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**Caught between Breadwinning  
Emotional Provisions : The Case of  
Polish Migrant Fathers in Norway**

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## CAUGHT BETWEEN BREADWINNING AND EMOTIONAL PROVISIONS: THE CASE OF POLISH MIGRANT FATHERS IN NORWAY

This article discusses heterogeneity of family and parental practices among Polish migrant fathers in Norway. The paper begins with a recollection of the contemporary approaches to masculinities, and addresses the emergence of “new fatherhood” in both family scholarship and migration studies. In the conclusion to the theoretical section, we reflect on transnational parenting in the context of male mobility. The empirical basis for the study stems from a combination of biographic and narrative interviews with members of Polish migrant families in Norway: ten Polish couples and two interviews conducted with fathers alone (the interviews were reviewed for this article from the broader research dedicated to the Polish families in Norway). In the analysis, we draw on the significance of the institutional support and social expectations for creating new patterns of being a father, yet we also underline the salient importance of individual, biographical elements that certainly influence the every-day practices of Polish migrant fathers. We put forward a general conclusion that there is not a singular fathering or fatherhood type among the Polish men in Norway, but rather a continuum of various family arrangements, often propelled by men, is observed. It is therefore crucial to look at the biographies which suggest social change and a shift towards a “new fatherhood”.

Keywords: fatherhood, family migration, Poles in Norway

### INTRODUCTION

While much has been recently said about an array of consequences that increased international mobility has on Polish families, we thus far know very little on the specifically

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gendered intersections of transnational fatherhood and migrant masculinities in the Polish case. This stems from the fact that the predominant labour-market analyses look at men primarily through an economic lens and frame them as workers. Although scholarly research dedicated to family migrants increasingly provides experience-driven multi-dimensional accounts (e.g. White 2011; Slany and Ślusarczyk 2013; Muszel 2013; Pustułka 2014), there is an overwhelming absence of males whenever families are discussed.

By drawing on parental narratives collected during the Transfam<sup>1</sup> project on Polish migrant families in Norway, we showcase the stories of male migrants from Poland and embed them in the broader discourse of critical masculinity and mobility studies. It is important to underscore a general description of Polish migration to Norway as a destination country, which has been characterized primarily as masculine and male-dominated, thus presenting itself as a fitting backdrop for broader arguments on the links between mobility and masculinity (Iglicka and Gmaj 2014). The empirical basis for the study stems from the data collected under the “Migrant families in Norway/structure of power relations and negotiating values and norms in transnational families” component of the Transfam study. A combination of biographical and narrative interviewing techniques was used and, in the scope of this paper, the analytical focus was placed on a selection of ten couple interviews (father + mother interviewed together), as well as two interviews conducted solely with fathers. To complement these efforts of shedding light on the particularities of male experiences from the “giving voice”-to-men perspective (Hobson 2002; Miller 2010), we also reviewed an additional twenty accounts shared by migrant mothers and, for validation purposes, we analysed their reflections on fatherhood and the roles that their partners play in families on the move. The study employed a range of direct and indirect recruitment strategies (from online adverts to direct invitations at the Polish supplementary schools in Oslo). Quite an important methodological note is that mothers were largely more willing to be interviewed and share their experiences of family migration, and they were also significantly more present in the places of recruitment. This finding is concurrent with the general difficulties in accessing men and fathers for other research projects concerning family, as noted by McKee and O’Brien (1983), Letherby (2003: 100–101; 1993), and Kilkey, Plomien and Perrons (2013) – the last in the Polish context. Conclusively, while collecting narratives for this study was embedded in a small-scale approach which is by no means generalizable, the findings address a clearly under-researched theme in the scholarship on Polish family migrations seen from the fathers’ perspective, even more novel in the context of the Norwegian destination society. In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, the men interviewed for this study were between 29 and 53 years of age, all have settled abroad post-2004, and have at least one child (ranging in age from babies to teenagers) living in Norway. The men predominantly reside in the Oslo suburbs, with some living in the capital city itself and a few in more remote villages of the countryside. They constitute a diverse group in terms of educational attainment and are employed in a variety of sectors, working in construction and gastronomy, and holding professional positions, such as in engineering.

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In terms of the structure, we begin by bringing together various stances offered by scholarly literature in the first section, wherein we attempt to explain the abovementioned invisibility of migrant men as fathers. Moving on to the analysis, we present a range of findings, which can be divided into two main themes: (1) accounts suggesting the persistence of a breadwinner-type traditional fatherhood and a rationale for it; and (2) an existing shift towards the “new” engaged fathering evident to some migrant men. We argue that there is an urgent need to address both the underrepresentation and the heterogeneity of family practices among migrant fathers from Poland (in family studies as well as in migration scholarship). Finally, we conclude by putting forward some thoughts on overcoming the dominant discourse of men in solely economic, provisions-oriented roles in families beyond borders.

## MAPPING THE TENSIONS: MASCULINITIES, FATHERHOOD, MOBILITY

Several distinct areas of contemporary scholarship are crucial for this paper, yet it is uncommon (and hence novel) to see those themes brought together. Firstly, research into masculinity sets the scene for outlining the heterogeneity of male experiences, as well as specificity of masculinities in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Zooming in on fatherhood requires venturing into the “new fatherhood” territories that are distinctively framed in the bi-local contexts of the Polish, somewhat traditional, society on the one hand, and the impactful destination locale of Norway as a representative of the broadly devised Western European environment. Lastly, the studies on transnational parenting (and fathering) situate men within migration, pinpointing mobility-relevant masculinity costs. They also locate men as fathers in the current population flows from the CEE and seek to see them conditioned by the globalization era and, more broadly, by its implications. We will now briefly outline those three subareas.

