consisted of Polish individuals, family members. The selection criteria for participation were: age – parents in their late 30s to mid-40s, children – from ten to eighteen; type of school – we wanted to speak to families where children attended not only the Polish school but also Greek school; place of residence – Athens; parents not married to a Greek citizen with children; minimum ten years of living in Greece; various socio-economic backgrounds; variation by profession and gender. We decided not to approach Polish-Greek marriages (one of parents Greek or other nationality than Polish), because they could have totally different migration strategies, might be more rooted in Greece, and are strongly related to the country of destination by friends and family networks. Therefore, their behaviour in times of crisis could be different.

Below we present an example descriptions of one of the families that took part in our in the study – Family D. We briefly present each member’s life story - their migratory experiences and lives in Greece. The description of other families and individual respondents can be found in appendix.

Family D:
Gloria + Bolek + Szymon

We spoke to Gloria both in the focus group and interview. Her husband Bolek participated in a focus group, but did not agree to take part in the interview. We spoke to their son Szymon in an interview.

Family lives in the centre of Athens, not that far from the “Polish district”. Parents met up and got married in Athens. They have two children, a twelve year-old son and a daughter of eight who go to the Greek school and the Polish weekend school, and are fluent in Polish and Greek. As Gloria explained it, together with her husband they try to raise their children “fifty-fifty”, which means sending them to Greek regular and Polish supplementary schools, making them read books in both languages, so that they could enrich their vocabulary. At home the family speaks Polish. Family has no Polish relatives in Greece. Godmother of their son and godfather of their daughter are Greek. Once a year, in the summer parents take children on holiday to Poland and leave them there for some time. Parents keep children occupied by sending them to private English lessons, to practice various sports - tennis, swimming, artistic gymnastics. Mother and children have double
citizenship: Polish and Greek. Father has only Polish citizenship and he does not want to get the Greek one.

Gloria - in her early 40s, 24 years in Greece, she comes from a village near Wroclaw (western Poland), a midwife by profession, finished studies in Poland and Greece, fluent in Greek. She came to Greece for a holiday and stayed since she found a job; she wanted to save money for college and go back to Poland, but she met her husband in Greece. It was after a year of her stay in Greece when she decided to not go back to Poland and apply to the Greek midwifery college. In the beginning she worked as a baby-sitter, waitress in a restaurant (she combined working and studying), then as a midwife; later and until now - as a nurse in a Greek hospital. Gloria is well organized and resourceful. She has a positive attitude towards life in Greece and to the Greeks, seems to be well integrated into the Greek society, she knows how to get things done in the Greek offices. She likes Greece, and tells us she has become accustomed to the Greek lifestyle. She has no plans to return to Poland. Gloria characterizes Polish people as introverted, always complaining, envious.

For Gloria family is the most important thing in life. Her ties with family and friends in Poland are not too close - as she says, only visiting Poland is not enough to sustain those ties. Gloria has some Greek colleagues from work and acquaintances from the neighbourhood, but they are not close friends. Her attitude towards friends is best described in her own statement: “I think that friendship was back in high school. We can talk about real friendships back then. Later, the older you are, the more distant people become, and friendships are not as close as they used to be. Everyone has his own life.”

Gloria prepares her children to the fact that they will be educated in Poland in the future (university), since she does not like the Greek educational system as, according to her, it is not easy to get to the university faculty you want: “Why should children destroy their dreams? Especially when they can go to Poland: if they speak Polish, write in Polish, understand it, then they can be educated in the faculty that they want.” Family’s only concern is whether parents will be able to afford to educate their children in Poland.

Regarding her migratory plans and potential stay in Greece she claims openly that it depends on employment: “If I did not have work, and my husband did not have work as well and we could not feed our children – I wouldn’t even think about it too long. I would go to Dubai,
anywhere where I could feed my family and provide a good standard of life.” Still, she plans to stay in Greece for good.

Bolek – in his mid-40s, fluent in Greek, 22 years in Greece, works as a builder. He seems to feel well in Greece, but emphasizes his Polish identity. Also he realizes is different from the native Greeks: “We have always been foreign and we will always be.” He does not like Albanians, and Gloria called him a racist. He initially came for one year to Greece only to earn some money. He found work, later met his wife and stayed. He said that climate plays a huge role in the decision about staying in Greece. He agreed that one of the reasons parents send their children to Greek schools are free books and transportation. Still, he noticed and underlined disadvantages of the Greek school: “At a Greek school every time something is going on: either there are no books, or there are delays [in getting books]…you need to wait a month.” Bolek also noticed a change in the Greek attitude towards Poles, according to him due to current economic situation in Greece. He does not plan the return to Poland in the nearest future, but does not rule out going there when he retires. He notices that the crisis has “started to knock on Poland’s door […] it starts to get worse.”

Szymon – Twelve years old, born in Greece, attends the Greek school (1st grade of Junior High School) and Polish supplementary schooling (last grade of primary school). He seems to be well integrated into the Greek society, has friends from the Greek and Polish schools, and also in his neighbourhood. Very intelligent and goal-oriented boy, fluent in Greek and Polish. At the Greek school he is friends with a Greek boy and an Albanian boy with whom they go home after school (they live nearby), meet after school, play computer games. He has also Greek and some Albanian friends from primary school with whom he spends weekends. He goes to Poland every summer, likes it, but he would rather stay in Greece. As for the future education it seems that Szymon has been discussing this issue with his mum, as they share the same vision: he would like to take advantage of his status as graduate of a high school outside of Poland: “I would prefer to go to Poland. If I finished a Greek school I could go as a foreigner and it would be better for my family because I would get a scholarship, I would not need to write any entrance exams, I would get student residence, so I would only need money for food. So it would be a relief for the family.”

Regarding school Szymon attends he feels a bit overwhelmed, he feels he does not have time for his friends. On one hand he would prefer to stop going to the Polish school, but, on the other hand, he knows it could be advantageous for him in the future.
In this part of the study we decided to present a sample description of one of the families. The rest of descriptions can be found in Appendix.

Tables Three and Four below present the summary of demographic information about our participants. We have marked with colours members of one family. Next to the names, in parentheses, are initials used in the research parts of our case study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
<th>Year of arrival in Greece</th>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Grade at Greek school</th>
<th>Grade at the Polish school</th>
<th>Polish weekend school</th>
<th>Grade at the Polish weekend school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inga (I)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>1st grade of High School</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>3rd grade of Junior High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antek (A)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>1st grade of Junior High School</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>last grade of primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylwek (S)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>2nd grade of Junior High School</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1st grade of Junior High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benek (B)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>(4 grades at the Greek Primary School)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franek (F)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3rd grade of Junior High School</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cezary (C)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>1st grade of Junior High School</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>last grade of primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odrysta (O)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>last grade of primary school</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna (An)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>last grade of primary school</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ala (Ala)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5 years in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3rd grade of Junior High School</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majka (Maj)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 years in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>(3 grades at the Greek Primary School)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szymon (Szym)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>1st grade of Junior High School</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>last grade of primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olga (Ol)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spent 5 years in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5 years at Polish school</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Children – general information
n/a = not applicable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year of arrived in Greece</th>
<th>Number of kids</th>
<th>Where does he/she come from</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Residence in Athens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan (J)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Subcarpathia (village)</td>
<td>builder</td>
<td>technical high school</td>
<td>In the centre, in the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teodora (T)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Subcarpathia (village)</td>
<td>cleaning lady</td>
<td>vocational business school</td>
<td>In the centre in the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ela (E)</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Krasno (Central Poland)</td>
<td>cleaning lady</td>
<td>mid-ury school</td>
<td>In the centre near the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zdzislaw (Z)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Krasno (Central Poland)</td>
<td>building administrator</td>
<td>vocational</td>
<td>In the centre near the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowal (K)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chwalim, Lincut (southern Poland)</td>
<td>butcher</td>
<td>vocational mining school</td>
<td>In the centre in the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariela (Ma)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Near Lincut (village in southern Poland)</td>
<td>cleaning lady</td>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>In the centre in the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danuta (D)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Zakopane</td>
<td>dentist</td>
<td>University graduate</td>
<td>Far from the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grzyna (G)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Around 1901</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>From Bieszczady (south of Poland)</td>
<td>cleaning lady</td>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>Far from the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominika (Dob)</td>
<td>late 30s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Around 1904</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Village in the south of Poland (Polishcarpathian Voivodeship)</td>
<td>cleaning lady</td>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>Near the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karina (Kar)</td>
<td>early 30s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>From Nesa, Lower Silesia</td>
<td>cleaning lady</td>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>Near the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewa (Ewa)</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Podlaskie Voivodeship</td>
<td>nanny</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>Near the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorata (H)</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Village near Skawna Wola (Subcarpathian Voivodeship)</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>Vocational education</td>
<td>In the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudek (R)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stalowa Wola (Subcarpathian Voivodeship)</td>
<td>builder/painter</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>In the centre in the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viktor (V)</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Subcarpathia</td>
<td>builder</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>Near the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woznek (W)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Early 90s</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Subcarpathia</td>
<td>transportation/moving services</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>Near the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kszenimir (Bko)</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Osoble Voivodeski</td>
<td>builder</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>Near the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria (Gla)</td>
<td>early 40s</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wroclaw (western Poland)</td>
<td>nurse</td>
<td>Midwifery in the Greek college</td>
<td>Far from the Polish district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolek (Bo)</td>
<td>mid-40s</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>builder</td>
<td>n/s</td>
<td>Far from the Polish district</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Parents – general information
n/a = not applicable; n/s = not specified
Eade (2007) divided Polish migrant workers in London with reference to their migratory strategies into Storks, Hamsters, Searcher and Stayers\(^{14}\). We wanted to check whether this differentiation could be applied to our interviewees. It turns out that in case of our respondent such a division could not be applied since they possess characteristics of all of those groups. We believe that most of them when they first came to Greece were Hamsters (since they migrated in order to gather enough capital to invest in Poland; they tended to cluster in particular low-earning occupations, were often embedded in Polish networks and saw their migration as basically a capital-raising activity), some were Storks (circular migrants, occupying low-paid jobs for whom migration is a capital-raising activity; they rely strongly on co-native relatives or friends and tend to be clustered in dense Polish social networks), but with time their migration strategies altered and they became Stayers who want to remain in the destination country for good.

With regards to White and Ryan’s (2008, p. 1471) differentiation between two categories of Polish migrants in respect to their motivation for going abroad: the classic labour migrants, and people searching for adventure and life experience, Polish individuals we spoke to definitely belong to the first group. They are low-skilled, come from small towns and villages, stagnant places with a limited range of livelihood strategies that offer no career prospects.

With reference to Grabowska’s (2005, p. 35) consecutive phases of economic migration of Polish nationals to Ireland we believe that in case of Polish families we spoke to we could ascribe them to the two last proposed phases. Some families (A, B, C, D, E, also person H, I, J, K, N) were clearly at stabilization phase, since they were well settled in, possessed grounded knowledge of the market as well as having well organized social and cultural life. Other (such as families F and G, person L and M) clearly represented phase of making a decision to leave (basically due to the crisis).

As we have already stated, in the process of finding the answers to the research questions using NVivo software we came up with certain categories that are discussed in the following subsection. At the beginning we present fragments of interviews, mainly citations that provided insight which enabled us to formulate answers for the research questions. The below data will be summarized and analyzed thoroughly in the next subsection – ‘Discussion of the findings’.

\(^{14}\) For explanation of the categories please see the pp. 81-82.
Categories of interest - results of research materials’ analysis

FAMILY DYNAMICS

Investigating family related issues in the present research - we wanted to find what family means for participants and how it is relevant when deciding about migrating or/and education as well as what the influence is that the family members have on the lives of our respondents. Moreover, we wished to find whether our respondents’ families lived together and where their relatives lived - in Poland or Greece. Interviewees, both adults and children, willingly and openly spoke about their families. According to our respondents family seems to be the most important in their lives:

“GL (F): I believe that family is the most important thing in your life.”

“G: the most relevant.”

The majority of our respondents lived together in Athens, but in two cases children lived on their own in Poland. Those exceptions were: Family B and Family C. Teodora, Gloria, Danuta, Karina and Dominika and their husbands met in Athens. Mariola and Konrad, Zdzislaw and Elwira, Honorata and Radek, Ewa and Grazyna and their husbands – they met in Poland prior to migrating to Greece.

Understanding of the notion family

One of the questions we asked during the focus groups and interviews referred to the definition of family. We wanted to find what interviewees’ views on this concept were. Asked to describe family children informed us that they see it as:

“B (M): People closest to you, who help you. Dad, mum, grandma, all the relations.”

“F (M): ...family... it is a connection of mum, dad and a child. So a family consists of three people, for sure.”

“MAJ (F): Mum, dad, grandparents, uncle, aunt, cousins...

ALA (F): All of them”

“O (F): Grandma, grandpa, and for me also great-grandma”

“An (F): Parents, siblings and also, like O said, grandma and grandpa.”

“Ce (M): These are members of family like mum, dad, sister, brother who spend all days together.”
“I (F): Family is first of all ties. Support. Your first support. And your first sort of, life education. Because what your parents teach you, later on if it’s well rooted in you, then it will stay in you, even subconsciously. So that is why I think that family is a kind of foundation.

M: And who is your family?

I (F): My parents – first of all, and then siblings, because siblings is the first way of contact with people, let’s say, almost your age, peers.

M: And what about cousins, grandparents, aunties and uncles – is it your ore distant family?

I (F): I think because we live abroad it’s rather distant. Because, I know that the cousins and aunts and uncles who live near my grandma – they have incredible ties. Practically every day someone drops to visit grandma, or they have dinners together, and we are farther, so above all, we do generally talk via Skype or on the phone.”

Parents had similar views regarding the definition of family as children:

“Do (F): For me family is me, husband and a child. This is a family for me.

M: What about the relatives in Poland?

Do (F): I don’t miss them… I don’t know, maybe it’s a matter of tie, but I do not even call Poland that often. My mum calls me, she calls me often. We talk. I also speak to my sister, but not so often. But I do not call them that often. I have my family here; I created it here, so maybe this is why I do not long for Poland.”

“GL (F): But I am not sure if we can call it a close relation: if you see someone once, twice a year.”

“GL (F): I think that sister, mum – this is also a close family. But they live far away.”

“G (F): Also my parents and siblings – they are also a close family not only daughter and husband.”

When discussing family there was a distinction noticeable between a close family, and the family back in Poland. Even though adult respondents underlined, that parents and siblings are also members of close family, the distance and the fact they do not see one another often and do not participate in one another’s lives moves them somehow away from their families.

Some respondents, for example Elwira and Teodora, spoke about the new type of family that they started in Greece – their friends:

“E (F): We have this “special” family here, [she speaks about, friends 3-4 families] I mean that we can count on one another. Call with a good, but also bad news. And it has been going on for the last ten years. You don’t have your family here: mother, father.”
Similarly Gloria considers her friends as family members:

“GL (F): our daughter’s godfather – he is like a family, he comes, we visit him, I send him some food – like in a family. And also our female friend who was a witness at our wedding – it is not that we see each other often, but we also treat her like a member of our family.”

However, Teodora admitted, that having friends will not replace the family:

“T (F): … family, whose lack is especially noticeable during the holidays [Christmas and Ester]. You have friends, but it is not the same.”

Following family member to Greece

Family was often mentioned with regards to reasons our adult respondents came to Greece. Teodora came because her brother was already in Greece together with his girlfriend. Konrad visited his sister only for the summer holiday. Ewa followed her fiancé and future husband to Greece; similarly Elwira and Grazyna came because their boyfriends and future husbands were in Greece:

“E (F): I came 3 months after my boyfriend [current husband]. He sent money for the ticket. So I paid and came. […] I came here for so-called “holiday” – I got a three-month leave from work. To see the country and earn some money.”

“G (F): He was my boyfriend. I was not happy with the job I got just after graduation – I was a shop assistant – and I was unhappy both: about my job and earnings. So, regardless the fact that I got a very interesting job offer – if I got it now I would have never left – I came “after” my husband. And I liked it a lot. The thing I liked the most was that we were independent, that we could afford things we wanted, we could do what we wanted.”

Karina also came to Greece for holidays to her aunt and uncle:

“KAR (F): I passed my high school exams; I did not get into the collage I wanted, so I came here to my uncle and aunt for the summertime, just to rest and get some distance to everything that happened. “

Karina’s husband came to Greece following his mother:

“KAR (F): My husband used to come here because his mother was here, but he would never stay for good. But about 5 years before me he used to come for 3-4 months for a seasonal work and he used to go back.”

Sometimes entire families followed one of the spouses to Greece, as it was in case of Mariola and Konrad and Honorata and Radek. Typically a woman followed a man, but in case of Mariola’s family
she went to Greece to join her sister and work as a cleaner since there was a demand for cleaners back then. Konrad stayed in Poland, he worked and took care of their two daughters.

“K (M): I still worked then. But my wife did now work, and it was difficult for us to support ourselves only from one wages. We did not cultivate anything, it was hard time for us. And we needed to restore the house.”

Afterwards spouses decided that Konrad would join Mariola with the girls. It was supposed to be only for a short time, enough to enable parents to gather some money to restore the house. But because of difficult situation in Poland and huge unemployment in the area where they used to live in Poland Mariola and Konrad decided to stay in Greece. Now Konrad’s and Mariola’s daughters live in Poland, they both study at universities. Family is in touch via Skype and phone calls, girls visit their parents in Greece, come for summer holiday:

“K (M): Last year they came twice. It all depends on the situation, because it’s obvious that it is kind of expensive. But [they come to Greece] at least once a year.”

Family decision-making

Generally, the parents in our study when speaking about making decisions that would concern their children, especially educational ones and to some degree migratory as well, seemed to take into consideration their children’s opinions, views and feelings.

“T (F): I believe that my children should chose for themselves. I don’t want to choose the road for them. Ok, I can guide them or advise them depending whether they want to study, or settle and work here, or in Poland, or somewhere else.”

“KRZ (M): we left children [in the Greek school] because they were doing fine. It just turned out like this. We asked our children, but they did not want to [to change school into Polish].”

When it comes to the school choice some parents from our case study emphasized that this is their child’s decision and they would support it. Elwira, mother of a boy who might go to Poland to continue education in high school there, spoke about the way she felt about this possibility:

“E (F): Very bad, terrible. I cannot imagine it. At all. But I realize that he wants it.” Still, she will support decision her son will make:

“E (F): I don’t want to choose for him. And that is why I will not make the decision that he will stay here and study […]. If he decides that he wants to go, or later do whatever he wishes – I will
always support him. Whatever he will want. Life changes a lot. I don’t dream that he would be a doctor, or pilot as he wants. He can be whomever he wants.”

Her husband also did not want to send boy to Poland, but he understood that it might be advantageous for his son:

“Z (M): I would prefer he went to high school here, but if it will not be possible – of course he will go to Poland. I believe that if he feels that he wants to do this profession – I am behind him. This is his decision.”

Other parents presented a different strategy: they tried to convince their children to solution they though was better. Jan explained how he was talking to his daughter to try to convince her that going to Poland to attend high school there was not a good idea. They talked a lot about Iza’s future and educational possibilities:

„J (M): hmmm... I have lately talked over my daughter going to a high school in Poland. This is an example of other people interfering and suggesting. I asked her how does she imagine it, that what? You will go to Poland and who will take care of you? She is at a dangerous age. She would leave and even though you go to your fatherland it is an unfamiliar environment. And who will take care of you? My brother and sister have their own children and own problems. It’s not that she would go there just like this.”

With regards to migratory decision-making parents emphasized that having a family means considering young family members when making relevant decisions:

“T (F): I believe due to the fact that I met my husband and got married, and when the first child was born I felt that we are a family. Because only the marriage is not it: you can always pack your suitcases and go back. But when you have a child you start to think differently and you cannot make decision one day just like this – you need to prepare. ”

Jan explained that once you get a family mobility becomes more complicated:

“J (M): because going with family...when you are alone you can always find a corner to sleep in. Just stay somewhere and settle the ground for the family. You need to have a house or a place ready to go with your family; you cannot go and then search.”

Parents make important decisions together and children notice that they are relevant in the process of migratory decision making:
“M: Do you think parents listen to what you have to say while planning for example whether to go or stay?
I (F): Yes. It would be definitely discussed. Maybe it would not be a fight, but discussion with arguments about what is more important”.
“SZYM (M): In our family it is like this: there is the head of the family – dad and mum, there is no one person who would rule […] They talk, each of them gives his option and then they decide.”
Szymon, when asked if parents take opinions of children while making decision responded that:
“SZYM (M): No… I don’t rather know. In the very important situations – rather not. OK, they will take a bit under consideration, but it would not have much effect. But let’s say in the smaller, less important [issues] – yes. I believe this is better because parents are the head of the family and not the child. And they know what is better and what is worse.”
Similar opinion about deciding on important matter, such as going back to Poland or staying, had Maja and Anna. When we asked them about parents making decision about whether to stay or go, to Poland (or another country), and whether they had anything to say, both girls answered that no. Similar opinion about family decision-making process had Sylwek. Other young respondent- Olga - openly informed that she opposed to parents decision regarding the school he would have gone to and had it her way:
“Ol (F): Our parents planned to send us to a Greek school after a year but I did not agree to that.”
Parents sometimes complained about their children not listening to them and did what they wanted:
“G (F): I would prefer is she listened a bit what is being said to her. But unfortunately it is not always as it should be.”

Transnational ties

Some of the families we spoke to had relatives in Greece. Examples are Jan’s and Teodora’s as well as Konrad’s and Mariola’s families. Teodora’s and Mariola’s sisters live in Athens with their husbands and children, but families do not have good relations, do not meet almost at all, except for some major celebrations. Teodora and Mariola did not speak about their sisters, we found out about Teodora’s sister from her children. Also Dominika has informed us that a few cousins of her husband came to Athens some years ago, but she did not speak about maintaining contacts with them. Karina has one brother in Athens, she did not talk about him at
all during our conversation. She also has an aunt and uncle with whom she keeps in touch, visits often since they live outside Athens.

Our interviewees, both adult and young ones, informed that their families from Poland visit them basically during the big Catholic celebrations like weddings, baptisms, the First Communion, etc. and sometimes during summer holiday.

“T (F): My mum came for the wedding, she liked it here just for a short time. She made an effort and came. The family organized a bus for the wedding and they came. Through Italy on a ferry. For people this age to go for the first time so far is a kind of challenge. But she was brave to come.”

“M: Do they [relatives] visit you?
Z (M): No, rather not. My sister came once, the older one. And the younger sister and brother have never come. I invited them, but somehow it never happened.”

In case of some respondents, like Elwira and Zdzislaw, their absence from home and distance between them and their relatives back in Poland combined with rare visits and communication mainly via phone and internet led to weakening family ties:

“M: Do you miss your family?
E (F): No, after so much time – not anymore.”

Relatives back in Poland take care of children during summer holiday visits, and sometimes also when family decides to send a child to school in Poland, but parents stay in Greece. Honorata’s and Radek’s daughter stayed at grandma’s house at the beginning of her high school experience, when she went alone to Poland. However, granddaughter was not getting along with the family and soon moved out to a dormitory. Now she lives with her brother, who also went back to Poland, and visits her grandma every (or every second) Sunday.

EDUCATION

One of the main aims of the present research was to find what strategies Polish migrant families introduce when it comes to education of their children. Therefore we often spoke about various issues relating to education: not only children, but parents and more generally – the importance of education in the lives of Polish migrants.
One of the issues we talked about with adult respondents was their education. The majority of respondents graduated in Poland: they had finished upper secondary education. However, two of the mothers we spoke to studied in Greece after coming to this country: Danuta has finished dentistry at Athens University and currently works as a dentist. Gloria has finished Midwifery College in Greece, worked for some time in this profession in one of the hospitals in Athens, and now works as a nurse.

Parents also spoke to us about their plans towards future education:

“KAR (F): Honestly, I can tell you that I regret it myself [not going to a university] and I think that if we went back to Poland I would like to go to university. Even extramurally. It’s not that I decided to be a cleaner for the rest of my life and that is why I am here. But at some point it gave me loads of money.”

For the families we spoke to education is the key aspect, most important thing they can offer their children.

“KAR (F): I believe that schooling is important. I wanted them to choose what they like to do, but I would like them to go to university.”

“G (F): I believe that education on its own does not ensure an easier start in life. But I think we become [thanks to education] a bit different as people. We look differently at the world. We look differently at people. This is what I believe. Because when you study you meet more open-minded people, with different views and ideas. So I believe that it is not only getting a degree, the diploma is not what counts the most. Education is very important.”

School: Polish and Greek

Interviewees shared with us their feelings about Polish and Greek educational systems, and more specifically - schools; what they liked and disliked about these institutions, what they thought about the level of education provided there and what was their general idea about those schools. Children often spoke about their teachers, favourite subjects, peers and organization of the schools.

In the group of parents the opinion about educational institutions was divided: in respect to both: Greek and Polish schools part of respondents had positive opinion about them and their educational levels whilst the opinions of the others were rather negative.
Polish children residing in Athens tend to attend either the Greek public schools, or the Polish School at the Polish Embassy. Five children in our study went to Greek schools and all of them simultaneously attended the Polish Saturday supplementary school and seven children went to the Polish regular school, but two of them had also experiences at the Greek school. We have heard bad and good opinions about specific school type from our respondents. One of the young interviewees who have had experience regarding both: Greek and Polish school shared with us his personal opinion about both types of educational institutions:

“S: At the Polish school […] teachers…they carry the lessons in a more interesting way. Lesson is more interesting and absorbing. […] I feel better at the Polish school […] you can fool around, I mean, do stupid stuff […] at the Greek school everything is more serious. Everyone is more serious, but when they make some seriously wrong stuff they laugh about it. So sometimes I felt a bit stupid there […] I prefer it [Polish school] because at the Greek school there is this weird system, teachers somehow allow it to be noisy, they teach… they prefer writing, us to write. So I felt differently. I felt like the lesson was boring. And at the Polish school the teacher allows pupils to run the lesson, to be creative, they allow the lesson to develop somehow itself, the pupils to do the lesson themselves. […] The [Polish] school is small and there are many children. And pupils keep changing classrooms for different subjects – each subject is in specific classroom. But actually I prefer the Polish school. Because there are Poles there and I feel better there, more freely.”

Parents were generally satisfied with the school their children went to, still they shared with us some negative thoughts regarding the school. In the case of the Polish school these for example were combining the school year groups and mixing children every year due to decreasing numbers of those children, as explained by Dominika:

Do (F): When she [daughter] was in the initial grades – 1- 3- it was horrible. At the beginning there were 3 school year groups but every year they we closing one. So Odeta was in grade c, they closed it and put remaining children into school year group b. After the second grade they closed b, so joined all the children together.

M: Why were they closing the school year groups?

Do (F): Because of the crisis. When it started, not in the first year, but in second and third many people left. People started to leave.”
Referring to the Polish school also young respondents emphasized the decreasing amount of students: friends from school started to leave Greece. Benek describing situation at Polish school said:

“B (M): Everyone has practically left. There were much more pupils in the past. Those whom I knew – they left.”

On the other hand, positives of the Polish school were often underlined, like the high level of the school:

“H (F): I have a comparison here as he [son] attended the Polish school and then he went to “tecniko lykeio” [Greek technical secondary school] and I remember that in the first class, and this is only an example, in math group they asked him – “where do you know such things from?” – “well – I learned it at the Polish school”. The level was higher.”

“G (F): I think it’s not coincidental that last year, last “Matura”15, there were about 22 high school graduates. All of them passed. I don’t remember right now if anyone did not get into university at all, my daughter did not attend the Polish high school, but I know that six people got into Jagiellonian University. So, sorry, but if we speak about 22 people, either the level was totally high of our school... Ok, it is good, but, but not as good so 6 people would be accepted by UJ, when in Poland you have to kill yourself to get there.”

Grazyna did not agree that the level at all Greek schools was low; she claimed there are good Greek schools:

“G (F): It depends on the school. I have an acquaintance whose son had finished a high school here and also got into a nice university. And there was a high level there, he had to attend everything, even though he was a brilliant student – no one gave him an easier time at school, even though it was a Greek school.”

The strategy of sending children to particular school, whether it was Polish or Greek, had various premises. It generally seems that those migrants that planned to stay in Greece for longer or for good, typically sent their children to the Greek school. Those children attended also the Polish weekend school, just in case something went wrong in Greece and they had to go back to Poland (so called “backup plan” strategy described in the following subsection).

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15 *Matura* is the name for the high-school exit exam or "maturity diploma" in Poland. It is taken by young adults at the end of their secondary education, and must be passed in order to apply to a university or other institutions of higher education.
“KAR (F): There is this hesitation with the school, because there are also Greek schools, but we do not know how long we will stay here, so I will tell you about our family: our children go to the Polish school, we sent them there because our situation here is rather uncertain. If one of us loses job we automatically have to leave, because we cannot support the entire family from one paycheck."

“GL (F): I think that if someone wants to go to Poland in the future, so that children could be settled in better – they would send them [children] to the Polish school. But if someone thinks about living in Greece and wants them [children] to not forget about their roots would send them to supplementary education [Polish weekend school]. At least I understand things like that. I would not send my child to the Polish school [regular system]. What for? I have no intention to return. I do not know how my life will work out."

“K (M): Those who came here at the beginning sent [children] to the Polish school. With the intention of return. So there were no problems, as in case of sending to a Greek school."

Sending children to the Polish school was a strategy introduced in order to ensure their easy acceptance to a Polish university:

“G (F): My Sylwia started a Greek school, but luckily for me I met with one lady, a teacher, who enlightened me that if she finished the Polish school here and would like to study in Poland – it would be much easier for her to get into university. And Greek – she would learn it anyway since she lives in Greece."

One of the reasons for sending children to a Greek school are material benefits: parents underlined that you get books for free at the Greek school, you do not need to pay contributions, obligatory insurance or transportation fees for the children as in the case of the Polish school. At the Polish school:

“Do (F): We need to pay the insurance and also a contribution for the Parents’ Council, about 20 euros. You know, these are not big money, but except this there is also a school year group contribution, about 30 euros for the entire year. We buy books ourselves."

Financial considerations seemed to influence a lot the educational decisions of Polish migrant families:
“EWA (F): I could not afford to pay 400 euros for a Polish kindergarten for them both, 200 each. So I sent them to the Greek ‘nipio’ for free. […] My children at the Greek school do not have problems because they do not wear a fancy t-shirt, they [school] do not procure on trips, or some contributions to the school. It is always emphasized that only those people that can pay should give something. If a child is hungry the headmaster always says to tell it, no one will laugh about it. In Polish school people would be ashamed to tell something like this because they would be laughed at. It is not like this at the Greek school.”

“Ma (F): Listen, children go on Saturday to Polish, and during the week to a Greek school because at Greek schools they get all the books for free, and at the Polish you need to buy books.

BOG (M): Of course.

K (M): And you need to pay for the transportation [at the Polish school].

Ma (F): For some people this is an obstacle.”

“GL (F): And everything here, books, are free [at the Greek school]. – not like in Poland. I have been receiving books for children for free. All the books were free. […] If I could afford it I would rather send my children to a good, private college than to public one. But if I have no money, no resources – where can I send them?”

Economic considerations are relevant up to choosing a university in Poland or in Greece:

“J (M): Anyone who wants to study and chooses a faculty can study in Greece. And it will be easier financially. I believe that relatively speaking it is easier to graduate from university in Greece than in Poland. I am not speaking about the capabilities of a child, but the material part.”

In case of Greek schools, due to their proximity, parents do not have to pay for the transfer of children like in the case of the Polish school, which is a bit remote. The yearly transfer fee in 2014 was about 80 euros per month per child (parents need to pay for 10 months – 800 euros yearly). Proximity was also mentioned when discussing situation of families who lived in the suburbs of Athens, away from the Polish school. In this case Polish parents tend to send their offspring to the local, Greek educational institutions.

Another thing is that for parents who had a couple of children it was rather typical to send the second and the third child to the same school type as their firstborn:

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16 From Greek Νηπιαγωγείο – kindergarten.
“T (F): With boys it was kind of automatically – because our daughter already went to the Greek school they would also go there. We wouldn’t mix it for them.”

With regards to the strategy of sending children to the Greek school for some interviewees this was a result of unstable situation of the Polish school in Athens: from its foundation school was being shot down and reopened again. Parents, wanting to ensure undisturbed schooling, chose to send children to Greek schools:

““EWA (F): I could not risk it and send my sons to the Polish school because they could close it again. I would have to wait every year for decision whether they close it or open it? So I will be stressed and then if the Polish junior high school was not open what would we do? What would children say – where did you send us?””

“BOG (M): I believe that sending a child once to the Polish, then to the Greek school, and then change again you harm the child. The child might either not manage, but it of course depends on the child, because some of them might manage just fine. Like if I would take my son from Greek school and suddenly put into Polish – it would be like to jump in at the deep end.”

“KRZ (M): Just ask those people that came here – they all say they would leave soon. But they stay here for many years, and now the children... people have to leave because children have no school to attend. They have no prospects for their future. So they simply have to... either they send their children to the Polish school [in Poland] and the children stay there with grandmas, or... [the family has to move back to Poland]”

“GL (F): Lately more and more people have been choosing Greek schools, because they have noticed that Polish school have been falling apart, after this Union low that does not allow a Polish school to function in the territory of, let’s say, Greece or Germany... at present Union prohibits this, am I right?
H (F): Yes”

“B (M): There will be no high school, only the complimentary one: the teachers are like tutors. But this not suit me that much. So we agreed I will go to Poland to high school there.”

Wojtek, a father cooperating with the Parents’ Counsel at the Polish school, emphasized that the closing of Polish school has negative consequences for families:

“W (M): parents do not know [what will eventually happen to the Polish school], so they sign their children into Greek schools. And part of them even leaves Greece. This is also, according to us,
breaking up the families, because, for example, now fathers leave since there are no jobs for men these days, or find rarely. And mothers stay. So this is more-less breaking up families due to the fact that there is no Polish school. And children want to learn and continue their education in Polish."

Children from Greek schools, referring to unstable situation of the Polish school, seemed to appreciate that they omit the hassle:

“I (F): Looking at current situation that there probably will not be Polish high school, so they need to really study hard for the exams and try hard at junior high school’s final exams since they want to get into a good Polish high schools. So I think it is good that I went to the Greek school because I can stay with my parents and I do not stress about those things.”

Danuta believed that attending Polish school might be a disadvantage for Polish children in Greece: “D (F): I believe that the existence of Polish school creates more harm for the child than advantages.

M: Why?

D (F): Because those children are lost afterwards. They finish primary school and then junior high school and then not all of those children are accepted to the Polish high school. There is a small group of children that gets into the Polish high school. And if the child finishes Polish junior high school he won’t manage in Greek high school at all. It is obvious. And high school is the most important time in child’s life.”

Respondents told us about the attempts of Polish parents to keep the Polish school:

“H (F): there are some meetings of parents of the children that should go to the first school year group organized. I read about it in the Polish newspapers. About 2-3 weeks ago there was this meeting...”

“KAR (F): Until now the education at the Polish school was OK, there was a high school. Only now there is a problem. They are fighting for it. My husband is actually among those who fight for the first grade to be opened [...] My husband is in the Parents’ Counsel at school. But there is a group of parents who have 6-year-old children and they are supporting one another and writing various letters. As for today there are about 23 children, so we’ll see. But it’s not very clear what the sense of all of this is. The same situation was last year. There were supposed to stop the recruitment but some parents gathered and they re-opened it.”
There is a group of parents in the Parents’ Council of the Polish school who try hard to keep the school unchanged. We have spoken to two dads who had been cooperating in this Council for years: Mr. Wojtek (9 years) and Mr. Viktor (14 years). Parents’ Council cooperates with school life, acts so that school is not closed, it is very active in the school, helps with renewing the school rooms, redecorating the school, organizes transportation of children from and to the school. The focus group we had with the two men from Parents’ Counsel gave us a lot of information about the way school runs, what changes have been made to it and what parents do in order to keep the school from being shut down (the regular system). When Wojtek and Viktor started working for the Parents’ Council school did not have any problems, it was blooming, as they told us. One of the changes that could have been noticed in the last couple of years is the decreasing number of pupils in the regular system at Polish school. Wojtek referred it to the crisis in Greece and the fact that Polish families started to leave this country in search for more stable conditions:

“W (M): The fact that the number of those students dropped is caused by the crisis in Greece. Families leave Greece because parents do not have jobs. So they leave for Poland, Germany; they look some other... [place, solution]”

On the other hand, the number of pupils in the supplementary school has started to increase.

