GROWING UP MULTICULTURAL:
THE EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN RAISED
BY POLISH-NORWEGIAN MIXED COUPLES IN NORWAY

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An increase in binational relationships in the contemporary world is generating a complex web of family, relational, educational, organizational, and identification practices. The intercultural marriage contract also often gives rise to tensions and conflicts stemming from cultural, social, religious and economic differences. In all certainty, the experiences and daily lives of children in such relationships deserve special attention, and, on the basis of the *Transfam* research project findings, this chapter strives to fill the gap. Sociological research into binational relationships and children raised in such family configurations is predominantly framed from the adult's perspective. Here we try to reach into the core of identified issues and approach the experience of living in a binational family from the child's perspective as well. The multicultural experience of growing up in Norway under the guidance of interethnic parents (Polish-Norwegian) is compared to the monocultural experience of children raised by intraethnic Polish-Polish couples. This article is based on interviews with children aged 6–13, observations registered during the course of those interviews (most commonly in children's rooms), and the Sentence Completion Test.

Keywords: migration, binational marriages, identity, family bonds, gender roles, language, children's perspective, Poland, Norway

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INTRODUCTION – AIMS AND FIELDS OF STUDY

The existence and practice of mixed marriage is no novelty in the field of sociology. Such relationships have manifested themselves as a key element in the social reality of all communities which have undergone certain processes in population migrations, experienced intercultural contacts, and built multicultural societies. Nonetheless, the current proliferation of this type of family is associated with a far-reaching ease in international contacts, amplified migration waves, as well as globalization and transnational processes (Castells 1996; Sassen 1998; Vertovec 2009). These processes compel groups to open up towards other cultures and to create multi-ethnic environs; this, in turn, generates new standards in the selection of an intimate partner. The culturally diverse world facilitates, with enhanced ethnic and religious tolerance, the formation of relationships which go beyond the homogeneity and endogamy which reigns over the world of traditional marital relationships. The internationalization of intimacy and the formation of "multinational global families" take on significance (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2013). Further, intercultural childhood takes on special meaning: its experience and practice will be another effect of the just-mentioned processes.

Therefore, the main aim here is to deepen the exploration and arrive at the specificities of a binational family with children. This is done through an approach that is (thus far) unique in Polish scholarship and relatively rare in international research: encompassing the voices of children growing up binationally. The multicultural experiences of growing up in Norway with interethnic parental couples (Polish-Norwegian) are here compared to the experiences of children raised in the same country by intraethnic Polish-Polish couples. Such an approach facilitates better comprehension of phenomena and practices as well as power and gender relations in families formed on the basis of migration and a decision to put down roots in a host country. This allows the distinguishing of certain generalizations, identification of variations, references made to the "power of Polishness", and the experience of being a Polish family as seen through the eyes of children. The article suggests an approach that could perhaps be adopted and applied in future research in order to recognize and explain the singularity of these mixed families in more detail, especially from the perspective of the youngest family members. We want the voices of children raised in nationally-mixed families to become heard in the social sciences.

The article is based on the Work Package 5 study, *Children's experience of growing up transnationally* conducted under the auspices of the *Transfam* project (2013–2016) titled *Doing family in transnational context: Demographic choices, welfare adaptations, school integration, and the everyday life of Polish families*

living in Polish-Norwegian transnationality.[2] The research methods included a combination of: 1) semi-structured interviews with children aged 6 to 13, born in Norway to inter-ethnic couples (12 interviews[3]) as well as children in this same age cohort, mostly born in Poland to intra-ethnic couples but also raised in Norway; 30 interviews – a total of 42 for both); 2) observations in the research situation (mostly children's rooms); and 3) sentence completion tests (23 tests in total).[4]

This study was conducted in 2014 in Oslo as well as in borderland communities (up to 200 km away in urban, rural, and suburban settings) over a five month period. The initial fieldwork entailed ethnographic observation of the expat Polish community and the conducting of interviews with experts. After initial exploration of the field, we began research with the children themselves. Parents with children were recruited via the so-called snowball strategy. In this phase we took advantage of support from the experts with whom we had already spoken, migrants who were friends or acquaintances as well as a variety of official Polish agencies and Polish expat organizations. This recruitment strategy enabled us to reach children from a wide range of socioeconomically classified families (see Table 1).

We met with participants in their flats/homes (per parental preference). Each interview was preceded by obtaining written consent from the parent(s) and oral from the child. In most cases we conducted interviews individually, but sometimes with pairs of siblings.[5] With regards to direct relations between the

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[3] We would like to underscore that our study touches on selected issues which might transpire in mixed couple families, primarily attempting to address the issues unique to this scenario. A relatively small number of participants from mixed couples means that the findings cannot be generalized but we hope that the child-focused nature of our research (see also Ní Laoire 2015) might be conducive to a shift in the social sciences, emphasizing the significance of carrying out further research with children as subject agents rather than as research objects (see James and Prout 1990; Ní Laoire 2015; Strzemecka 2015; Slany and Strzemecka 2016a).

[4] The use of the sentence completion test was tailored to children's anticipated language preferences. The method was applied in the case of older children (aged 9 to 13) and was available in Polish, Norwegian, and English. The test included various unfinished clauses, such as I like Poland because…, I like Norway because…, My home is…, or When I grow up I want to live in….

[5] More about our research protocol in Slany and Strzemecka 2015, 2016a.

researcher and the research participant, a hierarchy is likely to appear in nearly all social sciences studies, but especially when working with children.