### MASCULINITIES

In recent decades masculinity has become a salient topic for many social researchers and even more so for those specifically working in gender and queer studies (see e.g. Connell 1995; Hearn and Pringle 2006: 1; Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003: 4; Doucet 2007: 192; Landreau and Rodriguez 2011). Respectively, this interest in masculinity and social constructions of male roles has led to the emergence of a separate social research sub-discipline for which masculinity is no longer one of the analysed dimensions, but rather a central problem within various research projects. With a certain degree of generalization, we can assume that Western scholarship on masculinity can be divided into two distinct, but sometimes intertwined, theoretical and research traditions (Hearn and Pringle 2006: 1–19; Wojnicka and Ciaputa 2011: 7–22; Szczepaniak 2005). The first tradition originated from the feminist movement and theory, subsequently developed into gender and queer studies. This branch is described by an umbrella term of Critical Studies on Men [CSM] (Hearn and Pringle 2009: 5). The second counter-stance is offered by the generally anti-feminist perspective, which prescribes that men revert to normative masculine roles (e.g. Farrell 1993). This can be considered a pro-tradition response to the development of the CSM and, in a broader

sense, as the general social changes in regards to masculinity and femininity. In this paper, we follow the main theoretical assumptions of the former critical perspective.

One of the key arguments of the contemporary critical theories of masculinity is a conviction that one can distinguish multiple social constructions of masculinity that differ from each other historically, geographically, culturally, and in relation to social class orders (Connell 1995). Consequently, Connell analyzes modern masculinities through the concept of *hegemonic masculinity* defined as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (1995: 77). Hegemonic masculinity operates as the idealized image of being a man and practising the kind of manhood that men aspire to. However, not many men are actually able to meet the unrealistic standards that the model imposes, even though the majority of them benefit from its dominant position across societies. Within a hegemonic masculinity framework, Connell further distinguishes between complicit and subordinate masculinities reflexive of the existing gender order. These two types are defined, understood and practiced in the context of the hegemonic construction, since complicit masculinity refers to a social situation in which men accept and affirm the dominant masculinity model but may not be entirely able to accomplish principal roles for men due to various social and cultural reasons (Connell 1995; Wojnicka and Ciaputa 2011: 12–13). The final category of subordinate masculinity reveals a response of men who do not (or cannot) identify with the hegemonic masculinity pattern. This framing often applies to socially marginalized groups such as sexual or ethnic minorities. Once again, it is worth mentioning that masculinities as social constructions are produced through historical and global/local determinants, and are therefore subject to complex, individual and collective negotiations. Although the notion of hegemonic masculinities recalls a strong, normative and ideal model of being a man, it should be rather perceived in terms of its fluidity (Sinatti 2014). Thus, hegemonic masculinity is often linked with “traditional” characteristics associated with manhood, such as economic independence, dominance and authority, being a breadwinner or a “head of the family”. At the same time, those attributes may change in the course of time (Connell 1995; Hodges and Budig 2010). Examining hegemonic masculinities in the transnational context facilitates inclusion of a new perspective into migration studies by disclosing power relations and unstable, negotiable gender identities in the mobility framework.

Importantly, according to Connell (2012: 7) there is a specific “narrative of progress” now plaguing many studies on masculinities. It draws on a framing in which the so-called “traditional” masculinity related to patriarchal male and female social roles is juxtaposed with a new “modern” way of being a man, now defined through empathy, emotions and equality between men and women. For some researchers from CEE such a narrative may not be adequately fitting for the local context, where a discourse on sexual and gender identities is just emerging (Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011). However, one can find many examples of such a division in the Polish public discourse (see e.g. Wojnicka and Młodawska 2011; Szlendak 2005). Embedding their argumentation in the context of CEE, Kulpa and Mizielińska use the “time of coincidence” term to delineate a situation when various ideas about the shape of sexual and gender politics and the very understandings of gender and sexuality arise at the same time rather than in a temporally sequential manner (“time of sequence”, 2011: 14–16). Therefore,

we can observe particular entanglements within a “knotted time”, when ideas from across time and space can operate concurrently and be implemented as such. In time, they may take on new meanings, dissimilar from those incurred at the time of their creation. In the context of these discussions, one can assume that masculinity might be viewed as a map of multiple, distinguishable but somehow intertwined constructs consisting of various practices, identities and social roles, from the traditional to the modern attributes of being a man. With reference to masculinities in Poland, local researchers pay particular attention to the following topics: hybrid identities of men (Arcimowicz 2011), normative aspects of subordinate masculinities (Lis 2011; Pralat 2010), the notion of the nation in relation to sexuality (Kulpa 2011), and characteristics of Polish men’s movements (Wojnicka 2012). Nonetheless, it is underlined that masculinity as such has not received adequate attention from Polish researchers (Hearn and Pringle 2006: 39), and neither has fatherhood (Krajewska 2008: 67; cf. Wójcik 2013: 107), which this paper discusses next.

## FATHERHOOD

It has been argued that paternal roles became entangled with private/public division of female and male spheres, meaning that masculine responsibility has been tied to economic provisions and the primary responsibility of breadwinning, while it was a maternal duty to safeguard emotional bonding and everyday care for children (McCarthy and Edwards 2012: 96–97; Gattrell 2005; Lee, Bristow, Faircloth and Macvarish 2014). Overcoming this disassociation is presently connected to the issues of responsibility and support, as the British Family Studies and similarly positioned works argued for the difficulty that men may have with the contemporary “new” or “engaged” fatherhood (e.g. Morgan 2004; Hobson 2002; Hobson and Morgan 2002; Collier 2008: 172–173), often due to their diminishing powers in economic spheres (e.g. Pine 1998), but also in the context of limited parental rights usually granted to men when couples separate (Smart 2007).

