

DISSERTATION
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**Doing Family on the Move:
Highly-Skilled Migrants in the Lake Geneva region
(Switzerland) and the Frankfurt Rhine-Main region
(Germany)**

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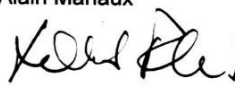
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Neuchâtel, le 5 novembre 2018

Le doyen
Pierre Alain Mariaux

p.-a. 

To Catherine, Laurent, Muriel, and Xymena

Abstract

This study is about highly-skilled migration, gender, and family relationships. More precisely, it focuses on the coordination between the work in the labour force and the care work within families and couples of highly-skilled migrants settling in either the region of Geneva or Frankfurt. It does so by combining migration studies and expatriation studies and by adopting a critical and innovative theoretical framework. Based on 36 qualitative semi-directive interviews with highly-skilled migrants and 8 problem centred interviews with key-informants, the thesis analyses the construction of gendered hierarchies between partners who are repeatedly on the move for professional reasons. It shows various ways of settling in a new region after a relocation, underlining that all settlings are different. Specifically, it stresses a form of settling which readily implies the possibility of the next move: a “motile” settling. This form of settling has serious consequences on the capacity of the partners to coordinate two professional careers. Through an analysis of the decision to move, the discourse about one’s family and the strategies concerning mobility, the empirical part reveals the gendered consequences of “motility”. These consequences are articulated in a “mutually exclusive model” deepening the understanding of gendered hierarchies in career achievement, in the context of highly-skilled migration. While the male partners operate three parallel elements: an upward professional career, a family-life implying child(ren), and maintaining their availability to further unplanned relocations; the female partners can only coordinate two of these concurrently. This inequality exists in the way the partners divide the work between the labour force and the care work; as the male partners combine the three elements by extensively taking advantage of specific, and mostly invisible, care work that the female partner provides. This care work does not only include caregiving and housework but also what I call the “homemaking”; that is to recreate the necessary conditions for a family-life after a relocation. Furthermore, the study shows that the couples managing to maintain two professional careers while being on the move actively mobilise local childcare provision. Based on these empirical results, the last part of the study proposes practical recommendations to increase the capacity of highly-skilled migrants to coordinate both their professional and family-life.

Keywords

Career coordination strategy, family-strategies, skilled migration, gender, partner

Résumé

Cette étude traite de la migration hautement qualifiée d'une perspective genrée et familiale. Plus précisément, j'y analyse la coordination entre le travail rémunéré et le travail de *care* au sein de familles et de couples de migrants hautement qualifiés s'installant dans les régions de Genève ou de Francfort. Basée sur 36 entretiens qualitatifs semi-directifs avec des migrants hautement qualifiés et 8 entretiens « d'expert », je m'intéresse à la construction de hiérarchies de genre entre des partenaires mobiles pour des raisons professionnelles. En particulier, l'analyse souligne les conséquences genrées qu'une installation temporaire déploie. Dans ce contexte, je parle d'une installation « motile », car, alors même qu'ils sont en train d'arriver, les partenaires envisageant d'ores et déjà une prochaine relocation. Cette forme d'installation a des conséquences profondes sur la capacité des partenaires à coordonner deux carrières professionnelles. J'articule ces conséquences selon un « modèle mutuellement exclusif » approfondissant notre compréhension du développement de hiérarchies de genre au sein des couples. Alors que les partenaires masculins peuvent coordonner une carrière professionnelle ascendante, une vie familiale impliquant des enfants et le maintien de leur disponibilité (de leur « motilité ») sur le marché de l'emploi, les partenaires féminines ne peuvent coordonner que deux éléments simultanément. Cette inégalité trouve sa source dans la manière dont les partenaires divisent le travail de *care* et le travail rémunéré. En effet, les partenaires masculins combinent trois éléments en s'appuyant largement sur le travail de *care*, la plupart du temps invisible, que les partenaires féminines fournissent. Ce travail de *care* n'inclut pas seulement les soins à des personnes dépendantes ainsi que le travail domestique, mais aussi ce que j'appelle « le travail de reconstruction des arrangements de *care* », c'est-à-dire de recréer les conditions nécessaires à une vie familiale après une migration. En outre, l'étude montre que les couples qui parviennent à maintenir deux carrières professionnelles tout en étant en mobiles mobilisent activement différentes formes de services de garde d'enfants. Sur la base de ces résultats empiriques, la dernière partie de l'étude propose des recommandations pratiques pour accroître la capacité des migrants hautement qualifiés à coordonner leur vie professionnelle et familiale.

Mots-clés

Stratégie de coordination des carrières, stratégies-familiales, migration qualifiée, genre, partenaire

Contents

List of Figures	xv
List of Tables	xvii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Relevance of the Study	2
1.2 Structure of the Study	6
Theoretical Part	11
2 Moving with Skills: A Review of the Literature	13
2.1 Historical Overview	13
2.2 Conceptual Overview	15
2.2.1 <i>State</i>	15
2.2.2 <i>Employer</i>	16
2.2.3 <i>Migrants, Families, and Couples</i>	17
2.3 Highly-Skilled Migration Studies	18
2.3.1 <i>Dichotomising Migration</i>	18
2.3.2 <i>Deepening Migration</i>	21
2.3.3 <i>Intermediary Summary: Construction of a Polarisation I</i>	24
2.4 Expatriation Studies	25
2.4.1 <i>Defining Expatriates</i>	26
2.4.2 <i>Assigned Expatriate and Self-Initiated Expatriate</i>	28
2.4.3 <i>Expatriate Adjustments</i>	32
2.4.4 <i>Intermediary Summary: Construction of a Polarisation II</i>	39
2.5 Gender and Highly-Skilled Migration	40
2.5.1 <i>Gender Binaries</i>	41
2.5.2 <i>Gender as a Dichotomous Variable</i>	43
2.5.3 <i>Gender as a Relational and Situational Feature</i>	44
2.5.4 <i>Intermediary Summary: Overcoming the Polarisation</i>	52
3 Decentring the Research on Highly-Skilled Migration and Expatriation: Three Methodological Premises	55
3.1 Decentring and Deconstructing	55
3.2 Methodological Individualism	57
3.2.1 <i>Defining the Family and the Couple</i>	58
3.2.2 <i>Hidden Economy of Kinship</i>	61
3.2.3 <i>Doing Family</i>	62
3.3 Methodological Nationalism	64
3.3.1 <i>Changing the Entry Points</i>	65
3.4 Methodological Economism	68
3.4.1 <i>Mobility and Migration</i>	69
3.4.2 <i>Temporal Mobilities and Permanent Migration</i>	70
3.4.3 <i>Defining and Problematising the Skills</i>	71
3.5 Research Questions	75
Methodological Part	77

4	Research Design	79
4.1	Epistemology	79
4.2	Methods in Practice	83
4.2.1	<i>Accessing the Field</i>	83
4.2.2	<i>Constructing the Interview Corpus</i>	85
4.2.3	<i>Analysing the Interview Corpus</i>	91
5	Contextualising the Study	97
5.1	Contextualising the Researcher	97
5.2	Contextualising the Lake Geneva Region and Frankfurt Rhine-Main Region	100
5.2.1	<i>Family Policy in the two Regions</i>	105
	Empirical Part	117
6	Professional Careers Coordination	119
6.1	Migration Triggering: Individual Approach	119
6.1.1	<i>Assigned Expatriate</i>	120
6.1.2	<i>Drawn Expatriate</i>	121
6.1.3	<i>Intra Self-Initiated Expatriate</i>	122
6.1.4	<i>Inter Self-Initiated Expatriate</i>	123
6.2	Migration Triggering: Collective Approach	124
6.2.1	<i>Primary-Mover and Secondary-Mover</i>	125
6.3	Conceptualising the Professional Careers Coordination	127
6.4	Primary-Mover	130
6.4.1	<i>Expat-Move</i>	131
6.4.2	<i>Local-Move</i>	135
6.4.3	<i>Continuum of the Primary-Mover</i>	137
6.5	Secondary-Mover and Secondary-Stayer	139
6.5.1	<i>Total-Move of a Partner-Initiated Mover</i>	140
6.5.2	<i>Unique Challenges of a Partner-Initiated Mover</i>	141
6.5.3	<i>Half-Move of a Partner-Coordinated Mover</i>	147
6.5.4	<i>Immobility of a Secondary-Stayer</i>	152
6.5.5	<i>Access to the Labour Force</i>	153
6.5.6	<i>Types of Moves of the Secondary-Mover</i>	161
6.6	Theorising the Professional Careers Coordination	162
7	Representing Migration: Between Motilities and Anchors	165
7.1	Displaying Family	166
7.2	Motile Narratives	168
7.2.1	<i>Structural Constraints</i>	169
7.2.2	<i>Career Men and Career Women</i>	177
7.2.3	<i>Paradoxical Family Men</i>	183
7.3	Anchored Narratives	190
7.3.1	<i>Ignoring Motility</i>	190
7.3.2	<i>Refusing Motility</i>	194
7.3.3	<i>After Motility</i>	198
7.4	Gender and Motility	203

8	Family-Strategies of Highly-Skilled Migrants	207
8.1	Conceptualising the Family-Strategies	207
8.2	Motile Family-Strategy	208
8.2.1	<i>Prioritising one Career</i>	209
8.2.2	<i>Homemaking and Caregiving</i>	217
8.2.3	<i>Company's Support</i>	221
8.3	Local Family-Strategy	230
8.3.1	<i>Low Support for the Care Work</i>	231
8.3.2	<i>Combination of Formal, Informal and Non-Formal Care Support</i>	235
8.3.3	<i>Separations and Divorces</i>	240
8.4	Mobile Family-Strategy	247
8.4.1	<i>Succession of Half-Moves</i>	247
8.4.2	<i>Power-Dynamics</i>	251
8.4.3	<i>Mobile Family-Strategy and Children</i>	254
8.5	Theorising the Family-Strategies	258
8.5.1	<i>Care Work Organisation and Social Networks</i>	258
8.5.2	<i>Iterative Logic, Path-Dependency, and Conflicts</i>	260
8.5.3	<i>Mutually Exclusive Model</i>	263
	Discussion Part	269
9	Theoretical and Empirical Insights	271
9.1	Decentring the Literature and the Research Design	271
9.2	Doing Family on the Move	277
9.2.1	<i>Consequences following the Decision to Migrate</i>	277
9.2.2	<i>Narratives Displaying the Division of the Tasks</i>	280
9.2.3	<i>Family-Strategies</i>	283
10	Recommendations for Practice	287
10.1	Migration, Children, and Gender Wage Gap	287
10.2	Childcare in the Geneva and the Frankfurt regions	293
10.3	Family-Friendly Companies	297
10.4	Summary of the Implications for Further Research and the Recommendations for Practice	300
11	Conclusion: Motility and Mobility	303
	Bibliography	307
	Appendix	327

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List of Figures

Figure 1: Frequency of the Term “Highly-Skilled Migration”, between 1960 and 2008, in the Library of GoogleBooks.....	14
Figure 2: Migration Binaries	40
Figure 3: Gender Binaries	41
Figure 4: Gender Binaries II.....	43
Figure 5: Gender and Migration Binaries.....	57
Figure 6: John’s and Aurelia’s Mobile Background	92
Figure 7: Open Codes and Excerpts	94
Figure 8: General Map Situating Frankfurt am Main and Geneva.....	102
Figure 9: Map of the Geneva Region	103
Figure 10: Map of the Frankfurt Region	103
Figure 11: Average Time Spent for the Work in the Labour Force and the Care Work in the Canton of Vaud, in 2013 (only includes people working in the labour force):.....	111
Figure 12: Family-Strategy	129
Figure 13: Continuum of Relocations of the Primary-Mover	138
Figure 14: “Total-Move” and “Half-Move”.....	147
Figure 15: The Types of Move of the Secondary-Mover.....	161
Figure 16: Family-Strategy	162
Figure 17: Mobile Trajectory of Pedro and Marta	213
Figure 18: Mobile Trajectory of Xavier and Laurianne	217
Figure 19: Mobile Trajectory of Richard and Andrea.....	226
Figure 20: Mobile Trajectory of Annisa and Adrian.....	232
Figure 21: Mobile Trajectory of Maria and Franz	248
Figure 22: Mobile Trajectory of Manon and Charles.....	253
Figure 23: Collective Family-Work Integration or Family-Strategy	258
Figure 24: Mutually Exclusive Model.....	264
Figure 25: Opposing “Migrant” to “Highly-Skilled Migrant”	272
Figure 26: Impacts of Children in a Difference-in-Differences Event Study Design	288

List of Tables

Table 1: Refining the Concept of Expatriate.....	30
Table 2: Educational Attainment of the Foreign-Born Population in the OECD Area, by Region of Origin and Gender (percentage of the 15+ population).....	74
Table 3: Research Questions	76
Table 4: Interviewees Characteristics, Absolute Numbers	86
Table 5: Example of a List of Codes	93
Table 6: Conceptualising the Family-Strategies through the Different Types of Move	207
Table 7: Summarising the Methodological Premises.....	274
Table 8: Summarising the Types of Move	278
Table 9: Conceptualised Questions and Corresponding Answers for Chapter 6	279
Table 10: Conceptualised Questions and Corresponding Answers for Chapter 7	282
Table 11: Conceptualised Questions and Corresponding Answers for Chapter 8	286
Table 12: Summarising of the main Implications and Recommendations of the Study	301

1 Introduction

This study asks the question how highly-skilled migrants cope with professional careers on the one hand and family life on the other. To answer to this question, I conducted 36 interviews with highly-skilled migrants and seven other interviews with key informants in the Lake Geneva region, Switzerland, and the Frankfurt Rhine-Main region, Germany. The main finding resulting from the interviews is that highly-skilled migration has specific constraints, which are currently not assessed in the scientific literature. It is neither a “free movement in a flat world” (D’Andrea, Ciolfi, and Gray 2011, 150) nor a “frictionless mobility”, but a mobility whose constraints are differently tracked (Favell 2014, 135). When at least one of the partners is mobile for professional reasons, I argue these constraints emerge for the other partner, as a consequence from the mobility of the former. By identifying which partner initiates a move, I developed a framework structured around two types of mover: the “primary-mover” (who takes the initiative of relocating) and the “secondary-mover” (who reacts to it). Through this model, I show not only that the female partners are more often the “secondary-movers”, but also that the “secondary-movers” face unique challenges after a migration. This distinction is a useful tool to understand better the emergence of gendered gaps in achievement and wage. The experience of highly-skilled migration differs between men and women when it comes to combine (1) family life, (2) upward professional career, and (3) mobility (or, more precisely and as we shall see, “motility” (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004; Flamm and Kaufmann 2006), which is the capacity to be mobile). While men can have them all, women can only have two of them simultaneously. It is the central insight of this study: to consider the construction of gender inequalities and gender hierarchies not only *per se* but through a mutually exclusive model.

To come to this result, I examine the decision and the consequences of the partners’ (multiple) move(s) on their distribution of responsibilities between care work and work in the labour force, using the approach of “doing family” (Jurczyk, Lange, and Thiessen 2014; Baldassar et al. 2014). “Doing Family” is an approach which analyses the practical production and organisation of personal and affective relationships between the members of a family. This implies looking at the ways the partners divide the care work and the work in the labour force and the relationships of interdependencies linking different generations; relationships involved in care work such as emotional work or housework. According to this approach,

families are (re)constructed and performed daily by their members in relation and in reaction to their environment, incorporating the social resources available, such as kindergarten.

As I will speak a great deal about families, couples, and skills in this work, it is useful to propose starting definitions of these terms which I can work on. These definitions are temporary; I shall refine and deepen them further in this work. I refer to highly-skilled migrants to underline either a tertiary educational achievement or a position in the labour force requiring it. Furthermore, what distinguishes a family from a couple is the intergenerational linkages between certain members and the relation of dependency between them. Thus, a family usually assumes the presence of children, implying care work. It raises acute questions of organisation in a mobile context. A couple does not imply the presence of children, but still implies coordination between the partners and care work, such as housework. The present study deals with the families and the couples of highly-skilled migrants adopting the approach of “doing family”. For families and for couples, I pay special attention to the relationships between the partners and the different constraints which hinder and/or favour their mobility.

1.1 Relevance of the Study

Research in the field of highly-skilled migration often overlooks the link between mobility for professional reasons and family relationships. This study analyses this gap in the scientific literature. King et al. (2006), Kofman et Raghuram (2005), Lutz and Amelina (2017), Stark and Bloom (1985), and Riaño (2012) all underline the importance of researching on the family while studying migration. Taking the family into account requires embedding “social relations between individuals in kinship groups (e.g. families) [and] households” (Faist 2010, 60) into the study of migration. Such an inclusive perspective allows the study to shed light on a range of topics central to understanding the dynamics of migration. Thus, the way the partners develop specific “family-strategies” (Känsälä, Mäkelä, and Suutari 2014; Ryan et al. 2009; Shinozaki 2014), the way they perceive, present and display their family (Davoine et al. 2013; Finch 2007), and the way they prioritise, for instance, one professional career over the other (Liversage 2009; Meares 2010), acknowledge the centrality of family in order to understand the dynamics of highly-skilled migration. In fact, except for these studies and a few others (Bonnet, Collet, and Maurines 2011; Cooke 2008; Favell 2008; Iredale 2005; Kōu et al. 2015; Levitan, Zittoun, and Cangìà 2018; Riaño et al. 2015; Wilding and Baldassar 2009), little is known about the ways highly-skilled migrants divide the work between the

labour force and care work. Too little is known about the impact of repeated relocations on the capacity of the partners to maintain two professional careers. Equally too little is known about the development of gendered discrepancies during the “second period of life” (Kohli 1989, 2)¹ of highly-skilled migrants. The development of the “gender wage gap” (Blau and Kahn 2017; Schmid 2016) and the relationship between “gender and career outcomes” (Reskin and Bielby 2005) are quite well understood in a “sedentary” context, but there is still a lack of knowledge when it comes to understanding them in the context of highly-skilled migration. That is why some migration scholars call for “opening the black box of the family” (King et al. 2006, 254), while others ask to “go beyond the workplace” (Kofman and Raghuram 2005), in order to better understand in what the experience of highly-skilled migration differs between men and women. My work responds to these proposals. I show the heterogeneity of “family-strategies” that highly-skilled migrants develop while being abroad. By this I stress the challenges that mobility and “motility” raise while dealing simultaneously and collectively with mobile professional career(s) and care work.

To assess the relationship between highly-skilled migration, professional career(s), and care work, I bridge two fields of study, migration studies and expatriation studies. On the one hand, migration studies produce research on “transnational families” (Baldassar et al. 2014; Baldassar and Merla 2014, 2013; Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Cieslik 2012; Kilkey and Palenga-Möllenberg 2016; Reynolds et al. 2010; Ryan et al. 2009), though barely focusing on highly-skilled migration. On the other hand, research developing knowledge on highly-skilled migration barely focuses on the family (Blitz 2010; Boeri 2012; Chaloff and Lemaître 2009; Lavenex 2007). The bulk of studies dealing with highly-skilled migration do not contextualise the family as they mostly tackle the professional activity of the migrants (i.e. his or her inclusion in the labour force) (Chiswick 2011) or they produce large comparative analyses of migration policies (Mahroum 2001; Triadafilopoulos 2013). In the same vein, researchers in expatriation studies focus on professional mobility and the reasons for expatriation within multinational companies (Avril and Magnini 2007; Azar 2012; Bartlett and Ghoshal 1999; Jetto-Gillies 2012; Millar and Salt 2008; Salt and Wood 2012b, 2012a). While some studies focus on family and partnership, they specifically focus on expatriation (Black and Gregersen 1991; Briody and Chrisman 1991; Laring and Selmer 2010; Mäkelä,

¹ For Kohli (1989) the life course is a social institution. He distinguishes three periods of life: the period of training, the period of activity, and the period of retirement. Each period corresponds to a specific set of welfare social protection, respectively and in broad outline education, unemployment insurances, and pensions.

Känsälä, and Suutari 2011). Doing so, they leave aside cases which are not technically expatriation but very close to it. Cases of foreign employees of multinational company who decide to stay where they live are left aside, while their colleagues relocating on a regular basis are central to these analyses. The two employees of this example see each other every day and work together but refer to different fields of academic research. When scholars in expatriation studies consider these liminal cases, they use a terminology which hinders a discussion with migration studies (or is it the other way around?). The concept of “self-initiated expatriate” is, for instance, very close to the one of “highly-skilled migrant”, but strangely, except in a few recent studies (Davoine et al. 2013; Joy, Game, and Toshniwal 2018), nearly no one, to the best of my knowledge, combines the strengths of the two disciplines (of migration and expatriation). It is therefore timely to begin this discussion and, another objective of my work, to build bridges between them. Bringing together sociology and management is a fruitful approach that has existed for some time. In 1960, Smith published an article called “Sociology and Management Studies” (Smith 1960). But bringing together expatriation studies and migration studies is innovative, as I am unaware of studies that explicitly combines them together. Thus, my study aims to understand the nexus of expatriation and highly-skilled migration in a single frame.

Furthermore, many private consultancy groups and international organisations produce, in the wake of management studies, reports which underline the gender gap in multinational companies (Johnson 2017), and stress the discrepancies between men and women in composition of the management boards (Shilling 2017), thus calling for a better understanding of the main factors leading to gender inequalities in the labour market (Hausmann, Tyson, and Zahidi 2009). All these studies could benefit from a sociological perspective explicitly studying the relationship between labour force work and care work in the context of highly-skilled migration, for researchers show that understanding the “gender wage gap” without acknowledging the arrival of the first child, for instance, overlooks the central factors that explain it (Kleven, Landais, and Søgård 2018). My thesis tackles the dialectic relationship between care work and work in the labour force and offers deeper insights on the reasons leading to the discrepancies between men and women in the context of highly-skilled migration.