“W (M): parents do not know [what will eventually happen to the Polish school], so they sign their children into Greek schools. And part of them even leaves Greece.”

Another reason of sending children to a Greek school was explained by Ewa, who believed that the atmosphere is somehow more pleasant and friendly at the Greek school:

“EWA (F): I think that the Greek school is more tolerant than Polish.
M: In what way?
EWA (F): My children at the Greek school do not have problems because they do not wear a fancy t-shirt, they [school] do not procure on trips, or some contributions to the school. It is always emphasized that only those people that can pay should give something. If a child is hungry the headmaster always says to tell it, no one will laugh about it. In Polish school people would be ashamed to tell something like this because they would be laughted at. It is not like this at the Greek school. This is good about the Greek school that children should not wear trendy clothes, no one is laughed at because the food he brings to school. At the Polish school it is not like this. For all those years that my children go to the Greek school I had not been treated worse because
I clean houses or I am a foreigner. They always help us, explain everything to us. So I cannot complain.”

Children were sent to Greek schools so that they could “taste” the Greek culture:

“ALA (F): Maybe so that they could learn a new language, maybe this was the reason.

MAJ (F): yeah

ALA: So that they learn the Greek culture

MAJ (F): Yeah. […]

ALA: They hope they will stay.

MAJ (F): They do not think about returning”

Another thing is that because children attending Greek schools start schooling one year earlier than at the Polish school, for those children that started education at a Greek school changing school to the Polish one would mean losing a year:

“I (F): I am not very keen on Polish high school. Because I lose a year: either I do not take Matura, or I would have to wait a year. So it is not very beneficial.”

The Polish school was chosen sometimes because a particular child could not manage in the Greek school, like in case of Mariola’s older son or Majka: “Ma (F): My son, for example, did not do well at the Greek school, so when we got the chance we changed his school straight away to the Polish school.”

“MAJ (F): I went to the Polish school because I was not doing that well with Greek history […]. In 3rd grade of primary school, and this is the time when history is added and I had problems. And that was the time that Polish school was reopened and there was recruitment. So my mum sent me to the Polish school.”

Similarly some parents, for example Karina, were afraid that their children will not make it at the Greek school because they did not know Greek, so they sent children to the Polish school straight away:

“KAR (F): judging by my children the language barrier is very big. And they do not want to. I don’t know if at this stage Julia would like to go to a Greek school and like to study, I don’t know.”

Greek was an issue regarding Polish children in Greek schools – parents are sometimes afraid they would not be able to help their children:
“G (F): there were many reasons [for not sending children to the Greek school]... because... I guess everyone had different reasons... some people were definitely afraid that in the Greek school they will not be able to help their child due to their little knowledge of the language. Other claimed that they did not know how will their child manage – maybe in the future he/she would want to go back [to Poland], or maybe we would all return, or maybe our system (educational) is nicer than here...”

“Ma (F): it was my mistake that, our mistake, that we did not send him [the older son] to the Greek kindergarten where he would have picked up the language. And I could not help him that much [with Greek, because she did not know it]. With Cezary I could help him. I went to school and finished some courses, so it was easier for me than with Franek”.

Decision about sending child to the Polish school was made in case of some parents based on a fear that children might forget Polish:

“G (F): it happened like this [that parents sent daughter to the Polish school] because we thought and this has actually happened, that she might want to go to Poland in the future, so it was important that she had contact with Polish and with Poles in general. So that she would have the choice. We live here so she speaks Greek perfectly and if she wants to stay, she can. And we chose Polish school so that she would not lose contact with Polish, people culture. And I think that those children that attend supplementary schooling – it is not enough. And this decision [to send daughter to the Polish school] was very well-thought.”

Majka implied that parents sending children to the Polish school might have wanted them to learn Polish and be in Polish environment:

“MAJ (F): Maybe so that they can learn their language, their subjects; so that they can be with their peers from the same country.”

When it comes to kindergarten basically in case of all the families, except Ewa’s, children went to the Polish ones: either illegal groups or Polish regular kindergartens run in Athens. Inga described her kindergarten experience:

“I (F): It was Polish, it was run by a lady who rented a building right next to the church, it was not at her house, and it was a two-floor building and downstairs there were desks – I guess that school helped her with that”.

Ewa chose differently due to economic reasons:
“EWA (F): I could not afford to pay 400 euros for a Polish kindergarten for them both, 200 each. So I sent them to the Greek “nipio” for free.”

During the focus groups and interviews respondents often compared education in Poland and Greece:

“GL (F): You know, I do not like the Greek system. Because when I was trying to get to the University in Poland I chose the faculty. And here in Greece, because I also studied in Greece, when I wanted [to study] a specific faculty they do not direct you to where you want, but depending on the points you have gathered. Of course you declare on the list which faculties you are interested in in an order, but depending on the points, and the number of places that are allocated for a [citizens of] specific country at the university, you might get it or you might not get it [the faculty you wanted]. Why should children destroy their dreams? Especially when they can go to Poland: if they speak Polish, write in Polish, understand it, then they can be educated in the faculty that they want.”

“Ma (F): the educational system in Poland is more stable
K (M): Here it’s problematic
M: How is that?
Ma (F): There have been some cases in Greece in the last two years of protests at the Greek universities. In the last year some Polish students came for Erasmus and for 2-3 months they were not studying at all. That is why the educational system in Greece is rather unstable and whoever has a chance prefers to send his children to Poland to study at more trustworthy universities.”

The beginnings in the Greek school were sometimes difficult, like in case of Grazyna’s and Teodora’s daughters:

“G (F): You know, I think it depends on the primary school you attend. The first grade. In our case the children were overwhelmed with Greek. And we sat down from the dusk to the down. […] I do not say I know it very well, but quite well, and I am pretty sure I would be able to help a junior high school pupil with it. But back than I was simply not able – with this grammar and this orthography. So we had a teacher and she really prepared her [daughter] well. […] At the beginning it was a bit difficult for her to get acclimated, not with regards to education, but rather the company. Because the majority of people she went to school with, from primary and finishing with junior high school as well, stayed in the Polish high school. So they knew each other well,
they were like a family. So the first three months at the Greek school were very difficult, so that we were thinking whether to transfer her back. But I was a bit stubborn and then it turned out that she liked the Greek school and was very happy there. She made some friends and with some of them she is still friends.”

When asked whether she would make different decisions regarding her daughter’s education Grazyna informed that: “G (F): Right now I would not have sent her to the Polish school at all.”

“T (F): At the time when the Polish school was closed and my daughter was supposed to go to the first grade, and we haven’t decided [to leave Greece] because we still had our jobs, we decided to send her to the Greek school. Since it was very difficult during the first years, as she finished Polish kindergarten, at the Greek school it was… so that she did not want to acclimate there. Yet she got used to it later on. School [Polish] was not running for two years. As she got used to it [the Greek school], she did not want to go back to the Polish daily school, and we continued…. And with the second child, and with another.”

Inga, Teodora’s daughter, spoke to us about her beginnings in the Greek school:

“I (F): At first, at the very beginning it was a huge stress – normally like in case of all freshmen […] suddenly everything was in Greek and I didn’t have many friends…”

Some children we spoke to have a positive attitude regarding the Greek school. Benek for example shared with us some nice memories from the time he was attending the international school.

“B (M): Well, it was fine. I knew Greek because I was born here so somehow I knew it. So it was ok. Those first years … I learned the basics of math, and other subjects. Besides, there were many Polish children at that school. So in my school year group 30% of pupils were Polish. […] There were two school year groups: A and B. and in each there were some Polish children. So we stick to a Polish company. But we also talked to the Greeks. But actually my school year group was rather mixed: there were Russians, Rumanians, Bulgarians, and also Greeks.”

Also Cezary had rather positive attitude towards his Greek school.

“M: Tell me please if you like the Greek school.

Ce (M): Yes, I like it. We do various stuff there. There is more studying [than in the Polish school].”

Cezary informed us he is doing well at the Greek school, but still does not wish to continue going there in the future.
We spoke to Benek’s parents about the reasons of sending boy to the “international school”. His mother explained that:

“E (F): Because all the [Polish] children went there. It was so-called “European school”. The school bus was for free. We took our children to Metaksourgio [very close to their flat] – the entire coach took children and brought back after classes. […] the school started English from the first class. It was great. There were plenty of children. So why did they go to this school? […] Because it [Polish school] was shut down for the entire year and the September and October of the second one. When the school was finally opened a bunch of children changed their school to the Polish one. And Bartek continued second and third grade there [at the European school], the forth one he went to a school nearby, but he didn’t like to go there. There were plenty of Albans, Rumuns, and first of all – “via” [aggression]. There were two guys who chased him until his block of flat, got into it after him and beat him a bit. So we decided straight away that from the next year our child would go to the Polish school. And it was very good we did that.”

Benek does not consider going to a Greek university:

“B (M): I guess, maybe if I had continued in the Greek school I would probably have chosen a Greek university. But now I have forgotten the language a bit, so I would not understand some things. I would misunderstand stuff during the lessons and I would have to study myself.”

Benek is satisfied with educational path he has followed, he would not prefer to go to a Greek school.

Franek also remembers his Greek educational experience well. When asked if he liked the Greek school boy said that:

“F (M): Yes. Very much. I had very nice people there. Now they have changed some teachers, so it’s worse. But in general it was very nice there.”

Franek believes that since he plans to go to a Polish university it would have been better for him to go only to the Polish school.

Basically, both parents and children were speaking positively about teachers at Greek schools: they helped foreigners, were patients.

“G (F): The Greek school was great: the teachers were great, and there was a teacher who stayed with children until 4 pm, helped them with homework, so that parents could work. So it was important.”
Some children from our research shared with us the negative views regarding Greek schools and educational system in Greece, popular among the Polish community:

“S: At the Greek school everything is more serious. Everyone is more serious, but when they make some seriously wrong stuff they laugh about it. So sometimes I feel a bit stupid there.”

“A: It is a bit boring in the Greek school, and in Polish together with other boys we have fun. Also boring during the lessons [at the Greek school]. I don’t like it that much. I would prefer to go to the Polish daily school.”

Both parents and children believed that finishing school in a foreign country is an advantage during the process of admission to university in Poland for the chosen faculty:

“G (F): the graduates of schools outside [Poland] have much easier access to the university than other regular children.
H (F): They have priority.”

Another thing is the possibility of getting a scholarship from the Polish government for those children who graduated from a foreign high school:

“GL (F): I have heard it from my niece who studies in Poland, who said that “foreign children”, who come from abroad, have a larger scholarship, I mean “greater chances of getting a scholarship compared to us”, she said.”

Going to the Polish high school was explained by the plans to study at a Polish university – in this case it seemed reasonable to choose Polish high school so that future university student would be familiar with specific vocabulary:

“F (M): So then I started to think that it was a good thing that I went to the Polish school. Because [otherwise] I would have not known simple words, that’s why.”

According to our respondents Polish parents from Athens send their children to Poland to their relatives or move back with them so their children can continue their education in a good school, one that would ensure getting into a prestigious university in Poland. Mariola, a mother of two daughters studying in Poland and two boys going to Greek schools explained family decisions of sending daughters to Poland informed that the reason was lack of school year groups with an extended curriculum in certain subjects in high schools in Greece: Polish and the Greek ones. Since one of her daughters wanted to study medicine she needed a high school with school year groups with an extended curriculum in biology:
“Ma (F): My daughter Daria she wanted to study medicine, so she needed to go to classes with an extended curriculum in certain subjects and we decided to send her to Poland, so that she would go to high school in Oswiecim and live with her grandmother. She wanted to go to Silesians high school, biologic section.”

The parents want their children to follow the educational path that they dream about. Zdzislaw, even though he would like his son to stay with parents in Athens, understands that son’s dream to become a pilot might not come true in Greece:

“Z (M): I think it would be better if he finished school here and went to high school here. At least high school. Because due to his plans and specific faculty he wants to follow, I am not sure if he could do it here. If there is such a possibility. So I would prefer he went to high school here, but if it will not be possible – of course he will go to Poland. I believe that if he feels that he wants to do this profession – I am behind him. This is his decision.”

In case of some families the educational path children followed was very complicated: children were changing schools from Polish to Greek one, or from Greek to Polish and back to Greek, like in case of Grazyna’s daughter:

“M: And could you tell me, as you have decided to choose “Polish path” of education, since your daughter finished Polish school …

G (F): But she went to a Greek high school. Her kindergarten was Greek, 1st grade of Primary school was Greek, and later there was Polish rest of primary school and junior secondary school. We sent her to Greek [high] school because she was not a brilliant student and there was no guaranty that she would pass Matura [high school final exams]. And only high school, without Matura, is rather strange. So, Greek school first of all was vocational, and second of all, if she would have wanted later on [in life], and I always hoped that she would actually like to go to university, so it would be much easier to get into a Polish one, and she wanted a lot to go to Poland to study. So, finishing Greek school it is much easier to get into university. So we were choosing school for her in a way not to exclude her from any possibility.”

Similar complications experienced Mariola and Konrad with their children. Both daughters have finished the Polish school, older son started a Greek school, could not manage and continued education at the Polish school. Now, because of the situation at the Polish school, family does not
know what to do next. Younger son started the Greek school and continues it. Parents want him to follow “the Greek path of education”, but he would rather go to the Polish school:

“Ma (F): Klaudia finished the second grade in Poland and Daria finished the kindergarten and they came here and we decided that we would stay here and we would be here with entire family. They did not want to go to the Greek school at all, so we registered them at the Polish School. Franek he also went to a Polish nursery and kindergarten, because at that time we were not so informed and we should have put him into the Greek ones straight away. And we had issues with Franek, because he started the Greek school later on, because there were no Polish school, they were supposed to cancel it, then they opened it again… and he was not doing well at the Greek school. So, then he went to the Polish school, which he is not very happy about. Now we have problem because we don’t know what to do next.”

Educational plans

Basically all the young respondents plan to go to university in the future, majority to the Polish one. Dominika, when asked if she would like her daughter to go to university, informed that:

“Do (F): Of course, and I am pushing her towards it. I am trying to inspire her for professions such as a doctor, or something like that. I don’t know, maybe I am doing wrong, maybe I should not decide for her. Because some parents want their children to achieve something what they missed. So maybe I am like this. So I don’t want to push her too much.”

Some of the young respondents, especially those from the Polish school, planned to go back to Poland to continue education in high school there. Children admitted that because they started Polish school it would be difficult for them to go to a Greek university:

“M: Have you ever thought studying in Greece?
B (M): No.
M: Why not?
B (M): I guess, maybe if I had continued in the Greek school I would probably have chosen a Greek university. But now I have forgotten the language a bit, so I would not understand some things. I would misunderstood stuff during the lessons and I would have to study myself.”

Educational plans of interviewed children were impacted by the changes at the Polish school.
Some of the parents we spoke to admitted that they planned to go back to Poland so that their children could go to school there:

“Do (F): [asked if they think about going back to Poland] Yes, rather yes. Maybe in two years. Because I used to say that we will go to Poland when Odeta finishes the last grade of primary school, because there is more studying from the secondary school.”

“KAR (F): Anna is in the last grade of primary school now, so in 1 year, if there is no junior high school we would leave – it would be a trigger for us not to think about it but to finally go back.”

Parents thinking of sending children to Poland to continue their education except the material issues fear about the safety and well-being of their children on their own:

“J (M): We know how high the prices of a rent in Poland are. Also I am afraid to throw her in at the deep end. And another thing is that she would not have any trusted friends […] In this case you could trust only the phone call, and this is like stopping the contact entirely.”

**Educational backup plan**

During interviews and focus groups we have noticed that our respondents, both adult and children, when discussing educational plans refer to ways of ensuring the education of the young Poles in the future, regardless where they would be. An example of such a strategy is sending children to the Polish supplementary school in Athens and Greek regular school: in case family goes back to Poland children can continue education uninterruptedly. The same would happen if family stayed in Greece – but the child would finish the Greek school:

“Ma (F): I believe that with Cezary it was the best choice that he continues both schools [regular Greek and Polish supplementary], so we have both options open. He will have a choice: he wants to go to Poland to the university – of course. He wants to study here – this is his choice.”

Another type of backup educational strategy in case of graduates, both of junior high school and high school, is to apply to Poland and Greece for the next level of education. This way if child is not accepted by the university or high school of their choice, he or she has a chance to be admitted to educational institution in the other country. In case of Benek and Franek, junior high school graduates, families applied to high school in Poland, but also the Polish high school in Athens. In case no changes are made to the way high school is run in Athens Benek would go to Poland, stay with his grandma and attend high school there. Franek would join his sisters:
“F (M): Because if there is no high school here I will go to Poland. I will probably, if I find the school near my sisters, I will live with them.”

Families hoped though that situation with the Polish school in Athens would clear and boys would not have to leave their homes. The same thing considers university:

“GL (F): Why should children destroy their dreams? Especially when they can go to Poland: if they speak Polish, write in Polish, understand it, then they can be educated in the faculty that they want.”

Educational backup plan was also noticed in case of family B, whose son was not managing in the Greek school. Due to his poor performance his mother was considering sending him to Poland to continue education in high school there.

Greek language

Polish adult interviewees came to Greece without the knowledge of Greek. They were learning the language directly from Greeks, often from their employers:

“G (F): My first job was at a souvlaki place, I had very pleasant employers and the lady-owner treated me as her daughter. She suggested that we should communicate somehow and to draw at the beginning what we meant, different stuff. […] And it was that lady who suggested that I watched TV, but not the news, because I wouldn’t understand anything, but cartoons – due to the simple language.”

Elwira, describing her first job, where she was taking care of elderly man, informed us that:

“E (F): And I was there without the knowledge of the language. And not even to say basic expressions – nothing. Only by showing stuff.” Woman eventually learned the language, basically thanks to her employers who were teaching her Greek.

Some Polish adult respondents explained they mastered Greek language rather quickly, like Gloria for example:

“GL (F): I learned language fast, after 8 months. I remember that after 8 months here in Greece in the afternoons I worked in the employment agency as translator.”

Honorata on the other hand, since she is not working and does not have much contact with Greek, as she explained herself, started a course of Greek:
“H (F): I go to school [to learn Greek]. Because I have not came into contact with Greek so much. It’s been a third year of me going to school. I go to school at the church, and also at Kipseli, where there are two teachers.”

Other Polish parents explain that they do not have time to learn Greek:

“Do (F): But there is a problem… to improve the language… but when to do it? I don’t have time. I know Greek because I have been here for so many years. So you know the language, you can communicate”.

One of our respondents claimed that Poles simply do not care about learning Greek:

“G (F): There are not too many Polish people who care enough to speak this language well. Majority cares only about intercommunicating. […] I think that few people speak good Greek. I still know people who have been here many years, as many as I have, or just a few years less and they only can communicate.”

Not knowing Greek becomes an obstacle for those children who consider studying in Greece:

“B (M): I guess, maybe if I had continued in the Greek school I would probably have chosen a Greek university. But now I have forgotten the language a bit, so I would not understand some things. I would misunderstood stuff during the lessons and I would have to study myself.”

Children from the Polish regular school complained that the Greek lessons at school were not interesting and not effective. Odeta described a typical Greek lesson in her class:

“O (F): There is noise, shouting, children write on the blackboard [on their own]”

Similar case was raised by some parents who emphasized that lessons of Greek at the Polish school were not given enough attention to:

“KAR (F): [at the Polish school] Greek is less important than the religion, on the very bottom [of the school’s importance hierarchy], what is a problem for me, because I would like my children to speak a little, I do not say perfectly, but we do live here.”

Children that went to the Greek school, if only for a few years, tend to know Greek well:

Honorata’s son speaks Greek perfectly because he went to a Greek high school. Similarly Benek attended a Greek primary school for four years and this also resulted in speaking Greek, but now, because he goes to the Polish school and has Polish friends, he has forgotten Greek a bit and does not feel confident speaking this language.
EMPLOYMENT RELATED ISSUES

Issues concerning employment were the most often discussed topic by our respondents. Employment came up when interviewees spoke about the reasons of their arrival in Greece, education of their children, future plans and many other subjects.

The majority of the men participating in our case study worked in construction: painting, plastering, etc. One of our male respondents worked as a building administrator, one in transportation/moving services and one as a butcher. In case of women they worked as cleaning ladies, baby sitters, one as a dentist and one as a nurse.

“Ma (F): cleaning... I would describe it as cleaning, psychoanalysis, psychotherapies, because it is not only cleaning. When we meet with those [Greek] ladies they need to complain to us and we need to listen to them.”

The issue with many Poles is that they work unofficially. In this situation they cannot have a full insurance.

“H (F): [referring to potential employer of her husband] at least [to work for] someone who would pay for his full insurance. Now they wanted to pay him 51 “ensima”¹⁷ – so I say – what is this? He is 44 years old, what – to work for his entire life? It’s horrifying.”

Insurance was often mentioned by our respondents. They were managing to get enough “ensima” to secure insurance but also retirement in the future in specific way:

“KAR (F): We try hard, especially my husband, to keep the track of it. So that we have enough ensima. If we have not enough, we buy from others. Now, because my husband works in construction, it is very difficult for him to get insurance. It is very hard. So practically he works without insurance, and no-one is actually bothered by it. […] So we have to take care of the insurance so that we have it. With two children it is rather impossible [not to have the insurance], because anything can happen.”

Only four of our respondents, two mothers: the dentist and the nurse and two men: the butcher working in a meat plant and the building administrator had permanent jobs with insurance and all the benefits.

Even in the times of economic recession Poles that stayed in Greece had jobs:

¹⁷ In Greece there is this system that you need to gather specific amount of “ensima” to get a pension.
“R (M): It is a first year for me that I am not working. For 5 months. Honestly I worked here and there, one month non-stop, but they did not pay me well.”

Due to the specificity of migratory experience, which for many Poles means living on their own, without any help of relatives that most often stay in Poland, migrant families need to cope and introduce livelihood strategies that enable them to function. It often influences employment:

“Do (F): My husband is insured and I am covered by his insurance. At the beginning I worked in a “sinergio” where we cleaned car salons, offices – they paid for my IKA then. And later, when I gave birth to Odeta I had to resign, because there is this rule that up to half a year you can [stay at home with a child], and then you need to go to work or give up the job [she probably spoke about maternity leave]. And because I did not have anyone to leave Odeta with I needed to give it up.”

“T (F): I have had permanent jobs for the last couple of years. In the past I didn’t have such a possibility because of the pregnancy, little children, kindergarten; I couldn’t work since I did not have anyone to leave children with. So I had to give my jobs to other women as a replacement, but then I would not go and take this job from this person away. So I had to look from the start. Maybe sometimes someone... you would return to the same family, but then you tried to give other job to that woman [who covered her job during the break]. Otherwise it would not be right. Also those people you worked for sometimes told you that they would find themselves another job for the other girl, so that I could return to them.”

Respondents spoke about employment offices that run in the 90s and offered jobs for Polish people. Many Poles used their services.

Participants of one of the focus groups claimed that up until the 2004 Summer Olympic Games held in Athens in 2004 there was plenty of work and prosperity and wealth of Greeks was noticeable and it resulted in an upgrade of the situation of immigrants in Greece. Interviewees also informed that they did not have to even know Greek in order to get a job. Polish workers had a good name around Greek employers, they were perceived as hardworking and honest, therefore were easily hired:

“Ma (F): [referring to perception of Poles by Greeks] “Kali texnites” – good specialists.”

The end of the Games resulted in worsening the economic situation, as explained by our interviewees:
“Ma (F): Until the Olympic Games there was plenty of work, of everything, and after it everything started to fall apart”
“J (M): So I say: until 2006 sit was Ok, and then the situation got worse. Everything started to fall apart.
Ma (F): And then it was officially said – crisis.
Z (M): Yes, exactly.”

So, as per our respondents, the economic difficulties migrants started to experience began even before the actual economic downturn of 2008. Lack of jobs and cuts on wages led to departures of Polish families:
“B (M): There are no jobs at the moment, due to this crisis. Parents make the decision to leave to Poland, so young people do not have much to say. It’s difficult to support yourself here.”

The fact that issues connected to employment started in 2006, yet Poles started to leave Greece a couple of years later is connected to the strategy of waiting out, as explained by our respondents. Poles counted that situation would get better. Moreover, if at least one of the spouses had a job the family could support itself for some time. However, because situation on the employment market was not getting better families gradually started to leave Greece:
“Z (M): Typically one of them [spouses] worked. One person in the family, so they still could manage. But in a long term they might have thought that they could not keep on like that and they started to leave.”

The crisis that struck Greece led to even more Polish immigrants losing jobs. It first started with men working in construction. Their wives were still working, but for less money and fewer times a week:
“BOG (M): It was not that they started to throw people out straight away.
Ma (F): No, no. but they simply started to cut down on help.
BOG (M): Oh, yes.
Ma (F): From every week to once a fortnight. At some point – ‘I can’t afford it’ – so once a month. So this was the way that girls started to lose their jobs.
BOG (M): And afterwards – you should tell it – from 60 to 50, from 50 to 40. From 40 to 35 [euros per day].
Ma (F): they started to cut down the daily wages”.
“J (M): My wife has been going to some people for twenty years [to clean], so they [employers] declare with distress that “you won’t be coming every week, but once in two weeks”, because they have children, who need to be taken care of, and they have other expenses. It is a different lifestyle now – some of the expenses needed to be cut. They do not have this easiness to spend money anymore. They need to take it into account that expenses are greater and money is limited.”

“T (F): I mean, I am lucky because I work for people who still have their jobs. Elwira – she works also as a cleaning lady and she lost 1 or even 2 days of work and she cannot find anything for those days. So it is more difficult for her. I also had evening jobs, and now I do not have them. There is less work, because I used to go to many families every week, and now they want every two weeks. So it’s obvious that there is less work. Also every now and again something changes […] but as for now I still have work.”

Respondents also informed that other immigrants tend to agree to do the same amount of work for less money, so they overtake some jobs as are more willingly hired by Greeks. After 2006 these were Romanians, and more currently – immigrants from Asia and Africa:

“J (M): There will be always poorer people coming who will not be working for 50 or 40, but for 20 [euros].

K (M): Romanians started to do it already.

Z (M): So they will take our places”

Some respondents were very pessimist describing economic conditions of their families:

“KAR (F): It is hard, it is very hard. With two children. Actually my husband did not work because they had this … and this is... a dead season in winter. In construction.

M: And do you work five days a week?

KAR (F): Yes, but for not as much money as before the crisis. So, wherever they could: 2 euros, 5 euros – they cut it. So I don’t have so much money. Because if it was before the crisis and my husband did not work, and I had those 6 days a week, I would be able to support us, but now it is impossible.”

Employment was mentioned also when respondents were speaking about their investments: Family B (Mariola and Konrad) bought a flat in Greece and they have debt in the bank that they need to pay off. Family F (Dominika) is building a house in Poland, so they invest their savings in his construction since they plan to settle there after returning from Athens. This family plans to move
back to Poland in a few years considering schooling of their daughter Odeta. Similarly Grazyna
and her husband invest in building a house in Poland:

“G (F): we are building a house in Poland, so in the back of the head there has always been this
thought, that one day, someday MAYBE [she emphasized] we would go back to Poland.”

CRISIS

During focus groups and interviews respondents often referred to the crisis and impact it
had both on Greece and on their private lives:

“Z (M): From 2009-2010 […] you started to notice more [people leaving]… that there are fewer
Polish people.”

Respondents were explaining that changes happened gradually: Polish people started losing jobs,
getting paid less and eventually they started to leave Greece. Due to the crisis at the time of our
research those people who stayed in Greece were basically ones that still had jobs. In case of
families it was enough for some time if one spouse had a job, but with passing time if situation
had not changed families often decided to move: either to other country (Canada, Germany, the
UK) or go back to Poland:

“Z (M): Typically one of them [spouses] worked. One person in the family, so they still could
manage. But in a long term they might have thought that they could not keep on like that and they
started to leave.”

“MAJ (F): A lot of people I know left for Poland, or, for example, for Germany, Norway, in those
destinations.”

Decrease in earnings, losing jobs resulted in people being forced to change their lives, their habits:

“EWA (F): we have never experienced poverty, neither we nor children ever missed out on
anything. Only that now, comparing to past, you need to count every penny. We used to go for
shopping and bought 2 pairs of shoes for children. Now we have to buy for one child in one month,
and for the other child the next month.”

“G (F): The life is not like it used to be. […] We cannot afford to do such shopping like we used
to do. And we cannot afford to go away every Saturday and Sunday, like we used to. […] now we
think about it – we think how much we will have to pay to refuel the car. How much it will take us to eat out.”

Respondents also mentioned stress that became a part of their everyday lives: the changing situation in Greece led to much more stressful reality. According to our respondents difficult situation in Greece has resulted in the shift in the attitudes of the Greeks towards the Polish people: they became more hostile, angry at foreigners:

“KAR (F): recently I have noticed that people everywhere: in the streets, busses started to tell that we are foreigners, that we take their jobs. Even lately I started an argument with a grandpa and told him that I can give my job to a Greek lady, but which one would take it? We only take those jobs that they would never in their lives do, because if they cleaned at homes themselves they would not need the cleaners, would they? […] it was not like this before. Everyone thought that we, Polish people, are cool. But now we notice this bit of envy that maybe if we were not here it would be easier for them, they would have more jobs or, I don’t know, maybe place in the bus because it seems to be also about it.”

People we spoke to link the decreasing amount of children at the Polish school with crisis:

“W (M): The fact that the number of those students dropped is caused by the crisis in Greece. Families leave Greece because parents do not have jobs. So they leave for Poland, Germany....”

Economic difficulties have made people worried about their present day and future. Adult respondents have not had jobs for some time, started getting less money for the same job they have been doing for years. It all results in the feeling of uncertainty, fear about the future:

“KAR (F): we are suspended and we do not know what to do, where to go. Because we realize that it will not be better here.”

Decision whether to stay or go is basically connected to employment issues, and more precisely to issues in this field caused by the crisis:

“KAR (F): You know, we have some savings still so they help us be here, even if something happens we could stay. So we are in a kind of suspension now – if we go back to Poland we do not have anything to do there, ok, my husband could go away straight away, but he does not want to go and neither do I. OK, money is important, but there are other things beyond the money. So that’s why we are kind of confused and we do not know what to do now.”
“EWA (F): My husband would like to leave, but if I could I would stay here forever. I like it here, a like the people.

M: Why does your husband want to leave?

EWA (F): Because he does not have work here.”

Children notice the results of the crisis, they worry together with their parents.

NETWORKS

When it comes to friendships and acquaintances – in case of grownups they were often mentioned when speaking about arranging employment in Greece, Poland, or elsewhere. Networks serve as a source of relevant information, not only regarding potential employment, but also regarding other aspects of life: education, social benefits, etc. Honorata explained how she learned about the steps necessary to transfer child’s insurance from Greece to Poland:

“H (F): Mariola told me, because she has older daughters than mine. So she told me where to go and what to do. In the past ZUS18 people where here, they informed her. There was a meeting organized and people from Poland from ZUS came.” Mentioned Mariola was known in the environment of Polish migrants as a person that “knows how the things should be done”.

Participants in our study had friends generally from the Polish cycle. Asked who Poles are friends with interviewees informed us that:

“Z (M): I would say that with other Polish people, but they have very small circles, they keep together with a few other families. They have also some Greek friends.”

“H (F): I have acquaintances exclusively from Poland.”

“Ma (F): Mainly this is Polish environment. Also Greek, but mainly due to work purposes. Also I know some Bulgarian and Georgian women.”

“KAR (F): I have a few Polish women with whom we go to park, but we also have some friends with whom we go out. Not that often, but sometimes we go to disco or just to enjoy ourselves. But at this moment we have very few friends. Very many people left: some to England, some returned

18 Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych (Social Insurance Institution) - Polish state organization responsible for social insurance matters.
to Poland, some went to Germany. It is not like it used to be when we hung out in a really large company. We are also in touch with those people who left.”

One of the mothers, Mariola, interestingly spoke about two “lines” of acquaintances that Polish people have: the Greek one and the Polish one:

“Ma (F): There are two lines: connected to work and to social life. And these are rather small circles. “

Karina, Dominika and Ewa spoke about a group of Polish parents that gather in the local park basically everyday:

“Do (F): Usually when it gets worm we go out with our children so they get some air. For 1-2 hours. So I spend time with those park-people. When it’s winter we only go to our friends on Saturdays.”

“EWA (F): Because we have children we often go to the park. So they can play.”

In relation to friendship Gloria had an interesting point:

“GL (F): I think that friendship was back in high school. We can talk about real friendships back then. Later, the older you become, the more distant people become, and friendships are not as close as they used to be. Everyone has his own life.”

Other ladies taking part in the focus group did not agree with Gloria:

“G (F): I have had a close friend for years. Practically from the time I came here [to Greece]. I have also friends, but I have only one close friend.”

Some of the adult respondents came to Greece because the networks already existing in this destination country; friends, family members or acquaintances found employment for them:

“R (M): I had a guy I knew. But he left me in the lurch, so I had to manage on my own.”

“GL (F): I remember that twenty something years ago, at the beginning, I remember that it was among friends – work. People tended to come here “to someone”. […] When you came here from Poland you started to make connections. There has always been a church,

G (F): or you would come to a friend, a son, an uncle, a cousin, who came earlier.”

“Ma (F): I had a sister here. So I was brought by my family. Earlier my sister was brought by brother who left later on, and I was brought by sister who stayed. So I came for a job waiting for me.”

Other Polish respondents, like Jan, came to Greece with some friends:
“J (M): We came here 3, me and two colleagues with whom I was earlier in Norway.”

Adult respondents did not have close relations with their neighbours:

“GL (F): I personally do not have any close relations with neighbours. We great politely, we talk, but we would not invite one another over for a tea.

H (F): My neighbours here are changing very often in one year.”

Danuta, the dentist, due to her profession has many Polish acquaintances, as those are generally her clients. After work she spends time with some Polish and Greek friends:

“D (F): I have a few friends from studies and we are still friends. I have also female friends who have Greek husbands […] I have only one good friend, and she is Polish. And we go back a lot, from the student times.”

Adult respondents we spoke to had rather negative opinion about their compatriots. Zdzislaw referring to the Polish people in Athens:

“Z (M): Yes: they are envious, jealous. These are our compatriots abroad. This is my opinion. So we have 2-3 families and we stay close, because we trust those people.”

Similar opinion about Poles had ladies from the small focus group:

“G (F): Polish mentality is disturbing the most. They are total ‘saddos’.

H (F): They complain.

G (F): they are very envious

GL (F): introverted

G (F): They are very malicious. “

Adult respondents informed that even though they left Poland many years ago they still had friends there. They meet with them during their visits in Poland, contact them via Internet or telephone.

In the present case study children had friends and acquaintances from Polish, Greek and more international environment. Majka and Ala, students from the Polish school, informed us they had some Greek friends whom they met through a friend that used to attend the Polish school with them, but later on moved to a Greek school:

“ALA (F): Nicola– she used to go to the same school year group with us, but now she goes to a Greek school. And I have one more friend who I met through a friend that attends Polish school.”
Inga, referring to children from her Greeks primary school spoke about feeling different from them, so she kept aside with another Polish girl. It was in the junior high school when “parees” (companies) started, relations started with Greek and other nationalities. So now she has friends from both Polish and Greek schools, also from her neighbourhood. Similarly Krzesimir’s children had various friends:

“M: And whom do your boys spend time after school with?

