

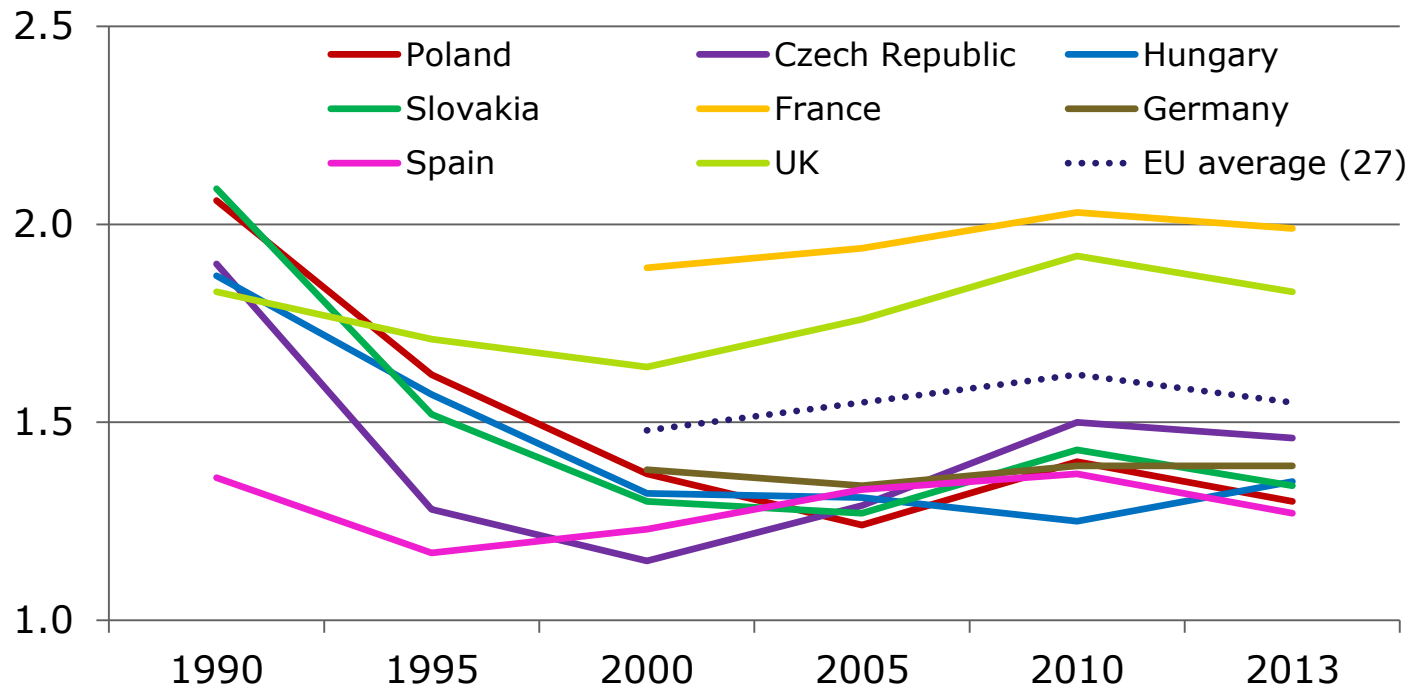
# **KIN SUPPORT AND CHILDBEARING INTENTIONS**

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# Background

- European countries: TFR fell from above to below replacement levels



## ❑ Low fertility

- How to deal with the “threat” of ageing populations?

## ❑ Gap between desired and actual number of children

“...income was the most often cited barrier to childbearing, closely followed by problems with housing... suggesting that income-associated pressures may be critical in fertility decisions...”

(Mishtal, 2009, p. 612)

“...the combination of ...paid leave, childcare services and financial transfers... for working parents ...is likely to facilitate parents’ choice to have children” (Luci-Greulich et al. 2013, pg. 397)

## ❑ Policies to reduce costs of childbearing

- CCE countries such as Poland
  - Low TFR persists despite numerous policies reducing childbearing costs
    - ✓ Extended paid leave
    - ✓ Child care services
    - ✓ Financial transfers

**How do we make sense of this?**

# Research question



- How Polish migrants and non-migrants rationalize childbearing costs and achieving adequate resources for childbearing?