Thus, in the context of highly-skilled migration I focus on the ways the partners reconcile private and professional lives. The incentive of being mobile in highly-skilled careers is

increasingly present in almost every professional field. This incentive combined with the rise of the overall qualifications of the workforce leads to an inflation of highly-qualified individuals moving for professional reasons. Conjointly, the political liberalisation of mobility in Europe renders highly-skilled migration smoother on the legal level. However it is, I argue, certainly not frictionless as other challenges emerge. Therefore, it is central to understand the dynamics surrounding highly-skilled migration as they become a frequent experience of contemporary life. The sociological approach invites us to focus on the social and family consequences of mobility and migration. It suggests questioning the power relations within families as well as the external support they receive and the environment they live in. This study pushes forward the scientific knowledge around this topic with an approach using the key concept of “initiator of a relocation”, initially used to differentiate several forms of expatriation. Expatriation studies distinguish the “assigned expatriate” from the “(intra or inter) self-initiated expatriate” and the “drawn expatriate” (Al Ariss 2010; Andresen, Biemann, and Pattie 2015; Biemann and Andresen 2010; Cerdin and Selmer 2014; Suutari and Brewster 2001); showing the differences between a move initiated by the migrant, the employing company or a competing business. I develop further this distinction from a sociological perspective acknowledging the family and the couple, distinguishing the “partner-initiated mover” and the “partner-coordinated mover” (6.3 Conceptualising the Professional Careers Coordination, 127). These types underline the various ways the “secondary-movers” react to the migration of the “primary-movers”. Doing so, I am able to tackle contemporary issues which still remain out of the scope of the scientific literature as they lie between migration studies and expatriation studies, so to speak.

Studying family and highly-skilled migration also helps to understand why the “secondary-movers” – most often the female partner – give up their professional career. It is a central concern because people, who are out of the workforce increasingly risk precariousness; especially migrants. They are less likely to have access to the same social welfare protection systems. Frequent professional mobility is challenging for families and divorces are not rare. Divorce and separation rates are apparently not higher amongst highly-skilled migrants but their social consequences are much more complicated (McNulty 2015). Therefore, it is essential to comprehend under what conditions one career is prioritised while the other is subordinated or even sacrificed, in order to develop policies which can counteract these effects when one partner loses her (or his) financial independence. I develop a better understanding of the process of subordinating or sacrificing one’s career – this is also a grey-

zone in scientific literature. For it is important to take into account in more depth the role of gender within the negotiation processes of mobility and settling. Besides, this may make it possible to prevent one central aspect of the shortage of skilled manpower, as a result of women giving up their careers. Certainly, there are other factors contributing to the shortage of skilled manpower in Europe, but – to some extent – improving the access to the labour market of female highly-skilled migrants, who are already in place, is one step forward to diminish the shortage and to use the available potential. This is not only a central topic for Switzerland and Germany which is strongly dependent on foreign (skilled) workforce, but also for other European states.

1.2 Structure of the Study

The present study is structured around four main parts: the theoretical, the methodological, the empirical, and the discussion parts. The two first parts are divided into two chapters each. The theoretical part deals with the review of the literature (Chapter 2) and the theoretical framework (Chapter 3). The methodological part outlines the research design (Chapter 4) and provides a contextualisation of the conditions of production for the study (Chapter 5). The empirical part focuses on three facets of “doing family”: the consequence of a migration for professional reasons (Chapter 6), the narratives portraying family (Chapter 7), and the “family-strategies” (Chapter 8). The first chapter of the discussion part stresses the theoretical and empirical insights of this study (Chapter 9), while in the second I gives recommendations for practice (Chapter 10).

The theoretical part starts with the chapter presenting current thinking and debate (Chapter 2). The goal is not only to present the relevant literature, but also to develop a conceptualisation of highly-skilled migration, which I will rely on for the rest of my study. I show how the conceptualisation of highly-skilled migration, which starts by acknowledging specific patterns corresponding to migrants with a tertiary education, ends up creating a world view (*Weltanschauung*) which encompasses unquestioned assumptions. As such it is not problematic to differentiate a highly-skilled migration from a lower-skilled migration, as “thinking is comparing”. The problem lies more on a set of unquestioned assumptions, which allegedly contribute to the differentiation between highly-skilled and lower-skilled migrants: the notion of skill becomes a proxy to import other forms of categorisation. The review of the literature stresses that highly-skilled migration studies and expatriation studies develop binaries opposing these unquestioned assumptions: economic versus social, temporary

adaptation versus permanent integration, frictionless mobility versus controlled migration, productive versus reproductive, us versus them, and, ultimately, male versus female. I will refer to these binaries as the “migration binaries” (King 2002, 91) and the “gender binaries”. These two binaries are the main theoretical insights of the review of the literature. They lead to my critic of some studies (though not all) and I shall show studies which reflect on these assumptions.

The second chapter of the theoretical part (Chapter 3) develops the theoretical framework itself: I propose a “decentred approach” based on the ideas of Derrida (1978). I present three “methodological premises” and show the biases each of them could entail, if they are not reflexively conceptualised. These three “methodological premises” are the “methodological individualism” (Mises 1999 [1949]), the “methodological nationalism” (Amelina et al. 2012; Amelina and Faist 2012; Chernilo 2006; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 2003), and the “methodological economism”. The “methodological individualism” warns against the risk of conceptualising the migrants as individuals outside the social context they live in, pleading for a collective and dynamic approach of “doing family”. The “methodological nationalism” refers to the risk of ignoring or naturalising the nation states, that is, through conceptualisation either forgetting the nation states or overemphasising the link between a territory, a state, and a culture. I stress how a method based on the “cities as entry point” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2010) can overcome this. These two first premises are already known and conceptualised in the literature. I propose a third one, the “methodological economism”, to complement them. Through the term of “methodological economism”, I stress the risk of opposing a “frictionless mobility” and a “controlled migration” (Favell 2014, 135). The former implies a “temporary adaptation” and the latter a “permanent integration”. Such a conceptualisation fails to acknowledge various forms of “(im)mobilities after migration” (Wieczorek 2018).

The methodological and contextual part corresponds respectively to chapters 4 and 5. Based on the three “methodological premises”, I show the research design in chapter 4 in which I emphasise my methods and the concrete way I construct this study. I review chronologically the whole process of creating the present study.; explaining how I accessed the field, what kind of interviews I carried out, who I interviewed, and how I analysed the transcripts of the interviews. In chapter 5, I propose an in-depth contextualisation of the study, that is situating the position of the researcher in the study and contextualising the two regions where the study

takes place. As we shall see, chapter 5 is central in overcoming the “methodological nationalism” by acknowledging the nation-states without naturalising them.

The empirical part focuses on “doing family” and is composed of three chapters. The first chapter (Chapter 6) deals with the coordination of two professional careers abroad. I develop a “collective approach” acknowledging the specific situation of both partners after a migration. Through this model I establish the types of the “primary-mover” (giving the initiative for the move) and the “secondary-mover” (reacting to the move), each partner facing specific challenges. I show the negotiations between the partners and their impact on their daily lives and their professional careers. While the challenges that the “primary-mover” faces are quite well-known in the literature, as it refers to the whole literature of the “adjustment of expatriates” after a relocation; the challenges that the “secondary-mover” faces are understudied, except a few exceptions (I dedicate a section in the review of the literature on studies dealing with the adjustment of the accompanying partner). Thus, the second part of the chapter focuses on the different reactions that a “secondary-mover” may adopt after the “primary-mover” takes the decision to migrate. I especially focus on the factors that favour or hinder the inclusion of a “secondary-mover” in the labour force. Doing so, I present several types of moves corresponding to different types of reactions given by the “secondary-mover”.

In chapter 7, I analyse the discourses of the respondents when it comes to “display their family” (Finch 2007) and show two narrative stances shaping how the partners divide the care work and the labour force work. Chapter 7 deals with the representations and the discourses of the respondents whereas the chapter 6 focuses on the practices and the decision-making process. If one wants to understand the process of “doing family” in depth, it is central to study the two of them. “Doing family” is not only about how the partners, for instance, divide the care work daily but also how they portray it. In this context, the concept of “motility” is key to understand why some partners develop a traditional and heteronormative organisation of the family while others are able to maintain a more equal division of the household tasks and care work. While displaying their family, some respondents stress the importance of being “motile”, prioritising their professional career and its importance for the well-being of the family. Others underline the necessity to develop arrangement in which they can both have a position in the labour force, implying reduced availability to further migration. In other words, the ones developing a “motile” narrative

stance usually follow a traditional model of the family which contrasts with those developing an anchored narrative stance. Furthermore, I show a discrepancy between the narratives and the practices, implying that the model of the traditional family, even though practiced, is not completely acknowledged by many of the respondents.

The last empirical chapter (Chapter 8) combines the insights of the two previous chapters of the empirical part to propose three types of “family-strategy”. These three types are the main empirical insight of my work. I distinguish the “motile family-strategy”, the “local family-strategy”, and the “mobile family-strategy”. I underline that these forms of “family-strategy” are flexible and can change or switch during the life course of the respondents. Each form of “family-strategy” corresponds to a specific way of “doing family” on the move. It is through these three forms of “family-strategy” that I stress the development of a “mutually exclusive model” of gender inequalities. I distinguish three elements which form the model: the capacity of the partners to raise children, the capacity to be mobile, and the capacity to maintain a dual career partnership. Each strategy favours only two of the three elements. I did not witness any empirical case in which the partners manage to combine all three simultaneously. Briefly, the “motile family-strategy” favours the “motility” and the children but not the dual career. Here only the male partners (as they are in most of the cases the “primary-movers”) can have the three elements simultaneously because the female partners (the “secondary-movers”) do the bulk of the care work. Collectively, the partners do not develop a dual-couple career, which enables the male partner to have a successful professional career. In fact, it is in the case of the “motile family-strategy” that I notice the most successful careers in terms of advancement in a company. Following this strategy, the “primary-movers” can reach the highest position in the company as they can focus solely on their professional career. The “local family-strategy” favours the children and the dual career couple at the expense of “motility”. It corresponds to a controlled narrative stance towards “motility”. The partners prefer to maintain their current position in the labour force, as they are both employed. This process happens at the expense of being ready and willing to take advantage of another opportunity abroad, which hinders their capacity to advance in their career. The partners tend to stay middle managers in their company, yet they are both employed in the labour force. The last type is the “mobile family-strategy” which favours “motility” and dual-couple career but at the expense of the children. The partners continue to work in the labour force and coordinate their family life through mobility; emphasising the

type of the split-families. It is a type of “family-strategy” common at the beginning of the professional careers of the partners as they (still) do not have children.

I discuss in depth these results in the last part of my work: the discussion part. In Chapter 9, I propose a summary of the main theoretical and empirical insights, by answering the research questions and proposing implications for further studies. In Chapter 10, I give some recommendations for practice focusing on three aspects: the partners, the “local policies”, and the employing companies.

I have shown in this introduction that more knowledge in the fields of highly-skilled migration and expatriation is needed as there is still a lack of understanding of the processes influencing family life and professional careers while migrating. Thus, my work raises the question: How do couples of highly-skilled migrants cope with professional careers on the one hand and family life on the other?

Theoretical Part

2 Moving with Skills: A Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I will present a state of the art on highly-skilled migration and expatriation, focusing on studies that tackle these topics from a gendered perspective. First, I will specify which facets of the literature I will review by setting out my temporal and conceptual limitations. Second, I will explain the concept of “polarisation of migration” to introduce how scholars become aware of the kind of human mobility which does not fit within “*normalfall* migration theories” (Bade and Oltmer 2004). I will present the “neoclassical theory of migration flows” and the “dual labour market theory” and will argue that both conceptualise the “polarisation of migration” through a binary of “high/low skill migration”. Here, I will develop the “migrations binaries”. Third, I will turn to a review of “expatriation studies”, showing how they overcome an approach focusing only on the professional activity of the expatriate to take into consideration the family and the cultural context of a relocation abroad. Nevertheless, this strand of studies struggles with the conception of the family; I will thus argue that “expatriate studies” create a “polarisation of migration”, too. This polarisation is of another kind, however, opposing a “male breadwinner” and a “female trailing spouse”; through this model, I will develop the notion of “gender binaries”. Fourth, I will link the research on expatriation and highly-skilled migration with studies on gender and highly-skilled migration. I will show how some scholars overcome simple conceptualisations of “migrant families” and propose to analyse “family strategies” and the “transnational family”.

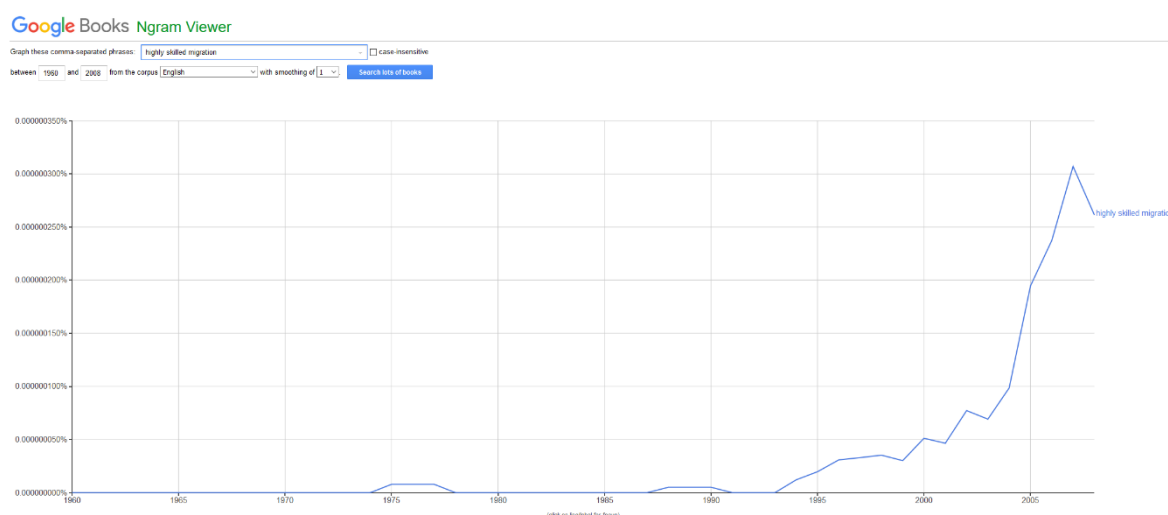
2.1 Historical Overview

Research on highly-skilled migration is relatively recent, beginning only after the Second World War. The development of this field of study corresponds to three historical periods. Chronologically, the first period coincides with sporadic studies, from the 1930s to the end of 1940s. Blitz refers to “an early period, characterized by spontaneous and personal movements and motivated primarily by negative push factors as a result of international and intrastate conflict and foreign occupation” (2010, 3293).

This “early period” of highly-skilled migration is characterised by a small number of individuals (intellectuals, scientists, engineers) who were mostly refugees fleeing Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. Personalities such as Theodor W. Adorno or Stephan Zweig are well-known examples.

The second period tallies with the “*Trente Glorieuses*” (Fourastié 1979) and corresponds to “an industrial period, during which limited movements and state sponsored recruitment campaigns reflects the needs of growing industrial populations and state policies” (Blitz 2010, 3293). The “industrial period” is emblematic of the “brain-drain”: it involved individuals coming mostly from low-income countries who had studied abroad and were hired within the industrialised “West”. During this period, scholars began to conceptualise highly-skilled migration as a factor to foster growth. In Western Europe, the experience of brain drain was also one of European scientists and/or engineers leaving for the United States (Chorafas and Herbette 1969). These dynamics still exist today; yet they are characteristic of what Blitz, taking the example of the Indian doctor working in the British National Health Service, called the “industrial period” (2010, 3294). During the industrial period, migration flows were structured mostly by *bilateral* agreements between states.

Figure 1: Frequency of the Term “Highly-Skilled Migration”, between 1960 and 2008, in the Library of GoogleBooks



Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer (<https://books.google.com/ngrams>)

The “global period” (Blitz 2010, 3293) started with the oil crises in 1973 and continues today: indeed, interest in highly-skilled migration is growing exponentially. There is an impressive extension of the literature dealing with highly-skilled migration between 1960 and 2008, as we can see with the example of *Google Books* (Figure 1). The “global period” concurs with structural and geo-political earthquakes such as the end of full employment in Western economies, the World Trade Organisation agreements, or the development of the European Union. New technologies of information and communication as well as a decrease in the costs of transportation have favoured a “globalised economy”, in which multinational

corporations, financial institutions, and non-governmental associations are the champions². In terms of migration policies, the passage between the “industrial period” and the “global period” is a passage from bilateral agreements between states to multilateral agreements. The Schengen Zone in Europe is an example of such a multilateral agreement.

In these three periods, we see a qualitative and quantitative evolution of highly-skilled migration that has in turn inspired new approaches to studying this phenomenon. I will now focus on the third period, thus narrowing the scope of my literature review. Admittedly, this temporal distinction is somewhat arbitrary, since the circulation of elites existed long before the term “highly-skilled migration” was coined. Indeed, historians warn us against seeing the second half of the twentieth century as the only one to have witnessed highly-skilled migration (Braudel 1979; Green 2008); what we define today as highly-skilled migration is not a new phenomenon. Bankers, merchants, and intellectuals did not wait until the late twentieth century to move for work. For example, during the second half of the nineteenth century, a large share of the professors working at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich came from Germany, showing an early form of brain-drain (Uerner 1976; Gugerli, Kupper, and Speich 2010). However, I focus on the literature published during the “global period” (Blitz 2010) of highly-skilled migration studies. Without such a restriction, there would simply be too much to cover. And yet even within these parameters, there is still too much material. Therefore, I also propose a second limitation—this time, a conceptual one.

2.2 Conceptual Overview

Koser and Salt (1997, 287) suggest that the interplay between three concepts – the migrant, the state, and the employer – structure the field of highly-skilled migration studies. The three concepts represent the three underlying perspectives of highly-skilled migration studies: a key to ordering this scientific field.

2.2.1 State

Some studies focus on highly-skilled migration from the “perspective of the state”, analysing the “competition state” (Lavenex 2007) or the dynamics of “brain drain” and “brain gain” (Boeri 2012). They shed light on the relationship between states³ and highly-skilled

² For an outline of the consequences of “globalisation”, see Giddens (2009).

³ It is always inconvenient to speak of the state as such, as if a state was a clearly defined entity.

migration. The structure of the labour force in the “global North” (Cochrane 2006; Söderström, Dupuis, and Leu 2013) is changing. In this context, politicians and policy makers recognise an increased demand for skilled workers. The attraction of skilled immigrants became and remains a strong trend of migration policies. Chiswick et al. (2011), for instance, analyse the different high-skill migration policies attempting to counteract the shortage of skilled workers in the “global North”. This field thus develops international comparisons of the different state policies to attract highly-skilled migrants (Triadafilopoulos 2013). International organisations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), produce knowledge from this perspective, too. By comparing migration policies, Chaloff and Lemaître (2009) show the relevance of language and active recruitment in attracting highly-skilled migrants. Most of these studies analyse highly-skilled migration from a ‘stated perspective’, using quantitative data in order to assess the effectiveness of various policies (Palmer and Pytlikova 2013) in ‘attracting and retaining’ highly skilled migrants.

2.2.2 Employer

Other studies focus instead on “the perspective of the employer”, highlighting how multinational corporations (MNCs) deal with the mobility of their staff between their subsidiaries. In this context, managing staff internationally is part of a broader strategy to develop MNCs abroad. Other factors include the creation of a corporate culture or the rationalisation of production processes (Ietto-Gillies 2012). The new competitive environment, however, requires a modification in the ways companies are managed; Bartlett and Ghoshal (1999) offer a famous insight on the ways to transnationally manage a company in an international environment. Research in management studies or organisational sociology examine the internal organisation of MNCs (Eckert and Mayrhofer 2005; Hashai and Almor 2004; Johanson and Vahlne 1977). These studies question the internationalisation of MNCs, which have become border-spanning, employing thousands of people around the world.

For MNCs, human mobility – here mostly in form of expatriation – is a factor in implementing management strategies internationally. Thus, the literature deals with the role of intra-firm transfers. The main questions are: “Should we practice intra-firm transfers at all given their cost?” and “What are the best “profiles” to be sent abroad?” Such research develops a utilitarian vision of expatriation. It focuses *stricto sensu* on MNC’s mobile employees and managers within the realm of their professional activity. Examples of these

studies would be the works of Salt and Wood (Salt and Wood 2012a, 2012b) and Miller and Salt (2008)⁴ as they focus on “global staffing” – that is, intra-company transfers – and introduce “portfolios of mobility” to conceptualise the strategic use of mobility to fulfil different tasks within a MNC, such as “knowledge-transfer”. Similarly, Harzing conceptualises the roles of expatriates in controlling foreign subsidiaries through three analogies: “Bears [to control and impose dominance] ... bumble-bees [to] ... create cross-pollination between the various off-shoots, [and] ... spiders [to weave] ... information communication networks” (2002, 6–8). This literature deals with expatriates *at work*. At the same time, it becomes clear that studies focusing solely on expatriate at work is insufficient. Scott notes that “[b]efore open system ideas, organizational scholars had concentrated on actors (workers, work groups, managers) and processes (motivation, cohesion, control) within organizations. Scant attention was accorded to the environment within which the organization operated” (2004, 5). He suggests a broader contextualisation to assess highly-skilled migration and expatriation. Expatriation as a “total phenomenon” produces the modification of one’s life as a whole. Therefore, understanding expatriates at work implies embedding expatriation in the broader social context in which it occurs: it is not just a question of work, but also, for instance, of families or couples.