KRZ (M): It depends, also on a whim. One day there might go out with…like today, they arranged to meet up with some girls and nuns from the Polish church to go and help with something. During the week it depends what they want to do. If they want to go cycling for example they meet up with Greeks, when something else – they arrange with Poles. […] they have friends from Greek, Albanian, Polish and other nations.”

Antek and Sylwek had more Polish than Greek friends – from the altar boy group and the Polish Saturday school. It seemed that with Greek friends from school they only spend time while at school.

“A: … my Greek friends from school… there are one or two that I like, but I have one friend from Greece who is very nice and sometimes I go to his house and sometimes he comes to mine to play.”

Cezary informed us that he had some friends from the Greek school, his best friends was a Bulgarian boy. Generally he did not meet them after school, only sometimes they arranged to play football together. Regarding other friends boy told us, that he basically knows them “Ce (M): from my parents’ friends and also from school.”

Franek, even though he had chance to meet children of other nationalities at school, befriended two Polish peers the most. Now he has friends from the Polish school. When discussing potential return to Poland and asked about missing his friends Franek said:

“F (M): I will not regret losing my friends, because they will also go to Poland. So it is not a matter.”

Szymon, boy attending the Greek school and the Polish Saturday school informed us he has friends from the Greek school with whom he sometimes hangs out: Greeks and Albanians. He has also some old friends from those countries that he befriended in the primary school. With regards to Polish pupils from Saturday School it is hard for Szymon to spend time with them since they live in the remote parts of Athens and basically he gets to see them only at school. In respect to Polish
children of his parent’s friends, Szymon informed us that they are generally younger than he is, so they do not have much in common.

Majka and Ala explained what the point of having friends during migratory experience is:

“ALA (F): They can help, so that you have some contact with other people
MAJ (F): Yes, in order not to be lonely
ALA (F): If you need to borrow some money, you know
MAJ (F): and nowadays it is hard to borrow.”

Girls also informed that their parents had both: Polish and Greek friends:

“ALA (F): Yes. My mum and Daniel have some Greek friends
MAJ (F): My parents also. Greeks, and others...from Italy, Albania...”

Due to the crisis which made many Polish people leave Greece, our young respondents lost their friends.

“B (M): Everyone has practically left. There were much more pupils in the past. Those whom I knew – they left.” Benek informed that now he is in touch with those friends via Internet. He told us he did not have any friends from the neighbourhood, even though he had lived there all his life. He has rather negative attitude towards those children, calls his pejoratively referring to their nationality, since majority of them are immigrant children as well.

Social networks seem not to influence decision of Poles about staying in Greece or going somewhere else:

“GL (F): Not in my case, no. I am self-sufficient. My acquaintances influencing the decision... no, I would not pay attention into that. I would only take into consideration my family.”

Poles need acquaintances to have nice time with, to get information about relevant matters, they help with finding employment, sometimes help to fill the void cause by the remoteness of their actual family.

EUROPEAN UNION

During focus groups and interviews we often spoke, especially with adult respondents and older children, about EU enlargement, and more precisely: Poland’s accession to the EU and its
role in the respondent family life. Regarding European Union our respondents mainly referred to the freedom of travel, education:

“B (M): Since we are in this European Commonwealth those countries help one another somehow. I am not very good at politics, but I think they help. There is also this foreign education and we have more rights to travel”.

Improvement in the Polish migrant status was noticed after Poland accession to the EU:

“K (M): Surely the situation of Polish people got better when Poland entered the EU. For many Poles it opened a gate to a new life. The majority of Poles, let’s say it, were only cleaning houses. And from the point they got papers they were able to do something else.”

Some respondents noticed that because their status has changed after 2004 they started to feel safer. Halina, speaking about her husband’s experiences prior to accession, underlined that he was deported back to Poland due to his illegal stay:

“H (F): When they caught him he had to return to Poland, but came back again. So he used to avoid the police.”

Karina similarly noticed that she felt safer nowadays comparing to the beginnings of their stay in Greece:

“KAR (F): Safer – yes. Because there were those raids [police actions against illegal immigrants] but we were already in the EU and it did not concern us. Earlier you would not go out of your house without a passport, you had to have it stamped. The most relevant were the papers. […] I was 7 months pregnant when they locked me in. I did not have a valid stamp in my passport and the police officer said that he did not like my husband’s papers. So they locked me in at the police station and they even watched me so I would not run away through a small window. 7 month pregnant it was difficult for me to move… so when we entered Union you had this mental comfort that you could go out. Still, even now when policeman stops us and asks for papers they ask where are we from, so we say Poland, and that we are in the EU, and he does not know about it, he is surprised. Not everyone knows that Poland is in the EU, for them it is a distant country.

Also when we travelled on a bus or a plane, you were calmer, even though we did not have anything to be worried about – still when they were checking your passport you were a bit stressed if everything was OK. Besides, my uncle and aunt went to Poland after 12 years of living in Greece, because they did not have valid papers, so before the accession they could not go. And there were
many people like this who stayed here for long because they did not have papers. Also when my husband went to get a work permit 5 years ago he did not have to wait in the foreigners queue with all those black people and stuff, he waited in the EU queue and it was faster."

The matter of gathering documents to make the stay legal prior to Poland’s accession to the EU was often mentioned by our respondents.

“KRZ (M): Little safer, because we did not have to be afraid of the police anymore. Because there used to be raids [police actions against illegal immigrants] and after we got into the EU there were still raids, but they left us free. They used to take you into the police station and keep you 5-10 hours. […] in 2000 in May I was caught 5 times.”

“Ma (F): I felt this freedom and I did not feel this threat that they would stop me in the streets. I have a document, I am an EU member. And I walk more bravely through the streets. I am not afraid that the police would stop me and stuff. Because I am in the EU. Also we have the access to all the allowances that we did not have access to when we were not in the EU.”

Some of the Polish respondents were aware of the advantages that their EU citizen status brought about.

“K (M): Now it is easier for us with bureaucracy, because we do not have to worry about papers. We got a card for 5 years and after those 5 years we got it forever, so we do not need to go anywhere, queue, to get the papers. ”

“G (F): Life here was a little more bothersome before our entrance into the EU. You had to go to get papers every once in a while, wait in queues. There were many foreigners here. So it [accession into EU structures] made our situation easier, we didn’t have to chaise papers. And, more generally, I think we [Polish people] are treated differently, even though I have never had any problems with Greeks. I just talk about offices. It’s different now. Now we are citizens of the EU.”

“Ma (F): And now the EU helps in a way that you can start your own shop, or other business legally.”

Those respondents, who took care of the legality of their stay after arriving to Greece did not notice any changes after the 2004 enlargement:

“GL (F): I have never had any problems like this [referring to experiences of illegal Polish migrants]. I have never had, because just when I started studies I had all the papers for legal stay and later I got the citizenship.”
“D (F): Surely in the past it was more difficult to get a stay permit. But I cannot say that it stroke me, as I have always been here legally. But it [bureaucracy] used to take me a lot of time, I wasted a lot of time to arrange stuff. But I think that Polish accession is not the reason, but the difference is due to the fact that it all has been modernized [bureaucracy in Greece], rather. It is not now as it was 15 years ago. Even the technology – it is more modernized now.”

It generally seemed that our interviewees did not know much about European Union, what changes did the accession of Poland bring about, how their status changed, what documents they still needed in Greece to make their stay documented. Interestingly, when we asked interviewed parents about changes in their lives after the accession of Poland into the EU, some of them did not notice any.

“M: And how the situation changed when Poland got into the EU structures. Did your life change after that?
E (F): Not at all.”

The accession of Poland into the EU impacted the perception of Greeks towards Poland:

“G (F): When we entered the EU it made the Greeks learn something about Poland, because they used to be guided by stereotypes – post communist country, they thought that culturally and economically on the level of Bulgaria and Romania. I bet that none of them did not even know where this Poland was. They thought it’s just here, 6-hour drive and you are in Poland. And so they got informed, by journalists. “

Another thing in relation to the European Union was discussed in one of the focus groups (the big one) - opinion, that after the 2007 enlargement that meant providing EU citizen status to large numbers of Romanians and Bulgarians present in Greece, the prosperity of Poles in Greece started to shift. It seemed that some of the Polish respondents hold a grudge:

“J (M): So, unfortunately, the economy crashed for us. It was not like in our case that we had two transitional years after the accession. Bulgarians and Rumanians got work permission straight away. And they had privileges.”
Some of our respondents had migratory experiences prior to their arrival in Greece. An example is Radek, who first came to Greece when he was 18-19 years old and stayed for a year. Later on he went to Holland and France to work. After 10 years from the initial arrival in Greece he came back to this country once again to work. He had still some friends there. He had been working in Greece and going to Poland to visit his family every three months for four years. It was difficult to support two households, so family decided to join him:

“R (M): supporting 2 houses, going back and forth every 3 months... [it was difficult]. We joined the Union, I arranged all necessary documents...”

Similarly Jan had some experiences abroad before coming to Greece:

“J (M): before [coming to Greece] I was in Norway. There were three of us there. So there were various options. One of our colleagues was in Greece for 8 months. And we wanted to go to Italy. But he explained that he had some contacts in Greece, you would not get great money, but you could change your work if you didn’t like it, or something went wrong.”

Mobility has entered lives of young interviewees who have noticed that many Poles started to leave Greece not only for Poland, but also for other destinations. Ala and Majka spoke to us about such observations:

“M: And why are they leaving?
MAJ (F): Because of the crisis.
ALA (F): crisis... it is more difficult to find work.
MAJ (F): A lot of people I know left for Poland, or, for example, for Greece, Norway, in those destinations.
ALA: For example my mum’s friend left for Sweden. Or Switzerland... no, Sweden”.

Ala’s mother started to go to various European countries to work when the girl was very young:

“ALA (F): I think since I was about 8 years old she started to go […] I mean, she also worked in Switzerland, in Zürich and in Germany I guess, and somewhere else, but I don’t know...”
Reasons for coming to Greece

During interviews and focus groups we have often discussed the reasons why Polish people came to Greece. In case of adult interviewees they spoke generally about their experiences, but also about their observations of Polish minority in Athens. Children spoke about their parents and people they knew.

Participants of this case study came to Greece basically for three reasons: economic – employment, family related – following a partner and for holidays.

Both parents and children asked about the reasons why Polish people started coming to Greece named employment:

“E (F): Financial, economic mainly. Back then it was the first reason to come here.

BOG (M): Back then, in 90ties.

E (F): Yes.

T (F): Yes. Economic reasons.

Ma (F): This was my dream: to see Acropolis and to get married. But I got married first and then I saw Acropolis. […] But mainly we could talk about economic reasons.

Z (M): It was difficult in Poland.

E (F): there weren’t any jobs in Poland. […]

E (F): They searched for people here. That without a language you could come here.

BOG (M): Greece opened itself … they simply needed builders… first of all the builder force. It was about building.

E (F): There was a demand. And women – you know, for cleaning.”

“M: Could you tell me please why do you think Polish people came to Greece?

MAJ (F): Because here there used to be…

ALA (F): better earnings

MAJ (F): Yes.

ALA (F): Easier to find job

MAJ (F): And there used to be ore Polish people here.

ALA (F): and now everyone is somehow running away from here, as I see it”.

Very often before coming to Greece respondents knew someone already living in Greece, like Teodora, who came to Greece to her brother that already worked here, because the company she worked for
was closing and they stopped paying her for work. Her brother came to a friend, who initially also came to a friend. Teodora informed us that in her area there was something like a job office opened that was sending Polish people for seasonal jobs in Greece:

“T (F): there was an office in Mielec [near her hometown]. The beginnings were [trips] to Greece for fruit gathering, oranges. So the first 3-4 people came and then they started to pull in other people from our region, because at that time very many industries were being shut down in Mielec, or privatized. So suddenly many people started to be pulled in. This lady that worked at this office was issuing visas all the time, and every week 2-3 couches were leaving, so it was incredible. So when I came here there were very many people from my region.”

Honorata and Radek’s case is very specific, since for this family as important as economic issues are social benefits: Honorata is on a wheelchair and her daughter has diabetics.

“H (F): In our case, because in Poland our child got sick and the insulin she was taking was very expensive, it cost 450 PLN [about 110 euro]) and the disability pension I got for my daughter was 420 PLN [about 100 euro]. And I meant only one insulin, not to mention stripes. Radek [husband] came here specifically for work purposes and he had been traveling between Poland and Greece for four years. But because we did not want to live like: me here and he there or the other way round, right...I mean he was here, and we decided specifically that we would come here to live here... to be here, to work. And so we stayed here. Here we got insulin for free. So – money brought us here. Even until today I take insulin from here for her, because she is still covered by my husband’s insurance. So I keep taking insulin from here for her as it is free here. And in Poland you still have to pay for it. As for today it costs 78 PLN one package [about 18 euro].”

Some of the respondents mentioned that Greece was just a transit-country on the way to USA, Canada or Australia.

“GL (F): The majority of them came, at the time of my arrival, they came... [Greece] it was a kind of transit country. When I came I was offered to go to the USA, Canada. But I was not interested in that. But there were many Polish people who went like this.”
Beginnings in Greece

During interviews and focus groups our respondents often referred to their experiences at the beginning of their stay in Greece. Polish people we spoke to came to Greece when they were quite young, after finishing their secondary education:

“G (F): I believe that a huge part of our perception of why we are here or why we leave has our age when we first came here. We were very young. We had just finished secondary school. So at the beginning it made no difference for us where we were, as long as there was work and as long as we were independent. We had... we were younger, more receptive, ... I don’t know... we just managed to get used to, we grew accustomed to, and also I suspect it depends on what kind of surroundings, environment one lives. We were lucky enough to live where from the very beginning we were accepted, treated as natives ...”

“GL (F): I came here for a holiday. I didn’t come to earn money. I came on holiday. And I stayed – I said I would stay here for a year and earn some money for the college. In the meantime I met my husband.”

“D (F): I came here on a trip and then I stayed [...] it was summer at that time and it was the beginning of 90s in Poland, when everyone was leaving Poland. After the fall of commune.”

Polish people came to Greece with tourist visas valid from 10 days up to 3 months, so their beginnings in Greece were in most of the cases illegal. With regards to their illegal status they were afraid of police raids that could end up with deportation. A few of our respondents were deported, many were stopped by police and/or held in arrest for couple of hours, the night. Many of them lived in a house with a bunch of people. Back then they were earning much more money than currently and could afford more; they were also able to save money and send some funds back home.

“K (M): So I came for a job waiting for me. It was easy to find cleaning job.
M: And could you support yourself with this job?
K (M): Yes.
Ma (F): Of course. You could support yourself, send [some money to Poland] and still...
K (M): And have some fun. Well.
Ma (F): no, send, but also save some.”
Respondents spoke about coming to Greece for a short period of time: 3 months up to a year – just to gather some money:

“Ma (F): nobody came here for 20 years”

“G (F): I think that not many Polish people came here thinking that they will settle. They came “just for a while”, and because they found job, much better conditions than in Poland, I think, at the beginning especially with regards to earnings, and then also housing, because, I guess, also even now not many Polish people who graduate and are working have the chance to rent a flat for themselves, support themselves and have a nice life and even be able to save some money. And then I believed we stayed here because we simply got attached. In Poland not so many things have improved, anyway, and I think that in many cases we were a bit torn […] so it was not very clear where the homeland was. When we were here we missed Poland, but we went for a month to Poland and after three weeks – we’re going back home”.

“G (F): People were coming with an intention of a short-term stay with various aims: to build a house, finish studies, see a part of the world. They came for a while, or to move elsewhere from here.”

Respondents emphasized that the beginnings of their stay in Greece were characterized by the fascination of Greek climate, culture, and people:

“Ma (F): Greeks used to be effusive, warm. They were warm like the Greek sun”

Also, in the initial years of interviewees’ settlement they felt that attitude of Greeks towards them was very positive, warm, and friendly – Greeks thought about Polish people that they were good specialists, hardworking and honest employees:

“Z (M): We were perceived as hardworking, honest, and so on. They had generally good opinion about us.”

Sometimes arriving to Greece Poles met difficulties, like Radek, who came to Greece for work – he was supposed to have job the day he came to Greece, there was supposed to be a person waiting for him at his arrival, but things turned out differently:

“M: So when you came here you were supposed to have a job or something?
R (M): Yes, and there was nothing.
H (F): He was left alone at the airport.
R (M): Not at the airport, at the bus station”
Still, thanks to his connections in Greece, Radek was able to find another job quickly.

In the first couple of years after arriving in Greece our respondents were not able to visit Poland – if they left they might not had been able to come back, since they were residing in Greece illegally:

“E (F): You did not leave from Greece. The first time I went back to Poland was in 1996, after four years. But there were phone calls then. It was a bad time [...]... It was hard back then.”

“EWA (F): We went for the first time after 8 years, because we did not have papers so we were afraid if we would be able to come back. Then, when the children were born, we were going to Poland for 4 years, and now it has been 4 years that we are not going at all because we do not have money.”

“T (F): The first time we went was after 8 years of stay. We didn’t have the papers so that is why. After 8 years we got papers and we went.
M: It must have been very difficult...
T (F): Very, the most difficult were the first three years. It was a struggle – go back or not. And then, I believe due to the fact that I met my husband and got married, and when the first child was born…”

Residential satisfaction

Participants in our study often spoke about Greece as a beautiful place they loved due to the weather, sights, sea, culture, traditions and friendly people. Below we present the selection of interviews’ and focus group citation that prove the sympathy of Poles towards Greece. The things Poles like about Greece:

“E (F): The weather. And lifestyle.”

“Do (F): the atmosphere, people... there is a lot of sightseeing here [...] maybe I am used to it.
M: Do you like the Greek mentality?
Do (F): Yes, I Really do. Sometimes Greeks are very funny. They are not as serious as we are. They have problems, but they enjoy their lives. They might have or might not have money, but they go for a coffee, they go to tavern, they drink, have fun.”

“J (M): Finances, what to say…OK, climate or lifestyle in Greece is all right, but under the condition that a person is working and can support himself. Because if I have to be stressed in
Poland [he means it is better to be stressed in Greece], and barely make the two ends meet... but, to be honest, if I went back I could start working basically from the next day. In construction industry. But I know how it is. In Poland you have work from the spring to autumn and then there is a slack”.

Parents often spoke about the good relation they have always had with Greeks:

“Do (F): I have never had, for all those years that I am here: during those first years and later, I have never met Greek people who would treat me badly. I have had only positive experience. OK, I do not socialize with them often, but still I have never experienced bad treatment. Greeks are very good for us.”

Interviewed children also informed us about things they liked in Greece:

“MAJ (F): I prefer this climate here, rather than in Poland. I feel better here.”

“A: I would like to stay in Poland, but something keeps me here: beaches, friends, and climate. But besides that I would like to stay in Poland.”

“M: So where do you like the life more?
B (M): I guess in Greece, because of the sea, the climate above all. In Poland I have never experienced -20 yet, so I don’t know.”

As often as speaking about positive aspects of Greece respondents spoke about what they disliked in this country:

“OL (F): First of all I do not like Greek, I know it very little. Everywhere I went I used the English language. I don’t like being here; it is too warm for me. I often get migraines due to those sweltering heats.”

“KAR (F): To be honest, I am bit tired of living here. It used to be different, and now we are thinking all the time if we will have enough money to pay for everything. So there is no such freedom like it used to be, that we did not worry about having to pay bills. We could go out, have fun, and go to tavern.”

“Do (F): I don’t know what keeps us here. I often ask myself these questions. I don’t like the heat. I love winters. I don’t know. Is it the habit, you get used to living here, or maybe you are scared to go back to Poland, you are scared of Polish reality, because you don’t know what will happen... on the other hand, you say – you are almost 40 years old, your husband is 43. When will you do something else? Because you don’t have any perspectives to do something here. Greece is slowing
you down. You can only get a job as a cleaner. And in Poland you can do more. You can start to develop.”

Parents notice that atmosphere in Greece has changed after the 2008 crisis and Greeks’ approach towards Polish people has shifted as well; they became unwelcoming, more hostile towards foreigners. But Poles understand this situation and do not blame the Greek people. So those changing circumstances do not have much influence on their migratory decisions. Jan suggested that if economic difficulties in Greece continued and he would not have a job, he would rather consider re-migrating to another EU country on his own, sending money to his family in Greece. Relocation of entire family to that country was not an option for him. Teodora shares similar views:

“T (F): you can always pack your suitcases and go back. But when you have a child you start to think differently and you cannot make decision one day just like this.”

A relevant factor making Polish people stay in Greece is social benefits. We spoke about it especially with Honorata, who was on a wheelchair. Her daughter had diabetics and other health issues. Family often emphasized that parents would stay in Greece as long as Honorata gets her disability pension and that in Greece the medicines are free for her. Honorata’s daughter is also entitled to get a social assistance pension:

“H (F): Here you get 320 euros from Proni\textsuperscript{19}. Right now she [daughter] is not taking this money because she would have to be in Greece to be questioned by Proni medical board.

M: And Proni is an equivalent of Polish Social Services?

H (F): It is social services. And this is like a social assistance pension in Poland. But she was not here, and she cannot be here because she is taking her final exams [Matura] and so on, so she is not taking this money. But the moment she comes here and is questioned by the medical board these 320 euros will raise to 560 because she became 18 years old.”

Racism/nationalism

When we asked participants of large focus group who they felt they were: Polish, Europeans, or maybe Greeks they started to laugh, said:

“T (F): a mix of everyone.

BOG (M): Polish abroad.

\textsuperscript{19} Πρόνοια - Ειδική Υπηρεσία Τομέα Υγείας & Κοινωνικής Αλληλεγγύης - Special Service for Healthcare and Social Solidarity.
E (F): We are pretending to be Greeks.20

J (M): Greko-Pole.

Ma (F): When Poland plays against Greece we are half-half [on both sides].’’

Bolek explained that his son says sometimes that he is Greek, and parents explain him that he is Polish. Franek, the youngest son of Mariola and Konrad, said he feels Polish. Teodora and Elwira also informed that their children feel Polish:

‘‘E (F): We had this conversation during one dinner recently about citizenship, Polish and Greek, who do you feel you are, as you could have Greek citizenship and he said that he’s Polish.’’

During our conversation with Polish interviewees we have noticed that they felt somehow superior towards other immigrants in Greece. This might be due to their EU citizen status, good opinion about Polish workers in the Greek environment or the common European heritage.

Some attitudes are copied from the Greek environment, like the antipathy towards Albanians and more recent – towards immigrants from Africa and Asia.

‘‘GL (F): My husband is a real racist towards the Albanians. It is due to the fact that they wanted to bit him up very badly at the beginning of his stay here. He once told our son that if he brings an Albanian girl to the house he will throw him out.’’

‘‘KAR (F): Also when my husband went to get a work permit 5 years ago he did not have to wait in the foreigners queue with all those black people and stuff, he waited in the EU queue and it was faster.’’

The antipathy towards various nations could be noticed for example in the way respondents: both adult and children, spoke about other nationals: instead of using proper Polish vocabulary referring to Albanians, Bulgarians and Romanians (Albańczycy, Bułgarzy i Rumuni) respondents referred to those nations in a pejorative way: Albany, Bulgary and Rumuny.

‘‘B (M): There are, but these are some kind of Greeks, Albany, Bulgary, they run around and make fuss. I’m not friends with them.’’

‘‘E (F): one of them was Alban and the other one Rumun. They simply did not like something. And because he [her son] is not like to approach them and start to fight, or scream, or to be in any way aggressive – he was bitten.’’

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20 There is a Polish saying: Nie udawaj Greka, which means do not pretend to be a Greek - When someone is pretending to know nothing when asked about particular topic.
Reasons for leaving Greece

During focus groups and interviews we spoke about the reasons why Polish people, friends, acquaintances of respondents, leave Greece. The most often mentioned reason was the lack of jobs and cuts on wages. Both parents and children were aware of the difficult situation and discussed it openly:

“SZYM (M): Most of the children could have left due to the finances. Or, I don’t know, maybe something happened. I know a girl whose grandma died and she went to Poland, and then she stayed because she felt better in Poland.”

“B (M): There are no jobs at the moment, due to this crisis. Parents make the decision to leave to Poland, so young people do not have much to say. It’s difficult to support yourself here.”

“J (M): It started gradually [gradually more people left]

Z (M): You started to notice more [people leaving]… that there are fewer Polish people.

E (F): Similarly the number of Polish children at Polish school started to decrease.

M: What could this be a result of?

J (M): Because they did not have work.

T (F): The lack of work.

Ma (F): No jobs.”

Asked about the pick moment of Poles leaving Greece participants of focus group pointed at time couple of years ago:

“Z (M): It was in the last couple of years.

T (F): In the last 3 years.

Z (M): From 2009- 2010, I would say.

E (F): In 2010 it was more…”

Prior to the economic recession people sometimes left Greece because they were tired of their illegal stay. Jan told us about his brother’s case:

“J (M): He went back after 2 years. He also met his wife here. When she got pregnant they returned to Poland. They managed to save some money, and they decided to leave. These were the times that we were her illegally, so he was saying “how to raise a child like this”, and in Poland that time started some positive changes.”
Other Poles might have got deported, just like Teodora’s brother:
“T (F): And then deportations started, our visas terminated and my brother was deported.”

Another reason for leaving Greece except for the economic crisis was connected to children going to Poland to continue their education there. According to some of our respondents in this case it might happen that entire families would go back to Poland:
“B (M): Now it is more often that when child needs to go to school in Poland his parents also go to Poland: search for jobs, finish houses they have been building… of course if they have jobs here they stay”.

“D: I know people who waited for their child to finish junior high school here, and because the high school here did not have faculties that the child wanted to study – yes [families left Greece].”

Some respondents, for example Grazyna, had opposite views. In her opinion in case when child left for Poland to be educated there, this was a reason for family to stay and work in Greece in order to support the child:
“G (F): I believe that not so many people leave Greece because of the education. Rather due to the lack of money. Especially since you need a lot of money to educate a child in Poland. So I think that if it is about education people rather send their child to Poland and stay here to make money, give it to children so that they can get education there.”

After going back to Poland

Adult respondents often spoke about experiences of their friends and relatives who left Greece for Poland due to the employment-related and economic difficulties they faced in Greece. Now those people regret making such a decision:
“Ma (F): I have heard such comments from those that left, that they had rather stayed in Greece and have only 3 –day job, or even 2 days, because one could still support himself, than living in Poland and working entire month – you cannot support yourself.

Z (M): There are many opinions like this. People regret now.

Ma (F): People do regret. Because I am in touch with such people and they say they were able to support themselves [in Greece]. Such a gigantic costs of maintaining, fees, food [in Poland]...

E (F): Costs of maintenance during winter...
Ma (F): So it is not so wonderful. As they say: “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. […]

Z (M): But generally I think that there is a greater exploitation in Poland than here at this point.

Ma (F): It has always been

Z (M): Those junk contracts ... come on!

T (F): It is terrifying

T (F): Those shifts that last 12 hours... what is that?”

“E (F): I will give you an example – we were four friends here and one of us left for Poland. Gave birth to twins, her husband lost his job three years ago when she was pregnant, and she had twins so she could not work pregnant, so they left for Poland. Last year in August when we visited them they said that if only they found out that there was work in Greece, they would go straight away. They want to come back here so much. They have been here for 15 years, one gets used to it.”

Children also referred to some friends that regretted going back to Poland:

“ALA (F): I have a friend, he went back to Poland and to school there and now he says he misses here a lot, that he would prefer to be here rather than in Poland. Because his mum is here…”

RELATIONSHIP WITH POLAND - POLISHNESS

Even though they live in Greece and their children go to school there, Polish families we spoke to basically still “live their lives in Polish way (T.)”: they speak Polish at home, watch Polish TV, keep Polish traditions, shop in the Polish grocery shops, go to the Polish catholic church (often every week).

“T (F): We speak Polish, watch Polish TV, and we live our lives in Polish way. We try that those Polish traditions, and fulfil everything that is possible for us to fulfil. And we try to carry it on, either Christmas Eve, or Easter basket21.”

Krzesimir spoke about “Little Poland” that Polish migrants created for themselves in the heart of Athens:

“KRZ (M): When there were more Polish people in Greece, because they did not return yet, we were joking that we only work in Greece. Because we had a Polish company, we watched Polish

21 Polish Easter tradition, the blessing of Easter baskets by the parish priest on Holy Saturday.
TV, spoke Polish at home. So we laughed that we only go to Greece for 8 hours to work, and after work we have Polish company, everything Polish.”

Families tend to visit their relatives in Poland once a year. However, they keep in touch with them on a regular, often daily, basis via Skype (very popular are video chats), Viber, Facebook or telephone. Poles admit that technology is making their life abroad much easier:

“G (F): It used to be letters, then phone-calls and now it’s Skype.”

“KAR (F): Now we practically use Skype. Even every day. We speak to mum, sister, brother, some friends - sometimes we call, speak on Facebook, SMS with them. [...] Now we have cheap phones, Internet. And my children practically speak to my sister’s children every day.”

Visiting Poland is relevant for Polish families:

“G (F): We all do... many people visit Poland very often. Not so long ago they were going to Poland even twice a year: for summer holiday and then, later, for Christmas. Or they went for holidays here [in Greece] and then to Poland for Christmas and Easter.”

Almost all the families we spoke to informed us that they visit Poland every year, mainly for the summer vacation.

“K (M): We go to Poland when we have our holiday.

BOG (M): So once a year.

Ma (F): Recently I go every two years

Z (M): But generally once a year – in August”

“GL (F): Every summer we take children to spend holidays in Poland.”

“Do (F): Last year we did not go because we wanted to have a holiday in Greece. We like to travel around Greece and not sit in one place. But typically we go every summer, in August. We have off.”

Due to financial troubles some families cannot afford to go to Poland as often as once a year:

“EWA (F): In the last 4 years we have not been in Poland due to financial reasons. Last year my husband went because his father died. We planned to go to Poland for the summer, but then he went before the summer and we did not have money to go.”

Children love going to Poland, they have their cousins, aunties, uncles, grandparents there who take care of them in case they go on their own. When asked why he liked going to Poland Cezary told that this is:
“Ce (M): Because I can see my cousins, sisters, aunties, uncles, grandmas, grandpas.”

“B (M): I have my neighbourhood, I have many friends there. I go there every summer, so we know each other. It is a vacation for me. I see those differences in society, the way people shop, go out.”

With time, as they get older, Polish children start to notice also less positive aspects of Poland:

“I (F): I feel at ease with my family, we have great contact with cousins. But just...I see those differences, for example I see, I mean when I was little “I would stay in Poland with my grandma, auntie”, this sort of talk. But now I have, let’s say, a more grown up attitude. And from what my cousins say, and from what you see […] I see that I could fit there just fine, but it would take me some time to get used to being there and maybe I would simply miss all those things I got used to right here.”

Some children go to Poland for the entire summer and parents join them in August. This was the case of Gloria’s children, also Zdzisław’s son:

“Z (M): our boy he goes to Poland earlier, as soon as he finishes school – he goes to grandma. And then we go and we all return together.”

Franek and Sylwek, when asked what he likes about Poland, explained that:

“F (M): I want to be there because I want to see the winter – this is the first thing. Also I want to live there because everything would be in Polish. Here it is different, because you have Greek. I like it a lot that there is the majority of Polish people there – only the Polish people.”

“S (M): we would definitely feel better in Poland

M: Why is that?

S (M): because we would have cousins nearby, there is a parcel near to my dad’s mother house. And she is a bit sick, so it would generally be better. Often at grandma’s all family gathers, there is a big house.”

Going to Poland only once a year is connected to employment: our respondents are free in August, but they work the rest of the year.

“G (F): We used to have so much work, my husband could not keep up with it, and we could not go, and now we have so little work, that we cannot just leave it.”

It is also connected to expenses, especially in the case of families with a few children.

Adult respondents when speaking about visiting Poland implied that after a couple of weeks they generally have enough and want to go back to Greece. Dominika and Krzesimir are examples:
“D (F): When I go to Poland for a month after 2 weeks I want to go back, I cannot stay there in one place. I want to go back home.”

With time visits back to Poland become infrequent and the possibility of permanent return diminishes:

“M: So, you do not consider going back...

KRZ (M): No. I mean we do not have this backup plan, we will just see how things are. But I am not attached to Poland in any way. Except my family nothing pulls me there.”

On the other hand, families and friends visit our interviewees rather rarely, every couple of years. In case of parents/grandparents the reason is their age and the lack of knowledge of foreign languages, and connected to it difficulties in traveling.

Existence of vivid Polish community seems to enable Poles to keep their sense of national identity and to bring up their children to feel Polish. Almost all our respondents find various ways of connecting to their Polishness. Some of the participants take part in formal organizations. Others go to the Polish church, buy Polish food products and cook Polish meals, but they also celebrate Easter, Christmas, confirmation ceremonies and weddings in a traditional manner, and access Polish media such as the internet, satellite television, newspapers and radio. Polish shops provide range of Polish foodstuffs. Poles are still present in such numbers that shopkeepers in the “Polish district” have a considerable incentive to adapt to their presence.

Majka and Ala explained to us why Poles like and stick to the “Polish district”:

“ALA (F): Because there are many Polish people in Athens.

MAJ (F): The majority of them is in the Polish district.

ALA: A lot of Polish are there.

MAJ (F): The most of them are around the Polish church and shops.

ALA: So they feel like in Poland with those shops and stuff.

MAJ (F): And also to feel more secure.

ALA: And maybe there are those restaurants so that they do not forget the Polish flavours, I don’t know...”

When we asked why are Polish shops so popular among the Polish migrants in Athens we were told that it might be due to the language barrier, or because Poles are used to their products:
“BOG (M): I think that Polish people always missed those products. I believe that our products are very specific, with different flavours.”

“Ma (F): But look, some people would go to Polish shop and buy vanilla sugar because it is written on it “Cukier waniliowy”, and in the Greek supermarket they can find “Zaxari me vanila”, which is 3 times cheaper, but they will not buy this. Some of them might not know that this is the same product, I believe there is this language barrier.”

The Polish migrants in our surveys often displayed the desire to keep their national identity intact. One motivation for doing this was the feeling that Polishness had to be kept safe for when or if it was taken back home again. That is why a part of parents we spoke to were determined to educate their children in Polish, so that they could slot back into the Polish school system when necessary. On the other hand, those parents who send children to Greek school, like for example Gloria, also try to sustain the feeling of belonging to Poland, being Polish:

“GL (F): We try to raise our children “fifty-fifty”, because they were born here they attend Greek school, but at the same time they go to the Polish Saturday school. We speak Polish at home. We try to make children, make – because currently at their age they are not so willing to read, they have to read over the summer holiday a couple of books in Polish and a couple of books in Greek.”

During one of the focus groups parents informed us that their children feel Polish:

“E (F): We had this conversation during one dinner recently about citizenship, Polish and Greek, who do you feel you are, as you could have Greek citizenship and he said that he’s Polish.”

Gloria, one of the most integrated participant in our study, seems not to be very connected to Poland:

“GL (F): Personally I am not too attached to Poland, as I left when I was a young girl. So I could not say that I miss Poland a lot. I will go to Poland, I will be happy about going there, to see Poland, to eat Polish food. But I do not see myself staying there for good. If I was financially OK maybe I could have one flat in Poland and one in Greece, so I could fly here and there to spend some time – I would not oppose. But one cannot afford it, can he?”

Non-state actors and institutions, such as religious organizations, play an important role in mediating the migration context. Polish church was mentioned when families were speaking about places relevant for Poles, it is a centre around which entire “Polish district” was created. Church organizes different initiatives, for example Christmas Fair, lotteries, blood donations; it gathers
money for the poor and the sick. Poles take part in those activities; they also often visit church’s masses. Teodora’s family for example goes to the church every week and sons serve as altar boys in an altar boy group. Teodora spoke about other immigrants looking up to the Polish citizens due to the fact that they stay together as minority; they have their school and church and keep their “Polishness” untacked.

