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**Working Paper**

## Return migration of second-generation British poles

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**Return migration of second-  
generation British Poles**

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**Agata Górny  
Dorota Osipovič**

March 2006

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## **Return migration of second - generation British Poles**

### **Summary**

This paper demonstrates the findings of our qualitative research into the second-generation British Poles living in Warsaw and London that was carried out in 2002-03. As shown in our interviews, they perceive themselves as a distinct group partly due to a specific national identity consisting of a mix of Polish and British elements. We focus on the 'return wave' of the second-generation British Poles being a response to changes in Poland. In fact, only relatively small part of this group returned to Poland in the 1990s and 2000s and 'returns for good' were exceptions rather than the rule. Then, remigration of the second-generation British Poles remains closer to transmigration than to repatriation or settlement migration. Moreover, on the collective level of the Polish émigré community, as we uncovered in the diaspora press analysis, the dream of return to the sovereign Poland underwent a reality check, being replaced by some alternative ideas regarding help for Poland or involvement in Polish matters. Nevertheless, Poland is present in life prospects of the second-generation British Poles that remained in the UK, in one way or another as for example in planning the retirement or buying a property in Poland, regular visits in Poland and so on.

## **Migracja powrotna drugiego pokolenia Brytyjskich Polaków**

### **Streszczenie**

Niniejsze opracowanie przedstawia najważniejsze wnioski z badania jakościowego dotyczącego drugiego pokolenia „brytyjskich Polaków” mieszkających w Warszawie i Londynie, które zostało zrealizowane w latach 2002-03. Jak pokazują nasze wywiady, „brytyjscy Polacy” mają silne poczucie odrębności grupowej oparte, w dużym stopniu, na specyficznie skonstruowanej tożsamości narodowej łączącej elementy polskich i brytyjskich wartości. Najwięcej uwagi poświęcamy zjawisku powrotów drugiego pokolenia „brytyjskich Polaków”, które pojawiło się jako jeden z rezultatów przemian systemowych w Polsce. Wszystko wskazuje na to, że tylko niewielka część omawianej grupy powróciła w latach 1990. i 2000. do Polski, a „powroty na dobre” stanowiły wśród nich raczej wyjątki niż regułę. W rzeczy samej, omawiana remigracja przypomina bardziej transmigrację niż repatriację czy migrację osiedleńczą. Co więcej, jak pokazała przeprowadzona przez nas analiza prasy emigracyjnej, marzenia o powrocie do niepodległej Polski, pielęgnowane przez lata przez polskich emigrantów, zostały zrewidowane na poziomie zbiorowym polskiej społeczności i zastąpione przez alternatywne pomysły zaangażowania w pomoc Polsce i sprawy polskie. Należy jednak podkreślić, że Polska jest obecna w przestrzeniach życiowych drugiego pokolenia „brytyjskich Polaków” pozostających w Wielkiej Brytanii w postaci, na przykład, regularnych wizyt w kraju rodziców, bądź planów spędzenia emerytury, czy nabycia nieruchomości w Polsce.

## **1. Introduction**

There are about 20 million Poles living outside Poland with 10 million Polish people and their descendants living in the U.S. alone (see [www.polonia.org](http://www.polonia.org)), whereas the total population of Poland is below 40 million. Poles abroad are not only emigrants representing different waves of emigration from Poland, but also descendants of Polish emigrants. Hundreds of organisations established by Poles aiming to preserve and promote Polish culture with the help of numerous media can be found all over the world. Polish communities abroad can be also considered as actively involved in political situation in Poland. Consequently, Poles living abroad earned the name “Polish diaspora”, even though the character of that group does not fully fit into the contemporary definition of the diaspora<sup>3</sup>.

A tradition of maintaining contacts and co-operation with Poles abroad had already developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was institutionalised in the II Republic of Poland (1918-39), (Kołodziej, 1998). This tradition was, to a large extent, broken by the Polish People’s Republic in the late 1940s. Most diaspora members declared themselves to be anti-communist and perceived the members of the Polish Government in Exile as the only legal representatives of the Polish nation. It turned their activities from co-operation into opposition towards the Polish communist state and made good relations between the Polish State and the diaspora very difficult if not impossible.

Nevertheless, in the past 25 years of Polish history, Poles living abroad have witnessed a few breakthrough moments that has influenced the lives of individuals and the functioning of the Polish society as a whole. The rise of the “Solidarity” movement in the early 1980; the Round Table Talks at the beginning of 1989 which initiated the period of political, social and economic transformation in Poland; and the Polish accession to the European Union in 2004 constitute historical events that had an impact on the life strategies of Poles around the world. It is also without doubts that establishment of the III Republic of Poland in 1989 was a breaking point in relations between the Polish State and its emigrants, as it terminated antagonism between the communist Polish state and strictly anti-communist Polish diaspora. Consequently, the nature of these relations and the role of the diaspora required an appropriate redefinition. It applied also to individual life strategies of the diaspora’s members – especially of the most active ones.

One possible individual strategy was return to democratic Poland. Indeed, in the 1990s, Poland witnessed a growth of return migration comprising Polish emigrants coming back after short-term emigration and those returning after decades of their stay abroad. As estimated by the Polish Central Statistical Office, return migration may have constituted even half of the overall inflow to Poland in the 1990s (compare Iglicka, 2002). Results of the National Census of 2002

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<sup>3</sup> The short discussion referring to this term is presented in Chapter 2.2.



suggest even higher proportion - people possessing Polish citizenship accounted for as much as 82% of 85,525 people who immigrated to Poland in 1989-2002<sup>4</sup>. Among immigrants coming from typical countries of emigration of Polish people, that share is even higher - around 90%. The biggest group of Polish citizens came from the United States – 11,535 people – constituting 95% of inflow from that country. In fact, Polish analysts of migration agree that both the proportion and number of Polish people coming back to Poland in the 1990s can have been even underestimated in the Census (CSO, 2003).<sup>5</sup>

The detailed characteristics of the return flow to Poland are unknown due to problems in measuring this phenomenon. It should be noted, however, that Poles returning to Poland comprised not only first-generation, but also second-generation remigrants. Estimating the size of the latter provides a particular challenge due to the “greyness” of official status of this group in Poland since second-generation Poles coming from abroad can be foreign citizens or dual citizens, as they had been born and grew up in foreign countries. Dual citizens (Polish citizenship and citizenship of a foreign country) constitute almost one third of all immigrants who settled in Poland in 1989-2002. Again, the biggest group of dual citizens came to Poland from the United States – 4518 (CSO, 2003). Certainly dual citizens can be also first-generation remigrants who naturalised in countries of their emigration.

This report is to examine selected aspects of changes that took place in the strategies, activities and attitudes of the Polish diaspora as a consequence of political transition in Poland in the late 1980s. In particular, we focus on the remigration to Poland as the possible reaction of the diaspora members. We pay the main attention to the individual strategies, but we interrogate also the diaspora press demonstrating some elements of the discussion on this issue in the 1990s. The report is devoted only to the part of the Polish diaspora – Poles living in London. The choice of Great Britain and London, in particular, seems to be justified by several reasons. Firstly, London was one of the centres of political activities of the diaspora by hosting the Polish Government in Exile. Secondly, short distance between Poland and the UK, in particular between Warsaw and London, facilitates migration thus also remigration, as returnees can easily maintain links with the both countries.

The object of our analysis is second-generation British Poles in London and Warsaw. The first sub-group comprises people that maintain their Polishness “in some way” and can be recognised as members of the Polish group. The second one includes second-generation British Poles that remigrated to Warsaw after 1989. In our view, this research group constitutes an interesting and important case study for examining changes that took place in the Polish diaspora in the 1990s. They represent a generation that grew up when the anti-communist and political mission of the Polish diaspora was born and implemented during over 40 years of the communism in Poland and their parents were likely to be the leaders of the Polish community in Britain. It can be also argued that the second-generation is one of the main actors on the Polish

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<sup>4</sup> It refers to permanent immigration – for settlement.

<sup>5</sup> There is no place to discuss the methodology of the Census here, but one of the reasons why remigration to Poland is underestimated is the fact that many Polish emigrants do not register their (even long-term) leave and, according to the official registries, they are Polish residents even though they are staying in a foreign country. Normally, their coming back is thus also not registered and it can be also the case with the Census data.

diaspora social scene who take part in defining the role and character of the Polish diaspora in the light of passing of older generation and fresh influx of newcomers from Poland in the 1990s and 2000s. Furthermore, returnees of the second generation are likely to return to Poland to implement their life strategies, in contrast to the first-generation remigrants that can be expected to “remigrate for retirement”. On the one hand, it makes analysis of this return flow important from the point of view of the future of the Polish community in London. On the other hand, its examination can contribute to understanding of the phenomenon of remigration as such. Last but not least, we believe that our work will contribute to the existing analyses of the situation of second-generation British Poles (Żebrowska 1986; Sword 1996) that need to be updated and followed up, bearing in mind the constantly changing circumstances of the situation in Poland and the fluent nature of individual’s sense of national identity.

Our main argument elaborated in this report is that political transition in Poland had an important impact on the group of second-generation British Poles in London. More intensive contacts with Poland and its inhabitants after 1989 can have been a source of some reconsideration or even redefinition of second-generation British Poles’ Polishness that had formed in a separation from a “real Polish life”. The existence of still active community of second-generation British Poles in London at the moment, suggests that return to Poland was one but many responses to changes in Poland. In our view, it has been chosen by selected remigrants who were either strongly ideologically motivated or well prepared to go to Poland in terms of their professional skills, interests and contacts. Moreover, unstable political and economic situation in Poland implied high uncertainty as to the success of return, thus, it is likely that only part of returnees stayed in Poland permanently. We argue, however, that remigration and intensive mobility between Poland and the UK in the 1990s provided for formation of mutual links between the both countries. Consequently, “access to Poland” enabled by the political transition in the late 1980s, became easier than it had ever been in the communist time. Poland’s accession to the European Union and opening of the British labour market for Polish nationals in 2004 constitute further facilitators of mobility, contacts and links between the two countries. All that can lead to further intensification of contacts and different types of co-operation between second-generation British Poles in London and people in Poland.

The report includes 8 chapters. First chapter is introduction whereas the last one demonstrates the most important conclusive remarks. Chapter 2 presents empirical data and definitions used in the report. Analytical chapters start with examination of Polishness of the second-generation British Poles and fluctuations that their identity went through over the years. Subsequently, in Chapter 4, the diaspora press analysis allows for demonstrating an importance of “return option” in discussion as to the role of the Polish community in the UK in a changed political situation in Poland. It is followed by two chapters devoted to remigration of second-generation British Poles. Chapter 5 deals with factors of remigration, whereas Chapter 6 addresses several problems related to the nature of returns: patterns of mobility, evaluation of remigration and its prospects. Chapter 7 demonstrates attitudes as to remigration and life strategies of second-generation British Poles that did not commit remigration at the time of the research.

## **2. Empirical Data and Selected Definitions**

### **2.1. Empirical Data**

This report is based on the results of the research project “Return Migration of the Second-generation British Poles. Warsaw or London?”, which has been undertaken by the Institute for Social Studies (Warsaw University) and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (University College London) in spring 2003, and sponsored by MB Grabowski Fund. It was a continuation of the study “Return Migration from USA, UK and Germany into Poland” coordinated by the Institute of Public Affairs (Warsaw) and School of Slavonic and East European Studies in 2001-2002. The research was sponsored by the German Marshal Fund and co-financed with MB Grabowski Fund. In this report we consider these two research projects as a one two-stage study.

Our aim was to compare the strategies and motives of two groups of British Poles belonging to the same generation – one group which decided to move to Poland and the other which stayed in the country of birth. The definition of the second generation used in this research requires the person to be born in the UK and to have both Polish parents, who were born in Poland (taking into account the borders of Poland before the World War II) and at least one of whom moved to Great Britain as a consequence of the World War II. We insisted on inclusion of that particular wave of Polish emigrants since they formed a close-knitted Polish community in the UK after the World War II. Consequently, their children are particularly likely to share common experiences of growing up in the Polish environment and of exercising a strong pressure on preservation of Polish identity in the UK. It was also our assumption that the idea of ‘the return to the Polish homeland’ was present and maintained in this group. All that make this part of second-generation British Poles a relatively homogenous group to research which members can be expected to have considered return to Poland after 1989. The chosen perspective, even though including some particular conditions, agrees with the historically grounded understanding of immigrants generations (see Eckstein, 2002).

The research group comprises 36 second-generation British Poles. Among them, 25 persons are returnees who were interviewed in Warsaw whereas 11 remaining people lived in London at the time of the study. Most of interviews were conducted during the year 2003 (15 in Warsaw – marked 01Wn to 15Wn and 11 in London – marked 01L to 11L). In addition we had at our disposal 10 interviews with returnees conducted during the previous research in Warsaw in autumn – winter 2001/2002 (marked 01Wo to 10Wo). In accordance with our research goal, interviewed return migrants came to Poland after 1989. We included, however, in the research group also two cases, where the return to Poland took place earlier. Analysis of these two cases brings about not only interesting information, but constitutes also an important point of reference for examination of how motives and incentives to come to Poland changed after 1989. It should be also noted that out of 11 respondents interviewed in London – 2 returned to London after

spending a couple of years in Poland. These two cases are, thus, included in the analysis of motives of remigration to Poland.

The research technique was a semi-structured in-depth interview carried out on the basis of scenario. All interviews were carried out in Polish, but respondents had always a possibility to express some complicated issues in English. The snow ball method of recruiting the respondents was used during the studies in Warsaw and London. It should be, thus, noted that conclusions from the analysis of interviews should not be automatically extended to the situation of second-generation British Poles living in other parts of Poland and the UK. Tables 1 and 2 show the breakdown of the respondents by year of birth and gender.

Table 1. Respondents by year of birth

	<b>Warsaw</b>	<b>London</b>
<b>1945-1955</b>	16	4
<b>1956-1965</b>	8	4
<b>1966-1974</b>	1	3
	25	11

*Source:* Own elaboration

Table 2. Respondents by gender

	<b>Warsaw</b>	<b>London</b>
<b>Male</b>	20	9
<b>Female</b>	5	2
	25	11

*Source:* Own elaboration

Even though we use interviews with returnees carried out in different periods – 2001/2002 and 2003, we argue that it does not have a strong impact on the analysis of motives of their returns and migratory patterns. As shown in Table 3, all respondents returned to Poland before 2002 and were present in Warsaw at the time of each stage of the research.

Table 3. Returnees by year of return and date of interview

<b>The year of return</b>	<b>The date of interview</b>	
	<b>2001/2002</b>	<b>2003<sup>a</sup></b>
<b>the 1970s</b>	2	0
<b>1989</b>	0	1
<b>1990-1992</b>	3	3
<b>1993-1995</b>	4	9
<b>1996-1998</b>	0	2
<b>1999-2001</b>	1	2
<b>Total</b>	10	17

<sup>a</sup> Including two reverse returnees interviewed in London. They remigrated to Poland in 1989 and 1992. Their return to London took place in 1996 and around 1994, respectively.

*Source:* Own elaboration

Two additional techniques were used in order to provide a wider context for interpretation of the data from in-depth interviews – press analysis and focus group interview. The London diaspora press was reviewed. Two papers were taken into account – the Polish daily “Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza” (1989-1992) and the monthly magazine “Orzeł Biały” (1989-2000). The aim of the press review was to determine whether the matter of return to Poland was high on the agenda of diaspora newspapers at the beginning of the 1990s. Moreover, it aimed at capturing the themes which dominated the published diaspora media regarding the future of the exile community.

Apart from identifying the press material relating directly to the issues of return and visits to Poland, we have also searched the diaspora press in an attempt to find the articles dealing with the redefining of the role of the Polish exile community in the UK after the political changes in Poland. Having this broad aim in mind, we have identified over 150 different items – articles, letters, interviews and advertisements – which were published in the Polish Daily “Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza” during the years 1989-1992. We decided to choose this four year period with the aim of capturing the public mood and main debates during the time when many of our second generation respondents started to think about the return. The Polish daily was the biggest Polish newspaper published at that time in London, associated with the exile establishment. Additionally, we have searched the issues of “Orzeł Biały”, a monthly magazine published by the Polish Ex-Servicemen Association (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów) covering the period from 1989 to 2000. Fourteen articles from “Orzeł Biały” were selected as relevant to the chosen search criteria.

The focus group discussion with the returnees took place in November 2003 in Warsaw. The four respondents invited for the discussion can be considered as key informants with regard to the group of second-generation British Poles in London and Warsaw. In London, all of them were strongly involved in activities of the Polish community. In Warsaw, they have many contacts with other British Poles and actively participate in business and social life of this group. Moreover, except for one respondent, the interviewees remigrated to Poland at the beginning of the 1990s and were observing the phenomenon of returns virtually from the moment when the process started. Therefore, we treat them as experts as to mechanisms of remigration of second-generation British Poles and its consequences.

## **2.2. Selected Definitions**

Second-generation British Poles constitute a group characterised by a complex identity. It is thus necessary to make several remarks regarding terms and definitions that we are using in this report. In general, Poles living abroad do not form a homogenous group. Economic emigration from Poland to western European countries and Americas dates back to the XIX century. These movements initiated the formation of Polish communities abroad. Subsequent waves were of various character including post-war emigration of Polish soldiers, political emigration in the communist time and, in particular, “Solidarity” emigration in the 1980s. The communist time emigration comprised also economic emigrants, as going to the west provided

them with enormous economic gain and possibility of incomparably higher standards of life when compared to the Polish People's Republic.

This report is devoted, first of all, to the situation of the second generation of British Poles. However indirectly it touches upon the issues of the first generation, which predominantly consisted of Polish soldiers, constituting the post-war emigration. They did not return to the communist Poland as they did not consider it to be a sovereign country but a soviet satellite. To this latter group add some Poles – almost exclusively Polish women – that emigrated from Poland in the 1950s and 1960s and married Polish soldiers staying in the UK since 1940s. It would be difficult to separate these two waves as we are talking about Polish families in the UK. In the report, we refer to this group as to “*the first-generation of Poles in the UK*” (or when emphasising its particular political inclination – as to the “exile community” or “émigré community”). The main group, which we focus on, is “*second-generation British Poles*” (or sometimes simply “*British Poles*”). It consists of children of post-war emigrants that grew up in a particular atmosphere of anti-communism in the Polish community and acquired complex and multi faceted identity. It should be noted that the term “British Poles” used in the text does not refer to the national identity expressed by our respondents. We use this term instrumentally so as to describe the overall group and distinguish it from other “*Poles in the UK*”. Remaining types and groups of Poles living in the UK and elsewhere are named, in this report, simply as Poles in the UK (or other countries where necessary). Finally, while referring to Polish people living in Poland we use an expressions like: “*Poles in/from Poland*” or “*Polish Poles*”. Thus Poles living in the UK are diversified. However elaborating these distinctions remained largely beyond the scope of our research, which from the outset concentrated on one particular group – the second generation.

Nevertheless the first-generation Poles take up somewhat special position in relation to other groups. The first-generation of Poles, after not going back to the communist Poland, perceived themselves as exiles and preserved the ethos of a political emigrant until 1989 when Poland became a democratic country. Representatives of this group can be found in many foreign countries constituting an element of the overall Polish diaspora scattered all over the world. We use the term “*Polish diaspora*” while referring to this big group in accordance with a terminology used in Polish social sciences. Traditionally, “the word ‘diaspora’ is closely associated with enslavement, exile and loneliness. A people is seen to be scattered as a result of a traumatic historical event (Cohen, 1995:5)”. As argued by Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2003:30)<sup>6</sup>, it was, however, also applied to “certain groups such as Greeks in Western Asia and Africa, or the Arab traders who brought Islam to South-East Asia, as well as to labour migrants”. The Polish diaspora is similar to what Gabriel Sheffer (1995:9) calls ethno-national diasporas that formed as a result of “either forced or voluntary migration”. In our view, the term “Polish diaspora” is thus appropriate to describe Poles abroad as they created a community that is linked by complex social and symbolic (ethnic) ties all over the world and possess its own establishment representing its interests before the Polish government, political actors and public. Moreover, even though it is difficult to talk about involuntary emigration from Poland at the moment, the communist time can be considered as a period of not fully voluntary stay abroad of anti-communist Polish emigrants.

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<sup>6</sup> They quoted works of several other authors on this occasion.

We also think, that the establishment of the communism in Poland can be classified as enough “traumatic historical event” to justify usage of the term “diaspora” in describing Poles abroad.

### **3. Polishness of the second-generation British Poles**

One of the aims of the research project was to map the national identity of the second-generation British Poles. We were particularly interested in respondents' definitions, perceptions and internalisation of the Polish side of their identities. We hypothesised that in case of some individuals a strong identification with Polishness was one of the factors influencing the decision to remigrate to Poland at the beginning of the 1990s.

As a point of departure we adopted the view that individual's identity is a profoundly social phenomenon. In this matter we move along the lines carved out by the social identity theorists. As Richard Jenkins writes inspired by the works of Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead: "individual identity – embodied in selfhood – is not meaningful in isolation from the social world of other people. Individuals are unique and variable, but selfhood is thoroughly socially constructed: in the processes of primary and subsequent socialisation, and in the ongoing processes of social interaction within which individuals define and redefine themselves and other throughout their lives." (Jenkins, 1996: 20). The similar conceptualisation of identity however one which puts more emphasis on what one might call a substance as opposed to the process of identity is proposed by Hanna Malewska-Peyre. In her view, identity is a relatively stable structure of feelings, values and representations relating to oneself, which is shaped during individual's life, by an individual and through the contact with others (Malewska-Peyre, 1992).

As one can notice it is difficult to escape a social, group or collective dimension when one tries to define what identity actually is. One can claim that every aspect of identity of an individual is socially constructed. National identity is one of such aspects along with gender, professional, family, religious or other "sub-identities" that an individual possesses. It relates as much to what is going on "inside" the person as to what is going on "between" people. Michael Billig takes this thought even further down the line of social determinism by claiming that in fact "national identities are forms of social life rather than internal psychological states." (Billig, 1995: 24). Therefore it is crucial to include the collective, interactional and ideological dimensions in the analysis of national identity.

One can examine the social charge inherent in the concept of national identity from different perspectives and on different analytical levels. For example Benedict Anderson draws attention to the phenomenon of "imagining" the national community by its members and the ways in which nationalism creates the sense of bonding between people (Anderson, 1991). Michael Billig examines further what are the constant reminders which help people to imagine their communities in the everyday life and postulates the importance of studying discourse, language and the ways of thinking (Billig, 1995). Other scholars, referring to the tradition of symbolic interactionism and the dramaturgical perspective of Erving Goffman, emphasise the importance of everyday interactions as the ground where the national identities are constructed, expressed, upheld or rejected by the others (Reicher, Hopkins, 2001; McCrone, 2002).

Drawing mostly on the latter theoretical background, we had two broad aims in mind while analysing our empirical material. Firstly, we have focused on extracting and describing the



construct of Polishness as it emerged from the narratives of respondents – the children of the post-war immigration wave and secondly, we attempted to look at the same phenomenon from the point of view of the processes i.e. how the national identity of our respondents was constructed, communicated and reshaped and what was the role of “others” in this processes. In other words we tried to grasp what Richard Jenkins described as “a dialectical synthesis of internal and external definitions” (Jenkins, 1996: 21).

We assumed that the national identity claims expressed by our respondents are not the only indicator of their Polishness. In order to understand better the essence of Polishness as it is defined and perpetuated by the second generation of British Poles, we broadened our perspective to include several contextual factors, which reflect the acquisition of and the affinity with the particular (in this case Polish) national culture. The scenario of the interview contained such themes as the usage of Polish and English languages in different social settings and in the course of individuals’ lives, the affinity with Polish and British cultures, and finally the second generation’s construct of homeland together with an issue of rootedness. Being aware that this selection of factors is not exhaustive<sup>7</sup>, we argue that the three chosen themes – language, culture (values and customs) and image of homeland – enabled us to build a picture of the national identity of our respondents and to understand better a nature of their identity claims expressed in the interviews.

We begin with presenting the accounts from the narratives with regard to the usage of Polish and English languages, the issues of cultural affiliation and the construct of homeland. This is followed by the analysis of the national identity “self-portraits” presented by our respondents. Finally, the self-definitions of national identity are confronted with the perceptions of others who engage in the everyday life interactions with the second-generation British Poles and thereby expose the boundaries of this group.

### **3.1. Two Languages**

The linguistic affiliation of the second-generation British Poles went through different stages. Most of the respondents had not known English before they went to school. Nevertheless they learned English very quickly picking up different local accents as they were growing up. The studies and working environment were places of practical usage of English. However, English was not reserved only for the public sphere but in some cases it also started to complement or even replace Polish in communication with siblings and second-generation Polish peers.

One of the main reasons of the marginalisation of Polish spoken at home and in other informal settings relates to the quality and type of Polish available for the second generation. First of all, the quality of Polish spoken at home varied from family to family. Often the vocabulary was poor and reserved only to a narrow sphere of everyday life. Keith Sword calls this

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<sup>7</sup> Another important factor is the religious affiliation of the second-generation British Poles. Their parents were trying to bring them up not only as Poles but also as Catholics. In this analysis we have looked at the religious affiliation through the perspective of individuals’ participation in the Polish community life and the churchgoing. However, the interrelations between the national and religious identity in case of the second-generation British Poles are worth a separate piece of research, which embraces also the representatives of the second-generation British Poles who do not invest in maintaining their Polishness.

phenomenon “kitchen Polish” (Sword, 1996: 192). Secondly, language is an alive and constantly changing phenomenon – new expressions regularly enrich language. The second generation did not have enough exposure to the “alive” Polish language. One of the female returnees retrospectively pointed out this circumstance as a cause of gradual replacement of Polish by English:

*“I understood afterwards why kids stopped speaking Polish when they went to school – because in school everything was new and interesting, dynamic, and at home everything was old, what was already in the past.”*<sup>8</sup> [05Wo]

The pre-war Polish spoken by their parents could not adequately mirror the dilemmas and experiences of the second generation. The cultural and linguistic exchange with Poland was limited, partly because of the self-imposed isolation of the community in exile and its policy of distancing from everything that was associated with communist Poland. And thirdly, even if the cultural exchange had taken place, it is unlikely that the specific situation of British Poles could have been adequately reflected in Polish language alone. As there are some things which do not have representation in Polish language and vice versa there are a lot of “useless” expressions in Polish which do not have any meaning for British Pole and in British reality. One of the respondents describes his linguistic confusion during his first visit to Poland in the second half of the 1960s:

*“I remember I had to get used to the Polish words, which I did not know at all. For example (...) ‘remanent’ [stocktaking]. I did not know at all what these words are. I thought ‘remanent’ [stocktaking] is ‘remont’ [renovation]. There were completely new words for me, which were beyond my awareness. And I was speaking Polish very well. But my Polish was practically the Polish from 1939. So yes, it was a shock”* [06L].

One of our respondents regards that the insufficient knowledge of Polish language is a particular problem of the second generation, which makes it difficult for them to communicate with Poles from Poland. British Poles have frequent problems with usage of Polish language – grammar, endings and vocabulary but also they do not share the same symbolic universe of the culture which one can get to know for example through extensive studying of Polish literature and history. In opinion of one respondent the first generation is to be blamed for this “linguistic disaster” of the second generation:

*“I see the mistakes of Polonia, that we are not taught in-depth, we are not offered a good literature so we could deepen our understanding, I feel that I did not deepen my Polishness”* [01L].

Indeed, several respondents who spoke Polish very well noted that the quality of teaching Polish in Saturday schools was not satisfactory. Some respondents stopped attending Saturday schools altogether because their level of Polish was higher than the one on offer in the schools:

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<sup>8</sup> All excerpts have been translated into English for the purpose of this publication.

*“I went a couple of times to the Saturday school, but it was not serious for me, because I’ve already spoken [Polish] and when a teacher was delighted that I could read the word ‘cytryna’ [lemon] it was simply repeating what I already knew” [10Wn].*

Language is often seen as one of the most important markers of national belonging. The categorisation of reality is done differently in each language. The grammatical structures express different ways of perceiving time and space. Language is thus bringing to the surface the deeper structures embedded in a particular culture. What were the consequences of turning to English as far as the Polishness of the second generation is concerned? Interestingly, some representatives of the second generation although admitting that English dominates their lives do not perceive it as making them “less” Polish but rather see it as a distinctive feature of the group. One of the respondents living in London notes this paradox:

*“I am actually with many Poles who were born here, we speak English among ourselves, it bonds us, we speak English but we feel Polish, it is a bit strange...” [09L].*

However other respondent who experienced herself the return to Poland during the 1990s, perceived this issue as a more problematic. In her opinion this particular linguistic situation reinforced the feelings of ambiguity and lack of a clear-cut belonging. On the other hand she observed that at the same time it provided an advantage of not being confined to only one worldview and having “two outlooks on the world”:

*“We always felt ..., felt that we are different from others, that we are something odd, in the middle, that we are neither here nor there. We speak English, but we do not think in English. But also later we started to think in English, so when I came to Poland I thought in English, but Poles thought that I think in Polish because I speak in Polish. And so on during whole life. It turned out that we are between two chairs. Actually we do not fit neither here nor there. But it also has its advantages.” [01Wn]*

Knowledge of Polish started to become more useful as the political situation in Poland changed, which brought more opportunities of practical usage of Polish. The change of attitude toward the Polish language is well illustrated in the comments reflecting the views of returnees, who moved to Poland in the beginning of the 1990s:

*“I remember parents were saying ‘learn [Polish] it will be useful one day’. ‘When it is going to be useful?’ [he was answering] This kind of discussion with a stupid child (...) Mum was right that this language would be useful. I did not learn properly..” [15Wn].*

*“For the first time I see that my Polish language is not only something that I have to use to make my parents happy but also I have some profit from it” [06L].*

Some returnees noticed a gradual but substantial improvement in their Polish language proficiency after they moved to Poland. Presumably, this process was taking place in a way automatically as respondents did not mention attending any particular language courses while in Poland. In contrast, in a predominantly English linguistic environment that London respondents

experienced those who wanted to better their Polish language had to make some conscious effort in order to achieve this.