Unlike mothering, fathering poses more difficulties in being defined as a distinct family or caring practice in its own form, leading Lamb, Pleck, Charnov and Levine (1987) to note three crucial areas of fathering, namely engagement (direct time with children), accessibility (presence at home), and responsibility (availability of care and resources). According to Lee (2014: 1–22), the “new” intensive fatherhood of the twenty-first century is supposed to resemble the intensive motherhood earlier imposed on women as providers of continuous (24/7) extensive care, devoid of their own selfhood (Hays 1996; Green 2010; Gustafson 2004). It is therefore increasingly noted by gender and family scholars that Rich’s classic (1976) distinction between public institution of motherhood and individual practice of “mothering”, may analogically be made among men, who define their fathering obligations from the place of agency and dynamic family practices. While men refer to broader constructions of socio-cultural ideals of “fatherhood”, they make their own choices of “being with children”, “doing fatherhood” or activities within “fathering” (Morgan and Hobson 2002). This indeed concurs with the application of Ruddick’s (1989) framework to “mothering” men offered by Doucet (2010: 170–180) who links parenthood with contemporary dimensions of emotional, community and “moral” responsibilities that are based on maternal roles in nurturing and

socialization, applied to everyone regardless of gender. In this paper, we follow the distinguishable logic of institutional/discursive “fatherhood” and everyday, individual “fathering”.

As it stands, gender and family research forefronts two main shifts: from mothering/fathering to – more broadly – parenting (Lee, Bristow, Faircloth and Macvarish 2014; Gattrell 2005), and from ascribed to achieved fatherhood that considers the male role as much more ambiguous and uncertain, given the lack of clarity of what contemporary “good” fatherhood is about (Furstenberg 1988; Faircloth 2014; Hobson 2002; Dermott 2008). While some may have proclaimed the arrival of the new “modified breadwinner” engaged in particular types of caring activities (O’Brien 2005; Gattrell 2005), an empirically increased level of male participation does not mean that their contributions to domestic chores and childcare are matched to (or interchangeable with) those of women (Chambers 2012: 56; Miller 2011; Mooney, Brannen, Wigfall and Parutis 2013). This puts into perspective the claim that men need to suddenly juggle both the economic responsibility that new fatherhood has not lifted and the emotional engagement that it now requires, asking if perhaps the norms of “proper” hands-on and loving parenting are more lenient for men than the strict and unattainable standards for women. A closer look at the patterns of spending time with children confirms that mothers engage mostly in “concurrent dual activities”, attempting to save time by performing chores while also taking care of children; men, on the other hand, are most likely to participate in play activities (Craig 2007). Conversely, Miller (2010) argued that a binary of provider versus carer is no longer applicable in the outlines of contemporary fatherhood, while Dermott stated that men involved in fathering rather than employment alone are “becoming culturally embedded and creating a new benchmark against which fathers are judged” (2008, cf. Mooney, Brannen, Wigfall and Parutis 2013: 374).

It is debatable whether the above paradigmatic changes affect Poland, as studies on fatherhood are still few and far between. Perhaps because womanhood, motherhood and nationhood are all connected in relying heavily on the “Mother-Pole” role-icon, it appears that “new” fatherhood is more often addressed in the sociology of the family rather than through the Critical Masculinity Studies. Some interdisciplinary new arguments have been, however, put forward in recent works that seem to be tracking down instances and preconditions for the “new fatherhood” in the media (Arcimowicz 2004; Wójcik 2013), policy (Suwada 2013) and politics (Fuszara 2008). Going back to the meanings of being a parent in Poland, Kubicki delineated two models of Polish fatherhood as Catholic and laic, which differ in relation to their hands-on participation, levels of individualism permitted in the performance of fathering, and in their acceptance or rejection of the normative models of Polish heterosexual masculinity (2009: 77–103). Conversely, other researchers have argued that the changes to masculinity in Poland are only skin-deep and are introducing a superficial “cosmetic” change to patriarchy (Szlendak 2009: 62–76; Titkow, Duch-Krzyszoszek and Budrowska 2004). Somewhat marrying the two perspectives, Budrowska believes that the traditional fatherhood pattern is outdated, but a new one has not yet emerged (2008: 125) and she explains the lack of any attempt to develop a modern fatherhood model through the arguably recent democratization, and the fact that the Mother-Pole stereotype has gone in the direction of “traditionalization” (Titkow 2007). Furthermore, it is worth noting that, when it comes to “new” or active fatherhood, there is little institutional support and insufficient interest on the part of the Polish state, which is



evident in the absence of fatherhood on the agendas of the social and welfare institutions. Illustratively, just recently released and media-reported data on the participation of men in the newly introduced “parental leave” (which has operated in parallel to the “maternity leave” in Poland since 2013) shows a gender distribution where among all leave-takers, new fathers constitute a mere 2% (Kostrzewski and Miączyński 2014) – a finding consistent with the earlier pattern of leave-taking prior to the introduction of the new welfare instrument. Conclusively, while some steps have been taken to promote a more gender-equal model, they do not cause significant social change (Suwada 2013) and should be seen as relevant predominantly for the educated urban middle-classes (see e.g. Sikorska 2009).

## MOBILITY

In migration scholarship, the position of male subjects was largely argued as privileged, due to the fact that women were historically underrepresented and overlooked in the currents of male-streams and the normative “working man” migrant-ideal (e.g. Morokvasic 1983: 16–18, 2004; Mahler and Pessar 2001). Further, while transnational mothers who leave their children behind are vastly criticized or even evaluated as proverbial embodiments of inept “bad motherhood” that causes “social evil” (Avila 2008; Urbańska 2009), fathers are rewarded and hailed as “heroes” who sacrifice themselves for their families (Avila 2008: 128). What others notice, however, is that this type of one-dimensional framing has hampered mainstream research from developing a more critically nuanced perspective on migrant men outside of the labour market assumptions (e.g. Kilkey, Plomien and Perrons 2013: 178). This is particularly evident in the context of Polish flows to Norway, where men in fact dominate this migration stream but are, with few exceptions (e.g. Friberg 2012; Sokół-Rudowska 2010; Ryndyk 2013), consistently discussed in the studies devoid of any reflection on gender and family (e.g. Rye and Andrzejewska 2010; Anioł 2009), and/or are portrayed in specifically stereotypical male occupations as, for instance, workers in the construction sector (Bratsberg and Raaum 2012; Napierała and Trevena 2010; Napierała 2010).