“T (F): As I heard from other mothers – only Polish people kept learning their language. In the difficult moments this [maintaining Polishness] helps, mobilizes people, because sometimes people...no one bothers no one, but if a catastrophe comes people can suddenly unify and it gives you strengths, it actually gives you strengths...”.

FUTURE

Due to specific interests of our research we have spoken a lot with our interviewees about their plans for the future. We often asked where someone sees himself/herself and his /her family in 10, 20 years.

“R (M): For me... in my age, because I am almost 45 years old, the most important is the peace. [...] It could be Poland, it could be wherever else. Peace.”

Radek informed that they would stay with Honorata in Greece as long as she would take her disability pension:

“R (M): As long as Honorata is taking her pension and so on, and there will be no threat that she would stop taking it we are going to be here, we will not change it. Because in our age you simply... the other thing is a habit, a bit.”

When it comes to the future and what it might bring about, family A is generally afraid of what would wait for them in Poland, if they had to move. Especially parents were concerned with the employment issues – they spoke about Polish junk contracts and 12-hours-shifts, possible lack of employment for Teodora. Jan said he would easily find employment in Poland in construction, but it would be only temporal, whereas in Greece you can work all year long. Still, every member of the family saw himself in Poland in the next 20 years – only Inga was not sure. Parents plan to return to Poland for their retirement. As for children – this is their choice. Inga thinks that she will
live in Greece, whereas both boys want to return to Poland in the future. Nevertheless, family members realize that it is not certain how the future will look like:

“J (M): It is like this: I want to go back, but what will happen in 5 years, who knows. My plan is to secure a pension and until the retirement everything is ok, secure a start for my children – this is my responsibility. The rest is in their hands. Nothing is 100% sure. I see it like this.”

For children their future is connected to studies – basically in Poland. They rather did not go beyond studies when discussing their future. Parents think that children want to go to Poland to study there, the example is Dominika. However, her daughter Odeta does not want to go to Poland, she got used to living in Greece:

“O (F): I prefer to live here.
An (F): I also prefer to stay here.
O (F): Here I have my friends and there I would have to start everything over.”

Franek sees himself in Poland, he wants to study there. But he understands that the future depends on the set of factors:

“F (M): It all depends on how this school year will go for me, how will I do during the exams, and if they will close the Polish high school. Because if there is no high school here I will go to Poland. I will probably, if I find the school near my sisters, I will live with them.”

Szymon, even though he informed us he plans to study in Poland, would rather stay with his family in Greece, at least for now:

“SZYM (M): Financially we are ok: neither bad nor good. I don’t know where the faith will bring us, but I would rather we stayed in Greece.”

Still, regarding the future he was emphasizing that it is not sure where he would live, study:

“SZYM (M): I don’t know how it will be. For example my mum did not know that she would live in Greece. She did not expect that she would live in Greece. So I would also like something to surprise me like that.”

Majka and Ala had different views about the future: in Ala’s case it had been already decided that she would go back to Poland the following school year. Majka’s family, on the other hand, plans to stay in Greece for good:

“MAJ (F): I’m staying here.
ALA (F): I know that I am leaving and my mum will stay here.
MAJ (F): I will attend now a Greek high-school or technical school because I will stay here.”
Ala informed she misses Poland, she would prefer to live there since all her family and friends are there. Majka prefers to stay in Greece, she does not miss Poland:

“MAJ (F): I don’t know... I mean, we all prefer to stay here rather than to go to Poland. We feel better here, we prefer to be here. My dad has been here for a very long time, my mum too. My brother was born here and he has never been to Poland. But he does not miss it at all. He somehow does not want to go. All the friends from Poland also went to other countries for work.
M: So there is nothing to go back to?
MAJ (F): Yes, we would have to practically start everything from the scratch, if we went back to Poland. Everything: house, work, friends.”
Ala was not sure about her mum plans regarding future and potential return to Poland:

“ALA (F): I don’t know, she will probably stay for a while and then we rather plan for all to return to Poland, so that we are all in Poland.”

When asked about the wider Polish population in Greece girls were certain, that majority of people were going to leave Greece:

“MAJ (F): I think that any people will leave.
ALA (F): Yeah. Maybe a few will stay.
MAJ (F): Some Polish will stay, but majority will leave.
ALA (F): yes, majority will leave.
M: Where will they go?
ALA (F): It will be surely various: to different places.
MAJ (F): But also to Poland, to settle down there.
ALA (F): See how it is in Poland, and then go somewhere else.”

Olga, speaking about the future of her family informed us:

“OL (F): I think my brother will be in Poland, he has a girlfriend there. And parents here. In Poland they have no flat, no home, nothing. But since my mum got the pension she will start gathering money and maybe she will buy a small flat here, or a small house.”

Cezary plans to go to Poland in the future, even though he was born and raised in Greece: he has his best friend there as well as two sisters. He wants to study and later work there.
With regards to more general future of Polish migrants in Athens our respondents had various ideas:

“R (M): Much more people will leave. 1/3 who is here today will leave. I know people who are planning to go. Basically we have no friends here. We have one family who will definitely stay for very long.
M: Why is that?
R (M): He has a very good job, hard, but stable. He works 10 hours. I don’t know if I could stand mentally such job. And not physically, but mentally.”

“W (M): Parents go back following their children because once you have gained something, provided education to children, saved some money aside, or built a house, a flat...
V (M): Very many people invested in building houses in Poland so now it is a matter of decision when we are going back to Poland.
W (M): We have the Polish school, [but] once our children finish it and go to a university nothing holds us here. We have the roof over our heads in Poland, how we say, so we return. Generally children settle down, because they leave home, they are of age, so we, for our old age, as we say it – we do not need much.”

“M: So how will the future look like?
J (M): We will be working until we will be getting money to support the family and live. And if you would be able to do so, because there will always be more poor people coming, who will not be working for 50 or 40, but for 20 [euro].
K (M): Romanians started to do it already.
Z (M): So they will take our places.”

Some Poles referred to economic crisis and lack of jobs in Greece, speaking positively about the future:

“Z (M): I think that it will improve [situation in Greece] – I think like this. But it just needs some time.
BOG (M): Very long time.
T (F): Some people hope that it will improve.... But still... if Greeks lose their jobs – we will lose jobs as well. Because they would not be able to afford us.”
Some Poles might decide to stay in Greece if they have good jobs with the insurance and social benefits, like Zdzislaw:

“Z (M): And also those points I am getting for working, so now I actually do not miss much to get to the retirement level. Let’s say that if I worked where I work I need only 5-6 more years, and I will practically reach the bottom level. So I do not know if I would leave everything right now …maybe there would be this possibility of transferring it… maybe it would not be lost [in case he moved to Poland], but who knows that. I do not have much left, so I don’t see a point of leaving it right now and risk.”

In case of some Polish migrants decision whether to stay in Greece or go back to Poland is also connected to education of their children. When we asked participants of one of the focus group whether education plays a role in deciding about migration we were informed as follows:

“GL (F): I have come across such things. They waited… they had small children… two years before their little one was supposed to go to school they said they would gather everything up and return to Poland in order to settle there, so that the child could go to school. And they actually did it.

H (F): I also have such friends.”

Other respondents had similar ideas:

“KAR (F): Anna is in the last grade of primary school now, so if there is no junior high school [Polish] we would leave – it would be a trigger for us not to think about it but to finally go back.”

Climate was also mentioned as a reason of keeping Poles in Greece:

“Z (M): I guess that the climate here is like … [nice], it would be difficult to get used to it [climate in Poland]. To get unused to this climate and used to the other one. But, first of all, job keeps us here.”

People living in Greece with time get connected to this country, its people:

“I (F): In the past I wanted to return to Poland very much. But now I believe that I got very connected to Greece. It’s been like this since my birth, I have so many friends, I attend the Greek school, so I have very close contact with Greek culture which in some way got under my skin.”

When considering potential return adult respondents were taking into consideration a set of factors: where could they stay in Poland, where would they work, children schooling, economic situation in Poland, etc.:
“Do (F): We also have another house of my husband’s parents, because his dad died 4 years ago. So it also belongs to him. So we do not have this problem that we would not have where to stay. We have where to go. But it is only the matter of job. If I was sure that I would get a job... also my husband says: if we would get 1000 euros both of us we could live in Poland. They say that wages in Poland are so high, but I don’t believe it.”

“KAR (F): I come from Nysa, this is Opolskie Vivodeship. My husband... if we went back today we would stay with my parents. At least at the beginning. In good times we managed to economize some money, but then, you know, there was crisis so we used that money and now we cannot afford to buy a flat, and we cannot even dream about building a house. So at the beginning we would come back to my parents, and then.... At the time that we planned to go back my husband had a job, ok, not in the same town, he would have to commute. [...] I don’t know... I am afraid about myself; because I would not find a job... it is had... There was even such possibility, but I don’t know. It was a job in 3 shifts, so the cost of commuting... I don’t know. Maybe it is also that we got used to it that here. I go to work, the longest I am away is for 6 hours, and I get this 40 hours. And in Poland someone would tell you that you get 200 euros for a 3 shift 8 hour job – its horrifying. And it’s not that cheap in Poland. And the other thing is that our children were born here.”

Polish parents we spoke to feel a bit overwhelmed with their potential return to Poland. They do not know what to expect, if they will get good jobs, if they will be able to live their lives the way they did in Greece:

“Do (F): Here I need to be with Odeta [because she has no one to mind her]. I sometimes tell to my mum: I will go to work and who will take care of Odeta? My husband does not have parents, my mum cannot. So it is a bit terrifying.”

Some of the respondents mentioned other livelihood migratory strategies of Polish migrants in Greece aimed at providing means of subsistence after going back to Poland for some time and seeing that situation is not better there: re-migrating back to Greece or re-migrating to another country.

Most of the respondents declared the desire to return to their home countries, even in the old age. The main reason for wanting to return to their homeland, except financial difficulties experiences in Greece, was longing for the country and for the family left behind.
Dominika believes that in 5 years the family will be back in Poland. Elwira thinks she will stay in Greece:

“E (F): I cannot even imagine living in Poland. At all.”

When asked about her retirement, Elwira answered:

“E (F): I personally do not plan so far into the future. But surely not in Poland – what would I do in Poland? No, no. I come from a small town – 50 thousands. But no, people are different there. I feel much more at ease here.”

Ewa asked about future informed she would stay in Greece:

“M: So, you have never thought about leaving from here?
EWA (F): No, at least I have not. I feel fine here.
M: So you want to stay here?
EWA (F): Of course I do. It will nowhere be better for my children and my anywhere else than in Greece.
M: So, in 20 years do you see yourself here?
EWA (F): Of course, I would gladly buy a flat here.”

Karina, even though she is not very sure how the future will look like for her family and whether they should stay or go, when asked where she sees herself in 5 years informed that in Poland:

“KAR (F): … I guess in Poland, but I am not convinced about it. To be honest, I am a bit tired of living here. It used to be different, and now we are thinking all the time if we will have enough money to pay for everything.”

Konrad plans to stay in Greece for as long as he works and return to Poland for his retirement:

“K (M): Surely until the retirement. And then we will see – maybe we will go to Poland, to the village. We could not say we would be here forever. […] Children will be surely in Poland because they will not want to come here to work. […] But maybe we will change the plans and buy a piece of land here, because we also have such ideas. Because we like it here. So we could stay there from spring to autumn.”

Mariola, Konrad’s wife, see their family in Greece for the next 20 years. She would like to be able to spend some time in Poland, and some time in Greece, if possible.

“Ma (F): The situation will look totally different in the 10 years, when children will be older, maybe they will start families and there will be grandchildren. Then it will be different – you might
want to be here or where there. […] Half a year here and half a year there. I think this is the best option. Then yet – if it’s about I would like to be buried – in Poland.”

We asked Mariola what they planned, but it seems that the family stopped planning:

“Ma (F): We have already planned in this way and it didn’t work out. So now we go with the flow. We will see what the time and faith will bring us.”

Gloria and Grazyna think about staying in Greece for good, due to warmer climate and habit.

“G (F): I believed we stayed here because we simply got attached.”

Danuta plans to stay in Greece, she does not plan to go back in Poland. However, yet again she could not say anything certain when asked about her future:

“D (F): oh, I cannot say that. This I can never know.”

When we asked what is keeping Polish people in Greece during one of the focus groups we were told:

“GL (F): I think, - money.”

“H (F): I could not afford to support my daughter in Poland.

G (F): The weather, the climate. If not the situation we are facing now [crisis], I would never leave. I simply like it here.

GL (F): This is the acceptance of Greek life – after a couple of years you become accustomed to this lifestyle. You might not like something about their approach to life, but I believe that after some time you become accustomed to this way of life and you accept this lifestyle and I believe many people like it, from what I understand talking to my friends. My friends tell me that when they go to Poland they cannot get used to the fact that after 6 – 7 p.m. everyone stays at home.”

Jan and Teodora plan to live in Greece until retirement and then return to Poland:

“J (M): It is like this: I want to go back, but what will happen in 5 years, who knows. My plan is to secure a pension and until the retirement everything is ok, secure a start for my children – this is my responsibility. The rest is in their hands. Nothing is 100% sure. I see it like this.”

Konrad expresses his affection towards Greece that keeps his family in this country:

“K (M): First of all – we like it here. This is at least what I think. There was a possibility of taking a loan and buy a house. And also I personally like it here in Greece. […] We had jobs, we decided to buy a flat. When we bought a flat it was… [more difficult to leave and easy to stay].”

Krzesimir was not sure what will he do in the future:
“KRZ (M): If you asked me 4-5 years ago I would have said that I would go back for 100%. And now it’s 50-50. Where would you find such weather, let’s not full ourselves. Where it would be better for us?

M: So why did you want to come back just a few years ago?

KRZ (M): Because back then it was my mum, friends... but with every year it fades. We have friends here now; just look [pointing at the group of Poles in the park that I approached]. If you actually count you will find that I’m more years living here than there. […] Nothing keeps me here, nothing pulls me to Poland. We do not have a house in Poland or anything like that, so we do not have to worry about that. Here also I rent a flat. So if we do not like something [something does not work out] we can always pack our bags and leave. We also recognize that one that we might have to go back (he and his wife) and boys would want to stay here.”

The future is vague for our respondents; they do not know how it will actually turn out:

“G (F): I have no idea how the future will look like, if we will remain independent. […] And even more since our daughter, when she was leaving for Poland, she thought she was going to a land of milk and honey, where everything was just wonderful, because it was always like this during holiday – beautiful. And recently she has mentioned that after finishing university she would come back [to Greece]. So it also makes us think.”

“Ma (F): Still, sometimes when I sit and think about it I have this dream to go back to Poland and create this family home where all the children would come for visits. [I think] that it would be easier [to be done] there than here. But... I don’t know. I don’t know what the situation will look like. The economic situation, the health situation. Because these are what make us decide where to be: here or there.”

This subsection was designed to present certain categories supported by citations of fragments of interviews which provided insight enabling formulation of answers for the research questions that were summarized and analysed thoroughly in the following subsection – ‘Discussion of the findings’.
V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The present case study was designed to look into the process of mobility and educational strategies’ formation of Polish families residing in Athens. The aim of this research was to find what those strategies are as well as identify factors influencing their negotiation processes. We gathered data from focus groups and interviews undergone with a few Polish families as well as from interviews with Polish priest and representatives of the Polish School and the Polish Embassy in Athens. The technique we used in this study aimed at encouraging participants to speak freely about their everyday lives in Athens, their experiences and their plans for the future. The use of semi-structured interviews and qualitative approach in general can be explained by our need to elicit participants’ thinking and feelings about their migratory and educational experiences in the wider, social context. Since focus groups as well as interviews had a form of loose conversations, respondents spoke freely and openly. The fact that the researcher was of Polish origin helped while speaking to the Polish people - it reduced the distance between interviewer and respondents and strengthened mutual understanding.

Our main concern was to find what members of Polish families think and feel about the circumstances in which they find themselves and how this is translated into the process of strategy formation. Focus was placed on the crisis and how strategies look / are shaped up / are changing in the face of economic downturn. Conversations with respondents aimed at investigating factors that play crucial role in the process of negotiation of family strategies. Our interest was placed at the families because the complex roles of those units in migration strategies and decision-making have been so far undervalued, yet contemporary literature emphasizes its relevance. We chose to discuss the negotiation of educational and migration strategies as we assumed that the juxtaposition of both types of strategies could create a new and interesting perspective and give better insight into the investigation of family strategies.

In evaluating results of the present case study we used NVivo software which led us to the following major themes that emerged from the data gathered from the interviews:
After analyzing those themes thoroughly we were able to discover answers for research questions (secondary and eventually primary ones) that will be meticulously presented in the following sections.

Our main research question was as follows: **What are the educational and migratory strategies of Polish migrant families in Athens and how do families negotiate them?** On the way to answer abovementioned primary research question, secondary research questions emerged:

1. **What are the factors influencing Polish migrant families’ negotiation of their migratory and educational strategies?**
2. **What role do family members have in the process of negotiation of migratory and educational strategies of Polish migrants in Athens?**
3. **How do family strategies change in the face of the economic crisis?**
4. **What possibilities do the EU educational and migration policies create in the context of the Polish migrant families’ strategy formation?**

The following subsection provides descriptive answers to abovementioned secondary and primary questions.

1. Factors influencing the Polish migrant families’ negotiation of their migratory and educational strategies

Kosic & Triandafyllidou (2003) emphasized that family strategies are influenced by three sets of features; socio-demographic (age, education, family status), support networks (with co-
nationals, kinship support in the country of origin, relations with nationals of the host country) and the institutional environment of the host country (employment opportunities, immigration policy, welfare benefits and socio-economic integration into the host country). The subject literature indicates that family migration strategies can be additionally impacted by double caring responsibilities; transnational ones and those in the destination country, which could prompt or hamper them (Ryan, 2011). Additionally, literature emphasizes that strategies might be influenced by family needs, career aspirations and lifestyle choices. Also the easiness and availability of communication technology through regular communication via increasingly affordable telephone and/or Internet communicators (e.g. Skype, Viber), connected to possibilities of cheap and quick travel within Europe impact on strategy formation. This behaviour was exhibited by the Polish respondents in other studies (e.g. Moskal, 2011; Ryan et al., 2009, 2007). In the case of migratory strategies Halfacree (2004) identified two sets of factors in the process of decision-making about mobility - economic and non-economic ones.

Drawing from the mentioned findings as well as referring to the data received from the focus groups and interviews we believe that in the case of investigated Polish migrant families negotiation of their migratory and educational strategies is influenced by a set of inter-related factors. In our study the economic factor impacting the process of mobility strategy formation within Polish migrant families we spoke to was the socioeconomic status of the family. Additionally, we noticed that the institutional environment of Greece as the host country with employment opportunities, immigration policy and welfare benefits were relevant for the researched group. In respect to non-economic factors, we have identified these as family related issues including stage in the life cycle of the family and children’s education, double caring responsibilities: transnational ones and those in the destination country, family needs and lifestyle choices; changes at the GoSaPEiA, participation in networks, relationship with Poland (Polishness) and residential satisfaction. EU policy is a factor that also impacts family mobility strategies to a certain degree. In addition, earlier mentioned accessibility of cheap and quick travel between Poland and Greece and the fact that families use communication technology for regular communication impact on the strategies’ formation.
With regards to the factors impacting on the educational strategies of Polish families, for the investigated group these are potential return to Poland, future education, financial considerations, participation in networks, family-related considerations and the EU policy.

2. Negotiation of migratory strategies

In classical economic theory a prospective migrant is regarded as a rational social actor, who gathers detailed information about the host country and makes decision to move on the basis of careful consideration of expected gains and losses stemming from migration in the long run (Trevena, 2011 after: Górny & Kaczmarczyk 2003: 49). However, as Fischer, Martin and Straubhaar (1997 cited in: Trevena, 2011) note, the assumption of full rationality on the part of the migrant is false. The case of the group in question confirms this criticism; the decision to move to Greece of the majority of our interviewees was rather spontaneous, without too much thought given to the consequences of such a step. Similarly to Travena’s findings also the rationale for going abroad of Poles in Greece was often based on the ‘I have nothing to lose’ or ‘let’s try to see how it works out – we can always go back’ principles. Facing the economic downturn that started in Greece around 2009, families we spoke to continue to form their future plans based on the second principle. Their decision about returning to Poland or re-migrating to another country could only be made in the situation that both parents would lose his/her jobs. As long as at least one of the spouses was employed family would stay in Greece. In our research families that decided to stay in Greece were ones in case of which at least one parent managed to keep their job; parents have experienced cuts in wages, changes in working conditions (economic and non-economic ones, such as longer working hours or fewer days of work weekly), but still they could support their families. As long as this situation does not change drastically investigated Poles stated they would stay in Greece, hoping that economic situation would change for better at some point. We call this behaviour a ‘waiting out strategy’.

At macro level, neoclassical economics focuses on differences in returns to labour across markets. Significant are divisions in wages and employment conditions between states: individuals from the low-wage countries move to the high-wage regions. The approach to migration as an individual decision for income maximization where the increase of wage levels of individual
migrants assigns them a key role in the process of migratory decision-making was named by 
Kurekova (2010) *the human capital theory of migration*. This approach transfers the neoclassical 
macro-level analysis into the micro-level model of individual choice. At micro level, neoclassical 
theory looks at migration as at a form of investment in human capital. Potential migrants take into 
consideration the costs and benefits of moving to a different country and choose those destinations 
where a positive net return from movement can be expected. From this perspective individuals 
maximize utility; they search for the new settlement country that maximizes their well-being. It is 
relevant to notice that the extended neoclassical models approach mobility decisions with regards 
to the expected rather than actual income. Earnings weighted by the probability of employment 
are the most significant factor (Massey et al., 1993). This approach could be applied to the case of 
our research group since the majority of the Poles we spoke to initially came to Greece because of 
the difficult economic situation they had faced in Poland. Greece was a destination for them where 
they could earn much more for the same amount of time they devoted to work in the sending 
country. The differences between Polish and Greek wages still keep Polish workers in Greece, 
regardless of the crisis.

With reference to the theory of a dual labour market, the secondary sector of the economy 
has been associated predominantly with low-educated, unskilled labour. Native workers choose 
from secure, well-paid jobs – the primary labour market, while migrant workers get low-skilled, 
low-wage, insecure and generally unpleasant jobs, which domestic workers refuse to take up – the 
secondary labour market (King, 2012). Our research has shown that Polish individuals living in 
Athens are primarily employed in low-skilled and low-paying jobs even if they possess higher 
levels of education (not common among our respondents). The majority of the men participating 
in our case study worked in construction - painting, plastering, etc. One male respondent worked 
as a building administrator, one in transportation/moving services and one as a butcher. In the case 
of women they worked as cleaners and baby sitters, with one as a dentist and one as a nurse.

Socio-economic status (SES) of the family refers to parents’ work experience and family's 
economic and social position based on income, education, and occupation. Scholars have indicated 
the relevance of SES in migratory experiences (Engel et al., 2014; Goldscheider et al., 2011; 
Ireland, 2011; Lopez Rodriguez, 2010; Christou, 2008; Coyle, 2007). Analysing families’ 
socioeconomic status we took into consideration parents’ education and occupation. It shows that
in the case of families we spoke to, their socioeconomic status was middle or low. Adding to low-skill, low-paid, mainly menial and insecure jobs they did, the majority of parents we spoke to had completed secondary education. Employment of parents proved relevant in the process of negotiation of family mobility strategies. As we have said, our interviewees often emphasized that work is something that keeps them in Greece. Even though they have experienced various obstacles connected to employment they managed to keep working regardless of the worsening economic situation in Greece. Parents we spoke to emphasized that if they lost their jobs and could not find employment in Greece, then they would return to Poland, or, rarely, that the father would migrate to another, typically EU country, and support his family in Greece. It seems that the employment is one of the most important, if not the decisive, factor impacting migratory strategies.

When it comes to family related issues those factors proved relevant in the process of migratory strategy negotiation for our interviewees. It has been recognized that the family is an important arena and one of the most relevant social units that influences and reconstructs individual experiences. We have deployed renegotiated definition of family broadened to the wide range of kin-based relations such as parents, children, siblings, cousins, grandchildren, grandparents as well as relatives-in-law, etc., as different family relationships are important at different stages in the life course (Ryan et al., 2009). Haug (2008) observed that family is an important determinant of migration. Scholar identified four components of migration motivation which affect migration decisions: the demographic structure, i.e. size of family, age and sex, stage in the life cycle, and various aspects of the social structure of families such as kinship patterns, all influencing the availability, expectations, motives and incentives with regards to migration. We did not notice a relationship between the size of the family and migratory plans; we can only assume that in case of bigger families (with three and more children) it is more difficult to support such a unit; therefore parents may need to take into consideration potential migration more willingly. Younger families, such as those of Dominika and Karina, who have spent less time in Greece than other respondent families are more willing to leave Greece and go back to Poland. Those families that have spent more years in the settlement country seem to be more rooted in the Greek reality and therefore for them return migration is not such an obvious choice. In respect to the gender of interviewees and their migratory strategies we have not notices an impact of this determinants mentioned by Haug on our families’ migratory strategy negotiation processes. Though, we agree with the scholar that stage in
the life cycle is relevant in this aspect. In the present research we tried to investigate which moments in family life should be taken into consideration and how important are those phases for the process of strategy formation. Generally, the subject literature underlines that the timing of migration is closely related to the family life cycle and major events over the course of immigrants’ lives. This can be referred to case of Family A when parents spoke about not considering relocating the entire family in case they lost jobs in Greece - only the father would go to work. Schooling was often mentioned with regards to this fact. It would be difficult to change children’s school. Respondents could not imagine going back to Poland as they, or their children, would lose one year due to school acceptance age difference between the Polish and the Greek educational systems. Families we spoke to considered going back to Poland when parents retire, or, in cases of families with younger children, when a child reaches a specific stage of his/her education. For some families it might be finishing junior secondary school and applying for high school, or finishing high school and applying for university. Since some families believed that the educational system is better in Poland they planned to send their offspring there and move back with them. Ryan and Sales (2013) implied that education, and more specifically the stage children have reached in schooling is an important factor for migration strategies. According to those scholars migrants with small children have to consider childcare and schooling while, for older migrants, adult children could both facilitate and complicate migration strategies (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 74). Their findings correspond with Ackers and Gill’s study (2008) who have also noted that children’s age and education as well as parents’ expectations about the opportunities available in the destination country may impact on family migration strategies. Parents often do not want to disturb their children’s education and wait for them to finish schools when they decide either to re-migrate or go back to their homeland. The importance of the family’s life stage is emphasized also in a life course approach, one of the three theoretical models referring to family strategies proposed by Moen and Wethington (1992), to which we have referred in the theoretical part of this research.

Another non-economic factor that influences strategy formation of Polish families were recent changes at the Polish School. As we have already said in the theoretical part of the present study, since the school year 2013/2014 there had been changes introduced into the functioning of the GoSaPEiA. Regular teaching mode was withdrew from the Polish high school and replaced by distance learning: pupils attend the Polish School every day where they have lessons of Polish and
knowledge about Poland. Additionally they participate in online courses on all the other subjects according to school year group with an extended curriculum in certain subjects that pupils chose. In the school year 2014/2015 24 pupils took part in the distance learning, which required them to do most of the school work independently, and obliged them to submit a number of test assignments in different subjects throughout the school year. Those assignments were marked and evaluated by teachers in Warsaw. Once all of them were submitted by a particular pupil he or she could proceed to take the classification examinations run at the ORPEG headquarters during the school holidays. A positive result at this stage provides advance to the next grade. During the school year pupils were able to participate in online consultations ensuring direct contact with teachers in Poland. School year groups of this kind are run via an e-learning platform. Graduates of high school take their final exams (Matura) in Poland, in Warsaw and alongside the GoSaPEiA’s diploma they obtain a diploma from the Polish National Education Commission High School.

The way that a school is currently run together with the fear that eventually it will be closed entirely has impact on family migratory strategies. Families, especially those with smaller children who attend the GoSaPEiA regularly (Family F and G), informed us that they would move back to Poland soon because of the situation at the Polish School. In case of families with older children, who were about to finish junior high school (Family B and E), there were plans to send children to Poland so that they would continue education at high school there, staying with their relatives (grandparents, siblings) whilst the rest of the family remained in Greece.

Mobility literature recognizes social networks as an important force for forming and perpetuating of migration (van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013; King, 2012; Castles & Miller, 2009; Haug, 2008; Thieme, 2006 after: Portes, 1989; Spittel, 1998; Massey et al., 1993). Numerous contemporary studies have showed that networks pay a significant role in the lives of migrants and the mobility decision is usually influenced by the participation in those. In the case of Poles in Athens we spoke to, networks exist within the sending country, between the sending and the receiving countries, within migrant communities and, to a rather small degree, between migrant communities and the receiving communities. They connect individuals in the sets of kinship, friendship and shared origin. Kinship networks (local and transnational) assure the practical, material, informational as well as emotional supports. Kinship, informational networks, and

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22 For more information about ORPEG and the Polish School please see pp. 155-156.
transnational communities have been conceptualized as forms and sources of social capital stretched across the migrant space.

According to Dwyer and colleagues (2006, p. 5), Coleman’s findings suggest that “economic disadvantage can be compensated by a strong form of social capital in the form of family norms, values and networks, as well as a broader set of community values and networks”. Adopting this idea to the situation of Polish families in Athens we could assume that their disadvantaged economic situation might be equalized by the social capital they get from their (local and transnational) families and communities. In the case of Polish migrant families in Athens there are different sources of social capital: family, school, work, people they meet during everyday interactions, in their neighbourhoods, associations they belong to, activities they participate in. Adding up all these different forms creates a single, sensible summary of the social capital specific to the Polish individuals in Athens.

Granovetter (1973) implied that better educated migrants tend to rely less often on ties than their co-migrants with lower education or skills. We have not noticed such a dependency in our research, but it would be interesting to check it in future, broader research.

With reference to the relevance of social capital for the strategy formation of Polish families residing in Athens we refer to Putnam’s (2000) distinction between bonding and bridging social capitals. Putnam’s notion of social capital helps to observe how social networks influence sense of belonging to communities of Polish migrants as well as their social integration. The negative aspects of both bonding and bridging capitals impact Polish migrants living in Athens and their strategies. Bonding capital having a strong sense of belonging to the local Polish community may lead to feelings of strong otherness and not leave place for integration to the Greek society. This way Poles may form mobility strategies based on rather negative sense of residential satisfaction. Strong bonding capital results often in the weak bridging one; Poles fulfilling their emotional, social, informational needs within the Polish community do not need to refer to the Greek one. Low levels of bridging capital show the connections of Polish citizens to the Greek community and influence their strategies.

Social networks of children and adolescents are mostly based on friendship, family members, neighbours and acquaintances. Tomanovic (2005) has implied that the social capital children possess in their social networks of friends is bonding one. When it comes to children that
live in multicultural community of foreigners, like the young respondents in our case study, they cumulate also bridging social capital. At their schools and after them they meet and make friends with peers from different countries and have a chance to learn about their customs, traditions, and habits. Peers are important models of socialization, shape aspirations, share information, and provide social reinforcement for beliefs and behaviours. After talking to our young respondents about the ways in which they interact with their Greek born peers and with the entire community, we assume that in their case we could talk about the predominance of bonding social capital over bringing one, which might result in a weak sense of belonging and in this way upset the migratory decisions. Children’s friendships with Greeks and other nationals were important for their residential satisfaction.

Bourdieu, but also Putnam, showed the ways in which social capital keeps and strengthens the marginalization of ethnic minorities. Participation in networks seems to be important for overall adaptation and integration processes of immigrants in mainstream society. In Bourdieu’s theory the lack of familiarity with the tacit rules, norms, expectations and traditions associated with the new systems in which immigrants live means that they are disadvantaged from the outset: the *habitus* they occupy ensures that they will feel like a ‘fish out of water’ when trying to access and integrate into mainstream education or work systems (Morrice, 2007, p. 166 after: Bourdieu, 1977). We could transfer this view to the situation of children of Polish migrants in Athens. This underprivileged group is not socially powerful, thus it does not have a full access to mainstream social capital. Another thing is the GoSaPEiA in Athens which is one of the main educational choices for Polish community in this city (Rerak, 2010). Due to its unique character as a Polish institution in Greek society, in some way it seems to lead to inequality as it keeps Polish students in Polish reality, creates and strengthens networks among Poles, regardless of the fact that Polish children function in the Greek society that they should integrate into. The subject literature indicates that immigrant children may react to their disadvantaged status with different strategies. One of them is relying on social capital available in their own ethnic community to actively fight for acceptance by the larger society (Zhou, 1997a). According to Siisiäinen (2000), Bourdieu believed that membership in groups and involvement in the social networks developing within these and in the social relations arising from the membership could be used in efforts to improve the social position of actors in a variety of different fields.
Networks seemed important for the investigated families with regards to Poland, country of return. Families have relations there who are willing to help find work and settlement. Family related considerations are also relevant in another aspect; our respondents emphasized that they would definitely feel better in Poland, since they have cousins, grandparents and other relatives there. Those kinds of relations proved relevant for all the members of families, who spoke about missing their relatives and how difficult it was to live on their own, but our young interviewees spoke about those feelings the most often.

The results of our case study confirm the existence of a specific paradox observed by White and Ryan (2008) regarding the role of networks in migratory strategies. On the one hand family networks, and more specifically transnational ties, seem to be essential baggage in preparation for eventual return to Poland, and also a particular pull-factor. At the same time social networks also extend the duration of migratory experience since they make migration emotionally easier in the country of settlement. Moskal (2011) explained that maintenance of close relationships with family in Poland with frequent communication may present a satisfactory permanent or long-term situation, and so may act to encourage permanent settlement. We would also add here the role of networks as a source of material and informational support especially in respect to finding employment in Greece and providing information about social services and benefits. On the other hand, White and Ryan (2008, p. 1491) noticed that it would be rather a simplification to assume that dense networks in the host society impact settlement plans. According to those scholars it might be that migrants, who have already decided to stay for a particular length of time in the settlement country, may want to establish networks. From what we have noticed with families we spoke to, such an inter-relation might be accurate. Especially at the beginning of their stay Poles in Greece started to create a Polish circle, and eventually “little Poland” that made their stay in Greece more bearable. On the other hand, our respondents themselves emphasized that having friends and acquaintances in Greece is not something that would impact their potential migratory plans.

Discussing the situation of Poles in Brussels, Grzymała-Kazłowska (2005) used the notion of the ‘institutionalization of “temporariness”’, where Polish networks incorporate a constantly shifting population of migrants. To some extent the same fluidity can be observed in Greece, even after 2004. This shifting ground is one of the reasons why formal networks, such as Polish
organizations and associations are often hard to sustain. Existence of a vivid Polish community seems to enable Poles to keep their sense of national identity and to bring up their children to feel Polish. Almost all our respondents found many various ways of connecting to their Polishness. Some of participants took part in formal organizations. Others went to the Polish church, bought Polish products (Poles are present in such numbers that shopkeepers in the “Polish district” have a considerable incentive to adapt to their presence) and cooked Polish meals, but they also celebrated Easter, Christmas, confirmation ceremonies and weddings in a traditional manner, and accessed Polish media such as the Internet, satellite television, newspapers and radio. Families tend to visit their relatives in Poland once a year, mainly for the summer vacation. Children love going to Poland, they have their cousins, aunties, uncles, grandparents there who take care of them in case they go on their own. Regardless of the fact that Polish families typically visit their homeland not more often than once a year, they keep in touch with relatives in Poland on a regular, often daily, basis via Skype (very popular are video chats), Viber, Facebook or telephone. Poles admit that technology is making their life abroad much easier. This kind of transnational contact and support is recognized in the migration literature and has been termed ‘caring at a distance’ (Moskal, 2011, p. 40 after: Baldassar et al. 2007). Researchers on the international migration see that currently technology interferes with network dynamics: people have better access to information and assistance via various sources, especially the Internet, which makes individuals less dependent from local networks. This perspective enables other agents to be involved in migratory experiences of individuals that no longer rely to large extent on family and community networks, but on different types of institutions, and also Internet communities and social media (van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013).