### 3.2. Two Cultures

In the course of the interview respondents were asked to compare whether they feel more affinity with Polish or British culture. The answers oscillated toward Polish extreme and ranged from an equal praising of both cultures to identifying stronger with the Polish culture. None of the respondents admitted feeling more bonded with the British culture. As one of the respondents forcibly stated that he feels closer to the Polish culture simply because:

*“British do not have a culture (...) they conquered the world but lost ... as Bible says they gained the world but lost their soul”* [10L].

When answering the question about comparison of two cultures, respondents talked either about the values, stereotypical predispositions and characteristics or about the customs characterising particular culture. In terms of values some stressed that they like this “cluster” of British and Polish values and that they try to take the best things from both cultures and combine them. Respondents admitted that while inheriting the Polish values through family, Church, Saturday school or scouting they have also absorbed the British values as a consequence of being rooted here and living in this society.

During the interview respondents spontaneously listed a substantial number of cultural characteristics and predispositions and attributed them to certain groups of Polish or British people. The interviews also contained a narrative context allowing us to distinguish whether a particular characteristic had a positive or negative connotation in opinion of the respondents. So for example the second-generation Pole from London when asked about his affinity with Polish and British cultures mentioned chivalry as a particularly positive feature characterising the first-generation of Poles in exile but not necessarily Poles from Poland:

*“A kind of chivalry that I see more often among Poles here, a kind of sense of honour. But I don’t always see it among Poles. This is what I got from the Polish community here. But of course, when one sometimes meets Poles from Poland this is another matter altogether.”* [6L]

On the basis of similar narratives we have compiled the list of British and Polish cultural characteristics<sup>9</sup> explicitly mentioned by interviewees with the positive or negative connotations. The characteristics presented in Table 4 are grouped by the place of interview (Warsaw or London) and the subgroup they mainly refer to. Positive and negative connotations are indicated in brackets.

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<sup>9</sup> The term ‘characteristics’ is used here in a widest possible meaning embracing a range of different notions such as values, predispositions, character traits and even the features of particular lifestyle or social life in the particular society.

Table 4. Selection of British and Polish cultural characteristics as perceived by respondents

Respondents interviewed in London			Respondents interviewed in Warsaw (returnees)		
British / English	Polish		British / English	Polish	
	Émigré Polish	Poles from Poland		Émigré Polish	Poles from Poland
(+) Tolerance (+) Social discipline (+) Fair play (+) Respect of the Law (+) Pragmatism (-) Work routine / stability (-) Narrow-mindedness in the outlook on world and other cultures	(+) Sense of honour, chivalry (+) Patriotism (+) Tolerance (+) Occidentalism, understanding of the West	(+) Attitudes toward older people (+) Family values (+) Spontaneity / ability to improvise (-) Disrespect of the Law (-) Caddishness / boorishness / rudeness (-) Cunning / slyness (-) Materialistic outlook on life	(+) Long term thinking (+) Ability to negotiate and compromise (+) Sense of humour (+) Respect of privacy and individual (+) Efficiency at work (-) Phlegmatic temper (-) Snobbism (-) Racism / xenophobia*	(-) Focus on the past (-) Patriotism	(+) Energy / vitality (+) Hospitality (+/-) Ingenuity (-) Lack of self-confidence (-) Lack of efficiency at work (-) Inability to compromise (-) Lack of strategic, long-term thinking and planning (-) Focus on material possessions (-) Pompousness [Tytułomania] (-) Racism (-) Intolerance (-) Indifference / apathy (-) Quick temper (-) Corruption (-) Envy (-) Backstabbing (-) Suspicion / distrust (-) Fatalism / determinism

\*mentioned in relation to the 1970s Britain

Source: Own elaboration

One must note that this list is nothing more than an attempt to illustrate subjective constructs of social and cultural reality held by some respondents. Furthermore another level of subjectivity was added by the researchers in the process of coding the interview transcripts and classifying each characteristic. Having said that, in our opinion, the above juxtaposition provides us with some interesting insights. First of all one can note that the profiles of characteristics attributed to the British group by returnees and those living in London show considerable similarity. It is when one looks at the profile of Polish characteristics (both émigré and of “Polish” Poles) the returnees and second-generation Poles living in London begin to differ. Secondly, on the whole positive Polish characteristics were more often expressed as being shared by Poles in general than the characteristics with negative connotations, which were viewed as much more “fixed” to the specific subgroup of Poles.

Both Warsaw and London informants applied the distinction of Poles from Poland and émigré Poles. The London respondents as opposed to the returnees interviewed in Warsaw provided a set of positive characteristics of émigré community. This stands in contrast with the returnees interviewed in London who seldom mentioned the émigré characteristics and in two instances presented them in a negative light. On the other hand, both Warsaw and London respondents provided a set of negative characteristics applicable mainly to Poles from Poland. However one can claim that they were based on different immediate experiences. In case of London respondents their experiences stem from encounters with Poles who come to Britain to work or from short visits to Poland, whereas Warsaw returnees ground their observations in a first hand experience of Poles during their stay and work in Poland.

It is difficult to provide an unambiguous interpretation of these results. It might be the case that by naming a number of negative Polish characteristics the remigrants took the opportunity to voice their criticism and disenchantment with the reality of social life in Poland (and in some instances with an émigré community). Nevertheless one should remember that some of those respondents already felt a part of the Polish society when voicing their criticism. The proper understanding of this narrative would require an analysis of adaptation patterns of remigrants in Poland which goes beyond the scope of this report. Here it is sufficient to observe that crucially the question on affinity with Polish and British cultures uncovered the fact of differentiation between “the cultures” of different subgroups of Poles. We will come back to this issue in the following chapters.

When having in mind customs rather than cultural characteristics, respondents’ answers were clearly skewed towards Polish extreme. Several respondents stressed that they liked all the Polish traditions maintained in their parents’ homes as it was something which positively distinguished them from the surroundings. Polish food was praised as very positive distinctive feature on a couple of occasions. A few female respondents referred also to the different way of dressing:

*“When we went to visit someone we were dressed up and wearing better clothes, English people do reverse, they dress up for work, but they wear old jeans when visiting friends, I always did the Polish way” [09L].*

Respondents emphasised that Polish customs and traditions are very rich compared to the British ones. Traditions of celebrating Christmas Eve and Easter in a Polish way are preserved and maintained by the second generation. Nevertheless one should not assume that all customs associated with different holidays or events are maintained exactly in the same way as in Poland. For example the All Saint's Day is not celebrated to such an extent as in Poland. The weddings and funerals are often a mixture of customs from both cultures.

One respondent admitted that his family celebrates Christmas according to both Polish and British traditions and Easter is celebrated in the Polish way because of the absence of British traditions characterising this time of the year.

One could ask whether respondents experienced any conflict between Polish and British values or customs? It seems legitimate to raise this question in the light of cultural differences between Britain and Poland. One can think of many everyday life dilemmas waiting to be solved e.g. whether to take care of the older parents or to find them a good care home. However this might look like a big issue from the point of view of an outsider but most of our respondents did not perceive a conflict between Polish and British values. Some of the respondents managed to incorporate "the best of both worlds" as they put it and often praised this specific blend of Polish and British values which they acquired.

### **3.3. Two Homelands**

Apart from acquiring the knowledge of Polish language and embracing Polish values and customs, the second generation deeply internalised some of the ideas inherited from their parents. Among those was a very strong sense of symbolic ties with Poland as an ethnic homeland. However, the second generation contrary to their parents did not have the intimate ties with what Stanisław Ossowski calls the "private homeland" in Poland (Ossowski, 1967). Ossowski distinguished two types of relations between an individual and their homeland – private and ideological. According to the author, "private homeland" constitutes the physical space, environment or territory with which an individual has established direct personal ties as a result of spending a considerable amount of time there or a formative life stage such as childhood years.

As with regard to the "private homelands" of the second generation, the respondents were inquired about the places where they feel "at home". The concept of place refers not only to the physical location and the social life in this location but also to the subjective values attributed to this space by an individual (Malmberg, 1997). People in such places gain a specific understanding of the social life, the additional asset which they would not have in other places. Often the intimate ties and positive charge associated with the place might be an important factor deterring people from migrating, which we will examine later on.

Evidently, the second-generation Poles could not build their relation with Poland as a homeland on the intimate ties with a particular place, as they did not have a chance to develop an attachment with any physical space in Poland. Instead they developed a second type of relation distinguished by Ossowski – a strong sense of attachment with Poland as an "ideological" homeland. It was based on internalising the patriotic notion of being a part of the Polish nation. In

effect a nation substituted a territory in the construct of Poland as homeland used by British Poles.

During Polish socialisation process in Saturday schools, Church and scouting there was a lot of stress put on the patriotic upbringing. Those who received patriotic upbringing recall the sense of “hunger” for everything what was connected with Poland as at that time Poland was very rarely present in mass media on British Isles:

*“We were taught how important Poland is. Of course, we were brought up in a very patriotic spirit (...) In the English world Poland did not exist completely. So we were searching where is this Poland? Where is Poland mentioned? And we were searching, passionately. I don’t know, like sometimes the tramp is looking for a cigarette, for a new fag-end. And so we were searching, where is this Poland in the English book? There [in Polish world] it is so important and it is everywhere and here it doesn’t exist at all, in the English world” [06L].*

However, the only Poland the second generation knew was the Poland that their parents were longing for – a nostalgic idealisation of the pre-war Poland. As migration scholars note, homeland portrayed in the immigrant narrations is not merely a physical place, but it has a time dimension as well. One of the main components of immigrants’ longing for homeland is longing for the past. As Charles Westin points out “one can return to the spatial location of this place but not to its temporal location” (Westin, 2000: 41). In the case of the first-generation Poles the feeling of nostalgia was amplified by the fact that those among them who were born in *Kresy* – the eastern parts of Poland annexed by the Soviet Union – felt that they also lost their space and they do not have a physical place to return to. This led to creation of the idyllic image of non-existing Poland. Generally, the first generation could not accept the fact that the time and space of pre-war Poland has changed irreversibly.

The image of Poland inherited from the first generation had little in common with the reality of contemporary Poland. When respondents went to visit Poland for the first time in the 1960s and 1970s this vision clashed with the reality of life in the communist country. The second-generation Poles felt astonished when they finally faced the “real” Poland:

*“And I was immediately overwhelmed, on one hand here is this Poland that parents and everybody around were talking about, that there are storks, fields, meadows, forests. People are talking in Polish and at last not in English (...) but on the other hand, it was completely different Poland” [11L].*

Nevertheless, visits in Poland in the 1960s and 1970s and, in particular, remigration in the 1990s changed the nature of ties of second-generation British Poles with Poland from virtually symbolic and/or ideological into more material links with particular places and Polish people in Poland. Thus, returnees have not only different perception of Poland than other second-generation British Poles, but also they established stronger links with country of their parents. Consequently, as revealed in our analysis, returnees define their “private homelands” in a different way. Not surprisingly, their remigratory experiences resulted in more complex perception of what is homeland for them. Full examination of returnees “private homelands” would require a detailed analysis of patterns of their remigration to Poland, as, for them, the



understanding of homeland was being reconstructed and redefined in the course of their remigratory experiences. Therefore, in this place, we only highlight some general patterns observed in the group of returnees, whereas examination of remigrations and their influence on perception of returnees' homelands are tackled more in detail in later chapters.

Poland became a homeland only for some returnees. It was particularly frequent for those who treated their remigration as the "return to homeland". It seems also that perceiving Poland as a homeland was more likely for initiators of remigration (taking up a decision individually or collectively with a spouse) than for tied remigrants (usually women). One female tied remigrant stated that she felt at home in London where she had grown up and where her parents and old friends lived. Interestingly enough, it was the only tied remigrant in our research and the only such a clear-cut opinion. For majority, it was difficult to point out a "particular homeland". Returnees tended to stress that their home was where their families lived. This attitude appear to be a consequence of the fact that remigration to Poland was often involving periods of partitioning of the returnees' families, that remigrants perceived as a bad outcome of their return to Poland.

The London respondents were more homogenous group with regard to "private homelands". Majority of them positively referred to London as "their" place. Nevertheless there were a few exceptions. One respondent with previous experience of living in Poland gave London a negative evaluation, not giving any positive response to the question. Another respondent who spent seven years working in Poland during the 1990s and then decided to come back to London named the little town in Poland, the home town of his father. Interestingly, this respondent was the only one who directly indicated a place in Poland. A third respondent did not refer to any particular place and stated that his home was everywhere where his family was. And finally yet another respondent indicated London, Krakow and a town in the USA as equally important places but then concluded:

*"London is a sort of middle point, where a person feels almost at home" [11L].*

One can notice that the reasons behind the choice of London are both pragmatic and emotional. All the advantages of living in one of the main capitals of the world such as access to theatres, galleries and museums were frequently mentioned. The respondents noted familiarity with the place and the fact that they are used to it. They know how this place operates and are very good at getting the most out of it which enables them to lead a comfortable life as one of the respondents stated: "[In London] I know where to go to Poles, I know where to go to Englishmen" [11L]. The access to Polish community and easiness of maintaining the Polish links and participating in Polish life were stressed as one of the main advantages of living in London by many respondents. Respondents noticed that living in London is convenient for maintaining Polish ties and it can serve as a substitute for living in Warsaw:

*"Besides if I want to maintain the Polish contacts where I live, there are literally three [Polish] parishes, POSK is round the corner, I can live in the Polish London, I don't need to be in Warsaw" [09L].*

Two people directly tied their sense of identity to London and described themselves as “Londoner” and “Polish Londoner”. This could indicate the readiness to embrace local identities among second-generation British Poles as a result of having feelings of attachment and affinity with the places, where they were born and brought up. Their parent’s generation did not have this sense of regional or local attachment to Britain. Parents’ “private homelands” were left behind in the pre-war Poland.

London was praised not only by the people who were born here but also by those who moved to London in the course of their lives from Leicester, Sheffield and Cardiff. Being one of the major world capitals, London pulls many people from the UK and abroad, because of its vibrant labour market. For British Poles, however, it has additional advantage of offering much more intensive Polish community life, which enables them to meet people from the same background.

*“I came here [to London] about 2 or 3 times, I sensed that here is Polonia and Poles, so I was coming back to POSK and I met a couple of acquaintances and gradually immersed myself into the life in London” [01L].*

*“I chose London because there are more things to do in London, and there is a bigger Polish community, I simply meet more people here who are either of Polish origin or Poles” [05L].*

Sometimes as in the case of one of our respondents who was born in Sheffield, London helps to rediscover and emphasise the Polish component of one’s identity:

*“I am not English, I am not Polish, I am a mixture of both, at the moment maybe a little bit more Polish than English in the mixture, but I have discovered it only here in London, if I lived somewhere else I would think that maybe more English in the mixture” [05L].*

Overall, London is an important place in the life of second-generation Poles. It is the convenient place where everything what they need is at hand. Being a multicultural city<sup>10</sup> it is also a place where people’s identities are rarely questioned by others. London is the place where both British and Polish parts of the identities of second-generation Poles can be maintained at any time. This accessibility of both worlds is the thing that matters. The other thing that matters is that both British and Polish worlds are diluted and digested through multicultural system of London. The Polish London offers a different quality of Polish environment from the one in Warsaw or Krakow. The Polish life in London is a mixture in which second generation feels the best. Therefore London is the place where one feels “almost at home”.

On the other hand, such a positive evaluation of London – common for London second-generation British Poles – is rather rare for returnees. Some of remigrants even pointed out that they did not feel at home in London due to its multiethnic diversity. Virtually ethnically homogeneous Poland is considered, by them, as a real home of Poles, in contrast, to London

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<sup>10</sup> London is often described as being “hyper-diverse”. According to the Census 2001, 27% of all Londoners were born in countries outside of the UK. Nearly 40% of Londoners described their ethnicity as not ‘White British’. This includes 3.1% of ‘White Irish’ and 8.3% of ‘White Other’. The number of Londoners who were born in Poland comprises 22,221 (ONS, Census 2001, Standard Area Statistics). One should note that this figure does not include the second generation.

where they feel to be only one but hundreds many different nationalities. They even sometimes complained that London become less “white” and European than Warsaw due to great number of foreigners originating from non-European countries. London’s size, crowd and traffic jams are other drawbacks of London, in view of returnees.

*“With my wife, we were talking about that [living in London] many times and we agree that we do not see ourselves in London; that London is sick. 11 million people in (...) and those traffic jams. Warsaw people complain about traffic jams, but they do not know what real traffic jam is. They really do not know”* [03Wn].

In general, we observe an interesting difference between returnees and second-generation British Poles staying in London. The latter group has rather positive attitude about London whereas many returnees not only prefer Poland, but also simply do not like London. Our data do not allow for determining whether that difference had been present prior to remigration of some British Poles or occurred in the course of their remigration. It should be, however, born in mind that attitude towards living in London can have had some impact on selection of remigrants from among second-generation British Poles.

### **3.4. Self-portraits of the second-generation British Poles**

The explicit national identity claims presented by the respondents during the interview reflected the fact that the second generation was influenced by both cultural environments – Polish and British. The nature of the national component of an individual’s identity is best exposed when the situation of individual is ambiguous. Poles born in Great Britain often face the problem of defining their national belonging and defending these fragile definitions during the interactions with others. As the excerpts from the interviews show, the definition of national belonging of second generation is not a straightforward one. The questions touching upon this issue brought the following answers:

*“I am Pole - Londoner”* [06L]; *“I am not English, I am not Pole. I am simply of Polish decent born in England and full stop”* [04L]; *„I suppose I feel Polish, there is no other blood in me”*<sup>11</sup> [03L]; *“Now I am feeling neither English nor Polish but a member of Polonia”*; *“I am proud to be the grey bit in the middle, neither one nor the other, I am definitely Londoner.”* [02L]; *“I am 100% British and 100% Polish”* [03Wn]; *“I am a mix, I am always saying that I am not English, I am not Polish, I am a mixture of both”* [05L]; *“I am a mixture”* [14Wn]; *“It is a complicated thing (...) I am always saying that I am European with a Polish heart and an English mind”*[04Wn]; *“I perceive myself as European”* [01Wn]; *“a man is feeling European (...) I would say I feel more Polish but I know that in Poland I am not fully a Pole (...) but I would like to regard myself as Pole and not as English (...) well, I don’t know whether I feel English or Polish, I don’t know”* [07L].

British Poles used a couple of distinctive ways for expressing the national identity in their narratives. Some interviewees preferred to deny both clear-cut identities – Polish and

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<sup>11</sup> The parts underlined were originally expressed in English.

British/English<sup>12</sup> and to opt for some “third value”. The notions of the “mix”, “the grey bit in the middle”, and “a member of Polonia community” are employed in trying to capture the situation of no correspondence between place of birth and descent. The others referred to “feeling European” or “being Londoner”. This mechanism of skipping the level of national identity by referring to supranational or local identity is a way of overcoming the difficulty in precise ethnic definition of who they feel. Some respondents expressed their identity by juxtaposing different components e.g. “British Pole”, “Polish Londoner”. In this case the respondents seem to stress that one of the identities is stronger but supported or followed up by the other.

Among those living in London, at the time of the research, none of the respondents called himself Polish without adding any qualifiers. It was more likely in the group of returnees and some respondents defined themselves as Poles, but declarations like the following one were rare:

*“I am Polish and my place is in Poland” [05Wn].*

At the same time none of the respondents chose to define themselves as solely British or English. The second generation of British Poles tried to incorporate both Polish and British parts of their identity in the self-definitions they have presented during the interviews.

The situation of being on the margin of both groups – Polish and British could lead to the inability of identifying with any of the groups. It can result in lack of belonging and can have an adverse effect on psychological well-being of the individual. Our respondents seem to notice the danger hidden in this type of situation but they try to transform the situation of being the “mix” or “between” two groups into their asset. Finding group or community they can fully identify with is of particular importance in this process of transposition. One of our respondents describes his genuine satisfaction from finally realising his “place” and finding a community which he can fully relate to:

*“And to be in this Polonia, it is very positive to be in this Polonia, to have so called community we could belong to, when I was younger I guess I felt more Polish than I feel at the moment, when I spoke to Poles from Poland they see me as English, when I am here they see me as Polish, now I am feeling neither English nor Polish but a member of Polonia (...) and here is such a community and this is not a bad community” [02L].*

Many respondents noticed that their affinity with Polishness fluctuated in the course of their life. Two main reasons were mentioned – the experience drawn from interactions with others and the influence of the life cycle.

So far as the interactional factors are concerned, the continuous juxtaposition and comparison with others is at the core of the process of identity formation. It is important to examine a particular identity claim within the context it has been made in. Consequently, one

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<sup>12</sup> The issue of distinction between referring to British identity and English, Scottish or Welsh is very complicated and requires additional exploration which goes beyond the scope of this publication. Some of our respondents seem to mix notions of ‘British’ civic/state/political identity with ‘English’ national/ethnic identity. This tendency of treating them as interchangeable is common in England (but not in Scotland and Wales) (see for example McCrone, 2002). On the other hand, some of the respondents stressed that there is a difference between notions of Englishness and Britishness. The issue of attitudes of Polish second-generation people born in Britain toward the British and English identities needs further exploration.

should not treat it as a fixed and unchangeable feature of someone's mind. One of our respondents who was born in Wales after being asked who he feels, described his flexible strategy of expressing the national identity depending on the partner of the interaction:

*"I will give you now 6 versions: I can be Welsh Pole, Polish Welsh, Polish Brit, British Pole, Polish European, British European, something like this... now I have more pragmatic, maybe even more canny attitude towards it, (...) I am simply changing my approach to this answer depending on who I am talking to, but I have learned it only recently, it's something that you learn..."* [01L].

The perceptions of other people play an influential role in shaping the individual's identity. Others can exercise power over individual through upholding or rejecting a claim to particular identity (Kiely et al., 2001; McCrone, 2002). The clash between the own-defined national identity and one ascribed to the individual by others may lead to redefining one's identity. Frequently, this kind of revision takes place after visits to Poland or talking to Poles from Poland who refused to accept the claim of being Polish made by representative of the second generation. It was especially likely for returnees, but we observed such "revision" also among second-generation British Poles in London. Two of them explicitly mentioned the process of "learning" and drawing the conclusions from the "unsuccessful" interactions i.e. when their claims were rejected by others (01L; 02L). After a series of such interactions individuals have a number of strategies to avoid this type of reaction next time. One way is to shift your own identity and redefine it towards the one perceived by others. Similar situation is being described in the quote below:

*"At the moment I feel less Polish and more how to say you know Polonia, because as I said earlier when I was in Poland and I was there at the conferences and I spoke with Poles at the university, they see me as English, in England they see me as Polish, so I am something how to say the grey bit in the middle"* [02L].

The second distinguished factor which can prompt the shifts and changes in one's identity is the life cycle. Second-generation Poles were immersed in the predominantly Polish milieu of home and social life during childhood and youth years. The only, but nevertheless powerful source of Britishness at that time was the school. Adulthood often meant moving out from home, going to universities and starting a professional career. This was the point when the second generation often moved away from the Polish way of life they used to lead in the family home. At the same time the other turning point of rediscovering the value of belonging to Polish community comes when one starts a family and has children. The decisions about children's upbringing are inevitable. Second-generation British Polish parents interviewed in London often decided to put their children through the same Polish socialisation process of Saturday school, church and scouting movement which they were exposed to as well.

Obviously, there are exceptions from this pattern – for example individuals who maintained strong Polish links all the way through their university life, forming Polish students clubs and associations. Also the so called "activists" and leaders of Polish community remained

involved all the time. Nevertheless the fluctuations of the intensity of one's Polishness can be observed in almost every biography.

Finally, one has to note an indirect impact of the external political events on the identity revision processes. The period of "Solidarity" activity in Poland followed by the introduction of Martial Law in the beginning of the 1980s was for many second-generation British Poles a profound experience. In the light of dramatic events in Poland one could not stay indifferent. One had to rethink what it means to be Polish. Many people from second generation got actively involved in different campaigns supporting the opposition in Poland. Those who did not take active part in helping Poland but were perceived by surrounding as Polish had to explain the situation in Poland in everyday conversations with British peers.

*"It was such a breaking point [year 81]. Then, I really had to think about what is Polishness. My friends were laughing, let's say after the introduction of Martial Law, that the "Solidarity" had no chances and that the communism would last (...) my involvement was growing in the 1980s. I joined [Polish] organisations – associations of Polish students and graduates" [03Wn].*

To summarise, the analysis of the narratives clearly indicates that the national identity of the second-generation British Poles is neither fixed nor unambiguous. However, it is worth noting that all respondents incorporated a Polish element into their often complex definitions of identity. Moreover, the interviews disclosed that during the course of individual's life identity is subject to a number of modifications. These identity shifts are guided by the lessons learned from the past interactions and other external factors.

### **3.5. Boundaries of the group – "Us" and "Them"**

The overview of the above dimensions of cultural belonging – language, cultural values and image of homeland along with the self-ascribed statements on the national identification – brings us to a conclusion that the situation of the second-generation British Poles is quite unique. They constitute a well-integrated but separate group in the British society. They often define themselves in opposition to English, Poles from Poland and the generation of their parents. It is sometimes easier for people from the second generation to state who they are not than to describe who they are.

The boundaries of the group are particularly visible during encounters with others. In the two-way process of interaction an individual reveals belonging to one group or another and presents himself to a partner of interaction who in turn chooses to uphold or reject his claim according to his own perception of the person. Often these two perspectives – actor's presentation and perception of other people – do not match. The encounters with others force us to realise what is our social identity – who we are in the eyes of the others. These encounters are sometimes uncomfortable especially when one predicts that their presentation will not meet with public understanding. Richard Wagner, a Romanian German poet and novelist living in Berlin, in his miniature "Millennium" describes the feelings of an individual who is about to face an uncomfortable question:

*“And where do you come from, asked the young man suddenly. The question always does get to you. Although I expected it. Although I am prepared for it. Live with it”* (Wagner, 2002: 145).

### **3.5.1. “Us” versus English**

The second generation of British Poles is well integrated but those who cherish their Polish origin perceive themselves as a rather separate group. However, to English people British Poles are an “unrecognisable” white minority. They speak English without a trace of Polish accent. The only visible marker of their Polish identity is their name, which one can choose to anglicise. As a consequence, they are often seen as English:

*“I was told by one man that I am an English gentleman so what could I possibly have in common with Polishness? (...) There are Englishmen who regard me fully as one of them”* [11L].

British people acting as an audience often judge that the place of birth is more important factor in determining someone’s identity than other markers for instance – ancestry or name<sup>13</sup>. Overall, our respondents do not seem to share this view. They put the principle of *ius sanguinis* above *ius soli*. They emphasise and defend their Polishness during the interactions with English:

*“It is always the same problem, you are treated as English. People say: ‘You are English’. I say ‘If I had been born on a plane, would I be a bird?’. So this is this kind of logic”* [01Wn].

Moreover, the boundary dividing British Poles from English peers is grounded in their upbringing, culture and Catholicism. One of the respondents mentioned that by being “different”, British Poles acquired more distance to the English society which allowed them to have a deeper insight into how this society functions. It is the kind of reflection that a “stranger” acquires while observing the host society.

### **3.5.2. “Us” versus “Polish” Poles**

British Poles also distinguish themselves from Poles from Poland. Growing up in a different environment and not sharing the same life experiences are the main differences stressed in the interviews as one example below illustrates:

*“I simply cannot feel Polish because I did not experience things which Poles of my age experienced, a lot of things happened in Poland during these 30 years, and even if I know Poland’s history and other things, I speak Polish ok, I cannot compare what they lived through”* [05L].

Not only has the lack of common experiences differentiated two groups. The language skills also distinguish British Poles as often their Polish is not perfect and they prefer to speak among themselves in English. Moreover, the mentality and behavioural norms of Poles from Poland are rather alien to what constitute British Poles cultural heritage – the mixture of the pre-war Polish and contemporary British values. This difference was already noticed during the first

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<sup>13</sup> The concept of identity markers and rules was developed by the researchers of Scottish national identity (see Bechhofer et al., 1999; Kiely et al., 2001; McCrone, 2002).

visits to Poland. The thing that British Poles noticed immediately during their first visits to Poland was the amount of roughness and impoliteness in everyday life interactions to which British Poles were not used to.

Visits to Poland were not the only experience which made the second-generation British Poles realise the gap between them and Poles from Poland. It became visible also on their “home” territory in Britain when the new migrants from Poland began to appear<sup>14</sup>. Here is how one of the male returnees interviewed in Warsaw recalled this time in Britain:

*“I have always maintained contacts with both communities, however I felt more at ease and understood in the company of Poles, I mean Poles from émigré community, born there [in Britain]. We differentiated when there was a second inflow of people from Poland, there was a clear distinction between us Poles and Poles from Poland. One used to say ‘beware, this is a Pole [Polish female] from Poland’.” [09Wo]*

With regard to the labour migration of the 1990s and early 2000s, the antisocial behaviour of Poles from Poland who were coming to London prompted one of our respondents to draw a line between the second generation born in Britain and other Poles. She admitted that she did not feel good about differentiating herself from other Poles but gave her reasoning for doing that:

*“I was always saying ‘second generation’ and it was quite terrible for me to say that you know I am different, (...) I don’t want to offend anyone, I think it’s a reputation, working illegally, trying to cheat the system, getting drunk, bad behaviour, into trouble and it doesn’t look good for Poles and those who work respectably, (...) sometimes in some situations in the recent year, I differentiate” [03L].*

Not only British Poles differentiate themselves from “Polish” Poles because of the above mentioned reasons but also Poles from Poland reinforce this distinction in a number of ways. For example during interactions they tend to regard the place of birth of the second-generation British Poles as a stronger identity marker than the ancestry. According to this way of thinking someone who was born and brought up abroad (in this case in England) cannot be regarded a “true” Pole<sup>15</sup>. Such interpretation often results in rejection of the second-generation Poles claims to Polish identity:

*“In 1975 and in 1979 when I was with my cousins in Poland and they called us, we always thought that we are Poles here but they called us ‘those English, those English’, and so, we are neither here nor there” [03L].*

*„Sometimes they see us as a kind of ‘artificial’ Poles who are not ‘true’ Poles. ‘We the true Poles we lived here’ and this and that and sometimes they have a very critical approach” [06L].*

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<sup>14</sup> Referring to the “new migrants” our respondents mostly had in mind the post-Solidarity migration and the 1990s economic migration wave to the UK. The differences with the most recent post-EU enlargement wave are yet to be explored.