In general, masculinity in migration is only marginally viewed in its complexity, for instance as gender-non-normative (Kilkey 2010; Manalansan 2006), racialized (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner 1999; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013), or family-driven. While scholarship on transnational mothering has flourished in the last two decades (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parreñas 2001; Pratt 2012; Nicholson 2006; Madianou and Miller 2011), fathers’ experiences of parenting at a distance were largely overlooked. This has happened despite the fact that fathers were included in Levitt and Jaworsky’s (2007) now-classic point about the shift towards examining the generalized ideas of “reproduction in the everyday of transnational families”, investigating the role of the experiences of mothers, fathers, children, and the elderly in multi-generational transnational families.

Works dealing specifically with migrant men as fathers include the arguments offered by Parreñas (2008), Pribilsky (2004), and Dreby (2006), among others. Parreñas pinpointed the traditional split within the gender norms being reinforced by migration, which “removes fathers from daily interactions in the family and consequently in their absence, even if only inadvertently, further reaffirms the traditional division of labour of a male breadwinner and



a female homemaker” (2008: 1058). Henceforth, a male success in being a good father can be measured by material milestones, such as building a house, paying children’s tuition, or fulfilment of similar financially-conceived needs and desires. Parreñas further argues that transnational fathers appear to lean towards a “heightened version of conventional fathering” (Parreñas 2008: 1058) which relies upon display of power and disciplining actions, as well as a primary focus on monetary contributions (Parreñas 2008: 1069). This can be linked to the fact that some mothers across studies were found to re-traditionalize and hold on to their heritage-derived models and traditions of mothering upon migration (e.g. Szczepanikova 2012; Pustułka 2014; Muszel 2013).

Analogically, the border-crossing men may see their traditionally gendered absence and provisions-oriented fatherhood as a confirmation of their strong masculinity, unfettered by migration (Parreñas 2008: 1059). Nevertheless, Parreñas underscores a distance and “a gap” that are inevitably created between migrating fathers and their children over long-term migrations (Parreñas 2008: 1064–1066). Such an emotional boundary is never easy to overcome (see e.g. Pratt 2012), especially when a father is oriented towards a traditional role and becomes the one tasked with control and order. A situation of paternal return or family reunification which entails a change in the father’s position and his “sudden presence” might be perceived as difficult, unwelcome and causing fatigue, to a point where a child prefers the father’s absence, despite the fact that many years of pedagogical efforts within family practices could have taught him or her to be respectful and grateful for the hard work that the parent endures abroad (Mummert 2005; Pratt 2012).

What seems to be even more relevant to the Polish case is reiteration of the above findings in the context of Mexican mothers and fathers parenting from a distance, as described by Dreby (2006). While the author argues that “women’s maternal roles are sacralized, whereas fathers’ roles are tied to financial provision” (2006: 32–33, see also Pribilsky 2004; Kilkey, Plomien and Perrons 2013), it is geographically astonishing but sensible under the similar domination of Catholicism that Dreby’s study offers parallels between Poland and Latin American countries in the recollection of *marianismo*, according to which “women should be self-negating and martyrs for their children because they are spiritually and morally superior to men [...]. In contrast, Mexican fathers’ role in the family is linked to honour rather than morality” (2006: 35).

Crucially, the absence of a father does not seem to significantly disrupt the previously established family structure. According to Parreñas (2008: 1061), nuclear families with absent fathers continue their intra-unit self-reliance with little to no help from the outside, and this finding equally holds for the CEE-based research. Conversely, maternal migration (like any other absence of a mother) means that members of the extended (i.e. non-nuclear) kin enter the scene of family practices. In most cases, grandparents instantly play crucial roles in the lives of the left-behind children. This means that, unlike fathers’ journeys, maternal migrations necessitate at least a partial reconfiguration of families and often lead to someone from a more broadly understood family (grandmother, aunt, various female in-laws) being in charge and becoming head of the family, despite the fact that the father actually remains at home (Walczak 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). For a neighbouring example of Ukraine, Tolstokorova (2010) underlines that migrations neither change gender orders nor

push mothers and fathers towards the new intensive (or engaged) parenting. Moreover, even if fathers temporarily take over the responsibilities earlier bestowed on mothers during female migrations, there is an underlying assumption that maternal return will bring back the *status quo ante* (Yarowa 2006). In essence, social understanding of absence is highly gendered, as it is discursively connected to the problems of lessened discipline and a lack of “male role-model” for children of absent fathers, while it is perceived as paramount threat for a family’s salient role in transmitting the most important values and securing care whenever mothers are the ones to migrate (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Dreby 2006; Nicholson 2006; Pratt 2012; Pustulka 2012).