2.2.3 Migrants, Families, and Couples

The third key to enter the field is the daily life of the migrants themselves. Mostly, this key refers to micro sociological studies dealing with the practices and representations of highly-skilled migrants, drawing on an emic perspective. In section 2.3, I will present studies dealing with highly-skilled migration. These studies propose theories and typologies assessing highly-skilled migration from the perspective of the migrants. But that is not all; as my work focuses specifically on highly-skilled migration and families/couples, I shall present studies crossing those two groups in sections 2.4 and 2.5. At the beginning of the introduction, I have already remarked a distinction between families and couples. I underlined the intergenerational nature of a family to distinguish it from a couple. To put it bluntly, a family implies children and the care work required to raise them (for a discussion of the notions of family and couple as well as my approach to them, see chapter 3.2 Methodological Individualism, 57). Thus, sections 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 review studies based on the migrant – compared to the state and the employer – as they analyse the ways in which migrants as social

⁴ For a review of the literature on the topic see Collings, Scullion, and Dowling (2009).

actors deal with their environments, negotiate with their partners, and make decisions regarding the division of care work and work in the labour force.

2.3 Highly-Skilled Migration Studies

In this section, I argue that a “polarisation of migration” supports the establishment of highly-skilled migration studies. The ways to order, rearrange, and interpret scientific theories are numerous; yet a polarisation stresses the specificity of highly-skilled migration compared to other types of migration, I argue. A polarisation means the “division into two sharply contrasting groups or sets of opinions or beliefs” (OED 2018). My discussion primarily concerns “migration binaries” (King 2012b), which maintain an oversimplified categorisation of the topic. Favell (2014), for instance, criticises categories presupposing a fluid elite on the one hand as opposed to the “*Normalfall*” ethnic migration from places such as Africa and Asia on the other. Thus, critics like Bauman (2013) argue that such a polarisation implies different types of migration reflecting each other in a mirror image game (e.g., the expatriate and the refugee). This section subsequently explicates the roles of the many migration binaries, such as “high/low skill migration” or “professional/ethnic migration”, in the construction of the field of highly-skilled migration studies. In the subsections that follow, I will argue that such a polarisation is present through two different processes.

2.3.1 Dichotomising Migration

I understand the expression “dichotomising migration” as referring to a group of studies that explicitly opposes two groups of people. I illustrate this process with two theories, namely, the neoclassical theory and the dual labour market theory. I argue that they both share a polarised vision of migration. While the neoclassical theory distinguishes between two patterns of migration which do not work under the same conditions, the dual labour market theory insists on a primary and a secondary job sector. In these examples, “polarising migration” happens through *dichotomising* migration, explicitly through creating frames.

a. Neoclassical Theory of Migration Flows

The neoclassical theory focuses on the economic aspects of migration, explaining them through a *macro* and a *micro* approach. At the beginning of the 1980s, it was the preponderant

theory exploring the causes of migration and explaining the flow of international migrants. The neoclassical theory is also known as the “push/pull” theory.

For the *macro* approach, the labour markets are the main mechanisms to explain migration, as the economic differential between two spaces creates a migration flow. The economic differential establishes incentives to migrate from one space to another, ending once an equilibrium is reached between the two spaces. The macro approach proposes a model of economic development beneficial to all. The economic gap between spaces is supposed to decrease through “convergence” (Lewis 1954) because the “economic development” of the “poorest regions” will catch up with the “richest ones” through a phenomenon known as the “trickle-down effect”. This theory’s ideological standpoints are at the core of globalisation processes and do not focus on highly-skilled migration specifically. Its application is quantitative and its scope reflects needs to understand global economic modifications and how to justify them. The increase in international trade as well as the development of “global commodity chains” (Giddens 2009, 134) need standardisation and international norms. Thus, this theory manifests a technical imperative: the requirement of a commonly accepted framework which posits that globalisation benefits everyone⁵. Negotiating and legitimizing free-trade agreements requires a theory accepted by the different states in negotiation – a theory which justifies the neo-liberal political agenda. It is the theory of “the dominant”, and in turn, “the dominant theory”.

For the *micro* approach, the theory questions the motivation to migrate by conceptualising the expected outcome of migration (Todaro 1969; Harris and Todaro 1970). The migrant is perceived as a *homo economicus*⁶ who valorises his or her own human capital in an optimal way. S/he plays with the differential between spaces and moves for an expected superior wage. The migrant expects to maximise his or her utility, emphasized by the concept of “subjective expected utility model”. When it comes to deciding whether or not to migrate, the micro approach underlines that highly-skilled migrants do a specific cost-benefit calculation because they possess a scarce human capital. As Massey et al. put it: “International flows of human capital – that is, highly skilled workers – respond to

⁵ The general agreement on trade and services (GATS) is an example and a consequence of this need.

⁶ Heterodox economists extensively criticise the way the orthodox model of economics conceptualises the individual as a rational and omniscient actor (Eymard-Duvernay 2006).

differences in the rate of return to human capital, which may be different from the overall wage rate, yielding a distinct pattern of migration that may be *opposite*⁷ that of unskilled workers” (1993, 434). Scholars thus define a specific pattern of migration, accordingly highly-skilled migration. The neoclassical theory conceptualises two opposite groups, thereby drawing on the idea of a “polarisation of migration” alongside “high/low skill migration”.

b. Dual Labour Market Theory

In contrast to the neoclassical theory, the dual labour market theory (DLMT) (Piore 1979; Berger and Piore 1980) explores the impact of globalisation from a critical perspective. For Berger and Piore (ibid), migration is one of the structural modifications of “Western economies”. They contest the neoclassical theory because, for them, migration is ultimately driven by “pull factors”: international migration flows arise from “cheap labour” in the Western economies. In other words, this theory offers a critical perspective on globalisation and gives another interpretation of migration. This interpretation leads Berger and Piore to describe a group called “the dominants” and to explain how they maintain their position. To put it figuratively, they claim to analyse the shape of the box – in other words, the so-called system and the ways in which “the dominants” carve it. Yet the DLMT implies a polarisation of migration by dichotomising it, too.

The DLMT considers the labour market within Western economies as being divided into a primary and a secondary sector⁸. The primary sector involves capital and offers well-paying jobs, providing positions for the “autochthone”. The social security of the welfare state protects the primary sector. In sum, the primary sector offers income and protection. On the contrary, the secondary sector provides low-paying, unstable positions at the low end of the labour market to migrants. According to this model, migrants predominantly take the dirty, dangerous, and demanding jobs (the “3Ds” jobs) in the secondary sector. The secondary sector provides jobs that no one (else) wants to do, but which fulfil crucial, unavoidable functions: “Jobs in the primary sector are largely reserved for natives, leading to a fundamental dichotomy between the jobs of migrants and the jobs of natives” (Morawska

⁷ Own emphasis

⁸ The confusion is easy here and needs to be clarified. Classically, we speak of the third sector to refer to the service-oriented sector of the economy – compared to the secondary sector (the industry – manufactory work) and primary sector (the agriculture – farmland work), yet these three sectors are not the same as the two ones conceptualised within the dual labour market theory.

2012, 58). In this context, highly-skilled migrants are outliers. They work in the primary sector, but they are migrants. They receive the income and the protection of the primary sector, the signs of financial and legal “inclusion” (Bommes 2012) as citizens of the “global North”. And, highly-skilled migrants perform a trade or an occupation which is (at least) similar to the ones performed by the local population. Therefore, I argue, their status as migrants becomes invisible as they are incorporated, from a “Westerner’s perspective”, into an inclusive “us”. To them, fluidity applies more than border-policing (Bauman 2013; Favell 2014). The DLMT, then, brings the question of inequality and power back to the core of the reflection on migration, opposing two seemingly homogeneous groups: “us vs. them”.

The neoclassical theory and the DLMT both exemplify “dichotomising migration”, the first process leading to the “polarisation of migration”. We have seen how scholars describe highly-skilled migration in relation to other types of migration through two binaries: “high/low skill migration” and “us/them”, introducing a polarisation through a dichotomy. However, I wish to distinguish a second process creating a “polarisation of migration”. I call it “deepening migration”.

2.3.2 Deepening Migration

In contrast to “dichotomising migration” (2.3.1), “deepening migration” focuses on highly-skilled migration as such, wherein the “polarisation of migration” is implicit. I will illustrate this point by pointing to the typologies of Iredale (2001) and Baruch et al. (2013) to refine the concept of highly-skilled migration. Both deal with the group they reify, thus leaving aside what they consider to be irrelevant. Certainly, one grand unified sociological theory able to consider everything is utopian and it is always easy to argue that some studies forget to focus on this or that, because saying something concrete simply implies making choices. Yet I use this critique as a tool to locate the blind spots in the literature; it helps to identify gaps.

a. Typologies of Highly-Skilled Migrants

The development of definitions and typologies is crucial work when scholars want to push forward a research agenda. It provides grounding concepts which help us to understand a complex phenomenon. Here, I focus on typologies which take up the broad conceptual base of the migrant, meaning they use the (professional) migrant her/himself as the unit of analysis. I have chosen to look at Iredale (2001) and Baruch et al. (2013) because they contain

key elements to define highly-skilled migration. Iredale stresses factors leading to the “internationalisation of professions” (2001, 10), such as international agreements like the General Agreements on Trade in Services (GATS) or the “emergence of new skilled labour markets that are relatively free of national controls” (2001, 13). The “internationalisation of professions” requires new scientific tools, as the ones existing at that time were mostly focused on the nation states. Iredale therefore proposes five complementary typologies to enrich our understanding of highly-skilled migration and thus the mobility of professionals (2001, 16–20). She considers (1) the “motivation of migration” – is it forced or induced by policies designed to attract highly-skilled migrants?; (2) the countries of origin and arrival; (3) the “channel or mechanism” (she identifies three major channels: “the international labour market of MNCs, companies with international contracts that move staff to service their offshore work; and international recruitment agency”); (4) the length of the stay; and (5) the “mode of incorporation” (ibid). In so doing, she furnishes foundational concepts for the many studies that would come in the next twenty years. For Iredale, each typology corresponds to a particular “means of categorisation” (2001, 7), or to “ways of categorizing professional migrants” (2001, 16). Viewed together, the five typologies show that highly-skilled migration is inherently complex and diverse. These typologies are used theoretically to ground concepts such as the ones of self-initiated expatriates (2.4 Expatriation Studies, 25). They show the diversity of highly-skilled migration, thus paving the way for finer categorisations.

When it comes to “deepening migration”, however, while the typologies of Iredale (2001) provide a thoughtful conceptualisation of highly-skilled migration taking into consideration factors outside the MNC, they remain “family neutral”: they do not take into account the role of the family in shaping professional migration processes. In other words, Iredale’s approach deepens our knowledge of highly-skilled migration *only* through the professional inclusion⁹, as if the relevant topics in studying highly-skilled migration were restricted to professional migration. But since this is not the case, I propose that the typologies in fact hint at a migration binary: “work/family migration”.

⁹ Truth to be told, four years later Iredale published an article that tackles gender (2005). Besides, the article of 2001 contains many references to gender discrimination. Yet, none of the six typologies deal with the dimension of the family.

The second typology focuses on different types of international career (Baruch et al. 2013). Though seven dimensions¹⁰, Baruch et al. describe the twenty main patterns of international work. They show the heterogeneity of highly-skilled migration as it is diverse and encompasses many types of mobility including traditional corporate expatriation, short term assignments, globetrotting, virtual global employees, cross-border commuting, secondments overseas, and so on (Baruch et al. 2013, 2375). The research of Baruch et al. (2013) brings valuable insights for further empirical studies to the developing field of highly-skilled migration studies, as it refines the units of analysis.

Their typology exemplifies, however, another aspect of “deepening migration”, in that they separate professional forms of mobility from “immigration”, as if the two apply to different people. I argue that this categorisation implicitly opposes “international work” and “ethnic immigration”. Two arguments illustrate my point. First, when we look at the table presenting the twenty main patterns of international work, the only two patterns which can be “illegal” are the two patterns labelled as “immigration” (namely “immigration – legal/illegal/asylum” and “temporary immigration” (Baruch et al. 2013, 2375). The 18 other types are “legal” or “legal; non-complex”. From this perspective, highly-skilled migration is allegedly legal and frictionless, but essentially different from immigration. Second, their conception of the “cultural gap” reinforces the legal/illegal¹¹ distinction. Indeed, the two patterns containing the term “immigration” stress a high cultural gap for migrants coming “from ‘the third world’ to developed [sic.]” countries, although this gap is never described as “high” for other types of international work. Therefore, I argue that the patterns oppose the two groups. For highly-skilled migrants, race, ethnicity, and borders do not apply, while they are deeply relevant to analysing “immigrants”. Thus, the “polarisation of migration” by “deepening migration” is also about the perceived relevant analytical categories used to perform research. I propose that the typology of Baruch et al. (2013) contributes to developing a “migration binaries” present in many studies on highly-skilled migration structured along “economic/cultural migration”.

¹⁰ The seven dimensions are the following: “Time exposure (short to very long-term foreign work)”, “intensity of international contact (one to many cultures)”, “breadth of interaction (predominantly work to holistic interaction)”, “legal context (rights to stay/work in country)”, “predominant instigator (individual or organization-supported)”, “cultural gap Job/role needs” (2013, 2375).

¹¹ Strangely, the authors use the binary “legal/illegal” to ground their typology and not “regular/irregular” or “documented/undocumented”. This choice is controversial as one could argue that no one is illegal; yet, someone can lack the “authorisation” to stay.

Nevertheless, Iredale (2001) and Baruch et al. (2013) improve our knowledge of highly-skilled migration. In sum, the two typologies map out a complex and multifaced social phenomenon. They place the foundation stones, and yet they fail to see that highly-skilled migration is also familial and cultural.

2.3.3 Intermediary Summary: Construction of a Polarisation I

In this section, I have presented theories and typologies dealing with highly-skilled migration. Despite the differences among these works, I argue that they all develop a “polarisation of migration”, which refers to a specific interpretation of migratory phenomena, though four “migration binaries”: namely (1) “high/low skill migration”, (2) “us/them”, (3) “work/family migration”, and (4) “economic/cultural migration”. As Favell (2014) suggests, the key to organising these binaries is an opposition between “a frictionless mobility [and] a controlled migration” (2014, 135). I will rely heavily on these “migration binaries” to develop the theoretical framework of this study. This interpretation introduces a sharp contrast between two groups: an economic, work-related, skilled, legally trouble-free group opposed to a cultural, non-work related, unskilled, potentially legally questionable group. Yet I argue that the polarisation of migration is part of a broader scientific process, moving from general to specific. The more numerous the studies, the more knowledge we have, and the more former all-encompassing categories are no longer sustainable – and then, the more further refinements are needed; an example of such a path would be in the evolution of terminology from expatriate, to self-initiated expatriate, to intra self-initiated expatriate (2.4 Expatriation Studies, 25). In a similar way, each new branch that grows adds complexity to a tree, but new branches can only grow out of existing branches.

After having critically assessed the underlying assumptions of studies dealing with highly-skilled migration, we can reverse the problem and see what these approaches may bring to the present study. Indeed, each single theory or typology brings its own insight. The neoclassical theory makes us aware of an important determinant in the motivations behind migration: the expected outcome. In other words, individuals inform themselves as they prepare to move, even though they may not have a perfect sense of what is going to happen. In this sense, professional migration is a question of income and career; this should not be overlooked. Then again, the dual labour market theory teaches us the “games of power” at play within contemporary societies: not all forms of migration are equal, because being mobile as such says nearly nothing about one’s social position. It is biased to assume that

highly-skilled migration concerns only a trouble-free, rich, elite class of businessmen. Hierarchies, inequalities, and social positions are still relevant when it comes to highly-skilled migration – another issue that is often overlooked. The typologies of Iredale (2001) and Baruch et al. (2013) provide first and foremost a relevant way to assess the empirical material by providing tools to categorise it. Indeed, the points these typologies raise are central to understanding highly-skilled migration – and so are those which are *not* raised. The blind-spots of these typologies deserve further exploration. In fact, the different theories and typologies discussed conceptualise vertical inequalities, like income, yet they do not have the tools to conceptualise “horizontal generator of inequalities (*Ungleichheitsgeneratoren*) [i.e.] gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, nationality, and disability” (Lutz and Amelina 2017, 7) as well as “precarity” (Cangia 2018). In conclusion, these theories and typologies refine our analytical tools and, more importantly, open way to new questions, like: What about gender, ethnicity or age in the context of highly-skilled migration? What role do they play? Can some highly-skilled migrants be in a precarious situation?

2.4 Expatriation Studies

In this section, I will introduce the research on expatriation. I will use the same strategy again, presenting the major studies on the topic to critically assess their conclusions and to see what they can bring to the present study. I will make three points in this section. First, I will propose a definition of the term “expatriate”, showing how such a definition emphasises the “us/them” binary. Second, I will define several other related terms such as “assigned expatriate” and “self-initiated expatriate”¹², arguing that they reinforce the “permanent/temporary” binary. Third, I will show how the private life of expatriates has come at the forefront of expatriate studies, by presenting two topics: the “cross-cultural adjustment” (Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou 1991) and the situation of the partner and the children in expatriation processes. Here, I will emphasise the opposition between “male breadwinner” and “female caregiver”. Therefore, this section works as a bridge between studies which do not tackle the family and gender and the ones which do. Indeed, we will see how the human face lurking behind expatriation will force scholars to give attention to the social context surrounding professional mobility. Furthermore, highly-skilled migration studies and expatriation studies have failed thus far to speak with one another. Putting the two fields in conversation can be

¹² For a historical account of the use of the concept of expatriation, see Green (2009).

very valuable in compensating for their respective weaknesses with their respective strengths, emphasising their complementarity.

2.4.1 Defining Expatriates

Let us start with an etymological clarification. The term expatriate is composed of the Latin roots *ex*, which means “out of”, and *patri*, which means “native land”. In other words, an “expatriate” is someone who is out of their native land. Moreover, *patri* comes from the Latin term *pater*, the father (Benveniste 1969, 217). The term is less neutral than it seems, as we can see a gendered dimension already in the terminology. It underlines a link between a person and their fatherland. It hints at people saying, “Look. I may be out of my home country for a time, but I intend to return to it or at least to maintain strong ties with it”. In turn, the term raises questions about the “integration” of an expatriate in a new country. The bond that exists between the expatriate and his or her home country may remove any sense of urgency to “integrate” into the country of destination, precisely because the term implies that the person is already “integrated” somewhere else. To put it in Malkki’s words: expatriates are not disturbing the “national order of things” (1995, 512) whereas migrants may very well be considered to do so.

McNulty and Brewster (2017) propose propose a stricter definition of the term expatriate. While dealing with the typologies of highly-skilled migrants (2.3.2 Deepening Migration, 21), I have shown the wide range of terms used to distinguish situations which are often similar. McNulty and Brewster (2017) also criticise this proliferation of terms (“flexpatriate, assigned traveller, self-initiated traveller, domestic international manager” [2017, 37], and so on) to name similar processes; it creates a fuzzy field of research, they argue. They suggest that this proliferation is due to the practical orientation of this field, which has led to a lack of studies engaging with theoretical considerations. To fill this gap, they propose the following definition: “We define ‘business expatriates’ as: legally working individuals who reside temporarily in a country of which they are not a citizen in order to accomplish a career-related goal, being relocated abroad either by an organization, by self-initiation or directly employed within the host-country” (McNulty and Brewster 2017, 46). The first part of this definition stresses that expatriates reside legally, temporarily, and for professional reasons in a country of which they are not citizens. I have already discussed the “documented/undocumented” binary in the previous section (2.3.2), and I will discuss in-depth the “temporal/permanent” binary in the next section (2.4.2). For now, let us focus on

the integration of expatriates in the labour force. According to McNulty and Brewster (2017), the condition involves being “organisationally employed”, regardless of the type of organisation. They argue that expatriates are not only employed by multinational corporations. Such organisations might also include non-governmental organisations such as the European Union in Brussels (Gatti 2009) or the United Nations in New York or Geneva, and to non-governmental organisations such as aid organisations or religious bodies as well as international sports and cultural associations. An expatriate might be “organisationally employed” by any of these groups. From this perspective, it seems that the “organisational employment” presupposes the skill level of the employees.

Thus, the three terms constituting McNulty and Brewster’s definition of “expatriate” – legally, temporarily, and for professional reasons – tend to create an unproblematised definition of an expatriate as compared to a migrant. This anchors expatriation on the “frictionless side” of human mobility because it does not include the disruptive connotations used to depict a migrant. In other words, a migrant can clearly be “illegal” (*sic.*) (undocumented), permanent, and unemployed. An expatriate cannot. Unsurprisingly, McNulty and Brewster exclude migrants from the category of “business expatriate” (2017, 48). Thus, this definition contributes to create a “polarisation of migration” through the same process that I have shown in the first part of this chapter, namely by extracting professional forms of mobility from immigration, as the core of the definition is about being “organisationally employed”.

Other researchers focus on the daily life of expatriates within the host-country. In *Transnational Lives* (2007b), Fechter analyses the presence and experiences of expatriates in Indonesia by using ethnographical methods. She develops the metaphor of “living in a bubble” (2007a, 167) to emphasise that transnational social spaces are not only spaces of fluidity and openness, but also conservative, rigid, and bounded ones. She underlines the intimate link between contemporary Euro-American expatriates in the “global South” and colonialism, pointing out that expatriation, transnational social spaces, and colonialism have a common history. In this context, the distinction between expatriates and migrants is rather clear. I quote this study because the “us/them” binary is only a step away from a racialised argument. This bias needs to be explicitly underlined and criticised. The argument goes as follows: an expatriate is a white male going abroad on a mission for a company in the “global South” whereas a migrant is “generic racialised and ‘religionised’ [*sic*] being” coming to the

“global North” for non-professional reasons. Thus, migration and expatriation respond to the “polarisation of migration” through the line of a “post-colonial world”¹³, in turn reinforcing the “us/them” binary. Al Ariss (2010) speaks of the risk of a non-reflexive categorisation of the migrant and the expatriate. For him, this leads to a reproduction of biased categorisations: “when expatriates come from less-developed countries they are most frequently labelled as “migrants” or “immigrants”. No rational theoretical or methodological foundation is given to explain such terminology. Instead, this terminological distinction comes to replicate and support a stereotyped image of migrants who are less advantaged in terms of their originating country and ethnic origins” (Al Ariss 2010, 80). This point is crucial to understanding that an unproblematised use of the term “expatriate” may lead to biased research. The definition developed by McNulty and Brewster (2017) and the work of Fechter (2007b) are intended as tools to evacuate flawed understandings and misleading connotations of the term. In fact, the definition proposes a neutral stance when it comes to race and/or gender, as it is structured around three elements which attempt to narrow the scope of the field based on a valuable scientific argument. Furthermore, McNulty and Brewster propose a definition to clarify a field in which so many different concepts have appeared over the last few decades that it is sometimes difficult to understand who we are talking about. And yet the very endeavour of “extracting professional mobility from migration” contributes to producing the “us/them” binary. I do not say that there is “one best way” of doing it and my study should be seen as a reflection on this binary, but it remains problematic, I argue. I propose to include families and couples as units of analysis in order to circumvent this binary. We shall see that this approach, too, raises problems. In that sense, “our meanings and understandings are unstable and endlessly ambiguous” (Brinkmann 2017, 19) and social scientists are trapped in their own categories. I develop this argument in a later section on epistemology (4.1 Epistemology, 79).