<sup>15</sup> Interestingly enough, this interpretation resonates also with the one applied by British people towards the second-generation British Poles. During interactions with British people, not only second-generation British Poles will not be perceived as “true” Poles, but it is also likely that they will be simply called “British”.



Furthermore some respondents observed that Poles from Poland often confuse the accent of British Poles with one of the regional accents in Poland. Others were mistakenly recognised as Polish migrants who returned to Poland. Both situations illustrate an attempt by the Poles from Poland to “explain” a relatively unknown to them and often incomprehensible case of Poles who were born and brought up in Polishness abroad.

On the other hand it seems that in certain situations some second-generation interviewees would have liked the boundary between them and “Polish” Poles to be perceived as permeable and insignificant. For example one of the female informants from London admitted that she felt rather flattered when Poles from Poland acknowledged her Polishness or language skills and treated her as “one of them”:

*“It is sometimes a compliment to me when people think that I was born in Poland. It means that I got a little bit of accent but it is only because I have a contact [with Poles from Poland] here and I am speaking with them all the time in Polish” [09L].*

As with regard to the returnees in particular, those remigrants who chose to express their national identity as solely Polish, found it extremely difficult to be simply a Pole in Poland due to the way Polish people perceived them. Some portrayed this problem as insolvable in their case but declared that they wanted their children to be Polish and to be perceived as Polish by others. One returnee described himself as the “import” following rather derogatory expression used by some Poles from Poland for describing Poles from abroad [09Wn]. Another respondent (also returnee) began to present herself English as a result of interactions with Poles in Poland.

*“It does not matter for me any more [how Poles perceive her]. In the past, it bothered me that I was perceived as English. At the moment, it is simply the easiest to say that I am English and it is a problem of people what they think” [02Wn].*

British Poles who come to Poland are not unique in their experiences of rejection of their national identity claims by their fellow co-ethnics. Accounts of similar dissonances have been explored in other cases of ethnic return migration such as for example *Aussiedler* migration to Germany and Russian/Soviet Jews migration to Israel (Persson, 2000), or the two cases of labour migration – Romanian Hungarians migration to Hungary (Fox 2003) and Japanese Brazilian migration to Japan (Tsuda, 2003). For example, Jon Fox in his research of Transylvanian Hungarians migration to Hungary observed that “the abstract expectation of shared nationality was consistently challenged by the everyday reality of social and cultural difference the migrants experienced in Hungary.” (Fox, 2003: 452). The author concluded his analysis of the case of Transylvanian Hungarians stating that “migration processes (and the structures they engender) are conducive to the emergence and redefinition of national identities” (Fox, 2003: 462). One can observe that in many cases of the so called migrations of “ethnic affinity” (Brubaker, 1998) the reception context in the host country has a profound impact on the migrants national attachments. These first hand experiences of “ideological” homelands often lead to the modifications and redefinitions of ones national identities.

Summarising, one can note a kind of paradox experienced by the second-generation British Poles. On the one hand it is easy for them to “be” English as they tend to be perceived that way by others. On the other hand it is quite difficult to look Polish in the eyes of Poles from Poland as well as British people. As it was mentioned earlier, our respondents used a number of psychosocial strategies to find a way out of this uncomfortable situation.

### **3.5.3. “Us” versus the First Generation**

Similarly, the second generation cannot fully identify with the generation of their parents. Contrary to their parents, they had been born in Britain. This basic fact has a lot of bearing on their situation and the way of thinking. They do not share the same sentiments and views towards Poland.

Respondents involved in the Polish community life in London tend to suggest that the second generation did not get an appropriate acknowledgment from the first generation. For a long time they were not treated as serious partners who can help to shape the life of Polish community in exile. They were largely perceived by the first generation as everlasting “youth” whose level of Polishness was either optimistically overestimated or unjustly underestimated but whose uniqueness was not fully recognised or understood. The second generation often pointed out that their needs were not adequately addressed during the Polish socialisation and upbringing. This situation resulted in the perceived gap between “old” and “young”. One of the respondents describes the gap between the first and second generations in terms of “ghetto” and emphasises the isolationist aspect of functioning in these two social environments:

*“There were kinds of ghettos, the mini ghetto of Polish youth by a bigger, wider ghetto of older Polish community. And the former was not fully associated with the latter one” [06L].*

It has been noted by some that the focus on the past characterising the generation of their parents who existed in a perpetuate cycle of ceremonies and anniversaries commemorating battles and independence days obscured the needs and problems of the growing second generation. As one respondent notices:

*“Their only concern was to see their children on the stage, to comfort them and nothing else, to make them recite beautiful poems and nothing else, they did not have any concern about what will happen in the future” [01L].*

Despite criticism of the kind of Polishness served by the first generation, second generation deeply internalised some of the ideas proclaimed by their parents. Among those a strong sense of symbolic ties with Poland as a homeland in its “ideological” sense and an idea of return.

## **SUMMARY**

The significant differences prevented the second-generation British Poles from the full identification with any of the three social groups – English, Poles from Poland or the first generation. Instead, the experiences drawn from encounters with others led to the

acknowledgement of own uniqueness which strengthened their in-group solidarity. The common circumstances of growing up and similar experiences from interactions with others created a sense of mutual, “wordless” understanding and internal bonding. One of our interviewees vividly explained the advantages of this “wordless” understanding which emerged in the second-generation environment:

*“I don’t have to explain why this thing hangs on the wall, why we eat this, what is that, how my surname is spelt, name, where my parents come from, how did they come here... English always asked those questions, instead... well you did not have to explain, normally, all families were ... I remember we sat one day in the Polish club: ‘What do you do on a Sunday? We come back from the church, then we eat dinner’, ‘And what do you have for dinner? Who has a chicken and a chicken broth for dinner?’ [laughter] it was incredible...*

***Everybody had?***

*Nearly everybody.” [14Wn]*

In the above presented excerpts from the narratives of the second-generation British Poles one can observe a continuous interplay between external categorisations and internal identifications which accompany the process of formation of a separate collective identity – a constitution of the notion of “us”. The symbolic ties grounded in the notion of “us” constitute the precondition of accumulation of group’s social capital and are preserved even when the British Poles move to Poland as one of the respondents observed:

*“And you also asked whether they stick together? Of course they do. I was sometime ago at the bonfire in Poland organised by the young people who came from England. We were remembering good old days and our Polish bonfires which we used to organise near London. Now we are having a Polish bonfire in Warsaw! But in our own circle (...) We are remembering good days when we were living abroad and we were something unique, we were Poles among English, so were special. And in Poland we are still unique among ourselves. otherwise we are perceived differently” [11L].*

In London second-generation British Poles (who maintain their Polishness) form quite closely knit circles. Many second-generation members know each other either through participation in the same professional, youth or student organisation, through parish, scouting, folk groups or through family, friends and acquaintances. One can claim that the environment of second-generation Poles in London consists of different clusters of strongly tied circles, which are interlinked by a number of weak ties. According to Mark Granovetter, those weak ties serve as “bridges” offering a relatively easy access to the resources of different clusters of strong ties and enabling an information flow between them (Granovetter, 1973). As it will be shown later on, the social capital of the group played an important role in channelling the return migration to Poland of some members of that generation and in determining their modes of operation and adaptation in Poland.

#### **4. The Issue of Return in the Diaspora Press at the Beginning of the 1990s**

In this chapter, we would like to provide a context for issues faced by the second generation of British Poles, in particular, the context of return migration from the UK to Poland. Firstly, we thus turn briefly to the first generation describing selected aspects of post-war migration of Poles to the UK and attitudes of this group towards return to Poland in the 1990s. Then, we move to the diaspora press to map the ways in which the issue of return to Poland was addressed. It should be noted that it is not our intention to generalise from the diaspora press to the level of the whole community. This would not be appropriate in most instances as particular press title usually represents one or another political or ideological option and is never bias-free. The diaspora press is not exception in this matter. Consequently, the array of published articles is inevitably selective. The intervention of the researcher through choosing some material and leaving out the other adds yet another layer to this selectivity. Due to these circumstances the chosen titles of the London diaspora press cannot be viewed as representative of the views of the first and second generation of British Poles. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the Polish daily “*Dziennik Polski*” monitored closely the functioning of the Polish community life in the UK and mirrored the attitudes and views of a part of the post-war emigration wave and their children in the UK, paying particular attention to the views of exile establishment.

We have focused our analysis of gathered material on extracting the clues on the materialisation, rejection or substitution of the idea of return. As the traces of the ideology and political myths tend to infiltrate many spheres of life, it was crucial to inspect opinions and texts relating to different areas of experience. Throughout following sub-chapters we attempt to present a brief socio-historical account of the situation of the first generation and the nature of their exile (chapter 4.1). This will be followed by an analysis of the views on return held by the exile community during the post-war years and at the beginning of the political transformation in Poland in the years 1989 and 1990 (chapter 4.2). Furthermore we will touch upon the perceived future role of the Polish community in exile (chapter 4.3) and the accounts of the situation in Poland and the impressions from the visits to Poland (chapter 4.4) as it was reflected in the émigré press. Finally, this overview will be rounded up with the presentation of the two personalized points of view on return – the point of view of the first generation (chapter 4.5) and the point of view of the second generation (chapter 4.6).

##### **4.1. First Generation of Poles in Exile – a short historical account**

The first generation consisted predominantly of former Polish soldiers who fought under the British command during the war, their dependants and other civil population (mostly women and children) who evacuated from the Soviet Union and travelled with General Anders’ Army. After the end of the World War II Poles who found themselves on British Isles were facing the dilemma whether to repatriate, to stay in Britain or to emigrate further. While taking the decision they were under the immense psychological pressure caught up between thinking of the welfare

of their families left behind in Poland, and their own future as well as being exposed to propaganda from British authorities, Polish government in London, and Warsaw government each pursuing their own agenda on whether they should or should not return to Poland (Habielski, 1999; Sword et al., 1989). Keith Sword, Norman Davis and Jan Ciechanowski in their detailed historical and sociological analysis of formation of Polish community in the UK estimate that around 105,000 Poles repatriated to Poland soon after the war (Sword et al., 1989: 308). Further 33,000 decided to emigrate to other countries such as Canada, US, Argentina, France (Sword et al., 1989: 314). Others, mostly those who did not want to return to communist Poland, who could not return because of fear of persecution, or who did not have anymore a physical place to return to (as those born in *Kresy*), stayed in Britain. According to researchers' estimate there were around 142,000 Polish adults in the UK at the beginning of the 1950s<sup>16</sup> (Sword et al., 1989: 449).

As noted by one of the researchers of Polish diaspora, the first generation had created and maintained a symbolic universe consisting of collective memory, myths, beliefs and attitudes guided by strong anticommunist sentiments (Lencznarowicz, 2000). Those who stayed in Britain perceived their own status as refugees. They formed a community in exile. London, which was the base of Polish Government in Exile, became an influential political and cultural centre of Polish diaspora. Despite taking a decision of not returning to Poland in the immediate aftermath of the WWII at the onset of the exile, the first generation treated their stay in the UK as temporary. There was a widespread belief that the post war order and division of Europe would not last too long and expectation of regime change in Poland and near return to free, independent country. The episode below represents one respondent's childhood reminiscences of this way of thinking:

*“Our parents of course, particularly at the beginning, those like mine, lived with the thought of return [żyli na walizkach]. We are returning to Poland, we are returning to Poland, we are returning to Poland... My first political awareness of the world, I remember when I was 7 or 6 when Stalin died. I remember Stalin died, I read and ask: are we going back to Poland now? Well no, son, not yet, but soon, soon” [06L]*

The prospect of near return to Poland influenced the ways in which Polish community functioned during the first years of settlement in Great Britain. The thought of return to Poland influenced the modes of adjustment to the host society. People did not think about getting permanently rooted in the new location. The adjustment did not reach far beyond the necessary minimum which guaranteed temporary survival. This was exacerbated by the external circumstances such as the perceived and real discrimination on the labour and housing markets, sharp decrease in social and occupational status experienced by some highly skilled and educated migrants, general conditions in the resettlement camps and hostile attitudes of the host society. These were only some examples of difficulties of adjusting to the civilian life experienced by the first-generation Poles. In addition, the psychological factors such as sense of uncertainty, temporariness, trauma, betrayal and distrust haunting the community were also impeding integration (Sword et al., 1989: 360-362). In the light of this, it is not surprising that the interest

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<sup>16</sup> The estimate is made taking into account the 1951 Census data.

in obtaining British citizenship was quite low in the first few years after the war (Sword et al., 1989: 317). The naturalisation rate started to pick up at the beginning of the 1950s however then some representatives of émigré establishment launched an anti-naturalisation campaign arguing that accepting British citizenship contradicted the ethos of political emigrant (Habielski, 1999: 250). According to Sword et al. in the years 1946 to 1958 over 23,000 Poles acquired British citizenship (Sword et al., 1989: 472). This number is relatively small comparing with the total number of Poles residing in the UK at that time<sup>17</sup>.

The circumstances surrounding the arrival and settlement of the post-war wave of Polish refugees indicate that the goals and visions of the community were oriented towards Poland. One can claim, that if one follows the typology proposed by Danièle Joly, the Polish exile community in the UK in the post-war period represents an example of Odyssean type refugees, whose main point of reference is the structure of conflict in the society of origin (Joly, 2002). Odyssean type is contrasted with the Rubicon type of refugees, whose primary goal is to find their place in the receiving society through involving themselves in existing structures of that society. As the author argues, this difference in the outlook has a major influence on the modes of settlement and integration of the refugee group. Odyssean refugees, in its ideal type, perceive their stay in the country of destination as temporary. They engage themselves in the political struggle against the homeland regime and nurture the collective project of homeland and return. All this explains why they also fiercely reject any attempts to label them as an ethnic group in the host society.

However, when the regime in the country of origin establishes itself strongly in the position of power, their period of exile gets prolonged. In this event, the Odyssean refugees tend to consolidate in thought that the exile takes longer than it was expected. Nevertheless, this does not lead to reorientation of their goals, but rather to the formation of a “double orientation” (Joly, 2002: 15). Maintaining of the project of homeland and working towards restoring the place for themselves there remain primary objectives of the exile organisations in the host society. In addition, the secondary goal emerges, which aims at dealing with everyday life issues in the host society and is often focused on the second generation. Joly notes that after the regime change in the homeland there are three possible strategies available for Odyssean refugees – return, assimilation or integration. The latter is manifested through the process of formation of an ethnic group in the host society.

For the Polish post-war migrants in the UK, the prospects of near return were fading with a passage of time. It can be argued that the ethos of political migrant was gradually eroding as Poles in Great Britain were subjected to the integration process, despite the fact that it was not regarded by the refugees as a primary goal. It seems that Polish refugees as a group followed the development trajectory of Odyssean refugees sketched by Joly. They developed a “double orientation” both to host and home country by trying to ensure that everyday life in the host society is comfortable and at the same time nurturing the ideological project of homeland.

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<sup>17</sup> Moreover researchers suggest that the total of around 23,000 includes a certain number of people who were not ethnic Poles such as Polish Jews and Ukrainians and even some British women who lost their British citizenship upon marrying a Pole and were applying for reinstating it (Sword et al. 1989: 472 -475).

As noted by Joly, the political changes in the country of origin can trigger the revision of the strategy for the community in exile. There are a number of strategies that the community in exile can follow in response to the radical and positive (from migrants' point of view) changes of political situation in their homeland. One of which is the return. The Polish history is full of such turning points resulting in flow and return flow of people. For example, Tadeusz Paleczny analysed the return movement of Polish migrants from Argentina and Brazil after 1945 (Paleczny, 1992). As he noted, for some people with left-wing political orientation the establishment of communism in Poland after the World War II was an incentive to return. One can observe that the return flow appears when the direction of political changes in homeland agrees with the political outlook held by migrants. For Polish community in the UK such a turning point was the end of communism in Poland.

#### **4.2. "Is Poland really free yet?"<sup>18</sup> - Launch of Discussion in the Diaspora Press**

Despite exiles' strong anticommunist views, when the long-awaited political change took place in 1989, it was greeted by London diaspora establishment with a certain dose of suspicion. In general, it was difficult for exiles to accept any compromises that the opposition in Poland was prepared to make with the ruling communists. As a result of the Round Table negotiations only just over one third of the seats in the elections to the Sejm was reserved for the opposition<sup>19</sup> (Roszkowski, 2002). The first elections to Polish Sejm were therefore contractual and not entirely free. Not surprisingly this outcome was disproved by many influential members of the exile establishment (Friszke, 1999: 466). Moreover, following contractual elections in June, for about a year the opposition shared power with the communists according to the famous formula of Adam Michnik "your president, our prime minister" (Roszkowski, 2002). All this kept the London establishment in ambiguous and uncomfortable position of uncertainty whether the observed changes are genuine.

It is only when the free president elections in Poland were won by Lech Wałęsa, in December 1990 the president of Polish Government in Exile Ryszard Kaczorowski decided to go to Poland and hand over the president insignia to the newly elected president during the ceremony in Royal Castle in Warsaw. This gesture, despite triggering some internal tensions within exile establishment in London<sup>20</sup> (Turkowski, 1995), can be viewed as an act of symbolic return of the Polish political refugees. The question can be raised on this occasion – was the symbolic return followed by the "real" one?

During the period of communist rule in Poland, the issue of return was surrounded by certain paradoxes. As those who stayed in Britain regarded their migration involuntary and perceived themselves as victims of historic circumstances, the dream of return to Poland was a constituent part of their *émigré* ethos. However, this return could only materialise upon one condition that Poland was independent and free from communist influences. The return to

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<sup>18</sup> (Dziennik Polski, 1991h).

<sup>19</sup> Elections to the Senat, the second chamber of Polish parliament, were free.

<sup>20</sup> The tensions built up between the circles of the Government in Exile and a quasi-parliamentary body of Rada Narodowa (Turkowski, 1995).

communist Poland was treated as a betrayal of the ethos of political migrant and was strongly discouraged by the Government in Exile and wider establishment on many occasions (Tydzień Polski<sup>21</sup>, 1971; Dziennik Polski, 1989b). According to this logic staying abroad and not maintaining any contacts with communist state was regarded an active form of resistance against the regime. In contrast, going to Poland meant accepting the power of Polish authorities (Habielski, 1999). Émigré establishment was also worried that short-term visits might give wrong impressions of communist Poland. Habielski in his analysis of the attitudes towards visits writes about the initiative of the SPK to publish a brochure in 1974 called “When you go to Poland...”, explaining the situation in Poland and informing potential visitors about the peculiarities of the system which according to the authors are difficult to spot during a short visit (Habielski, 1999: 267-268).

In practice however, the ban on travel, visits and contacts with the People’s Republic of Poland was not observed by ordinary members of émigré community. As one of the publicists of the diaspora press observed, even before 1989 the existence of the government in exile had almost no impact on the social functioning of émigré community at large (Tydzień Polski, 1991a). Moreover, unlike people associated with the exile establishment, ordinary émigrés were not subjected to any informal sanctions for breaking the ban such as ostracism, dishonour or exclusion. Temporary family and tourist visits to Poland were quite popular during the communist years.

Also the majority of our second-generation respondents visited Poland during their teenage years. However, one should note that the second generation seemed to be “exempt” from the ban on visits to Poland. One of the fierce advocates of the ban justified this in the following way: “The visits of young are a different matter. They do not require sacrifices or compromises, young [people] are not and never were Polish citizens<sup>22</sup>, they go to Poland as to any other country and come back as from the holiday abroad – home to England or America or wherever, these visits are not political, nor patriotic, just tourist.” (Tydzień Polski, 1971). However further the author praises an attitude of a young British Polish girl who despite wanting to visit Poland chose not to go as a sign of the “sacrifice for the good of Poland” (Tydzień Polski, 1971).

During the years 1989 – 1990 the exile establishment was still rather cautious about the issue of return. The unclear political situation in Poland meant that the government in exile was still unconvinced that Poland is “free enough” to qualify for return. The ban of journeys to Poland to all members of exile government was reinforced in the document dated December 1988 and published in January 1989 by the Polish daily (Dziennik Polski, 1989b). It was followed by the period of discussions in the establishment circles and diaspora press throughout 1989 and 1990 whether to uphold, lift or liberalise the “ban” on visits to Poland. Some members of establishment maintained that personal visits are permitted however one has to refrain from contacts with officials and institutions. Others postulated that it is a futile effort to issue the bans which nobody will observe anyway (Turkowski 1995). Finally, in February 1990 the Government in Exile

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<sup>21</sup> “Tydzień Polski” was the Saturday edition of “Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza”.

<sup>22</sup> The author is wrong in this instance as according to the Polish law children of Polish citizens automatically acquire Polish citizenship. Many second-generation returnees took advantage of this during the 1990s and received Polish passports.



revised and softened its stance on visits to Poland (Rzeczpospolita Polska, 1990). The members of government establishment were allowed to go to Poland and to maintain contacts with Polish officials providing they informed their superiors (Friszke, 1999: 477-478). Interestingly enough, the document published by “Rzeczpospolita Polska” in February 1990 also stressed the importance and beneficial character of visits to Poland of “people who were born abroad, often possessing high professional qualifications”, thereby voicing émigré establishments’ approval for the returns of the second generation (Rzeczpospolita Polska, 1990).

The articles from the diaspora press titles selected for the analysis, which were published during the “period of uncertainty” (i.e. during the 1989 and 1990) were engaged in the similar debate on whether Poland already fulfils all the conditions necessary for lifting the ban. Several articles supporting the initial tough stance of Government in Exile on visits to Poland were published (e.g. Dziennik Polski, 1989c). Another sign of the pro-ban attitude represented by the Dziennik Polski in 1989 was the row over some of the representatives of Polish émigré publishers going to Warsaw for International Book Fair (Tydzień Polski, 1989a - 1989d). Many perceived Poland as still not “free enough” and insisted that visits are a betrayal of émigré ethos. Presumably in order to confront similar views, Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, an influential and widely respected figure of the Polish diaspora, explained the meaning of his visit to Poland in 1989 in the following way:

*“One should not build their own barrier in place of the barrier built by communists. I went in order to establish a direct contact with the [Polish] society (...) If one claims that I am a traitor then I think one has parted from their own nation which treated me not as a traitor but as a patriot.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1989d)

In view of the above, one case of early returns to Poland stands out as significant because of its closeness to the ideal type of return of political elite of Odyssean refugees. This was the case of return for good of Józef Piłsudski’s daughters with their families. It was a return rather consistent with a dream of return nurtured by Polish exiles for years. However, the event did not attract as much publicity in the press as one would expect. It was followed up by a short article published at the bottom of the third page of Polish Daily (Dziennik Polski, 1990d). It is difficult to speculate as to the reasons behind such low-key reporting. One potential explanation might be the fact that the return happened before the official handover of president insignia, so still during the time of high uncertainty as to how émigré establishment should view the changes in Poland. All in all, it is probably safe to assume that at the beginning of the 1990s the issue of returns and visits to Poland had a potential to cause new and stir up old frictions within the émigré elite environment. On the other hand, most probably these nuances were rather irrelevant for the ordinary members of the community.

Articles published during 1991 show a shift from the discussion on whether it is appropriate or not to go to Poland towards a range of more practical issues concerning return. Author of one of such articles stood on a position that it is primarily up to the Polish state to encourage the return flow of migrants from the West (Dziennik Polski, 1991e). He appealed for a need to establish an institution in Poland which would coordinate all aspects of remigration. In

fact, the publication sets quite a high level of expectations towards the Polish state as it should “ensure job places and means for paying potential unemployment benefits, places in schools and nurseries, health care, issuing permits for buying properties, permanent stay permits [kart stałego pobytu] or national identity cards [dowodów osobistych]” (Dziennik Polski, 1991e: 3). Interestingly enough, there is no reference in the article to the idea of return in the form it was nurtured by the exile community. Contrary, it puts the émigré community in a rather passive role of waiting for the incentives from the Polish government to remigrate<sup>23</sup>.

The issue of return was often marginally mentioned in the articles dealing with the future of the émigré community which is discussed below. Rather than speculating about the remigration to Poland, one of the publicists of the diaspora press spotted the potential for more migrants from Poland coming to Britain. In 1991 the author wrote:

*“Émigré masses are not going to dash to return. On the contrary. In the light of the difficult economic situation and uncertainty of political tomorrow in Poland, émigré community can expand.”* (Tydzień Polski, 1991a)

Finally, it has to be noted, that there were also random appeals and loose thoughts regarding the return scattered in different articles on the future of émigré community and addressed mainly to the “young” part of the exile community – the second generation (see for example Tydzień Polski, 1990). The authors usually wondered whether the second generation will engage in returns or urged the second-generation members to go to Poland in order to help with restructuring and transforming the Polish economy.

### **4.3. Opinions on the Political Role of Polish Exiles after 1989**

Another broad theme of the chosen press articles embraced a range of wide issues relating to the rethinking of the role of émigré community in the light of changes that were taking place in Poland<sup>24</sup>. As mentioned earlier, the political migrants faced by the changes in their homeland have three general choices – the return, assimilation or integration in the host society as an ethnic group. There were several articles explicitly admitting the fact that the Polish community shifted from being political refugees to becoming an ethnic group. One account of this awareness is presented in the article “The other side of the coin”:

*“The fact that [post-war emigration] was becoming more a community in exile and less a political emigration ready for immediate return when the conditions in Poland change, was overlooked.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1991a)

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<sup>23</sup> In addition, the article contains a short discussion on “benefits” for Poland of remigration of Poles from the West and the “dangers” of remigration or repatriation of poorer Poles from the East (from the former USSR), as according to the author the “mass” remigration from the East will put a financial pressure on the Polish State. Moreover author warns of the possibility that “persons of Belarusian, Ukrainian and Lithuanian nationalities” will join the repatriation programme which will result in “establishment of numerous national minorities in Poland, which would not remain without influence on the internal relations in the state” (Dziennik Polski, 1991e).

<sup>24</sup> One has to note that the debate regarding the “future” shape and role of Polish émigré community in Britain is still ongoing. Recently it has been refuelled with an issue of accommodating the new post-EU enlargement migration wave. However in this research we focused our attention on the beginning of the 1990s as these were the years when many decisions to remigrate were made.

Similarly another author in the article devoted to the functioning and prospects of the Federation of Poles in Great Britain states:

*“We stopped being the “political emigration”. We do not have a reason not to accept British citizenship anymore. In this situation, regardless of an adjective describing the word “emigration”, we became a national minority in Great Britain, having duties and rights stemming from this status.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1991f)

Nevertheless, admitting that the era of political emigration is over did not prevent the émigré activists from continuing to be involved in politics. The articles concerning the future of the émigré community were dominated by finding a new political rationale for the community rather than by the reflection on the definite end of era of its political importance. The discussion was concentrated on finding the new arguments and “tasks” for maintaining the political mission and status of the Polish community in Great Britain. This point was made in the interview titled “Are we political emigration?” published by “Orzeł Biały”:

*“We are not a political emigration. In order to be able to use this title we have to deserve it. And not by looking into the past and legitimising why we are here but by what we are doing now politically.”* (Orzeł Biały, 1990)

On the basis of press overview one might form an opinion that some émigrés did not want to abandon their engagement in politics. One of the main roles to play in the future of the community was reserved for the second generation. Some authors argued the need for active involvement of the generation born in Britain in running many organisations with a prospect of taking them over in the future (see for example Dziennik Polski, 1991f with regard to the Federation of Poles in Great Britain). Others promoted the route of greater engagement in British politics claiming that:

*“Young have better chances of sitting in the House of Commons than in the Sejm. (...) Nothing will do more good to the country and émigré community than our own lobby.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1991g).

At the beginning of the 1990s a number of articles was published by the second-generation representatives promoting the idea of the so called Polish lobby in Britain and encouraging the émigré community to play a bigger part in British political life and to influence Britain’s politics towards Poland from within (Tydzień Polski, 1992a; Dziennik Polski, 1992a; Dziennik Polski, 1992b). The lobbying for Poland could be interpreted as a sign of the redirection from the attachment to the conflict structure in Poland to becoming an actor in British social and political life, acknowledging the fact that Poles became a part of the UK diverse ethnic landscape and attempting to advocate the rights of Poles using politically available means. The idea of “lobbying for Poland” in these circumstances could be viewed as an attempt to reinvigorate the political ethos of emigration. Also it provides a framework for activities of the second generation both in Britain and in Poland as in the case of returnees.

Along with the refreshing idea of lobby building there were also more traditionalist attempts to defend an old ideology of émigré community. In the article “Emigration without a last chapter” the author proposes a “continuity of the ideas” as a recipe for the future. This continuity might take the form of monitoring the democratic processes in Poland, publicising and promoting émigré stance on the history of the last 50 years and maintaining Polishness abroad by means of education of younger generations (Dziennik Polski, 1990a). The émigré community was also trying to get involved in the politics in Poland. Soon after Poland regained independence Polish diaspora felt “abandoned” by the Polish government particularly as far as the issues of Polish citizenship, voting rights, reprivatisation, no policies encouraging return migration and no privileges for ethnic Poles in Poland were concerned. One way of defending the interests of Polish people living abroad was proposed in the article titled “Émigré lobby in Warsaw” (Tydzień Polski, 1991b). The proposal included such actions as building the lobby this time in Poland and appointing a person who would represent the interests of the Polish diaspora in the Polish parliament.