Considering the above argumentations, it is not surprising that migrant fatherhood is predominantly conceived from a relational standpoint, meaning that fathers are analysed as impacting the children’s situation (e.g. Parreñas 2008), or affecting the entirety of a family (as a social institution, see e.g. Nobles 2013). Only few recent projects have yielded some preliminary results focused on intergenerational changes within fatherhood in the case of Polish migrant families in the United Kingdom (Kilkey, Plomien and Perrons 2013; Mooney, Brannen, Wigfall and Parutis 2013), while “parenting” has also been addressed more broadly in a selection of other studies (e.g. Muszel 2013; Krzyżowski 2013; White 2011; Pustulka 2014; D’Angelo, Ryan 2011). A dearth of research deals with fathers on their own terms and gives them voice to self-express and evaluate their situation, their parental role, and ways used to construct their identities as men, migrants and fathers (see e.g. Kilkey, Plomien and Perrons 2013; Brannen, Mooney and Wigfall 2013). Interestingly, Pribilisky (2004) and Kilkey, Plomien and Perrons (2013) go beyond the stance that migration is instrumentally materialistic for fathers, speaking to the importance of the broader societal and postmodern change of seeing children as (social/investment) projects under intensive parenting. The latter is evident globally (Giddens 1998; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Lee, Bristow, Faircloth and Macvarish 2014), as well as in Poland (Bojar 1991: 63; Olcoń-Kubicka 2009a: 116). Analysing parental migrations in this very context, it is crucial to ask how migration, absence and distance (largely brought on by objective/structural features of the financial situation and/or the predefined needs of a household) can be reconciled with the requirements behind the new engaged fatherhood. Those tensions and a steady shift towards intensive parenthood will shape the themes of our analyses.

## MIGRANT FATHERHOOD AND FATHERING: A DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To start with a perhaps trivial, yet crucial, remark, it is clear from the empirical evidence that men and women talk differently about their migratory experiences and life trajectories. While it is not a novel finding in the context of feminist research on male/female public/private division of lived spaces being reproduced in the narratives (Miller 2010; Letherby 2003; Maynard and Purvis 1994), the women respondents in our research organized their trajectories on the axis of the topics related to family life (e.g. children’s births and development milestones, everyday practices, intra-family negotiations and difficulties), while the male informants structured their narratives in relation to the issues connected to employment

(e.g. promotion, new jobs, unemployment). This societal fixedness on parenting as a female domain implicitly excludes male narratives and hinders access to the unheard stories (see also Hobson 2002; Miller 2010), which are clearly of paramount value for discussing men from the perspectives of the Critical Masculinity- and Feminist Studies. Consistently, our male respondents appeared to feel preconditioned or obliged to define their caring roles primarily from the stance of securing financial well-being and living standards, while other dimensions of fatherhood were pushed to the background (see also Lamb, Pleck, Charnov and Levine 1987), and required significant probing from the researcher to eventually uncover complex and contextualized forms of fathering beyond its economic understandings.

In the context of the study, Budrowska's hypothesis (2008) about incomplete transition appears quite fitting, but it is nevertheless possible to argue for the arrival of a subsequent phase of social change within the model of fatherhood. The qualitative character of our project on the one hand signifies a low number of cases, yet on the other hand it draws the attention to the in-depth factors in the constructions of new fathering, which are strongly tied to the migration experiences in the individual male biographies. The traditional, patriarchal model of a breadwinner can still be observed within a range of fathering practices, but it might not be fully adequate and often stems from a somewhat non-reflexive answer to the dominant discourse of the social pressures within providing for one's family and securing proper sustenance, while forsaking emotional bonds, leisure and quality time with one's family. We argue that the observable pattern of new fathering does not simply mirror the "intensive motherhood" (Hays 1996), which is the recent thesis of Lee (2014) and a point of feminist critiques for Doucet (2010a, 2010b) or Ruddick (1989). Instead, we believe that Miller's (2010) and Gattrell's (2005) frameworks are more suitable for our analysis as they rely on a more long-term-oriented diversity, negotiations and shared parental engagement in actual caring practices (inclusive of custodial care), as well as a sense of responsibility over children and family that is expressed equally by men and women. This heavily depends on the fact that changes are reinforced and inevitable when men encounter the quite strikingly different cultural norms of fathering in Norway.

Let us begin with Michał's story of taking a 3-month paternal leave when his younger daughter Milena was born and comparing this recent experience with the time when his older child – Jola – was born in Poland:

With Jola it was totally different because we were living with the in-laws, and [...] in Poland it was not like here at all, after coming home from work I had to do something else [another job] (Michał, 36, m: 2006, (2) daughters: 2004, 2011)<sup>2</sup>.

This story must be seen in the context of the Norwegian society, where there are strong normative expectations for significant active fathering practices and state-implemented policies, such as the paternal leave quota (since the 1990s) that fosters male domestic care-work (Kitterød and Pettersen 2006). Further, Kitterød (2014), who analysed fathering practices and

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<sup>2</sup> To inform the readers about some basic background of our respondents, we provide annotation to our interview quotes in the following format: (Pseudonym-coded name, age of the respondent, m: date of migration to Norway, (number of children): their gender and dates of births).

work-family reconciliations in the framework of the time-use surveys conducted 1971–2010, recalls that 83% of Norwegian men reported doing some housework daily in 2010, and reports a new 2010 pattern of fathers with children under 3 years of age spending increasingly more time with their offspring and cutting down on work hours. Indeed, Michał's story above relies on the premise that a work-life balance is "a given" of family life in Norway. It was further discovered during the interview that Michał actually asked his wife to share with him some part of her pre-assigned leave, and eventually concluded with the admission that he feels like he has lost a lot by not being there for his first child. Evidently, in Michał's case it was the mobility from a country with little institutional and social support for engaged fathering (Poland), to a country with institutional obligation and practical societal expectations (Norway) that ultimately led to an emotionally beneficial care arrangement. Simultaneously, this shift and admission of affectionate fathering are by no means universal, but rather represent one of the possibilities on the continuum of male attitudes.