2.4.2 Assigned Expatriate and Self-Initiated Expatriate

Beneath the broad definition of “business expatriate”, the concepts of “assigned expatriate” and “self-initiated expatriate” are widespread in the literature. In fact, McNulty and Brewster (2017) include them in their definition when they emphasise various initiators of relocation: “by an organization, by self-initiation or directly employed within the host-country” (2017,

¹³ One could say a “Wallerstein’s world” (Wallerstein 1974), where expatriates move from the “core” to the “periphery” whereas migrants travel the other way round.

46). Thus, scholars agree on a distinction between “assigned expatriates” (Biemann and Andresen 2010; Dabic, González-Loureiro, and Harvey 2013) and “self-initiated expatriates” (Suutari and Brewster 2000). As we shall see, the distinction between a “self-initiated expatriate” and a migrant is blurry, too, as the concept of “self-initiated expatriate” beclouds the straight-line differentiation between expatriate and migrant. But what is a “self-initiated expatriate”? And how is he or she different from an “assigned expatriate”?

An “assigned expatriate” is sent abroad by – typically though not only – a multinational company; the company or other employing organisation¹⁴ initiates the move. By contrast, a “self-initiated expatriate” takes the initiative to work abroad him- or herself. Moreover, an “assigned expatriate” has an employment contract located in his or her home-country while s/he works abroad. The contract, therefore, stipulates that the employee will be paid in the currency of his or her home-country. Typically, the contract also contains an “expatriate package”, which includes support to settle and live in the new local space as well as other benefits, such as paid “home-leave” or a company car. On the other hand, a “self-initiated expatriate” has a local employment contract bounded in the legal framework of the country of arrival and receives less organisational support.

Cerdin and Selmer (2014, 1290) define “self-initiated expatriates” through four constitutive elements: they (1) take the initiative to relocate, (2) have a legal job or look for one, (3) wish to return to their home country, and (4) are skilled. For the authors, the wish to return to the home country is central to distinguishing between a “self-initiated expatriate” and a migrant. I argue that this is problematic, however. Although the definition is theoretically straightforward, it becomes confusing in the empirical world. Indeed, one may not know if one wants to stay in the country one is working in, or return to one’s home country, or move on to a third country. In that sense, migration and expatriation are iterative processes. Hence, the notion of “wish to stay/wish to leave” is rather problematic and strongly dependent on context. External events can radically change the perspective of an individual.

Other research further refines the contrasts between these concepts. Andresen et al. (2014), for example, propose a typology of expatriation, distinguishing between (1) “assigned expatriate”, (2) “*intra*- self-initiated expatriate”, (3) “*inter*- self-initiated expatriate”, and (4)

¹⁴ According to the definition of McNulty and Brewster (2017), the employer of an expatriate is not always a MNC. In the following, I will refer to the employer of expatriates as “employing organisation”.

“drawn expatriate”. They construct their typology according to two factors, organisational mobility and initiative (Table 1).

Table 1: Refining the Concept of Expatriate

	No Organisational Mobility: Work for the Same Company	Organisational Mobility: Work for Another Company
Move: Company’s Initiative	Assigned Expatriate	Drawn Expatriate
Move: Own Initiative	Intra- Self-Initiated Expatriate	Inter- Self-Initiated Expatriate

Source: Own Elaboration based on the Results of Andersen et al. (2014)

First, when someone moves internationally within a single organisation, on the initiative of the employing organisation, the authors speak of “assigned expatriates”. Second, it may be that the move is initiated by the employee him or herself, even as he or she continues to work for the same organisation: in this case, they speak of “*intra-* self-initiated expatriate”. Both of these scenarios might occur if the organisation for whom the person works has an available position in another country and the employee applies for it internally. In both cases (“assigned expatriate” and “*intra-* self-initiated expatriate”), the employee continues to work for the same organisation. And yet, the “*intra-* self-initiated expatriate” mobilises the internal labour market of an organisation, in which employees apply for a new position while continuing to work for the same organisation. The difference between these categories is at the level of who initiates the move.

When a new employer is involved, the authors distinguish between the “*inter-* self-initiated expatriate” and the “drawn expatriate”. As opposed to the “*intra-* self-initiated expatriate”, the “*inter-* self-initiated expatriate” applies for a position in a new organisation abroad and quits his or her former position. The “*intra-*” and “*inter-* self-initiated expatriates” might not only work for MNCs, then – they can also be scholars or practitioners. Similar to McNulty and Brewster (2017), Andresen et al. (2014) go beyond the MNCs and include many people who would be called highly-skilled migrants in other fields. In other words, the research on “self-initiated expatriates” deals with the same people as the research on highly-skilled migrants, but uses different terms. The last case is the “drawn expatriate”: an international hire. This typically happens when a head-hunter proposes a position abroad to someone on behalf of another employing organisation. In this case, the initiative comes from the company which wants to recruit somebody specific, such as a global top executive. The typology shows

how the literature in management studies develops a refined categorisation of the different types of international moves possible between, within, and outside of an employing organisation.

The refinement of these categories, however, does not come without definitional problems. In a post-colonial vision of the world, it was easy to differentiate between expatriates and migrants, as I pointed out before. Yet new patterns of mobility have appeared over the last 25 years, and the “assigned expatriate” has become only one type of international professional mobility amongst others. As new forms of professional mobility appear, new denominations – such as “self-initiated expatriates” – follow¹⁵.

a. Permanent/Temporal Migration Binary

With Cerdin and Selmer (2014) we have seen that those called expatriates – as opposed to migrants – are not considered through the lens of permanent settlement. It seems that expatriates need to adapt only temporarily. One assumes that everything will fall back into place once they return home. We can see how the binary “permanent and temporal migration” (King 2002, 93) is central to distinguishing between the two categories. In absolute terms, the permanent settlement of a migrant may be shorter than the temporal settlement of an expatriate. The outcomes of human mobility as an iterative process are difficult to foresee and recent research shows different “patterns of (im)mobility” after migration (Wieczorek 2018), thus overcoming the sedentary bias in migration studies. Conversely, I would suggest, we face a nomadic bias in research on expatriates. The distinction between migration and expatriation is based more on hierarchies of social classification than on questions of the intention to stay or to leave; or, more precisely, I argue, the intention to stay or to leave reflects hierarchies of social classification. Expatriation studies show how belonging somewhere else and having the possibility to return creates a “distinction” (Bourdieu 2012) between a migrant and an expatriate.

¹⁵ Or is it the other way around? Can we only see what we can name? The epistemological question at play here is central. It shows how social agents (including social scientists) shape the reality they live in and in turn how this reality effectively takes place in our research. In that sense, (collectively) we discover what we are looking for. This becomes a way to classify the world with practical implications (Bourdieu 1983).

2.4.3 Expatriate Adjustments

Now that we have a clearer view of how expatriation is defined in the management literature, we can switch to a major topic it tackles: the “adjustment of expatriates” (Black and Mendenhall 1990a, 1990b; Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou 1991). Scholars working in this area measure the capacity of an individual to adjust to a new environment. Subsequently, they speak of high adjustment and low adjustment as they analyse how some people, in some places, under specific circumstances (like a strong “company culture” or a dedicated organisation support) are more likely to have a successful international assignment, with a lower rate of early returns and withdrawals. Centrally, they see three types of adjustment. Black and Mendenhall (1990b) define the “cross-cultural adjustment ... in terms of the psychological comfort and familiarity an individual feels for the new culture” (1990b, 130). They propose a model of cross-cultural training (1990b, 127) to help expatriates to adapt to a new environment, as the aim of “cross-cultural training” is to soften the adaptation of expatriates when they arrive in a new affiliate by, for instance, diminishing the “cultural shock”. The “cross-cultural adjustment model” highlights the centrality of learning the acceptable behaviours in a foreign cultural context. Black and Mendenhall argue that uncertainty about how to behave – “to perform one’s role” – generates stress, thus leading to “cultural shock”.

Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou (1991) further develop the concept of adjustment by bridging two bodies of literature: “international adjustment literature” (1991, 293) and “domestic adjustment literature” (1991, 295). While the domestic literature focuses on the adjustment process that an individual faces when starting a new job with little or no geographical mobility, the international literature focuses on the adjustment in cases involving international mobility. The two bodies of literature deal with changes and uncertainties in professional life. The domestic literature emphasises the ways organisations can foster the socialisation of new employees by implementing, for instance, an organisational culture. It stresses the “work factors” (1991, 295) which include clear definitions of the roles and tasks that a new employee must perform: the authors refer to the “work adjustment”. Correspondingly, the international literature highlights the environment surrounding the professional activity that an expatriate must face while starting a new assignment abroad (food, climate, etc.), thus acknowledging expatriation as a “total phenomenon”, modifying one’s life at many levels: this is the “cross-cultural adjustment”. There is also an “interactional adjustment”, which refers specifically to the interactions with host-country

nationals. Thus, by bridging the two bodies of literature, Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou distinguish three types of adjustment: (1) the adjustment to work, (2) the adjustment to activities outside of work, and (3) the adjustment to host-country nationals (1991, 304). In doing so, they examine the situation of an expatriate comprehensively and introduce a “framework of international adjustment” (1991, 303). This framework highlights the various challenges (inside and outside work) that expatriates encounter when they arrive in a subsidiary abroad. In sum, the authors consider, within a single framework, the relevance of the professional environment *and* the centrality of other domains of life, such as the family, to assess professional mobility. The beginning of the 1990s is a turning point; before that, scholars accorded only scant attention to the environment within which expatriates evolved. The “framework of international adjustment” makes clear that the adaptations of an individual in a new environment cannot be understood outside of the social, cultural, and family context in which s/he lives.

I see complementarity between the way expatriate studies assess “adjustment” and the way highly-skilled migration studies tackle “integration”. On the one hand, studies which use an adjustment model *depoliticise* human mobility. Speaking of individual adjustment renders the topic more practical: it is a pragmatic approach aimed at facilitating the adaptation of individuals in a new environment. It becomes a technical problem and enables us to shift our focus to the concrete challenges faced by individuals in their everyday life abroad, bringing together the individual’s situation and the challenges they encounter. On the other hand, the “integration” of migrants is a politicised topic and too often the concrete practices that either help or hinder their life in a new environment are hidden behind normative considerations on “cultural integration/assimilation”.

Moreover, if “integration” occurs within the labour market (Bommess and Kolb 2006), then it is important to analyse how concretely one adjusts to a new workplace and how one copes, for instance, with a new environment. I argue that the “framework of international adjustment” (Black, Mendenhall, and Oddou 1991, 303) contains the necessary analytical tools to consider the complex relationship between professional mobility, work, and adaptation to a new environment. The strength of this model is also that it considers the ways in which the employing organisation must support its employee, for the adaptation is reciprocal and organisational support is crucial.

a. Partner and Family

So far, we have seen some definitional refinements of the concept of expatriation, and we have become acquainted with the “framework of international adjustment”. Now, I will focus on how the studies of the “trailing spouse” [*sic*] have emerged. The term “trailing spouse” appears as the counterpart of a “breadwinner” implying a traditional conceptualisation of the family. The “breadwinner” brings money and “food” to the family while the “trailing spouse” follows and takes care of the domestic matters. Nearly always, the “trailing spouse” is a woman and the “breadwinner” is a man. For the most part, the literature focusing on the “trailing spouse” considers a traditional vision of the family: a vision where the wife follows the husband.

Several studies from the early 1990s focus on the ways in which the “trailing spouse” impacts the “breadwinner’s” adjustment success. These scholars explore the adjustment of the “trailing spouse” because s/he increases the adjustment success of the “breadwinner”. In this context, the “trailing spouse” is subsumed within the “spouse adjustment” of the “breadwinner” (Black and Gregersen 1991; Briody and Chrisman 1991). It is assumed that the successful adjustment of the “trailing spouse” increases the quality of the “breadwinner’s” work in the labour force. Braseby (2010, 8) argues that the studies of Black and Gregersen (1991) or Briody and Chrisman (1991) conceptualise the “trailing spouse” as an independent variable to the “breadwinner’s” adjustment. As the “family concerns” and the “spouse/partner career” are identified to be the main reason explaining “assignment failure” (Andreason 2008; Brookfield Global Relocation Services 2012, 14), the interest in the topic grows. In other words, it is because the “spouse’s dissatisfaction” impacts the professional activity of the employees that more attention is paid to their specific situation. Scholars emphasise that the partner’s satisfaction diminishes the risk of an early return to the home-country.

A semantic development in which the term “trailing spouse” is replaced by “spouse/partner” has taken place in the last decade. This is a welcome modification as it changes the unquestioned assumptions behind the terms and contributes to develop a more sensitive perspective acknowledging, for instance, the will of the partner to maintain a position in the labour force; it gives agency to the partner. Yet, the “female trailing spouse” and the “male breadwinner” are still gendered notions reflecting the empirical structure of the field of study. The “trailing spouse” and “breadwinner” correspond to the gendered binary of the

“reproductive female” and “productive male”¹⁶. These gender binaries support strong narratives on masculinity and femininity and scholars are not immune to them. Research has struggled to overcome a gendered narrative conceptualising the “female trailing spouse” as a burden. It was not until 2010 that the first studies appeared analysing the supportive role that the partner not working in the labour force can give during an assignment (Davoine et al. 2013; Luring and Selmer 2010). During the same decade, other researchers developed studies of the “emotional situation” (Cangià 2017) or the “precarity” (Cangià 2018) of the “expat spouses”, the importance of organisational support for the “accompanying partner” (Cole 2011; McNulty 2012), and the “career coordination strategies” of “dual career couples” (Känsälä, Mäkelä, and Suutari 2014; Mäkelä, Känsälä, and Suutari 2011). These scholars have also developed a reflexive use of the terms, thus overcoming the value-laden term “trailing spouse”. In fact, in most of the existing research, the “trailing spouses” are seen as a burden, for this assumption is built into the term itself: “Although a number of investigations have included the potential negative influence of partners on expatriates’ careers ... few, if any, have focused on the positive role of the spouse for the expatriate career” (Luring and Selmer 2010, 60). Luring and Selmer (2010) look at the ways in which the partner not working in the labour force supports the partner working in the labour force abroad. In doing so, they manage to overcome a simplistic vision of the adventurous *pater familias*, supporting a family and a spouse abroad while continuing to work in the labour force, thus overcoming a conceptualisation implying that one of the partners is necessarily dependent on the other. In short, they envision the partners as a team and they analyse the ways in which one partner develops strategies to support the career of the other – for instance, by helping him or her to find professional opportunities in the new local space or back at home.

Similarly, Davoine et al. (2013) theorise three repertoires of the “supporting partner”, which express the partner’s positive impact on expatriation. The first repertoire highlights the assistance to the career as well as psychological support. The second repertoire emphasises the search for information on the new place where the partners will live. This includes developing a network in the new place. The third repertoire stresses the logistical support the spouse provides when it comes to the family. Thus, the authors show that the assistance of

¹⁶ I shall develop this crucial point in the next section on gender and highly-skilled migration for there is much to say.

the “supporting partner” occurs at different levels, and they conceptualise him or her as far more than simply a burden.

Furthermore, Davoine et al. (2013) show differences in the mobilisation of the repertoire depending on the gender of the “supporting partner”. They distinguish “frontstage activities” and “backstage activities” following a “Goffman’s dramaturgical analysis” (2013, 18). “Frontstage activities” imply public representation while the “backstage” ones are done in private. Davoine et al. (2013) reveal perceived gendered expectations and how the actors deal with them. The male “supporting partner”, for instance, tends to offer “backstage” psychological support, and yet it may be more complicated for them to perform “frontstage” activities, such as getting involved with the local expatriate community. In contrast, the female “supporting partner” is more at ease performing “frontstage” activities because these fit with the local “gender norm”. In sum, this study stresses the gender differences in (1) the support provided and (2) the repertoires that the “supporting partners” mobilise. Although the structure of the field is gendered, since many couples of expatriates are indeed organised along traditional lines, the gendered assumptions of the researchers themselves have also made them blind to the active role the supporting partner may play.

Exploring the situation of the accompanying partner further, Cangià (2017, 2018) explores the burdens and challenges specific to their situation. Cangià (2017) focuses on the “emotional work” of the accompanying partner when they speak about their new environment. She considers especially the mixed feelings about the obligation they might feel to be excited about their international experience even while they face difficult personal situations (e.g., unemployment, loneliness, lack of social networks) that risk leading to intense suffering. In a subsequent article (2018), Cangià explicitly criticises the idea of “frictionless mobility”, showing how the accompanying partners find themselves in a precarious situation. Through a reconceptualisation of precarity, she shows how people who could be seen as favoured are in fact in fragile and ephemeral situations. She underlines the price of an uncompromised focus on the career of one of the partners. The individuals who quit a position in the labour force to follow their partner abroad face a situation of precarity, defined here beyond solely socio-economic precarity: “Trailing in mobility creates a paradox in that, while being with the family can give the security and comfort for dealing with change both for the assignee and for the partner, it is the very choice of moving for the family that creates spouses’ condition of precarity” (2018, 22). This situation is precarious because the

accompanying partner must do the care work for the family while waiting for the hypothetical and yet very possible further relocation of the partner working in the labour force. The accompanying partner, in scholars' eyes, has changed from a "burden" to a source of support to individuals facing their own emotional challenges in precarious situations while on the move. It thus seems only logical that other scholars have paid further attention to the organisational support that can be offered to these couples and families (Cole 2011; McNulty 2012).

Cole (2011) and McNulty (2012) emphasise that the major sources of stress during a relocation abroad are the loss of professional activity, the personal stress, and the lack of adapted support to the accompanying partner. McNulty argues that "both career and relationship stress are two of the most common ongoing unresolved tensions encountered by the trailing spouse when moving into unfamiliar cultural environments" (2012, 421). Both McNulty and Cole emphasise the importance of "organisational support" for the accompanying partner. They show that the most common type of support is practical support (like finding accommodation), whereas the social and professional support still seem lacking in many organisations. McNulty gives a good idea of the wide range of support which could be made available to the accompanying partner: "Assistance in finding a job for the trailing spouse (e.g., obtaining work permits, using a career coach, updating a resume), helping them stay connected remotely to their career (i.e. through paid subscriptions, associations), and/or building a new career appears especially necessary (see, for example, Parfitt 1998). If employment is not an option or not desired, companies could help with the reimbursement of education-related costs to compensate for the loss of spousal income, or childcare to facilitate attendance at courses" (2012, 431). Actually, when we combine the results of Cangia (2017, 2018) and those of Cole (2011) and McNulty (2012), we see that the "burden" of an international relocation are not generally shared equally between the partners. The accompanying partner takes the larger share, especially if this person has to resign from a position in the labour force. Furthermore, Cole underlines that the partners making the decision to relocate are aware that one career will be prioritised: "expatriate dual-career couples make a conscious decision that one person's career will take precedence for the duration of the expatriate assignment. If so, spouses have already accepted the reality that their careers will be affected" (2011, 31).

The studies of Cole (2011) and McNulty (2012) both underline changing trends in the family organisation of expatriates. First, they have witnessed more male accompanying partners. In this context, Cole (2011) shows a gendered difference, as the female partner whose position in the labour force was interrupted because of a relocation will have higher cultural and interactional adjustment. This creates new challenges, as males have lower cultural and interactional adjustment than their female counterparts (which is coherent with the results of Davoine et al. [2013, 17], as traditional norms still prioritise the career of the male partner). Second, Cole (2011) and McNulty (2012) both refer to dual career couples as a more and more frequent form. McNulty found that 84 percent of the accompanying partners have a tertiary education and 79 percent have a career before the relocation, but only 36 percent continue to work in the labour force after the relocation (2012, 428). In light of these results, it becomes clear that reflecting upon “dual career couples” is a central topic when one deals with expatriate international relocation.