In such cases there is even talk of a doubled power imbalance as a consequence of the researcher-subject and adult-child relationships (see, for instance, James and Prout 1990; Alderson and Morrow 2004; Holt 2004). Although complete neutralization of this inequity is impossible, investigations conducted in the spirit of what is known as new social studies of the child and childhood as well as new paradigms of participatory research aim to achieve the greatest possible offsetting of this problem (see Ní Laoire 2015). Although we did not adopt the participatory approach in its traditional sense (i.e., the engagement of participants as co-investigators), we still succeeded (like many other scholars dealing with childhood, including Caitríona Ní Laoire 2015: 4) in unveiling that: "(...) children's roles as active sociocultural producers and their competence as research participants through the use of methods that allowed them to participate actively in the research and to communicate in ways with which they were comfortable".

Table 1.

Comparison of Polish-Norwegian and Polish-Polish couples in Norway

	Polish-Norwegian couples	Polish-Polish couples
Marital status in the family	Mostly marriages (Polish mother and Norwegian father – 8; Polish father and Norwegian mother – 2), but also single parents (2 Polish mothers)	Mostly marriages, but also single parents and cohabiting couples
Number of children per family	1–3	1–5
Age of parents	38–54	30–53
Level of parental education	Mostly higher education, but also technical and vocational training	Mostly higher education; some with technical school diplomas
Period of migration	Polish parents mostly immigrated to Norway during the so-called "Solidarity" migration wave in the 1980s, as well during the 1990s; others immigrated during the "post-accession" migration wave (meaning Poland's EU accession in 2004)	Polish parents mostly came to Norway during the "post-accession" migration wave, but some also came during the 1990s
Employment status of parents	All currently working	Mostly working

Source: authors' own analysis.

BACKGROUND:
SCALE OF THE BINATIONAL FAMILY PHENOMENON

Numerous researchers (Lanzieri 2012; Rodríguez-García 2015; Song 2015; Törngren et al. 2016) have undertaken the definition of heterogeneous (e.g., ethnically, nationally, religiously, linguistically, etc.) marriages. From the whole range of general terms by which mixed relationships are described (including "intermarriage" and "mixed marriages"), Saya Osanami Törngren and her associates (2016: 3) determined that precisely "intermarriage" would be the catch-all term because it "can be applied in relation to relationships, including marriages, cohabitations, and in some cases dating, which are defined by ethnic, racial, religious, national differences, or some combination of the above" (among others, see also Brzozowska 2015).

That said, other scholars (Rodríguez-García 2015; Collet 2015) have attempted to introduce and popularize such concepts as "mixedness" or even "conjugal mixedness" which, in their opinion, serve as more adequate a label, better reflecting the complex nature of this type of exogamy. The point is to describe not only an observable state of affairs (the result of conjoining national, racial, cultural, or religious differences), but also a dynamic process of "mixing up" the social space.[6]

In addition to the above-mentioned, more general expressions, scholars apply more precise ones. Hence, in the context of our chapter, it should be emphasized that, in the case of relationships distinguished by national differences, and entered into by citizens of different states, researchers also use the term "binational marriages" which thus highlights the international mobility of the marital partners (Jaroszewska 2003; Rajkiewicz 2009).[7]

Transitioning from issues of definition to those associated with the structure of mixed marriages, we should comment on the difficulties in answering questions such as "What is the scale of this phenomenon" or (in other words) "How many such relationships function on the European and other continents?" Problems in delineating the extent of this phenomenon are already manifest in attempts

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[6] Törngren and associates (2016: 3) note that, "Given the diverse understandings and conceptualizations of intermarriage, scholars are talking past each other much of the time". Therefore we will avoid delving deeper into definition issues; for the purposes of this article we will apply two terms: mixed marriages/partnerships or binational marriages/partnerships.

[7] Relevant literature (see Medrano et al. 2014) increasingly emphasizes that a binational marriage between European citizens (dubbed 'Euromarriages' in the literature) is a different phenomenon than a binational marriage between a European-partner with a non-European spouse altogether. For more on this topic, see Gaspar 2011 or Medrano et al. 2014.

to utilize found data: among other things, there is a lack of standardization in the collection of statistics. In his efforts to capture the scale, Giampaolo Lanzieri (2012) analysed statistics regarding the number of mixed marriages in Europe. On that basis he determined that, in 25 out of 30 countries, there were more mixed marriages between 2008–2010 than between 2005–2007. In recent years, in the majority of countries, the percentage of persons in a marital relationship with a foreigner is relatively low: below 5% (albeit in the Baltic States this rises to over 15%). Citizens marrying non-citizens is more popular in the Scandinavian states, the Netherlands, and France than in Italy, Spain or most of Eastern Europe.

As regards Poland, the increased scale and scope of emigrations from this country after EU accession in 2004 have led to growing numbers and heightened visibility of issues connected to the realities faced by mixed families (see Slany et al. 2014). Against the background of all marital unions formed in Poland between 2004 and 2014, mixed marriages comprise over 2%. That stated, Polish statistical data (*Rocznik Demograficzny* 2015) do indicate that citizens of Poland entered into approximately 44,000 mixed marriages in Poland between 2004 and 2014. Most commonly, Polish women marry citizens of the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Ireland, France, and the Netherlands, while Polish men predominantly form unions with women from Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. Additionally, the number of Polish newlyweds who married abroad between 2004–2014 exceeds 39,000.