The Polish migrants in our surveys often displayed the desire to keep their national identity intact. Even though they live in Greece and their children go to school there, Polish families we spoke to basically still “live their lives in Polish way” (T.); they speak Polish at home, watch Polish TV, keep Polish traditions, buy products in the Polish grocery shops, go to the Polish Catholic church (often every week). Our respondents spoke about the “Little Poland” that Polish migrants created for themselves in the heart of Athens. One motivation for keeping their national identity intact was the feeling that Polishness had to be kept safe for when or if it was taken back home again. A part of parents we spoke to were determined to educate their children in Polish, so that
they could slot back into the Polish school system when necessary. Not every migrant had such conscious identity-preserving strategies; nonetheless, for most, migration was provisional and temporary. Only rarely were interviewees definitely planning to stay in Greece for their entire lives. Similar observations were made in the context of Greek immigrant children in Germany in 70s; many Greek parents were afraid that they would lose their children to the new country. In order to ensure the Greek identity of their children those parents were establishing or supporting so called ‘national schools’ (Grigoropolou, 2011).

Existing research has assumed that, unlike their parents, immigrant children lack meaningful connections to their home countries and, thus, are unlikely to consider Poland as a point of reference (Zhou, 1997a, 1999). Unlike in Zhou's studies, our young participants referred to Poland often, they have spent some time back there, especially during their summer vacations and, thus, were in the constant process of comparing and contrasting their lives between Poland and Greece.

Non-state actors and institutions, such as religious organizations, play an important role in mediating the migration context. The Polish church was mentioned when families were speaking about places relevant for Poles, it is a centre around which the entire “Polish district” was created. The church organizes different initiatives, for example Christmas fairs, lotteries, blood donations; it gathers money for the homeless, poor and the sick. Poles take part in activities organized by the church. Teodora’s family for example goes to the church every week and her sons serve as altar boys there. Teodora spoke about other immigrants looking up to the Polish citizens due to the fact that they stay together as a minority; they have their school and church and keep their Polishness.

Migrants create and use social networks in various ways, depending on different profiles and migration motives. Social networks seem not to influence decision of Poles about staying in Greece or going somewhere else. Poles need acquaintances to have a nice time with, to get information about relevant matters, they help with finding employment, sometimes help to fill the void caused by the remoteness of their actual family. Social networks in the destination country provide therefore information and assistance of different kind; economic, psychological, regarding employment, schooling or housing, provision of new social ties, etc. We agree with van Meeteren and Pereira (2013) who claimed that migrant networks trigger and sustain migration by contributing to lowering migration costs over time and reducing selectivity.
The subject literature has already proved that networks trigger migration to specific destinations: they encourage circular migration and reduce migration risks. This situation could be observed in the 90s when more and more Poles were coming to Greece pulled by their friends or family members. In this way social networks at the place of destination can be regarded as a pull factor. This is true for our research since the majority of the adults Poles we spoke to initially came to Greece to visit, or were invited by their friends, acquaintances or family members. The subject literature also claims that networks may help to explain why migration continues even when the initial reasons for the movement changes, like in the times of crisis when, even though wages are cut and unemployment among immigrant rises, immigrants persist on staying in the receiving society, or chose re-migration. Poles depend on their co-nationals that still reside in Greece regardless of economic difficulties, and they refer to them for information and emotional support. When it comes to friendships and acquaintances – in our study in the case of adults, these were mainly mentioned when speaking about arranging employment in Greece, Poland, or elsewhere. Also socializing with other Poles proved relevant, but this would not have influence on the decision on whether to leave or stay in Greece.

With regards to networks, the present case study reaches out to the research by Krystyna Romaniszyn (1996), who investigated Polish networks in Greece almost twenty years ago, and therefore described the environment that our respondents lived in at the beginning of their stay in Greece. Romaniszyn’s research was based on a case study of the formation and operation of ethnic networks and describes how Polish immigrants, despite their very uncertain status, managed to gradually form and sustain a community in Athens. Scholar have referred to this specific community as an invisible community, constructed from a loose network of non-legalized institutions operating in Athens that enabled illegal Polish immigrants to feel and be self-sufficient. Romaniszyn believed that the presence of Poles in Greece was temporary, and might disappear virtually overnight. This proved to be right in cases of many Poles, but not the participants of our study (at least not yet). This undocumented population of Polish workers resided in Athens without manifesting their presence in the city, without the necessity of learning Greek or mingling with nationals. This is still true for the Polish community, which remains somehow in the shadow of regular Greek life. Romaniszyn’s study also emphasized the role of the Polish church in sustaining and shaping networks. The majority of Polish citizens tended to visit it on a regular basis to pray.
and to receive moral support, but also to socialize; they got married and baptized their children there, organized meetings with co-patriots, the Polish Ambassador to Greece or other Polish VIPs. The importance of the Polish church in forming and perpetuating networks seems to be almost unchanged since the early 1990’s, the time when Romaniszyn carried out her research: Poles are still very connected to their Polish church in the heart of Athens. One of the general characteristics of Polish emigration worldwide is that it is very close to the Catholic Church. Religion has already been proved to be an important part of the lives of Polish immigrants settling in various regions, including Greece (Rerak, 2010; Maroufof, 2009; Marchlewski, 2008; Ryan et al., 2008; Romaniszyn, 1996). In the present case study we have learned how religious practices are related to the everyday lives of Polish migrants in Athens. They tend to participate actively in the life of Church, as it is probably one of the things that keeps them close to their homeland. Currently the Polish population in Athens is still concentrated around Michail Voda Street, where the Polish Catholic Church of Christ the Saviour is located. Around that district a large informal network of Polish private services has been established, including childcare, shops, restaurants legal offices, doctors’ surgeries, etc. This area is a meeting place for Polish citizens where they can socialize and exchange information concerning all the aspects of immigrant life in Greece.

Nowadays the situation of Polish migrants in Greece is not that different from Romaniszyn’s description. Poland is a member of the EU, so Polish citizens are not illegal immigrants anymore. Still, their presence in Athens remains invisible with Polish institutional networks operating regardless of the crisis (though on a much smaller scale).

At this point we would like to refer to differentiation of the types of migratory strategies of Polish migrants after 2004 proposed by Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski (2008, pp. 85-120). Scholars discussed sectorial strategy, the strategy of delayed spatial dispersion; the strategy of implicit depreciation of skills, and the strategy of exit from the shadow economy. In sectorial strategy Polish migrants in the UK prefer specific economic sectors in which they have started to dominate; construction, hotels and restaurants, agriculture and the food processing industry. This strategy is true also for Poles in Greece who dominate in the construction sector for men and services (cleaning) for women. The strategy of delayed spatial dispersion concerning the spatial distribution of Polish people in destination countries cannot be discussed here since our research focuses on migrants in Athens. The strategy of implicit depreciation of qualification relates to the
common case of work under formal qualifications, which might designate occupational degradation. Factors such as no need of knowledge of Greek (or only basic knowledge), availability of work in selected industries and sectors caused a greater interest of Polish immigrants in Athens to work in low-skilled sectors, where the natives usually did not want to work due to low wages and low work prestige, just as in the case of Poles in the UK. Due to the small sample we cannot generalize about the depreciation of qualification in general, but we believe this is the case for our researched group. Strategy of exit from the shadow economy refers to the post-accession change of migratory status from illegal to legal, which often resulted in the change of labour sector. The abolition of restrictions on access to the labour market and the right to obtain the status of an EU citizen that resulted from the enlargement of the EU in 2004 did not have much influence on Poles in Greece; no change in occupational pattern of our research group has been observed.

Personal experiences gained during living abroad have a huge impact on decision-making about the future migration. Residential satisfaction is one of the factors that impacts on the migratory strategies of families we spoke to. Both adults and children spoke often about Greece as a beautiful place they loved due to the weather, sights, sea, culture, traditions and friendly people. They liked their lives in Greece and it was hard for them to imagine living elsewhere. During interviews and focus groups we often heard about the ways in which Poles are attached to Greece that they miss it when they stay longer in Poland and that after holiday in their homeland they actually return home (to Greece). Adult respondents often spoke about the good relations they have always had with Greeks. Children, especially from the Greek schools, emphasized that they had Greek friends – it seemed that for interviewed children friendships with Greeks and other national was important for their residential satisfaction.

On the other hand, our respondents have noticed that the atmosphere in Greece has changed after the 2008 crisis and Greeks’ approach towards Polish people has shifted as well; they became unwelcoming and more hostile towards foreigners. But Poles understand this situation and do not blame the Greek people. Those changing circumstances seem not to have much influence on migratory decisions of Polish individuals.

A relevant factor making Polish people stay in Greece is social benefits - the effects of EU adhesion. We spoke about it especially with Honorata, a wheelchair user, who received her
disability pension and free medicines. Her daughter was also entitled to receive a social assistance pension. This family often emphasized that parents would stay in Greece as long as Honorata could collect her benefits. Family migratory strategies are influenced, therefore, by the institutional environment of the host country including not only employment opportunities and migration policy, but also welfare benefits. In her study on Poles in Greece Christou (2008) claimed that access to health care or pensions do not seem to play an important part in the decision to stay longer in the settlement country. Our case study shows otherwise, but due to a small sample it would be advantageous to look into this issue more thoroughly in the future research.

During our conversation with Polish interviewees we noticed that they felt somehow superior to other immigrants in Greece. This might be due to their EU citizen status, good opinion about Polish workers among Greeks, or the common European heritage. Some attitudes might have been copied from the Greek environment, like the antipathy towards Albanians and - more recently - towards immigrants from Africa and Asia. This antipathy could be noticed for example in the way our respondents, both adults and children, spoke about other nationals; instead of using proper Polish vocabulary referring to Albanians, Bulgarians and Romanians (Albańczycy, Bułgarzy, Rumuni) respondents referred to those nations in a pejorative way - Albany, Bulgary and Rumuny. Also in the way Poles spoke about their jobs and life in Athens it was noticeable that they were proud to be Polish and felt more privileged than other immigrants.

Neighbourhood ethnic composition impacts on the residential satisfaction; Poles seem to prefer to live close to other Poles, they sometimes might not feel safe living around foreigners – some of the interviewees spoke about situations when they got beaten or threatened by foreigners. This might be also the reason of earlier mentioned antipathy towards foreign nationals coexisting with Polish nationals in the centre of Athens.

Currently cross-border mobility in Europe is characterized by a situation when people establish and maintain activities and connections in both the country they come from and the new state where they live. Migrants who keep in touch with their homes in the sending countries actually live between two social spaces; they become embedded in the host society, but also keep close connections to the life in their homeland. Even though we started the research with an idea that there is a Polish community characterized by a strong sense of Polishness, as pointed out in the research by such scholars as Maroufof, Romaniszyn and Triandafyllidou as well as our own
previous projects, which we wanted to investigate in respect to family strategies, in the end we have noticed that a small part of our research group showed something like a hybrid identity. These were mainly children attending Greek schools but also few adult Poles who have lived and worked among Greeks for many years. Poles live within and between two cultures – their ethnic heritage and the culture of their new country and interact in a transnational space. They speak Polish and Greek at homes, watch Greek TV, have Greek friends and acquaintances, or even chose Greek friends as godparents. They love Greece, want to live in that country and do not plan to go back to Poland. The transnational perspective that our study refers to, privileges notion of hybridity when capturing migrants’ lived realities as embedded in more than one nation state (Binaisa, 2011, p. 6 after: Basch et al. 1994; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Hannerz 1996; Portes et al. 1999). It is relevant to notice that the hybrid ways of life are various from both those in the place of origin, and those in the place of destination since Polish migrants need to bridge the differences between receiving and sending countries. This transnational existence seems to facilitate maintenance of the parental culture within the investigated group. Regular visits back to the homeland combined with everyday contact with relatives and friends in Poland and the use of Polish media maintain a sense of affinity with Polish culture and create transnational identities.

Polish families in Greece live their lives within and across the borders of the EU Member States, in European transnational space. Since their transnational practices involve many arenas of social life (like regular visits, keeping in touch with families and friends back home on a regular basis, political activity - voting in elections, remittances etc.) they engage in the comprehensive transnational practices (compare with Levitt et al., 2003). Referring to the typology of transnational practices proposed by Dahinden (2010) which was discussed in the theoretical part of the present study, we believe that the Poles we spoke to belong to the localised mobile transnational formations. Polish migrants maintain ties with their country of origin, by regularly moving back and forth for holidays and family obligations. Some of our respondents had property or land in Poland. On the other hand, they seemed to be naturalized in Greece, where they live, earn money and raise their children. Thus, our respondents move between Poland and Greece and are involved in both sending and receiving countries and are integrated into networks within both countries. Poles left their homeland and social ties back home, but they use sets of strategies to sustain links to their origins while negotiating the values and norms of the Greek society they live
We have observed that in our respondent group meanings of family, parenthood, kinship and to some degree even friendship was rearranged in order to accommodate spatial and temporal separations. Co-residency and physical unity were replaced by geographical dispersion. Polish transnational parents send their children to their relatives in Poland and try to combine caregiving and guidance with breadwinning. In those cases family ties were fostered and sustained by showing emotional ties through frequent visits, calls, video chats, and remittances (compare to Ho Thi Thanh Nga, 2012). Polish parents remained physically separated from children, but maintained parenting connections and financial obligations. This experience is difficult for all - parents and children - but the Poles we spoke to said it was necessary for the sake of family well-being. Initial research on Polish migrants in Athens (Rerak-Zampou, 2012) and the present case study show that families whose parents or one of them lives in Greece, while children and/or spouse are in Poland, are not uncommon examples in this community. Some of them have plans to build a house in Poland, have already started building one, or plan to buy property at some point in the future, but this, typically, would mean giving up their home in Greece. In this way families pursue transnational livelihoods. Thus, in the case of a few families we spoke to, but many families we were told about, we could speak of the Polish transnational family – a family that has adopted a deliberate strategy of living in Poland and Greece, forming spatially dispersed webs of relationships in order to maximize opportunities for employment, education and social advancement of family members (compare with Ryan, 2011; Ryan et al., 2009; Ho & Bedford, 2008; Ryan et al., 2008).

Social networks are important in facilitating transnational migration. Polish migrants’ transnational practices are conducted mainly through family networks. Similarly, religious practices are connected to the Polish migrants’ transnational livelihoods; religion seem to be an important part of lives of Polish migrants settling in Greece. Poles attend their Catholic Church, celebrate religious feasts in the way they did in Poland and their families in Poland do.

EU policy is a factor that also impacts on family mobility strategies to a certain degree. Its influence on the formation of strategies for Polish families in Athens is discussed below, in a subsection answering secondary research questions regarding the possibilities that the EU educational and migration policies create in the context of the Polish migrant families’ strategy formation.
In our study for the process of negotiation of family mobility strategies in the case of investigated families both sets of factors; economic and non-economic ones proved relevant. It seems that financial considerations are an overriding factor for our interviewed families. This may have to do with the fact that migrants decide to leave one social context for another on the basis of a hierarchically ordered set of values. Therefore, for the labour migrants the economic factors would be decisive in case of making migration choices. Neoclassical migration theory emphasizes the economic aspects of migration and the reasons for it. We refer to this theory, since our research on the integration of Polish youngsters in Athens (Rerak, 2010), as well as present one on negotiation of migrant family strategies indicate that even though immigrants are influenced by the mix of socio-demographic features, still the most important factors were economic considerations. Yet, in order to not oversimplify the migratory strategy negotiation processes, as migration dynamics cannot be explained only by the economic factors, the complex and diverse realities of migration and interactions development need to be taken into consideration. This was evident in our research. Personal experiences, individual characteristics of migrants but also family and community characteristics, the effects of home and host states, education of children and the importance of politics and policies for mobility are of relevance. Discussing migration strategies we need to take under consideration the complex, multifaceted, and shifting interactions and interconnections between the local, national, and transnational spaces. The migration experience, the many efforts made by Polish individuals to settle and adjust to their new home, is difficult and complicated. The situation of Polish people we spoke to supports the concept described as ‘bifocality’, namely the situation when the country of origin remains the source of cultural and social identification, while the host country is a source of material and economic opportunities (Moskal, 2011).

3. Negotiation of educational strategies

One of the main aims of the present research was to find what strategies Polish migrant families introduce when it comes to education of children. In the proposed case study we have looked into issues connected to education in a twofold way; we have attempted to investigate the role of children’s education in the process of migratory strategies’ formation, but also what impacts on the development of educational strategies of migrant families. During focus groups and
interviews with our Polish respondents we often spoke about various issues relating to education; not only the education of children, but also parents and more generally – the importance of education in the lives of Polish migrant families in Greece, and the differences between educational systems of Poland and Greece. Education is a prevalent subject with regards to research on family strategies. Family strategies differ among different groups of people and one of the sources of these differences is education. In respect to the factors impacting on the educational strategies of Polish families, after analyzing the results of interviews we have named those as potential return to Poland, future education, family-related considerations, financial considerations, participation in networks, and the EU policy.

The premises of the new economics of migration theory enable to place the behaviour of individuals regarding mobility in a wider societal context including family as decision-making unit. We agree in the present study with scholars who claim that migration decisions are not made by isolated, individual actors, but they are rather joint decisions taken within larger units of related people, typically families. From this perspective, education is conceptualized as familial and not individual pursuit. Sociological literature confirms that education is an important factor in strategies of many (migrant or not) families. We have investigated that for the families we spoke to education is the key aspect, most important thing that can be organized for children.

Scholars such as Ryan and Sales (2013) and Ackers and Gill (2008) believe that children’s education as well as parents’ expectations about the opportunities available in the destination countries impact on family migration strategies. For example, migrants with small children have to consider childcare and schooling while, for older migrants, adult children could facilitate migration strategies (Ryan et al., 2009). Older children (especially those at secondary school or in college) are seen as more likely to have their education disrupted by migration whereas younger children are viewed as able to cope with the experience of migration and getting to know a new system (Ryan & Sales, 2013). Nevertheless, parents often do not want to disturb their children’s education and wait for them to finish schools to decide on family’s eventual mobility. We have not noticed such phenomena in our interviewed group. We agree with scholars that children’s education as well as parents’ expectations about the opportunities available in Greece influence family strategies. Yet, Polish families we spoke to seem to be willing to disturb their children’s education at any point if they were to lose their jobs and decide to relocate. Of course parents
spoke about their children finishing the current stage at school, but we did not notice that the decision to disturb children’s education might be more difficult for younger children than for the older ones, as suggested by Ryan and his colleagues. Polish children are expected to be able to handle the experience of going back to Poland, changing school and getting to know a new system without too much hassle, regardless of their age.

According to Zhou (1997a) the educational strategy adopted by migrant families is of great relevance since schooling becomes a crucial first step towards successful adaptation to mainstream society for immigrant children and the children of immigrants. School supports migrant children in achieving social advancement, its environment with norms, values, and support has the power and tools to promote positive inter-group contacts within which diverse groups can interact, learn from one another and develop positive attitudes (Papoulia – Tzelepi et al., 2003). School characteristics can promote or hinder opportunities to develop friendships and this is important since peers are models of socialization; they shape aspirations, share information, and, in case of immigrant children, they serve additional purpose of assimilation in terms of linguistic fluency and understanding of local, social and cultural norms (Vaquera & Cunningham, 2010). That is why school choice is of such importance, especially in case of migrant children, and explains our interest in this subject. As school distributes specific values, norms and attitudes preparing students to life in particular society, it becomes clear that the kind of school family chooses has an important repercussion for the life not only of the child, but the entire household. It is evident in the case of migrants whose livelihood strategies are proved to be impacted by the school choice. This combined with the importance of family as the subject of migration explains the relevance of investigating the role of school choice in the process of mobility decision-making.

When it comes to choosing school, Polish families in Athens get to select from a variety of educational opportunities - Greek public and private schools, various international schools and the group of Polish schools at the Polish Embassy in Athens. Nevertheless, taking into account the migratory pattern that the majority of Polish migrants present, namely economic emigration characterized by low paid jobs, the actual school choice concerns non fee-paying institutions; either the public Greek schools or the GoSaPEiA (Rerak, 2010). Children in our study indeed either attended the Polish School or “regular” Greek public primary, secondary and high schools. Polish students follow the Greek national curriculum in Greek. Generally families who planned to
move to Poland in the future believed it was better for children to attend the Polish School. Likewise, those respondents that planned to stay in Greece understood it was better for them to attend Greek school. Families A, B, D and the person H, I and J decided to send their children to the Greek schools, which was not an obvious choice for the family at that time (about ten years ago) and many Polish families, planning to return to Poland after some time (when they would gather enough money), rather chose the Polish School. In case of mentioned families and people, children simultaneously attended the Polish Saturday school. The strategy of sending children to the Polish complementary schooling - so called “educational backup plan” - has to do with families trying to have an additional option open rather than for children to learn their heritage, language and history of Poland. This is a deliberate strategy, which aim is to assure the possible continuation of education in Poland in case the family decided to go back to their motherland. Polish parents tend to send their children to the Polish Saturday school to ensure that if they have to go back to Poland then their children would be able to continue their education seamlessly. This was also the case of earlier-mentioned families. The other strategy, namely of sending children to the Polish “regular” school had the same premises as the strategy of sending children attending Greek schools to the Polish Saturday school; it was supposed to ensure children's undisturbed education in Poland, after the family’s return to this country. Sending children to the Polish School was a strategy introduced also in order to ensure their easy acceptance to a Polish university, which the majority, if not all, children in our study planned to do. The Polish School was chosen sometimes because a particular child could not manage in the Greek school due to, for example, language difficulty. A decision to send a child to the Polish School was additionally made in case of some families based on a fear that children might forget the Polish, but also because some parents might have wanted them to learn Polish and be in Polish environment. In addition, there is a belief present among the Polish community in Athens that there is a higher level of education at the Polish school compared to the local Greek schools.

In the case of families whose children attended the Greek schools some respondents declared that it would be advantageous for children since the family planned to stay in Greece for longer. Some respondents believed that due to the fact that they lived in Greece it was advisable for children to go to Greek school. Another reason for implementing such a strategy were economic considerations; some parents underlined that education at the Greek school is cheaper; books and
transportation are for free, there are no obligatory fees, insurances, contributions, etc. The transfer fee at the GoSaPEiA was often mentioned, which in 2014 was about 80 euros per child. Also proximity to Greek schools was mentioned by our interviewees - the Polish School is in a remote part of Athens, more than an hour by bus from the “Polish district” so it was more convenient for Poles to attend local Greek schools. Proximity was additionally mentioned when discussing the situation of families who lived in the distant suburbs of Athens, even further away from the Polish School, where the respondents of the present case study lived. In this case Polish parents tended to send their offspring to the local, Greek educational institutions.

Both parents and children believed that finishing school in a foreign country is an advantage during the process of admission to university in Poland for the chosen faculty. Another thing is the possibility of getting a scholarship from the Polish government for those children who graduated from a foreign high school. With regards to the strategy of sending children to the Greek school, for some interviewees this was a result of unstable situation of the Polish School in Athens; from its foundation the school was being shut down and reopened again. Parents, not wanting to interrupt their children’s education and ensure undisturbed schooling chose to send them to Greek schools. Some of the parents we spoke to admitted that they planned to go back to Poland so that their children could go to school there, since the situation at the GoSaPEiA in Athens remains unstable. Children from Greek schools, referring to the unstable situation of the Polish School, seemed to appreciate that they did not have this hassle.

There are vivid attempts of Polish parents to keep the GoSaPEiA running on a regular basis. Two of the fathers we spoke to took an active part in those attempts organized by the Parents Counsel with the cooperation of the Polish community in Athens. They implied that Polish families began to move back to Poland before the crisis due to the changes that started to happen to the school. In the last couple of years the number of pupils in the “regular” system at the Polish School has started to decrease and in the supplementary system has started to increase.

Another type of backup educational strategy in case of graduates, both of junior high school and high school, mentioned by our respondents was to apply to institutions both Poland and Greece for the next level of education. This way if a child is not accepted by the university or high school of their choice in the priority country, they have the chance to be admitted to educational institution in the other country. This strategy assures continuation of education in any case.
One of the educational strategies implemented by Polish families in Athens is sending children to high school in Poland. Such family decisions were sometimes explained by the lack of specific high schools in Greece with school year groups with an extended curriculum in certain subjects such as biology, which is desirable if a child wants to study biology, or medicine at university in Poland. Generally, according to our respondents, Polish parents from Athens send their children to Poland to their relatives or move back with them so their children can continue their education in a good school, one that would ensure getting into a prestigious university in Poland (as explained by our respondents).

Parents tend to have a decisive voice when it comes to the choice of school their children should attend. Our study shows that parents have a great influence on decision-making around educational trajectories and spatial strategies of families. Parental involvement in children’s education has grown in importance in recent decades; often they are the ones that have the most to say regarding the schooling and remain very rational in adopting the strategies of support for education of their children. Moskal (2011) indicated that in most families, adults make the decisions. But the presence of the children is central to the families’ decision-making processes, and children fundamentally shape the nature and course of families’ migration experiences. Schooling and children’s education in particular act to integrate migrant parents into the wider society. In her study Rerak (2010) observed the importance of school choice for Polish adolescents in Athens, but also the relevance of parents with their plans and prospects for the future. Those observations were also made in the present case study. Another thing is that for parents who had a couple of children it was rather typical to send the second and the third child to the same school type as their firstborn.

Generally, the parents in our study when speaking about making decisions that would concern their children, especially educational ones, seemed to take into consideration their children’s opinions, dreams, views and feelings. Regarding the school choice few parents from our study emphasized that this is their child’s decision and they would support it. Even though some parents might not like their child’s choice, like in the case of Elwira and Zdzislaw who would prefer their son stayed in Athens rather than went to Poland to attend high school there, they supported their son and tried to focus on the advantages of his decision. Other parents, however, presented a different strategy; they tried to convince their children of the solution they thought was
better. Jan is an example here with the way he tried to convince his daughter that going to Poland to attend high school there was not a good idea. Parents spoke to Inga a lot about her educational plans and eventually managed to convince her to stay in Greece. In our study it seemed that parents make important decisions together taking into consideration their children opinions, plans and dreams and children notice that they are relevant in the process of family decision making.

The subject literature confirms that schooling opportunities for children in the destination country are important. Fifteen years ago Nikolaou (2000) observed that the school system in Greece generally did not provide the educational support needed for immigrant students to achieve their potential. Experiences of some of the parents and children we spoke to seem to prove this opinion. Part of respondents in our case study had rather negative opinions about the Greek schools and universities, describing the level of education provided at the Polish educational institution as much higher. This was especially the case of respondents whose children went to the Polish School in Athens, or to the schools/universities in Poland. On the other hand, in case of those families whose children attend, or attended, the Greek school family members we spoke to had rather positive opinion regarding those institutions; they emphasized lower costs of education (mentioned free books, transportation, and no obligatory contributions), involvement and devotion of teachers, and a more pleasant and free atmosphere at school.

With regards to networks we infer that they are relevant for the process of educational strategy formation. First of all, as we have already said, Poles in Athens tend to acquire information from their native friends and acquaintances rather than from Greek institutions. This also concerns information regarding schooling. Networks, especially transnational ones, proved relevant in case of the strategy of sending children to high school or university in Poland, since relatives are the ones who take care and often host children while parents remain in Greece. Influence of networks on decision-making regarding education is also noticeable in case of children. Most often grandparents host and take care of such children, but it might also be the case of older siblings already living in Poland. Young participants in our study raised in the Polish environment fulfilled with native ties found it difficult to get accustomed to Greek schools, had problems with making Greek friends and eventually chose the GoSaPEiA where they had their Polish friends.

Referring to the factors impacting on family educational strategies it is also important to mention the basic principle of the EU policy which is that each EU citizen has the right to enjoy
equal treatment with nationals in respect to various aspects of life, including education. As it has already been stated in the theoretical part of the present research, as an addition to the EU nationals that are able to work abroad in another EU state, their family members have the right to reside in the chosen country of settlement and children have the right to be educated there. Therefore, the EU policy impacts on family educational strategies’ formation because it gives the freedom to Polish migrants and their children regarding schooling.

An additional problem Polish graduates faced upon entering the Greek labour market was that of diploma recognition. Research has acknowledged that a general devaluation of Central and Eastern European education occurs in Western European countries, and this is also true for Greece. Although the European Union has developed a system of mutual recognition of qualifications, it has been noted that it works primarily to ensure that professional qualifications are recognized, rather than general education or academic qualifications. However, also the recognition of professional qualifications proves to be problematic in case of Greece. Even after EU accession Polish migrants are still in a disadvantaged position in the Greek labour market. Our respondents at the beginning of their stay in Greece could not continue working in the profession they worked back in Poland, but had to change their professional path. This was the case with Elwira, who finished midwifery school in Poland but works as a cleaner, or Konrad, who finished mining school, but works as a butcher (he went to butchery school in Athens).

Vellymalay’s (2010) explained that parents might place a high importance on their children’s education since most of them were not highly educated themselves. This was noticeable in our research; education was mentioned by many adult respondents who attributed it the utmost attention and relevance. Polish parents want to ascertain a bright future for their children and they see education as a means to that.

The subject literature also implies that a large percentage of Polonia participates in out-of-school education (e.g., various courses, trainings, correspondent education) that are organized mainly by public and religious institutions, or even by sub-cultural circles (Gacek, 2013; Burszta & Serwański, 2003). Gacek (2013) described the strategy of career advancement though attendance on courses, language training and other endeavours among Polish migrants in the UK. The majority of adult Polish individuals we spoke to did not invest their time in learning or increasing qualifications; the time Poles had they preferred to spend working. This might be due
to the fact that Poles tended to think about their migration as a temporary experience or that Polish citizens focus mainly on satisfaction of material needs and mostly devote their time to this cause. With children, the situation was rather different; few attended language schools and sport activities outside school. In our study four mothers admitted that they had participated in Greek courses in the past, the rest of the adult respondents had learned Greek at work, from TV and everyday interactions. Polish adult interviewees came to Greece without knowledge of Greek. Proficiency in Greek seems to be important for the formation of educational strategies. Some respondents informed us that their children did not attend Greek school because they did not know the language.

According to the results of Granovetter’s study (1973), better educated migrants tend to more often speak the language of their new country. This was also true for our research; Gloria and Teodora, university graduates, spoke Greek perfectly. They have been using this language at work and in their everyday interactions for many years. Also their children who attended Greek schools, spoke Greek as well as they spoke Polish. In case of other respondents they knew Greek better or worse (more often), but they did not speak the language fluently, nor they were willing to learn it. Polish parents explain that they do not have time to learn Greek. One of our respondents claimed that Poles simply do not care about learning Greek. This, of course, does not concern Polish children attending Greek schools. Greek competence seems to be relevant for strategy formation since it helps families with employment-related issues, enables children to attend Greek schools when Polish School was being shut down. Not knowing Greek becomes an obstacle for those children who consider studying in Greece.

As we have explained in this subsection, educational strategies of Polish migrant families are impacted by a set of factors; potential return to Poland and future education, financial considerations, family-related considerations and, to some degree, by participation in networks and the EU policy. All those factors simultaneously influence on the process of educational strategy formation altering it day by day. Educational strategies of Polish families were often changing, which proves that their negotiation is a constant process and not onetime choice. In the case of some families the educational path children followed was very complicated – children were changing schools from the Polish to Greek ones, or from Greek to the Polish and back to Greek. This proves the fickle nature of migrant family strategies. Similarly, respondents were not sure about the future education of the children and that is why Polish families introduce so-called
‘educational back-up plans’, which should ascertain leaving the door open for possible return to the Polish educational system.

4. Family members in the process of negotiation of migratory and educational strategies

While our small sample provided a range of examples of the ways in which families formulate their migratory and educational strategies, we saw very little diversity in the constitution of the family groups themselves. Consistent with the literature (e.g. Fitzgerald & Kirk, 2009 after Shaw, 2008), most seemed to conform to traditional relations; the dominant type of family within our research sample was a small, two-generation (so-called basic or nuclear) family composed of parents and children (1-4).

As we have already repeatedly said, family members have an impact on the process of migrant and educational strategies’ development. This statement is common in the subject literature and it is also true for our study. When researching family decision-making we chose to approach the family as a collective, heterogeneous construct with each of its members possessing a degree of agency that enables them to modify and negotiate processes of strategy formation within the family. In the present case study we utilize universal approach towards family, looking at it as at a social unit fulfilling specific tasks, but including relatives who does not necessarily live together in a spatial concentration. In this context of strategy construction and realization we looked into the positions of power held by individual family members. Conflicts and power relations within the household may persist since the interests of all household members are not always the same. The subject literature suggests that when we look at family strategies the distribution of power between different members of the household needs to be taken into account. This was noticeable in our research. For example parents had the most to say regarding migratory and educational strategies of families, yet they often took into consideration opinions of other family members, especially their children. In this way family strategies need to be conceptualized as results of compromise achieved among family members in the course of decision making, often a product of a lengthy process of negotiation. In our study it seems that in just a few families parents held a position of power within the family and children basically needed to come to terms
with their resolution. We did not notice that one of the spouses decides on their own – we spoke to parents who cooperate, decide and plan together. This was proved by adult and young respondents. It is also essential to emphasize that some interviewed families parents tended to listen to their children and they took into consideration the children’s dreams and opinion when planning the future, especially the educational future. It seems that the power relations within families of Polish migrants in Athens are working in favour of young migrants and they feel in a position to directly influence their parents’ resolutions.

As we have said, on the one hand strategies might be results of consensual decisions, on the other they might be imposed by some family members against the opinions of other individuals within the family. We emphasize that family strategies are often a result of compromise achieved among the family members in the process of decision making. We believe that the notions of compromise and negotiation are central to the present research.

Ryan and colleagues (2007) implied that men’s migration strategies might be dependent on family situation, children’s education and their wives’ preferences. In our case we cannot speak about solely men’s strategies, but family ones and these are related to family situation, education of children and preferences of members of a particular family. As we have said, the traditional pattern for mobility, which includes men migrating in order to find work, and women – due to family/love – connected issues tends to portray women within narrow domestic and familial contexts, playing supporting roles as wives and home-makers. Their involvement in strategies regarding mobility was basically limited either to those family members who were left behind or simply follow the migration of their husbands through family reunification. This tendency comes from the dominance of economic perspectives within mobility literature, an approach that focuses on the male migrant worker as the main actor in mobility experience. This has not been noticed in our case study. The women in the resent research did not present themselves as simply following their husbands but rather as making their decisions based on practical considerations. In case of some families women were the lead migrants themselves, in other men and women met during their migratory experiences, got married in Greece, and worked together. The crisis that started in Greece led to a situation where women were the ones to support the family as they held their jobs and men where often the ones to lose their employment first. Men also had greater difficulties with finding a new job. Current migration studies confirm our observation and give much more attention
to women as equally important participant of family mobility experience and, as has already been mentioned, an active player in the decision-making process. It is important to remember that in general women migrating as heads of household now make up almost half of global flows and are becoming major initiators of family reunification (Kofman & Meetoo, 2008). In this way the mobility experience impacts on traditional gender roles.

In the present research we have focused on family dynamics in order to find whether we can discuss family strategies, or maybe rather strategies of family members. At this point we could answer this question by saying that in the case of Polish families we spoke to, migratory and educational strategies were family ones rather than strategies of a particular family member. This is because those resolutions are negotiated among the family members and each individual plays a role in this negotiation process. Of course the degree of compromise is various for the various families and the small sample size requires more thorough future investigation.