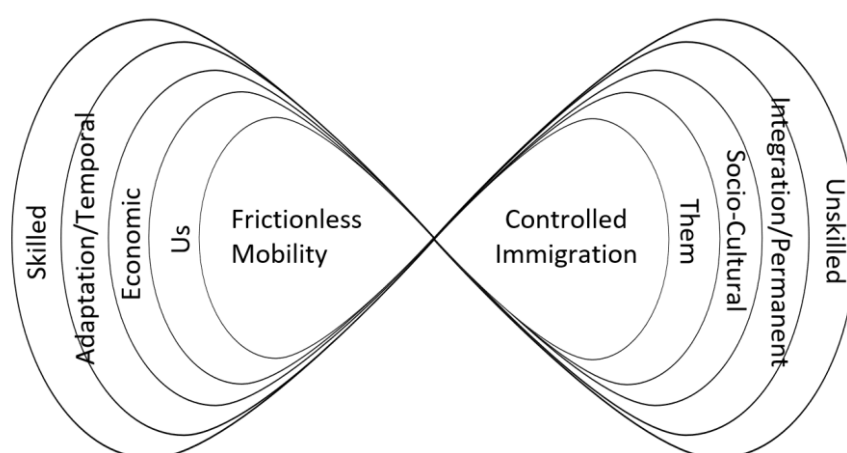
Känsälä et al. (2014) go one step further and focus specifically on “dual career couples”, thus looking beyond the traditional model of the family. They analyse the different types of “career coordination strategies” and develop a theoretical framework, defining three strategies for coping with professional mobility and family life. The “hierarchical strategy” corresponds to the prioritization of one career over another. In most cases, the male career is prioritized while family responsibility and the care work lie with the woman: a “male breadwinner” and a “female supporting partner”. In the “egalitarian strategy”, both partners’ careers have equal importance, implying coordination and negotiation. In other words, family life, care work, and professional careers are equally important to both partners. The family tries to live in the same household, thus avoiding long-distance relationships. The “egalitarian strategy” expresses both an egalitarian approach to valuing the two professional careers and a vision in which work in the labour force and care work have uniform significance. In contrast, the “loose coordination strategy” emphasises equal investments in the careers and disengagement from the family. Both partners prioritise (equally) their careers and over their family and private life. They choose to favour their professional life over their family life. In sum, Känsälä et al. (2014) theorise the coordination strategies of expatriates and show the various models of family organisation.

2.4.4 Intermediary Summary: Construction of a Polarisation II

Section 2.4 deals with studies that focus on the relationship between professional careers and private or family life. Expatriation is essentially about professional mobility, yet scholars increasingly understand it in a broader context. In the latest studies, they have reconciled “labour migration” and “family strategies”. The most up-to-date research on professional mobility bridges the gap between the non-professional implications and the professional ones. Thus far, I have dealt with expatriate studies and assessed them critically. I pointed to definitional questions and indicated three main topics which can enrich the study of highly-skilled migration: the processes of adjustment, the specific (precarious) situation of the accompanying partner, and the coordination of two professional careers.

Nevertheless, most expatriate studies rely on “migration binaries”, and three of them arose in section 2.4: “us vs. them”, “temporal vs. permanent”, and “breadwinner vs. trailing spouse”. I argue that these binaries strengthen the semantic opposition between the expatriate and the migrant. The “polarisation of migration” has a performative impact in scientific research, too. There, too, it underlines the “migration binaries” between “us” and “them”, cutting human migration into two categories: “migrants” and “expatriates”. In crude terms, this approach assumes that expatriates bring science, growth, rationality, and development to underdeveloped countries while migrants disrupt the national order of the world (Malkki 1995) and bring problems to developed countries. This vision is a myth.

Figure 2: Migration Binaries



Source: Own Elaboration

The “temporal/permanent migration” binary shapes expatriation studies, too. It seems to justify the different social treatment of those who are seen to stay permanently – and who should integrate into the host society – and those who are only here temporarily – who just need to adapt for a time. Yet it is not clear how this distinction can be empirically justified, since human mobility is an iterative process. The line is blurry but taking it for granted can have strong performative effects on the lives of the migrants and the expatriates themselves. Thus, in the first part of this chapter, I have theoretically constructed what I will refer to as the “migration binaries” (Figure 2). In addition, I have described a gendered binary, which usually implies a “male breadwinner” and a “female trailing spouse”, following the traditional conception of the family. I will deal with this topic in depth in the next section and construct a second set of binaries central for this work: the “gender binaries”.

2.5 Gender and Highly-Skilled Migration

Up until now, I have pointed out that the “migration binaries” polarise migration, leading some scholars to biased categorisations. The present section is about gender and highly-skilled migration. I will introduce the “gender binaries” to develop further the “polarisation of migration” and more importantly to show how some researchers propose ways out. Then, I will address studies that use a “dichotomous variable”¹⁷ to analyse gender and highly-skilled migration. After that, I will deal with research that stresses a “relational and situational”

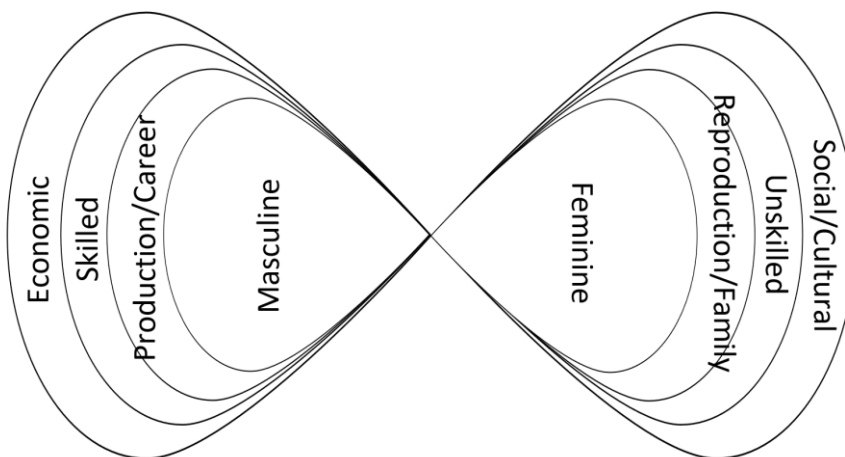
¹⁷ A “dichotomous approach” superposes sex and gender to compare the differences between men and women whereas a “relation and situational” approach considers gender as an everyday construct, thus reflexively conceptualising sex and gender (Donato et al. 2006).

conceptualisation of gender, to finally argue that the study of gender and highly-skilled migration still lacks research that effectively tackles the images of femininity and masculinity when it comes to “families on the move”.

2.5.1 Gender Binaries

The “gender binaries” express an opposition between narratives of femininity and masculinity. For example, they oppose a “female trailing spouse” and a “male breadwinner”. Scholars in gender studies have developed this idea and spotted many mirrored images differentiating femininity from masculinity. The dichotomy opposes a productive, economic, skilled, work-oriented male to a social, cultural, unskilled, reproductive, and family-oriented female (Kofman and Raghuram 2006; Schaer, Dahinden, and Toader 2017) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Gender Binaries



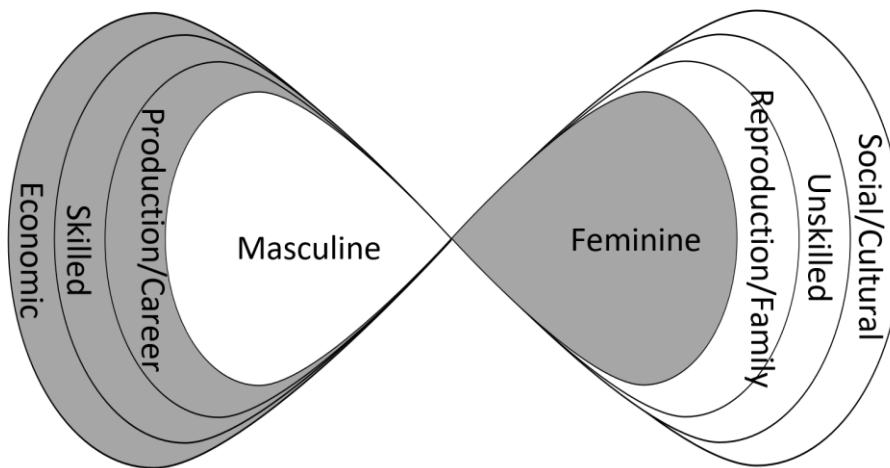
Source: Own Elaboration

The “gender binaries” impact the topics addressed by scholars, which include highly-skilled migration studies and expatriate studies. I argue that highly-skilled migration studies mostly focus on the masculine side of the binaries as they deal with the professional careers of employed skilled migrants. In other words, the focus on the professional activity promotes research on highly-skilled migration from the masculine side of the binaries. For example, questions around the wellbeing of the “supporting spouse” became relevant only when scholars acknowledged that the “dissatisfaction of the supporting spouse” leads the partner working in the labour force to break his employment contract and to return prematurely to his family in the home-country. Kofmann (2000) develops a similar point saying that highly-skilled migration studies overlook the female migrants. The women are invisible in highly-

skilled migration studies, reducing the experience of highly-skilled migration to a generic gender-neutral professional experience.

The same argument the other way around also works: while highly-skilled migration studies are trapped in a gender-neutral paradigm, migration and gender studies do not tackle highly-skilled migration. According to Meares (2010, 473), the gendered experience of highly-skilled migrant women is largely ignored. Instead, she argues, the research focuses mostly on disadvantaged women, studying their family-relationships as well as social and cultural migration experiences of unskilled female migrants. In other words, research on gender, family relations, and migration has not tackled the topic of highly-skilled migration thus far, focusing more on the “feminine side” of the “gender binaries”. This logic, Kofman (2005) argues, creates two strands of literature which are hermetic and blind to each other. Similarly, Schaer, Dahinden, and Toader (2017) emphasise this mutual blindness, stating: “Family migration, tied migration, and larger social networks have largely been ignored in this field of study [highly-skilled migration studies], while they have been extensively theorised and studied in the gender and migration literature” (2017, 1294). In sum, research on gender and migration scrutinises the feminine side of migration, while research on highly-skilled migration analyses the masculine side. The “gender binaries” provide a reading grid to assess migration and highly-skilled migration studies, I argue. Indeed, they lead us to see what has been and, more importantly, what has not been studied so far. In the last ten years, however, scholars have become more and more aware of this gap in the literature and they have engaged with it in two ways. A first way out consists in adopting a “crossing focus”, analysing the specificity of the experiences of highly-skilled migrant women. In this context, scholars reconfigure the migration binaries by crisscrossing the “gender binaries” (Figure 4). In other words, this approach collapses the “male productive and female reproductive” dichotomy and focuses instead on the professional activity of *female* highly-skilled migrants – emphasised by the grey zones on the figure. A second way out is to question the family strategies and the family organisation comprehensively encompassing the binaries and analysing the impact of feminine and masculine narratives on family strategies and the migration decision.

Figure 4: Gender Binaries II



Source: Own elaboration

2.5.2 Gender as a Dichotomous Variable

Studies using gender as a “dichotomous variable” (Donato et al. 2006) – that is superposing sex and gender – analyse discrepancies of income and career progression between men and women. They show the specificity of the experiences and the decreased “chances to succeed” of female highly-skilled migrants compared to their male counterparts. These studies focus on highly-skilled women and explain how the migration experience differs between men and women. The studies analysing the differences between men and women show that international migration tends to have a negative impact on the career of female highly-skilled migrants (Meares 2010, 473), whereas the impact is mostly positive for the men’s careers. Research dealing with the professional integration of highly-skilled female migrants points out the reasons why they encounter more challenges than their male counterparts in finding a job that corresponds to their skills, if they find a job at all.

Adsera and Chiswick (2007) analyse also the difference that gender and skills make in the process of migration. They conduct a systematic analysis of individual earnings based on the 1994–2000 waves of the European Community Household Panel (ECHP). They test gender differences with other explanatory variables such as “marital status, number of children, education, experience, foreign birth” (Adsera and Chiswick 2007, 9) and develop arguments which provide better knowledge of the relationship between gender, highly-skilled migration earnings, countries of origin, and countries of arrival. Their results plead in favour of a better understanding of “intersectionality” (Crenshaw 1989) in highly-skilled migration, too.

Indeed, the women from Latin-America and Eastern Europe are discriminated against two times in terms of income: first because they are women on the move and second because of their countries of origin, both times regardless of their skill level. This discrimination is also related to the difficulty they experience in getting their diplomas recognised.

Research using the “dichotomous variable” of gender uncovers four main factors (Liversage 2009) which lead to enhanced challenges for highly-skilled female migrants; they may even hinder international female highly-skilled migration. First, highly-skilled female migrants mostly have skills that are not as easily transferable as those predominantly held by men. Indeed, according to Cornelius et al. (2001), men possess more often technical, scientific, or managerial skills. Such skills are more in demand and easier to transfer than the skills of women, which tend to be in fields such as medicine and teaching. Second, the predominant type of migration into a new country differs between men and women. Women tend to enter more often as dependents or refugees while male entry routes are more oriented towards “work-migration”, such as inter-company transfers. Because women move more often for non-professional reasons, they face greater challenges in finding a job, such as the lack of working-permit (Liversage 2009, 121). Further causes leading highly-skilled women migrants to encounter more hardship than men are related to causes outside the realm of migration studies. The gendered structure of the family, especially the gendered division of family tasks, is the third cause, while the discrimination women still face in labour markets is the last. These discriminations come from, for instance, the gendered orientation of the “welfare regimes” (Pfau-Effinger 1998). I shall come back to this central point in the next chapter. All in all, quantitative studies using a dichotomous variable of gender show that gender does make a difference when we speak of highly-skilled migration. Gender-neutral research is not sufficient to comprehend the phenomenon fully. And, as Liversage (2009, 122) argues, even studies using a dichotomous conceptualisation of gender do not help us to understand how discrepancies between men and women are produced and reproduced: another perspective is needed.

2.5.3 Gender as a Relational and Situational Feature

The relational conceptualisation of gender suggests that gender is an everyday construct, challenging the idea that it could be natural or biological (Butler 1990). Gender is “produced as a socially organised achievement” (West and Zimmerman 1987, 129). In order to operationalise these theoretical ideas, researchers take up a qualitative perspective to catch

how gender is “done” (West and Zimmerman 1987), “undone” (Butler 2004; Deutsch 2007), and “displayed” (Finch 2007) in the context of highly-skilled migration. This involves linking the “gender binaries” to assess how they “systematically” respond to one another. For this purpose, Kofman and Raghuram (2005) propose that further research on highly-skilled migration should go “beyond the workplace”: “Virtually all the studies on skilled migration have concentrated on the workplace and on career trajectories, leaving aside the incorporation of familial relations and a wider social network” (2005, 151). Going beyond the workplace means analysing the relationships between professional careers and family life. In contrast to studies grounded on a dichotomous conceptualisation, the ones conceptualising a relational and situational perspective are more attentive to the social processes that constitute and reproduce gender. Yet studies using either a relational conceptualisation or a dichotomous one develop largely convergent results, showing that highly-skilled female migrants must face more frequently fearsome challenges, which may lead to painful shifts in their professional careers as well as fundamental identity ruptures.

a. Women and Highly-Skilled Migration

Studies analysing the biographies of highly-skilled migrant women highlight the moments which create or consolidate gendered hierarchies. Liversage (2009) uses the concept of “vital conjunctures” to refer to the options of an individual in a specific realm of structural possibilities during a period of uncertainty, typically “after” migration, thus having implications on the identity someone can claim. A “vital conjuncture” expresses what one can “do” after migration; and how one can protect and project their identity when one is confronted with structural barriers.

Liversage (2009) studies highly-skilled women who arrive in Denmark for non-work reasons and distinguishes the paths that her respondents take to find their way in the new labour market. She shows that the chances for highly-skilled migrant women to find a professional activity in Denmark hinge on the social structure in which they are embedded and the “marketability of their skills” (2009, 135). Some find a job in their field, going through the period of “vital conjuncture” quickly and without “migration de-skilling”. Highly-skilled migrant women who are able to do so, she argues, are mostly the ones with “hard” skills, easily transferable, such as doctors or engineers. Others have to struggle to find a professional activity. These women often find looking for a job in a new country to be difficult. Nevertheless, some manage to attain the highly-skilled sectors. Liversage distinguishes three

trajectories of highly-skilled migrant women able to attain the highly-skilled sector: (1) valorising their skills to find a professional activity with other migrants, (2) studying again, or (3) going back home (2009, 136). Those who do not find a high-skill job may accept an unskilled job, often implying painful identity reconfigurations. The ones who do not find a professional activity at all and the ones experiencing a migration “de-skilling” must find ways to cope with a “vital conjuncture”, which makes the expectations they had when they arrived in Denmark “out of reach”. A reason can be that their diplomas are not recognised. This shows the centrality of professional identity in contemporary societies and reveals that, in the worst-case scenario, its loss can “cast them back onto a gendered identity of being ‘just housewives’ with little life or purpose of their own” (Liversage 2009, 135). Liversage (2009) also describes the paths of highly-skilled migrant women who change of country for non-work reasons. According to her, not only do women move more often than men for non-work reasons, but women also face stronger structural barriers than their male counterparts. For example, men are more likely to possess “hard” transferable skills, making it easier to find a job abroad. In sum, Liversage (2009) shows how the experience of highly-skilled migrant women is specific, thus pointing out the “blind-spots” of the gender-neutral paradigm of highly-skilled migration. A relocation is a key biographical passage, promoting the emergence of gender-based employment inequalities, especially when women follow men – which is, as many studies show, very often the case.

Similarly, Meares (2010) proposes an analysis based on biographical interviews of South African highly-skilled migrant women in New Zealand. She highlights the processes leading professionally successful women in South Africa to leave paid work in New Zealand, which include under- or unemployment or the absence of a working-permit in New Zealand. The transition between the two countries is problematic for many of her interviewees; indeed, it is accompanied in many cases by periods of unemployment, part-time jobs, or retraining. Meares (2010) focuses on the balance between work in the labour force and family life, analysing how it changes for highly-skilled migrant women after an international move. She emphasises two simultaneous movements which push highly-skilled migrant women back to the traditional role of the “supporting spouse”. First, on the professional level, the hard times without a position in the labour force, the loss of money, the migration “de-skilling”, and the subsequent identity shifts diminish a woman’s chances to find a position in the labour force; and second, on the family level, the altered relationships within the family due to the geographical distance and the absence of a network of support increase the time the family

requires in terms of care work. These concurrent processes make the time after migration, Meares argues, a risky biographical moment. Meares's study (2010) shows the "career damages" that her respondents experience. In sum, she explains the processes pushing highly-skilled migrant women towards the domestic sphere, all of which imply a painful identity cost and a total shift in the "vital conjuncture" (Liversage 2009).

Riaño et al. (2015) deal, also, with the specificity of the experience of highly-skilled migrant women, but they focus on the creation and/or the reproduction of gender inequalities. Their study highlights "critical moments" and "critical places" in the migration process by assessing the fissures in the biographies of highly-skilled migrant women. "Critical moments" are the birth of a child and/or the relocation of the family. "Critical places" are places where the "gender culture" (Pfau-Effinger 1998) remains traditional, such as the small town in Switzerland where the respondents of Riaño relocated. The nature of the location to which the highly-skilled migrants relocate does matter, as different places offer various degrees of institutional support. The type of "welfare regime" (Esping-Andersen 1990) – granting different lengths of maternity leave – or the support available for day care characterise a "critical place". Thus, not only does the breakage in the professional career through relocation and parenting contribute to gendered inequalities, but the very place where the family ends up offers various structural barriers. As Riaño et al. put it, "Parenthood is not necessarily the critical moment at which gender inequalities emerge. Migration of women from a country or area with a high level of gender equality to one with a more unequal system can be the turning point in inequality. In such cases, parenthood will only further reinforce inequality between partners" (Riaño et al. 2015, 162). Riaño et al. (2015) explain the processes by which gender inequality sneaks into families over time and through multiple relocations. These results corroborate the work of Aure (2013), who analyses highly-skilled female migrants who enter the labour market in Tromsø, Norway. Aure stresses that "labour market access is profoundly contextual – locally, socially, gender-wise, culturally and geographically" (2013, 282). In short, the complex interlinks between mobility, "critical moments", and "critical places" highlight the multi-faceted nature of gender inequalities. These three studies reveal that mobility involves serious challenges in terms of gender. Based on their results, we can distinguish three social spheres which shape gender inequalities: (1) the labour market, (2) the family-work balance, and (3) the gender culture of the environment. These three simultaneous social processes are the ones which lead to "patterns of downward mobility" (Chang 2014) of highly-skilled female migrants – or as Riaño (2016) puts it, the

hardships of a “marginalised elite” (Cangià [2018] develops similar findings, see p. 34). Theoretically, the scholars in this section explicitly reverse the commonly unquestioned gender assumptions structuring research on highly-skilled migration to explore the impact of international migration on the careers of highly-skilled female migrants. While the odds are definitely not in women’s favour, it is striking to see how the “gender binaries” impregnate the social world.

b. Migration Family Strategies

Researchers propose that another “way out” of the “gender binaries” is to encompass them in a framework which connects the “family-strategies”, the individual professional careers, and the biographies of the members of a family. In the same framework, they put forth a conception encompassing international migration, work in the labour force and care work, developing a concept which is going to be central to my study; namely, the concept of “family-strategies”.

In a study on Polish migrants in London, Ryan et al. (2009) examine the dynamic nature of “family migration strategies” (2009, 63). They define two broad types of “family-strategies”. The first type maintains the unity of the household. The partners and the possible children move to London; thus, they may have less savings because life is more expensive, but they live together in a place where the quality of life is higher. The second type emphasises a split family in which the members of a family decide to live separately: one member goes alone to London and sends money back to Poland. According to Ryan et al. (2009, 65), it is usually the male partner who moves to London and sends back the money he earns to the female partners and the child/ren. In sum, Ryan et al. (2009) distinguish two main models: together or apart. “Family-strategies” do not provide a picture of a family at a given time, and they do not remain frozen in time; on the contrary, they evolve as constraints and opportunities (dis)appear. In brief, Ryan et al. further develop the concept of “family-strategies”, arguing that a family’s financial situation (standard of living) and lifestyle choices (quality of living) need to be accounted for. They underline the dynamic nature of “family-strategies” and they stress that an accurate conception of “family-strategies” needs to encompass not only work in the labour force and savings, but also the unpaid care work and housework.

Kōu et al. (2015) use a biographical approach and emphasise the dynamic nature of the “family-strategies”, too; they focus on the “family-strategies” of highly-skilled Indians in the

Netherlands. The authors incorporate a chronological dimension to the study of “family-strategies”, meaning that the members of a family do not have to move together at the same time, but that they can plan different modes of living together or apart for a time. In addition, they argue that although the “family-strategies” of highly-skilled migrants contain a strong gender component, the female is not passive. In other words, it is not only about sacrifices but also about strategies and opportunities. Even though highly-skilled migrant women are more frequently on the move for nonprofessional reasons like marriage, they can also use this move as an opportunity to get a better position in the labour force or an additional degree; “they do not sacrifice but strategise” (Kōu et al. 2015, 1658). The authors do not reproduce a gendered binary implying a “passive female” and an “active male” in their study. As they speak of highly-skilled women on the move for family reasons – marriage – it would have been easy to conceptualise them as passive, following a non-reflexive categorisation of masculinity and femininity, but they consider other dimensions as well.