In the Norwegian context within which our study was conducted, it is worth mentioning that this particular state has a relatively long history of migration flows amongst the countries of Scandinavia – especially in comparison with the half-century of migrations from other parts of Europe (especially including northern Europe) and the world as a whole (Wiik and Holland 2015). At the beginning of 1992 the immigrant population in Norway was 4.3% of the total population. Twenty four years later, at the beginning of 2016, the number had risen to 16.3% of the population (Statistics Norway 2016).[8]

At the start of 2014 (Statistics Norway 2014), meaning the time when our research was conducted, an official study showed that 4,081,000 people (79.9%) of the total population were Norwegians with no migrant background (both parents born in Norway) whereas more than 759,000 individuals (14.9%) were immigrants or descendants of recent immigrants, from neighbouring countries and the rest of the world. A further 235,000 (4.6%) were born in Norway to

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[8] In 2016, the five largest immigrant groups in Norway were Polish, Lithuanian, Swedish, Somali, and Pakistani respectively (Statistic Norway 2016). Immigrants from Poland still made up the largest contingent in the country, with 95,700 persons; they constitute almost 14% of all immigrants in Norway (Statistic Norway 2016; compare with IOM 2016).

one foreign-born parent, while 34,000 (0.7%) were born abroad to one parent born in Norway. There were 4,971 children born in Norway to one Polish-born parent at the beginning of 2014 (*Ibid.*). This number has risen to 5,356 two years later, at the beginning of 2016 (Statistics Norway 2016).

Rocketing mobility directly contributes to the higher numbers of mixed marriages as well as informal relationships with partners from ethnically distinct backgrounds. With time, children are born into these unions. Both the couple dynamics and matters related to the children of binational families are sparking interest.

A REVIEW OF CURRENT AFFAIRS: BINATIONAL FAMILIES IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Dan Rodríguez-García (2015: 8) noted that:

"Social scientists have been drawn to the investigation of intermarriage for over a century: from the classic anthropological studies of the nineteenth century (e.g. McLennan 1865); to the development of classical assimilation theory, first by sociologists of the Chicago School led by Robert E. Park (e.g. Park and Burgess 1921) and later entrenched by Milton Gordon (1964); to studies from more current times, in which the subject has been analyzed from many different disciplines".

These disciplines include demography, sociology, cultural psychology, and social geography.

The development of theories and research into mixed marriages is commonly ground in the North American, European (mostly British), and Asian (mostly Japanese) experiences (Rodríguez-García 2015). Nevertheless, in the second decade of the 21st century, there is a tendency to stretch beyond these geographical areas. This illustrates the growing differentiation in this sub-discipline's research trends – examining the experiences, the patterns as well as the social implications of such partnerships. Testifying to this are a few special issues (see, for example, Rodríguez-García 2015 and Törngren et al. 2016) which encompass empirical research in English-speaking countries (such as the USA, Canada or the UK) as well as non-English-speaking ones (such as Japan, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, France or Spain). The number of studies into mixed marriages has risen significantly in the last few decades, especially pertaining to Western societies which are becoming increasingly more multicultural and diverse (Törngren et al. 2016).

Researchers (Kalmijn 2010; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2013) claim that mixed relationships are accelerating the process of cultural diffusion and are therefore oft-described in the literature as "barrier-breaking" relations (Rodríguez-García 2015: 9). They diminish the sharpness of social divisions and distances. They lead to social transformation in the context of increased diversity and the trespassing of social group boundaries, especially through the formation of mixed identities among the children born into such relationships. Mixed marriages can also comprise an instrument for vertical mobility, meaning the rise or fall of the socioeconomic positions of the marital partners (Morgan et al. 2016). At the same time, emphasis is drawn to the fact that the intercultural partnership or marriage contract can arouse tensions and conflicts stemming from cultural, social, religious, and/or economic differences between the partners (Le Gall and Meintel 2011; Slany et al. 2014).

Within mixed marriage research, three main currents are currently distinguished (Törngren et al. 2016: 7): 1) the likelihood and patterns of intermarriage (Epstein and Guttman 1984; Lichter, Qian, and Tumin 2015); 2) intermarriage and migration (Gonzalez-Ferrer 2006; Williams 2010; Eggebø 2013); and 3) intermarriage and social and economic integration (Marcson 1950; Hwang et al. 1997; Alba and Foner 2015).[9]

However, when it comes to the progeny of mixed marriages, literature reviews reveal a deficit as far as direct studies of children from such couples is concerned. Whereas issues concerning identification and identity, educational patterns and achievements, or the integration of children raised in binational relationships have been covered by numerous quantitative and qualitative studies, the dominating perspective is that of their parents or, more occasionally, the reflective and retrospective accounts of now adult children (Kalmijn 2010; Song 2015; Gaspar 2011; Le Gall and Meintel 2011, 2015). Consistent with this focus, children as social actors growing up in binational families are rarely asked to share their experiences in a research context (Okita 2002; Kalmijn 2015).

As a case in point, Josiane Le Gall and Deirdre Meintel (2015) investigated identity and socialization issues among children of mixed marriages, but from the perspective of the parents. On the basis of interviews with couples in Quebec, Canada, the authors discussed the identity "projects" – practices such as choice

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[9] It should be noted that the above-mentioned trends have been distinguished nominally; the borders between them are not so sharp and there is mutual interaction. Surfacing in nearly each of the identified tendencies is the theme of migrant integration not only on an ethnic level – migrants who entered into marriages mixed on micro, mezzo, or macro-social levels as well as mixed in various dimensions (legal-institutional, economic, social or cultural identity). Comprehensive reviews of mixed marriage studies conducted in light of the primary research approaches can be found in Brzozowska 2015, Rodríguez-García 2015 or Törngren et al. 2016.

of first name as well as surname and instruction in the language of the migrant parent – which the parents direct towards their children. Here Le Gall and Meintel assert that the couple's conscious decisions in the context of their child's identity formation bear broader goals than a simple transmission of ethnic heritage. The parents also aim to enrich the life of their progeny and expand the spectrum of future choices – offering the child a chance to acquire multifarious connections, equipping the child with maximized cultural resources. Research done by Le Gall and Meintel (2011) also demonstrates that social interactions with the family of the migrant parent, from his or her homeland, are sometimes stronger than those with family in Quebec even if the latter was geographically closer. The findings prove that the parents of the immigrant (and often their "native" counterparts, too) invest in the development and maintenance of bonds in order to create strong ties with the family abroad.