#### **4.4. Poland – Descriptions of the Changing Situation and Accounts from Visits**

Generally, the exile community was rather overwhelmed by the pace of changes in Poland. As one of the regular columnist of the Polish daily observed:

*“In Poland things are happening in such a pace and on such a scale that interpretations become false before the ink manages to dry.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1989a)

We have distinguished a separate group of articles focused on Poland of that time. These accounts either concentrated on the descriptions of unfolding economic, political and social situation in Poland or presented the emotions and impressions of members of émigré community from the visits to Poland.

As far as the situation in Poland was concerned, articles often contained very touchy portraits of the economic deprivation and everyday life struggles of Polish society during the transformation period. The first impressions were often gloomy. As one of the visitors observed: “Difficult living conditions after all these years created a posture of a sad man, a man without a smile.” (Dziennik Polski, 1989f). Shortages of goods, hyperinflation, unstable exchange rates, low wages, and flourishing shadow economy were mentioned in the early accounts (e.g. Dziennik Polski, 1989e; 1989f; 1990f) with only a few years later to be replaced by the reports of wide availability of goods, high prices, rising unemployment and widening gap between the rich and the poor (e.g. Dziennik Polski, 1992e; 1992f).

One thing that repeatedly appeared in many observations from visits of British Poles was a boom in petty trading. After the years of shortages and considering unfavourable economic conditions, many people turned to petty trade as an alternative or additional source of income:

*“In order to live, one must trade.” “Well, Warsaw is trading. From students to pensioners, and ordinary comen, all are seen on the markets and streets.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1990g); *“Hitherto elegant, clean cities look nowadays like Persian bazaars.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1990f); *“One trades with what one can, and however one can”* (Dziennik Polski, 1991b).

Another bleak picture of Poland was painted by a visitor who went to buy a flat in Poland. Buying a property in itself proved an interesting experience accompanied by many unpleasant encounters with Polish bureaucracy. However, in author's opinion, the situation was not as bad as it appeared at first sight. The article contains a criticism of Polish society for running after "easy money" and lacking enthusiasm and work discipline: "Poles have to learn to work, and not dream about the millions earned in one day." (Dziennik Polski, 1992d). In the conclusion author suggested that developing work ethics is more needed than a charity. Adding to the negative side of things, the deregulation of norms, common cheating and the fear of crime were also mentioned on a couple of occasions (Dziennik Polski, 1990f).

Despite all the gloominess, in many published articles one could sense a certain admiration for the "new energy" which characterised that time and place. Visitors praised the resilience and spirit of Polish people. Some first-generation Poles from Britain appreciated the opportunity of being able to personally witness the wave of changes. The freedom of speech in Poland and the fact that nobody was afraid to express their thoughts in public were also noticed by many (Dziennik Polski, 1990f). One visitor reported the enthusiasm of people during the first free elections to parliament in 1989 (Dziennik Polski, 1989g). On the other hand, later accounts noted a growing apathy and indifference regarding political affairs (Dziennik Polski, 1992f).

Many reports from visits of the first generation British Poles contained sentimental passages devoted to the feelings of coming back. For the first time in many years people had a chance to visit the places and streets of their youth. These journeys in time brought to the surface many memories and emotions reflected in the statements similar to the ones below:

*"I am afraid not of Warsaw, but of myself, of my poignancy [wzruszenia]. We will be looking at everything through the tears."* (Dziennik Polski, 1991i)

*"I have to admit that Poland bewitched me. I felt like a pilgrim, like a prodigal son of this beautiful, sacred Polish soil who wasted those 50 years."* (Dziennik Polski, 1990b)

*"Nowadays Warsaw is in many ways a different city to what you and I remember from the period of our youth. However I discovered several places that changed a little or have not changed at all."* (Dziennik Polski, 1989g)

Moreover, for a Pole from Britain who was visiting Poland the fact that everybody around spoke Polish was indeed extraordinary. One author states that the primary goal of his visit to Poland was to indulge in Polish language:

*"I went not in order to make a fuss, to criticise but in order to enjoy Poland (...) to relish the Polish language in theatre and to listen to people talking in Polish around me on the street, in the tram or the café. God! How different this Polish is from the one we speak here. Alive, rich, often surprising."* (Dziennik Polski, 1991b)

Many praised the way Warsaw was rebuilt and its grand streets, parks and theatres as well as the beauty of historical sights of Krakow and other parts of Poland. Kindness and openness of

Polish people, as well as hospitality were also mentioned in half ethnographic, half belletristic attempts to capture a “real” Polish way of life and mentality (Dziennik Polski, 1990h).

Finally, the articles relating to the visits to Poland contained detailed itineraries of the first visits at the beginning of the 1990s. One should note that visits to Poland were undertaken by ordinary members of the Polish community as well as famous people from the first generation Lidia Ciołkoszowa, Irena Andersowa, Józef Garliński, Klemens Rudnicki and others.

#### **4.5. Impossibility of Return – Selected Arguments of the First Generation**

A specific way of coming to terms with the issue of return can be traced in the personalised narratives of the first generation published extensively in the diaspora press. The members of the first generation on a number of occasions provided arguments justifying the impossibility of return to Poland for good in their case and accepted of the fact that the return cannot materialise. The old age of the first generation was the most commonly mentioned reason for not returning for good to Poland. Lidia Ciołkoszowa, an exile politician and social activist, captured the feelings of many first-generation Poles in her memoirs stating:

*“During all these years we dreamt about returning to Poland. But it came so late that unfortunately not many of us, old people, can return for good”* (Ciołkoszowa, 1995: 388).

General Klemens Rudnicki, aged 94 at the time of his visit to Poland in 1991, was asked whether he is going to come back to Poland for good. He answered:

*“What for? Don’t you have enough problems without bringing [sprowadzania] the old people back? The question was followed by another one – Whether émigré community should return to Poland? Answer – Young people, who can contribute something for Poland, yes; but old people, no, unless they have families that they can return to.”* (Tydzień Polski, 1992b)

It seems that on some occasions the short term visits were presented by representatives of the first generation as a substitute of return for good. For example a member of the official delegation accompanying President in Exile to Warsaw presented visits to “free” Poland as a final and closing part of the émigré project:

*“Those who after 50 years return to Poland for the first time, happy that what they fought for – independence and sovereignty – is just round the corner, (...) can feel after all that they fulfilled their duty towards homeland till the end.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1991i):

Apart from an old age, other reason for staying put was the difficulty of transferring British pensions and other social benefits to Poland and the fact that as soon as the pension is transferred the money stopped being regularly indexed according to the inflation rate. As one of the readers of Dziennik Polski in the letters sections emphasised:

*“In the current situation many Poles would return to free Poland, if our pensions, earned here, continued to be increased in line with the British legislation”* (Dziennik Polski, 1991j)

There were also reports of ingenuity of some pensioners who engaged in shuttle migration in order to avoid losing their British pension privileges. They were going to Poland for six months and then coming back to Britain for a few weeks and continued this cycle for as long as it was possible (Dziennik Polski, 1991k).

The established ways of life in Britain in terms of everyday necessities like access to doctors and hospitals were also quite important thing of consideration. And last but not least, the reason for immobility is related to an image of Poland that first generation maintained for years. The clash of this vision with contemporary Poland was too obvious for those who have visited Poland after the long period in exile. In some articles published in the diaspora press at the beginning of the 1990s along with the moving feelings of being back to Poland representatives of the first generation noticed that the Poland that they were visiting is not the Poland that they have left. One account of this is presented by a journalist commenting the visit to Poland of Józef Garlinski, a historian in exile, states:

*“For a Pole who was born before the World War I and educated during the times of independent Rzeczpospolita, almost all realities of social life in Poland have changed, the images of old idols were smashed to smithereens, yesterdays sacredness disappeared, the values were mixed up.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1990c)

#### **4.6. The Stance of the Second Generation**

The second generation of British Poles had a rather different perspective on the changes in Poland and the potential return. A good starting point in thinking about return to Poland in case of second generation is provided by Krzysztof Nowakowski in the article titled “Meeting of 100”<sup>25</sup>:

*“One cannot return to the country which one has not left. We could only emigrate to Poland.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1992a)

On this occasion it is worth to refer to the views of the second-generation representatives on the identity issues and the definition of homeland expressed in a couple of articles published by the diaspora press at the beginning of the 1990s. For example, Konrad Brodzinski writes:

*“In order to serve Poland well, British Pole or British of Polish origin has to have a clear idea what he or she means by Polishness, and what, in their opinion, constitutes Polishness.”* (Dziennik Polski, 1992c).

The author continues by stating that the period of cultural isolation of the second generation from the life of contemporary Poland during the post-war years resulted in insufficient exposure of his generation to the Polish culture. In author’s opinion, émigré cultural heritage was not sufficient to fill this gap. Therefore author advocates a need for every individual from his generation to define for himself/herself the notions of Poland, Poles and Polishness. He concludes

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<sup>25</sup> The so called “Meeting of 100” Polish community activists in Great Britain was organised by the Polish Embassy in London in March 1992.

with welcoming more presence of the contemporary Poland in the life of the Polish community abroad.

Adding to the theme, another representative of the second generation reflected on the notion of Poland as a homeland. In his attempts to find an answer to the question of what Poland means to him, he states:

*“My answer is influenced by the fact that for the last 40 years I had hardly anything in common with Poland. (...) While trying to define my notion of “homeland” and trying to answer the question what is Poland to me I have to first of all ask myself: Am I a Pole?”*<sup>26</sup> (Tydzień Polski, 1992c).

As one can notice, the nature of relations with Poland that the second generation held and verbalised in the diaspora press at the beginning of the 1990s was not as clear-cut as in the case of the first generation, and depended heavily on the definitions of identity and belonging, which in turn were also complex and problematic.

Despite the ambiguity regarding identity, homeland and cultural belonging, the structural opportunities available for the second-generation Poles at the time fitted well with the idea of “working for Poland”. A number of funds and organisations operating in Britain were interested in supporting the reforms in Central and Eastern Europe. The activity of the Know How Fund, established in 1989 by the British government as a funding body with an original budget of 50 million pounds to be spent on the transfer of know how from Britain to Poland, provided a lot of opportunities for second-generation British Poles to engage in consultancies (Stafford, Szlaszewski 2003). The British Executive Service Overseas (BESO) – the scheme of providing consultancies on a voluntary basis was also in operation. A number of other initiatives like “Teachers for Poland” or United Nations programme “Expatriate Poles for Poland” also existed. As a result many Poles born in the UK engaged in offering their skills, expertise and advice to the Polish government and industry.

Another route of opportunities emerged in the corporate sector. Many transnational corporations were planning to open their offices in Poland. Some British Poles were getting offers of transfer directly from their employers. Such transfer was often seen as a career boost and unique opportunity, which would have been unlikely to emerge in their British working environment. Those who were not offered an internal transfer could choose from many vacancies advertised in British press, diaspora press and by recruitment agencies.

As far as job advertisements in the diaspora press are concerned, during three years, from 1990 to the end of 1992, we have identified 28 job vacancies advertisements published in the Polish daily and targeted primarily at the second-generation British Poles. Most of the advertisements were published in English. The accountants, financial controllers and consultants in a variety of sectors were in the most demand. The vacancy usually related to the post requiring either frequent journeys to Poland or work there on expatriate terms. The salaries were encouraging and the knowledge of Polish was essential. These job vacancies appearing in the

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<sup>26</sup> One can assume that what the author of this excerpt refers to is the concept of the ideological homeland discussed in the Chapter 3.3. This is an example of the substitution of a territory with a concept of a nation in the way of thinking about an ethnic homeland.



Polish daily newspaper published in London reflect an overall demand for Polish speaking professionals at the outset of political and economic transformation in Poland.

One can claim that changes in Poland allowed the second generation gaining a greater presence on the political stage of emigration life. The second-generation representatives possessed the right skills and capital to engage in lobbying activities, consultancies and work in Poland. Nevertheless, as some press accounts suggest, the efforts, views and initiatives of the second generation were not acknowledged enough by the broader émigré group. For example, a representative of the second generation, in response to the article published in Polish daily which pleaded for involvement of second generation in the life in Poland, had to point out that the second generation is already involved:

*“If Mr Olejnik followed British and Polish press he would have known that for more than a year now a few dozen bankers, accountants, lawyers and other experts born in the West work in Poland as advisors. He would have known about the establishment of such companies as Polish Investment Company or Central Europe Trust, whose founders were young Poles born in England. He would have known about trainings run by the young generation under the auspices of Know How Fund”* (Dziennik Polski, 1991c)

There were relatively few first hand accounts published in the press from the visits to Poland undertaken by the members of the second generation. The aim of one such visit was practical evaluation of implementing an advisory programme in Poland (Dziennik Polski, 1990e). In the interview with Polish daily journalist the representatives of second generation expressed their view on the developing situation in Poland, criticised old nomenclature for entering the big business and advocated the need for supporting the sector of small and medium companies. Moreover they pointed out often unnecessary money spending on travel and luxury accommodation by the consultants and advisors working for the Know How Fund.

In addition to this, there were also second hand impressions published in the press, when parents reported on behalf of their children (e.g. Dziennik Polski, 1989g). One example is a letter from the reader who described his son’s failed mission of establishing business contacts in Poland for a big pharmaceutical laboratory (Dziennik Polski, 1991d). Both first and second hand accounts suggest that some members of the second generation engaged in the visits to Poland on the premises of giving their professional advice and expertise and establishing business links with Poland.

## **SUMMARY**

To conclude, on the basis of the presented press overview, it can be argued that return to Poland was not high on agenda of the diaspora press. Apart from the initial signs of hesitation of lifting the official “ban” of visits to Poland, there was no distinct campaign either pro or against the returns to Poland. Unlike the dilemma “to return or not to return” which Polish war refugees faced after the WWII as a group, the issue of return after 1989 did not awaken such great collective emotions or sentiments. Instead it was left entirely for consideration and decision of particular individuals and their families. One could argue that after 1989 the dream of return to free Poland, as it was nurtured by the exile community, underwent a kind of “reality check”. The

emphasis of the community shifted towards developing and propagating the ideas of “working for Poland” both in the UK (as in form of lobbying) and in Poland (as in form of engaging in consultancies and know-how transfer).

In the case of the members of first generation, who were the direct carriers of the dream of return, its materialisation became largely impossible because of the old age of the first generation. A mass return of this generation was considered unlikely and unrealistic. On the other hand, the visits and engagement in migrations to Poland of the second-generation members bore more resemblance with an ideology of helping Poland, or “working for Poland” in general than with the fulfilment of the refugee dream of return home. The returns of the second generations were on different terms, at least as one can judge on the basis of the selected publications in the diaspora press.

## **5. Returnees – Factors of Remigration**

Remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland in the 1990s and 2000s has been a phenomenon recognised by members of the Polish community in the UK and particularly in London. Nevertheless, only selected British Poles decided to return to the country of their parents responding to changed opportunity structures in Poland upon establishment of the III Republic of Poland in 1989.

Measuring the size of remigration of second-generation British Poles is difficult not only due to typical problems with measuring return migration but also due to the proximity of Poland and the UK which facilitates commuting instead of permanent settlement. However, to give some indication as to the size of the phenomenon that we are describing in this report: at least 3,384 remigrants came to Poland from the UK in the 1990s - permanent immigrants possessing Polish citizenship (CSO, 2003). One third of them possessed dual citizenship. At the same time, 78% of people born in the UK and living in Poland are Polish citizens<sup>27</sup> (2,048 persons), (CSO, 2003). Therefore, we do not talk about hundreds of thousands people but rather about several thousand returnees. In fact, it is neither exceptionally big nor small, as other traditional countries of Poles' emigration like Canada, France, Australia, Italy were sending similar numbers of remigrants to Poland in the 1990s.

The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate factors of remigration of second-generation British Poles. We put our analysis into three-level scheme of micro, meso and macro-determinants. We assume a chief role of macro-factors in initialising and stimulating that flow in the 1990s. Namely, we argue that termination of the communist regime and economic transition in Poland constituted its pivotal determinants and necessary conditions for it. Thus, we treat macro-factors of remigration as a context of our analysis in which we interrogate, first of all, the two remaining analytical levels – micro and meso – tantamount with individual motives and social capital of remigrants.

In our view, ideological and economic motives should be treated as main determinants of remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland. We argue, however, that it would be difficult to separate “ideological” returns from “economic” ones, except for some marginal cases. The most common scenario is the return governed by the mix of the both types of motives and influenced by family factors. At the same time, the role of social capital, as a facilitator and stimulator of remigration, can not be neglected, as it appears to support many returns of second-generation British Poles to Poland in the 1990s and 2000s.

The chapter starts with demonstration of assumptions and method of analysis. In particular it includes our justification for classifying mobility of second-generation British Poles to Poland in the 1990s as remigration even though individuals concerned were born outside Poland. Then, we present selected macro-factors of remigration. Subsequently, micro-level determinants of

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<sup>27</sup> This group includes dual citizens.

remigration – motives of returnees – are described, whereas the final analytical section is devoted to its meso-determinants – family factors and social capital of remigrants.

## **5.1. Assumptions and Method of Analysis**

### ***5.1.1. Return or Migration?***

Traditionally return migration or remigration is understood as “the movement of emigrants back to their homelands to resettle. Migrants returning for vacation or an extended visit without an intention of remaining at home are generally not defined as return migrants” (Gmelch, 1980:136). Thus, classifying flow of second-generation British Poles to Poland as the return or remigration can be problematic for some readers, as we talk about people that were born and grew up in the UK. Why not to talk about migration to Poland? What distinguishes our respondents from other citizens of the UK is Polish parents, involvement (at different degrees) in the life of the Polish community in the UK and in Polish matters. Even though these specificities of the research group are not a peculiarity in the multiethnic Britain, there are several reasons that prompt us to consider movements of those people to Poland as remigration.

Firstly, the second-generation of British Poles grew up in a virtually Polish environment. Those born in the 1940s lived with their parents in so-called Polish camps where most neighbours were other Poles. Polish language was the first to learn, Polish schools, churches, scouting and dancing-clubs provided for establishment of strong friendships with other Polish youngsters. Poles in the UK constituted a close-knitted national minority preserving its culture and identity. Even though some of Polish political emigrants either rejected or were afraid of visiting Poland, many young second-generation British Poles were visiting Poland with their parents in the communist time. Thus, Poland was not a distant and unknown place.

Secondly, Poles that remained in the United Kingdom after the World War II tended to consider themselves as temporary political refugees in the UK. They were awaiting abolishment of the communist regime that would enable them to return to Poland. This attitude was widespread in the 1940s, when part of the group returned to Poland. The dream of return to Poland became less vibrant in later years, but it was present in lives of many Polish families. The abolishment of the communism in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s enabled accomplishment of the dream of return to Poland.

Thirdly, Poles that remained in the UK after the World War II were strongly involved in the Polish matters. In particular, London – hosting the Polish Government in Exile – was an important centre of Polish political life on emigration. Poles abroad were supporting the Solidarity opposition in Poland and inviting its leaders to London and other foreign towns in the 1980s. It is not within the scope of this report to describe exhaustively the whole spectrum of activities of the Polish diaspora. Nevertheless, all those activities applied formation of mutual contacts and links between countries of emigration and Poland. These ties constituted an important element of the framework for return migration to Poland in the 1990s.

Fourthly, some part of returnees from second-generation of Poles living in the UK were accompanied, in their remigration, by first-generation remigrants. Wives and husbands from Poland were returning to place of their birth and to their families remaining in Poland. Also,

elderly parents of our respondents were sometimes going back to Poland. In this way, remigration of second-generation British Poles was even closer to the traditional understanding of the return.

Lastly, it should be born in mind that, usually, second-generation British Poles are formally Polish citizens. According to the Polish law, having at least one parent, who is a Polish citizen, entitles to Polish citizenship, notwithstanding the place of birth of the person, unless parents or a parent relinquished Polish citizenship in the past (which usually applies also to children). Only 3 returnees did not have their Polish citizenship “confirmed” in the Polish governmental institutions at the moment of the research. But it does not mean that they were not entitled to it. Usually, second-generation British Poles were acquiring Polish identity cards, Polish passports and were registering themselves in the Polish registration system when planning, deciding or committing return to Poland.

Certainly, the above factors apply in a different manner to the each case. Polish post-war emigrants represented different degree of involvement in the “Polish life” in the UK. Nonetheless, those factors are crucial for understanding mechanisms of mobility of the second-generation British Poles to Poland in the 1990s and 2000s. At the same time, they frame this mobility in a particular way making it very close to return migration. Thus, using the term remigration allow us for capturing a specificity of this particular movement.

### *5.1.2. Analytical Categories*

Analysis of migration distinguishes pull (in the destination country) and push (in the home country) factors of international mobility and it is assumed that both groups of factors are important in understanding movements of people. It applies also to return migration. Pull factors are particularly important for returns of refugees awaiting political changes in their countries of origin to be able to return home. It was also the case with most of Poles that remained in the UK after the World War II and their children that considered themselves to be political refugees. Thus, in our analysis, we focus on pull factors in remigration of the studied group.

As in analysis of international migration, factors influencing remigration can be grouped into three different analytical levels – macro, meso and micro (for example, Faist, 2000). The macro factors refer to the overall situation in two (or more) countries, regions or other so-called “macro-level” units (Fischer, Martin, Straubhaar, 1997) and the structural opportunities which they provide for the potential migrant. The meso level factors embrace the reference community of the potential migrant and symbolic ties that he or she maintains with it. This analytical level comprises also individual’s networks of relatives, friends and acquaintances allowing for circulation of the information valuable in migratory decisions and activities. This “middle” layer of factors which represent the person’s social capital is regarded by some researchers as crucial in migration decision making (Faist, 1997). Finally, micro factors refer to the direct scheme of preferences of the individual, the evaluation of gains and loses of migration, estimating probabilities of attaining a desired goals and so on.

Macro-level factors that we take into consideration are limited to consequences of political and economic transition in Poland that completely changed opportunity structures available, in Poland, for remigrating second-generation British Poles. However, we treat these factors as the

context for our analysis and examine them mainly via individual motives of remigrants. Meso-level, that we interrogate, has two layers: family factors and social capital. The first category applies to factors influencing decisions and patterns of remigration coming from the side of the close family: spouse, children but also parents of remigrants. Even though a household is traditionally considered as a micro-level (especially in economic analyses), we argue that it is particularly justified to treat it as a middle-level in the analysed case of mobility. Remigration to Poland was likely to involve partitioning of the households at various stages of remigration. Consequently, most remigrants' families were running two households tied usually via shuttle mobility of their members. By social capital, we understand the content of individuals' social and symbolic ties determining access to resources inherited in their social spaces (compare, Faist, 2000). Finally, micro-factors taken into account are motives driving remigration to Poland revealed in the analysis of narratives of returnees.

## **5.2. Setting a Macro-context – a Short Overview**

The political and economic transition in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s brought about the termination of the communist regime in this region and initialised economic reforms aiming at formation of the free market in the former Soviet bloc countries. These two aspects of the transition were of pivotal importance for attitudes of the Polish diaspora members towards their trips, migrations and returns to Poland. The communist regime in Poland was restraining many Poles living abroad not only from returning to Poland, but even from visits in their motherland. They did not consider communist governments as representing interests of the Polish nation and did not identify with the Polish communist state. The second-generation Poles were usually eagerly spending holidays in Poland. However, only their small fraction decided to migrate to Poland and to try work and live there at least for several months. In rejecting return to the communist Poland, the second generation was following the standpoint of the first generation.

Formation of the III Republic of Poland terminated this, lasting for over 40 years, refusal to return to Poland. All ideological reasons restraining Poles living abroad from coming back to Poland disappeared in several months of 1989. For a number of people, those changes came too late to reconsider return to Poland. Those who had decided not to come back to Poland after the World War II were already in their late years, retired, sometimes struggling with health problems. For this group of people, the only possible type of return was “return for retirement”, but their children were able to accomplish the plan of return to Poland, and some of them did.

Another aspect of the transition in CEE was economic reforms. Rapidly transforming Polish and other CEE countries' economies were in need of experts with western business experience especially in management and finance. Polish labour market was offering them rapid carriers that would be impossible in well-established western European market economies. At the same time, western level salaries and low costs of life in Poland secured a high level of life in a niche of a foreign business elite. Representatives of the second-generation Poles (not only in the UK) possessed also an additional advantage – knowledge of the Polish language. Thus, second-generation British Poles perfectly fitted in the demand of the Polish labour market at the beginning of the 1990s. It should be noted that having completed western education was the most

appreciated advantage at that time. Therefore, the second-generation Polish emigrants had even more opportunities than first-generation Polish emigrants coming to Poland in the 1990s.

It can be argued that political and economic transition in CEE constitute a major determinant of remigration of the second-generation British Poles to Poland in the 1990s and 2000s and a necessary precondition for it. It is a rare situation, in migration studies, that we can identify so precisely a chief factor of international mobility. Its importance has been directly verbalised by our respondents and confirmed in the analysis of their stories. Even though the transition resulted in variety of changes, its two major aspects were pivotal for remigration of the second-generation British Poles. They included: the ideological change implying termination of the communism and initiation of democracy in Poland and the economic change enabling returning Poles to highly benefit from taking up a job in Poland.

### **5.3. Motives of Remigration – Micro-level**

#### ***5.3.1. Introductory Remarks***

As in migration decisions, motives of remigration of the second-generation Poles embrace a variety of factors. They can be, however, divided into two main and most important types: ideological and economic motives corresponding with the two major kinds of outcomes of the political transition in Poland, that stimulated remigration of this group – ideological and economic changes.

What we call ideological motives is seldom used as an analytical category in examination of motives of remigration. In a recently published work on remigration (of the first-generation emigrants), Bimal Gosh (2000) distinguishes only economic, social, family and political determinants. The latter category refers only to changes in a political situation in the destination country and constitutes a macro not a micro-factor. We argue, however, that for second-generation British Poles this aspect should be analysed also on a micro-level. Ideological reasons were literally mentioned by our respondents as a factor of their remigratory decisions and involved redefinition of individual identities and life projects relating to Poland. Certainly, ideological and economic motives can co-exists and strengthen each other.

#### ***5.3.2. Ideological Motives***

Ideological motives, that we consider as exceptional in the analysed flow of second-generation British Poles to Poland, are related to a “Polish component” of their identity and their attitude towards Poland in the light of political and economic changes that took place in the late 1980s. These motives can include, for example, willingness to fulfil an idea of “return to the homeland” and to help the Polish state in its transformation into a democratic country.

In fact, identities of most returnees included a strong “Polish component” already before their remigration to Poland represented by maintaining contacts with the Polish community in the UK. Remigrants not only went through the Polish socialisation process (compare Chapter 3), but were also very active in the Polish life. Past presidents of student Polish associations and different types of clubs prevail in the studied group. Around one fourth of respondents took active part in the action of providing aid to Poland during the Martial Law – they were driving lorries with

medicaments and other goods in shortage in Poland at that time. Finally, smaller, but still considerable, group has on their account political activities related to the Polish matters in the UK and Polish-British affairs.

It is evident that not every second-generation British Pole living in the UK was so strongly involved in Polish matters, but, among returnees, there was only one man that had cut off himself from contacts with the Polish community in the UK. Probably his opinion about the Poles in the UK was not so unique in the group of second-generation British Poles in the UK, but exceptional for returnees.

*“I do not like Poles abroad at all (...) Firstly, I must admit that I still do not like the characteristics of Poles abroad that I am going to mention. It is looking back: [repeating] that it was so great in the past. Second thing that I do not like (I do not know why) is that people [Poles abroad] are showing everywhere [noszą jakby na rękawie] their [Polish] patriotism. I am sick of this. We were living in England (...). It is not necessary to repeat children all the time that it was so great and cause in them some kind of schizophrenia. Because, on the one hand, you are a Pole, on the other, however, the life and work is in England...” [13Wn].*

At the same time, almost half of the remigrants grew up in a dream of return to Poland after the collapse of communism. It was either directly stated by our respondents or we can derive it from their narratives. Interestingly enough, the role of the family (parents) was of pivotal importance for maintaining that dream. Those returnees, who mentioned it as a factor of their decisions to remigrate, directly referred to the attitude of their families in this matter. Nevertheless, Polish parents of second-generation British Poles usually did not put any pressure on returning. In our group we have only one case where a father was expecting his daughter to accomplish the dream of return to Poland.

*“He asked me when I was intending to go to Poland. I said that for the holidays. Then, he said: ‘Not for the holiday, but for longer’. I asked: ‘Dad, do you think that time has already come?’. ‘Yes.’ he said” [05Wo].*

The factor directly related to the dream of return is that formation of the democratic III Republic of Poland in 1989 redefined the status of stay in the UK of Poles that had not come back to Poland after the World War II. It relates more to the self-perception and self-definition of Poles abroad than to structural factors.<sup>28</sup> It seems, however, that, for some of them, it constituted the end of their “political emigration” and the beginning of “economic emigration”. Consequently they had to take up some position in relation to this changed situation and rejection of being “economic emigrant” was tantamount with remigration to Poland.

*“We read that [changes in Poland] as irreversible. Then, that status of political or ideological emigrant was difficult to maintain and it was necessary to accept that a person is an economic emigrant. I did not want this, even though I was not a political refugee myself but somehow via my family. And I did not want that. I have never perceived myself as a materialist” [08Wo].*

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<sup>28</sup> For analysis of a press debate regarding redefinition of the status of the Polish community in the UK after the political changes in Poland, compare Chapter 4 in this volume.



The political changes in Poland required also some reconsideration of the role of the Polish community as to the nature of its involvement in the Polish politics and international affairs. Evidently, some of returnees did reconsider it and it influenced their attitudes towards living in Poland. The following statement represents the most radical opinion questioning a need for existence of the Polish community abroad at the moment: “I do not see myself in this life of [Polish] emigration. What the heck we need it for now?!” [05Wn]. Opinions of other respondents were less radical, but attitudes that, being Poles, they were to live in Poland instead of involving themselves in Polish organisations abroad were common even though not always mentioned as motives to remigrate to Poland.