# Methodology

## □ In-depth interviews

- ✓ Open to individuals' perspectives, to gather rich data
- ✓ Data collected until a point of saturation was reached

## □ Sample selection:

- ✓ Mothers and fathers
- ✓ Various education level
- ✓ Migrants resided in the UK at least 2 years
- ✓ Final sample (n=42)

- ❑ Contacting respondents
- ❑ Nvivo 8
- ❑ Thematic analysis
- ❑ Interviews conducted & analysed in Polish
- ❑ Limitations:
  - ✓ Interviewing individuals rather than couples
  - ✓ Lack of kin/grandparents' perspective

# Comparative study design

- ❑ Comparing Poles living in different countries
  - ❑ Similar upbringing but live in different environments
  - ❑ Poles in Poland
    - ✓ Persistent very low TFRs
  - ❑ Polish migrants in UK
    - ✓ High(er) TFR



# Poland: kin support seen as vital for childbearing

- State's support for families in Poland perceived as poor, one should rely on the market and family help:

*...these days one should rather count on oneself, or on family, because from the state there is no help (Jurek, 25, Krakow).*

*...We get benefits but it is a terribly small amount, **if one lives at parents' then you can survive**, but independently, if one was to live somewhere in a flat there are no chances [to survive]...they [parents] help... (Józef, 28, Krakow)*

- Financial & in-kind support (housing, food, clothes, toys, childcare)

*...our parents help... we always get a lot of food from them and other things too, this helps a lot... We can always borrow money from my mother... (Mariola 29, Krakow)*

- ❑ Family help long-term and “reliable” in present but also in future (safety net?)

*JM: Are there any conditions on which your decision about a second child depends?*

*W: ... there is always help...surely we can borrow money if we need...we can count on money to buy a house [in the future] but every month... we get 1000 [£213] zlotys [from parents]... (Wojciech, 32, Krakow)*

- ❑ Perceptions of living costs & social expectations seem to reinforce idea that parents need to assist adult children:

*... if you do not have any financial help from parents then it is very hard even to live anywhere, because flats are so expensive ...One cannot manage, without parents' help you simply cannot even live in Krakow... (Bartłomiej, 30, Krakow)*

*It is “a matter of honour” to help adult children (Jurek, 25, Krakow)*

- ❑ Kin support can make it easier to start a family  
BUT
- ❑ Negative consequences for higher parity intentions? Children with fewer siblings have better access to parental help as adults:

*...so we will own two flats, and with three kids, I would give one flat to two children and nothing for the third one? So this would be a bit strange... (Waldek, 23, Krakow)*

*I would not want him [child] to look for a flat and take a mortgage...to support a child, provide this start for a child... to educate him...and to provide him with a flat... you need finances and with two children it would not be easy. (Marta, 29, Krakow)*



# Poles in London: overall no financial/in-kind help

- ❑ Some supported their family in Poland:

*...we often help them [family in Poland], because one needs to buy coal or something, now the roof needs changing... Because my parents also got ill and they cannot afford medication... (Kuba, 33, London)*

- ❑ State support for families reported as adequate and a “safety net” in case it is needed in future:

*...another child means expenditure...I know that here, if our finances do not allow for this, then the government will help. (Marek, 25, London)*

*...Now I am in a good financial situation... but I also have this awareness that I have a chance to get different benefits... This I think is good, with a low income it would be more difficult to have a bigger family [3 or more children] and with these benefits this makes a difference... (Felicjan, 24, London)*

- London: little or no expectations of supporting children into adulthood, perhaps because:
  - ✓ Polish parents in London generally did not rely on parental support themselves –no expectation of indirect reciprocity?
  - ✓ Many London-based informants, unlike these in Krakow, considered renting an acceptable & affordable solution.
  - ✓ Migration seen as a way to provide children with certain type of 'support' in itself (e.g. better career opportunities for children brought up in UK, languages etc.)

*...I had ambitions for him [son] to speak English...I tell him [son] that the fact that we are here, **this is an enormous opportunity** ... My son has more possibilities of working here, he can learn, **whatever he does with his life later, he has much more opportunities here** (Edyta, 33, London)*

# Migration as a strategy for the asset poor & family oriented?

- In London and Krakow migration was seen as a strategy to achieve housing or financial means to have children when family support was not available:

*...we rented in Poland...We came here to earn for a flat...because we had to earn for it [flat] ourselves... (Natalia, 27, London)*

*... we are not coming from some rich families... we do not have our own property there [in Poland]... if I got a job [in Poland] and earned...this is nothing...if I was to rent a flat... (Janusz, 32, London)*

# Concluding remarks

- ❑ The importance of extensive long-term kin support increases economic resources, seen as necessary for childrearing, leading to lower reproductive intentions because parents expect to invest rather heavily in children long into adulthoods.
- ❑ Polish respondents in London did not rely on kin-support & their expectations about the necessity of long-term financial investment in children were overall lower than in Krakow.

# Arising questions

- ✓ How grandparents perceived their assistance to their adult offspring? Did they encourage or discourage respondents to have more children?
- ✓ Do childbearing intentions at all relate to individuals' (prospective) caring responsibilities towards their own aging parents?
- ✓ What if anything can governments do to reduce long-term costs of childbearing?



**Questions?**

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