To take a step back to the other end of the continuum, the patriarchal breadwinner model was often further fuelled by migration, and still perseveres. It may be partially explained by the dominant sequence of primary (male) migration among our respondents. It suggests that Polish men largely perceive women as tied-stayers within mobility projects, with an underlying assumption that maternal absence is "dangerous" for families (e.g. Pustułka 2012; Nicholson 2006; Pratt 2012). Consistently, in many couple interviews men would not discuss their fatherly role at all, deferring questions on family life to their wives. Several accounts from mothers painted quite a pessimistic picture of men leaving their families behind, with seemingly little reflection on the consequences of their absence and essentially forcing women to follow them to Norway if they wanted to preserve the family's unity. Like in other studies on family life and division of housework (McCarthy and Edwards 2012: 96–97; Chambers 2012; Titkow, Duch-Krzyszczoszek and Budrowska 2004), the bulk of housework remained under the charge of our female respondents on a daily basis. In particular, Polish fathers were very unlikely to engage in care of babies and toddlers aged three and under. Additionally, many accounts pictured a reflection of patriarchal gendered structures and hegemonic order of masculinities, where men and women were inherently separated and constrained by traditional understandings of their roles. During one of the couple interviews with parents of five children, in which a maternal grandmother is always called over from Poland for periods following childbirth, Przemek – the husband – complained about the flawed timing that left him alone for a day with three older sons when his wife was giving birth to their fourth child. He reflected:

Somehow I managed, but, well, it is like Beata [wife] said – she is, you know, fulfilled by being at home, and so and so, like her [mother]. So now mum [in-law] arrived, so she helps Beata, and I have to admit that I do not, I cannot do laundry, really, maybe once in a blue moon, very rarely and if she is here – then **never**. [...] Ela [2-year-old daughter] knows better, she knows those [housework] things better than I do. [When we were folding laundry] she was passing me pieces of clothing and she knew that this was dad's, this was Dominik's and this is Darek's [brothers], this Ela's; [...her] brothers who are much older do not know these things (Przemek, 32, m: 2006, (5) sons 2002, 2006, 2009, daughters 2011, 2013).

It is important to note Przemek's sincere belief that his wife is a woman truly happy with being a mother and carer, who became even more traditional in her dedication to housework in the years following migration. While there is a thesis that women often use the economic gains of mobility as enablers of re-traditionalization in the form of quitting work and staying at home (Szczepanikova 2012; Pustułka 2014; Muszel 2013), there is no discussion about the kind of consequences this particular "backlash" can have for men. We argue that a broader perspective on intra-marital gender relations is necessary to evaluate the fact that while many men prefer and choose patriarchal organization of labour and tie their identities with Connell's (1995) hegemonic masculinity, some of them merely react to the choices made by women.

Nonetheless, fathers' unfamiliarity with children's lives was also evident in Jan's account – an example of a family with highly gender-divided female and male spheres, where the father is quite uninvolved and rather uninterested in home matters and childcare. Jan, who was interviewed alone, openly underlined his lack of information on the schooling system and found it hard to specify his child's daily schedule or school obligations. In his wife's absence, he simply redirected certain questions to his 11-year-old doing homework in the adjoining room, one example of such basic questions being about the time she spent daily at the kindergarten. Perhaps illustrating some intergenerational differences, Jan, who is 53 and remarried, when asked specifically about his parenting experiences across the life-course consistently fails to acknowledge the fact that he had left his (now grown-up) son back in Poland. At the same time, his construction of fatherhood does not move beyond the simple "breadwinning" task. He said:

Well, yes, a 10-year-old-girl, you have to take care of her somehow... show some things, her mom and I show her different things, different. [...] I try to show her that life does not end with school, friends and Justin Bieber [...], that other things exist, like some sports [...] But other matters like having to clean or such and such home stuff, this is rather my wife's domain (Jan, 53, m: 2007, (2) son 1980s, daughter 2003).

To reiterate, Jan broadened his scope of parental duties from material to developmental responsibility, yet what he accomplished is still just a step towards active fathering in everyday life. Consequently, he displays a characteristic trait of men who seek to abandon the most stereotypical hands-on "new fatherhood" (O'Brien 2005), but participates instead in the selected tasks that he deems most appropriate or simply convenient (i.e. leisure rather than custodial care), revealing that the burden of care is to remain on the mother's side (see also Craig 2007). Thus, for Jan's and Przemek's stories, we can argue that some "cosmetic" changes (Szlendak 2009) to the practices of the traditional fatherhood are seen as the respondents seem to be more involved in the upbringing of their children. The fact of the matter is, however, that those small novelties do not indicate changes within gender relations in families, and still portray these men as embodiments of the well-known breadwinner figure. As such, they rather reinforce the constructions of traditional masculinity in general, and in socialization processes of children more specifically. In that sense, we are here looking at an exemplification of the aforementioned "time of coincidence" (Kulpa and Mizelińska 2011), as various types of identities and ideas relating to fatherhood or masculinity in general (from different geographic spaces and different times) do not simply result in a straightforward transfer of

the Norwegian patterns into the migrants' communities, but rather create and shape new hybrid practices, inclusive of those, wherein the "conservative" component is strengthened.

As per our approach of sketching out a continuum of the masculinity-fathering practices, other Polish men are seen as beginning to transgress the breadwinner model and move towards a new fatherhood. Taking on a modified breadwinner's role which, to a degree, bridges the economic and emotional components, is evident in the story of Cyryl – a 32-year-old labourer from a working class background, who moved to Norway in 2000 as a single man ready to take on a job. Cyryl had met his future-bride back in Warsaw and he convinced her to join him in 2005, as he "did not believe in long-distance relationships". Soon thereafter they were expecting a baby and rushed a wedding. Despite raising a son together, Cyryl and his wife grew apart and faced marital problems that ultimately led to a divorce a few years back. Separation aside, Cyryl kept reassuring his involvement in his child's life from birth, as he underlined his bravery in assisting the delivery of his son in a hospital back in Poland. In this interesting post-divorce context, the father recalls that initially he could spend time with his son only every Wednesday and every other weekend, but he has subsequently decided to apply for a shared custody and has been ever since enjoying a 50–50 split of time divided between his ex-wife and himself. Moreover, he likes to emphasize that he is the only Polish father in his municipality who actually applied for (and was granted) joint custody, having actively reached out to institutional support.