In general, for the returnees the most involved in activities of the Polish community in the UK, coming to Poland was a natural continuation of their work in helping Poland. The conviction of second-generation British Poles that they could be of help for Poland on its way to become the democratic and capitalistic country was almost the norm. Although only several persons mentioned a willingness to be of use for Poland as a dominant motive of their remigration, many returnees complained about Poles in Poland wasting and undermining skills of second-generation British Poles at present. Such willingness to do something for Poland in Poland as a motive for returning can be considered as particular type of ideological motive. It has a patriotic dimension assuming active involvement in improving the situation of the homeland.

Our respondents usually tied that willingness to help Poland with their professional or political involvement. In fact, it was rather difficult for the second-generation British Poles to enter Polish political circles and take up some political activities in Poland due to two reasons. Firstly, only few of them had social and political contacts that would enable them to enter Polish political environment. Thus, they would have to start a political career from the very beginning in Poland being in their forties or fifties. Secondly, our respondents were pointing out that they could not find a Polish political party that would be appropriate for their political orientations. Therefore, this “helping Poland” was usually related to some economic activity and the most common motivation that would fall into the category of a patriotic attitude can be described in the opinion of the respondent who had worked as vice financial director in London before he returned to Poland:

*“My profession, as one among very few professions, is exactly what was needed in Poland. I was thinking that I would give something to Poland. And I wanted myself [to return]”* [09Wo].

Final reason for remigration that we would classify as an ideological motive is strongly related to family motives of return. Some of our respondents stressed that a crucial determinant of their moving to Poland was that they wanted their children to be “fully Polish” in order to prevent them from mixed identity problems encountered by themselves. The group is rather diversified in the attitude to this issue, as it intersects with other decisions with regard to raising children like: providing them with a high-quality childhood life and education; giving them the best possible conditions to grow up and securing for them good prospects for the adult life. Such type of reasoning was usually accompanied by other ideological motives.

*“Many of my friends: they are travelling all the time; they are sending children to English schools. No! Although it would be beneficial and if I was born in Poland probably I would like to send my children to British schools to make them learn English. Consequently, we put also our children in an absurd situation. They encounter this [identity] difficulty. This lack of rationality is influencing subsequent generations...”* [08Wo].

The ideological motives played an important role in remigratory decisions of second-generation British Poles, that can not be neglected. We argue that, only in one fourth of the investigated cases, there were no traces of ideological reasoning. Among them, one case is a young man that came to Poland with his parents and also one female case that found her remigration to Poland as challenging to her already complex identity<sup>29</sup>.

Slightly adjusted perspective of ideological side of remigration should be employed to migration of two men that returned to Poland in the 1970s. They both came and stayed for good in Poland as they liked the social life and nature of interpersonal contacts in the communist Poland. According to Gosh (2000) such factors of remigration should be classified as social. However, both of them were working for western media reporting situation in communist Poland and being strongly interested and involved in observing political changes taking place in the course of their stay in Poland. Therefore, it is unquestionable that their social motives intersect with ideological reasoning.

Ideological aspects not always acted as the main motives of the decision about return to Poland. Involvement and interest in Polish matters might be a determinant of only few-months visits in Poland transforming later on into more permanent forms of remigration. For example, one of our respondents came to Poland to collect materials for his MA thesis devoted to some aspects of Polish history. It resulted in a sympathy towards Poland and eagerness to live in Poland..

All in all, ideological motives, as main determinants, drove only selected remigrations in the investigated group. The strongest ideological reasoning represented people that were brought up in the dream of return to Poland and who were involved politically in Polish matters in the UK. Intensity of visits in the communist Poland was also important here. Ideological motives can be found especially in the reasoning of those who were often travelling to the communist Poland and considered it as a place that suits them more than the UK to live in. Certainly, it intersects with social factors, but our respondents were also mentioning identity related factors that influenced their good perception of Poland.

We are aware that giving ideological reasoning can be a *post-factum* rationalisation of remigration to Poland. In fact, in our view, a group of returnees that came to Poland solely due to ideological reasons independently of economic factors is very small. It seems that there are only 3 cases in our group that can fall into this category. For others, even though ideological motives were important, promising evaluation of economic opportunities in Poland was a necessary condition to consider return to Poland.

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<sup>29</sup> The fact that she is married to an English man is probably an important factor empowering her identity problems.

### 5.3.3. *Economic Motives*

Economic factors are considered as the chief determinants of international mobility. Evidently, they are pivotal also in explaining remigration, although motivation in this kind of mobility has frequently important non-economic emotional and social sides (compare, Gmelch, 1980). A contemporary example of a great flow of Italians returning to their home country after the bankruptcy of Argentina provides a sounding evidence of the importance of economic factors in return flows. There is not doubt that economic motives played also an important role in remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland. The British Poles that did not commit remigration and also leaders of the Polish community in the UK go even further in their opinions about this issue. They seem to be convinced about solely economic motivation of second-generation British Poles returning to Poland. To quote the leaders: “Children of emigrants return to Poland (...) usually as representatives of big firms, consultants or experts. It is a professional promotion, not sentiments. Many of those who did not teach their children Polish feel very sorry about this at the moment (W1.) (Iglicka, 2002:26)”.

Certainly, economic reasons must have been important for remigration of second-generation British Poles. As mentioned before, the Polish labour market was offering them very attractive job prospects. At the same time, according to our respondents, the situation on the British labour market was not very attractive at the beginning of the 1990s. Economic factors have several facets and we can distinguish a set of economic motives of remigration that we consider to be related to either the professional career or the economic standard of life. The first group includes not only the level of anticipated salaries, but also factors like job satisfaction and professional promotion. As far as the achieved in Poland standard of life is concerned, we take into account not only the purchasing power of salaries earned by remigrants of Poland but also availability of goods and services to which returning British Poles had been accustomed in the UK.

All our respondents came to Poland with a job offer already in their hands. Exceptions constitute only a returnee who came to Poland for strictly ideological reasons and a young man who accompanied his parents. Sometimes an offer was coming unexpectedly, sometimes a remigrant was looking for a job. The latter scenario was characteristic for those who wanted to find a job in Poland in order to accomplish their idea of returning to Poland due to ideological and/or family reasons.

In the first half of the 1990s, Poland was a “career paradise” for second-generation British Poles. Job offers were waiting for them and were a professional promotion as a rule. It constituted a crucial incentive and a motive for return for our respondents. Young people had a chance to start an international career at the very young age, as portrayed by the below example of a young economist who responded to a job advert, in the Polish diaspora newspaper in London, with a little hope to succeed:

*“It was 1989 I guess, the beginning of 1990, I think, my mum found this job advert. I thought that I did not have any chance, as I was 25 without the work experience and it was a high position. I will never forget sending my CV and receiving a call in a following day. When the guy noticed*

*that I spoke Polish, immediately, 3 weeks later, I was on the plane (...). I remember, my boss was the youngest chief executive in the world and I was the youngest financial director” [10Wn].*

Professional promotion was also a motive for older and more experienced second-generation British Poles. Work in Poland was a solution for overcoming limits or even the blockade of their professional advancement in the UK.

*“At the beginning of the 1990s, (...) I already achieved some high level in my company. My advancement was blocked, as my boss had still 4 or 5 years to be retired. I could neither fire nor leave him behind. I know that I had to change something” [02Wo].*

Most of returnees were taking up jobs in giants of the world business that were only starting their activities in Poland with a few people. Others were delegated by their firms to set up branches of their UK companies in Poland, as there was a strong interest among western companies in investing in Poland. Frequently, an initiative was coming from remigrants, as they wanted to pursue some individual tasks taking advantage of their social and human capital – knowledge of the Polish language, culture<sup>30</sup>, people and Poland itself. It usually intersected with some ideological reasoning in the form of willingness “to do something in(for) Poland”.

*“I went to my boss, in a big company that I was working in, and I said him that he should be in Poland. He looked at me and said: ‘Do you have something there? Are you doing something there? (...) Then, I understood that I have to start to think about this” [01Wn].*

More brave returnees, who possessed valuable skills, were opening their own businesses as the result of the above motivation that was strengthened by the fact that investments in unexplored segments of the Polish market could provide exceptional return rates at that time. Attitude of the Polish authorities - welcoming for businessmen from western countries – was also an incentive. As recalled by our respondent:

*“They [civil servants at the Polish Ministry of Finance] were opening the doors and bowing [kłaniali się]. It was the beginning of 1990; expert came from abroad. (...) it would be impossible today” [12Wn].*

For a surprisingly big group of returnees, challenges imposed by work in Poland constituted not only strong incentives but also the motives. Remigrants were employed in Poland to build up companies or branches of international corporations from the scratch or to introduce services unknown in Poland – for example, a chain of cash machines. It was an interesting and involving job and also a profitable work experience. Moreover, it intersected with ideological, even patriotic, motives: in this way, returnees were really involved in a transformation of the overall young Polish economy proceeding quickly on their eyes. The below example shows, how the husband of our respondent achieved his goal to participate in opening of the first advertising agency in Poland.

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<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that returnees’ knowledge of the Polish culture was necessarily limited to what they knew from participation in their Polish circles in the UK and their earlier visits in Poland.

*“He [a husband of the respondent] said: ‘when the first advertising agency will be set up in Poland I will be in this agency’. And he found out which agency was to open its branch in Poland – the first international agency [entered into the Polish market] in 1989 or 1990. And he moved from his agency to that international agency. And they employed him to open their branch in Poland” [14Wn].*

A long list of incentives and related motives regarding work in Poland ends (or opens) with the high remuneration. None of our respondents directly mentioned this as a motive, but it was certainly influencing remigratory decisions. Purchasing power of salaries that returnees were acquiring in Poland was enormous for Polish standards at that time. They could easily afford standard of life that was beyond the reach of ordinary Poles often struggling with hardships of economic transformation. Remigrants entered the business elite comprising, first of all, foreigners delegated to work in Poland. Already at that time, rapidly developing Warsaw, was providing them with exclusive clubs and hotels where social life of top managers was concentrated. Memories of our respondents from that period speak for themselves.

*“We were earning very good money also for western standards and prices were low at that time [the beginning of the 1990s] in Poland. Thus, it was normal to go to the night club, eat caviar and drink champagne at the evening. That was life!” [10L].*

*“For us [the respondent and his family] having lunch in Marriot on Sunday was nothing special, whereas for an ordinary Pole, even though it was not a lot of money, it was something exceptional at that time” [02Wo].*

At the beginning of the 1990s, running exclusive style of life in Poland was possible for returnees as “infrastructure” for business elite developed quickly in Warsaw. Ordinary family life, even though very cheap, posed more difficulties at that time. Doing simple shopping still required some Poland-specific knowledge - obvious for Polish housewives. Some more sophisticated products, also food-products, were still unavailable for returnees accustomed to them. Poland-specific knowledge was also necessary to achieve anything in Polish government and local offices. Children were deprived of swimming pools, sport facilities and entertainment centres. This bad side of the Polish life appears, however, not to have restrained second-generation British Poles from coming to Poland. In fact, these bad sides of Polish life were encountered only by a part of returnees and their families. It was common for remigrants, at least at the beginning of remigration, to leave their families – the most exposed to inconveniences of life in Poland - in the UK.

In general, for second-generation British Poles remigration provided a big economic gain (especially in a purchasing power of their salaries) and a jump in a professional carrier. For dynamic individuals, it was also a challenge and promising avenue for professional satisfaction. In the mid-1990s, the above gains from remigration to Poland decreased due to maturation of the Polish economy and its Polish labour market and consequently smaller demand for western skills. It should be also noted that extraordinary job opportunities that returnees had in Poland at the beginning of 1990s were available only to selected people. “Having an appropriate profession” or “fitting into a demand on the Polish market” were, frequently mentioned by our respondents

reasons that they perceived as determinants of their return. Some of them even admitted that they would not have remigrated to Poland if they had not possessed an appropriate professional position there.

One can observe an interesting pattern in motives of returnees. The more ideologically motivated a person was, the less important role economic factors played in his/her decision. However, the reverse reasoning would provide a misinterpretation. Leaving apart around one fourth of analysed cases where, given directly or indirectly, reasoning for return was career's development or economic gain, returnees strongly motivated by economic factors were usually men of initiative that considered their remigration as an act of patriotism. Active involvement of our respondents in the Polish matters in the UK and their willingness to take part in the Polish economic transformation is unquestionable. In our view, for many (if not for majority) of second-generation British Poles separating ideological motives from economic factors would be a controversial exercise.

#### **5.4. Family Factors and Social Capital – Meso-level**

##### ***5.4.1. Family Factors***

Only some part of international migration is mobility of individuals free from family ties. Independent migrants are usually young people pursuing their studies abroad. In general, the life-cycle is considered to have an important impact on migratory decisions (compare Boyle, Halfacree and Robinson, 1998). Establishment of the family (household) limits, in some sense, freedom of mobility, as the family consists of several individuals with different preferences, motivations and plans about the future. However, family factors can also play a decisive role in migration decisions, like in migration to take care of the elderly parents or tied migration with a husband.

Literature examining interrelation between family strategies and patterns of mobility is already rich (compare, for example, Kofman, 2004). As a rule, migration of the overall households involves a tied migration. Traditionally, women follow their husbands and compromise. Interestingly enough, even in dual-career households, women are rather unlikely to take up a leading role in migratory decisions (Ackers, 2000). For following wives, migration involves moving the household, sending children to new schools and adjusting to everyday specificities of the new country of living. Limited attractiveness of these tasks is portrayed by the results of the study of Jeroen Smits, Clara H. Mulder and Pieter Hooimeijer (2004) who demonstrated that unemployed wives are likely to use their what authors call age advantage<sup>31</sup> to restrain the household from mobility, whereas the husbands use the respective advantage to initiate migration. Interestingly enough, the above mechanisms has been observed also in remigration of second-generation British Poles. Men were usual initiators of remigrations and their leading parts, whereas women were likely to act rather as tied migrants. It appears that high importance of ideological motives in the described remigration did not eliminate general patterns observed in international migration of families.

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<sup>31</sup> Age advantage is simply being older than the spouse.

The focus of our research and analysis is initiators of remigration<sup>32</sup>. There were only two cases of tied remigrants – women – in our research group. Thus, in our analysis, we consider family factors as an important parallel set of determinants that accompany ideological and/or economic motives of remigration. We should speak about factors, even though some of them may turn into motives. From among family motives and factors we can distinguish motives related to marriage (and a spouse), children’s bringing up and looking after elderly parents.

Marriage factors included ethnic composition of the second-generation British Poles’ couples, that can involve unions with other second-generation British Poles, Poles from Poland, Brits and other foreigners. In the investigated group, the first type of unions was the most common and interrelated with involvement in the “Polish life” in the UK. Couples involving Poles from Poland formed either in the UK or in Poland: Poles were coming to study or to work (e.g. as au pairs) in the UK or returnees met them during their trips to Poland. Thus, the likelihood of marrying a Pole was relatively high for our respondents. Interestingly enough, the only non-Polish mates married by our respondents were British<sup>33</sup> (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Partners<sup>a</sup> of second-generation British Poles by gender of respondents**

Description of a partners	Males	Females
<b>British</b>	3	1
<b>Second-generation British Polish</b>	5	2
<b>Polish from Poland</b>	11	1
<b>No partner</b>	3	1
<b>Total</b>	22	5

<sup>a</sup> It includes marriages and cohabitating couples.

Source: Own elaboration

Couples differed in relation to determinants and process of taking up the decision about remigration to Poland. We can distinguish three scenarios: remigration to Poland was the decision and the will of both partners; one partner was an obvious leading part and he/she was first to start remigration; remigration was taken individually and a couple formed in Poland. The latter case includes also situations when returnees came to Poland alone leaving his/her family in the UK and, as a consequence of partitioning or due to some other factors, the family dissolved. Then the present partner (married or cohabiting) of the remigrant is a Pole from Poland. In fact it was not such unlikely scenario, according to our respondents.

*“Majority from our circle of those who we know from the UK... We can say that, from among around 20-25 the closest acquaintances who went to Poland, only two still have the same wives. There was a norm that, when landing on the Heathrow, we were immediately getting amnesia [as to social life in Poland]. Social life, to make it short, was a male companion (...) female companion was usually from Poland” [10L].*

<sup>32</sup> Certainly, there were cases where the decision was taken up jointly by partners.

<sup>33</sup> Except for one man whose estranged wife was a Swiss. The present partner of the man is Polish.

The first scenario seems to be most likely for unions of two second-generation British Poles. Usually, the remigration was planned by these couples at the beginning of 1990s and they were only waiting for the right moment. This right moment was coming when at least one partner had found an appropriate job in Poland. It was usually a man who was looking for a job, but it is not a rule, as demonstrated by the below case.

*“To be honest, my wife got a job first [zalała się wcześniej] because her company was interested in establishing something in Poland” [03Wn].*

Another important indication of the right moment for remigration was the age of children. Couples that decided to remigrate to Poland were usually aiming at securing their children a smooth switch between Polish and British education system.

Couples deciding jointly were usually ideologically motivated. Statements like: “We considered ourselves to be Poles and we wanted to live in Poland” were often explanations for their decisions to remigrate. In our view, none of the couples following the above decision-making process returned to Poland due to solely economic reasons. Interestingly enough, we observed the similar pattern of decision-making in the case of one Polish-British couple. Our respondent stressed the role of his British wife in taking up the decision about remigration:

*“I told that if we did not do that [remigrate] at that time we would never do that. And my wife she is more active and brave. And I think that if I had a Polish wife, someone coming from Poland, then, I would never move to Poland” [10Wo].*

Evidently, Polish women (from Poland) were the least eager to go to Poland and their unwillingness has been stressed in different contexts by our respondents. Exceptions constitute women who were living in the UK for a short period of time and maintained strong links with their Polish families in Poland.

*“During our first 5-6 years of living in the UK, she [Polish wife] wanted very much to come back to Poland. Later on, she got used to the UK; our two children were born in the UK. Thus, at the beginning, she was a main initiator of moving to Poland” [04Wn].*

It seems that Polish women were not eager to come to Poland due to practical reasons. Standard of life that they had acquired in the UK was incomparably higher than what was achievable in the communist Poland. Running a household was much easier and, in case of need, Polish products were easily accessible in London (and other British towns). Going back to Poland was for those women, not an exiting adventure, but coming back to everyday practical Poland-specific problems, though gradually disappearing in the course of the economic transition. All these determinants of Polish women’s unwillingness to go to Poland, became understandable, for our respondent, during his visit in the place where his wife used to leave in Poland.

*“In general, it was difficult for my wife to come to Poland. For her it was the return. She left Poland in 1972-73. It was a time of Gierek in Poland. She was living in a very unpleasant block of flats. When I saw the conditions she was living in... Fifth floor (...), one toilet for 4 apartments;*



*no tap water. There was a tap water but to take a bath, they had to bring buckets of water. And when I thought about what she had left in the UK: beautiful five-bedroom house” [05Wn].*

We have only one case of a male partner from Poland, it shows, however, a completely different pattern. The man was an initiator of the remigration, whereas his second-generation British Polish wife (our respondent) treated it as a compromise from her side. She was aware that:

*“He would like to be here [Poland] more than there [the UK]. We did not talk too much about that, as I was presumably afraid to touch this issue not to hear ‘yes, I want to return’ whereas I did not want to” [02Wn].*

It can be argued that the character of this return is typical remigration of first-generation emigrants. Its motives are sentimental or, according to Gosh (2000), social, with some ideological reasoning behind: the couple wanted (or the husband decided so) to bring up their children as Poles.

Even though, our material is too much limited to develop general conclusions, the difference between male and female Polish spouses is striking. It seems that an important source of differences is the lower comfort of everyday life in Poland when compared to the UK. It was a duty of women, in most cases, to organise family life in Poland. High salaries earned by their husbands did not compensate difficulties in obtaining goods that were within easy reach in the UK. Situation of the described Polish man was similar to other male remigrants: he was, first of all, responsible for providing a family with appropriate financial means. His wife was taking care of the organisation of the family’s everyday life.

Also, differences in professional opportunities in Poland of female second-generation British Poles and Polish women from Poland is striking. Evidently, Poles did not have exceptionally promising job prospects in Poland, as only some of them acquired, in the UK, valuable human capital that was in demand in Poland. From this perspective, even British wives’ situation on the Polish labour market was better. Some of them, who managed to adapt to the Polish environment, successfully developed their professional careers.

The third family scenario was setting up a family in Poland with a Pole. It can be not only a factor, but also the motive of remigration to Poland. In our group there were, however, only few such cases though it seems to be a common scenario in remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland. Marriage with a Pole was, first of all, a factor stabilising remigration to Poland and turning it into a permanent settlement. Only in one case the will to marry a Pole was a direct motive of remigration.

Many of remigrants were in the middle-age and had already children at the moment of their remigration. The cycle of their bringing up was an important factor influencing mobility patterns. In general, on the one hand, we can observe that returnees usually perceive remigration to Poland as unbeneficial for education of their children. On the other hand, however, there is a group of returnees who perceive Poland as a better country to grow up in. It was a motivation for their remigration and further stay in Poland.

*“I think that childhood is childhood in Poland (...) We can say that [in the UK] the childhood is shorter, whereas here light-heartedness of childhood is longer. The childhood is respected in the Polish society. In the West, they want the child to become a consumer as soon as possible” [03Wn].*

It seems that the best compromise in such a situation was living in Poland, sending children to British schools in Poland and then to British Universities. All those decisions were of pivotal importance for mobility of returnees’ families.

Compromises were virtually unnecessary in relation to parents of returnees. Parents usually played a minor role in the decision concerning remigration. It is in contrast with usual patterns of remigration of first-generation migrants, for whom, taking care of elderly parents left in the country of origin can constitute a strong motivation of return (compare, Weinar, 2002). Parents of our respondents were not insisting on remigration of their children, but some of them decided to return themselves. The latter seems, however, to be rather seldom, as it is usually difficult for elderly people to leave their friends and social life in the UK. Poland has become already for them an alien place with few members of family and shortage of friends. Our respondents were often stating that “Political changes came too late for their parents”.

In general, only selected family factors acted as facilitators and motives of remigration. Willingness to join a Polish partner in Poland constituted a strong motive, but worked as a determinant of return of only one our respondent. Motive to bring up children in Poland seems to have played more important role. Here, however, parents have to struggle with decision as to the type of education that would be the most profitable for their children. This motive was interrelated with an ideological motive of providing children with “unproblematic” Polish identity. Ethnic composition of the family was another important aspect and even though did not influence the decision regarding return directly could act as either facilitator or obstacle of remigration. Unions of two second-generation British Poles were the most likely to return. Other family factors were likely to be rather obstacles or neutral circumstances than stimulators of remigration

#### **5.4.2. Social Capital**

##### **5.4.2.1. Introductory Remarks**

As shown in the previous sections, collection of motives and incentives of remigration is big and tempting, but social capital representing the meso-level can not be omitted in our analyses. It has been already observed in migration studies that development of social networks between the sending and receiving area can transform migration between these two areas into self-perpetuating process (Massey, 1999). The migration literature distinguishes a variety of functions that social networks and social capital can play in migration (compare, for example, Gurak, Cases, 1992). Lowering transaction costs of migrations is considered to be its most important role in stimulating international mobility.

We focus, then, on that role of social capital relating it to four other functions of social capital distinguished by Faist (2000): selective, diffusive, bridging and adaptive function. In our view, this conceptualisation of social capital, strongly embedded in a concept of transnational

migration, provides for capturing appropriately its role in remigration of second-generation British Poles. Moreover, our analysis revealed that, in remigration of second-generation British Poles, social capital played a particular role in the job searching in Poland. At the same time, for many of returnees finding an appropriate job in Poland was a necessary condition for remigration. Thus, we pay a strong attention to this aspect in our analyses.

#### ***5.4.2.2. Selective Function***

Social capital is a local asset difficult to transfer abroad and between countries (compare, Faist, 2000). Therefore, people who possess ties only in their home countries are less likely to migrate than those having social links abroad. Also, would-be migrants are most likely to take up migrations to countries, where they have some social networks, neglecting other directions. Thus, social capital determines selection of migrants on the one hand and selection of destination areas on the other.

In remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland social capital was but one of the various factors determining selection of the destination country – Poland. It can be assumed that this function is of minor importance in remigration process, as a rule. Decision-process of our respondents did not tackle the question: “Which country to go?”, but the questions like: “Whether to go to Poland?” or “When to go to Poland?”. Returnees saying that “I wanted to go abroad and I was lucky that it became Poland” were exceptions in our group.

Like in other examples of returning flow, Poland was a natural choice for second-generation British Poles not only due to ideological reasons. It was determined by their human capital, as apart from the knowledge of Polish, they were likely to have some work experience related to Poland. Some of them were responsible for contacts with Poland in their British firms, others worked for media as Polish correspondents. All in all, remigration to Poland, for majority of them, was the most effective way of using and reproducing their human capital.

Social capital, played, however, an important role in selection of remigrants. Those possessing some business and social contacts in Poland were the most likely to migrate. Consequently, it seems that the group of second-generation British Poles actively involved in the Polish life in the UK was the most likely to remigrate. It is because the so-called “Polish life” implied not only UK-specific activities but also visits in Poland and contacts with Polish people belonging, frequently, to the elite of the Polish opposition that became a political elite after 1989. Therefore, selective function of social capital is first of all selection of remigrants whereas its other aspects were insignificant in the analysed mobility. Evidently, social capital acquired in Polish churches and organisations in the UK was of particular use in remigration to Poland in the 1990s.

#### ***5.4.2.3. Diffusive Function***

When transferred abroad, social capital may constitute an important force stimulating emigration to a given area, as it enables access to resources located there. In our view, this diffusive function is the most important in explaining mechanisms of remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland in the 1990s. In fact, it can be argued that the social capital was literally transferred to Poland in the late 1980s. In 1989, Poland-specific capital of second-

generation British Poles was rather limited (even though existed). There was some relatively small number of second-generation British Poles working in Poland. There were also some contacts that Poles in the UK had with Poles in Poland originating from either some limited business contacts or holiday visits in Poland. All that changed rapidly at the beginning of 1990s.

It seems that the major transfer of social capital took place with the help of the British Know How Fund and business organisations set up primarily by second-generation British Poles in the UK. One of our respondents mentioned Anglo-Polish City Club that assembled over 100 Poles working in the City in London. The prevailing goal of these initiatives was to spread a specialist finance and banking knowledge in Poland. All started with trainings in Poland. British Poles were going to Poland in buses to visit several towns in Poland (so-called “bus group”). The programme of each evening was a lecture and receptions giving the occasion to set up some business contacts in Poland. As it stems from the analysed interviews, a great part of this group decided to remigrate. They can be considered as pioneers who are always necessary to develop (re)migratory social capital. It should be noted that their role in its formation was exceptional and difficult to compare to the typical development of the chain migration. These people immediately entered a business elite in Poland and become involved in recruiting other second-generation British Poles to work in Poland.

Another group of pioneers were those who were sent to Poland by international companies they worked for in the UK. As already mentioned, second-generation British Poles were often actively looking for such an opportunity. Also their tasks directly implied recruitment of people. At the same time, it is evident that second-generation British Poles were particularly eager to employ Poles from abroad educated in the West.

*“I was travelling all over Europe (...) I was employing first people – persons who left Australia (it was a production manager), one man was in America and he was looking for an opportunity to return to Poland. They wanted to take advantage of their skills and experience and so on. My secretary also was in the States. She directly came back from the United States” [02Wo].*

There was also the third stream of pioneers although it seems to be smaller than the remaining two. Companies entering Polish market were actively looking for people with western education and knowledge of Polish language. Polish diaspora press was an important channel of the recruitment.

The above three main very effective channels of pioneer remigration to Poland gave rise to a rapid formation and further reproduction of social capital facilitating returns. Moreover, returnees were relatively often changing jobs in Poland, which was stimulating further reproduction of social capital. Consequently, vast majority of our respondents came to Poland with the help of social capital and it was usually their friends from London who were proposing them jobs or helping in finding appropriate posts. The job proposals were even more often than help in the search. In our research, we came across only two cases<sup>34</sup> of so called “bus group”. In their remigration, establishment of own business or contacts from circles of businessmen organising training trips to Poland were the main source of job offers.

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<sup>34</sup> On respondent took part only in the focus group interview.

To avoid the simplification, it should be, however, added that some returnees, from among our respondents, were also finding a source of income in Poland via their ties with Polish people from Poland. Some of them were able to take advantage of their contacts with the political elite originating from the Solidarity opposition. Two our respondents, found, in this way, jobs in the Polish Ministries. The “alternative types” of social capital and ways of finding the job in Poland have been observed mainly among “early returnees”. In the mid-1990s, social capital in a form of British Poles in Poland became a primary (if not decisive) in the job search, thus, in remigration to Poland. Thanks to it, jobs in Poland were still relatively easily accessible for late-comers, even though the demand for western skills was already smaller on the Polish market. Our respondents were repeating the same names of companies where they had worked with their acquaintances from the UK.

As presented above, the role of diffusive function of social capital in remigration to Poland can not be underestimated. The reproduction of social networks of remigrants in Poland was exceptionally fast. Within not more than one year, remigration from the UK took form of chain migration, which usually takes several years. In this way, transaction costs of remigration rapidly decreased. All that make the social capital a crucial factor of individual decisions regarding remigration to Poland.

#### ***5.4.2.4. Bridging Function***

Social capital serves as a bridge between the sending and the receiving area when migrants maintain social and symbolic ties with their home social spaces. Bridging function of social capital may facilitate migration due to constant flow of information between the two areas. It seems that this is another function of social capital that facilitated remigration of second-generation British Poles. It can be derived already from the previous sections that, in Poland, returnees usually maintain their links with the UK. Most of our respondents go to visit their parents once a month or every two months. There is even a group of British Poles that travel between Poland and the UK on the weekly basis, as their families are staying in London. Christmas is a time when second-generation frequently meet either in London or in Warsaw which is exemplified in the statement of a returnee who work in Poland and travel to London every week.