The portrait sketched by Le Gall and Meintel of mixed couples in Quebec is more optimistic than the one sketched by Beate Collet (2015) of mixed couples in France. This author, reflecting upon the processes to which mixed marriages are subjected, claims that these relationships generally exemplify an inherent social inequality. This inequality results from the fact that the culture of one partner (the native-born parent) is always that of the majority and will be perceived as the norm in the society of residence. Conversely, the culture of the other partner (the migrant parent) is of minority status. As a result, the mixed couple must jointly work out ways for negotiating cultural differences so as to integrate with the society in which the multinational family lives. On the basis of her research, Collet (2015: 133) identifies three "intercultural modes of conjugal adjustment": 1) adoption of the majority culture; 2) adoption of the migrant parent's culture, or 3) reciprocal intercultural exchange.

Other studies have undertaken attempts to assess the impact which mixed marriages have on the social integration of their offspring (see Rodríguez-García 2006; Song 2010; Gaspar 2011; Kalmijn 2010, 2015). Investigating African-Spanish couples in Catalonia, Rodríguez-García (2006: 403) observed that "social-class factors are more important than cultural origins in patterns of endogamy and exogamy, in the dynamics of living together and in the bringing-up of children of mixed unions". In turn, Sofia Gaspar (2011) analysed educational patterns among binational children. Taking into consideration three variables – children's language capabilities (one, two or more languages), the type of school (national or international, public or private), and family social networks (national, mixed, or international) – Gaspar identified three types of educational strategies: 1) a family assimilation strategy, 2) a binational family strategy, and 3) a peripatetic family strategy (cultural heterogeneity).

Matthijs Kalmijn (2015) analyzed the social (contacts with natives), cultural (religiosity and family values), and economic (school achievement tests) outcomes for 14 year-olds with mixed couple parentage and compared these to the results for their peers from immigrant couples as well as from native-born couples in four European countries (England, Germany, Holland, and Sweden). Kalmijn asserts that the scores for children from mixed marriages (on all three accounts) are generally situated between those for offspring of two immigrant parents and offspring of native parents. These results thus suggest that functioning in the case of mixed couple children are both mechanisms of integration as well as stigmatization.

Reviewing the current state of affairs in this field, little can be inferred from this particular lens regarding relations with the destination country's environment, daily family practices, maintenance of transnational family bonds, feelings of belonging and national identifications, language use or mediation of multiculturalism between partners. Above all, the research on binational relationships and children growing up in this family setup continues to be framed from an adult perspective; there is a clear deficit of studies that show how this works from a child's standpoint.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION: MULTICULTURAL FAMILIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THEIR CHILDREN

In first order, we will sketch the socioeconomic backdrop for the families we studied, concentrating mainly on a comparative analysis of parental employment as well as the gender roles discerned by children. This will facilitate subsequent transition into analyses of issues associated with national identification of children, family bonds, language use, and strategies for mediating multiculturalism in these mixed couple families.

WORK, CAREER PATTERNS AND GENDER ROLES

Figuring large among the families studied (both Polish-Norwegian and Polish-
-Polish) is the dual-income family model in which both parents participate in the monetarily compensated sector of the labour market. From the children's descriptions, the mothers in Polish-Norwegian families emerge, on the one hand, as nurses, teachers, carers, office administration personnel, IT engineers,

and academics; the mothers in Polish-Polish families work, on the other hand, mostly in the broadly understood sectors of "feminized" services: teachers, shop assistants, cleaners, homemakers, or carers. Conversely, fathers of children in Polish-Norwegian families are military men, engineers (oil rigs and IT), office and administrative employees, as well as artists, whereas fathers in Polish-Polish families are found in "masculine" professions related to construction, transportation or oil rigs, or work as automobile mechanics, carpenters or glaziers. Nonetheless, both parents of one child are doctors, and one father is an IT engineer (Slany and Strzemecka 2015; see Strzemecka 2017).

In Table 2 below, we present some trajectories of the professional pathways that could be inferred from the interviews with children from Polish-Norwegian families, augmented by supplementary data obtained from conversations with the parents. The purpose of this analysis is to illustrate the diversity of the career pathways. The professional trajectory of parents (promotion, degradation, no change) influences the social mobility of the family (Sorokin 1959). Family institution is considered by us to be one of the main "channels of social mobility" (e.g. Żyromski 2001) of children of migrants. In the case of the Polish migrant parent in mixed marriages, the collected data illustrated a spectrum, ranging from deprivation of qualifications or deskilling to continued maintenance of occupational status.[10] Noteworthy is the fact that educational degrees or employment qualifications achieved in Poland do not automatically or directly transfer to those recognized in Norway. As a result, the Polish parent in these mixed couples (most often the mother) had to undergo a difficult process of adaptation to the Norwegian labour market.

As for the perception of gender roles, children from Polish-Norwegian couples have been imprinted with more egalitarian gender scripts in comparison with children from Polish-Polish couples (see Slany and Strzemecka 2015; Strzemecka 2017). Gender role ideologies among children from mixed couples in Norway rely rather heavily on the cultural understanding of gender (rather than sex), favouring the equality ideas promoted and practiced in that Scandinavian society.