Despite this significant involvement, Cyryl does not dedicate much reflection to his own parenting. Therefore, Cyryl's "new fatherhood" is much more prominent in the routine family practices, everyday activities and his attitude towards his child. This is visible in how they try to organize time in an active way when his son stays over at his father's place: they go fishing or skiing, visit Oslo and other cities, go to a playground, and so on. Although during the interview he recalled mainly how he spent his spare time with his child playing and did not mention his engagement in domestic duties, he expressed an emotional involvement and attachment to his child when describing Igor's hospitalization in Norway. Thus, we can safely assume that he performs care duties due to the 50/50 time allocation arrangement between the two parents. Asked directly for the meaning of fatherhood in his life, Cyryl replied:

I don't know how to say it, I'm just a happy man, I'm happy that I have a son (Cyryl, 32, m: 2000, (1) son 2007).

Cyryl becomes frustrated when he mentions having to work until 5 pm while his son must wait for him at the afterschool program, showing the imminent need of defining his fathering through spending (quality) time with his son. Further, he is not the traditionally disciplining and authoritarian father that we know from Parreñas' works, as he specifically stated that he was beaten by his own father, hence he would never hit Igor and always explains everything to him patiently.

In relation to the differences between the children's upbringing in Poland and in Norway, Cyryl pointed out that the Norwegian environment is a better place for having a family due to financial reasons, a stable job and the general sense of security:

I mean, I don't know how upbringing of kids looks in Poland, [...] because I never had a child in Poland. And in Poland I worked only for three days, [...] But generally speaking I don't know,



**I can see my friends' and other people's experiences and it is catastrophic [in Poland].** With one's salary you can buy some clothes for kids, for yourself, pay the bills. Suppose that one gets his salary on the 10th [of every month], so on the 13th, 14th after [paying] the bills, only 50 Polish Zloty is left.

We can observe that Cyryl paid particular attention to the economic issues of childrearing, and, even though he describes quality time with his son, he still appears focused on the material provisions in defining his fatherhood, similarly to the respondents known from the works of Dreby (2006), Nicholson (2006) or Parreñas (2009). Illustratively, although he does not plan a return to Poland, he is keeping his flat in Warsaw just in case his son would like to live there sometime in the future. It is noteworthy that such future-oriented investments and economic understandings of fatherhood do not necessarily counter the new fathering, especially if one views them from the perspective of the postmodern child-centrality and the parental social investment projects devised for children (Giddens 1998; Beck and Beck--Gernsheim 2002; Lee, Bristow, Faircloth and Macvarish 2014). While subscribing to the notions of intensive parenting may somewhat obscure the emotional dimension of fatherhood, there is evidence that Polish parents are particularly prone to ensuring that their children will have a better future in financial terms (Bojar 1991: 63; Olcoń-Kubicka 2009a: 116), making it unsurprising that our respondents explicitly underlined this issue.

Continuously, the next step in conceiving a migratory model of new fathering should include some notes on the links between the emotional engagement of men in the father-child relations, nowadays increasingly raised by family scholars (Gattrell 2005; Hobson 2002). We believe that while in several of our respondents' families, the father-child bond has might not yet been given an importance equal to that of the presumed mother-child inseparability, it nevertheless warranted a consideration during migration decision-making processes. Aurelia, who is just about to leave Poland and join her husband in Norway said:

Initially it was Skype every day, every other day, but then, now, the children are bigger, they understand and they just cry when they would see him on the video, so we decided it was too much, this hysteria, so we decided not to do it anymore. It is very tough and that's why we have to move (Aurelia, 34, m: 2014, (2): daughter 2011, son 2013).

This was reproduced in the post-mobility narratives, as the emotional toll of missing his son was the key and primary reason for Paweł's decision to bring his spouse and child over to Norway for good:

It was decided that it was the time [to reunite] because Marek [son] was terribly missing me. You kept telling me how he missed me. I could not, I really could not sit around, here or there. I hated it. [...] I could not look at his pictures – had to hide them away, the pictures on the phone and on the computer because I missed him so much. And I read him stories over skype and he would fall asleep, remember? On Skype we saw each other very often (Paweł, 38, m: 2007, (1) son 2007).

In this quote it is quite clear that fathers articulate their emotional needs in relation to the family life – a pattern expressly more present in the broader literature on men, masculinities and fatherhood (Miller 2010; Hobson 2002). In this sense, the sexless and economically-oriented

framings of the men's journeys abroad do not hold much explanatory value, as they fully overlook both the distress and the ultimate familial agency that fathers display when addressing the family separation. Moreover, it is important to note that it is not only explicitly more socially acceptable, but it also begins to be a desirable trait for men to show their love and affection towards children.

This leads us to the final points on the "new fathering" type represented by the aforementioned Michał who, together with his wife Magda, are in agreement about the positive impact of the existing division of labour in the household. Michał shares a conviction that it is good that fathers take care of the children and initially jokes that family was "unharméd" by him taking a paternal leave, while his wife shares that she was worried whether "he was not enjoying being a housewife too much". Eventually, Michał spoke up about the benefits of the early care for the creation of a father-child bond. This final argument was shared by a significant group of our respondents – fathers and mothers alike, as they were often critical of the patriarchal model and valued the shared responsibility over raising children. Quite significantly, two women in our study who are no longer married to the fathers of their children still decided on staying in Norway due to the importance of the closeness and the emotional relationships that their respective children have with their fathers. Together the above arguments illuminate that a foreign setting with its institutional demands on fathers might foster renegotiations and the fathers' own discoveries of the joy that family life in general and fathering in particular can bring.

## CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS

This paper tackles a novel aspect of the Polish migrations to Norway, not only by looking at previously overlooked family practices, but predominantly through our focus on men – the key actors of this migration flow – and their narratives of fatherhood and fathering. In this sense, we shed light on Polish masculinity by embedding our arguments in both the sending and receiving locales, as we use the implicit comparative aspect of the migrants' accounts for assessing the potentiality and conditions for a social change.