*“On Christmas party (...) where there was a Polish circle (środowisko) in the UK, there were about 5 or 6 man who had been in Poland” [02Wo].*

In the studied group, those who did not maintain intensive contacts were in minority. It applied to two returnees whose all families – brothers in the one case and parents, wife and children in the other - came to Poland. Interestingly enough, it was a strategy of one of them not to maintain strong ties with second-generation British Poles as he wanted to “disappear” in the Polish society. His return can be considered as highly ideological, but the remaining ideological returnees did not follow this pattern.

It seems that family links constitute an important factor in maintaining Polish-British links over borders. Also, returnees that established their families in Poland are less likely to travel to the UK and involve themselves in environment of British Poles. None of them did not, however,

cut off from his friends in the UK. Evidently, we can observe a bridging function of the social capital in remigration of second-generation British Poles. Certainly, maintaining links with the UK is not difficult thanks to a relatively small geographical distance. Those ties stimulate travelling between the two countries and may facilitate also further remigration. For sure, the bridging function was important in the “boom period” when those already in Poland were easily able to recruit their friends from the UK to work in Poland. It seems that remigration to Poland did not stop second-generation British Poles from maintaining intensive contacts with their friends from Polish churches, organisations and scouting in the UK.

#### ***5.4.2.5. Adaptive Function***

Social capital enables access to resources in the destination area, thus, it influences a mode of migrants’ insertion in the receiving country. This adaptive function of the social capital is another one observed in remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland. Relatively big stream of people that came to one town – Warsaw - in a short period of time, at the beginning of 1990s, provided for particular conditions of returnees’ incorporation into the Polish society. Remigrants and their partners found themselves in Warsaw surrounded by their friends from the UK. Consequences of this particular situation can be observed till now.

The main reference group of remigrants in Poland were and still are other returnees or foreigners from western countries. It was the group where returnees were finding help in settling up in Poland and solving all organisational and bureaucratic problems. Their social life was and still is also concentrated in this social circle. The statement like the below one was not an exception in the investigated group:

*“I found a social circle [odnalzałam się towarzysko], but it is not a Polish circle. As long English people [she also meant second-generation British Poles] are here, I have a lot of companionship. If they are gone I will then worry” [04Wo].*

Strong social networks with other returnees give our respondents also access to job offers. Certainly, it is not the only way of finding a subsequent job in Poland, but it seems to still play a role and allow returnees not to lose their positions in the business elite in Poland. Also, female returnees seem to rely on that group in acquiring their jobs in Poland. It is not by accident that many of them work in the British and international schools in Poland. Contacts with other returnees and foreigners make remigrants have their circle free from identity tensions. The resistance, on the side of Poles, to fully accept returnees as Poles, is a source of frustration for remigrants. Thus, being able to turn to their own Anglo-Polish circle makes their life in Poland more comfortable.

In general, the adaptive function of social capital influenced many spheres of adaptation patterns of remigrants in Poland. Here, we point only some selected aspects of this problem. It is without doubts, however, that formation of a distinguishable group of remigrants and immigrants from western countries working in Poland was conditioned by a transfer of social capital of British Poles to Poland and its rapid reproduction within business circles in Poland.

## SUMMARY

We argue that determinants of second-generation British Poles' mobility to Poland prove a specific character of this flow making it similar to remigration. Namely, an important role of ideological motives in stimulating this mobility is exceptional and typical rather for remigration than for ordinary migration. In fact, motives for remigration were mixture of ideological and economic reasons embedded in changes brought about by political and economic transition in Poland in the late 1980s.

“Ideological remigrants” were, first of all those who had grown up in the dream of return to Poland preserved by their Polish parents and those who had known Poland from the previous visits. Nevertheless, ideological reasoning was often not enough to return to Poland. Acquiring an appropriate job in Poland constituted usually a necessary condition of remigration, except for few extreme cases. Exclusively “economic remigrants” were, however, also exceptions in the returnees' group, even though transforming Polish economy was offering second-generation British Poles: high salaries, professional promotions and demanding but interesting jobs. Most common were thus mixed cases, in which patriotic motives like “willingness to help Poland and do something for Polish transforming economy” was very often.

Family factors could either strengthen motivation or restrain return. Unions of two second-generation British Poles were the most likely to jointly promote the idea of return and to take up a risk of resettlement of the overall household. Polish partners from Poland were less eager to leave the UK, except for those who were living in the UK for a short period. Nevertheless, all families shared the same obstacles: conflict of interests related to professional careers of both partners and a problem with providing children with British education, which most of returnees perceived as more beneficial for their children. Therefore, aside strong incentives of ideological and economic nature, some family factors were unfavourable for remigration.

The factor facilitating remigration was social capital of second-generation British Poles. Without stimulation of social capital, the rapid growth of remigration to Poland in the first years of the 1990s would be much less likely. The social capital was efficiently transferred from the UK to Poland with a big group of pioneers that came to Warsaw already in the late 1980s. Then, the high dynamics of returns at the beginning of the 1990s enabled its rapid development and reproduction. Consequently, returnees coming to Poland in the mid-1990s seem to have relied chiefly on their social networks in finding job in Poland and establishing themselves and their families in Poland.

As a conclusive remark, we want to note that the constellation of motives and factors determining remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland in the 1990s make this flow of returns similar to, what Francesco P. Cerase (1974) calls, “return of innovation”. In this type of return “the immigrant sees in his return home the possibility of greater satisfaction of his needs and aspirations. (...) In order to realize them, he is prepared to make use of all the means and new skills he has acquired during his migratory experience (Cerase, 1974: 251)”. “Innovative remigrants” return to their home countries to bring there new ideas and new values that can be beneficial not only for them, but also for the society of origin. Obviously this type of return is

possible only if opportunity structures in the home country give space for such activities. Although the second-generation British Poles are not migrants returning to their places of birth, we can see that motives of their returns fit very well into pattern of “return of innovation”.



## **6. How Permanent? How Stable? Patterns and Prospects of Remigration**

Already in 1980, George Gmelch (1980: 136) stressed that “in some settings it is difficult to distinguish analytically the migrants returning home for a short visit or seasonally from those who have returned permanently”. The outcome of contemporary international mobility is even more difficult to predict, as in the era of advanced communication technologies and transportation, migration is less and less likely to be a one-way movement. Mobility may involve variety of time-space strategies including, for example, different patterns of commuting (compare, for example, Malmberg, 1997). So-called transmigrants are on the move all the time sharing their life between different locations and pursuing sophisticated time-space strategies. They are partly in one country and partly in the other. Their places of living are not tantamount with places of work. “An essential element of transnationalism is the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies (Basch, Schiller, Blanc, 1997: 7)”

It is thus not an easy task to determine whether we can already talk about return of second-generation British Poles to Poland or we should rather treat their arrival to Poland only as temporary labour migration. Even returnees themselves were changing their attitudes towards the character of their mobility to Poland. It is not an exceptional situation in international mobility, but this uncertainty as to the returnees’ future was empowered by uncertainty as to the path of political and economic reforms in Poland. The first-half of the 1990s was characteristic of dramatic changes in all sectors of the Polish economy. Old firms were being either successfully restructured or closed down. Newly established firms were achieving unbelievable returns rates or going into bankruptcy. Political situation was highly unstable marked by high dynamics of formation and dissolution of political parties.

The goal of this chapter is closer examination of second-generation British Poles’ patterns of returns in order to address an issue of stability of this wave of remigration and its prospects. We argue that only part of remigrants returned definitely to Poland, whereas mobility of others resembles transnational migration. Namely, it seems that “ideological remigrants” were the most likely to move permanently to Poland whereas others pursue complicated time-spaces strategies related to Warsaw and London depending strongly on family factors.

In trying to predict future of returns of second-generation British Poles to Poland, we examine opinions of remigrants regarding satisfaction from remigration and its dynamics in the 1990s and 2000s. It appears that “remigratory boom period” had already passed, whereas those intending to run their lives in Poland are dissatisfied with limited opportunities for influencing Polish political and economic reforms. We argue, however, that symbolic links that had existed during the communist time between Poland and second-generation British Poles in the UK turned into more physical ties as a consequence of remigration. Then, links between Warsaw and London seem to be the strongest and the densest. In our view, we can even talk about particular Warsaw-London social space including remigrants and people in Warsaw and London, in

particular second-generation British Poles. It can be conducive to further mobility of second-generation British Poles.

In this chapter we use two sources of data: in-depth interviews with returnees and material from the focus group discussion. The opening analytical sub-chapter is devoted to time-spaces strategies of returnees and is based on in-depth interviews. Subsequently, analysis of the way in which returnees evaluate remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland is demonstrated using the focus group discussion as a source of information. The next sub-chapter deals with dynamics of returns and provides for some reflections as to the future of remigration. Dynamics of returns is reconstructed, first of all on the basis of opinions of experts that took part in the focus group discussion, whereas remaining sections build on the overall material collected during the research.

## **6.1. Time-Space Strategies of Returnees**

### ***6.1.1. Pattern of Return***

Moving the overall household to another country is a difficult decision and great organisational effort usually requiring more investments in the new country than movement of a single person. Therefore, we can observe differences in patterns of returns between singles and those having already their families established. Indeed, family factors had a strong impact on modes of the returns. It appears, however, that the role of returnees' ideological and economic motives was also of importance here.

It was apparently a relatively small part of the remigrants that instantly returned with their families. Among them also not everybody dared to take up a definitive decision.

*“We decided with my husband that we will make a two-year trial; that we will not think at all whether we are going to stay for good in Poland or go back to the UK during these 2 years. If, after those 2 years, we like it [ life in Poland] we will decide to stay and all other plans we will adjust to this decision”* [04Wo].

Usual pattern was that one partner was coming several months earlier to prepare an apartment or a house. Only some of them were instantly buying the property. Others were deciding for renting or using houses provided by their companies. Returnees following this path tended to pay off their mortgages before they moved to Poland, but only one respondent had sold his house in the UK. Selling a house was a source of money for establishing a new life in Poland and a symbolic closure of the UK stage. Sometimes, this move was impossible due to the fact that returnees' parents were staying in the UK house. Moreover, keeping a house in London was and still is providing remigrants with a financial security, as its renting constitutes a source of good, especially for Polish standards, income.

All returnees that came to Poland with their whole families were ideologically motivated. A man that was pursuing an international career in several countries and whose family was accustomed to follow him everywhere was the only exception in this group. Interestingly enough, this group comprised first of all couples of two second-generation British Poles. Some unions including Poles from Poland added to this group, but they included only Poles either living in the

UK for a short time or maintaining strong family links with Poland<sup>35</sup>. What all these couples have in common is the joint decision about remigration. Exceptions from this rule are very rare in our group and presumably in the overall population of second-generation British Poles returning to Poland.

The biggest group of returnees was coming to Poland in stages. Usual pattern was that one partner (most often the husband) was getting or organising himself/herself a job and going alone to Poland. It involved a period of intensive commuting of the returnee between Poland and London that lasted from one year up to 6 years in extreme cases. There was variety of reasons for such a pattern of mobility and most of them were family factors. First of all, many returnees pointed out that they did not want to expose their families on risk of failure of remigration – mainly in economic terms. They were often stressing that they want to move their families in a “safe and smooth way”. It applied also to a British career of a returnee’s spouse which seems, however, not to be a major determinant of a pattern of returning, but a factor that remigrants had to take into account.

*“It was a time when my husband had a chance to resign from his military service. They were proposing good conditions of resignation. Then we decided that we will go to Poland with children”* [01Wn].

Sometimes professional obligations and/or successful career of a spouse were postponing arrival of the family.

*“I came only in 92. He[the husband of the respondent] had been already here [in Poland] 1.5 almost 2 years alone. We were coming frequently. Children were small. I had a very good job. And we did not want to close our eyes and go leaving all that [jechać w ciemno] ”* [14Wn].

The chief determinant constituted, however, children and their bringing up. The school regime was a decisive factor here. Children were usually not being taken from British schools in the middle of school semesters. Sometimes, one parent (usually the wife) had been waiting to join a spouse till the moment when all children could be sent to board schools or become independent. In one rather extreme case it lasted 6 years. Small children were usually instantly brought to Poland if other obstacles were missing.

The reasons for the period of initial commuting were also of economic nature – related to the professional career of a remigrant in Poland. Jobs that our respondents were receiving in Poland at the beginning of the 1990s were very good, but their high share was temporary contracts. Remigrants were usually given some tasks like setting up a branch of the company, developing marketing strategy or computer system for the firm. At the beginning, some of them worked only as consultants that required spending only few days a week in Poland. Thus, returnees were using the first stage of their remigration to ground their professional position in Poland. Those who were starting their own businesses were aiming at achieving the stable position on the market. In fact, achieving a relatively stable professional position in Poland was, in some cases, a determinant of the second stage of mobility – arrival of the family.

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<sup>35</sup> Other cases like the Polish-British marriage described earlier, should be treated as exceptional.

*“I came alone. In 93, we had won the contract that obligated me to permanent stay in Poland. (...) then the family [came to Poland]” [03Wo].*

Single remigrants were pursuing the third pattern of the return. They accounted for around one sixth of our research group. Two other cases adding to this group are returnees whose marriages dissolved either prior or in the course of their remigratory movements to Poland. Except for two persons, all of them are already in unions with Polish partners from Poland. They usually came to Poland without any precise plans for the future. Although there are some important exceptions in this group, it can be argued that they tended to come to Poland either for job reason or for some “light” ideological reasons – interest in Poland, fascination with Polish culture and so on. Plans of members of this group were less precise as those of husbands and wives described earlier, but their initial stage of remigration did not involve strong commuting, as they had not leave any or limited family obligations in the UK. They were entering the second stage of remigration upon a marriage or the start of cohabitation with a Pole. Consequently, their remigration was taking a more permanent form, as they settled a household in Poland. For those still single, stages of their remigration were governed by stability of their jobs – stable at the moment of the research.

In general, initiation of remigration of second-generation British Poles usually involved intensive commuting between Poland and the UK. Exceptions, even though rare, where returnees driven chiefly by ideological reasons aiming at rising their children in the Polish environment and closing the UK period of life. Majority decided for a “smooth move” to avoid exposing their children (and also spouses) to unnecessary stress and investing too much in life in Poland in case remigration would be a failure. Returnees’ career paths also impacted on the pattern of return. Acquisition of the stable job was rising the likelihood of arrival of the family and more permanent stay in Poland. It is, however, evident that family factors – character of couples and age of children – where the strongest determinants of the pattern of return.

### ***6.1.2. Time-Space Strategies after Return***

In the course of the 1990s the second-generation British Poles’ character of stay in Poland was changing. All of our respondents – still in Poland at the moment of the research – were, however, joined by their families at some point<sup>36</sup>. Exception constitutes a man, interviewed in London, whose wife had never decided to go to Poland. Thus, after 7 years of commuting – between 1989 and 1996 – the man gave up his travelling and, at the moment, overall family is in London. In this case, decisive factor seems to be the family – the wife did not want to give up her career in London. It is likely that this trajectory is not an exception and that giving up remigration due to resistance on the side of the returnee’s spouse was more often in reality than what we observed in the research group.

Most remigrants have been in Poland continuously, even though some of them have been commuting extensively. Sometimes, they were leaving Poland (and Polish jobs) for some time due to the job offer in other European countries. It was usually typical labour migration related to

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<sup>36</sup> Certainly, it does not apply to single remigrants and those who established their families in Poland.

the careers of the remigrants. Interestingly enough, only few of them took a break in the UK. One woman went to London to take up additional studies in the UK. Another followed his husband to Asia, where he got a subsequent job, and then to the UK. She came again to Poland in 2000. It seems, however, that going for some time to the UK was not a marginal phenomenon among returnees in Warsaw, as our respondents, from time to time, were mentioning examples of such mobility pattern.

Again, mobility patterns of returnees importantly governed by ideological reasons were “the least interesting”. The goals of their returns to “help Poland”, “be Polish” and “have their children Polish” involved regular stay in Poland. It was, however, not a very big group. Also, returnees that set up their households with Poles in Poland were regularly staying in Poland, as Poland had become not only their place of work, but also the place of stay of their families. Many of returnees were, however, travelling rather intensively mainly due to family factors. Namely, it was not exceptional that one spouse (usually the wife) decided at some point to leave, temporarily or permanently, Poland with children whereas the other partner (usually the husband) was staying in Poland and travelling extensively to London like in the initial period of remigration.

The main reason for leaving Poland by the family of the returnee was education of children. Remigrants were usually deciding for British or international education system<sup>37</sup> which is provided in Poland at the primary and secondary level. Virtually all of them were planning to send their children to the UK for studies. At the same time, a relatively big group came to the decision that attending secondary schools in the UK would be most beneficial for their children in terms of further educational opportunities and job prospects. Consequently, mostly the wives were going back with children to the UK to take care of their education. One can see that it was a few-year perspective of partitioning of the family.

*“After being 7 years together in Poland, we decided, in fact my wife decided - she is a school-teacher and she was following those things – that, taking into the continuation [of children’s studying in the British system], it would be easier for them [children] to go to the British Universities after school in the UK” [02Wo].*

Sometimes education of children constituted only an additional factor of family’s (one partner and children) reverse return to the UK, whereas the main reason was lack of adaptation of the spouse in Poland. Interestingly enough, second-generation British Poles were able to adapt themselves quite successfully in Poland taking also advantage of the existence of the close social links among second-generation British Poles in Poland. British spouses were the most likely to encounter adaptation problems. Some of them had never learnt Polish, as their social circles in Poland were English speakers. Their adaptation problems usually did not lie in the lack of job, but were related to everyday life and relations with Poles. Those, who returned, as they “could not adapt” or “did not like Poland” were usually unemployed housewives. It seems that determinants of their going back to the UK were characteristic for typical remigration of first-generation migrants: “loneliness”, “missing family, friends and home country”. Taking into

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<sup>37</sup> Exceptions constituted parents who declared the will to raise children as Polish. Then, they, however, tended to stress that choosing Polish education was not a rational decision from the perspective of children’s job prospects.

account the fact that their husbands were top managers in Poland having the interesting, but involving long-hours of work, career, their lack of adaptation is becoming more appealing. Elderly parents and necessity to take care of them was the seldom, and usually additional, reason for reverse return of the remigrants spouses.

At the moment of the research, one fifth of our respondents had their families in the UK. It is a relatively big proportion of those who had established their families before their return to Poland. As demonstrated before, such situation can quite likely end up with dissolution of marriages and establishment of new families in Poland. In fact, our respondents were not happy about being away from their families stressing that it is a bad outcome of their remigration to Poland.

*“My family is there [in the UK] and it is this element that, let’s say, is not good. But it is the way it is” [02Wo].*

For none our respondent, being partly here and there was a decision determined by a type of work. All of them simply worked in Poland, although frequently employed in international companies. Only one respondent, regretting isolation with the family, argued that the fact that he did not live with his family is beneficial in some way, as he can either fully involve in working (in Poland) or in family life (in the UK).

*“The benefit [of commuting] is that, when I am here [in Poland], I can involve myself 100% in my work, 12 even 14 hours per day; Saturday and Sunday. It is not important, as I do not have any other obligations apart from maintaining myself in Poland. When I am back in the UK, I always try to go back for 4-5 at the minimum. Then, intensively: house, children and all matters there [in London]” [02Wo].*

In fact, model of returnees’ commuting is rather unbeneficial economically. Earning money in Poland, where average salaries are smaller than in the UK, and maintaining the family in the UK, where costs of life are much higher than in Poland, is against the usual rationale of migration. Moreover, family, by living in the UK, occupies the house that could be rented for good money if empty. In this way, remigrants and their families are deprived of the additional source of income.

Why, then, remigrants decide for such transnational time-space strategies? Why don’t they go to the UK to join their families? Evidently, as for motives of remigration, reasons seem to be ideological and economic. Ideological reasons are natural consequence of motives of remigration. Those, who came to Poland, as “they considered themselves Polish”, “wanted to do something for Poland” and so on, still hope that their partners will re-join them in Poland in the future. Some of them do not want to leave in the UK, as they question the necessity of being Poles abroad in the present situation. Many simply do not like living in the UK, as they feel better in Poland.

*“Maybe, now, I can see this English world [in a different way], this multicultural mess. And it is not my country. I feel much better here [in Poland]” [05Wo].*

Sometimes, economic reasons play more important role in committing this type of mobility. Those, who stubbornly stay in Poland and agree to fly to London almost every week, are usually the most successful remigrants. Salaries that they earn in Poland are very attractive and their firms frequently cover costs of their flying between London and Warsaw. Then, remigrants, even those less successful, frequently, would have to leave or close companies that they established themselves. Their Poland-specific skills would be of less use in the UK than in Poland which directly translates into lower attractiveness of potential jobs that they could have in the UK. Last but not least, commuting remigrants are usually already in their late forties or fifties when it is already difficult to re-enter a labour market in a foreign country after several-year break. It seems to be also related to not very good situation on the British labour market. Examples of second-generation British Poles who decided to go back to the UK are not encouraging, at the moment.

*“This crisis in the middle of 2000 was a turning-point. Many of my friends, who went back to the UK, cannot find the job at the moment” [03Wn].*

In general, it is obvious that only part of second-generation British Poles indeed resettled with their families to Poland. It is mostly the case of “ideological remigrants” and those who established their families in Poland. Others, “at least”, maintain two houses (in Poland and Britain) – even though commonly one of them is only the source of income from renting. For example, it provides one respondent with funds for financing foreign (not in Poland) studies of his children. Thus, only part of returnees decided to fully close their British period, others resemble transnational migrants in their migratory strategies. The term “transnational” is the best to describe families of returnees. Even if their wives are already with them in Poland, their children are dispersed all over the world (only some live Poland). It is, however, striking that this transnational nature of migration is chiefly caused by family factors being rather second-best option from the economic point of view, in contrast to usual pattern. Obviously, the fact that transportation between Warsaw and London is very good constitutes an important factor determining this mobility. It can be expected that, for example, for second-generation American Poles, such transnational strategies would be more difficult to accomplish.

### ***6.1.3. Plans for the Future***

Plans of the returnees regarding their place of work and living are an interesting source of information as to the nature of their remigration to Poland. Certainly, what we analyse here, is only attitudes and beliefs of our respondents that can change in the course of their later experiences. It should be noted that our respondents are likely to represent a particular group – relatively successful remigrants. Only 5 of them came to Poland after 1995, whereas majority had been staying in Poland for at least 8 years, at the moment of the research. In this chapter we limit our analysis to 25 cases of those who were still in Warsaw at the moment of research<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> From among respondents interviewed in 2001/2002, majority was still in Warsaw in 2003. Only 2 remigrants might have gone back to the UK earlier. For others we know for sure that they were still staying in Warsaw at that time. Nevertheless, we exclude from analysis in this section only those interviewed in London having experiences with remigration to Poland.

In general, plans of those living with their families in Poland are more “Poland-oriented” than of those whose families live in the UK. It is without doubts that family factors are of pivotal importance in this respect. In fact, the more returnees’ family members, including also parents and siblings<sup>39</sup>, have moved to Poland the more likely the remigrants are to plan a permanent stay in Poland. Also, remigrants that had established their families in Poland usually did not plan any further resettlement. All of them usually explained their intentions to stay in Poland by statements expressing lack of ties with the UK: “lack of relatives”, “lack of reasons” and so on. In general, for majority of them, there are little, if any, pull factors for going to the UK, whereas push factors, in Poland, do not exist or are insignificant.

It should be noted that orientation to stay in Poland not always involved lack of migratory plans. Some returnees took into account labour migration to European and other well-developed countries. Younger people, before their fifties, were more likely to consider this. It depends, however, first of all on professional plans and opportunities. What needs to be stressed is that, for this group, Poland became the country to come back to. In other words, for them, Poland, not the UK, became the country of origin, when international migration is concerned.

It appears that remigrants intending to leave from Poland for other countries comprise, first of all, people being quite confident about their job prospects in the UK and also other European countries. They considered their migratory plans as further development of their careers. Some remigrants planned to spend their retirement period in some “pleasant” countries, like, for example, Spain. Such “retirement related mobility” is a phenomenon observed in many western European countries.

The group having the most vague plans is commuters having their families in the UK. However, the most successful remigrants (in our group men only) usually did not consider going to the UK in the short-term perspective. One of them, running several businesses in Poland, stated that:

*“It is obvious that one is making it [working hard in Poland] not for esthetical or some superficial purposes, but for money. And it is going to be my retirement programme”*[02Wo].

They tended to think about their future plans in terms of their professional plans, prospects and investments. Interestingly enough, this part of returnees was eager to spend their retirement time in Poland, but they were making it dependent on moves of their families, as they, definitely, wanted to spend that time with their relatives.

One female commuter married to an English man was less eager to agree on such a long-term perspective of commuting. In her case, conflict between the career and interests of the family was the most appealing. Even though she was anxious about her job prospects in the UK, she seriously considered terminating this type of life instead of waiting for ability to live permanently with her family, until the retirement. As a woman, she considered taking more

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<sup>39</sup> We did not pay main attention to the remigration of siblings as a factor of the return. It is because, it seems that it did not play a decisive role in motivation for remigration. The fact of having a brother or sister in Poland, before the return, did not influence remigratory decisions more than the fact of having close friends. Both factors constituted simple a social capital useful in remigration.



extensive care of her family and children to be her duty. Men were less concerned about this problem, although not fully satisfied with their family situations.

In fact, the analysis of returnees' plans supports observations presented in the earlier sections. It seems that returns of "ideological remigrants" are the most likely to be definitive. Going back to the UK would be against the accomplishment of the dream of the return to Poland, preserved by the returnees' parents. In this realm, they, sometimes put themselves in the opposition to other remigrants driven chiefly by economic reasons in their remigration to Poland.

*"[We decided] for good and for bad, since when we have decided that we want to be Poles then we can not say that: 'yes we are Poles but only if everything is all right'. And we cannot stop sharing bad time [with other Poles] when things go wrong. We think that one has to be consistent and dare to say that it is for good and for bad, as we have to find our place in this [Polish] society. I think that I have the right to influence the life here [in Poland], since I registered myself and I pay taxes. It is in contrast with those who come here [to Poland], for example, only as they have the job here, whereas, they do not have one in the West" [10Wo].*

It should be noted, however, that highly, if not exclusively, "ideological" motivation is the most likely to be observed among those who had resettled to Poland with the overall households and had taken up their remigratory decisions jointly with their spouses. Then, family factors did not constitute the obstacle for the definitive stay in Poland. Some "ideological" remigrants could not take up such a sharp position regarding staying for good in Poland, since they had to compromise between the "idea of return" and interests of their families. The importance of family factors is also portrayed by an example of our respondent who should be considered as an extremely "ideological" type. She was planning to go back to the UK as a pensioner and justified this plan by family factors. She is single and all her siblings and their families live in the UK.

*"[For retirement, I want to be] where my relatives [najbliżsi] are. It looks that everything goes into direction of England. (...) I want to be with them. I simply do not want to be alone" [05Wo].*

In general, only part of returns of second-generation British Poles should be considered as definitive. Others, either share their lives between Warsaw and London pursuing transnational mobility or are prone to take up further migrations – usually in search of adventures and professional advancement. On the one hand, it is symptomatic that remigrants motivated, first of all, by economic factors are likely to have either imprecise plans or to consider leaving Poland. On the other hand, however, the role of family factors should be born in mind. Some of those undecided, still consider spending their retirement in Poland making it dependent on moves of their families. It seems that our research group comprises a relatively high share of "ideological" remigrants and those having Polish families in Poland, who, at the moment of the research, already perceived Poland as their home. Characteristics of the overall group can differ from our group in this realm.

## **6.2. Success or Failure of Return?**

### ***6.2.1. Introductory Remarks***

This section is based on the focus group interview conducted with four male second-generation British Poles. The nature of the discussion is itself an interesting and important research result. It was dominated by exchange of ideas regarding ideological side of the remigration. It partly resulted from the composition of the group as we did not invite solely “economic remigrants” for the discussion. Our respondents were not, however, also exclusively “ideological remigrants” and represented, in our view, rather typical pattern of remigration – determined by the mix of economic and ideological factors. What makes the interviewees exceptional is their strong involvement in the Polish life in the UK and the fact that they had been the leaders of different Polish organisation in the UK before their return to Poland.

Thus, we can treat our respondents as experts in understanding the character of the “Polish life” in the UK (especially London) and of returns to Poland. Their opinions should not be treated as representative for the overall population of returnees in Poland. However, we assume that they provided us with the point of view of the group of returnees that came to Poland in the 1990s not by accident and not because “there was a job offer” or other typical rather for emigration and not for remigration reasons. In our view, opinions of our experts should be treated as a source of information regarding aspects of return migration of second-generation British Poles, that make this flow exceptional and deserving the name remigration, even though people committing it were born outside Poland. At the same time, the discussion was not limited to “ideological remigrants” and covered various types of return migrants, thus, it is a valuable source of information about the overall phenomenon of remigration.

### ***6.2.2. Patriotism Unappreciated***

The nature of discussion during the focus group supported an importance of ideological factors in returns of second-generation British Poles to Poland in the 1990s. In fact, our respondents shared some disappointment about accomplishment of their patriotic intentions regarding their will to help Poland in its political and economic transformation. For second-generation British Poles, the establishment of the III Republic of Poland, in 1989, was a historical moment and time for mobilisation of the forces of the Polish nation to restore the democratic Polish State. In their opinions, such mobilisation had not been observed among Poles in Poland and returnees were complaining about lack of patriotic attitudes and behaviours in the Polish society. This high-level language and reasoning is typical for remigrants brought up in the atmosphere of preserving Polish tradition, history and Polish patriotism. Such “big words” are less common among ordinary Poles. It seems to be an element of a broader phenomenon that national minorities living in foreign countries and preserving their distinctive, in the host society, identities and ethnic/national belonging are likely to be more concerned and focused on fundamental national issues than their country folks in the home countries. Consequently, remigrants encountered some clash between their images of Poles and the reality found in the contemporary Poland. They argued that even their so-called “bus action” aiming at providing Poles with training in business and finance in the late 1980s was received with irony by Poles. All

that was a source of bitter feelings among second-generation British Poles making them perceive themselves as “strange” and even naive in their willingness to do something for Poland.