At this point we want to emphasize the complexity of family strategies and decision-making and underline that all the family members, including children, take part in the process of strategies’ negotiation. Family strategies, both educational and migratory ones, were changing and being modified by family members, impacted by altering economic and social circumstances. They were the results of family members daily interpreting and managing their specific life conditions.

5. Family strategies and the economic crisis

The economic crisis that struck European markets in 2008 is a relevant aspect in discussion on intra-European labour mobility, including the issues of migrant strategies. From that moment many EU countries started to register record unemployment. Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and Ireland were countries that have suffered the most because of the economic downturn. In 2009 a broad economic recession hit the Greek state hard with consequent tensions in the entire EU zone. Referring to the economic crisis that struck Greece this study has looked into the ways in which, within the context of the family, individuals adapt their actions; how Polish migrants responded to changing circumstances, how families adapted their behaviour to the new social context within which they had to operate, what they do to improve their situation, and where Polish families see themselves in the future. We have also explored the relationship between the crisis and families’
decisions about the duration of their stay in Greece. We have investigated how immigrants make sense of the institutional environment of the host country and which strategies they use when seeking employment and improve their living conditions, more so in the difficult times of economic downturn.

Migrants are likely to quickly adjust their coping strategies to the changing situation, which could be observed during the recent economic recession. In the times of crisis when, even though wages are cut and unemployment among immigrants rises, immigrants persist on staying in the receiving society or choose re-migration. In our investigated group, the families that remained in Athens after 2009 were ones in which at least one of the spouses had kept their job. Our working respondents negotiated their labour market position in terms of the types and number of jobs available and making the most from the employment they had managed to secure for themselves. A common strategy developed by Polish migrants was de-skilling - individuals were accepting jobs that did not match their educational and skills levels.

According to our respondents, the economic difficulties migrants started to experience began even before the actual economic downturn of 2009 – according to our adult interviewees issues connected to employment started in 2006. Yet, Poles began to leave Greece a couple of years later. This situation is connected to the “strategy of waiting out” - Poles counted that situation would get better, so they decided to stay in Greece for as long as possible. Moreover, if at least one of the spouses had a job the family could support itself for some time. Networks help to explain why migration continues even when the initial reasons for the movement changes.

However, because the situation on the employment market was not improving, families gradually started to leave Greece. Respondents were explaining that changes happened progressively; Polish people started losing jobs, getting paid less or their hours of work were getting cut down and eventually Poles started to leave Greece. The decrease in the Polish population could be noticed after the beginning of the crisis, which made the large part of Polish community leave Greece in search for a better life elsewhere. Entire Polish families began to re-migrate to other EU countries (UK, Germany, Denmark, Sweden), some chose more distant locations (Canada) or returned to Poland. Indeed, as suggested by the subject literature, the financial crisis provides a context in which mobility patterns and prospects are altering rapidly.
Polish respondents noticed that the atmosphere in Greece changed after the 2009 and Greeks’ approach towards Polish people had shifted as well; they became unwelcoming and more hostile towards foreigners. But Poles understand this situation and do not blame the Greek people. Decrease in earnings and losing jobs resulted in people being forced to change their lives, their habits. Those changing circumstances seem not to have much influence on migratory decisions of Polish individuals. Respondents also mentioned the stress that had become a part of their everyday lives; the changing situation in Greece led to much more stressful reality noticeable in media, streets and means of public transportation. Economic difficulties have made people worried about their present day and their future. Some adult respondents had not had jobs for some time, and started getting less money for the same job they had been doing for years. It all resulted in the feeling of uncertainty, fear about the future. Children noticed the consequences of the crisis; they worried together with their parents. Due to the economic downturn which made many Polish people leave Greece, our young respondents lost their friends.

Interestingly, the crisis affected Polish men more severely than women. In case of our respondent families, men were the first to start losing jobs, and often women where the ones to support family for the extended period of time. Losing jobs in the Polish community in Athens began with men working in construction. Their wives were still working (all the women we spoke to worked), but for less money and fewer hours a week. The situation was more difficult for men: in case of three families fathers were not working at the time of our interviews. Bräuninger and Majowski (2011), explained how the crisis affected men to a greater degree than women by indicating that sectors severely hit by the crisis and, therefore, characterized by the greatest unemployment rates, such as the construction business and industrial manufacturing – are traditionally occupied by male workers. Few adult male respondents suggested that if economic difficulties in Greece continued and they would not have a job for longer period of time, they would rather consider re-migrating to another EU country on their own, sending money to their families remaining in Greece. Relocation of the entire family to that country was not an option due to education of children, or the fact that they had mortgage in Greece to pay off as well as other obligations and benefits, or because their wives still worked in Greece.

Greece was for many years a destination country where Polish migrants could easily find a menial job, even without knowledge of Greek. The global crisis of the end of the first decade of
new millennium has changed this phenomenon; massive unemployment made many Greeks start taking up those menial jobs, making the situation of migrants, including Polish citizens, more difficult. Additionally, since there was a greater workforce ready to take up any jobs, wages were cut dramatically. As our respondents informed us, there was always someone, mostly other foreigners, who would do the same work for less money. Some immigrant groups eventually overtook jobs done by Poles so far as they were more willingly hired by Greeks. According to our respondents, after 2006 these were Romanians, and more currently – immigrants from Asia and Africa.

A few respondents were very pessimistic describing the economic conditions of their families and they planned to go back to Poland in the near future. Other families in our research were doing well, some adult participants were able to keep their jobs and support their families. In those cases respondents planned to stay in Greece for longer. Therefore, the decision whether to stay or go is basically connected to employment issues, and more precisely to issues in this field caused by the crisis. Still, some Poles referred to economic crisis and lack of jobs in Greece speaking optimistically about the future. They hoped the situation would eventually get better for them and their families (continuation of a ‘waiting-out’ strategy).

6. EU educational and migration policies and family strategy formation

During focus groups and interviews we often spoke, especially with adult respondents and older children, about EU enlargement, and more precisely, Poland’s accession to the EU and the role of this fact in respondents’ family lives. In our case study we focused on the implications of freedom for movement on family issues connected to migration, education, housing, and so on. We emphasized more the social perceptions of free movement of workers and their implications than on economic ones. Regarding the European Union our interviewees mainly referred to the freedom of travel and work in various EU countries as well as education right and the right to social benefits. The freedom of travel is in itself an important right for the new citizens of the enlarged EU but, as suggested by Ryan and Sales (2013, p. 93 after: Ackers & Stalford, 2014) it also opens up other rights such as access to welfare within different states, including services such as health and education.
The majority of our interviewees came to Greece after the collapse of the Communist regime in Poland in 1989. As we have already said in the theoretical part of this study, almost at the same time Greece tightened its migratory policy - legal entrance and settlement of foreigners with the purpose of working in Greece became nearly impossible. That is why the majority of Polish citizens we spoke to stayed in Greece illegally. Siadima (2001) stated that at the beginning of the ‘noughties’ Polish workers constituted the third largest group of undocumented immigrants in Athens. Anastasia Christou in her study on the agency, networks and policy with regards to Poles in Greece (2008) underlined that Polish migrants are rather resilient to policy changes, especially in respect to legalization of their status. This statement is true for our investigated group. In our case study only Danuta and Gloria had made the effort to legalize their stay from the very beginning, which enabled them to start education at Greek universities and eventually have a career other than low-paid menial jobs that the rest of the interviewed women and men did. Another characteristic of Polish citizens is that they prefer to rely on other Poles rather than on Greek institutions, taking information from friends, relatives or informal networks. General acceptance of their undocumented stay, keeping a low profile and continuing to stay in Greece illegally contributed to the naming Polish minority an “invisible community” in the years preceding Polish accession to the structures of the EU. Prior to the accession of Poland into the EU incipient EU membership might have enabled Polish immigrants to bypass the work permit procedure but still they needed to participate in IKA. Baldwin-Edwards (2004b, p. 16) informed that this was especially visible when comparing the IKA registrations with permits for dependent employment – there was an inconsistency noticeable over-representation in IKA registrations.

Research suggests that Europe’s enlargement represents a potentially crucial transition in relation to migratory strategies (Ryan et al., 2009, 2007). The acquisition of EU citizenship has important implications for migration patterns within the Union. The accession of Poland into the European Union on the 1st May 2004 meant for Polish immigrants visa free regime. Since 1st May, 2006 gradual lifting of labour restrictions towards Polish citizens started in Greece, reinforcing the migration policies for Poles. Triandafyllidou and colleagues (2009) implied that these changes in legal and political status did not automatically mean that Poles no longer faced discrimination or exploitation in the workplace. The EU and Schengen memberships led to significant changes to national asylum and migration policies in Greece. Due to Greece’s EU membership Greek law has
been harmonized with EU legislation. Many changes in the Greek legislation came as a result of incorporating European Conventions and Directives in the spirit of EU policy as outlined in the Maastricht Treaty. Yet, incorporation of EU legislation into national law proved to be problematic for Greece. With regards to migratory law the Greek institutional framework tries to comply with EU directives, but lags behind European legislation. Liapi and Vouyioukas (2006) claimed that in Greece there has always been a gap between legislation and reality. In the European Union Greece is often perceived as one of the laggards of European integration, or even as an ‘awkward partner’ (Dimitrakopoulos, 2007). Implementation of the EU policy in Greece led to certain problems and shortcomings which meant that Polish citizens were not considered EU nationals equal to migrants from the old Member States. Christou (2008) inferred that the lack of coherent approach and information offered by the Greek state and state officials to migrants has resulted in Polish citizens having been denied their rights as EU nationals in relation to the issuing/renewal of their work and stay permits. Still, the new EU citizen status was a relief for Polish migrants, which was often underlined by participants of our study. It simplified several matters of their everyday life, for instance not spending time and money for immigration documentation renewal, having easier access to public services and schooling opportunities for children, health care, housing, loans, social benefits or pensions. The matter of gathering documents to make the stay legal prior to Poland’s accession to the EU was often mentioned by our respondents. Interviewees also underlined that because their status had changed after 2004 they started to feel safer comparing to the beginnings of their stay in Greece. Prior to accession some respondents were stopped by the police, detained for the night in custody or even deported back to Poland due to their illegal stay. Christou (2008) confirmed that the relevance of the EU citizen status is that it brings about a certain safety that the stressful days of insecurity are over and also simplifies everyday life of Poles. Scholar implies that for Polish immigrants in Greece EU membership has greatly improved their immigration status and the possibility of making plans for the future and this has been also noticed in our investigated group.

Europeans generally highly value the right to move freely within the European Union. This was also noticeable in case of our respondents; both children and adults referred to the free movement as one of the greatest advantages of the EU, enabling them to make specific plans for
the future. Some respondents also pointed out the right to educate children equally to their Greek peers as an advantage of their changed status.

EU economic and social policy has an influence on the lives and strategy formation of Polish migrant families. EU citizens’ status enables Poles to reside freely in Greece, children can attend Greek schools equally with their Greek peers. Poles do not have to be worried anymore that they might be stopped and held by the police in custody, they enjoy the same rights as their Greek neighbours. All this makes their lives in Greece easier and in this way influences migratory strategies enabling more comfortable stay. Still, not all the Polish respondents were aware of the advantages that their EU citizen status brought about. It generally seemed that our interviewees did not know much about European Union, what changes did the accession of Poland cause, how their status changed, what documents they still needed in Greece to make their stay and work documented or to be able to acquire social benefits and pensions. Interestingly, when we asked interviewed parents about changes in their lives after the accession of Poland into the EU, some of them did not notice any. On the other hand, the accession of Poland into the EU impacted also the perception of Greeks towards Poland; they started to notice that Poland is a big and developed country, also began to approach Poles differently – not so much of second category citizens.

Additionally, the EU policy impacts on family educational strategies’ formation to a certain degree. For example it seems to give the freedom to Polish migrants and their children regarding education. Our respondents were aware of the right to free education and it seemed to give them a kind of physical comfort regarding schooling issues.

Another thing in relation to the European Union was discussed in one of the focus groups, namely the opinion that after the 2007 enlargement providing EU citizen status to large numbers of Romanians and Bulgarians present in Greece, the prosperity of Poles in Greece started to shift. It seemed that some of the Polish respondents hold a grudge that they had to go through transitional period; their situation was more difficult than other new EU members.

7. The educational and migratory strategies of Polish migrant families in Athens

With regards to the Polish families in Athens we have revealed a few mobility strategies popular among this group. Firstly, already mentioned, so called ‘waiting out strategy’ - as long as
at least one of the parents works and the economic situation of particular family does not change drastically families would stay in Greece, hoping that their financial situation would change for better at some point. This strategy emerged prior to the beginning economic downturn in Greece which resulted in the worsening of financial situation of families we spoke to.

Relocating the entire family back to Poland is a strategy that would be introduced if the living conditions of families get worse, for example due to the lack of parents’ employment. This strategy was also utilized by families with younger children who planned to go back to Poland due to the changes and possibility of eventual shut down of the Polish School in Athens.

Mobility strategy mentioned by our respondents was also one where man was willing to re-migrate to another country whilst his family would stay in Greece. As we have mentioned, respondent families found it rather difficult to relocate entire family due to schooling, mortgages, or the fact that one of the spouses, typically the wife, still worked in Greece. Adult male interviewees realized that moving the entire family would be both difficult and expensive. Therefore, they spoke about the possibility of working in another country and supporting family in Greece.

Another common strategy among the Polish families in Athens was using networks abroad for finding jobs, housing and information about schools and other services. In case of Polish migrants ethnic networks proved relevant as they help to find jobs but also reduce the costs of housing and consumption spending, especially at the beginning of mobility experience, but also all the way through this experience.

In relation to the migration pattern that investigated population presents our case study is en sync with Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski’s research (2008) on global migration strategies as well as individual strategies of Polish contemporary migrants in the UK. Scholars identified that for mentioned group preponderant strategy is the strategy of ‘intentional unpredictability’, which entails spontaneity, keeping open options regarding continuing or the termination of migration and return to the home country, changing jobs within the sector or, sometimes, even between sectors. Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski indicate that the strategy of intentional unpredictability means ‘going with the flow’: people following this type of strategy can end up their mobility experience as quickly as they started it, or their stay abroad can take a very long time, be indefinite. We have observed similar attitudes in our researched group. Our respondents were not sure how their future
would look, whether they would stay in Greece, go back to Poland or re-migrate to another country. They were also not sure how the educational future of their children would look. During focus groups and interviews we often heard that respondents “can always go back” in case something “goes wrong”, which may mean termination of employment, but also closing the Polish School. Adult respondents, especially men, tended to be open-minded with regards to employment. They stated that they could do different jobs if necessary. Strategy of ‘intentional unpredictability’ also in case of Poles in Greece is supplemented by so-called 'on spec strategy': when migrants come to work in a receiving country without finding jobs, accommodation etc. in advance. At this point it is important to emphasise that migration strategies of Polish families come down to the questions return? stay? go elsewhere? or wait?

Our research undergone on the Poles in Athens revealed a few common educational strategies followed by Polish families. The kind of school Polish children attend may reflect the migratory strategy of particular family in the way that those families who plan to stay in Greece for longer tend to send children to Greek schools, whilst families who came with intention of relatively short residence tend to send their children to the Polish School. Some of respondents decided to send their children alone to Poland to continue education there in order for parents to remain in Greece and support family members in Poland. It involves introducing strategy of extensive delegation of care differentiated by Wall and São José (2004) which concerns other members of kin (for example grandparents and siblings as showed in our study) that need to take care of children sent to Poland. The subject literature notes that older children may be left with grandparents to complete secondary or university education (Ryan & Sales, 2013; Ackers & Gill, 2008). Children of transnational parents who stay in Greece are not ‘abandoned’ since parents continue to provide emotional support through regular visits, phone and Skype calls, as well as remittances. Some of the interviewed parents whose children were in Poland phoned or Skyped them every day. Such a support at a distance is well evidenced in migration studies (Moskal, 2011; Ryan et al., 2009, 2007). These children also often have the love and care of their extended family who take over parental responsibilities while their parents are away. Parents who send children to Poland are worried about them, but by working and sending money home they can provide for them and offer possibilities for their future. Other Polish families decide to move back to Poland with the entire family so that children can continue education there. ‘Educational back-up strategy’
– refers to sending children to Greek regular schools and the Polish Saturday school, or only to the Polish School to assure continuation of their education in Poland in case the family has to go back, but also if the child decides to study in Poland. Another type of backup educational strategy in case of graduates, both of junior high school and high school, mentioned by our respondents was to apply to both Poland and Greece for the next level of education. This way if a child is not accepted by the university or high school of their choice in the priority country, they have a chance to be admitted to educational institution in the other country. This strategy assures continuation of education in any case. Polish families chose to send children to the Polish School sometimes because a particular child could not manage in the Greek school due to, for example, language difficulty. The decision about sending child to the Polish School was additionally made in case of some families based on a fear that children might forget Polish, but also because some parents sending children to the Polish school might have wanted them to learn Polish and be in Polish environment. This educational strategy has to do with Polish citizens wanting to keep their identity intact. Additionally, there is this belief present among the Polish community in Athens that there is a higher level of education at the Polish school compared to the local Greek schools.

Sending children to the Greek schools is a strategy implemented by families who planned to stay in Greece for longer. This strategy was also introduced by families who lived in the distant suburbs of Athens, far away from the Polish School. In this case Polish parents tend to send their children to the local, Greek educational institutions. Additionally, some parents and children in our research believed that finishing Greek school would be an advantage during the process of admission to university in Poland for the chosen faculty. Another thing that makes Poles chose Greek schools is the potential possibility of getting a scholarship from the Polish government for those children who graduated from a foreign high school. Regarding the strategy of sending children to the Greek school for some interviewees this was also a result of unstable situation of the Polish School in Athens and the fear that at some point the education of children might get disturbed. Parents who had a few children implemented the strategy of sending their second and third child to the same school type as their firstborn.
VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The European Union has become a mobility arena in which people are free to seek and accept employment in different countries. Mobility is a complex, dynamic process that has shaped and continues to shape the image of modern Europe, affecting many areas of social and economic lives of European countries. The transformation of Europe into a single market represents a significant conceptual challenge for accounts of family migration.

Contemporary migrations are becoming a common process for people who want to improve their living conditions and to provide better economic security for themselves and their families, but also for those who want to experience changes in their lives and exercise their freedom to move and settle in a chosen country. Current mobility literature shares a view that migrants have a variety of motivations for moving, among which no single factor dominates, but a combination of reasons including economic, social and family triggers need to be taken under consideration. Mobility entails making a set of relevant decisions. For citizens of the accession countries the EU enlargement marked a decisive shift in opportunities to migrate. EU membership of Poland significantly improved migration status of Poles and the possibility of making plans for the future. The status of Poles as EU citizens also influence the plans and actions of Polish citizens who are currently in Greece as it enables access to the labour market as well as to public services equally to Greeks. At the same time Poles could consider resettlement to several other EU countries. This security of status is very important for Polish individuals and it has been emphasized in the statements of our respondents during focus groups and interviews.

As we have already stated, contemporary mobility literature indicates the importance of complex family relationships and considerations in migration decision-making. European Union recognizes the relevance of family units in the mobility experience of EU workers and this interest is reflected (to a particular extent) in its policy.

Recent migration theories point out that mobility decisions in the EU context are not made by isolated individual actors, but by larger units of related people – typically families or households. Therefore migration is being conceptualized as a collective decision made in the course of formulating broader strategies for family sustenance and improvement. And ‘family’
needs to be approached in this view in the broad sense including not only household units but also the full range of transnational as well as inter and trans-generational relatives.

Even though immigration is becoming an increasingly important matter all over the globe and there are many research concerning different aspects of this issue, there have been few studies that examine Polish migrant families in Greece. Therefore immigration of Poles in Greece is not a fully recognized phenomenon; the literature review undergone for the present research shows a lack of qualitative studies carried out amongst Polish migrant community that would use techniques such as narrative interviews, focused interviews, and observations. Such projects aim to look into the world of the immigrants’ lives and focus on the conditions determining their conduct and the process of adaptation to a new environment. They provide an important source of information concerning the barriers and problems with reality which migrants struggle, and can, thus, be useful for the formation of migration and integration policies.

In this case study a qualitative, and inductive approach was used in which we did not specify possible factors that influence process of strategies’ negotiation, but rather encouraged participants to identify those themselves. The present research is based on the focus groups and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Polish migrant families in Athens and explores Polish migrant decision making processes. In particular, we ask how migrants negotiate their strategies, how this is influenced by the crisis and other (which?) factors. We have also investigated the implications of education of children for the process of strategy formation.

We chose focus groups as research technique to gather general insight into the situation of Polish migrant families. Data we gathered this way was used to structure the individual interviews. We expected that the perceptions of participants of focus groups would reveal some additional information that we were not able to anticipate beforehand, but would help us design the in-depth interviews that followed. In the individual interviews we asked respondents more directly about their own experiences and ideas. During the focus groups respondents started free discussions regarding migratory and educational experiences of their friends and families. After analysis of this insight we elaborated on the interview questions, which were various depending on the age of interviewee, but also due to the fact that semi-structured interviews are conducted with an open framework which enables conversational, two-way communication. Rather than asking all participants the same set of questions we followed the discussion, still not forgetting the aim of
the session and, if necessary, guiding the discussion towards topics that we wanted to gain insight into. As with any qualitative research project, the goal of the study was not to generalize experiences of the interviewed families to all members of Polish minority in Athens, but to present and analyze the lived experiences of a group of Polish families following their settlement in Greece.

Searching for the answers regarding the process of educational and migratory strategy negotiation for Polish families residing in Athens we have reached out to three relevant migration theories - economic, network and transnational perspectives. Scholars in the field of migration theory have argued that, since there is no single, comprehensive model of migration, it is possible and advisable to combine and integrate different theoretical perspectives, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive (King & Skeldon, 2010; de Haas, 2008; Massey et al., 1993). Economic approaches to migration are incomplete in explaining migration motives and processes of Polish minority in Athens: analysis based only on the neoclassical theory of migration might be de-contextualized and oversimplified. That is why in the present case study we referred also to the network and transnational approaches. Network theory introduces the socio-demographic characteristics of migrants’ ties ascribing them importance in migratory experience. Transnational perspective, on the other hand, broadened horizons of the present research.

As we have already emphasized, families are more likely to have combined trajectories of mobility than others: in their case decisions about going abroad or staying in the receiving country are complex and the possible economic advantages of mobility are often not the principal decisive factors. This was noticed in the families we spoke to, for whom it was not easy to leave Greece, even in times of crisis. Especially parents spoke about the difficulty to gather the entire family and move back to Poland or migrate to another country. It was due to children’s schooling, employment related issue, mortgages and other obligations, social benefits available to particular participants but also due to the fact that with time families had got used to their lives in Greece and it became really difficult for them to imagine living elsewhere. Families often spoke about the ways in which they got used to Greece with its climate and culture, speaking highly about the Greek people and the Greek lifestyle.

Since individuals and their rational calculations are not the only determinants of strategies, but variety of factors and actors impact on the processes of revealing strategies, it is important to
take into consideration migrants’ environment, upbringing, various experiences, customs, traditions and unconscious motives. It is important to emphasize that family decision-making is influenced by complex and interwoven family dynamics, socio-cultural expectations and power relations. In the case of family strategies not only economic considerations matter, but the interaction of economic, social and cultural factors, and this has been evident in the present research as well as shown in the subject literature. Even though groups or individuals possess the same amount of material resources they may have very different preferences, backgrounds, and conditions for carrying out their strategies. Various aspects of family life and economic conditions affect the migratory and educational choices and patterns. Some strategies are results of consensual decisions taken by family members after a lengthy period of negotiation. Other might be imposed by some family members against the opinions of other individuals within the family. In case of Polish families residing in Athens their educational and migratory strategies are their responses to changing circumstances, an attempt to improve their economic situation and ensure brighter future for their offspring.

Having children in the destination country influences decisions-making about going further, returning or staying since parents need to take into consideration children’s schooling and their adaptation to the new environment in case of the move. We argue that the changing needs of children and particularly the stage they have reached in their education are relevant elements in the process of evaluation and decision making. Moskal (2011) indicated that children encourage the settlement and assimilation of migrant families, but they also play an important role in keeping parents connected to their homelands. This is especially true when family is split, like in the case of a few interviewed families whose children were going to school in Poland and parents remained in Greece (sometimes with younger children). In such cases children serve as social, emotional, and economic links for transnational households. Parents may sustain ties ‘back home’, especially with their relatives, but also friends and acquaintances, because their children ask for, or seek out, such connections but also because parents want to have someone to take care of their children. There is a growing recognition of the importance of caring responsibilities as a factor in shaping migration strategies noticeable in the subject literature (Ryan & Sales, 2013). Our findings chime with those of Ackers and Gill (2008) and Ryan and Sales (2013) who also noted that practical decisions around childcare and educational opportunities may inform family decision-making. On
the other hand, children facilitate family migratory strategies since they aid processes of settlement and community building, for example, through networks they create at school and outside of it, bonding parents in the country of settlement. For the Polish parents cited in this study children were a factor in their migration strategies in a complex and varied ways. Some planned to move back to Poland with their children from the outset but for others migration was a compromise between conflicting priorities. In some cases economic factors were clearly the most important ones in decision making, but in other parents chose family remaining together regardless the fact that it was a more “expensive” option.

The sense of identity and cultural and lifestyle expectations and the extent to which these change or are changed by the experience of living in Greece also impact on decisions whether to stay or return. As Moskal (2011) explained, “Poland has a complex history, with its combination of a strong Catholic church which successfully coexisted with the communism for 40 years after World War II. Traditional family values have been maintained and family ties are strong, and even many people from younger generations remain attached to traditional practices”. Considering the values and cultural norms of Polish migrants in relation to these historical developments is important for understanding their expectations and aspirations for family life in Greece. Among the factors influencing negotiation of family mobility strategies we have observed the relevance of relationship of our interviewee with their homeland, which we call Polishness. Polish migrants in our case study often displayed a strong desire to keep their national identity intact. One motivation for doing this was the feeling that Polishness had to be kept safe for when or if it was taken back home again. That is why a part of parents we spoke to were determined to educate their children in Polish, so that they could slot back into the Polish school system when necessary. Only rarely were interviewees definitely planning to stay in Greece for their entire lives. Even though for most interviewees migration was provisional and experimental, not all of them had such conscious identity-preserving strategies.

Initial research on the Polish families residing in Athens indicated a few concepts relevant for the formation of family strategies, namely networks, education, residential satisfaction and migratory plans (Rerak-Zampou, 2012). In the theoretical part of the present study we have presented an altered model of migration decision-making that we thought would be applicable to
our case. After analyzing the results of the present case study we tested the model’s applicability for our sample and we have introduced some certain alterations:

![Modified model of migration decision-making](image)

Figure 7. Modified model of migration decision-making.

In evaluating results of the present case study we used NVivo software which led us to the following major themes that emerged from the data gathered from the interviews; family dynamics, education, employment related issues, crisis, networks, migration and settlement, European Union, relationship with Poland – Polishness, future. In the previous subsection – Discussion – based on the mentioned categories we have answered descriptively the primary and secondary research questions. In the present subsection we summarize the results of proposed study and once again, briefly, answer all the research questions.

*What are the factors influencing Polish migrant families’ negotiation of their migratory and educational strategies?*

Due to the fact that respondents we spoke to represent mainly the economic migration, employment issues proved to be extremely relevant for the process of family strategy negotiation.
Nevertheless, we want to emphasise that in case of family strategies not only economic needs matter, but rather the interaction of economic and non-economic values. The present case study shows that for our research sample economic and non-economic factors influence the process of mobility strategy formation for the Polish families from Athens. Within economic factors we differentiated: socioeconomic status of the family, institutional environment of Greece as the host country with employment opportunities, migration policy and social benefits. With regards to non-economic factors, we have identified these as family related issues including stage in the life cycle of the family and children’s age and education, double caring responsibilities: transnational ones and those in the destination country, family needs and lifestyle choices; changes at the GoSaPEiA, participation in networks, relationship with Poland (Polishness) and residential satisfaction. EU policy is a factor that also impacts family mobility strategies to a certain degree. Additionally, accessibility of cheap and quick travel between Poland and Greece and the communication technology used by families for regular communication via telephone and/or Internet (especially Skype,) impact on the strategies’ formation.

Regarding the factors impacting on the educational strategies of Polish families, these are potential return to Poland, future education, financial considerations, participation in networks, family-related considerations and the EU policy. Of importance are also cheap and quick travel between Poland and Greece and the communication technology mentioned in the above paragraph.

*What role do family members have in the process of negotiation of migratory and educational strategies of Polish migrants in Athens?*

Family strategies, especially those migratory ones, were changing and being modified by all the family members, impacted by changing economic and social circumstances. They were results of family members interpreting and managing their specific life conditions. In case of educational strategies – these were closely related to migratory ones as well as to economic conditions of the family. At this point we want to emphasize the complexity of family strategies and decision making and the role of family members, including children and their education in them. We have already indicated that the traditional theories of migration that have been framed within the neoliberal paradigm generally treat migration as an individual matter, decision and
action taken by a sole breadwinner, typically male and based on narrowly economic calculations. In our study decisions in the families regarding potential migration, but also schooling were made by both parents. Thus, women in our research had an equal position when it comes to family decision-making as men. Children’s age and education as well as parents’ expectations about the opportunities available in the destination country affected migratory decisions of investigated group and parents had clear expectations about whether children would be able to manage potential disruption to their education. For the Polish parents children were a factor in their migration strategies in complex and varied ways. Parents rarely spoke openly about the role their children play in the family decision-making process, but it was still noticeable. Also children underlined that when important decisions are made, or relevant discussions take place their voice is listened. Children’s agency in migration manifests itself in influencing parents' decisions about migration and education, in taking care of younger siblings and in different ways of negotiating family strategies in the migration process.

From what we have learned during the interviews and focus groups we can assume that family is the most important for our respondents. Each member of the family with its views and opinions was a relevant part of a bigger (family) structure.

*How do family strategies change in the face of the economic crisis?*

The dynamic character of immigrants’ projects is developing as a response to new circumstances, like the times of economic crisis. Facing the economic downturn that started in Greece around 2009, families we spoke to continued to form their future plans based on the principle, ‘let’s try to see how it works out – we can always go back’. The economic crisis made a number of factors such as recruitment procedures, competition in the labour market, qualification recognition, and, most importantly, the structure of labour supply and demand to have even greater impact on migratory strategies of Polish families than prior to economic downturn. Yet, the differences between Polish and Greek wages still keep Polish workers in Greece, regardless of the crisis. Greece remains a destination country where they can earn much more for the same amount of time they devoted and would devote working in Poland. Relevant are also pieces of information our respondent receive from their friends who moved back to Poland – the economic situation in
their homeland is no better than in Greece, especially taking into consideration education and work experience of interviewed adults and the types of jobs they could do in Poland. Thus, Polish families remain in Greece regardless of economic difficulties caused by the crisis that families had to face. Due to the existence of, among others, obstacles to saving funds, also associated with the crisis, Polish migrants often set aside the decision to return to their homeland.

Yet, economic crisis made some families renegotiate their strategies. We were informed that if the situation in Greece gets worse families would consider either returning to Poland, or arrangements in which the father would re-migrate to another EU country and support his family in Greece. Introduction of this strategy had to do with parents’ desire to not jeopardize their children’s education. Also Poles had to cut down on spending and introduce modifications to their family budgets.

Poles in Greece notice that because of the crisis the atmosphere in Greece has changed and Greeks’ approach towards Polish people has shifted as well; they became unwelcoming, more hostile towards foreigners. But Poles understand this situation and do not blame the Greek people. Thus, those changing circumstances have rather limited influence on their migratory decisions. On the other hand, also the frames of mind of Polish individuals have changes: Poles started to worry about their jobs, spending and futures in general.

*What possibilities do the EU educational and migration policies create in the context of the Polish migrant families’ strategy formation?*

Researchers assume that information, or even expectations about actual or planned policies may serve as central factors influencing migration patterns and strategies (Lyberaki et al., 2008). Immigration regulations are regarded as critical when it comes to influencing the migrants’ labour market strategies (Raghuram, 2004, p. 309). Poland’s accession to the European Union in May 2004 brought many new possibilities and opportunities for Polish migrants in Greece. More and more Poles understand that their changed status works for their benefit and they are aware of their rights as EU citizens. The status of EU citizens influence the plans and actions of Poles who are currently in Greece and especially the decision to prolong their stay since it enables to access public services and social assistance equally to Greeks, as well as to access the labour market. At
the same time EU-citizenship enables Polish citizens consider resettlement in several other EU countries which fully implements the right to free movement for Polish citizens. We have noticed that respondents we spoke to realize that since they are members of the EU they have the right to move freely within Europe and some of our interviewees were ready to exercise this right if necessary. The new status also simplifies several matters of everyday life such as not spending time and money for immigration documentation renewal as well as having easier access to social benefits. The security of status is very important for Polish individuals and it has been emphasized in their statements during focus groups and interviews. Informants noted that the new EU citizen status brings with it a big relief that the stressful days of insecurity are over. This sense of security of status was also noticed and described by Christou (2008) who underlined its relevance for the Polish community in Greece. Our respondents emphasized that after the accession of Poland into the EU their situation has changed for better, especially with regards to legalizing their stay in Greece.

*What are the educational and migratory strategies of Polish migrant families in Athens?*

Mobility and educational strategies popular among the investigated group of Poles were thoroughly described in the ‘Discussion’ section of the proposed project. In the present subsection we name and briefly summarize them.

Mobility strategies:

Firstly, so called ‘waiting out strategy’ – rather popular among the Polish community residing in Athens; as long as at least one of the parents worked and the economic situation of particular family did not change drastically families would stay in Greece, hoping that their financial situation would change for better at some point in the future.

Relocating the entire family back to Poland is a strategy that will be introduced if the living conditions of families get worse.

Re-migration of a male adult family member to another country whilst his family stays in Greece is another strategy that might be introduced with relation to difficulties and expenses connected to relocation of entire family due to children’ schooling, mortgages, or the fact that the wife still worked in Greece.
Another migratory strategy was using networks in the settlement country for finding jobs, housing and information about schools and other services.

Strategy of ‘intentional unpredictability’ also in case of Poles in Greece supplemented by so-called ‘on spec strategy’ - our respondents were not sure how their future will look like, whether they would stay in Greece, go back to Poland or re-migrate to another country. They were also not sure how the educational future of their children would look like. Polish migrants’ projects had dynamic character; they were developing as a response to new circumstances (like the crisis) and opportunities. Poles seemed to quickly adjust their strategies to the changing situation.

Educational strategies followed by Polish families:

Sending children to Greek schools for those families who plan to stay in Greece for longer. This strategy was also introduced in case of families who lived in the distant suburbs of Athens, far away from the Polish School. Additionally, some parents and children in our research believed that finishing Greek school would be an advantage during the process of admission to university in Poland for the chosen faculty. This strategy was also introduced by families who believed in potential possibility of getting a scholarship from the Polish government for those university students who graduated from a foreign high school. The strategy of sending children to the Greek school for some interviewees was also a result of unstable situation of the Polish School in Athens and the fear that at some point children’s education might get disrupted.

Sending children to the Polish School is a strategy implemented by families who had intention of relatively short residence in Greece, but also families who feared that their children would forget the Polish, and sometimes because a particular child could not manage at the Greek school due to, for example, language difficulty. Additionally, there is this belief present among the Polish community in Athens that there is a higher level of education at the Polish School comparing to the local Greek schools.

Another strategy introduced by Polish families residing in Athens was sending children alone to Poland to continue education there whilst parents remain in Greece and support a family member in Poland. It is connected to the strategy of extensive delegation of care differentiated by Wall and São José (2004) which concerns other family members (for example grandparents and siblings as showed in our study) that take care of children sent to Poland.
Moving back to Poland with the entire family so that children could continue their education there was also mentioned when discussing educational and migratory strategies of the researched group.