In contrast, children from Polish-Polish couples discover a hierarchically different value and meaning assigned to reproductive and productive work. Children raised in these families admit that their mothers work hard not only in the public, but also in the private space (Slany and Strzemecka 2015). Regardless of the fact that both parents are contributing to the household income, it is still the father who is treated by the children as the primary breadwinner (*Ibid.*: 177).

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[10] For comparisons of parental employment and careers in the Polish and Norwegian contexts from the perspective of children from Polish-Polish couples, refer to Slany and Strzemecka 2015: 164–165.

Despite parental declarations of an increasingly egalitarian division of tasks and responsibilities (see Pustułka et al. 2015), in the eyes of the offspring, the father rarely assists at home. One can, therefore, argue that the Polish-Polish families in Norway continue to anchor their functioning in an internalized representation of the *Matka Polka* (the "Polish Mother"). This representation has functioned in the collective consciousness of Poles for a long time, to the extent that it plays the role of a social myth (Slany and Strzemecka 2015).

Table 2.

Parental careers in Poland and Norway
– select cases of the mixed child's perspective

	Mother's Education, Occupation and Employment	**Father's Education, Occupation and Employment**	**Evaluation of the Professional Path** *M-Mother/F-Father*
	Poland / Norway	Poland / Norway	Norway
Karis's parents	Poland: economic analyst, worked as a receptionist, later as a computer graphics designer Norway: first a "nanny", currently working in an institution with "troubled youth"	Poland: Non-applicable Norway: University degree, financial-administrative advisor in a corporation	M: Deprivation of qualification paired with action towards changing the work situation; overall good position; improved economic situation F: Non-applicable
Sander's parents	Poland: Non-applicable Norway: University degree, PhD, researcher	Poland and Norway: University degree, Artist	M: Non-applicable F: Maintaining occupational status, more opportunities for professional development
Karolina's mother (single parent)	Poland: University degree, art education, worked in advertising Norway: Head of logistics in a company producing seedlings	Poland and Norway: Non-applicable	Deskilling, not using qualifications; new qualifications, improved economic situation

Source: authors' own analysis.

Conversely, in Polish-Norwegian families, both parents help the child in doing homework and the whole family spends more free time together. Such a state of affairs is, among other things, a consequence of a more stable situation overall and the higher socioeconomic status of families. Indeed, the level of

wealth displayed by children of Polish-Norwegian parents is higher than by their Polish-Polish counterparts since the families of the latter are have only begun to accumulate financial resources (*Ibid*.).[11]

THE CHILD'S SENSE OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING: MORE NORWEGIAN THAN POLISH

Naming one's child is a very important step in the life of a family and for the child in general. The first name, the given name, constitutes a fundamental denominator for an individual. In our research, as many as 27 children of the 32 born in Poland were given Polish names with international equivalents (e.g., Klaudia, Hanna, Julia, Wiktor, Matylda, and Oliwier). Other names included 5 which were traditional: 3 Scandinavian ones acceptable in Poland (Olaf and Karina), 1 Slavic (Miłosz), and 1 an Old-Polish derivate (Leszek). Among 12 children born in Norway, 10 received international names with Polish equivalents (e.g., Elias-Eliasz, Katarina-Katarzyna, etc.) and 2 bear names which are highly popular in Norway – Sindre and Selma.

In accord with her original findings and based upon Antonina Kłoskowska's (1996) concept of national identification and cultural valence (*walencja kulturowa*; see Slany and Strzemecka 2016a), we identified five types of national identification present among children of Polish migrants in Norway: 1) Polish univalence, 2) Norwegian univalence, 3) Polish-Norwegian bivalence, 4) Ambivalence (uncertain national identification), and 5) Polyvalence (cosmopolitism). Unlike the children raised in Norway by Polish-Polish couples, those born to mixed couples generally have no doubts in the denotation of their identities. The majority of mixed couple progeny (8 out of 12) exhibits a strong bond with Norway and unambiguously expresses a unilateral identification with that country. Comparatively, for the 32 children of the Polish-Polish couples, only 9 were univalent, 14 had double identification (Polish and Norwegian), and 9 were ambivalent in this regard.

Norway seems a natural context for the mixed couple offspring. Having been born in the country, this is where their closest acquaintances, siblings, classmates, and peers are. They are rooted in Norway and had neither a direct migratory experience, nor witnessed their parents fighting for migration success.

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[11] Due to the scope of the chapter at hand, the topics of gender roles, caring and childrearing practices, and the division of domestic labour in binational families will be reserved for future publications.

They did not have to face a speedy process of learning the Norwegian language and familiarizing themselves with local surroundings.