Another study reflecting the dynamic and gendered characteristics of “family-strategies” is that of Shinozaki (2014). She focuses on couples of highly-skilled migrants in Germany, contrasting different types of family migration strategies and highlighting the role of gender in those strategies. As in many studies, Shinozaki emphasises that the most common “family-strategies” are highly gendered, involving a “male breadwinner” and a “female supporting spouse”. She points out the necessary support a “female supporting spouse” gives to her husband, whose professional mobility is possible only because she takes care of the family. In this case, when mobility is, for the male, a strategic way to progress in his career, it means for the female stepping back from her own professional career (Shinozaki 2014, 533). While she acknowledges that strategies can change over time and that the spouse does have agency, Shinozaki stresses that the gendered orientation of the family strategies is quite enduring. Indeed, the author introduces another migration “family-strategy” in which the partners shift the priority given to either one or the other professional career. In this case, the partners each make compromises for one another; however, Shinozaki shows that for the care work, the female partners rely on other female kin, like the mother-in-law, rather than the husband: “This way, Mrs. Ono-Roth did not have to directly confront her husband, letting his wish to have their baby taken care of by a (female) family member unchallenged” (2014, 536). In addition, Shinozaki (2014) analyses the case of dual career couple, in which both partners continue to work in their field. She notices particularities in these couples. The partners are specialised in fields which are flexible, and they possess transferable skills; as well, they

carefully plan their careers, which is not the case in the other cases she witnesses. Moreover, they are able to transnationally mobilise their cultural capital through, for instance, professional networks. On the top of that, Shinozaki, emphasises the centrality of dual-career policies within the hiring organisation of one of the partners. Thus, Shinozaki shows that maintaining a dual career couple on the move demands a capital that can be hard to find and substantial institutional support.

In summary, Ryan et al. (2009), Kōu et al. (2015), and Shinozaki (2014) show the dynamic and temporal nature of family migration strategies. They also emphasise factors orienting the “family-strategies” towards a “traditional” organisation of the family for highly-skilled migrants.

c. Gendered Image of Migration Family Strategies

Additionally, scholars analyse the narratives of migrants in the development of “family-strategies” in order to determine the role gender plays in these narratives. Schaer, Dahinden, and Toader (2017) analyse the arrangements of young couples of academics and their partners on the move. They propose three ideal-types, each expressing the entanglement of gender and mobility (2017, 11). The first ideal-type, “from dual-career mobility to a conventional gender configuration”, expresses the long-run impact mobility and gender can have on family organisation. It refers to moments in the biographies which modify the partner’s role over time. Again, the birth of a child is an example of this process. In the long run, the “family-strategy” tends to follow a traditional division of the tasks. The lack of institutional support to do, for instance, the care work, the difficulty of transferring skills, the problem of diploma recognition, and “traditional” dichotomies between a public male and a private female, lead to such situations. Their second ideal-type reflects an unconventional pattern introducing a “female primary mover [and] male tied mover”; thus, it shows an atypical configuration in which the traditional gender roles are inversed. In this case, convincing the male partner to move seems to be linked with his own professional dissatisfaction or his capacity to transfer his skills. While this question has been ignored when it comes to the “trailing-wife” (and, ignored over more than 20 years of research), it is one of the first to be asked when it comes to the male partner. How can *He* give up *His* job for *Her*? Here, we see the strength of a gendered narrative. It underlines the value of paying special attention to gender when analysing highly-skilled migration. The authors develop a third ideal-type which speaks of the “male primary mover [and] female tied mover”. This

type falls back on the traditional construction of masculinity and femininity with a “male breadwinner” and a “female trailing spouse”. The strength of this analysis is to show the ways in which narratives change according to who is the primary mover: “Men can adopt a rather protective – paternalistic – attitude towards their female partners’ following them, whereas women can express concern – and even guilt – about their male partners doing the same” (Schaer, Dahinden, and Toader 2017, 12). These results complement the research done in expatriate studies. Earlier I discussed the study of Käsälä, Mäkelä, and Suutari (2014), which distinguishes three types of career coordination strategies: hierarchical, egalitarian, and loose coordinated. They explain that female primary movers find it more difficult to negotiate with their partners than their male counterparts do. In light of the results of Schaer, Dahinden, and Toader (2017), we can better understand female primary movers feel obliged to offer additional narratives of justification. It seems “natural” for a male primary mover to ask his partner to leave her professional activity; when the roles are inverted, more justifications are needed. This is evidence of a powerful gender narrative surrounding the experience of highly-skilled migration.

Family migration strategies become even more complex when one uses a *flexible* conceptualisation of the family, encompassing both the “local-family” and the “transnational family”. In the chapter 3.2.1, I will develop finer conceptual definition of the family. For the moment, let us say that – until now – I have dealt with “elementary families” composed of adults and children (procreated or adopted) and not with more encompassing concept of the family implying kinship. The above studies already pointed at this, and Wilding and Baldassar (2009) further stress the significant effects of the “transnational family” on “family-strategies”. They underline recurrent cross-border practices of care work within families who span different countries, considering a broader concept of the family not limited to the “elementary family”, as it encompasses close relatives, too. They consider kinship, too. To perform the care work efficiently, the authors show that the partners need both time and money; however, saving time to do the care work means a diminution in paid work: it is a zero-sum game. In addition, the members of a transnational family need to care about the “local family” and the “transnational family”, which means that they face a supplementary challenge as they must care “multi-locally”; indeed, they must find a balance of care between the “local [elementary] family” and the “transnational family [implying kinship]” (Wilding and Baldassar 2009, 183). Similar to Shinozaki (2014), Wilding and Baldassar (2009) emphasize that family strategies demand demand resources that are hard to come by. In sum,

Wilding and Baldassar (2009) are interested in the “work-family integration” (Halpern and Murphy 2005 cited by Wilding and Baldassar 2009, 185) of their respondents and how they develop coping strategies to deal with the need for money and the need for time to care. The authors consider both a masculine and a feminine way to do so. The masculine way to cope tends to increase working hours in the labour force in pursuit of a career in order to have enough money to delegate the care work. Males try to coordinate their professional activity with family visits abroad. In other words, males “use work to care for the family” (Wilding and Baldassar 2009, 183), as they tend to prioritize their career over family responsibilities. Correspondingly, the feminine way of coping is more oriented towards a “reduction of work to be with the family” (Wilding and Baldassar 2009, 180), sometimes for relatively long period of time when it comes to do the care work for an ageing parent back home. In brief, Wilding and Baldassar (2009) introduce different gendered images of “caring”, as well as different perceived responsibilities toward that work. They stress that males and females tell different narratives, influencing both the “work-family integration” and the “family-strategies”.

2.5.4 Intermediary Summary: Overcoming the Polarisation

In section 2.5. I showed how studies focusing on gender and highly-skilled migration overcome the “polarisation of migration”, as these studies have proposed two “ways out”. First, some “criss-cross” the “gender binaries” to assess highly-skilled migrant women. Scholars (e.g., Liversage 2009; Riaño et al. 2015) show how the feminine experience of highly-skilled migration is specific, and contains its own distinct challenges. Thus, they assert why the studies cannot be subsumed under a generic “gender-neutral” approach to highly-skilled migration. Second, other researchers (e.g., Shinozaki 2012; Schaer, Dahinden, and Toader 2016) tackle the “gender binaries” comprehensively, reconciling in a single analysis the interactions between highly-skilled migration and family migration strategies. They show the centrality of gendered narratives expressing and justifying the consequences of family migration strategies.

Having reviewed the most relevant literature on the topic and assessed its strengths and weaknesses, I will, in the next chapter, develop the theoretical framework that I will use to construct my own empirical analysis. This overview of highly-skilled migration and expatriation studies has revealed, above all, the centrality in existing research of “migration binaries” and the “gender binaries”. Scholars struggle against these binaries; some manage

to overcome them while others do no. The theoretical framework is therefore crucial, as the goal is to avoid conceptual “traps” which can lead to bias in the analysis

3 Decentring the Research on Highly-Skilled Migration and Expatriation: Three Methodological Premises

3.1 Decentring and Deconstructing

In the review of the literature, I showed the many studies covering the field of highly-skilled migration and expatriation from the perspective of the migrant, the family, and the couple – compared to the ones of the state and the company. I stressed two sets of unproblematised binaries: the “migration binaries” and the “gender binaries”. In the current chapter, I will work on these binaries to propose a “decentred theoretical framework” which critically conceptualises “highly-skilled migration”. A “decentred theoretical framework” deconstructs the dominant mindset of discourses – which can constitute a more or less coherent field of study such as studies dealing with “highly-skilled migration” – and creates the space for a critical analysis within the same field.

By deconstructing discourses, scholars usually refer to a critical and interpretative analysis revealing their unspoken, naturalised and hegemonic assumptions (Hurlbert 2010). All forms of discourses – on any support – can be deconstructed (e.g. scientific studies, newspaper articles, television shows, movies, and sociological interviews). Post-modernist scholars create tools to deconstruct discourses in order to analyse the processes of power imbedded in them. For Brinksmann and Kvale (2009):

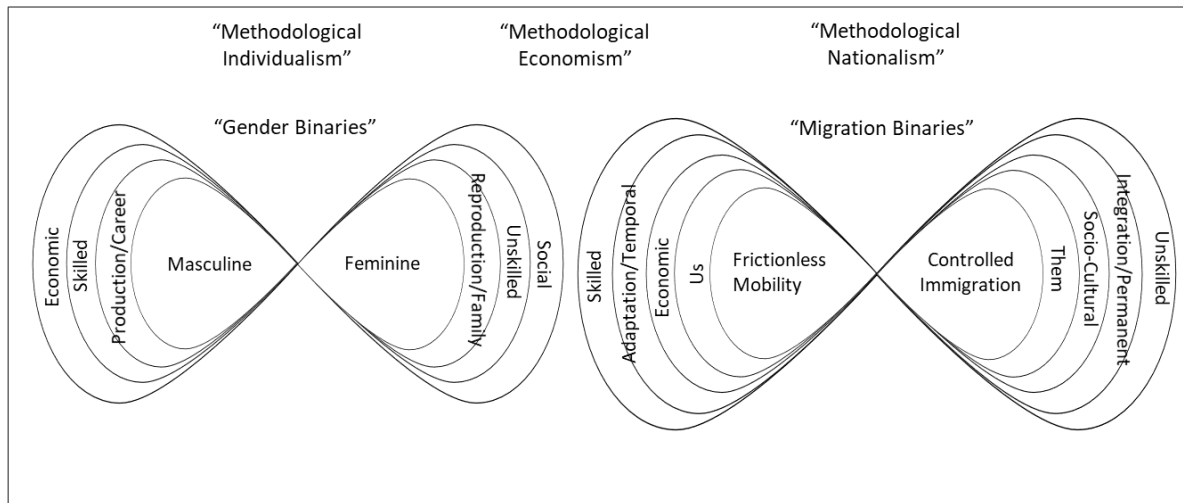
A deconstructive reading tears a text apart; unsettles the concepts it takes for granted; concentrates on the tensions and breaks in a text, on what a text purports to say and what it comes to say, as well as what is not said in the text, on what is excluded by the use of the text’s concepts (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 230).

Using the “migration binaries” and the “gender binaries”, I will show what a non-reflexive use of the term “highly-skilled migrant” takes for granted, what it comes to say and does not say. I will deconstruct the taken for granted assumptions carried by such a non-reflexive usage. It does not mean, however, forgetting the deconstructed concept to produce a new theory. For Derrida (1978), it rather means to see these concepts as tools that one should use *à défaut de mieux*. It is about “conserving all these old concepts within the domain of empirical discovery while here and there denouncing their limits, treating them as tools which can still be used” (1978, 359). Thus, a “decentred theoretical framework” does not only deconstruct a non-reflexive usage of a concept, but also works on it to create a framework aware of the pitfalls implied by such a usage. A “decentred theoretical framework” does not

dismiss the main conceptualisations of former studies, as they would now become irrelevant or false but focuses on the dominant mindsets they reproduce, showing in what these mindsets create biases, to then create an approach able to tackle reflexively the same topic. It implies looking specifically at the blind spots of the dominant mindsets. Metaphorically, it is about moving the source of the light on an object, so its shadow appears and what was left in the shadow comes in the light. In sum, I develop an analytical framework to study highly-skilled migration, by deconstructing the hegemonic discourse it implies.

I do so through 3 arguments: (1) deconstructing three core conceptualisations of highly-skilled migration and expatriation studies and proposing a framework to overcome the biases they involve (which I refer to as “methodological premises”), (2) developing an original “methodological premise”, namely the “methodological economism”, and (3) creating the analytical framework of my study. The three “methodological premises” are (i) the “methodological individualism” (Mises 1999) – which involves a blindness to the social context in which a highly-skilled migrants lives, (ii) the “methodological nationalism” (Amelina and Faist 2012; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 2003) – which corresponds to the systematic superposition national territory, people (*Volk*), and culture, and what I call (iii) the “methodological economism” – which stresses unproblematic and un-politicised mobilities versus problematic and politicised migration. Furthermore, each methodological premise is linked to one of the two binaries spotted earlier i.e. the “migration binaries” and the “gender binaries” (Figure 5). The “methodological individualism” concerns the “gender binaries”, the “methodological nationalism” refers to the “migration binaries” and the “methodological economism” combines a critic of both.

Figure 5: Gender and Migration Binaries



Source: Own Elaboration

3.2 Methodological Individualism

Intense and frequent international relocations influence both the career path and private-life. It is a key feature of many contemporary skilled careers. The incentive to be mobile is increasingly present in skill-demanding professional fields. Yet, highly-skilled migrants also hold other social roles: as wives or husbands, mothers and fathers. Too often, they are understood outside of the social and family context they live in, what I call the “methodological individualism” bias. When they move, highly-skilled migrants are not individuals abstracted from their social milieu: their professional mobility does not have consequences only for them. Their partner will have, for instance, to decide if he or she will accept to resign from a position in the labour force to possibly move, too.

Stemming out of economics, the “methodological individualism” (Mises 1999 [1949]) influences many studies on highly-skilled migration. It tends to obscure the social context surrounding the daily life of highly-skilled migrants. The problem of “methodological individualism” is not about focusing on individuals as “the way to a cognition of collective wholes is through an analysis of the individuals’ actions” (Mises, 1999 [1949], 42). The problem is rather the sole focus on the “masculine side” of the “gender binaries” i.e. the economic, skilled, and productive side, which ignores the conditions making it possible. The “gender binaries” reveal a specific way to categorise what is deemed relevant – the economic activities of men and women – letting unquestioned what is deemed irrelevant – the necessary coordination of the work in the labour force and the care work as well as the coordination between two professional careers when the two partners work in the labour force. I argue that

the binaries evolve in a dialectic way and one cannot be understood without the other. An individual usually performs many activities related to each side of the “gender binaries” several times a day. The distinction is a theoretical view that has been constructed for practical and legal purposes, opposing, for instance, the public and the private life, the economic and the social realm or the productive and the reproductive activity. A sociological approach focuses on what individuals do concretely in their daily lives i.e. they do not only go, for instance, to the office. Thus, I aim at decentring the “methodological individualism” by systematically imbedding the social and family relationship of highly-skilled migrants in my analysis. The division of the care work between the partners is not part of the conceptualisation of many studies focusing on the economic side. In other words, the “masculine economic side” is essentialised and corresponds to the “natural” concern of highly-skilled migration studies. Decentring the analysis means questioning this unquestioned focus; it implies that a study on highly-skilled migration should not only restrict itself on analysing the professional career of one of the partners – his or her productive activity – but rather focusing on the dialectic between the work in the labour force and the care work, as well as the coordination between two professional careers.

Through a decentred analysis of highly-skilled migration, I aim at overcoming the “gender binaries”. It implies revealing the collective social processes while studying what is referred to as part of an individual economic process. Thus, my research answers to the call of opening the “black box” of the family in the context of highly-skilled migration (King 2012a, 23). Yet, I do not address the organisation of the family independently from the professional activity of the partners, which would only recreate the binaries in their opposite form. Thus, I propose a single framework to study the professional and the family life. To explain and develop this framework, it is necessary to present a stronger conceptualisation of the family and the couple: I will briefly do so in the next subchapters.

3.2.1 Defining the Family and the Couple

At the beginning of the introduction, I stressed a distinction between families and couples. There, I underlined the intergenerational nature of a family to distinguish it from a couple. While a couple requires a coordination between, possibly, two professional careers and the care work (the absence of children does not mean the absence of care work); a family adds layer of care work because of the presence of children and the necessity to raise them. At first glance, this distinction seems straightforward; yet it implies shortcuts that do not subsume

the complexity of conceptualising the family in contemporary societies. In the following, I will briefly define families and couples, allowing a distinction between “categories of practices” and “categories of analysis” (Brubaker 2013). Then, I will present the approach that I use to study families and couples in this work, namely “doing family” (Baldassar et al. 2014; Jurczyk, Lange, and Thiessen 2014).

Barry et al. (2000) define a “family” as a “group of people who are akin by consanguinity or by alliance” (2000, 725)¹⁸. In fact, this definition shows that a “family” is more than only an intergenerational link. Déchaux (2010) – in a textbook called *Sociologie de la famille* – argues that this definition has the advantage to encompass the “elementary family” and a larger group called kinship. He defines the “elementary family” as “the residential group composed of adults and their children who were procreated or adopted” (2010, 2)¹⁹. Thus, the “family” subsumes more than the “elementary family”, as it includes the kinship: the “elementary family” and the “family” are two different concepts. In other words, a “family” is a socially organised relationship of trust and responsibility – which implies more than the partners and their children. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) speak of a “a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘family-hood’” (2002, 3). A group of people linked by consanguinity or by alliance, sharing a feeling of collective welfare and trust, as well as a sense of unity and responsibility define the analytical concept of the “family” that I use in this study.

I distinguish further the “elementary family” from the “couple”. In this case, the intergenerational link is the key factor of distinction. The “couple” corresponds to two persons “united by love or marriage” (OED 2018)²⁰ not currently raising children in the same residential unit. Simmel (1950) speaks of a “dyad” to define the “couple”²¹. For him, a “dyad” is the smallest form of “reciprocal action” possible, arguing that “a dyad depends on each of its two elements alone – in its death, though not in its life: for its life, it needs both, but for its death, only one” (Simmel 1950, 124). Working on this argument, a couple is easier to

¹⁸ Ensemble des personnes apparentées par consanguinité et (ou) par affinité (Own Translation).

¹⁹ Le groupe résidentiel composé d’adultes et de leurs enfants engendrés ou adoptés. (Own Translation).

²⁰ Truth to be told, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a couple as “a man and a woman united by love or marriage”. This definition is heteronormative.

²¹ In Simmel’s view, the “couple” is by far not the only expression of a “dyad”, as exchanges, harmony, domination and conflict are all “dyads”. For him, it corresponds to different “forms of reciprocal action” when two people are implied. In fact, a “dyad” is a quantitative aspect of Simmel’s formal sociology. He compared it to the “monad” (the stranger, the “lone wolf”) when one person is involved and the triad (family relationship, concurrence or money). In a “triad”, a third element has the double function to unite and separate.

terminate than an “elementary family”. An “elementary family” is more than a “dyad”, as there is more than two people implied: it involves a bigger coordination, especially in case one of the partners want to terminate the relationship. Of course, in an “elementary family” a separation is still possible but the whole organisation following it is far more complex than when the partners forming a “couple” decide to get separated (because in an “elementary family” the partners still will have to organise the care work for the children). Thus, the presence/absence of children (procreated or adopted) in a residential group is my key to differentiate the concept of “elementary family” to the one of “couple”. The advantage of the concept of “elementary family” is that it is open the complexity and heterogeneity of contemporary family life.

Déchaux (2010) underlines major transformations of the “elementary family” and the “couple” during the last decades. The freedom of choice in terms of sexual orientations befrees many people to choose the affective life they wished for. Though still suffering intense discriminations, the LGBT communities earned many rights during the last decades. Homosexual partnerships, marriages, and adoptions, for instance, became legal in some countries. Furthermore, Giddens underlines that family ties are not naturally given anymore and have to be negotiated (2004, 122). As a result, divorces are more common, children born outside marriages or partners deciding not to marry at all increased, too. In sum, an emancipation process modified the way to live the “family”, the “elementary family”, and the “couple”. For a sociologist, these transformations are empirical facts that have to be analysed.

The “elementary family” does not equal what Parsons calls the “nuclear family” (1955) composed of two (heterosexual) spouses and their children. The larger group of kinship is excluded from this definition, as it is understood as archaic and not adapted to the conditions of modernity. In other words, the members of an “nuclear family” live independently from the kinship (Déchaux 2010, 92). According to this (evolutionary) perspective, the kinship will be, at time, replaced by the welfare state. It is somewhat reminiscent of Durkheim’s distinction between a “mechanic” and an “organic solidarity” (Durkheim 1926). The basic idea is that the “mechanic solidarity” – based on the proximity on individuals living in small community – will be replaced by an impersonal “organic solidarity” ruled by public institutions. The conceptualisation of the “nuclear family” has been largely criticised by sociologists of the family because it hides the social context. Catherine Bonvalet (2003)

shows, for instance, the persistence of the link between adult children and their parents. For her, the kinship still offers concrete support; especially in difficult economic times²². Concretely, the support of the kinship means a “system of exchange of goods, services, and money” in a family (Déchaux 2010, 98). According to this perspective, the adult children are not isolated from the kinship, and they receive support, for instance, from their own parents.