Overall we argue that there is no single type of fathering or fatherhood among Polish men in Norway, but rather that a range (or a continuum) of male attitudes to parenting should indicate two clear findings. First, due to the heterogeneity of experiences, migrants should be treated as individuals with significantly varied biographies. Secondly, while we argue that a new fathering emerges in the Polish context, it is neither independent of the institutional welfare-state and the gender mainstreaming in Norway, nor is it a universal change.

The fathers we encountered cannot escape redefinitions of their own roles as fathers, as their migratory decision signifies operating in the culturally and institutionally different context of the Norwegian society. More often than not, Polish fathers are lacking clarity on what "new" or contemporary fatherhood is and should be, demonstrating the persistent significance of the earlier findings on the matter (Furstenberg 1988; Faircloth 2014; Hobson 2002; Dermott 2008). In dealing with this ambivalence, on the one hand they attentively observe the Norwegian practices of fathering, especially since they usually highly value the local

way of spending leisure time, and clearly benefit from the fact that they, for example, work much less than they used to (or would have to) in Poland. On the other hand, the majority of our respondents maintain strong transnational ties with their country of origin, which practically makes them subject to the influences of the Polish models of fatherhood and motherhood (see also Pustułka 2014; Muszel 2013). This has an effect on both men and women, as evident in the language that Magda – wife of the “new” father Michał – used to express her slight discomfort with how much Michał was enjoying the role of the stay-at-home parent. In our view, this highlights a persistent social belief that parental leave is still generally not considered as something that fathers do – a possible reflection of the normative practice in Poland (wherein mothers are commonly the sole carers, see e.g. Titkow, Duch-Krzystoszek and Budrowska 2004; Kotowska 2007). It also pinpoints that gender negotiations and changes to familial practices are not straightforward and can entail resistance – on the part of both mothers and fathers.

It is quite apparent that the processes of recounting social change are (with few exceptions) not very reflective in nature. A majority of the observable issues can be classified as new forms of fathering practices (Hobson and Morgan 2002), rather than as forming a holistically new vision of fatherhood. The respondents can rarely point out rationales for their new practices. Some key aspects can be traced to the new cultural/national surroundings (“This is how things are done in Norway”), some are attributable to structural conditions (work-life balance), and others to one’s individual situation (e.g. life after divorce). It is then justifiable to refer to a classic distinction that Rich (1976) proposed be made between motherhood as a (public) institution and motherhood (or mothering) as a (private) personal experience. There is analytical value in applying said differentiation to men, as this seems to be the dividing axis between the patriarchal and traditional breadwinners that mainly perceive their role as a duty towards the (economically determined) continuation of families and societies, and the “new fathers” who adapt to post-migration and make certain creatively dynamic interventions to their fathering practices. This is not to say that new fathers are independent from the outside pressures, but rather that their individual negotiations allow for decisions that spearhead emotional involvement, caring and affection.

To sum up, in our research we discovered that significant institutional and normative influences on fatherhood from Norway are paired with how individual agency is executed. While we do not aim at offering a new model of fatherhood, we argue here that Polish migrant fathers should be seen through the lens of the every-day practices (i.e. playing with children, engaging in sports activities etc.). In other words, as presented in this paper, some significant changes can be observed in the Polish migrant case of “doing fatherhood” and “fathering” on the personal and individual level, seen on the temporal continuum over the course of the respondents’ biographies. However, a new reflexively-derived definition of what being a father actually means to the Polish migrant men cannot be unanimously formulated, as it has not yet reached a public debate phase in which men could collectively narrate their experiences. We believe that our findings can assist in such efforts towards a formulation of a more robust framework of male mobility experiences within family contexts and beyond. By disassembling the myth of the male migration assumed to be solely labour-orientated, we put a range of migratory fathering experiences on the map.

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#### POLSCY OJCOWIE W NORWEGII – MIĘDZY OBOWIĄZKIEM UTRZYMANIA RODZINY A UCZUCIOWYM WYMIAREM RODZICIELSTWA NA EMIGRACJI

Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia różnorodność praktyk rodzicielskich w wybranych kontekstach rodzinnych dotyczących polskich ojców, którzy przebywają wraz z rodzinami na emigracji w Norwegii. Tekst otwiera rekapitulacja współczesnych koncepcji teoretycznych w obrębie studiów nad męskością oraz analiza istniejących, jak i dopiero wyłaniających się modeli ojcostwa. Przedstawione stanowiska omawiają zarówno badania w ramach socjologii rodziny, jak i perspektywę studiów migracyjnych. Szczególną uwagę poświęcamy zamykającemu przegląd literatury zagadnieniu transnarodowego rodzicielstwa w kontekście mobilności mężczyzn.

Empiryczną podstawę artykułu stanowią wywiady biograficzne i narracyjne przeprowadzone w rodzinach polskich migrantów i migrantek. Do szczegółowej analizy wybrano dziesięć wywiadów z parami (mażeńskimi) oraz dwa wywiady przeprowadzone tylko z ojcami. Dane reprezentują szersze badania w ramach projektu „Transfam” poświęconego polskim rodzinom w Norwegii.

W części analitycznej wykazane zostaje z jednej strony znaczenie instytucjonalnego wsparcia i społecznych oczekiwań dla powstawania nowych wzorów bycia ojcem, a z drugiej rola indywidualnych, biograficznych czynników wpływających na codzienne praktyki ojców migrantów. Podkreślamy, że wśród polskich migrantów w Norwegii dostrzec można raczej pewne kontinuum postaw, aniżeli jeden dominujący wzór ojcostwa, tym bardziej cenne jest więc podejście biograficzne, dające możliwość wglądu w przyczyny i przebieg przemian społecznych prowadzących do wyłaniania się „nowego ojcostwa”.

Słowa kluczowe: ojcostwo, migracje rodzin, Polacy w Norwegii