They do not have a strong connection to their Polish parent's country of origin; bonds are weaker still for children with a Polish father versus a Polish mother. They do not experience strong nostalgia because they do not treat Poland as their homeland which is somewhat obvious. They speak about Norway more often than about Poland, and they cheer Norwegian athletes. From interviews with children and observations of their rooms, we know that although their books are a mix of Polish, Norwegian, and English, they tend to choose Polish language versions rarely. They hardly ever have access to or watch Polish television programming; sometimes, however, they own Polish children's cartoons. Interestingly, Norwegian identity does not compete with Polish identification, despite the fact that a Polish mother will engage in tremendous efforts aimed at maintaining Polish traditions and family bonds as well as, most importantly, promoting Polish language use at home:

> *Poland is my second home, but I am Norwegian. I will never be Polish. And my sister is a total Norwegian.* (Beata, 13 years old)

However, the awareness of being a child from a multicultural family does result in questions about belonging and who one is, even in early childhood. Maintaining close relations with kin in Poland augments doubts in this respect. However, embeddedness in Norway as well as good and secure relationships with one's parents do eventually alleviate some dilemmas. At the age of 13, Beata already knows that she is Norwegian. Nonetheless, even though she claims that, she is also somewhat anchored in Polishness:

> *When I was little, I was said to ask mum who I was. I asked what should I say when people ask me who I am. Mum would say "you can say you are half-Polish, half-Norwegian, or that you are Norwegian but your mum comes from Poland" (...) I was asking this when I was about 4 years old.*

She later says:
> *I need to be going to Poland. I already told my mum: when we one day don't go to Poland, then, for me, that will not be the summer that I know. (...) I started thinking about how it would be when my grandparents are gone, because, after all, we don't have any other family [there]. (...) I don't know how it will turn out, but I simply don't want us to stop going. Maybe when we don't go to see grandma, then we'll just go travel around Poland.*

Beata's narrative testifies how observant and sensitive the children are and demonstrates the high complexity of the identity situation. The girl gives the example of her mother coming to Norway and getting married. She reflects how her mother felt very lonely and only the birth of her daughter made her stronger and provided a new sense of belonging in the receiving country. This illustrates that migrant parents in mixed couples are invested in "finding a place" (Okita 2002: 203) for themselves in a new family, while simultaneously re-establishing their family connections in the country of origin, and ultimately in a broader socio-cultural realm. They become rooted in the society through their children:

> *When my mum moved here, she had to renounce her Polish citizenship. It was a difficult time for her. She had some friends, but she had to change her pro-fession, [attend] courses. Grandparents, the Norwegian family, they are lovely people. They really wanted to meet her, but initially it was hard for her. She felt very lonely. These are different cultures. Only after I was born, she felt she had someone close. Now it is all very good.*

RELATIONS WITH POLAND: SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR

Applying a comparative lens to children from the Polish-Polish versus the Polish-Norwegian families reveals that the latter group experiences much greater emotional distances (see Slany and Strzemecka 2016b, 2017 forthcoming). While children have many relatives in Poland, they do not have such strong bonds with them as we argued was the case for the children raised by Polish mothers and fathers. We have demonstrated the existence of a "transnational intergenerational arch" (Slany and Strzemecka 2016b: 276, 2017 forthcoming), established on the basis of strong ties between grandparents in Poland and grandchildren abroad. A bond with one's grandmother was particularly special.

While the children from mixed families feel a consanguine connection to kin in Poland, the power of this bond is weaker. The transnational intergenerational arch does not occur here. The children from Polish-Norwegian families do not visit Poland as often as the children of Polish-Polish couples. Furthermore, the places which the former visit in Poland do not seem particularly attractive. For instance, 11-year old Sylvia misses shopping centres and malls when she visits her grandparents living in the countryside:

> *For holidays we don't go to Poland as much. Rather here (...), but a few times we were in Poland for Christmas. Andrea and Sanne* [Sylvia's younger sisters]

only twice, but I've gone three times. (...) [Poland] it's just where my grandmother lives, well, I like to go shopping and similar things. (...) there's no stores and only a car brings food everyday.

A typical attitude emerges which could be elaborated and described as that of "a global teenager" (Melosik 2000) who is oriented on a specific lifestyle, consumption, and transnational orientation. As noted by Zbyszko Melosik (2000: 378; cf. Kluczyńska 2010: 65), teenagers are very pragmatic and take ease of communication for granted. They are rarely surprised and the world marked by the development of the communication and transportation technologies constitutes a "close milieu" for them. The aforementioned researchers emphasize that the state and nationality are terms that are losing their original significance, ceasing to be useful when one tries to determine identity and answer the "who am I" question. The contemporary identity of a global teenager is primarily shaped by pop culture and consumption.

From the children's narratives it follows that the mixed couple families prefer spending their holidays at attractive holiday destinations. Thailand, Greece, Spain or skiing in Sweden seem more desirable than holidays in Poland. It happens that, if they do go to Poland, then they visit a spa resort in Zakopane rather than stay with their grandmother. Polish-Norwegian families perceive the world as more a "pluriverse" than a universe. Despite the fact that their private, microworld is "a world in which many worlds fit" (Zapatistas 2001: 2; cf. Chanbot and Vinthagen 2015: 526), it does also bear cosmopolitan features. Note this dialogue between the researcher and Sander, a 13 year-old boy with a Polish father who sometimes served as a translator:

R: *That's great. So actually, do you visit your grandmother in Warsaw when you guys go to Zakopane?*
S: *We haven't this time.*
Father: *We used to.*
S: *Used to.*
Father: *But not recently.*

MAINTAINING POLISHNESS AND CONTACT WITH POLAND: THE WORK OF POLISH MOTHERS

In spite of an occasional reluctance towards being Polish, the young respondents state that their mothers encourage them to read Polish books, talk to relatives, and spend leisure time during school breaks in Poland. A mother is an

intermediary in a cross-cultural transfer; she is the one to send children to Polish school, speak Polish at home, teach Polish, and read stories in Polish. Research shows that the mothers care about having children baptized and celebrate their First Communion as well as Confirmation. Sometimes these mothers also include offspring in the preparation of traditionally Polish dishes.