3.2.2 Hidden Economy of Kinship

Déchaux (2010, 99) develops the idea of a “hidden economy of kinship” (ibid) to explore the support between relatives. This support is structured around three elements: care work, access to others, and money transfer.

The “care work” mostly corresponds to house-working, shopping, cleaning or doing the care work for a child. Déchaux argues that these services are mostly exchanged between the female generations, creating an “interchangeability of the females” in the support of an “elementary family” (ibid): mothers, sisters, and daughters. Interestingly, he argues that “many of these services require geographic proximity” (ibid). He underlines that the care work is still predominantly done by women in contemporary families. As we shall see in the empirical part, this has deep consequences on the way the partners prioritise their professional careers. Déchaux stresses the necessity of considering kinship when analysing “elementary families” or “couples”. The second element of the “hidden economy of kinship” is the “access to others” (ibid). One member – usually a parent – mobilises their network to facilitate the access to employment or to find an accommodation for – most often – a child. It is a mobilisation of the parent’s social network for the sake of a kin. Déchaux speaks of the mobilisation of social resources (ibid). The third element refers to the money transfers. This implies not only heritage, but any form of financial transfers (hand to hand, bank transfer, etc.). In this context, transnational studies show the relevance of “remittances” between the members of a family (see, for instance, Abrego 2009). Thus, the “hidden economy of kinship” emphasises that “elementary families” and “couples” are not isolated. In a demographic study which took place in France, Bonvalet shows that half of the respondents of her study lives in the same commune than a parent (2003, 38). She speaks of the local embeddedness of the

²² According to the Observatory of Emancipation almost 80% of the youth under 30 still live with their parents, in Spain, in 2014, retrieved August 3, 2018, from https://europa.eu/youth/es/article/38/23676_en 30.07.2018

family (“*famille-entourage local*”) to express this idea. How does this support take place when an “elementary family” or a “couple” is recurrently mobile for professional reasons?

In sum, these studies re-imbed the “elementary family” or the “couple” in the family. Furthermore, it allows a difference between the ways the respondents speak of what they call family and how I analyse. While the former corresponds to a “category of practice”, the concepts of “family”, “elementary family, and “couple” correspond to “categories of analysis” (Brubaker 2013). As a category of practice, the notion of family is used by the actors in their everyday life “to identify oneself and to identify others” (2013, 2). As a “category of analysis”, these three concepts introduce the “units of analysis” of my work: I deal with the three of them.

3.2.3 Doing Family

Having defined the concepts, I still lack an approach to use them. In the context of highly-skilled migration, the approach emphasising “doing family” (Baldassar et al. 2014; Jurczyk, Lange, and Thiessen 2014) lacks the scholarly attention it deserves. “Doing family” – along with “doing migration” and “doing space” (Lutz and Amelina 2017) – are all socio-constructivist and praxeological concepts. They refer to the seminal work on “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987). By “doing gender”, the authors stress that gender is “a routine, [a] methodical, and recurring accomplishment” (1987, 126). In other words, the way gender is produced and exhibited in daily interactions creates a difference between men and women. The difference is socially constructed and not biological nor naturally given. It is a way of differentiating the attributes of what is accepted to constitute men and women at a given time, in a given historical and geographical context. In this perspective, gender is always situated but “once the differences have been constructed, they are used to reinforce the “essentialness” of gender” (1987, 137). “Doing family” underlines the same socio-constructivist logic emphasising that “couples”, “elementary families”, and “families” are daily-practices. For Jurczyk, Lange, and Thiessen, “doing family” is not only a socio-constructivist concept but also a praxeological one, because it “directs the production and the organisation of personal relationships between generations and, where appropriate, between genders (2014, 9)²³.

²³ [Ein praxeologischer oder praxistheoretischer Blick auf Familie als Doing Family] fokussiert sich (...) auf die Praktiken der Herstellung und Gestaltung persönlicher Beziehungen zwischen Generationen und gegebenenfalls auch Geschlechtern (Own Translation).

“Doing family” focuses on the way an “elementary family” or a “couple” is practically constructed by the partners. The collective decisions-making process orient the actions of the partners, as most of the time they act in a way to maintain the personal relationship. The daily and recurring accomplishment of family goes in hand with the production of a discourse on the family. The partners give meaning to their practices. Thus, the socio-constructivist epistemology emphasises the processes by which a family is meaningfully constituted in a given context. It aims at overcoming a positivist and essentialist approach of the family which would consider the “nuclear family” as a “naturally” given form of organisation in which each gender has naturally his or her own role to play.

Speaking of “doing family”, the children are central actors. Truth to be told, I do not specifically analyse them in the current study. I did not do interviews with children but with the parents. I shall show that the children are a central consideration for the parents while developing “family-strategies” and are at the core of their way of “displaying family”. I focus on the perspective of parents on their children and not on the children’s perspective itself. I had to do choices and restrict myself to topics I (arbitrary) selected. The work of Gaspoz (2013) shows the very meaning of “geographic itinerancy” for teenagers. In that sense, my work answers to hers, as I focus on the parents and she focuses on the children. She analyses the institutional (school, hobbies, church) and interpersonal (friends, family) ruptures that teenagers in “geographical itinerancy” experience and I show the struggle of the parents to find and organise the institutional and social embeddedness of their children.

“Doing family” corresponds to the ways the partners co-create a feeling of collective welfare and unity daily within an “elementary family”. It stresses how the partners do family (1) in practice, (2) in discourse and (3) recurrently. First, “doing family” is a matter of practices. It is about the concrete consequences of the decision to migrate for an “elementary family” or a “couple”, about how the partners recreate the fabric of daily life after a migration. Second, it is about the discourses they develop to present and portray their family, about how they justify their decisions regarding their daily organisation. Third, it is about how the practices and the discourses interact on the long run, as family is usually done over several years if not decades. In other words, it is not a fixed entity, but rather a dynamic between these three facets. Proposing a framework able to catch the dynamics of “doing family” in the context of highly-skilled migration is the crucial endeavour of my work. I propose to analyse the dynamics of “doing family” through three complementary perspectives which correspond to

the socio-constructivist approach I developed earlier: the practice of the move, the narratives to display family and the “family-strategy” that the partners adopt. The three facets cover three broad fields of sociological investigation: practices, discourses and strategies. Each of these perspectives correspond to an empirical chapter as they each provide a specific perspective on “doing family”. At the beginning of each empirical chapter I will propose a methodological clarification to show how I tackle the three facets of “doing family”. Thus, the first element of my “decentred theoretical framework” overcomes the “methodological individualism” by stressing the unquestioned and naturalised assumptions behind the “gender binaries”.

3.3 Methodological Nationalism

The “methodological nationalism” corresponds to another type of biases essentialising, this time, the processes related to the nation states. I will use the same strategy that I used in the previous part by presenting where the problem lies to propose a decentred way to overcome it. The term “methodological nationalism” has already generated a large amount of literature (Amelina et al. 2012; Amelina and Faist 2012; Chernilo 2006; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 2003). In their seminal work, Wimmer and Schiller (2002, 2003) underline three forms of it: the ignorance, the naturalisation and the territorial limitation. The first form overlooks a world structured around nation states, having their own laws, institutions, and constitution. This form ignores the nation states. The second refers to the naturalisation of “nationally bounded societies” implying a positivistic superposition of territory, people, and culture. On a nation state’s territory live culturally similar people: nation states are internally homogeneous and naturally given as the French live in France. The third form implies the limitation of research to the territory of a single nation state. Commissioned research paid by the German government (mostly) deals with Germany²⁴. The nation states are conceptualised as independent boxes which can be studied as such. In sum, when it comes to the “methodological nationalism”, the path between ignorance and essentialisation is narrow as one must acknowledge the relevance of the nation states (being complex entities acting at many levels) without naturalising them.

²⁴ On this topic, the text of Favell (2001) “Integration policy and integration research in Europe: a review and critique” offers an extensive and insightful state of art.

Interestingly, studies dealing with migration often emphasises the country of origin of the migrants. These studies construct their knowledge through an “ethnic” or a “national sampling” (Amelina and Faist 2012). It is much rarely the case when it comes to highly-skilled migration and expatriation studies. While studies on migration tend to naturalise the nation state, studies on highly-skilled migration tend to ignore it. Studies on highly-skilled migration and expatriation tend to refer to the larger frame of globalisation – arguably outside of the reach of the nation states – while studies on migration ultimately focus on the “integration” of migrants in a national community. Thus, in many studies on highly-skilled migration and expatriation, the country of origin of the migrant is not specified. A non-reflexive use of the concept highly-skilled migrant refers to a self-explanatory “us”, the dominant. I interpret these two fields of studies as either focusing on “us” or focusing on “them”, the “global South”. The approach focusing on “us” is not the same as the one focusing on “them”: highlighting the relevance of the “migration binaries” to spot unquestioned assumptions. A large amount of studies focusing on ethnicity speaks about the “others”, as if one would need to understand “them” better in function of their national, religious, or ethnic belonging. Brubaker (2002) calls this “groupism”: studying the Italians assuming a cultural, social, and economic homogeneity between the members of the group created. In fact, studies on “ethnic migration” on the one hand and highly-skilled migration studies on the other develop, in mirror, a seemingly coherent discourse on the stratification of migration opposing an “elite” to “proles” (Amelina 2016). The model of the ethnically neutral highly-skilled migrant reproduces the dichotomy between the Western mobile professionals and the Southern desperate migrants. One could see a way out of this problem by “ethnicising” highly-skilled migration studies; thus, analysing British highly-skilled migrants in Germany, for instance. A seminal study adopting such an approach would be the one of Beaverstock (2005); yet, he does not speak of “migrants” but rather of “British highly-skilled inter-company transferees”. “Ethnicising” highly-skilled migration studies does not overcome the “migration binaries” but rather reverse them, exactly as studying only the family relationship of highly-skilled migrants (instead of focusing on the professional activity) recreates the “gender binaries” in a reversed configuration. In order to overcome this conceptualisation opposing “us/them”, I suggest changing the entry points of the study.

3.3.1 Changing the Entry Points

Overcoming the “methodological nationalism” implies finding ways to still acknowledge complex nation states without naturalising them. Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2010) develop

an approach to do so: I use their approach to develop a suitable framework for my study in the current chapter. In Chapter 5, I will contextualise the two regions investigated in this study and justify the relevance of this choice.

My work deals with migration for professional reasons, meaning that the respondents have, for the most, a professional position in the country of arrival. Thus, they are imbedded in different systems of social security. The region where they hold a professional activity grant them or their partner specific rights (e.g. maternity leaves) and offers specific opportunities (e.g. the availability of international schools) to coordinate the work in the labour force or the care work. These elements create specific realms of possibilities in their way to organise their settling. I will show the case of a French pharmacologist taking a French maternity leave to be able to follow and live with her partner in Italy. This example shows how the embeddedness in a specific welfare state offers various possibilities when it comes to coordinate the care work and the work in the labour force. The region, where the respondents contribute for social security, live or are employed in the labour force, matters. Thus, acknowledging the nation states means being aware of the variation of rights and social insurances in the different countries where the respondents contribute. The typology of “welfare state regimes” (Esping-Andersen 1990, 111) is useful to understand these variations. Esping-Andersen (ibid) proposes a typology to stress various forms of welfare states. The key variable to create the typology is the concept of “de-commodification”. The “de-commodification” refers to “granting alternative means of welfare to that of the market” (1990, 105). The more a regime is de-commodified, the more the individuals outside of the labour force can maintain their standard of living. He differentiates the “liberal regimes”, the “corporatists regimes”, and the “socio-democratic regimes” (ibid), all implying different relationships between the state, the market, and the family. In a nutshell, the “liberal regime” focuses extensively on the market to provide welfare, the “corporatist regime” encourages the traditional family, while the “social democratic” adopts a universalistic stance. Thus, the “welfare regimes” correspond to the configuration of social rights in different nation states.

Refining further the model of Esping-Andersen (1990), Pfau-Effinger develops the concept of “gender culture” (1998) to show that the different “welfare state regimes” have cultural and normative assumptions. She stresses the development of the various forms of “welfare state regimes”, as well as their impact on the participation of women in the labour force. She underlines that the “welfare state regimes” are based on a certain idea of the “normal way”

of “doing family”, i.e. a certain “gender culture”. According to her framework, Switzerland and Germany are “conservative-traditionalist welfare regimes [in which] (...) a gender policy based on the male breadwinner/female carer family, [is] (...) least favourable for the labour market integration of women [compared to Scandinavian countries]” (1998, 162). When arriving in Switzerland or Germany, the respondents are confronted to these regimes. The models of Esping-Andersen (1990) and Pfau-Effinger (1998) capture the structure of the “welfare state regimes” and explain institutional elements favouring or hindering the participation of women in the labour force. Yet, they both understand the nation states as homogeneous units. In this sense, these authors are still trapped in the “methodological nationalism”. Other authors underline that the “gender culture” and the structure of the “welfare state regimes” differ at the subnational level (Bühler and Meier Kruker 2002; Riaño et al. 2015). The “gender culture” can change if one moves, for instance, from a metropolitan area to the countryside, from one *Bundesland* or *Canton* to another or from one linguistic region to another (in Switzerland). Thus, the very region where the respondents live do matter, not only the country. In this context, Riaño et al. (2015) spot the different elements which constitute a “critical place”, that is a place in which it is especially difficult for the female partner to maintain a professional occupation after a relocation. These elements are “[the] geographical location, [the] availability of childcare facilities, (...) [the] spatial mobility infrastructure, [the] labour markets, and [the] gender culture” (Riaño et al. 2015, 157). All these elements play a role when it comes to explain the choice of the partners regarding the division of the tasks between the work in the labour force and the care work. The “critical places” allow a conceptualisation of the national and the subnational variations of the “welfare state regimes”, the “gender cultures”, and the support available to highly-skilled migrants when they settle in a new location. This support does not have to be given by the state; I will show that many highly-skilled migrants mobilise privatised support such as international schools, private childcare facilities, au-pairs, or nannies. Each regions has specific constraints and opportunities, as they are imbedded in specific “welfare state regimes”.

Thus, the focus on regions rather on nation states acknowledges the inner heterogeneity of nation states without ignoring their policies. Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2010) develop an theoretical framework “using the city as an entry point”; it comports the advantage of overcoming the “ethnic lenses” (Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006) as the inquiry does not start by focusing, for instance, on the Turks in Germany but rather on the Frankfurt Rhine-

Main region. The focus is not on such or such ethnic or national group, but rather on the processes happening in a city. Salzbrunn (2010) develops a similar argument, i.e. to start with the cities. In her view:

Focusing on localities rather than on specific groups based on national, ethnic, or religious criteria allowed us to go beyond methodological nationalism and to follow the actor's social practices, which extend beyond national frameworks (Salzbrunn 2010, 189).

She proposes to focus on more than a single city (in her case New York and Paris) to assess the way migrants adapt their strategies according to the resources available in specific localities. Having a bi-local fieldwork creates contrasts in the analysis which allows the researcher to assess the context in which the migrants live. I use a similar approach, though unlike Salzbrunn in her study, I do not develop a comparative research design. My goal is not to compare the two localities but rather to change the region where the research is conducted to reveal the differences between them while studying “doing family” on the move. In this way, it is possible to take seriously the critic warning against a “methodological nationalist” bias, by acknowledging the nation states without naturalising them i.e. to assess the impact of policies (may they be coming from the national level or the local level) and institutions on the daily life of the respondents. This is crucial in my conceptualisation as the agency of the actors are oriented by these elements. Different cities, different “critical places”, different regions offer different opportunities and constraints. Thus, doing the fieldwork in two regions allow me to contextualise and decentre the interviews, seeing the differences as well as the similarities in the daily-life of the respondents, implying a study aware the role of the state in migration processes.

3.4 Methodological Economism

I develop the term of “methodological economism” to complement the “methodological individualism” and the “methodological nationalism”. In a nutshell, I proposed, so far, to study how highly-skilled migrants are “doing family” in two locations to decentre the “methodological individualism” and the “methodological nationalism”. The “methodological economism” aims at decentring the concept of highly-skilled migrant. To do so, I stress an unquestioned assumption implying that highly-skilled migrants perform temporary moves by choice whereas lesser-skilled migrants are forced to move permanently. The consequence of this is that highly-skilled migrants need to adapt for a time in a new location while lesser-skilled migrants need to integrate for good. These are assumptions that I did not witness

during my fieldwork. Thus, my aim is to decentre the concept of highly-skilled migrant by “problematizing mobility”. I interpret this argument as a corollary to “depoliticising migration” (Moret 2018; Wieczorek 2018) or as Dahinden puts it “de-migranticising migration” (Dahinden 2016).

3.4.1 Mobility and Migration

The “methodological economism” corresponds to Favell’s critic (2014) opposing “frictionless mobilities” to a “controlled migration”. The problem with this conceptualisation is not only that it implies – once again – an opposition between “us” and “them”, but that it stresses that mobility is frictionless. The superposition of the different binaries contributes to create a worldview in which migration and mobility refer to allegedly different phenomena:

Among those moving across the borders of territorial ‘container’ states, there are the immigrants (e.g. refugees and the economically desperate), who are moved by forces beyond their control; and then there the others, most generally thought of as ‘international travellers’ (e.g. tourists, businessmen, expats, exchange students, retirees) who move by choice alone (Favell 2014, 135).

Favell shows a categorisation cutting the world into two: it refers to the “migration binaries”. Favell argues that such a conceptualisation does not reflect the challenges that highly-skilled migrants may face in their daily-life. He points at the lack of empirical studies reflexively dealing with highly-skilled migration, underlining that “it is not frictionless mobility but rather differently tracked mobility with its own costs and constraints” (Favell 2014, 136). Highly-skilled migration studies should not presuppose an absence of constraints but should rather question their possible existence as well as the way to track them. I will argue that the costs and constraints arise, for instance, when the coordination between the care work and the work in the labour is considered.

Questioning “migration” and “mobility” opens the topic of the nomenclature that I use in the current study. In this study, I decided to use the term “highly-skilled migrant” and not “highly-skilled mobile professional” or “expatriate”. Using the term of migrant is part of the objective to decentre the analysis. By underlining that the respondents of this study are migrants, I situate them in the field of migration studies. At the same time placing them in the field of migration studies questions the whole field. Green (2008) develops this point while discussing the “migration of the elites”:

Thinking about the “migration of the elites” inserts this topic in the field of the history of migration, while placing it at the margin of the field: margin that challenges the field itself. Performing greater mobility, business people are an extreme on the scale of migratory movements. Too rich, they would be at the economic margins of the field compared to its initial definition. The well-to-do migrants would be on the side-lines of a culturalist definition of the immigrant, too; they are often too close to the natives or, in any case, thanks to their social proximity, not seen as problematic. All these criteria refer to the implicit delimitations of the field of migration studies that have given rise to a rich literature devoted to the migration of workers (Green 2008, 112)²⁵.

Green (2008) decentres the history of migration by inserting the “migration of the elite” in the framework of migration – *too rich they would be at the economic margins of the field compared to its initial definition*. She points at the many unquestioned assumptions that I present in the theoretical framework, concerning, for instance, the “methodological nationalism” bias – *they are often too close to the natives or, in any case, (...) not seen as problematic*. An un-reflexive categorisation would be blind to the overlap between social class, gender, and ethnicity. Thus, using the term of highly-skilled migrant is a deliberate choice, as it reinserts these movers in the discussion on migration. Decentring the framework is precisely about that: revealing the essentialised hierarchies of power i.e. moving the light to see the shadow of a concept. The term “highly-skilled mobile professional” does not insert the respondents in this debate; the light is metaphorically at its zenith and no shadow can be seen. It places the movers on the “frictionless side” of the binaries, coherently aligning the race, the gender, and the class. Acknowledging this assumption leads to overlook the possible constraints that their (multiple) relocations imply; it creates a frictionless mobility.

3.4.2 Temporal Mobilities and Permanent Migration

Another binary composing the “methodological economism” opposes “temporal mobilities” to “permanent migration”. I will use this binary to explain the reasons why I use the term of highly-skilled migrant rather than the one of expatriate in this study. Wiczorek (2018) argues that migration studies often lack to see mobility after migration. She develops three patterns of (im)mobility to analyse the various constellations of (im)mobility after initial migration. In

²⁵ Penser une « migration des élites » insère cette histoire dans le champ de l’histoire des migrations tout en se plaçant à ses marges, marges qui interpellent le champ lui-même. Pratiquant une mobilité accrue, les gens d’affaires représentent un extrême sur l’échelle des mouvements migratoires. Trop riches, ils se situeraient également aux marges économiques du champ par rapport à la définition initiale. Les migrants aisés seraient également en marge d’une définition culturaliste de l’immigré puisque souvent trop proches des autochtones ou, en tout cas, grâce à leur proximité sociale, non perçus comme problématiques. Tous ces critères nous renvoient aux délimitations implicites du champ des études migratoires qui ont fait fleurir une riche littérature consacrée à l’immigration ouvrière (Own Translation).

her view, the “classic theories of migration” (e.g. assimilation and multiculturalism) assumes that migration is mostly immobile as the migrants are not thought to move again after their initial migration. Thus, drawing on “transnational studies” and on “mobilities studies”, she develops other empirical patterns in which further mobilities (after migration) are investigated. Doing so, she underlines the diverse and complex mobilities of Polish migrants after their initial migration. Most of the studies on expatriation focus on a succession of short-term assignments and/or ultimately the repatriation. There is however a third possibility which is to stay on the long-run in the new country of residence, what Wieczorek calls the “pattern of immobility” (2018, 101). Doing my empirical work, I met people who arrived in Switzerland or Germany as expatriates – having a position in the labour force before arriving in the country most often in a multinational corporation – several decades ago. Since then, they managed to stay on the long run either by convincing the employer not to relocate them anymore or by changing of employer. In their case, the boarder between expatriation and migration is blurred. I already mentioned this point in my state of the art, but I believe this point is central. Thus, the concept of expatriation falls short when the focus is on the biographical dynamics: some people decide to stay. The consequence of that is a difficulty to conceptualise the expatriate’s inclusion in the “immigrant policies” (Hammar 1985) as well as their actions to have access to resources and privileges offered, for instance, by a specific citizenship. Another difficulty is to overcome a conceptualisation of the expatriates as part of a “self-segregating” group (Fetcher 2007) having no interest in the local population and not learning the local language. I do not say that “self-segregating communities of expatriates” do not exist as I witnessed some during my fieldwork. Rather, my point is to underline that these assumptions, related to the term expatriate, may blind the researcher to processes such as the people saying they are expatriates but living in Germany for 25 years. In other words, the “category of practice” may be expatriate but my “category of analysis” is “highly-skilled migrant”. This choice is motivated by the explicit ambition to propose a “decentred theoretical framework” allowing the conceptualisation of liminal cases which do not really fit with the classic definition of expatriation but can still enhance the knowledge on the complexity of contemporary human migration.