‘Educational back-up strategy’ – refers to sending Polish children to Greek regular schools and the Polish Saturday school, or only to the Polish School to assure continuation of their education in Poland in case family has to go back, but also if the child decides to study in Poland. Another type of backup educational strategy in case of graduates, both of junior high school and high school, mentioned by our respondents was applying to both Poland and Greece for the following level of education.

Among the educational strategies of Polish families we spoke to we also differentiated a strategy of sending second and the third child to the same school type as the firstborn (Polish or Greek) – implemented by families with a few children in order not to confuse educational paths of their offspring.

How do families negotiate their strategies?

In the case of our investigated Polish migrant families, negotiation of their migratory and educational strategies was influenced by a set of interrelated factors at macro, meso, and micro levels. The macro level proved to be of particular importance for pre-accession period when our adult respondents did not have many options than to take up work in the informal sector. In terms of post-accession period, the institutional barriers no longer held, yet a number of other factors such as recruitment procedures, competition in the labour market, the problem of qualification recognition, and, most importantly, the structure of labour supply and demand, especially in the face of economic crisis, had a major impact on migratory strategies of Polish families.

Social ties and social capital are aspects constituting the meso level of strategy negotiation process. Networks, often underlined in the subject literature as relevant for family strategy formation had rather limited impact in case of interviewed families – they seem not to influence decision of Poles about staying in Greece or going somewhere else. The role of social migration capital in the form of either migration networks or weak ties in Greece prior to arriving was a crucial factor in the process of initial migration decision making of our respondents. Strong ties
formed within their national group and limited language skills that prevented Poles from participating fully in the Greek community hindered the flow of novel information and led to the rather scanty integration of Polish migrants, phenomenon frequently highlighted in the literature (e.g. Grzymala-Kozlowska, 2005). The use of migration networks is a feature of a common migration strategy for most of the migrants. The network resources were used when decision to migrate was made, to get information about the target countries and their employment possibilities. Later on friends and acquaintances were sources of emotional and informational support. Social networks in the destination country provide information and assistance of different kind: economic, psychological, regarding employment, schooling or housing, provision of new social ties, etc. We observed the use of networks for finding jobs, housing and information about schools and other services, which appears to be a part of mobility strategy. The role of ties in strategy formation came to providing this certainty that if family has to return to Poland, or would need to search for employment in another country, family and friends would help with finding a job and settling. Local networks (those in Athens) proved relevant for socializing and informational support, but they had rather limited impact on formation of family strategies. Poles need acquaintances to have a nice time with, to get information about relevant matters; they help each other with finding employment, sometimes help to fill the void caused by the remoteness of the actual families. Family back in Poland proved also relevant for emotional and practical support; especially children seem to miss being around grandparents, cousins, uncles and aunts. While abroad, most migrants maintained contacts with the family - usually through phone and Skype calls. Transnational relations proved relevant for migratory strategies, since families wanted to reunite with relatives they left in Poland, but also for educational strategies, as in case of sending a child to Poland to continue education there when typically family members took over the care of the offspring. Results of our case study confirm existence of a specific paradox observed by White and Ryan (2008) regarding the role of networks in migratory strategies. On the one hand family networks, and more specifically transnational ties, seem to be essential baggage in preparation for eventual return to Poland, and also a particular pull-factor. At the same time social networks, both transnational and Greek-based, make migration easier to bear emotionally and therefore easier to extend indefinitely. Referring to transnational practices of Polish individuals, we have noticed that these are comprehensive, since Poles are engaged in a various activities: keeping in touch with
families and friends back home on a regular basis, regular visits and phone/Skype calls, political activity, voting in elections, business like transportation services between Poland and Greece. Dimensions of transnational practices were both subjective and objective (comp. Levitt et al., 2003). Poles in Greece often have a sense of being able to keep their options open, and, once again, this is linked to the speed with which networks can be activated, enabling return if required. With time visits back to Poland become infrequent and the possibility of permanent return diminishes. Polish citizens in Greece return to Poland for a week or two for summer holidays and religious feasts, but their centre of life seems to have shifted towards the destination country.

Regarding the levels of strategy negotiation process the micro level is most significant for understanding the way in which family strategies are formed. The timeframe of migration and its perception by the migrants along with their motives for moving to the host country and continuing their stay there prove to be of crucial importance. Research on the group of Polish families residing in Athens has demonstrated that while the macro and meso levels condition initially decisions to leave Poland, come to Greece and settle in this country, it is the micro level factors that are most important in determining the length of stay and migratory plans of the family.

With reference to the question we asked ourselves in the theoretical part of this study, namely whether strategies of Polish families in Athens are long or short term, after analyzing the results of focus groups and interviews we must say that it seems that our respondents basically create short-term strategies: ‘adaptation’, ‘livelihood’ or ‘survival’ ones. The dynamic character of immigrants’ projects developing as a response to new circumstances (like crisis) and opportunities prompts Polish migrants to form strategies, rather than the intentional a priori elaboration of strategic plans concerning for example entry and settlement in the country of destination. Migrants are likely to quickly adjust their coping strategies to the changing situation, which can be observed since the beginning of economic recession in the dawn of the first decade of 21st century. Polish migrant families adapt their plans and develop coping strategies in response to social and institutional environment of the country of destination (Kosic & Triandafyllidou, 2003). The migratory and educational decisions of the majority of our interviewees were spontaneous. The rationale of especially migratory strategies was often based on the ‘I have nothing to lose’ or ‘let’s try to see how it works out – we can always go back’ principles. Facing the economic downturn
that started in Greece around 2009, families we spoke to continue to form their future plans based on the second principle.

Strategies we have observed within research population were generally short-term, reactive ones. Nevertheless, we have also noticed trials to create more long-term strategies that could improve lives of Polish families except from the immediate receipt of wages and daily survival, for example buying a flat in Greece so that family does not have to pay for the rent, building houses in Poland, starting own businesses.

The present case study showed that Polish women are engaged in work to the same extent as men, and in negotiating family migration outcomes each partner’s individual employment opportunities are taken into account. As we have suggested in the above paragraph, in our study it seemed that parents negotiate their strategies together taking into consideration their children opinions, plans and dreams and children notice that they are relevant in the process of family decision making. We have not observed that one of the spouses decides on their own – in the case of families we spoke to parents who cooperate, decide and plan together. Parents had the most to say regarding migratory and educational strategies of families, yet they took into consideration opinions of other family members, especially their children. Thus, we conceptualize family strategies as results of compromise achieved among family members in the course of decision-making, often a product of a lengthy process of negotiation. It seems that the power relations within families of Polish migrants in Athens are working in favour of young migrants and they feel in position to directly influence their parents’ resolutions.

We believe that the notions of compromise and negotiation are central to the present research. The degree of compromise is various for the various families and the small sample size require more thorough future investigation. Family strategies, both educational and migratory ones, were changing and being modified by family members, impacted by altering economic and social circumstances. They were results of family members daily interpreting and managing their specific life conditions.

A few more concluding remarks

The concept of family strategies is very complex and compound, capturing a variety of features and being applied widely in the subject literature. Characteristic of the Polish community
in Athens seems to be the liquidity of their strategies. Educational and migratory strategies of Polish families were often changing, which proves that their negotiation is a constant process and not onetime choice. This has been noticed in research on Poles from other European countries, for example Moskal (2011) implied that Polish citizens in Scotland undertake a strategy of keeping options open, and adapting them as life goes on. It is difficult to see clearly the nature of the pattern of migration of Poles to Greece - it seems that migrants do not take a firm decision regarding the length of stay in the host country, but rather adapt to the current situation in the labour market and to own, changing life situations. In the case of Polish migrant families their migratory and educational strategies seem to emerge as a response to everyday life and various obligations, rather than they are negotiated in advance. Polish migrant workers taking the decision to emigrate, usually assumed that it will be a temporary experience, enabling them to obtain the funds that could be spent on attaining their targets. Their expectation was that migration would be temporary rather than permanent, and that they can always move back if things do not work out. With time the issue of whether to extend their stay in Greece or return to Poland was often discussed in terms of the age of their children, their stage within the educational process and the importance of minimizing potential disruption. Migratory strategies of a few Polish families seem to be characterized by strong emotional reasons for remaining together. In other cases adults enabled the famil’s split as long as it would be beneficial for their children. Nevertheless, economic factors were clearly the decisive ones. Respondents underlined that finances and work keep them in Greece for now. We acknowledge that the economic situation in Poland and associated problems of job insecurity, low wages and unemployment in the regions that respondents come from combined with specific education and skills of researched group might be the reason why Polish families remain in Greece regardless economic difficulties caused by the crisis. Due to the existence of, among others, obstacles to saving funds (currently associated with the crisis), migrants often set aside the decision to return to their homeland. Another reason for the extension of stay in the host country may be, for example, favourable employment conditions and job satisfaction.

Our case study shows that parents seem to have a great influence on decision-making around educational trajectories and spatial strategies of families. The presence of the children is central to the families’ decision-making processes, and children fundamentally shape the nature
and course of families’ migration experiences. Generally, the parents in our research when speaking about making decisions that would concern their children, especially educational ones, seemed to take into consideration their children’s opinions, dreams, views and feelings. In our case study it seemed that families make important decisions together and children notice that they are relevant in the process of family decision-making.

The qualitative design of this case study and the small sample size preclude the possibility of making generalizations to other members of the Polish population in Athens. However, certain trends that were discovered are confirmed in the existing literature on the topic, while others provide useful additions to the discourse on family strategies’ formation. Although the study offered an insight into the strategy formation of the Polish migrant families, it also had some limitations that need to be acknowledged. The major limitation was its small sample size and the homogeneity of families investigated in this case study. Small sample sizes are generally typical to research conducted within the interpretive paradigm and generalizability of findings is not the goal of such studies. Yet, we believe that investigating larger group of respondents would enable us to observe clearer correspondence between specific interviewee categories and the research axis. We could check if there are differences between women, men and/or children, or, similarly, between those Polish families who came together from Poland with ones that met in Greece, and so on. In our reach such observations were not made, but it would be interesting to find whether those differences exist. Therefore, it would be desirable if future projects on this subject, and survey research in particular, employed larger samples and, thus, enabled comparing and generalizing findings. Investigating larger sample could help to fully explain phenomena noticed in the present research.

On the other hand, including relatively few respondents was study's advantage since it enabled focusing thoroughly on their experiences, listening to their stories and analysing relevant issues from the interviewees’ point of view.

Another limitation of the present case study was that we had to take what people said in interviews and focus groups at face value. This contains several potential sources of bias and is limited by the fact that it rarely can be independently verified. On the other hand, in the present research we were more interested in the ways people think about their lives and migratory and educational experiences as well as choices rather than investigating what actually happened.
Additionally we recognize that the fact that researcher herself is Polish might have impacted on the study design as well as its conduct. Yet, we would like to underline that the author had always kept objectivity and distance towards the research and its participants. Being Polish, on the other hand, helped gather the research sample and create a friendly atmosphere during the interviews and focus groups that enabled respondent to speak freely and openly about their experiences.

We believe that a real strength of the present case study is the research interest and the scope, particularly since it looks beyond the traditional interest of migration studies in terms of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors. Our research contributes to the understanding of family migration by highlighting the complexity of family strategies and decision-making. In particular, our findings challenge the narrow view of mobility as an individual endeavour. We emphasise that migratory decisions often involve balancing the conflicting priorities of different family members. Our case study reveals the complex decision making processes about leaving, staying, and returning and explores the variety of family migration and educational strategies and the factors that influence migrants’ decision-making processes.

Literature review undergone on the family involved in mobility experience made us realize that it is not possible to define ‘the migrant family’. This would mean that it is a static concept, when actually it is rather a set of complex social relations, which are characterized by unpredictable outcomes. That is why our results should not be generalized – they are applicable to the specific cases of our respondents. Attention needs to be paid to the complexity of social relationships and investigate the factors impacting it, bearing in mind that family-led mobility is an individual experience, a response to the diversity of people’s situations and stories. It seems quite obvious that families may change through migration in a multiple ways.

Our case study tried to answer the questions about the causes and impulses for the changes, as well as to establish their results and impact on members of Polish migrant family. Still, more and wider research on the Polish migrant community in Athens is necessary to investigate how and which circumstances influence the process of migratory strategy formation.

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23 For more limitations please go to pp. 23-26.
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APPENDIX: Description of families

Family A: Teodora + Jan+ Inga + Sylwek +Antek

We spoke to the adult family members both in the focus group and interviews and we interviewed all the children. Family lives in the heart of the “Polish district”. Parents met up and got married in Athens. Children attend Greek schools and the Polish weekend school; they are fluent in Polish and Greek. Parents speak Greek communicatively. Teodora informed us that at home family speaks exclusively Polish, they watch Polish TV, cook Polish and Greek food, but generally “live their Polish lives”: (Teodora) “we speak Polish, watch Polish TV, and we live our lives in Polish way. We try that those Polish traditions [are kept], and fulfil everything that is possible for us to fulfil”. On the other hand, Inga, daughter, implied that they speak half Greek half Polish at home and that both: she and her mum cook Greek dishes.

Teodora and Jan are both in their mid-40s, they come from the same part of Poland – Subcarpathia, but they are from different villages. They came to Greece in early 90s. At that time many industries around their villages were shut down, there were no jobs. In Mielec (town near their villages) a job office was opened that organized seasonal job trips to Greece (generally to gather fruits in autumn), so many people from that area went to Greece, some stayed there. As Teodora explained it: “So, suddenly many people started to be pulled in. This lady that worked at the tourist office was issuing [Greek] visas all the time, and every week 2-3 couches were leaving, so it was incredible. So when I came here there were very many people from my region”.

As Teodora and Jan said themselves – they would have never met if not for Greece. They got married in Athens, have 3 children, all of whom were born in Greece: Antek – 11 years old, Sylwek 14 and Inga 16. Children attend Greek schools and the Polish weekend supplementary school. Parents sent the oldest daughter to a Greek school because the Polish one was closed for two years. Inga got accustomed to the Greek school and did not want to move to the Polish one when it got opened. Parents decided to send their sons to the same type of school as their daughter’s in order not to cause more confusion.

Jan’s brother used to live in Athens, but went back to Poland with his Polish wife whom he had also met in Athens. Teodora came to Greece to visit her brother, who was there with his Polish girlfriend. The couple returned to Poland later on. Teodora’s sister lives in Greece with her
family, but Family A seems not to have good relations with those relatives – did not speak about them almost at all.

Family A visit Poland every second year due to financial reasons (restrictions) and their family from Poland visits them rather rarely – on special occasions, for example baptisms or First Communions of children. First time Teodora and Jan went to Poland was after 8 years of their arrival, because they did not have necessary documents to travel and come back to Greece – they did not want to risk being deported.

Family is very religious, both sons serve as altar boys at the Polish church, family goes to church every Sunday (and more often), they celebrate all the religious feasts the way those feasts are celebrated in Poland.

Jan has finished chemical high technical school in Poland. He came to Greece in 1992 with three friends (he was supposed to go to Italy) and from that time he has lived in Athens. He works on construction sites around Athens, sometimes on various Greek islands. At the time of our interview he didn’t work and stayed at home waiting to be contacted by his employer to start working. Jan informed that in case he did not work in Greece he would have gone to another European country, but he would leave his family in Greece in order not to disturb their lives and since his wife still worked in Athens. He would like his children to study in Greece; he tried to convince their daughter to apply to a Greek university. He likes Greece, would like to stay there until retirement and then go back to Poland. However, Jan understands that it is impossible to plan anything: “It is like this: I want to go back, but what will happen in 5 years… who knows. My plan is to secure a pension and until the retirement everything is ok, secure a start for my children – this is my responsibility. The rest is in their hands. Nothing is 100% sure”. He seemed to be very realistic and down to earth when it comes to education and mobility issues. Jan understands difficult situation Greece and Greeks are facing due to economic downturn, did not show a demanding or blaming attitude. He seemed to be rather resourceful – he believed he would always find an odd job and was not afraid to do anything to support his family: “I have done many things in my life, I am not afraid to work in the construction, or to be a painter, to work in the garage or gas welding, or turning lathe. I can do all those things, so I have other possibilities”.

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Teodora – has finished vocational business school in Poland, works as a cleaning lady for different families 5-6 days a week for a few hours every day. Since the beginnings of crisis her wages got cut down and people she works for started to demand more for the same salary.

Teodora came to Greece in 1991 to gather money for an extra-mural secondary school she wanted to finish and her parents could not afford to pay for. Due to the fact that she met her husband in Greece and got married, they both worked and because later on children were born it was easier for the family to stay in Greece. The most difficult experience connected to staying away from homeland was the first three years for her as she missed her family: “It was a struggle – go back or not”.

Teodora said that some Albanian neighbours that live near them and observe the life of their family admit that they envy Teodora’s family’s specific rhythm: Greek school on weekdays, Polish school on weekends, afterschool activities – English, football, church on Sunday.

With regards to friends and family that left Greece Teodora believes that those who returned to Poland are happy now because they feel at home: “there is this freedom there”. The only problem is the lack of work in Poland. On the other hand, there is family especially missed during the holidays (Christmas and Ester). Teodora explained that having friends is not the same as being close to your actual family.

Teodora spoke about the difficult position of a Polish migrant mother in a foreign country without support of relatives, which was especially evident when she started family with Jan. She lost some jobs because she had to raise her children, and then, when children got bigger, she had to look for employment from the beginning: “I have had permanent jobs for the last couple of years. In the past I didn’t have such a possibility because of the pregnancy, little children, kindergarten, I couldn’t work since I did not have anyone to leave children with. So I had to give my jobs to other women as a replacement, but then I would not go and take this job from this person away”.

Regarding children’ education Teodora is not sure whether sending children to a Greek school was the right choice “I don’t know if it was a good decision. I often ask myself this question because there are ups and downs with Greek education, practically even now there is this instability […] So I thought – since we are here the children will study in two languages, if they could manage – that’s good, if not – we would change the school [into Polish]”. Teodora
underlined the importance of economic considerations regarding children’s schooling – she was referring to the fact that it is easier financially for the family to send children to the Greek schools since family does not have to pay for books, transportation, contribution fees, etc.

Teodora informed she had never planned to go or live abroad. She likes Greece, especially its climate, but got a bit tired of this country. She believes they will return with Jan to Poland when they retire, but she does not plan anything for children: “I believe that my children should choose for themselves. I don’t want to choose the road for them. Ok, I can guide them or advise them depending whether they want to study, or settle and work here, or in Poland, or somewhere else. We want them to learn English and to develop. And it’s their decision. And we... I think we will go back to Poland”.

Inga - the oldest offspring, 16 years old, she was in the first grade of Greek High School and third grade of supplementary Polish Junior High School. She was born in Greece, has never lived in Poland and only went there on holidays. Inga attended illegal Polish kindergarten in the “Polish district”.

Inga explained that except the closedown of the Polish school for two years the reason she started the Greek school was that Polish one was in a remote part of Athens and since her parents worked there was no one to take her to that school every day. And the Greek school was not far from the house. The beginnings at the Greek school were rather difficult since Inga spoke only little Greek: “suddenly everything was in Greek and I didn’t have many friends, but there was this one girl who was also Polish and she became my friend”. With time she got used to Greek school and made friends, but she has always felt different from other classmates. Inga believes that due to the constant problems with Polish school in Athens it was a good thing she went to the Greek school – she can stay with her family and continue education, she does not need to go to Poland. Still, she plans to study there.

Inga admits she feels good in Poland, she wanted to move to Poland in the past, but for now she feels fine in Greece: “In the past I wanted to return to Poland very much. But now I believe that I got very connected to Greece. It’s been like this since my birth, I have so many friends, I attend the Greek school, so I have very close contact with Greek culture which in some way got under my skin”. She pictures herself in Greece in the future. Except friends from Greece that returned to Poland Inga does not have other friends in that country.
Family for Inga is people close to her: her parents and siblings. Girl explained that because she lives away from other relatives the ties are not so strong.

**Sylwek** – 14 years old, he was in the first grade of the Polish Junior High School (supplementary) and second grade at Greek Junior High School. He was an altar boy at the Catholic Church of Christ the Saviour in Athens. He spent great deal of his spare time with other altar boys, who attend the Polish school; they participate in various activities organized by priests at this church.

With regards to the differences between schools he attends, Sylwek informed us he preferred lessons at the Polish schools since they are more interesting and absorbing. Additionally he feels more at ease at the Polish school, has more friends to fool around with: “It’s freely [at the Polish school]… at Greek school everything is more serious. Everyone is more serious […] So, sometimes I feel a bit stupid there”. In the future he plans to study in Poland.

Family for Sylwek are his parents and siblings. He rarely contacted his relatives in Poland, if he does it is by Skype. In the future, with regards to the economic situation of his family, he sees family returning to Poland, and he wants to go where his family goes.

**Antek** – 11 years old, attended first grade of Greek Junior High School and the last grade of Primary School at the Polish weekend school. He also serves as an altar boy at the Catholic Church of Christ the Saviour in Athens.

Antek thought the Greek school was boring, whilst at the Polish school he had fun with his friends. He informed that he would prefer to go to the Polish daily (regular) school and he asked his parents to send him to the Polish Junior Secondary School from the following school year.

He likes Greece due to its climate, beaches, but also because he has friends there. On the other hand, he would rather live in Poland since his relatives were there.

Antek, even though very young, knew well that Greece faced economic crisis. He informed that if it was not for the crisis he would have liked to live in Greece in the future.

He has some good friends from the Greek school, his best friend is a Greek boy named Stavros. He has also friends from the Polish school and among altar boys.

**Family B: Mariola + Konrad + Franek + Cezary**
Family lives in the centre of Athens, in the Polish district. We spoke to parents both in interviews and focus groups and we interviewed two of their four children: we spoke to both sons. Adult daughters live in Poland and study there. They have spent a couple of years in Athens and attended Polish school there.

Migratory experience of this family is very complex. Mariola was the first one who came to Greece, but she returned to Poland when she was pregnant with her third child. She came to Greece in December 1994 and her husband followed her next year in August together with their daughters. Their plan was to stay in Greece a year or two to gather money for a house renovation. After a year in Greece Mariola and Konrad sent their daughters to Poland where they stayed for a year with their grandparents. This was due to the fact that both parents worked a lot and wanted to save as much as possible. In 1997 Mariola went to Poland and gave birth to Franek, she stayed at her in-laws’ house until 2000. Mariola and Konrad were going between Poland and Greece for a few more years before they decided to finally settle in Greece. They bought a flat and now they have a loan to pay off.

Mariola’s and Konrad’s daughters were born in Poland and came to Athens when they were already at school: the older one finished the second grade of primary school, the younger one finished kindergarten. Girls did not want to go to Greek school, so they went to the Polish one. Franek went to Polish nursery and kindergarten.

Girls do not want to live in Greece, this country is only a holiday destination for them. They study and live in Poland and want to remain there. Daughters visit this family twice a year, sometimes once – it depends on the costs of the trip.

Konrad’s brother is still in Athens, he came after Konrad.

Mariola – she has finished a secondary economic school and then two years of Post-secondary School of Cultural Education. She works as a cleaning lady in various Greek houses; she has not lost any jobs due to the crisis, nor got her wages cut. Before coming to Greece she worked as a wet secretary and then, for a while, in a butcher’s shop as a shop assistant. She worked there with her husband, but they did not earn enough to support their family: “it was in 1990. So we started working, at a butcher’s, together. So we earned such a lousy money that it was really difficult to make both ends meet, even though we had our own place in the countryside”. Mariola informed that she and Konrad had always wanted to live in Poland, but it was difficult due to
various circumstances: “The economic conditions were that… [bad] and we are from the regions [of Poland] where always the wages are the lowest. And without any help, just supporting ourselves on our own – it was impossible”. She came to Greece to her sister, and earlier than that her brother also worked in Greece. There was a job arranged for Mariola from the very beginning – she worked as a cleaning lady.

Mariola believes that with the last child – Cezary – they had finally made the right school choice: he continues both schools - regular Greek and Polish supplementary, so, according to Mariola, he has both options open. It means that he can continue education either in Greek or in Polish system. Mariola seems to be generally very involved with the education of her children. She believes that sending older son to a Polish nursery and kindergarten was a mistake, because he did not learn Greek, and she was not able to help him with this language since she did not know it herself. Later on she started courses of Greek, sent the younger son to a Greek kindergarten and was able to help him. She thinks that the educational system in Poland is more stable.

Mariola believes that it will be easier to support her family in Greece, so she plans to stay in this country. She likes living in Greece, has important people here, she got attached to Greece. Still, she was not sure how the future would look like: “I cannot tell it right now. The situation will look totally different in the 10 years, when children will be older, maybe they will start families and there will be grandchildren. Then it will be different – you might want to be here or there”. Yet, she dreams about family home that she would create in Poland where all the children would come for visits.

She misses her daughters but she is in everyday contact with them via Skype and phone. Mariola admitted to have a small cycle of Polish friends, some Greek and other nationals’ acquaintances.

We spoke a lot about European Union with Mariola, about the things that happened in Greece and Poland after accession. She seemed interested in the topic and well-informed. With regards to European Union Mariola noticed huge difference in the way she was treated in Greece after the accession of Poland into EU structures: “I felt this freedom and I did not feel this threat that they would stop me in the streets. I have a document, I am an EU member. And I walk more bravely through the streets. I am not afraid that the police would stop me and stuff. Because I am in the EU. Also we have the access to all the allowances that we did not have access to when we
were not in the EU. And – we are those better once. When you talk to people, not only Greeks but also other foreigners, they say – oh, you are lucky, because you don’t have to settle this or that, pay a lot of money, or you have right to this or that. So in this respect we are lucky”.

Generally Mariola is a person that has a huge knowledge regarding everyday life in Greece, education of her children both in Greece and in Poland, handling bureaucratic issues, etc. She asks and searches information online. In the Polish environment she is known as a person that has many useful pieces of information and many Poles approach her to help them with their various concerns. She was the only interviewee we spoke to who admitted that watches Greek TV.

Konrad – in his middle 40s, has finished vocational mining school in Poland and a butcher school in Greece. He works at meat plant as a butcher. During the focus group he seemed to be very proud to have a legal employment with full benefits and retirement found. He has worked there since 2000, it is his longest employment so far. Other, especially male interviewees, seemed to envy his position. After finishing mining school Konrad worked three years in a mine in Poland. After getting married they moved away with MAriola and he could not find a job in his profession in the new place of settlement, so he “learned to work with meat”.

When they decided that Mariola would go to Greece Konrad still worked in Poland: “I still worked then. But my wife did now work, and it was difficult for us to support ourselves only from one wages. We did not cultivate anything, it was hard time for us. And we needed to restore the house”. When he came to Greece he started to work as a replacement for someone who went on holiday. Afterwards he found work straight away in a butcher’s shop, even though he did not know Greek.

Regarding the reasons why his family stayed in Greece he explained that he liked it in Greece, but also that: “There was a possibility of taking a loan and buy a house”.

Konrad plans to stay in Greece until the retirement, and then he is not sure whether they would go back to Poland, or maybe only go to Poland in the summer. He also considers buying a piece of land or a small house in Greece so that they could spend summers there with Mariola when they retire.

With regards to education he would like his children to finish university in Poland. The youngest son, since he wants to study in Greece as Konrad believes, could stay in Greece. He was not sure what his daughters studied.
According to Konrad the accession of Poland into the EU has made bureaucratic issues much easier for the family. They do not need to arrange any documents, they can legally stay in Greece. Another thing is that Konrad feels safer now: “when I walk the streets I am not afraid that the police would catch me or something”.

Franek – 16 years old, born in 1998 in Poland. At the time of our interview he was in the last grade of Polish Junior High School. Franek wanted to go to the high school at the Polish School in Athens, but he was not sure if he would be accepted – it would depend on the final Junior High school exams. At the time of our interview he was preparing for those final exams and was a bit afraid of their results. If there was no high school at the Polish school, or he was not admitted, he would go to Poland, stay probably with his sisters and attend high school there.

Until the fourth grade of primary school Franek was attending Greek school, but his parents moved him to the Polish primary school because, as the boy explained it “According to my mum I had difficulties [at the Greek school], according to me I didn’t have any, but let’s stick to what mum says”. He informed us that he liked the Greek school, had friends from various countries there, and had nice teachers. He also liked the Polish school and if he could change anything he would go to this school from the beginning. He explained that the level of education at Greek schools is worse than at Polish school.

Franek is interested in psychology and wants to study it in the future. Since he wants to study in Poland it is advantageous for him, as he explained, to attend the Polish School. Also the language barrier seemed to be relevant for Franek: he did not speak Greek that well, so he did not feel confident enough to plan his further education in Greece. He explained that when he went to the Polish School he started to forge Greek. Additionally, because of the language barrier Franek does not feel well in Greece: “If I asked someone something in Polish they would normally answered me, so I would not have to worry that I have forgotten a particular Greek word”. Franek likes Greece, but he decided he would go to Poland in the future: “I like it here, and I also like Poland. I would like to go to Poland more […] So, I like it here that nobody looks at you like on a kind of idiot. Even if you went out naked here nobody would pay any attention to you. And in Poland I guess everyone would start to take pictures of you. So I like it here that people here are very kind, the climate is great, it’s warm”.

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We spoke with the boy about the changes noticeable since the beginning of crisis. Franek said that a lot of his friends had left Greece, returned to Poland. Also he noticed that more foreigners came to Greece in search of work. He did not understand why they came since there was no work in this country.

**Cezary** – 11 years old – attends both: Greek and Polish schools: first grade of Greek Junior High School and the last grade of primary school at the Polish School. He was born in Greece, speaks Greek fluently. Cezary attended Greek kindergarten. He prefers Polish school because he has more friends there. At the Greek school there are many children from various countries, in his school year group there is one more Polish pupil. Cezary said he had only one friend at this school – a boy from Bulgaria. He told us that he sometimes went to play football with friends from his Greek school after school. He likes the Greek school even though there is more studying than at the Polish School. Still, when he finishes Greek Primary School he wants to go to the Polish Junior High School as the Greek school is more difficult for him. He likes going to Poland because he has his sisters there and other relatives. He thinks in the future he will live in Poland.

**Family C: Honorata + Radek + Olga**

Family lives in the heart of the “Polish district”, next to the Polish church. We spoke to Honorata both in focus group and interview, and we interviewed her husband and daughter. Parents have two children, their son (19) was in Poland at the time of our interview – he lives and attends college there. Their daughter Olga also lives and attends high school in Poland, but she came to Greece for the summer 2014 so we were able to speak to her. Olga and her brother live in the same flat, they have one roommate. Olga had a surgery in the spring of 2014, at the time when I spoke to her parents who were very concerned about her health. They could not visit Olga in Poland because Honorata had to stand in front of health board in order to get her disability pension prolonged. Another reason why parents were not able to visit their daughter at the hospital was that Radek was not working for 5 straight months and Honorata was not getting pension for 8 months so they could not afford to go to Poland. Brother took care of Olga when she was in the hospital. Due to unemployment of Radek Honorata was afraid they would not be eligible for insurance the following year (Radek insurance covers entire family). Their son was not yet working in Poland so parents had to support him as well.
Children live in the town where Radek is from, not far from Honorata’s home village: they visit their family from time to time.

Honorata moved to Greece with children to join her husband in 2005, they were supposed to stay only for three months. Due to the fact that Radek had a good job at that time family decided to stay in Greece, children started Polish school in Athens. It was difficult for them to support two different households: one in Greece and one in Poland. Also going back and forth between two countries was difficult in a long run.

Honorata told us that her son speaks Greek perfectly. Until the end of the junior high school he went to the Polish School and then to a Greek technical secondary school. He had many Greek friends. Olga was getting a disability pension in Poland, but it was not enough to cover girls’ medicines. For this family except work-related issues very relevant is social assistance and benefits Honorata and Olga collect. These are the reasons that this family still resides in Athens.

Honorata – she followed her husband to Greece in 2005. She has finished vocational school, worked as a child minder and door to door seller in Poland. When her daughter got sick she quit her job in order to take care of the girl. Honorata had a car accident a months after arrival in Greece and she was severely injured. Now she is on a wheelchair.

Due to wheelchair she did not have job and was at home so she was thinking to mind children as an additional job. Since she did not work Honorata had a lot of free time and said she was generally bored, so she tried to organize various activities to participate in. She went to two courses of Greek, started preparation for a Polish association that would help Polish people: “this will be about helping people in simple stuff: to fill in documents, inform where he needs to go, how to get to a specific institution – this kind of paper work”. Honorata said that if it was not for her pension they would leave Greece. She would rather live in Poland.

Honorata was very concerned about the health of her daughter and her education due to the final exams that the girl was supposed to take that spring. She seemed to know what was going on in her children’s’ lives, she spoke about new relationship of her son. Honorata believes there is a higher level of education at Polish schools, she claimed she had a comparison since her son went to the Polish Junior High School and then to a Greek Technical Secondary School.

Honorata does not have Greek friends of acquaintances, only Polish ones. She thinks high of Polish people. Honorata claims she met a great deal of wonderful Poles who helped and help
her a lot. She keeps in touch with her friends and family from Poland: she calls or Skypes them. The injuries she suffered from the car accident were very severe, she might have died. Polish people living in Athens helped Honorata a lot when she was recovering. As she said herself – she is not very integrated with the Greek community. She does not speak Greek well. Due to her 7-month stay in physiotherapy centre (after the accident) she only knows Greek medical terminology.

Honorata has knowledge about her rights in Greece as an EU citizen.

Olga – she has been living on her own in Poland since she was 16 years old. She came to Poland to attend high school, started to live with her grandmother and uncle’s family, but due to some family misunderstandings she moved out to live in a boarding house. She had some issues there as well, so her parents rented eventually flat for her. Until Olga’s 18th birthday her mother used to call the principle of her school often to ask how the girl was doing at school. If a signature of a grownup was necessary Olga’s grandmother went to school. The girl was raised for a couple of years by her grandmother, she said she did not want to leave Poland and move to Greece.

Olga spent five years in Greece and attended Polish school in Athens. Her parents wanted her to go to a Greek school, but she opposed. She has some friends in Athens, these are generally Poles. Most of her friends, though, live in Poland.

Olga is diabetic and she spent some time in hospital in the past which resulted in losing one school year, as explained by her mother. The girl, on the other hand, informed us that she used to play truant a lot and that is why she lost a year at school. Due to the fact that Olga has a Greek insurance (she is covered by her father’s insurance) she had to arrange transmission of this insurance so she could be operated in Poland. She did it on her own which proves that the young girl is very resourceful. Olga is eligible for a social sickness benefit in Greece, she used to collect it but at the time of our interview she did not since she did not stand in front of the Πρόνοια medical board– she has to do it every year to be able to get the money.

We spoke to Olga couple of months after we interviewed her parents. It turned out that Olga was not accepted to the university at a first attempt and that she had to try to get to another university after the summer: she planned to apply to physiotherapy, medical emergency, or cosmetology.
Olga openly admitted she did not like Greece, she did not know Greek: “I don’t like being here, it is too warm for me. I often get migraines due to those sweltering heats. [...] I don’t like Greece so much.” Olga noticed a positive aspect of being in Greece: medical assistance, which, according to the girl, is much better than in Poland.

When in Poland she speaks to her mother every day, and very rarely to her father. She seemed not to be very connected to her father: “he believes that he takes care of the family because he earns money”. We spoke about the situation of her family, her dad worked in black economy for 10 years and Olga would like him to have a regular job. When asked what family was for her she said that basically family is her mum. We asked the girl where her home was: “My home? In my suitcases. I am not attached to any place. I got used to changing places often, because when I was little we used to move often”.

Radek – in the past had various jobs in Greece connected to construction: painting, plastering, building houses. He used to go to Greek islands to work there. At the time of our interview he was unemployed, had not worked for 5 months. He came to Greece in 2001. Between 2001 and 2005 he was moving between Poland and Greece – every three months he went to see his family. First time he came to Greece to work was in 1991, he was 20 years old back then, he stayed 10 months and worked in construction and in a hotel and then he returned to Poland.