As Teri Okita (2002: 5) argues, "raising [children] bilingually is emotionally demanding and invisible work". The invisible work is hidden in the spousal dyad. For instance, as 7 year-old Jakub explains, his mother reads to them and helps with homework from both the Norwegian and the Polish school. The parents, as children recall, also host Polish relatives, especially the grandmothers (for more on the flying grandmother phenomenon, see Slany and Strzemecka 2016b, 2017 forthcoming) who come for Christmas or simply help their daughters out with household chores and childcare. It seems that grandmothers also ensure that the Polish language does not die out in mixed parent families. See this interview with Anna, a 10 year-old:

> R: *So since your grandma lives in Poland, how do you communicate with her?*
> *If you're here and you want to talk to her.*
> A: *In Polish.*
> R: *In Polish. And you speak on Skype or over the phone?*
> A: *Over the phone.*

Thanks to the "family work" of the mothers, the children can identify the family members of their kinship network in Poland. The offspring also speak of mothers organizing seasonal work in Norway for their brothers. However, despite "family work" to the contrary, the pull to become Norwegian is very strong. This is paired with the fact that affiliation is weakened and emotional distances are stretched to the point that some children did not know where the family in Poland lived – for instance, 10-year-old Anna did not know the name of the town. This was never the case among the children from the Polish-Polish couples.

Another key issue in maintaining Polishness is sending children to Polish schools. Four children attended supplementary Polish schools on weekends, while some parents had abandoned this educational path. From conversations it could be inferred that – as parents of children who no longer frequent such a school admit – the school's sole purpose was to teach the language, yet the actual curricular content was unsatisfactory in this regard. Some parents were disappointed by the degree of Catholic indoctrination and some children also did not want to go to school on the weekend. Overall, families preferred to spend weekend free time together.[12]

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[12] In the broader context of our Transfam research, these views were rather marginal.

Concerning the children born in Poland, 14 out of 32 attend supplementary schools. Among them, 10 frequent the Polish Saturday School in Oslo (4 girls, 6 boys) and 4 attend classes at the Polish Embassy School in Oslo (2 girls, 2 boys). Regarding the children raised in mixed couples, only 4 out of 12 children attend this type of school – all of them at the Polish Saturday School in Oslo (3 girls, 1 boy). One can surmise that they do not want or need any certificate and do not currently consider the possibility of living in Poland – this results in choosing a private school.

THE USE OF LANGUAGE:
POLISH AS A SECOND/THIRD LANGUAGE

In speaking of school and learning, the majority of the children partaking in this research knew Polish at least at a basic level and could quite easily communicate with their relatives living in Poland. However, Norwegian was used in daily life although communication with a parent and/or sibling(s) could be conducted in Polish. As a result, Polish is used occasionally – that is, above all during visits in Poland when communicating with a grandmother and/or aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. Children clearly manifest their reluctance to use the Polish language. In some cases, they even preferred to use English (for instance, in the sentence completion test). They rarely read Polish books and do not watch Polish television often. For the 23 completed tests, the progeny of mixed couples chose the Norwegian version 3 times, the English version once, and none of the children chose the Polish version; in turn, the progeny of Polish-Polish couples chose the Norwegian version 11 times, the Polish version 6 times (though one was filled in using a combination of Polish and Norwegian), and the English version twice. In comparison to the children raised by Polish-Polish couples, the conversations with the children raised by Polish-Norwegian parents highlighted the latter group's weaker language competency in Polish. Mixed couple children prefer Norwegian and English in both speaking and writing, and would rather read in Norwegian or English. Polish appears to be too difficult for them.

Having an international partner requires use of the language of the country of residence, especially since the children have to function well in school and in the peer environment. Research shows that Polish is a second – if not a third language for the children, following Norwegian and English. It has also been noticed that the first-born child in a family manifests stronger connection to Poland than subsequent children.

Sometimes Beata [Karina's older sister] *and mum talk about something in Polish because they like to. I understand a lot; I could answer in Polish but why do so? When I am in Poland or when grandma is here, then I speak some Polish, the rest is all in Norwegian (...) I don't have to speak Polish if I don't want to. It's cool to know it, but I don't have to speak it daily, only from time to time. Maybe it'll turn out useful for me one day* (Karina, 8-years-old).

CROSS-CULTURAL SPOUSAL AND FAMILY CONTRACTS

As earlier mentioned, per Collet (2015), mixed marriages generally feature an inherent social inequality. For this reason, the partners must elaborate ways to negotiate cultural differences, especially with regards to the country in which they reside and raise their children. Based on interviews with such children – and taking into account such factors as attitudes towards the maintenance of bonds with or instruction in the language of the immigrant partner's homeland – we have delineated two main strategies of mediating multiculturalism in mixed couple families. Within the realm of spousal/partnership contracts, we observed: 1) support for mediation of multiculturalism – a willingness to undertake actions towards mediating multiculturalism, and 2) lack of such support – passivity or an aversion towards mediating multiculturalism.

1. **Supporting the mediation of multiculturalism – willingness and actions actually taken towards mediating multiculturalis**

   Here we want to share the example of 13 year-old Beata whose Norwegian father goes to Poland with his wife and daughters. When his daughters were small, he actively encouraged them to learn Polish. He has a positive attitude as far as raising children biculturally is concerned.

   (...) I am very happy that Karina [Beata's younger sister] *learnt Polish. It was also very important for our dad that we know Polish. Our dad was really for it, he wanted us to be spoken to in Polish. Even when I was little, he tried to say some words to me in Polish.*

2. **Lack of support – passivity or aversion towards mediating multiculturalism**

   In this case, we present the example of 7 year-old Jakub's family. His Norwegian father does not want to go to Poland with his wife and kids, even though Jakub would very much like for his father to visit his mother's homeland

at least once. Rather than joining in the visits with family in Poland, Jakub's father spends this time in Norway (for instance, skiing). Jakub senses the absence and passivity of his father, perhaps even holding it against him.