*“Some of us came with such ideals. They feel that this Polish car was ditched and is stalled in mud. And all of us, we run to push it to the front. But we suddenly realise that everybody is laughing at us”* [FGI].

Moreover, second-generation British Poles consider Polish reforms going into bad directions, mainly due to widespread corruption and stiffness of the Polish bureaucracy. In their view, it is one but many consequences of the Polish mentality and widespread lack of responsibility for the Polish state. Extraordinary critical attitude towards the Polish state and its institutions is what many second-generation British Poles have in common. Although, in this critics, they tend to distinguish between the Polish nation and the Polish state. Such a division was deeply institutionalised in Polish communities abroad during the years of questioning and neglecting the Polish communist governments. It is, therefore, natural for second-generation British Poles to differentiate between Polish people and the state. Then, widely recognised underdevelopment of the Polish institutions (compare, for example, Kamiński and Kurczewska, 1994) constituting a troublesome burden for remigrants establishing their new lives in Poland did not eliminate, but even preserved their negative attitudes towards the Polish state. This discontent was accompanied with disappointment regarding remigrants’ inability to “do more” for Poland. They usually associated it with their professional activities, as they saw limited opportunities for political involvement in Poland<sup>40</sup>. One interviewee was, for example, stressing that his attempt to involve himself in work related to the Polish accession to the European Union was unwelcome and his expertise undervalued.

Interestingly enough, interviewees mentioned the reason that could be an important determinant of their frustration. In the UK, many of them were leaders of the Polish associations having impact on operation of the Polish community and they tended to expect the similar leading and respectful role in Poland.

*“I was from those small leaders. I was expecting that I would come here [to Poland] and that I would become the President of the Polish scouting or that someone would like me to do something similar”* [FGI].

Unexpectedly, Poles in Poland were not so willing to respect and welcome advice from the “more experienced” British Poles. “Maybe it was a conceit from our side” stated one of our respondents when discussing this aspect of the returns. The result was, however, returnees’ frustration and feeling of being useless in Poland.

It can be argued that the picture presented in this section demonstrates disappointment rather than satisfaction associated with remigration to Poland. In fact one of the men participating in the discussion had already planned his “reverse return” to the UK due to reasons that can be classified as ideological even though they were also related to his professional opportunities, as he was not able to take up a work in Poland that he would like to do. His example becomes

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<sup>40</sup> Even though, one of them involved himself in the politics but mainly at the local level.

appealing when we take into account that he had returned to Poland with the aim to settle permanently selling his UK house and sending his children to the Polish schools. His justification for leaving Poland comprises disappointment directly related to deficiencies of the Polish transformation and state institutions.

*“I want to do it for them [for children]. I want them to have decent and normal lives in a normal country. They deserve some respect from the State and they do not have it here [in Poland]”* [FGI].

Other participants of the discussion, even though sharing the disappointment as to their patriotic mission in Poland, were less extreme. Their attitudes would be difficult to address in terms of success or failure of their return. They tended to share the stand point that their present place of live was Poland and they had to accept its bad and good sides. However, all our respondents shared the conviction that human potential of returnees has been wasted in Poland. They were stressing also the lack of policy encouraging its nationals living abroad to come back to Poland.

### **6.2.3. Limits of Economic Attainment**

It is evident that remigration of second-generation British Poles could have provided an economic gain at the beginning of the 1990s, as already revealed in the analysis of in-depth interviews with returnees. This gain included: professional promotion, attractive salaries and possibility of relatively high standard of life in Poland. Economic factors are also considered as crucial determinants of the return flow to Poland in the 1990s.

It seems, however, that the returnees’ professional jump was rather unstable and sometimes even temporary. The period, when knowledge of the English language, possession of the university education and some “western experience” were enough to acquire high-top managerial jobs in international companies in Poland, was short. It ended within a few years of economic transition in Poland upon maturation of the Polish labour market. It appears to have been expected by the returnees, as presented in the below statement.

*“It was such a temporary period, transitional period. They acknowledged that I had some skills the could be useful for them. However, the most important for them was that I was able to write a letter in English with no problems. Certainly, it was a temporary career [kariera na krótkich nogach]”* [FGI].

Interestingly enough, our interviewees were able to point a very precise dates when the “career paradise” for returnees had ended in Poland. They tended to relate this shift to political changes in Poland. Namely, according to them, the business atmosphere changed visibly in Poland in 1993, when the post-communist parties won the elections. They considered a period of 1995-1996 to be a break point, since: “Left Democratic Alliance [the chief post-communist Polish party] already settled down and started to change the headquarters of all companies”[FGI]. In view of our respondents, it was accompanied with the shift of the attitudes towards “patriots from the UK”: from friendly and welcoming attitude into resistance and lack of trust.

It is difficult to assess, how much, the change of the attitudes towards second-generation British Poles was indeed an outcome of the change on the Polish political scene, as anti-communist attitude of the members of the Polish diaspora is well known. It is without doubts, however, that, as a result of involvement of second-generation British Poles in activities of the Solidarity movements in the 1980, returnees had ties with the opposition and also its support at the beginning of the 1990s. Thus, the shift on the political scene in favour of post-communist parties probably deprived returnees from some support from the side of the Polish political actors. At the same time, in the mid-1990s, privatisation of the Polish economy was still in progress and it is with no doubt that governmental actors had a strong impact on business relations (especially on appointing the highest top managers) at that time.

In our view, however, considering a political factor as the main and only reason for worsening the professional position of the returnees would be an exaggeration. We argue that maturing of the Polish economic transition and market mechanisms constituted crucial determinants of the changed situation in the mid-1990s. In fact these factors, were also acknowledged by our respondents. The number of unexplored segments of the Polish market generating enormous return rates was shrinking accompanied with maturing of the Polish labour market. As mentioned by one interviewee:

*“Polish labour force eager to accept half of our salaries had already grown up. Polish people had also wide contacts here [in Poland] and they were more useful than those who were coming [from abroad]”* [FGI].

In fact, changes on the Polish labour market impacted not only on the speed of returnees' professional advancement. Opportunities of extraordinary fast advancement diminished also for Poles entering the labour market at that time. It was a stabilisation after several years of fast, dynamic, but sometimes also chaotic, economic changes in Poland. One can also distinguish a particular factor that is likely to have worsened a professional opportunities of the second-generation British Poles in Poland. In the mid-1990s, many high-level foreign managers that had been sent to Poland to develop branches of international companies were already leaving Poland after accomplishment of their tasks – opening a business and training Polish teams. Consequently, a group of employers trusting first of all western skills also shrank.

*“[At the beginning of 1990s] it was like that: some English or American firm intending to establish its office in Poland was taking people [from abroad] speaking Polish and English instead of trusting Polish people here [in Poland]. And those people were being offered quite interesting positions. But it lasted only to some moment”* [FGI].

In general, the portrait of economic side of the remigration, derived from the focus group discussion, suggests that extraordinary economic and professional gain from return to Poland was achievable only for early remigrants at the beginning of the 1990s. In fact, it was also the case of Poles who were able to enter high business strata in Poland at that time. Those remigrants who managed to appropriately ground their position in Poland, particularly by developing their own firms, were able to enjoy long-term economic and professional gains from remigration. For many

it was only a short-term achievement, and, at the moment, they tend to do worse economically in Poland than at the beginning of the 1990s: “Before, I was always flying [to London], whereas now I go only by bus” [FGI]. It should be noted, however, that economic position of remigrants in Poland is not that bad. Even though some of them are complaining about limited job prospects in Poland, most of them are active in the business circles in Poland. Reflections concerning their present limited professional opportunities and abilities in influencing Polish matters were usually put in the context of some ideological reflections about contemporary Poland and thoughts regarding the nature of Polish transformation. It seems that the worst side of their professional and economic life is clash between expectations and reality as well as still encountered uncertainty as to their professional future, which would have been more stable if they had not left the UK.

#### **6.2.4. Family Payoff?**

In the realm of family factors, the focus group discussion supported observations derived from in-depth interviews enriching them, however, with some additional interesting observations. It is evident that remigration challenged stability of many families of returnees due to long periods of families’ partitioning. In fact, the dissolution of the family established in the UK was considered, by our respondents, as frequent and bad outcome of remigration.

At the same time, all interviewed men agreed that Polish wives from Poland are less eager to remigrate, as: “they had left for England not to return to Poland later on” [FGI]. They also directly stated that women, in general, encounter much greater difficulties in adapting to the Polish reality and it is first of all related to everyday problems with running a household in Poland. Our respondents described it in a humorous way, but their description includes a direct message.

*“They can not find the place for themselves. They were imaging that it would be nice, like a bigger parish bazaar in Ealing, whereas it come out to be very different. They expected that everybody is wearing traditional folk costumes, eats Polish sausages and so on” [FGI].*

Apart from tensions, already described in the previous sections, related to the closest family – children and a spouse – returnees mentioned also another family related factor that could influence satisfaction from remigration. It is related to differences between social position of a remigrant in the UK and social position of his/her family in Poland. Respondents were presenting examples of those who occupied a relatively high positions in the UK due to their role in the Polish community and professional prestige achieved in the UK. Some of such respected second-generation British Poles originated from peasant or blue-collar workers’ Polish families. Upon arrival to Poland and meeting with their Polish family, still representing a working class, they experienced some status dissonance between their own status in the UK and status of their Polish families in Poland. The problem did not exist when returnees had limited, if any, contacts with their families in Poland.

Notwithstanding a danger of bad results for the family that were likely due to remigration to Poland, the interviewed men addressed an additional issue constituting a positive and

important outcome of remigration. It is a combination of family and identity related gains. Returnees were stressing an importance of finding their roots and having some family history in Poland. They perceived it as an important element of their identity that they had been deprived of in the UK. This aspect of motivation for remigration has not been revealed in the analysis of the in-depth interviews, but it seems to be important for the evaluation of the return. The respondents considered this outcome to be very important and beneficial for them and their families – spouses and children. Obviously, it was not achievable for returnees originating from territories belonging to the former republics of the Soviet Union at the moment. However, also these remigrants tended to take up trips from Poland to the ex-USSR countries in search of family roots.

In general, remigration to Poland has been relatively likely to have some bad family outcomes – divorce, partitioning of the family, having children studying or living far away. Some of remigrants also had to take into account encountering some dissonance regarding differences between status of their families in the UK and Poland. However, finding family roots in Poland and possessing family links and contacts that were limited or simply missing in the UK constituted, for returnees, a valuable outcome of remigration to Poland.

### **6.3. Prospects for Remigration**

#### **6.3.1. Reverse Return?**

Measuring remigration of second-generation British Poles to Poland poses a great difficulty, but, as demonstrated before, it is not a mass phenomenon. As of June 2002, there were several rather than hundreds of thousands such returnees present in Poland (compare CSO, 2003). Taking into account difficulties in measuring this flow, opinions of returnees as to the scope of the return and its dynamics constitute an important additional source of information.

It is evident, that those who had been strongly involved in the Polish life in the UK prior to their return, were more likely to perceive it as a relatively high-scale phenomenon in their circle.

*“Once, at the party [in Poland], we counted 8 or 9 people only from our parish, thus, there are many of them [returnees] in Poland from our Polish circle [środowisko]. These are those, who keep their Polishness and are involved in that [Polish] world. For sure, a half of people from that circle [środowisko] have tried [to come to Poland]. Maybe our parish was special” [05Wn].*

All second-generation British Poles shared, however, an opinion that the volume of solely ideological returns is relatively small and that majority committed remigration due to economic incentives. At the same time, according to participants of the focus group, “economic remigrants” were the first and the most likely to go back to the UK when their economic gains from being in Poland had decreased.

*“I think that those [who paid the primary attention to economic gains of remigration], they went back to their conformable lives in England. They live again in England. They made a career, took money and they are already gone” [FGI].*

Evidently, not only dynamics of remigration decreased, but also the reverse flow has been observed starting from the mid-1990s. In the perception of experts taking part in the focus group, many returnees went back to the UK in the early 2000s. In their view, also couples of two second-generation British Poles commit the reverse return mainly due to education of children. Thus, this factor is not only the cause of partitioning of the family, but also of reverse return. It should be noted, however, that this mobility is driven chiefly by family not economic factors, in contrast, to the reverse return of “economic remigrants” described earlier. Moreover, the interviewed experts do not expect high wave of subsequent returns from the UK. In their view, their generation was the most likely to return due to the way in which they were brought up – in the Polish environment and in the dream of return. At the same time, those who had decided to remigrate to Poland they already returned. Last but not least, economic incentives of remigration are much smaller than at the beginning of the 1990s.

It should be noted that the second-generation British Poles, taking part in the focus group interview, also do not see the Polish accession to the European Union, as a new incentive for further returns even though they themselves hope for betterment of the Polish economy as a consequence of the accession.<sup>41</sup> As of February 2006, it is still a little bit too early to predict the scope of economic changes in Poland resulting from the accession. Polish political actors and experts are divided into Euro-enthusiasts and Euro-pessimists. However, undoubtedly, Poland more and more resembles the developed European country rather than unexplored post-communist desert. Therefore, in our view, it is not unlikely that we still can witness some additional inflow of second-generation British Poles to Poland comprising “more careful” remigrants who were not interested in committing an adventurous return to Poland at the beginning of 1990s. It appears that “interest in uncovering the Polish roots”, especially among Poles living outside Europe, grew as a consequence of Poland’s accession to the European Union.<sup>42</sup> For example, a number of applications for Polish nationality recognition submitted to Polish consulates abroad increased visibly, especially outside Europe in the 2000s. In 2000, only 765 such applications were registered whereas, in 2004, their number reached 3,807. In 2000-2002 the highest number of applications was coming from Germany. Then, Argentina took the first rank with 505 in 2003 (Centre of Migration Research, WU, 2005).

In general, remigration of second-generation British Poles has already gone through several stages. It included its dynamic growth in the first half of the 1990s related to extraordinary economic opportunities and discovering, by British Poles, their homeland newly re-established as a democratic country. The second half of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s was a period of stabilisation marked by decreasing inflow and reverse returns. The reverse flow included, first of all, chiefly economically motivated remigrants. Others go back to the UK due to either adaptation problems in Poland or family reasons. It is difficult to estimate the size of this out-flow to the UK, and to predict how many of these reverse returns are definitive or constitute only an element of time-space strategies of remigrants. However, the reverse return has been

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<sup>41</sup> They were not directly asked for this issue, but they did not mention it spontaneously as a fact that can facilitate further remigration.

<sup>42</sup> According to information derived from a conversation with Polish civil servants, the number of applications for Polish citizenship or its recognition, coming from American continent, has grown recently.



recognised by second-generation British Poles in Poland, thus, it does not constitute a marginal phenomenon. At the same time, however, the Polish accession to the European Union again changed the context of remigration to Poland, that can lead to a subsequent wave of return. In our view, it would not reach the dynamics of the return from the beginning of 1990s, but its possibility should be taken into account when trying to formulate some expectation about the future.

### ***6.3.2. Warsaw-London Social Space?***

All individuals operate in some environment that is shaped by them, on the one side, and influencing their activities, on the other. One of the approaches in dealing with this problem is a concept of social spaces understood as: “comprising of everyday life and concentrated social “interlacing coherence networks”, and the social institutions that structure human life” (Pries, 1999: 3). Thus, social space is not tantamount with a geographical space and can include several geographical locations. In particular, it can form a transnational social space defined as social space consisting of “combination(s) of sustained social and symbolic ties, their contents, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that can be found in multiple states” (Faist, 2000: 199). Transnational social space involves intensive mobility between the two locations, flow of information and goods. It comprise migrants and non-migrants linked via social and symbolic ties in each location included in the space. Migrants belonging to such a space are maintaining links with different locations belonging to the space. At the same time, existence of transnational social spaces facilitates and stimulates mobility between areas belonging to this space.

It is evident that symbolic and some social ties were present between Poland and the UK already during the communist time. It can be argued, however, that remigration that started in the late 1980s provided for development and revitalisation of physical (social) links between the two countries that were limited during the communist time. In our view, it lead to formation of a specific transnational social space including many second-generation British Poles in Warsaw and London. As already presented in the previous sections, social networks between second-generation British Poles in Warsaw and London were of primary importance for their remigration to Poland. Transfer of information was fast and efficient. Consumer goods were flowing between the cities due to differences of prices and availability, especially at the beginning of the 1990s.

Initial period of remigration involved also intensive commuting, as many returnees were still testing the possibility of their families’ return and grounding their professional positions in Poland. Many of them were working only as consultants for Polish companies keeping, at the same time, their jobs in London. Social networks between second-generation British Poles with Poles from Poland were thus developing quickly. All that led to formation of specific Warsaw-London social space, where the main group constituted second-generation British Poles either in Poland or in London. Even though, remigrants were returning from various places in the UK and some of them were going to other towns than Warsaw in Poland, the two capitals constituted the main scene of remigration in the 1990s. Thus, we should rather talk about Warsaw-London instead of Polish-British social space.

It can be argued that after a few years of dynamic development, the Warsaw-London social space started to stabilise and even regress in the mid-1990s. Maturing of the Polish economy and labour market accompanied with decreasing interest in western experts in Poland limited the collection of incentives for remigration. Even though, second-generation British Poles were still returning to Poland, the group of those hoping for extraordinary professional promotion was shrinking. The above economic changes, adaptation problems and family related factors, like the strive to provide children with British education gave also an impulse to the reverse return which size is difficult to estimate at the moment. Moreover, many remigrants had to compromise between their will to live in Poland and stability of their families challenged by long periods of partition. The latter led either to reverse return or to resettlement of the overall household definitely to Poland and involved termination of transnational commuting. Consequently, mobility of second-generation British Poles between Warsaw and London decreased visibly. It is demonstrated by the below statement, which shows also how dense were social networks between remigrants.

*“In the past, about 6-7 years ago, when you were flying to London, you knew half of the plane. Now, you do not know simply anybody, indeed. Once, you really knew almost everybody, whereas now (...) Last time, when I was flying I did not meet anybody I would know”*[FGI].

At present, intensity of contacts and travelling is lower, though all remigrants (with some particular exceptions) maintain contacts with London. Still, those, who work in Poland and go to their families in London every week, live in a typical transnational social spaces. Others appear to be well informed about what is going on in London. Returnees had their opinions as to present activities of the Polish community in London and some observations regarding contemporary inflow of emigrants from Poland. Moreover, analysis of our material revealed that it is only part of either remigrations to Poland or reverse returns that should be considered as definitive. Our respondents were giving us examples of people who were moving between London and Warsaw in few-year cycles.

*“There are others [staying in Warsaw] who had gone to England and 2-3 years later came back here [Warsaw]”* [08Wn].

Also, a character of a group that second-generation British Poles formed in Poland suggests a development of transnational social space. Namely, in Poland, remigrants tend to maintain strong social links, first of all, with themselves, whereas their contacts with external environment are necessarily limited. Obviously, we are aware that we talk about people that have many business contacts in Poland, it seems, however, that the most important group of reference for returnees have been second-generation British Poles in Poland. Due to high concentration of second-generation British Poles in Warsaw in the 1990s webs of ties between them became almost self-sustained in the mid-1990s. Consequently, second-generation British Poles form a distinguishable social circle, also in their perception, which includes only selected Poles and other foreigners. They also tend to work together in few-people groups in the Polish companies, especially in those run by other remigrants.

Obviously, lower attractiveness of remigration to Poland is an important cause of regress of Warsaw-London social space. We argue that there are also other mechanisms that restrained its dynamic development. Firstly, strong links and norms of reciprocity between second-generation British Poles made them highly dependent on the social capital within the group. Thus, only part of remigrants developed human and social capital that would make them independent of their group. Others, encountered difficulties in going deeper into the Polish society that resulted into discontent as to their opportunities in Poland. It was empowered by frustration with “fighting with” Polish bureaucratic apparatus. Secondly, factors underlying return flow, embedded in the idea of work “for Poland and in Poland”, implied that remigrants were first of all working in Poland not developing a Polish-British professional activities. In this respect, Warsaw-London social space does not fully fit to a concept of transnational social space, where trans-state activities are particularly likely to proceed.

In our view, further dynamic development of Warsaw-London social space comprising second-generation British Poles is rather unlikely, but its transformation seems to be possible. There are mutual links already established that are likely to last. Many remigrants live their lives in Warsaw-London context instead of Poland. It can create a conducive conditions for further mobility of second-generation British Poles between Warsaw and London and for their involvement in Polish-British business initiatives that facilitated also by the Poland’s accession to the European Union. Moreover, one should remember about children of second-generation British Poles. Their parents aim at providing them with high-standard British education. It is very likely that their adult lives will be tied with the both countries – thus transnational in a way. One of our respondents takes, for example, into consideration that his children, at the moment in London, will continue his business in Poland. As a closing remark, we want to stress that the described Warsaw-London social space is one but many different Warsaw-London social spaces that developed in last years. For example, social space including young Poles (mainly students) going in numbers, for years, to take up a summer work in London every year constitutes another example. It should be noted, however, that Polish youngsters working in London originate from various locations in Poland, thus, in their case it would be more difficult to point out a particular area that belongs to this space. Certainly, Warsaw is only one of them.

## **SUMMARY**

In our view, remigration of second-generation British Poles has more in common with transmigration than with classical one-way return. Some returnees were pursuing few-year cycles switching between life and work in the UK and Poland, but chief determinants of transmigration instead of definitive remigration are family factors. It was not seldom that partners of our respondents decided to go back to the UK after some time spent in Poland due to either education of children or their unsuccessful adaptation in Poland. Consequently, the returnees were staying alone in Poland and heavily commuting between London and Warsaw. At the same time, it can be argued that this type of transmigration instead of definitive remigration is kind of second-best option - not the most beneficial from the economic point of view and sometimes destructive for

the family. Consequently, plans of returnees as to the future place of living are imprecise and dependent on family factors.

The mid-1990s brought about the slow down in return migration of second-generation British Poles. On the one hand, it is undoubtedly determined by lower economic attractiveness of remigration. On the other hand, however, some dissatisfaction observed among returns regarding accomplishment of their “ideological mission” in Poland and the way in which they had been received in the Polish society appears to restrain further mobility and cause also a reverse return. Nevertheless, none second-generation British Pole that took part in our research directly admitted that he/she regretted his/her decision to come to Poland. It appears that the biggest share of reverse flow constituted “economic remigrants” who simple took advantage of attractive economic opportunities in Poland at the beginning of the 1990s. Returnees remaining in Poland, even though heavily criticising the Polish state, pointed out advantages of remigration including: finding their roots in Poland, better conditions for rising children and the fact of living in their motherland.

All in all, even though remigration itself lost its impetus in last years, it resulted in formation of the closely-linked group of second-generation British Poles in Warsaw. It can be even argued that specific Warsaw-London social space developed as a consequence of that mobility. It is a life space of many returnees staying in Warsaw including also second-generation British Poles in London and other people in Warsaw and London. In our view, it is likely that existence of this transnational social space can be conducive to further inflow of second-generation British Poles to Poland stimulated by the Polish accession to the European Union and possibility of related development of Polish-British investments. The repetition of “the remigratory boom”, observed at the beginning of the 1990s, is, however, rather unlikely, but we should take this possibility into account.

## **7. Poland in the Life Strategies of the Second Generation Polish Londoners**

Although the bulk of this report deals with the analysis of the motives of second-generation returnees, the examination of the situation of those who did not engage in return migration might shed some additional light on this phenomenon. Migration scholars who postulate embedding the analysis of migration flows within the context of migrant's sending community and social group (see for example Massey 1990; Stark and Bloom 1985; Hugo 1981) often stress the benefits of taking into account also the situation of "non-movers" belonging to the same social grouping. The case of immobile individuals is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, if one can assume that many people from time to time compare the advantages and disadvantages of changing location, the calculations of immobile individuals could unveil certain aspects of migration decision making process. This in turn could help to distinguish the motives playing decisive roles in case of a particular migration flow. Secondly, immobile individuals are potential future migrants. Thirdly, by virtue of sharing the same social environment in sending community they often form tight social networks with the migrants. And finally, the "non-movers" provide a benchmark against which the migrants from that community tend to compare their economic and social status. Examining the nature of the links between migrants and stayers enable us further insight into the benefits and costs of the migration for the individuals, households and local community.

Following the above reasoning, we focus in this chapter on those members of the second-generation British Poles who did not remigrate to Poland. We analyse not only reasons for staying in London given by our respondents, but also their opinions regarding motives of returnees from second-generation British Poles and their plans concerning future contacts with Poland and Poland-related migratory strategies. In the final analytical section of this chapter we devote some time to reflections regarding future of the Polish community in London based on the opinions of our respondents and other sources of information. Overall, we trust that this chapter constitute a valuable supplement to analyses presented in the previous chapters.

### **7.1. Staying Put – Motives for not Returning to Poland during the 1990s**

The question of why, despite persisting economic disparities between countries, majority of people prefer to remain immobile began to absorb migration scholars relatively recently (e.g. Fischer, Martin, Straubhaar, 1997; Tassinopoulos, Werner, 1999; Faist, 2000). The economic value of immobility was first explored by Fischer, Martin and Straubhaar (1997). According to the authors, some people make a rational choice not to engage in migration because of accumulation of "location specific advantages". These location specific "abilities and assets" (Fischer, Martin, Straubhaar, 1997: 75) include human and social capital accumulated through years of residence in certain locality. The main trouble from a point of view of the person

planning to move is that these capitals are not easily transferable abroad, it takes time to accrue them and in order to achieve this one has to remain immobile for a period of time.

According to “insider-advantage” approach, people are reluctant to move because of accumulation of assets and resources which enhance their quality of life in a particular location. Authors divide the insider advantages to work-oriented and leisure-oriented. The work-oriented advantages strengthen the chances of a successful career due to availability of social capital and increase the rewards from using particular skills in the most optimal environment. The leisure oriented advantages encompass a greater knowledge of consumption opportunities and leisure activities as well as a psychological comfort of being an integral part of a particular society which facilitates dealing with everyday life issues. The migration challenges both these aspects of social life and forces individuals to learn new rules and norms of other society. Moreover, as it was already mentioned it takes time before a person acquires enough insight into a new society to be able to feel a benefit of being a part of it. The only way to experience this benefit is by staying immobile for a period of time. As it will be shown below, the insider advantages mentioned by the second-generation British Poles ranged from professional and financial to the familiarity with cultural environment and differences in ways of thinking between Poland and Britain.

Faist distinguished a number of other factors, in addition to being tied by the location specific assets, which can support immobility (Faist, 2000: 291-300). Faist concentrated on explaining the reasons for relative immobility from poor countries of the South to wealthy countries of the North. According to the author, other potential reasons for staying put are acute poverty, alternatives to exit strategy such as loyalty and voice and alternatives to international migration such as internal migration or South to South migration. The analytical focus chosen by Faist renders some of these findings not applicable to the extremely different situation of British Poles. Nevertheless, as one can see below, the alternatives to exit strategy – the opportunity of voicing Polishness and being actively involved in political and social life of Polish community in Britain as well as various loyalties and allegiances grounded in British social and physical space might be viewed as implicit reasons voiding the idea of return migration in the eyes of second-generation British Poles.

In the case of second-generation Poles integrated with British society, majority of whom did not have an economical incentive to move to Poland, it is likely that the decision of moving to Poland after 1989 was rather an exception than a norm. Nevertheless in our opinion, looking at the decision making process from the point of view of those who decided not to move to Poland might help us to understand better the motivations of those who decided to remigrate. Thus the analysis presented below could be described as the “anti-motives” of return.

Nine out of eleven people interviewed in London never lived in Poland. These respondents in the course of interview were asked whether they have ever thought about moving to Poland for longer or for good. Rather surprisingly, the great majority of those who did not move to Poland admitted that they had considered this possibility. Only one respondent, a housewife married to an Englishman, said that she had never thought about going to Poland for any other purposes than tourism. Other respondents mentioned several distinctive reasons of not moving to Poland during the 1990s such as lack of appropriate qualifications, financial issues, family circumstances and

other. Many of these reasons could be summarised under the above discussed categories of insider advantages and alternatives to migration.

Two respondents linked their decision to stay primarily to the lack of sought qualifications on the Polish labour market. According to their knowledge, Poland had many highly qualified individuals in their occupational groups – namely in this case engineers and math teachers so they could not possibly offer anything valuable to Poland. The difficulty related to the transfer of their skills to Poland also has been stressed. For example the lack of knowledge of Polish terminology in their disciplines was seen as an obstacle. One can assume that possessing professional skills other than those which were in high demand at the beginning of the transformation period prevented many second-generation British Poles from considering the migration to Poland.

Another respondent in a similar occupational position emphasised that if he had moved to Poland he would have earned much less than what he earned in London. At the same time he would have had to socialise and keep in touch with the group of second-generation British Poles who had returned to Poland and worked as bankers, accountants, financial consultants, advisors and whose financial situation was very good:

*“I would not earn anything there [in Poland]. I would have to... You know, majority of my acquaintances in Poland, who are Polish, they are either doctors or teachers or in the environmental organisations, and they generally earn, you know, the normal wages. My acquaintances, those who left England, they have huge houses, (...) they earn 10 times more than others, (...) they are completely different economic groups. And I would have to get used to having much less money than here. You know, my position would be completely different. But at the same time I would have to keep the contact with those people [from England]... No, it would have been too difficult” [04L].*

What stands out is that the respondent did not want to lower his financial status not only because he would have to adjust to the reality of having less money in absolute terms but also because he would have much less money compared with his group of reference in Poland – the environment of British Polish returnees – and would not have been able to lead the same lifestyle. It seems significant that the respondent positioned himself in relation to the second-generation group in Poland rather than to the majority of Polish society there.

Another respondent mentioned that he could not afford financially the move to Poland or anywhere else as the burden of debts and credits on his family was too high to afford or risk the migration.

Two respondents mentioned that at the time of evaluating the potential move to Poland alternative possibilities appealed to them more. In one case it was an opportunity of establishing cooperation between English and Polish academic institutions and in the other – a chance of beginning a political career in Britain. In the latter case it was a direct trade off between an opportunity of a political career in Britain and an offer of going to Poland as a consultant. The alternatives to return migration were seen at a time as much more rational and promising steps from the point of view of the individual life strategies.