Radek has some previous migratory experiences: after going to Greece he also went to France. He decided to travel to Greece once again after 10 years because family needed money due to their daughter sickness.

When asked about the future Radek said that they would stay in Greece as long as Honorata receives her disability pension. Radek likes Greece; he informed he would be able to stay in this country for good. R: “I like it generally: I like Greeks, as they are, their mentality. It’s suitable for me. [...] I have been interested in Greece, Greek philosophy since I was a child. Philosophy is my hobby.”

The majority of his friends have left Greece.

Radek was once deported from Greece due to the lack of necessary documents.

Family D: Gloria + Bolek + Szymon
We spoke to Gloria both in the focus group and interview. Her husband participated in a focus group, but did not agree to take part in the interview. We spoke to their son in an interview. There is also a young daughter in this family, but parents did not allow interviewing her.

Family lives in the canter of Athens, not that far from the “Polish district”. Parents met up and got married in Athens. They have two children, a 12-year-old son and a daughter (8). Children attend a Greek school and the Polish weekend school, are fluent in Polish and Greek. As Gloria explained it, together with her husband they try to raise their children “fifty-fifty”, which means sending them to Greek regular and Polish supplementary schools, making them read books in both languages, so that they could enrich their vocabulary. At home family speaks Polish. Family has no Polish relatives in Greece. Godmother of their son and godfather of their daughter are Greek.

Once a year, in the summer, parents take children on holiday to Poland and leave them there.

Parents keep children busy by sending them to private English lessons, to various sports: tennis, swimming, artistic gymnastics. Mother and children have double citizenship: Polish and Greek. Father has only Polish citizenship and he does not want to get a Greek one.

Gloria - in her early 40s, 24 years in Greece, she comes from a village near Wroclaw (western Poland). Gloria is a midwife by profession; she has finished studies in Poland and Greece. She is fluent in Greek. She came to Greece for a holiday and stayed because she found job, she wanted to gather money for studies and go back to Poland, but she met her husband in Greece. It was after a year of her stay in Greece when she decided not to go back to Poland and apply to the Greek midwifery college in Greece. At the beginning she worked as a baby-sitter, waitress in a restaurant (she combined working and studying), then midwife; later and up until now - as a nurse in a Greek hospital. Gloria is well organized and resourceful. She has a positive attitude towards life in Greece and the Greeks, seems to be well integrated into the Greek society, she knows how to get things done in the Greek offices. She likes Greece; she got accustomed to the Greek lifestyle. She has no plans to return to Poland. Gloria characterizes Polish people as introverted, always complaining, envious.

For Gloria family is the most important thing in life. Her ties with family and friends in Poland are not too close - as she says: only visiting Poland is not enough to sustain those ties. Gloria has some Greeks colleagues from work and acquaintances from the neighbourhood, but
these are not close relations. Her attitude towards friends is best described in her own statement: “I think that friendship was back in high school. We can talk about real friendships back then. Later, the older you are, the more distant people become, and friendships are not as close as they used to be. Everyone has his own life”.

Gloria prepares children to the fact that they will be educated in Poland in the future (university), since she does not like the Greek educational system as, according to her, it is not easy to get to the university faculty you want: “Why should children destroy their dreams? Especially when they can go to Poland: if they speak Polish, write in Polish, understand it, then they can be educated in the faculty that they want.” They only concern is whether parents will be able to afford to support their children in Poland.

Regarding her migratory plans and potential stay in Greece Gloria claims that it depends on employment: “If I did not have work, and my husband did not have work as well and we could not feed our children – I wouldn’t even think about it too long. I would go to Dubai, anywhere where I could feed my family and provide a good standard of life.”. Still, she plans to stay in Greece for good.

Bolek – in his mid-40s, fluent in Greek, 22 years in Greece, works as a builder. He seems to be rooted and feel well in Greece, but emphasizes his Polish identity. He knows he is different from the native Greeks: “We have always been foreign and we will always be”. He does not like Albanians, Gloria called him a racist. He initially came for one year to Greece only to earn some money. He found work, later met his wife and stayed. He said that climate plays a huge role in the decision about staying in Greece.

He agreed that one of the reasons parents send their children to Greek schools are free books and transportation. Still, he noticed and underlined disadvantages of the Greek school: “At a Greek school every time something is going on: either there are no books, or there are delays [in getting books]… you need to wait a month”. Bolek also noticed a change in the Greek attitude towards Poles, according to him due to current economic situation in Greece. He noticed that crisis “started to knock on Poland’s door […] it starts to get worse”. Bolek does not plan the return to Poland in the nearest future, but does not rule out going there when he retires.
Szymon – 12 years old, born in Greece, attends the Greek school (1st grade of Junior High School) and Polish supplementary schooling (last grade of primary school). He seems to be well integrated into the Greek society, has friends from the Greek and Polish schools and also from the neighbourhood. Szymon is a very intelligent and goal-oriented boy, fluent in Greek and Polish. At the Greek school he is friends with a Greek boy and an Albanian boy with whom they go home after school (they live nearby), meet after school, play computer games. He has also Greek and some Albanian friends from primary school with whom he spends weekends.

Szymon goes to Poland every summer, likes it, but he would rather stay in Greece. As for the future education it seems that Szymon has been discussing this issue with his mother as they share the same vision: he would like to take advantage of his status as graduate of a high school outside of Poland: “I would prefer to go to Poland. If I finished a Greek school I could go as a foreigner and it would be better for my family because I would get a scholarship, I would not need to write any entrance exams, I would get students residence, so I would only need money for food. So it would be a relief for the family”.

Regarding schools Szymon attends he feels a bit overwhelmed: he does not have time for his friends. On one hand he would prefer to stop going to the Polish school, but, on the other hand, he knows it could be advantageous for him in the future.

Family E: Elwira + Zdzislaw + Benek

We spoke to parents both in the focus group and interviews and we interviewed Benek. Family lives near the “Polish district”, in the centre of Athens. Parents met in Poland and got married in Athens: first they got married in a registry office 21 years ago, and then, 14 years after the first wedding, they got married once again, this time in the Polish church.

Family E seemed to be connected to Greece in many various ways: via their admiration of the Greek climate, Greek lifestyle and beauty of this country, having Greek acquaintances, planning to stay in Greece forever. Family has a flat in Poland but does not plan to go back to that country. They visit Poland every year during summer holidays and often leave their son to stay with his grandmother in Poland for the entire summer. Family from Poland visits them in Greece every 2-3 years, they come for major family events: (B): “now my grandma will come to my Confirmation in two months”.
With regards to their son’s education, due to the changes at the Polish school and online learning introduced into school’s program, family considered sending Benek to Poland to go to a regular high school there. They have applied to both: high school in Poland and in Athens hoping that something would change at the latter school and their son would stay with family in Greece.

**Elwira** – came to Greece in 1992, worked as a cleaning lady at the time of our interview. She has finished midwifery school in Poland, worked for a short time as a midwife in her homeland, but had never worked in this profession in Greece. Elwira followed her future husband to Greece who came three months earlier than her. She came to Greece with a tourist visa for 10 days. She planned to stay 3 months and it turned out to be 22 years: trip to Greece was supposed to be a three month holiday for Elwira, but she stayed for good since she got a job offer – she started to take care of elder Greek people at their houses. Elwira went to Poland only after four years of her arrival in Greece. Those initial years were difficult for her as she missed her mother (her father died when Elwira was 11 years old). Elwira told us about the special kind of family she had in Athens – the one consisted of her friends: Teodora’s and Mariola’s families. They meet often, spend holidays together and can rely one on another.

Because of the crisis Elwira lost one or even two days of work a week and she could not find anything for those days. Also the frequency of her jobs deceased: she used to go to some families to clean their houses every week, and now she goes every month.

Elwira spoke a lot about her son’s education, she admitted she does not have knowledge about the Greek educational system and its requirements, but she knew quite a lot about the procedure of moving child from the Polish School in Athens into a school in Poland. According to her it was not that easy. Elwira support her son in his dreams to become a pilot and leaves the decision about the high school to Benek, even though she would prefer he stayed in Greece.

Elwira admitted that since she has spent more than half of her life in Greece she cannot imagine living in Poland anymore. She likes Greek lifestyle, loves its weather and the Greek lifestyle; she often travels around Greece, goes to Greek islands. Still, when asked about her plans for the next 20-30 years she informed she did not have any: “I personally do not plan so far into the future. But surely not in Poland – what would I do in Poland? No, no. I come from a small town – 50 thousands. But no, people are different there. I feel much more at ease here.” Elwira
had some serious health issues which had changed the way she looked at life. She does not plan, expect, she wants to live her life and enjoy it.

Zdzislaw - vocational mechanic school graduate, at the time of our interview he had a regular job as a building administrator, but for twenty years he had worked in construction.

In the focus group Zdzislaw spoke about difficult situation in Poland that resulted in his arrival in Greece. He also spoke about the beginnings of his stay, when he used to earn a lot, but he worked illegally: “Of course it was black economy back then. There was no legitimacy, no nothing [...] With a daily wage you could live a nice life.” The reason why Zdzislaw came to Greece was economic: there were no jobs in Poland at that time. And in Greece there was a demand for workers, even without the knowledge of Greek. According to Zdzislaw the fact that he has a good job and his wife works as well is keeping family in Greece. Very important for him was also the fact that he had worked for a number of years legally, so in about five-six years, as he informed us, he would be eligible for a pension. Another thing was that Zdzislaw seemed to like living in Greece, did not feel connected to Poland, and did not long for his family left in that country, so he planned to stay in Greece forever. His relatives do not visit him in Greece, only one sister came once. Zdzislaw informed that he was not very attached to his relatives in Poland, probably because he left the country when he was very young.

With regards to friendships in Greece Zdzislaw had a group of trusted friends, and due to the crisis it became more difficult to make friends since people started to be rather suspicious. He had negative opinion about Polish people abroad – that they are envious, jealous. He did not mention having Greek friends, only some acquaintances from his and his wife’s job circles.

Zdzislaw believes that it would be better for their son to finish high school in Greece, but he understands that because Benek wants to be educated in a very specific faculty it would be advantageous for him to go to Poland. And he supports his son’s decision.

With regards to the crisis Zdzislaw believes that his family did not suffer that much: “we avoided the worst. Because the good thing was that we have not lost our jobs: either me or E. If two people work you do not have problem. So we avoided those tragedies that other families experienced, that one left, the other stayed, so those separations... we avoided that”. He implied that his family was lucky, but also they had some connections, knew people that helped him get a good job. Zdzislaw believes that situation in Greece will improve, but it would need some time.
On the other hand, Zdzislaw spoke about situation in Poland, he informed us that there is greater exploitation of employees by employers and other job-related difficulties; he mentioned junk contracts as one of these.

In his free time Zdzislaw plays table tennis with Jan (this is actually how the families met) and goes to table tennis tournaments to Poland, also takes part in the tournament in Greece.

Benek was 16 years old at the time of our interview; he attended the Polish school regularly – he was in the third grade of the Polish Junior High School. He went to a Polish illegal kindergarten. In the past he attended 4 grades of the International Primary School because the Polish School was closed for almost two years. The International School was famous among Polish families back then: (B) “there were many Polish children at that school. So, in my school year group 30% of pupils were Polish. […] So, we stuck to a Polish company. But we also talked to the Greeks. But actually my school year group was rather mixed: there were Russians, Rumanians, Bulgarians, and also Greeks”. Benek’s mother explained that the transportation to that school was for free, so many families decided to send their children there, even though it was in a bit remote part of Athens. Even though the Polish School opened from the winter the following year Benek continued education at the International school until the third grade of primary school and then he went to a regular Greek school in the area. After some issues with boys from this school parents decided to send boy to the Polish one. Going to the International School and the Greek school Benek spoke Greek perfectly, now he informed he had forgotten it as he did not use the language.

Since he was finishing Junior High School at the time of our interview and due to the changes in running of the Polish School Benek agreed with his parents to go to Poland to attend high school there. Parents will remain in Greece and he will live with his grandmother. Benek had also very specific plans regarding his future education – he planned to go Rzeszow’s University of Technology because, according to the boy, only at this university there is faculty he is interested in – the aviation. Benek has never considered studying in Greece; he believes that due to the lack of language knowledge he would have problems at the Greek university. Since he wants to be a pilot in the future he did not see himself living either in Poland or Greece, but somewhere else around the world.

Benek was happy that he went to the Polish School, he believed it would have been worse if he followed the “Geek path” of education.
Benek spent his free time at home, did not go out, did not have any Greek friends in the neighbourhood, and rather had some issues with boys his age that lived nearby. He stayed at home because he had to study, but also because many of his friends had left Greece because of the economic difficulties their families faced.

Family for Benek are parents, grandparents and other relatives. In the past Benek sometimes went to Poland with his parents but stayed with his grandparents when parents left for Greece. His dad explained that “our boy he goes to Poland earlier, as soon as he finishes school – he goes to grandma. And then we go and we all return together”. In Poland Benek has many friends that he spends summers with.

Benek likes Greece due to its climate and the seaside.

We spoke with Benek a bit about European Union, he was aware of some aspects of it “since we are in this European Commonwealth those countries help one another somehow. I am not very good at politics, but I think they help. There is also this foreign education and we have more rights to travel”.

Family F: Dominika + Odeta

We spoke to this family on the square in the center of Athens, a meeting point for the Polish families from the area. Every day after work Poles go there and hung out, Polish children play there.

Dominika lives with her husband and Odeta near the Polish district. She has been living in Greece since 1994. She was in her late 30s at the time of our interview. Dominika comes from a small village in the south of Poland, she has a high school diploma, works as a cleaning lady four times a week. Her husband works in construction, but he sometimes has a job, and sometimes does not – the longest he has ever not worked was for two months. Still, he is insured and Dominika and Odeta are covered by his insurance. Before giving birth to her daughter Dominika worked in a cleaning company where she had insurance and other benefits, but since she did not have anyone to leave her baby with she did not return to that job when she finished her maternity leave.

Dominika came to Greece after finishing high school and passing exams for university – she wanted to study history. Her mother could not help her financially, so she decided to go to Greece for a few months to gather oranges. She came on tourist visa, paid for this trip and the job.
But when she came to Greece with other people it turned out that it was a scam and there were no jobs waiting for them. They were lucky because a Greek took them to work for him. In the same couch there was Dominika’s future husband – he comes from her district in Poland, but she had never met him before. Later on Jehovah Witnesses helped them, brought them to Athens, found a flat and started to search for work for them. Dominika and her finance settled in Athens, but after a year they decided to return to Poland and never to go back to Greece. They got married in 1999 and went for a honeymoon to Greece which lasts until now.

Dominika and her husband are building a house in Poland where they plan to settle after returning from Greece, so they try to save money for this purpose. They visit Poland every year in August for the summer holiday.

She told me about the time when she gave birth to her daughter and her husband worked from the morning until late evening. She was alone, did not have any help from friends or members of the family and it was generally a difficult time for her. Some cousins of her husband came to Greece 2-3 years later and still reside in this country.

Dominika plans to return to Poland at the end of every school year, as she does not want to disturb education for Odeta. Yet, every year they decide to stay a year or two longer. The family had to decide whether to return to Poland or not for sure at the time of our interview since Odeta was finishing high school and Dominika wanted her to continue the next level of education – Junior High School - in Poland. After returning to Poland Dominika could work in a nursery home – a cousin found her position there. More difficult would be finding employment for Dominika’s husband. Still, the woman was concerned about the wages she would get in Poland – 300 euros a month for an 8-hour job. She got more for working fewer hours a day in Greece. In Poland both spouses would have to work to support the family, while in Greece even if one person worked they could manage. And also Dominika’s husband in the times when he did not work always found himself a random job to provide additional income to his family. Dominika is not interested in a work in supermarket, often the only available work in the part of Poland she comes from, because it is an irregular work, in shifts, she would have to work on Sundays. And Dominika needs time to devote it to her daughter, to help her with her homework, and be there for the girl. Another thing is that Poland becomes a more and more expensive country: „it is very expensive in Poland, not cheaper than in Greece, at all. I have already noticed 3-4 years ago that it is expensive. We are
sometimes surprised about the prices. So now it is not worth to buy things there and bring here, like we used to do. The prices are comparable. And clothes are cheaper here”.

Education of Odeta is very important for Dominika, she invests a lot of time to help her daughter at school: she dreams that Odeta would become a doctor or a lawyer in the future. When asked if she had ever considered sending Odeta to a Greek school Dominika explained that since they had been always decided to return to Poland she had never thought about the Greek school.

When asked why they tend to postpone their return to Poland Dominika explained: „I don’t know what keeps us here. I often ask myself this questions. I don’t like the heat. I love winters. I don’t know. Is it the habit, you get used to living here, or maybe you are scared to go back to Poland, you are scared of Polish reality, because you don’t know what will happen”. On the other hand, she believes that she cannot develop in Greece, she can only work there as a cleaner. And in Poland she would have more possibilities of personal development. She speaks communicative Greek and has no time to learn it better. She would rather invest time to learn English.

Dominika was not satisfied with the Polish school in Athens her daughter attended: when Odeta was in the initial grades of primary school the number of school year groups was getting reduced and the composition of school year group was changing. This was because there were fewer children in the due to the departures of Polish families because of the crisis – the principal of the school was mixing children and creating new, fewer school year groups.

Dominika believes her daughter wants to return to Poland.

For Dominika family is her husband and daughter. She said she did not miss her relatives in Poland that much, she rarely contacted them. Her mother calls her, so she speaks to her mother often, but rarely calls Poland herself.

Dominika spoke highly about Greek people, she has only had positive experiences with Greeks.

Odeta – she was 11 years old at the time of our interview, attended only the Polish School - last grade of primary school. Odeta is the only child in the family, she was born in Greece. Odeta claimed she understood Greek a bit. She was rather shy during the interview and we had to ask her basically direct questions to get any answers.

The girl attended the same school year group as Anna from family G. Odeta likes Polish school, would definitely not like to attend to a Greek school – her friends attending it informed her
it is not nice at all. We talked about the teachers she liked and disliked and the favourite subject at school. Odeta likes Greece due to the, weather, seaside and the sea. When asked about future she said her family would live in Greece. She would prefer to stay in Greece and not move to Poland.

She visits Poland every year for the summer holiday – she visits her grandparents and cousins. She said she gets along with children in Poland.

When asked what family was Odeta explained that these are parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

Odeta said that when her parents are making decision about whether to stay or go, to Poland or another country they do not take into consideration her opinion.

Family G: Karina+ Viktor + Anna

We spoke to the female family members: Karina and Anna only in the individual interviews. Viktor participated in a small focus group – with two fathers, we also spoke to him in an interview. Anna has a younger brother - Tomek; they were both born in Greece. Tomek was 8 years old so he was too young to participate in our study.

Karina and Viktor met and got married in Greece. They had always said that when children would go to school they would return to Poland. But because they were both working and earning good money, better than they would ever get in Poland, they decided to stay. All the family is insured by Viktor. They also pay for a retirement found in Poland. Since Viktor works in construction, it is very difficult for him to get work with insurance.

Prior to the crisis family had some savings, but they spent the money when Viktor did not have a job, and now they are not able to buy a flat or build a house in Poland. So, if they return, they would have to stay with Karina’s parents.

Since Anna is in the final grade of the primary school Karina thinks they would finally go back to Poland: “it would be a trigger for us not to think about it but to finally go back”.

Last summer Viktor took children to Poland and left them at their grandparents’, and children loved it. They have many friends there since they go to Poland every year for at least a month.

Karina – in her early 30s at the time of our interview, she worked as a cleaning lady 5 days a week, lived with her family in the center of Athens, near the Polish district. She comes from
southern Poland; she finished high school, passed Matura, but failed entrance examinations at university. She came to Greece in 2000 to her uncle and aunt only for the summertime, just to rest. But she found a job with good salary, got married and gave birth to her children.

Karina’s children attended the Polish school. This is because parents had always planned to return to Poland in case the economic situation of family gets worse: “our children go to the Polish school, we sent them there because our situation here is rather uncertain. If one of us loses job we automatically have to leave, because we cannot support the entire family from one paycheck.”

Karina complained about the level of Greek at the Polish School, she believed there should be more focus given to this subject so that children could communicate. According to her at the Polish school there is no attention given to the proper teaching of Greek – this subject is the least important in the school’s curriculum. Education of children is important for Karina and Viktor, they have a private tutor teaching their children English since they were in the first grade of primary school. Karina has not considered sending her children to a Greek school; she explained that they might not have managed due to language barrier, and children do not want to attend a Greek school.

Karina regrets not going to university and she would like her children to study there. She does not want to impose anything on them, wants them to choose their own path, but education of her children is very important. She would like to finish a college in Poland when they return, even extramurally. She thinks about doing something to upgrade her qualifications, now that her children are bigger and she has more time. When the children were little she did not have any time because she had to take care of them and had no one to help her.

Two years prior to our interview the family was ready to return to Poland, and two weeks before leaving Greece they decided to stay. Karina explained that she is “afraid of Poland”; she does not know if she would find a job there. Additionally, the woman explained: “in Poland someone would tell you that you get 200 euros for a 3 shift 8 hour job – its horrifying. And it’s not that cheap in Poland. And the other thing is that our children were born here.”

Karolina seemed to be ashamed to work as a cleaner, especially because in Poland this kind of job is very low-profile, not like in Greece, as she believes. She does not plan to be a cleaner for the rest of her life; she explained this job was her choice because it gave her loads of money at
some point. Karina spoke a lot about her employers trusting her, and that she had always tried to be honest.

Karina did not know how the future would look like, whether they would return to Poland. Yet, she was tired of Greece especially because things have changed due to the crisis; it is more difficult now in Greece: “to be honest, I a bit tired of living here. It used to be different, and now we are thinking all the time if we will have enough money to pay for everything. So there is no such freedom like it used to be, that we did not worry about having to pay bills. We could go out, have fun, and go to tavern.” In Poland Karina’s parent have a farm and at least there would not be a problem with buying food.

Karina told us about her friends – those from the park and others with whom she and Viktor went out. She had only Polish friends. Majority of them left Greece because of the crisis – some returned to Poland, some went to the UK and Germany. Karina is still in touch with them mainly via Internet.

Karina informed that since the beginning of economic difficulties in Greece the attitude of Greeks has changed and they became more unfriendly for foreigners.

When she was 7-months pregnant she was held at the police station for a night because she did not have valid documents. The accession of Poland into the EU provided the sense of security for Karina: security every day in the streets and while traveling to and from Poland. Karina said that if they had an employment ensured in Poland they would not think about it too much and return to their homeland.

**Viktor** – works in construction. He came to Greece in 1995 to his mother that stayed and worked in Athens. His mother, sister and brother are still in Greece. In winter preceding our interview he did not work, it was a “dead season”. He has not been to Poland for a couple of years now, his wife typically goes there with their children in August, and he works then. If they returned to Poland he would be able to work in construction, he was offered such a job there.

When their daughter was born Viktor got a job offer from Sweden. But together with Karina they decided not to take it since they wanted to be together. Two years ago he went to Sweden to his brother-in-law to work there since he did not have a job in Greece. It was a difficult experience for the entire family, children missed their dad and Karina informed that it was not
worth it. Still, if they return to Poland going abroad to another European country is an option for Viktor; it is a typical choice of the majority of habitats of their village.

During the small focus group we spoke a lot about the Polish School. Viktor is very involved in the school issues. As Karina said “My husband is actually among those who fight for the first grade to be opened”.

Anna - 11 years old at the time of our interview, attended only the Polish School - last grade of primary school. She claimed she understood Greek a bit. Anna likes Polish school, had rather negative opinion about Greek schools. We talked about the teachers she liked and disliked and the favourite subject at school. Anna likes living in Greece. She goes to Poland every year for the summer holiday – she visits her grandparents and cousins. She said she sometimes gets along with children in Poland and sometimes she does not. It seemed that she liked Poland because her family in that country live in a village and she is more free and independent when visiting them: “I miss the fact that we can go outside on our own, like in Poland, so we can run as much as we want, and here we need to always go out with our parents and we cannot stay away of them.”

Anna would not like to change her school into a Greek one. She would rather say in Greece and not go to Poland.

Anna said that when her parents are making decision about whether to stay or go, to Poland or another country they take into consideration her opinion.

People:

Wojtek – he was in his middle 40s at the time of our interview, has two children – his daughter studies in Poland and his son is in the second grade of the Polish High School in Athens. He said he was from the first flow of immigrants that came to Greece – he came to this country for work-related purposes in the early 90s.

Wojtek has his own transportation company (very small one). His wife works as a cleaning lady couple of times a week. Wojtek is very active at the Polish school – he is the chairman of Parents’ Counsel – and at the Polish church – he served at the altar many times and helped with various events organized by the church.
Daughter left Greece when he was 19 years old, so Wojtek said she was a grown-up person. It is not a big problem for him that his daughter stays away, he believes that if they lived in Poland she would go away to study anyway. Wojtek explained that due to the cheap airline tickets she comes to Greece couple of times a year.

On the day of our interview his son was supposed to dance a performance prepared by the Polish School due to Greek national celebration.

Wojtek built a house in Poland so when his son finishes high school in Athens nothing holds him in Greece and he will probably return to Poland. Wojtek is aware that it is not easy to find job in the part of Poland he comes from.

During our conversation with Wojtek we spoke a lot about various issues relating to the Polish School in Athens. He tries hard to keep the school running.

Krzesimir – in his early 40s, worked in the construction, lived near the Polish district, father of two boys (14 and 16) who attended Greek schools and the Polish Saturday School. He came to Greece in 1996 on holiday, to visit his sister. Then, after three months, his wife joined him. Krzesimir stayed in Greece because he liked the country very much.

Krzesimir’s wife started to work when the crisis hit Greece, earlier she stayed at home and took her of boys. When they were little she worked for some time as a child minder.

Krzesimir informed that they decided to send children to the Greek school since the Polish School was closed, and then boys got used to their Greek school and did not want to change it. The older son stopped going to the Polish Saturday School because, as explained by his father, he was very busy at the Greek school and had to study a lot. Both sons will continue their education at the Greek high school. Krzesimir is satisfied with the decision of sending boys to the Greek school, especially since there were issues with the Polish School. He was not sure whether he would return to Poland or stay in Greece: “If you asked me 4-5 years ago I would have said that I would go back for 100%. And now it’s 50-50.” He explained he likes Greece, its weather, but also he has more friends in Greece now than in Poland. His family is “open”, as Krzesimir explained: nothing keeps them in Greece, but also nothing pulls them to Poland. They do not have a house there, neither a flat in Greece. So they can move at any time or stay in Athens.

Krzesimir’s sons have Polish and Greek friends and also friends from other nations.
With regards to the accession of Poland into the European Union Krzesimir explained he felt a bit safer in Greece: when he is stopped by the police he is not held in contempt anymore. Only in 2000 he was held for 5-10 hours by the police five times, because he did not have necessary documents.

Krzesimir lives his life in a very Polish way: “*When there were more Polish people in Greece, because they did not return yet, we were joking that we only work in Greece. Because we had a Polish company, we watched Polish TV, spoke Polish at home. So we laughed that we only go to Greece for 8 hours to work, and after work we have Polish company, everything Polish.*”

Danuta – a dentist in her middle 40s, lives with her family far from the Polish district. She works has her own dental practice not that far from the Polish district – the majority of her patients are Polish. At the beginning of her stay in Greece she worked as a waitress and house maid.

Danuta has one daughter who attends a Greek primary school and the Polish Saturday School. She comes from Zakopane, popular winter resort in Poland for mountaineering, skiing, and tourism known informally as "the winter capital of Poland”. Danuta came to Greece in 1994 to a friend, just for a while, and then she decided to stay and searched for employment. After two-three years of living in Athens she got accepted to dentistry school at the Athens University.

Danuta started to learn Greek from the very beginning: first on her own, and then in private courses. She worked and studied simultaneously. Danuta said that it was not that difficult to manage. She met her husband during studies and even though she had always planned to go back to Poland: first – to study, and when she got into university in Greece – after finishing it, she stayed. She could not explain why she stayed – it was a force of habit, she had created networks in Athens that she could rely on, she liked Greece. Her husband wanted to go back to Poland.

Danuta thinks highly of Greeks: that they are well-educated, know many languages, they focus on their children’s education and invest in it time and money.

When asked about her plans for the future regarding settlement Danuta informed she did not know for sure, but she did not plan returning to Poland. Yet, it is an option later on in the future.

Danuta visits Poland twice a year: during summer and either for Easter or Christmas. She visits her family, but her home is in Athens: “*now is that we go there to visit and afterwards we return home*”. Her daughter loves going to Poland – she has grandparents and cousins there, but
also due to the fact that family they visit lives in the countryside. Danuta contacts her family and friends in Poland often via Skype and phone.

With regards to her daughter’s education Danuta informed she had never considered sending girl to a Polish School. She has rather negative attitude to the Polish institution “I believe that the existence of Polish School creates more harm for the child than advantages. [...] those children are lost afterwards. They finish primary school and then junior high school and then not all of those children are accepted to the Polish High School. There is a small group of children that gets into the Polish High School. And if the child finishes the Polish Junior High School he won’t manage in a Greek high school at all. It is obvious.” Danuta explained that this was the reason why some families send their children to Poland to continue education there, or they send them to a Greek school and a child cannot manage, so teachers expect from this child less in order for him/her to finish that school. Another reason Danuta provided against the Polish School was that children from it do not integrate with their Greek peers, but are separated from them and they do not want to learn Greek. Danuta wants her daughter to finish Greek schools and with regards to university she does not have any preferences: she gives herself as an example that once you have finished high school you can study anywhere.

Danuta claims that half of her friends are Polish and half are Greek. She has still some Greek friends from university and she socializes with mixed Polish-Greek couples. She has one good friend and that woman is Polish. Danuta’s daughter has friends form the Greek and Polish school.

Danuta started to notice changes around her caused by the crisis: “The poverty started to be visible. Shops are being closed down. The atmosphere in the streets: people are gloomier”. Those changes apply also to the Polish community in Athens. Poles started to leave Greece and go to various European countries or return to Poland where they manage well.

The accession of Poland has not changed that much in the life of Danuta since she had always stayed in Greece legally.

Grazyna – in her middle 40s at the time of our interview, has one, 18-year-old daughter in Poland and works as a cleaning lady. Grazyna has secondary education - food technician. We spoke to her both in the focus group and interview, her husband and daughter did not agree to take part in our research.
Grazyna lives far from the Polish district – in the "Greek" district - Ag. Dimitri. When she arrived there, there was only one other foreigner in the neighborhood. She came to Greece around 1991 (she was 22 years old) to her boyfriend at that time, now her husband. In Poland she worked as a shop assistant and was unhappy with both: job and earnings. So, she followed her boyfriend and liked Greece a lot: "The thing I liked the most was that we were independent, that we could afford things we wanted, we could do what we wanted". Independence is very relevant for Grazyna: she emphasized it in focus group and interview. She could not imagine going back to Poland – they would have to live with her in-laws at least at the beginning and this was hard for Grazyna to imagine.

Her husband works in construction – prior to crisis he had a small company and hired 12 men, now he works himself or with a friend. At the beginning of her stay Grazyna worked in a restaurant, then as a babysitter and shop assistant. She stopped working when she got pregnant and went to Poland to give birth there. She decided to go to Poland because there was no one in Greece that could help her after the birth. Her husband was supposed to come a month after her and they planned to stay in Poland. But they did not like living there: the earnings, lifestyle were difficult to accept, so when their daughter was six months old they decided to move to Greece.

They invest in building a house in Poland, so they have always had this thought, as Grazyna described it - in the back of the head - that one day they would return to Poland. Another thing was that they wanted to build this house for their daughter, since she used to like Poland very much. Now the girl does not like the life in Poland and wants to go back to Greece as soon as she finishes education.

Education of her daughter is very important for Grazyna but not because she wants the girl to get a degree, but rather become more open-minded. Grazyna’s daughter went to Greek kindergarten and the first grade of the primary school, then she moved to the Polish School which she attented until the high school. She went to a Greek vocational high school, as Grazyna explained: "We sent her to Greek [high] school because she was not a brilliant student and there was no guaranty that she would pass Matura. [...] finishing Greek school it is much easier to get into college in Poland." Grazyna claims that their educational choices were always very well-thought. They chose Polish school so that their daughter would not lose contact with Polish, people
and culture. For Grazyna attending only to supplementary schooling was not enough to achieve this aim.

The life of the family has changed after the economic downturn: they cannot afford to buy and travel as much as they used to, they are more stressed.

Grazyna has a very positive attitude to life in Greece and the Greeks, she seemed to be well-integrated. She works with the Greeks, knows how to get things done in various offices, speaks Greek fluently even though she has never attended any Greek courses; she learnt the language herself. Also a wife of one of her employer’s thought her some Greek. Grazyna wants to stay in Greece, does not plan to return to Poland. She would like to stay in Greece forever, but be able to visit Poland more often than just once a year, buy a small house in the Greek seaside, but because of the crisis this is only a dream. Grazyna loves Greek weather, lifestyle; if not for the crisis she would definitely stay in Greece for good.

On the other hand, Grazyna had a negative opinion regarding life in Poland and Poles in general: she described them as envious and malicious saddos.

After the accession of Poland into the EU life in Greece got easier due to less bureaucracy involved in it: „you do not have to run to gather the papers and stand in queues. And they treat you differently – as citizens of the EU.” Also the attitude of Greeks towards Poles has shifted – they started to know more about Poland and treat Poles better.

Ala – 16 years old, 2.5 years in Greece at the time of our interview, she attended only the Polish School - the final grade of the Polish junior high school. Ala’s parents were divorced. The girl came to Greece to join her mother who has lived there for a couple of years and was moving between Poland and Greece. Ala used to live in Poland with grandparents and her mum was going back and forth to Greece, but for the first year of junior high school Ala came to Athens to stay with her mum. When the year ends she would go back to Poland and stay with her grandparents again. Grandma is often visiting and helping with Ala’s baby sister – six months old at the time of interview. Ala’s relatives live in Poland; they sometimes visit Ala’s family in Athens: her uncle was supposed to come for girl’s sacrament of confirmation soon. Ala had Polish friends, she knew some Greek peers through friends. All her Polish friends attended the Polish school, also among children of her mum’s friends there were no pupils of Greek schools.
Ala wants to go back to Poland; she prefers to be there because she has all her family there. She is horse-riding there and wins trophies. Her mother, as we were told by Ala, would also return to Poland.

Ala notices that Polish people started to leave Greece; she believed this was due to the crisis and difficulties with employment – people started to lose jobs.

Majka - 16 years old, 10 years in Greece at the time of our interview, her mother has stayed in Greece 11 years and father - 20. Majka attended only the Polish School - the final grade of Polish junior high school. She went to the same school year group as Ala. Majka lived in Athens with parents and 9-year-old brother who only attended a Greek primary school. Her brother was born in Greece and he has never been to Poland. Majka’s grandfather used to work in Greece but he returned to Poland when he lost his job. Other relatives are scatter around the world and the girl does not see them often, but contacts via Skype, FB, phone, because “we practically do not go to Poland ever”. Many people that Majka knew left Greece because of the crisis.

Majka attended Greek school until 3rd grade of primary school, and then she moved to the Polish School. She explained that in 3rd grade history of Greece is added to the curriculum and she had problems with this subject. Also at that time the Polish school was reopened and there was recruitment so, as girl explains, her mum sent her to the Polish School. She did not like this change; she preferred the Greek school because it was easier for her, as she explained.

Majka informed us that her family plans to stay in Athens for good and that is why she planned to attend a Greek high-school or technical secondary school. She prefers Greece to Poland, likes its climate and nature. Then, after graduation, she would like to go either to Norway or to Germany to work there depending on the situation in Greece – if she has job she prefers to stay in Greece.