R: *So you are probably going with your mum and brother? Or only with your mum?*
J: *This time it was only mum and myself going to Poland. Filip wanted to. He did. And dad does not. He wants to stay here, so he goes to this [unclear]. He has to do this [unclear], he and the whole, he goes skiing with someone, or something like this.*
R: *Would you like your dad to come with you to Poland?*
J: *He has never been there.*
R: *And would you like him to go?*
J: *Well yes we could, we could go. I don't know. We cannot do that much.*

In the cases studied herein, at the moment in which this was captured by our research, the dominant model was the first strategy of supporting and actually performing mediation of multiculturalism in mixed couple families. The prevalence of this strategy could be a positive sign leading to the family's working out of a "reciprocal intercultural exchange" model (Collet 2015: 143).

CONCLUSIONS

The intensification of migration at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries in Norway is contributing to a growing number of binational couples. These pairs eventually start raising children together. Thus, the binational family is a concrete social fact and "can be considered a microlaboratory of intercultural relations" (Rodríguez-García 2015: 25). Only some years ago we were mostly witnessing Polish children arriving in Norway with their mother to join a father who had already been working there. However, there is now a new generation of Polish migrant offspring being born to mixed couples in Norway. It is this phenomenon which gave rise to this chapter in which we have tried to showcase the uniqueness of the binational family via the still underrepresented voices of children growing up in such an environment. We have uncovered the multicultural child's experiences of growing up and compared children raised in Norway by mixed heritage parents with their counterparts raised in Norway by two Polish parents. Quite evidently, the material gathered allows for the identification of certain differences between the surveyed children, mostly stemming from the

economic situation of the parents, the strength of bonds with the country of origin, and, most importantly, the role and position of the migrant parent in the relationship.

Our findings show that an awareness of being the offspring of a binational family evokes "who am I" questions, even in early childhood. Interestingly, unlike the children of nationally homogeneous Polish couples living in Norway, those of mixed couples rarely have trouble with identifying their national belonging. Most of their narratives suggest a strong link to Norway; the children are almost unambiguous about their unilateral national identification with that country. The children feel Norwegian because this is where they were born and, despite their cosmopolitan lifestyle, Norway is where they are growing up. The people closest to them are also in Norway (e.g., family members, siblings, and friends) and so are the places they consider their own (e.g., the movie theatre, school, sports club, shopping mall, etc.). They mainly want to live in Norway, even if they would consider temporary relocation elsewhere (to the US, for example).

With regard to language use, it is evident that children from heterogeneous families do not know Polish well, especially when compared to children raised by homogeneous families. Having a Norwegian partner somewhat imposes local language usage at home to a great extent; this pattern is also strengthened by a desire for the child to function well in school and peer environments. The majority of the children interviewed can converse in Polish, at least on a basic level, and this ability facilitates relatively easy communication with kin left behind in Poland. Research shows that Polish is the second favoured language for the children in this group, sometimes even moving to a tertiary position after Norwegian and English preferences, both orally and in writing.

The matter of transnational bonds among children in Polish-Norwegian families in Norway is a complex one. While they have a family bond with Poland, the connection is not as strong as that held by their Polish-Polish peers. The mixed families are usually more global and prefer spending holidays, including summer and winter school breaks, abroad. Yet new destinations (e.g., Thailand, Greece, Spain or Sweden) are more common than visiting the country of origin of the migrant parent, meaning Poland. Furthermore, it should be noted that the firstborn mixed couple children seem to manifest a stronger dual identification (more Norwegian-Polish) than their younger siblings; they do want to visit Poland regularly.

Although mixed family children position Norway as the country and culture closest to their hearts, parents still play an important role in intercultural transfer processes. The immigrant parents – particularly mothers – ensure that their children do not forget where their "secondary roots" are and engage in

"binational work". Such mothers rear their children binationally by sending them to supplementary Polish schools, speaking Polish and Norwegian, helping them with homework from both schools, and visiting Poland with them.

The Polish grandmother remains a significant agent in the intercultural transfer. Similar to the homogeneous families, the heterogeneous ones also benefit from the flying Polish grandmothers (Slany and Strzemecka 2017 forthcoming) who come during holidays or breaks, or help their daughters with household and childcare tasks. It is often thanks to the Polish grandmothers that the Polish language retains its presence in Polish-Norwegian families. The attitudes of the Norwegian partners towards the cultivation of Polishness by their spouse and children are usually positive. Overall, they support raising children in a Polish-Norwegian spirit, even if the father in one mixed family displayed a negative attitude.

To recapitulate, the children born in Norway to one Polish and one Norwegian parent are shaped by at least two cultures, with an undeniable dominance of the Norwegian component. The process by which the children become Norwegian is quite strong in the studied families, and the emotional distances exhibited with relation to Poland are vast. It is evident that the families are dominated by practices oriented towards life in Norway rather than in Poland. At the moment captured by this study, Norwegian identity does not seem to need to compete with the Polish one, despite tremendous efforts made by the migrant parent, primarily mothers. Through what Okita (2002: 203) called "invisible work", the mothers attempt to maintain Polish traditions, family bonds, and Polish language usage. Looking at the processual nature of children's identities, it is hard to predict how their relations will look in a decade or so. Nevertheless, we hope that our research will contribute to a deeper coverage and better elucidation of the binational family phenomenon studied through a child-centred approach (e.g., Hyvönena et al. 2014).

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