Moreover, respondents on many occasions pointed out that to them generally life seemed easier in Britain than in Poland. They emphasised that their knowledge of how to function in a

social space in Britain and how to deal with everyday life problems. The feeling of being used to London and being attached to certain leisure activities like for example going to opera, playing golf in the favourite club or reaching the sea in an hour and a half, and not being prepared to sacrifice these everyday pleasures were mentioned.

The motivations indicating the common knowledge of how to optimise the functioning in a social space of a particular locality represent the concept of insider advantages. One can say that in the case of the second-generation British Poles “insider advantages” of staying in Britain have their mirror reflection in “outsider disadvantages” of living in Poland. Respondents who never lived in Poland did not possess a ready knowledge about dealing with everyday issues starting from things like where to buy milk to how to rent or buy a flat. Some of the biggest problems of life in Poland perceived by British Poles were ever-present bureaucracy, corruption and bribery. A couple of respondents mentioned that they would feel less secure in Poland in terms of being a potential target of a crime or an assault. All these reasons indicate that respondents regarded the rules of everyday life and mentality of people in Poland as quite alien to what they were used to in Britain.

Different family circumstances were indicated as preventing a consideration of moving to Poland. One respondent mentioned the need to be close to their older parents, other indicated having young children as a reason for opting for stability. It is very interesting that further two respondents, both single males in their 30s, were openly discouraged of going to Poland by their Polish mothers.

*“It’s my mum who forced me to buy a house, so I would not be able to move to Poland, because mum wanted to keep me here” [01L].*

*“Mum doesn’t want me to move to Poland, (...) I don’t know, she always tells me – don’t go, don’t marry in Poland (...) I don’t know why she says so, but I listen to my mum [laughter]” [05L].*

Both respondents’ mothers came to Great Britain from communist Poland during the second half of 1950s and beginning of the 1960s and by marrying the post-war migrants stayed in the country. This negative attitude to Poland and especially to a prospect of their sons marrying a girl from Poland was already noticed by Keith Sword (Sword, 1996: 206). It is difficult to find the reasons behind this attitude. One can only reflect that the personal experience of the mothers and comparison of life in Poland and Britain might have shaped this particular attitude.

Finally, there were attractive alternatives to migration even for those people who wanted to maintain and invest in their Polishness. Second-generation Poles did not have to leave Britain in order to do this. It could be done through engaging actively in Polish community life in Britain. A vibrant Polish London environment being constantly enriched by a stream of newcomers from Poland provided plenty of opportunities to socialise with other Poles. Moreover, the political changes in Poland widened a spectrum of possibilities of involvement directly with Poland in a variety of ways and spheres. Each individual could find a way of deepening his attachment to Poland without the necessity of moving location for good thanks to advancement in the communication technology and cheaper transport.



One of the respondents pointed out that there should be a really valid reason, a big incentive for someone to be prepared to sacrifice the “insider advantages” especially in the light of very easy alternatives of maintaining ties with Poland without moving there for good:

*“I can always simply go to Poland when I miss Poland. But I would need to have the reasons to move to Poland and to withdraw myself from everything what I already have here. Here I have connections, here I have a job, here is majority of my closest relatives, then you would have to give up all these, if you go to Poland for good. So you have to have a reason to do that, at the moment I don’t have such a reason” [11L].*

To summarise, as well as the motives directing towards the decision “to go”, the reasons of immobility can be described from a couple of analytical angles. For those British Poles who did not see an easy way to transfer their human and social capital to the Polish environment the decision to go seemed disadvantageous as it would mean abandoning all the “insider advantages” which they kept benefiting from by living in Great Britain. Moreover for those British Poles who wanted to cherish their Polishness there were many alternative ways of doing this without the need of permanently changing the location. One way was to engage in the Polish community life in Britain, the other – to invest in maintaining personal, family, professional and other types of contacts in Poland.

## **7.2. Opinions about the Returnees**

The respondents in London also had a chance to express their opinions on the motivation for return of those members of their generation who decided to move to Poland. The opinions varied from attempts to list motives characterising different types of return to presenting one general motive ascribed to all returnees.

One of the respondents noted that the second-generation group of returnees is a diverse one and consists of different subgroups of people who were driven by different motives of return. First of all respondent distinguished a group who had mainly ideological reasons of moving to Poland as for example the children of prominent figures of émigré establishment. For these returnees the patriotic or identity motives and the fulfilment of the émigré project of return to Poland were sufficient reasons of moving. The second distinctive group mentioned by the respondent were the advisers and consultants working for British institutions that went to Poland to help reorganise the industry and public sector. The third group were English language teachers as Poland was short of them at the beginning of the 1990s. The fourth type of returnees constituted individuals who went to work for the commercial sector, mostly transnational corporations, in the field of banking, insurance and finances. And the last group were those who went to Poland simply in search of opportunities.

However the majority of London respondents were less scrupulous and rather inclined to treat all returnees as one homogeneous group. They had in mind mainly those who went to Poland to pursue their corporate careers. Among London interviewees, this type of return was perceived as the most visible in the community. Many respondents tended to ascribe the motives of this type of return to the entire group of returnees.

In the opinion of the majority of London respondents the main reasons for moving to Poland were economic opportunities and the chances of career advancement awaiting some members of the second generation who possessed particular professional skills and experience. Respondents emphasised that very few people moved to Poland to get a job “on Polish terms” and that the majority moved to Poland “not so completely altruistically” [09L]. Another respondent was even more critical towards the group of returnees as he pointed out that the great majority of the second-generation returnees went to Poland because of materialistic reasons and “not that they loved Poland (...) or felt some kind of duty toward this country” [04L]. The same respondent admitted that he is sceptical towards the claims of any sentimental or patriotic motives of these returns. For many respondents the fact that some second-generation returnees moved back to the UK when the economic situation in Poland worsened or when they lost their contracts, proved the salience of the economic motive of these migrations. The other sign indicating the prevalence of this motive, in the opinion of London respondents, was the fact that many returnees did not cut off themselves completely from life in Britain and many still owned and rented out properties in the UK, had other income source or close family members here. This indicated that the move to Poland was not treated as definite. In other respondent’s opinion, judging by the patterns of behaviour of second-generation returnees in Poland like sending children to the international schools, having English speaking domestic aids or going to American churches, they rather resembled the British expats’ environment than tried to adopt the Polish way of life. The same respondent noted existence of a two-tier system in Poland with British Polish returnees functioning in a better-off circles having little in common with an average Pole.

In the middle of this polarised spectrum of opinions were respondents who acknowledged the fact that the return to Poland was a combination of both economic advantages and ideological motivation. One of our respondents, living in London, summarised very well this combination of motives:

*“Majority had both motives. Our parents brought us up as Poles. If it becomes possible we will return to Poland. It took 50 years. Parents were already old and very settled here, so they could not return, in this case we will return. And we will do something good [for Poland] and at the same time we will earn some money” [11L].*

To conclude, the image of returnees held by the second-generation British Poles living in London was rather pragmatic. Respondents emphasised the economic motives of return to Poland of part of their generation. Many remained oblivious or sceptical of the presence of any other motives of these migrations.

### **7.3. Prospects of Mobility – Destination Poland**

It is now worth to have a closer look how our respondents envisaged the development of their further involvement with Poland. London respondents were asked whether they consider moving to Poland in the future. Only one respondent explicitly expressed the plan of moving to Poland for retirement. Further two respondents did not exclude the possibility of moving to

Poland but were undecided at the time of the research. However majority of respondents did not have any plans of moving to Poland for longer or for good.

Despite not having explicit plans of moving for good to Poland, respondents considered other forms of mobility thereby enriching the ways and types of contact with Poland one could maintain. One motif in the future mobility projects was mentioned particularly frequently. Namely, many second-generation respondents expressed their interest in buying a property in Poland – be it for retirement or as a second, holiday home.

As far as the retirement plans are concerned, the plans of one London respondent, who had experience of working in Poland during the 1990s, stand out as particularly thought through. The respondent planned to buy a house and settle either in one of the sea cost towns or in the town where his family roots are. After his return to London this individual tried to stay in touch with the Polish reality through a variety of means like frequent visits and other engagements. One of the ways of ensuring the satisfactory level of contacts with Poland was his involvement in cooperation between Polish and British higher education institutions. All this conscious efforts suggest that the project of retiring to Poland is likely to materialise. Even though only one respondent expressed explicitly his plans of going to Poland for a retirement, one can speculate that this might become a wider phenomenon among the second-generation members.

Three London respondents expressed the wish to acquire a holiday home in Poland. They planned to share this property with their British family or friends during holiday periods. One can predict that this phenomenon will become more widespread due to Poland's membership in the EU which relaxed the practical constrains and removed psychological barriers of buying a property in Poland.

In the case of holiday home buyers, it is interesting to observe how the choices of the second-generation Poles relate to the housing strategies of British population at large. One has to note that in Britain the phenomenon of buying a second home abroad is widespread<sup>43</sup>. Therefore the plans of second-generation Poles do not differ significantly from the rest of the British population. However, what does differ is their choice of location. Instead of very popular Spain or France they are more inclined to choose Masurian Lake District, mountainous south of Poland or Baltic Sea coast for their place of retreat. One can conclude that in this case an ethnic component plays a role on a smaller scale influencing slightly a mainstream pattern of behaviour.

As it was mentioned, the majority of respondents did not plan to move permanently to Poland. The discussed earlier “insider advantages” of staying in Britain on the one hand and the Polish bureaucracy on the other hand were mentioned as the prime deterrents of move. However at the same time all respondents stressed how vital and crucial to them is to keep contact with Poland and maintain Polishness. Each individual had their own project of maintaining the ties with Poland according to one's interests and needs.

The personalised projects of keeping the contact with Poland presented by respondents were usually quite specific. For example, one respondent had a commitment of going to Poland

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<sup>43</sup> According to the 2003/2004 Survey of English Housing, estimated 254,000 households in England owned a second home abroad, with Spain and France being the most popular destinations (ODPM, 2005: 36-38). This figure includes around 73,000 households owning a property abroad which is the main residence of someone else, in other words these households are engaged in so called buy-to-let business.

with children at least once a year in order to have a direct exposure to the culture of contemporary Poland. Another respondent tends to spend Christmas each year with the family in Poland. Some respondents stressed that they enjoyed being in Poland and observing how the Polish reality was unfolding. The second-generation Poles generally invested time and effort to maintain and develop the ties with relatives, friends and acquaintances from Poland. The professional or interest-based contacts were also maintained as the example of an ecologically minded respondent shows:

*“They protect storks, turtles and stuff. So it was a fantastic contact for me, because we went to the mountains straight away. Soon afterward I went with them on canoeing trip on Biebrza and we were collecting rubbish from Biebrza. We were in Bieszczady, looking for bears. What else have I done with them? I was catching bats at night! Bats! Two nights!” [04L].*

All in all, our research showed that Poland is present in the lives and plans of the second generation<sup>44</sup>. It seems that second generation welcomed the diversification of opportunities of engagement in contacts with Poland. The London respondents gave many examples of maintaining contacts with Poland in a way that suited their personalities in different contexts and forms. Poland was taken into account in the plans of the second generation on the more open and individualised basis than it was at the beginning of the 1990s when, broadly speaking, the structural opportunities of moving to Poland emerged for a group of people in possession of certain types of skills. A separate question remains whether this engagement in contacts with Poland will have any influence on transforming one’s feeling of Polishness. To answer this question requires a further research.

To conclude, generally all London respondents expressed a need of maintaining their contacts with Poland and all respondents went beyond a mere statement. They presented concrete individually shaped projects of keeping the links with Poland which did not require moving permanently there. Therefore these activities can be viewed as an alternative to return migration. One can predict that frequent visits to Poland and certain types of transnational mobility which lie somewhere in between classically understood migration and tourism as for example staying for a part of the year in Poland in the holiday home will be popular among the second-generation British Poles. Moreover, some members of the second generation might wish to come to Poland for retirement.

#### **7.4. Polish Community or Polish Communities?**

It is difficult to provide an unequivocal picture of the situation of the second-generation British Poles in London as they function in a very dynamic social space. The following chapter is based largely on the observations of the unfolding Polish London scene in the recent years and

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<sup>44</sup> However it has to be recalled once again that our research group comprised people who were actively engaged in maintaining their Polishness. In the light of this fact it is easy to explain the disparity between the outcome of our research and the conclusion drawn by Anna Żebrowska that second-generation British Poles do not regard the relation with Poland and Poles from Poland as important factors of their Polishness (Żebrowska, 1986: 166) as the group of the second-generation representatives reached by Żebrowska was much more diverse in their attitudes towards Polishness and consisted also of those individuals who did not maintain their Polish identities.

aims to address some issues raised by our respondents of how the changes in Polish London environment affect their particular position.

One can predict that the question posed in the title of this chapter will remain a relevant research question for the next few years. It is relatively easy to observe that at the moment Polish London is far from homogenous entity but represents a grouping of different Polish milieus shaped on the basis of several distinct migration waves which occurred over the last sixty years, such as post-WWII refugees (first generation), post-1956, post-1968 and post-Solidarity migration waves, economic migration of the 1990s and the most recent post-EU enlargement migration. Migrants from each of these flows had different reasons and circumstances of their move to Britain. They also retained some of their distinctiveness in the eyes of other Poles who were already settled in the UK, which prevented the creation of a kind of blended notion of a “Pole living in Britain”.

One should add to that diversity the environment of the second generation, the children of the post World War II wave who were the subject of this research and the circles of their children – already a third generation – as well as children of the migrants from other waves. Due to the dynamic nature of interactions between these groups, their different positions in terms of power relations and the fact of being exposed to the integration process in different ways, it is difficult to predict whether the direction for the future of the Polish London will be that of convergence or divergence. However at present, having this diverse mosaic in mind, it seems more justifiable to speak of Polish communities in the plural sense rather than of a unified entity. The future social dynamics between these groups is worth a separate piece of research.

What is interesting from the point of view of this research, is the social dynamics of the relationship between two of these specific groups – the newcomers, defined for the purpose of this comparison as those Poles who came to Britain over the last fifteen years, and the second-generation Poles in Britain. We would like to sketch this issue briefly.

In our opinion, since the end of the 1990s and especially after the enlargement of the EU the landscape of Polish London had been changed considerably as many (mostly young) Polish people choose to come here in order to work, study or pursue their careers. The post-EU enlargement wave of immigrants from Poland appearing on the British Isles is a recent addition to already diverse Polish communities in Britain. For the first time Poles migrating to Britain come on different terms – they enjoy the rights of any other EU citizen. This essential change enables Polish newcomers to feel freer in their migratory choices of staying, going back or circulating etc. It also affects the terms of their integration with the host society.

Not only the legal status of the new immigrants is different but also one can expect that their motivations for migration differ slightly from the previous migrant waves. In addition to the economical motivations for coming to Britain the new migrants are also looking for challenge, for opportunities to invest in their career, to gain experience, to improve the language skills or simply to see the world. The question remains whether they will be able to find an employment which corresponds with their qualifications and skills or whether one should expect a considerable “brain waste” phenomenon.

Along with a new type of migration to the UK a new type of migrant has emerged. Poles moving to Britain at the beginning of the 2000s and especially after Poland's accession to the EU had different needs from those Poles who were already settled in Britain. One could notice that an old institutional infrastructure of Polish community was not able to satisfy all their needs. So a number of new organisations, companies, shops and press titles emerged on the Polish London horizon over the last few years targeting the newcomers in terms of their information, consumption or entertainment needs. According to the latest figures, in the period from May 2004 to December 2005 nearly 205,000 Polish citizens made an application to the Workers Registration Scheme (Accession Monitoring Report, 2006). Due to the sheer volume of the post-EU migration wave, which some even think greatly exceeds the number mentioned in the WRS statistics, the newcomers constitute a large enough army of consumers for a variety of ethnic products and services. Michał Garapich in his analysis of the current situation suggests that this consumer-driven boom in the Polish London ethnic economy niche facilitates an integration process of the new migrants and plays a significant role in creating citizens' attitudes towards the new social space that migrants inhabit (Garapich, 2005).

The fact that Polish London underwent a major transformation connected with an arrival of a new type of people is visible in a number of new magazines and newspaper such as "Goniec Polski", "Polish Express" "Cooltura", or "Fusion" targeted primarily at this new wave. Even the well-established Polish daily "Dziennik Polski", which for many years was seen as expressing the interests and the worldview of post-war emigration, shows some signs of reorientation towards the new migrant group as they publish more information from Poland and from "a Pole's from Poland" perspective. A number of websites is offering a comprehensive package of advice, news and entertainment tailored at the needs of the new Polish migrant in the UK. The websites such as "Londynek" or "NetworkPL" provide also a sense of virtual community on their lively forums. The other examples of change are successful initiatives such as the internet radio "HeyNow" or a company "Buch" which arranges concerts of popular Polish bands in club venues in London, attended by crowds of young Poles. All these are the symptoms of the presence of a new type of Polish migrants in the UK.

One could ask an important question what these new phenomena mean for such settled and established group as an environment of the second-generation British Poles. The second generation has a range of organisations and institution catering primarily for their own specific needs such as the Association of Polish Students and Graduates in Great Britain, and its continuation the Association of Polish Graduates and Professionals (TOPAZ social club) as well as a virtual community "Poles in Great Britain" run in English, attracting members of the second generation from all over the UK. However there is scope for a variety of tensions between newcomers from Poland and this generation not only on the level of identity differences, which were addressed in the previous chapters, but also due to the potential conflict of interest as these groups have to share some of the ethnic institutions, the most significant of which are the Saturday schools and Polish Churches. Frictions arise when these institutions shift to accommodate the needs of the new migrants rather than those who were born in Britain. For

example one of our respondents, a mother of three, already observed a potential ground for a conflict of interest in the Polish Saturday Schools based on the experiences of her own children:

*„What worries me a little bit is that Polish school was created for local [British born] children from second generation, for people like me, and now a lot of Poles from Poland come, where the first language is Polish, where there is no problem with reading or speaking at all, and they come to school and they raise the standards of course, but it means that local children do not have a chance, when I went to the church in X, and there is quite a big parish there, in order to enrol [my child] to the school, they did not admit us” [03L].*

The reason for refusing an admission of this particular child was a poor knowledge of Polish language. Such treatment left our respondent bitterly disappointed. She felt that third generation children are being discriminated as they do not have an opportunity to experience the contact with Poland and Polish language prior to going to school in such intensity as children of Poles from Poland who have their grandparents in Poland and who spend a large amount of time in Poland during the holidays or summer time. For many third generation children the Polish Saturday school is often the only way of getting to know Polish language, culture and history. So from the point of view of our respondent, denying an access to the Polish school because of the lack of knowledge of Polish language is unfair and defeats the purpose of such institution.

The other respondent mentioned a certain inadequacy of attitudes of priests from Poland who worked in parishes in London. Our respondent noted that Polish priests often did not refer enough to the situation of certain groups belonging to the second generation. Being a single woman in her forties this particular respondent felt that there is not enough effort to accommodate and embrace a group of single Polish Londoners in the parish communities:

*“I think a lot of my friends who are single in parishes, and this is the problem of Catholic Church in general and Polish church in particular, that either you have to have a family or be a nun or a priest, there is no other possibility (...) there is no place for us during the sermons or homilies,(...) priests often and especially priests from Poland do not think about this group.” [9L]*

In addition, our respondents also noted a certain preoccupation of priests from Poland with the reality in Poland at the expense of British reality and a tendency of treating the parishes in London as a prolongation of their parishes in Poland. This often resulted in failure to acknowledge the types of problems relevant to London Poles.

Yet despite the issues indicated above, all our respondents had friends or acquaintances among Poles from Poland. This would suggest that the interpersonal contacts between the second generation and Poles from Poland were not endangered despite some of the expressed identity and interest differences.

One can expect that the interests of different groups constituting the diverse Polish community in the UK will intersect in many ways and in many points. Some of these encounters will result in conflict of interests, other will be creatively transformed and used as a positive experience benefiting all. It is worth to follow up closely the processes of negotiating the social equilibrium within this environment.

## SUMMARY

To summarise, interestingly enough, majority of the respondents who did not engage in the return migration to Poland, nevertheless, considered this option at some point in their life. We have discovered that two general factors prevented them from remigration at the beginning of the 1990s – “insider advantages” of staying in the known and “tamed” social space and availability of alternative courses of actions which promised greater rewards than potential return migration. Moreover, it has been shown that certain types of occupations and qualifications were preferred over the others and that the return migration process at the beginning of the 1990s was selective in this respect.

Overall, our respondents showed a considerable amount of interest in keeping the diversified contacts with nowadays Poland. However, majority of those who stayed put did not express the wish to migrate to Poland for good in the future. Instead, respondents indicated some plans of engaging in other strategies and actions requiring some forms of mobility to Poland, which can be situated somewhere in between the classically understood migration and tourism – as for example going to live in the second home in Poland for longer periods of time. One can predict that second-generation British Poles will try to incorporate, where possible, a Polish ethnic component in whatever life strategies they pursue.

Finally, the future of the Polish community in London seems to depend on the unfolding dynamics between the newcomers from Poland and the more settled Polish groups in Britain, as for example the environment of the second generation. We have also shown that because different groups of Poles in the UK have different needs but operate in the same social space and make use of the same institutional infrastructure, there is a scope for the building up of the conflict of interests. This makes the social dynamics between different groups in the Polish community in Britain worth a further research and observation.

Bearing in mind the diversity of Polish communities in the UK, there is a scope for the future research which reaches beyond a homogenising ethnic banner of “Polish community in the UK” and acknowledges the social dynamics within this category. On the one hand, “Polish” might be understood as a rather neutral, objective and descriptive category, depicting someone’s nationality or ethnicity. However on the other hand, as the results of this research suggest, this term may mean different things to different people. In our opinion, a research perspective that is attentive to differences between the various social groups will allow us to understand better the social processes that affect the Polish migrants and their descendants in Britain. One can assume that many of these processes have their roots in the wider phenomena such as globalisation, transnationalism and institutional changes in Europe and Britain.



## **8. Conclusions**

The transition of Poland from communist into democratic country, initiated in 1989, appears to have a profound impact on various aspects of operation of the Polish community in London. As revealed in our analysis, it also influenced individual identities and life strategies of second-generation British Poles in London who represented a specific type of Polish identity at the beginning of 1990s. An example of the second-generation British Poles clearly shows that individual identity is a dynamic construct sensitive to the external factors and interactions with “others”. Namely, growth of intensity of contacts of British Poles with the “real Poland” constituted some challenge to their Polishness. In our view, it strengthened their feeling of uniqueness resulting from mixture of Polish and British values. The common circumstances of growing up and similar experiences from interactions with others empowered, if not even created, senses of mutual “wordless” understanding and internal bonding.

The choice between going to Poland and staying in London in the light of availability of “return to Poland” was another factor challenging identity of second-generation British Poles. Many of them brought up by their families in the dream of return to Poland had to face that decision after the collapse of the communism. Interestingly enough, there was no visible pressure on the side of the Polish community in London on committing the return. The issue was discussed in the diaspora press, but rather in the tone of inventing activities aiming at helping Poland alternative to the return or of giving reasons why the dream is difficult to accomplish for elderly members of the community. In the mere discussion on this issue uniqueness of the second-generation British Poles was again brought to the surface: the return was perceived by the second generation as unavailable since they had been born in the UK, thus, they could only migrate to Poland.

We argue, however, that mobility of second-generation British Poles has much in common with remigration, although having some peculiarities. In our view, treating it as return migration allows for capturing mechanisms of this phenomenon. Nevertheless, only selected second-generation British Poles took up remigration to Poland in the 1990s. They were motivated either ideologically or economically. In fact, the most common scenario was a mix of these two types of factors implying remigration of people who aimed at “doing something for Poland” taking an advantage of favourable professional opportunities available for them in Poland at the beginning of the 1990s. Interestingly enough, even though dream of return has lost its causal power on the level of the Polish émigré community in the UK, as revealed in the analysis of the diaspora press, second-generation British Poles considered it as an important factor of their remigration. It seems that the level of the family was more important in maintaining this dream than the level of the Polish community. At the same time, the more ideologically motivated remigrant was the more his/her remigration was likely to be permanent and solely economic remigrants were first to leave Poland were economic opportunities became less attractive.

In fact, remigration to Poland was rather unlikely to be permanent from the outset, except for highly ideological remigrants. For majority, it involved periods of heavy commuting between Warsaw and London where returnees' families lived. Family factors were the most important in determining a pattern of return: settlement in Poland of the overall family versus commuting of one its member between Warsaw and London. Career of a spouse, education of children and difficulties with adaptation of the returnee's partner were major reasons for splitting of the family. This pattern was unbeneficial either from the economic perspective or from the family perspective. Interestingly enough, families of the two second-generation British Poles were the most likely to decide for permanent remigration.

Strong social and symbolic ties within the group of second-generation British Poles gave rise to a rapid development and reproduction of remigration-specific social capital. On the one hand, it resulted in facilitation and stimulation of the return flow. On the other hand, however, it led to the formation of rather closely-knitted community of second-generation British Poles in Warsaw. One can even talk about some particular type of transnational social space that developed between Warsaw and London in the 1990s. It comprises first of all second-generation British Poles (in Warsaw and London) linked by strong ties, but also Poles and other foreigners in Poland and the UK.

Notwithstanding existence of that social space, remigration of second-generation British Poles lost its impetus in the mid-1990s. It was a consequence of decreasing attractiveness of the Polish labour market for the returnees and some reverse returns of those motivated chiefly by economic reasons. In our view, it was also an outcome of the nature of social capital within the group of the second-generation British Poles and related lack of satisfaction from remigration. In other words, many second-generation British Poles not received as "full Poles" in the Polish society and strongly linked and dependent on their "within-group" social capital, did not manage to enter deeply the Polish society. All that translated into dissatisfaction from the way they were perceived by "Polish Poles", difficulties in achieving satisfactory level of participation in the Polish political and economic transition and sometimes into problems in finding an appropriate job in Poland. Thus, when the "boom period" passed in the mid 1990s, achieving any of the two typical goals of remigration – ideological and economic – became problematic for some second-generation British Poles.

In fact, limited success or even failure of "innovative remigrants", as we can consider second-generation British Polish returnees, is not such a surprising outcome. Francesco P. Cerase (1974) has already observed this problem in remigration of Southern Italians from the U.S. He was dealing with return migration to small villages in the Southern Italy, but results he obtained remind conclusions stemming from our material. In his opinion, "innovative returnees" encounter problems in introducing innovation in their home villages due to two reasons: "the first is the economy of the village or town of repatriation; the second, the power relations among various classes which constitute these communities (Cerese, 1974: 258)". The first reason seems to be rather insignificant in the case of second-generation British Poles, as they were real actors of economic change introducing western solutions into the Polish reality. Polish economy was open for such initiatives at the beginning of 1990s.

The second factor – local power structures – seems to have played some role in constraining returnees in their innovative ideas. It was stiffness of Polish bureaucracy, underdevelopment of the Polish institutions, unfavourable for returnees power relations in the Polish elites and “less civilised”, when compared to western European countries, mechanisms of governance on the national level, that our respondents were complaining about. The most dissatisfied group were remigrants who came to Poland with an idea to directly involve themselves in the Polish political and economic transition by implementing their western experience of being leaders of different organisations and politicians in the UK. Another factor creating returnees’ discontent was lack of policy encouraging Poles living abroad to come to Poland. It can be, thus, argued that problems experienced by second-generation British Polish “innovative remigrants” did not differ so much from obstacles encountered by first-generation return migrants in other countries. Evidently, “innovative remigration” requires appropriate opportunity structures in remigrants’ home countries to be successful.

All in all, remigration of second-generation British Poles ending up with settlement in Poland was not so frequent. In fact, their remigration resembles rather transmigration than the return. It seems to be in contrast to traditional remigration of first-generation emigrants that are more likely to return for good to their home countries, even in the present era of globalisation. It seems, however, that political changes in Poland and remigratory mobility intensified and changed links between Poland and the UK in a permanent way. Strong ties existing between second-generation British Poles – both in Warsaw and London – are still likely to become a vehicle of mobility between the two locations. Then, Poland as a member of the European community became even more accessible than in the 1990s and Polish-British investment and business could be easier to implement than in the past due to smaller institutional burden.

Intensification of links that second-generation British Poles have with Poland has been also portrayed in attitudes of the British Poles who did not commit return migration. They expressed a need of maintaining contacts with Poland and Polish people in a number of personalised projects. Moreover, similarly to the returnees, they also seem to prefer the more transnational types of mobility as opposed to the orthodox settlement migration in Poland. They showed a considerable amount of interest in the mobility forms involving the life “in” and “between” the two countries – Britain and Poland – as exemplified by the plans of purchasing the holiday homes in Poland.

Evidently, the collapse of communism combined with the advancement of telecommunication technologies and availability of cheap transport links created a variety of new opportunities for maintaining, manifesting and participating in Polishness for the Polish diaspora all over the world. Since 1989 individuals interested in keeping links with Poland could find a personalised way of doing it. One can observe that the “monopoly” of the diaspora centres and establishment circles on “supplying” the Polishness to Poles living abroad is gradually eroding. The situation unfolding in London, one of the strongest centres of the Polish diaspora in the world, can be interpreted as a sign of emerging new dynamics in the relations between the Polish diaspora and the contemporary Poland. As the recent migrants from Poland often enrich and at the same time challenge the established routines in a number of diaspora institutions, they take up

the role of actors steering the change towards bringing closer the environments of the newcomers and the more settled groups in the Polish diaspora. However, as some presented evidences suggest, this process of convergence might be accompanied by the potential frictions.

Finally, one can note that although the return migration of the second-generation British Poles has lost its impetus since the latter half of the 1990s, the large and steady flow of the new Polish migrants to Great Britain creates a stock of potential returnees. Therefore the story of the return migration from Great Britain to Poland is yet to be followed up.

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