3.4.3 Defining and Problematising the Skills

Choosing the term “highly-skilled migrant” also implies decentring the notion of “high-skill”. The term underlines the educational achievement of the respondents and/or the level of skills required to occupy a position (OECD). Ryan and Mulholland (2014) stresses that:

The term ‘highly skilled’ covers a diverse group, but the OECD and European Commission/Eurostat framework defines it as encompassing those who have either successfully completed a tertiary education and/or are employed in occupational roles normally requiring such qualifications (2014, 6).

Therefore, I deal with “highly-skilled migrants”, a heterogeneous group which is constituted neither through the race, nor the ethnicity, nor the country or the culture of origin but through the educational attainment and/or the position held in the labour force. Though straightforward, this definition is problematic because it refers to the binary opposing “high/low skill migration”. This binary needs to be decentred, as the notion of skill is often used as a proxy to refer to some other forms of binaries. The higher skills are often linked, for instance, to the economic and productive side of the binaries; they create a “distinction” (Bourdieu 2012) between individuals – not only migrants. Higher skills are a central assumption to judge the quality (not to say the value) of an individual in a society in which the labour market is a central institution (Bommes and Kolb 2006; Polanyi 2001). Yet, many studies show the miss-match between the high educational attainments of a person and a well-off position in the labour force. Riaño (2012) stresses that:

The presupposition by the human capital theory that educational attainment is rewarded with professional status does not apply to the case of migrant skilled women, especially when they originate from countries outside the EU (2012, 16).

Through an intersectional approach, she shows that the educational attainment alone is not enough to presuppose the position of an individual in labour market. Doing so, she “problematizes” highly-skilled migration. She shows that a simplistic definition of the skills hides inequalities in terms of gender and countries of origin, referring accordingly to the “gender binaries” and the “migration binaries”.

Concerning the “gender binaries”, Kofman and Raghuram (2005) argue that:

the model of the rational and work-oriented male reproduces the dichotomy between economic man and social and cultural woman. (...) It supposes skilled migrants to always be men and women migrants to usually be less skilled (2005, 151).

They call for more studies on gender and highly-skilled migration precisely to deconstruct this assumption. They underline that studies adopting a gender-neutral perspective reproduce a hierarchy and a worldview: the one of the dominant. The notion of skill contributes to the objectivation of a relationship of power, as usually a higher skill corresponds to a higher income and a higher social status. Women still faces a “gender wage gap” (Blau and Kahn

2017); they earn less than their male counterparts with equal qualifications. On the top of that and in a migratory context, they also are discredited in the negotiations with the male partner concerning a possible further professional migration as he already earns more: I shall show this in the empirical part. It follows that they have more chances to resign in order to follow the male partner, being the ones facing the difficult task of finding a position in the labour force after migration – thus not having a secured position in the country of arrival. Not having a secured job in the country of arrival is in turn a further risk of “brain waste and job-education mismatch”, especially in the case of first generation migrants (Pecoraro 2013, 10). In other words, many of the male respondents have a position in the labour force before moving, securing a relatively high income and a recognition of their skills while a lot of the female respondents, though they also have a tertiary education, struggle to find a position in the labour force corresponding to their skills and/or do not see their diplomas recognised. Though both are skilled, their lived experience of migration differs substantially. Sandoz (2018) develops the concept of “migration channel” to express the differences in these experiences of migration. She underlines different “channels of migration”, that is different ways of entering and subsequently settling in a new country. Thus, she defines the “channels of migration” as:

Mobility pathways structured by different actors (states, profit-oriented actors, third-sector actors, and individual social ties) that create specific opportunities and constraints for migrants (2018, 3).

Based on this definition, she distinguishes four “channels of migration”, each implying specific opportunities and challenges after migration: the “family-oriented channel” the “company-oriented channel”, the “study-oriented channel”, and the “protection-oriented channel”. These four channels encompass the various ways someone otherwise categorised as “highly-skilled migrant” can enter a country. They stress different lived experience for the migrants. In my study, I deal with migrants entering either through a “family-oriented channel” or a “company-oriented channel”. Very often, the female partner enters through a “family-oriented channel” while the male partner, already having a position in the labour force, enters through a “company-oriented channel”. Thus, an unproblematised definition of the skills can lead to an essentialisation of the “gender binary” as Kofman and Raghuram (2006) show and by decentring the “high/low skill binaries”, using the works of Riaño (2012) and Sandoz (2018), I conceptualise further “highly-skilled migration” showing that the term

hides complex interactions between skills, work in the labour force, “migration channel”, “doing family”, and gender.

Concerning the “migration binaries” and according to the Database on Immigrants in the OECD (DIOC), the share of tertiary-educated represents a non-negligible share of foreign-born individuals in Germany (14,9%) and Switzerland (23,7%). For the OECD, “population with tertiary education is defined as those having completed the highest level of education” (OECD)²⁶. However, there is no real overlapping between the region of origin and the educational attainment. In other words, superposing “high/low skill migration” and “us/them” is a view of mind. Table 2 shows that while women are nearly systematically discriminated against – having more often primary or secondary educational attainment, the share of highly-skilled foreign-born evolves in a complex dynamic that a binary “us/them” can difficulty subsume. There are still strong regional differences, too. 43.8% of North American and 38.4% of Asian who moved in other OECD areas have a tertiary education, while it is only 14% for Latin America.

Table 2: Educational Attainment of the Foreign-Born Population in the OECD Area, by Region of Origin and Gender (percentage of the 15+ population)

Region of birth	Men				Women				Total			
	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)	Tertiary (%)	Total (000)	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)	Tertiary (%)	Total (%)	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)	Tertiary (%)	Total (000)
North Africa	52.9	27.1	20.0	1 993	58.0	25.8	16.2	1 643	55.2	26.5	18.3	3 636
Sub-Saharan Africa	31.1	31.9	37.0	1 509	36.4	33.7	29.9	1 432	33.7	32.8	33.6	2 941
Asia	27.0	32.1	41.0	7 770	31.8	32.3	35.9	8 381	29.5	32.2	38.4	16 151
Latin America	56.1	31.2	12.7	9 648	51.5	33.2	15.2	9 394	53.8	32.2	14.0	19 042
Oceania	27.3	43.7	29.0	541	30.1	39.8	30.1	570	28.8	41.7	29.5	1 111
North America	18.9	35.0	46.1	875	20.0	38.2	41.8	1 040	19.5	36.7	43.8	1 916
Europe EU15	37.4	35.8	26.8	7 252	42.0	34.5	23.5	8 114	39.8	35.1	25.0	15 366
Europe EUA10	28.1	47.7	24.2	1 684	36.3	43.5	20.2	2 068	32.6	45.4	22.0	3 752
Other Europe	45.3	37.1	17.6	4 805	51.4	31.9	16.7	5 103	48.4	34.4	17.2	9 908
OECD	45.5	33.2	21.3	16 521	45.9	33.4	20.7	17 221	45.7	33.3	21.0	33 742

Source: OECD (2008, 88)

The “methodological economism” corresponds to a third type of bias which opposes a skilled, frictionless, and temporal mobility to an unskilled, controlled, and permanent migration. These assumptions have important implications on the ways to conceptualise studies, as a temporal mobility requires adaptation and permanent migration implies “integration”. Thus,

²⁶ Definition available on the website of the OECD, retrieved April 13, 2018, from <https://data.oecd.org/eduatt/population-with-tertiary-education.htm#indicator-chart>

the “methodological economism” contributes to conceptualise further a framework aiming at not (re)producing hegemonic assumptions.

Each “methodological premise” stresses a way to avoid specific biases in the research. The “methodological individualism” is a tool to deconstruct gender-neutral studies looking exclusively at the professional inclusions of male mobile professionals extracted from their social context. It stresses the necessity to take into consideration the family-life and the professional-life concurrently. The “methodological nationalism” is a tool to acknowledge the role of the nation-states and their regional influences without naturalising them, by underlining the necessity to have more than one “entry point”. The “methodological economism” is a tool to “problematise” highly-skilled migration by stressing that not all highly-skilled migrants are temporary on the move for professional reasons and that it is not a “frictionless mobility”; it is a tool to “problematise” highly-skilled migration. Yet, the “methodological individualism” is the structuring concept of the study; I use it to divide the empirical analysis into three chapters and I refer to it to ask the research questions.

3.5 Research Questions

Table 3 (below) summarises the research questions. The first row of the table stresses the “main research question”, while the three next rows all deal with thematic research questions. Thus, I propose a “main research question” that I subdivide to explore the different facets of “doing family” on the move. Each subset of research question corresponds to an empirical chapter and for each subset of research questions (i.e. each row of the table), I propose a “key concept” and a “conceptualised research question”. The three “key concepts” aim at developing a comprehensive framework to analyse “doing family”. Thus, the middle column introduces each of these concepts; namely the practices, the narratives, and the strategies. I rework the “general questions” on the light of the “key concepts” to propose “conceptualised questions”. These “conceptualised questions” are the ones I answer through the three empirical chapters. The brief answers to the “conceptualised questions” are presented in chapter 9. The “conceptualised questions” are reformulated research questions considering the main concepts that I use to develop the analysis. The second row focuses on the micro-level of the daily practices after a relocation (Chapter 6). The third row addresses the narratives of the respondents while portray or display their family (Chapter 7). The fourth tackles the strategies of the respondents on the long run (Chapter 8). In fact, each empirical chapter focuses one of these facets as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Research Questions

	General Questions	Key Concepts	Conceptualised Questions
Main Research Question	How do highly-skilled migrants and their families cope with professional careers on the one hand and family life on the other?	<i>Doing Family</i> P+N+S	How does “doing family” happen under the constraints and opportunities of frequent professional moves?
Research Questions for Chapter 6: Professional Careers Coordination	How does the partners coordinate their professional careers when at least one moves for professional reasons? What are the individual consequences for their professional careers?	<i>Work in the labour force integration</i> Practices	How do couples “integrate” two positions in the labour force when one has to move abroad for professional reasons? Is the “secondary-mover” facing specific challenges regarding their professional career? If yes, what are these challenges about?
Research Questions for Chapter 7: Representing Migration: Between Motilities and Anchors	What narratives do the partners develop when they are asked to portray their family? How do they talk about the division between the care work and the work in the labour force?	<i>Displaying Family</i> Narratives	What kind of “meaning patterns” do the interviewees produce when they “display family”? Does “displaying family” guide them while taking decisions on their “care work integration”? If yes, how do they orient their actions while taking these decisions?
Research Questions for Chapter 8: Family-Strategies of Highly-Skilled Migrants	Which strategies do the partners develop while settling in a new local space? How can they be conceptualised? Is the specific local space where the family settle important? If yet, in which respect?	<i>Family Strategies</i> Strategies	How can the “family-strategies” be conceptualised to study “gendered hierarchies” within families? What kind of model can I construct on them? What is the relationship between the “family-strategies” and the region where the respondents settle?

Source: Own Elaboration

Methodological Part

4 Research Design

I concluded the theoretical section with the research questions (Table 3, 76). I will now focus on the methodological approach – corresponding to the research design (Chapter 4) and the context of the study (Chapter 5). The research design stresses how I tackle the research questions (the methods: my tools in this study) (Subchapter 4.2) and the justifications for using the methods I chose (the epistemology: the philosophical argument supporting the scientific validity of the methods chosen to construct knowledge) (Subchapter 4.1). Moreover, the present research is qualitative. Thus, I show that contextualising the conditions of production of the study is a necessity, because qualitative interviews are by essence heavily dependent on the context. Therefore, the methodological part bridges the theoretical and the empirical parts, by explaining the epistemology, showing the methods, and contextualising the conditions of production of the study.

4.1 Epistemology

I use the qualitative methods of social science research (Beaud and Weber 2003; Becker 2008; Flick 2009; Lamnek 1993; Van Campenhoudt and Quivy 2011; Witzel 2000) and take inspiration on the “grounded theory”, based on the ideas of Corbin and Strauss (2008). The epistemological reflection behind these methods is that a qualitative research design implies interpretative research findings:

Unlike quantitative studies, where researchers claim to hold the objective perspective of the “disinterested scientist”, qualitative researchers work from a tradition which recognizes that all research findings are interpretative and that the researchers are engaged participants. (Walsh 2003, 72)

For most of qualitative studies, the researcher creates his or her own empirical material in the field that he or she defines relevant. A qualitative study is not a “laboratory work” in which the researcher controls all the factors influencing the study; or, if there is a laboratory, then the world itself is the laboratory. Thus, the epistemological foundations and the scientific validity of qualitative research lies in other philosophical traditions than the (neo-)positivistic one of (many) quantitative studies as well as most of the natural sciences. The principle of replicability is not attainable, as it is impossible to recreate the same study under the exact same conditions. In a sense, these conditions are gone forever, and no one will ever be able to replicate the context of Frankfurt am Main, for instance, during the warm spring of 2017 when I did the interview. Though, the possibility to conduct another study on the same topic

exists, the interviews and the whole process of conducting it are going to be different. In fact, only the title may be similar. The experiment cannot be replicated.

Qualitative researchers do not work with “pure materials” (Becker 2008, 152). Geologists can measure, for instance, granite at different places, in different time, and will allegedly always find the same characteristics. Qualitative research does not work like this, as it relies on heavily contextually and relationally dependent material. In this context, Maxwell (1992, 279) quoting Bosk (1979) highlights the central question that researchers in qualitative science need to answer: “All field work done by a single field-worker invites the question, Why should we believe it?” (1979, 193) A qualitative answer to this epistemological question is that the more the reader understands precisely how, where, when, and by who the study was conducted, the more the quality of the empirical material increases. In the absence of the possibility to replicate the study, the scientific validity is constructed around the capacity of the researcher to explain as precisely as possible how the research was conducted and constructed.

The central idea is that the qualitative empirical material is contextual and relational. Metaphorically, there is no such thing as a “data tree” that the qualitative researcher finds in the “wilderness of the social world” to then collect the “authentic and unaltered fruits of knowledge”. It means that the conditions of production of the empirical material is always relational because “whatever the configuration of the study, the researcher is, in practice, never absent” (Papinot 2014, 237)²⁷. Thus, there is no data *per se*, as they are always produced in a relational context. Papinot (2014) quotes Bourdieu reminding us that “real is relational” (Bourdieu 1994, 18 quoted by Papinot 2014, 238). The empirical material is nothing more than the result of the meetings between the respondents and the researcher in the context of a sociological interview. Yet, this encounter is by no means neutral: therefore, the reflexivity is so important. A reflexive approach stresses the necessity to objectify (“objectivation” in French) how I create the empirical material. The goal is to overcome the naivety of the positivistic “tree of knowledge” and – simultaneously – the pitfalls of a relativist approach in which no general knowledge is possible, as everything is unique and contextual. Though the situation of the interview is unique, it remains, nevertheless, a social interaction, in which the actors mobilise “schemes of meaning” or “habitus” (Bourdieu 2012)

²⁷ Quelles que soient les configurations de l'enquête, l'enquêteur en pratique n'est jamais absent (Own Translation).

or “dispositions” (Lahire 2006) which are present before the interview. Language is an example of what pre-exists an interview. From this perspective, the question to know if the respondents are telling the “truth”, i.e. to know if the data collected by the researcher are “pure” and “unaltered”, becomes less important than understanding why the respondents develop this precise discourse in the situation of this precise interview. From a reflexive perspective, the empirical material is not “self-sufficient” and needs to be interpreted and contextualised further in order to anchor its scientific value. What is at stake during this interview? Why do the respondents depict themselves or the family the way they did? What kind of power game did the researcher create by soliciting the interview? These are questions at the core of a study reflexive on its own conditions of production.

This imperative of reflexivity is central to the philosophies of qualitative research. Brinkmann (2017) – author of *Philosophies of Qualitative Research* – differentiates several epistemological “traditions” in qualitative research. These “traditions” tackle slightly differently the question of reflexivity and subsequently the way of grounding and justifying a scientific knowledge through a qualitative material. My study mobilises a mix of two of them: the American tradition known as “pragmatism”²⁸ (Becker 2008; Dewey 1957; Goffman 1990; Rorty 1982; Thomas 1928) and the French one known as “post-modernism” (Derrida 1978; Lyotard 1979). Brinkmann (2017) summarises the American tradition through the following idea:

Making the hidden dubious implies a critique of the very idea that there are hidden dimensions of meaning behind our common superficial experiences and practices (2017, 19).

The major part of my empirical analysis is grounded on this idea. “Doing family” is ultimately a process that I can grasp through three concepts: the practices, the narratives, and the strategies. According to this tradition, (social) sciences do not reveal the “far side of the moon”, but rather show the practices, the narratives, the representations, and the strategies of the actors – furthermore, doing so is a practice, too. For Dewey, a leading pragmatist figure, “the so-called separation of theory and practice means in fact the separation of two kinds of practice, one taking place in the outdoor world, the other in the study” (Dewey 1957, 69). The next subsection of the present chapter will describe how I conducted the study (4.2

²⁸ For Brinkman, these distinctions are just analytical ones to order various epistemological traditions. It does not mean that the “French” use only the so-called “French” set of theories while the “American” the “American” one. They are just label based on the place where this tradition was originally developed.

Methods in Practice, 83). It allows the reader to understand how I practically (and pragmatically one could add) created the study. It is a first step to contextualise the conditions of production of the study: a necessary but insufficient one. Indeed, to understand the conditions of production of the study comprehensively, the reader needs to know more about who crafted this study (5.1 Contextualising the Researcher , 97) and the reason why the study takes place in specific regions and not others (5.2 Contextualising the Lake Geneva Region and Frankfurt Rhine-Main Region, 100). The scientific justification of a study such as this one is not only grounded in the contextualisation of the conditions of production of the analysis; but also, in the contextualisation of the study itself. In this context, the researcher cannot be overlooked and should not be hidden, as he or she is a central actor of the process. The second telling example of Brinkman (2017) summarises the French tradition, “post-modernism”, a tradition extremely sceptical when it comes to understand the social scientist as a neutral producer of scientific knowledge on “society”:

Making the obvious dubious implies an attempt to question what we take for granted to show that our meanings and understandings are unstable and endlessly ambiguous (2017, 19).

These ideas guide the state of the art (2 Moving with Skills: A Review of the Literature, 13) and the theoretical framework (3 Decentring the Research on Highly-Skilled Migration and Expatriation: Three Methodological Premises, 55) through the “migration binaries” and the “gender binaries”. In these parts, I deconstruct and decentre the meanings and understandings of previous studies to reveal some of their non-reflexive arguments. Deconstructing and decentring other studies is one thing; doing the same in the process of the current study is another. In other words, decentring other studies does not protect my research from (re)producing non-reflexive assumptions and arguments. One method to control— as much as possible – the knowledge taken for granted is a recurrent toing and froing between the construction of the empirical material and its assessment. Thus, I use a “circular” model rather than a “linear” hypothetico-deductive model. The “circular” model relies on “feedback loops” (Van Campenhoudt and Quivy 2011, 209) between the empirical and the theoretical work to create knowledge which considers what the respondents have to say in the construction of the research. As a learning being, the researcher develops and sharpens his or her own understanding of the topic during the research. Not only the theoretical work influences the understanding of the topic; but, during the fieldwork, the respondents give their perspective, underlining the challenges and the questions that are relevant to them. The respondents point at topics that the researcher could overlook, leading the latter to reorient

the study. Thus, the research design is open and flexible. Ultimately, it grounds the research in the discourses and the practices of the respondents, who are understood as the experts of their own life. The sociologist does not know more than any of the respondents but knows what they all say, the collection of all discourses (Becker 2008, 123). Subsequently, he or she provides a respectful, yet critical, account of the respondents' discourses and practices. Practically, it means to rework the core conceptualisation of the study based on the empirical material produced to analysis it. In sum, I develop a qualitative, empirical, reflexive, and circular study.

4.2 Methods in Practice

I repeat: the epistemology is the underlying philosophical argument justifying the scientific value of the methods. The methods are the tools to produce the empirical insights. As such, it is very difficult to present methods *in abstracto*, as they are, following a pragmatic standpoint, literally the practice of the research. Thus, the present subchapter (4.2) focuses on the methods in practice.

4.2.1 Accessing the Field

I will use the time of the beginning of my fieldwork and the first refusals to have access to the field as a practical example to refer to the circularity of the research process. Starting this study, I wanted to analyse the “internationalisation processes of four multinational companies”, focusing on the “role” of expatriates and human resources in the aggro-food business. In January 2014, I begun to look for potential respondents. I sent requests to the companies and their employees for interviews: at first, I received no answer. When I received a response, it was a categorical “no go”. The public relations of the companies redirected me to the companies' website. The potential respondents systematically refused the interview, telling me that the information I was asking for was too sensitive. Besides, I needed to have the agreement of the public relation teams of the companies, they told me, which, of course, I did not have. In brief, I could not access the field. Darmon (2005) stresses how the “refusals of fieldwork” (“refus de terrain” in French) and the “struggles to access the field” are valuable empirical material. Darmon's main point being that the fieldwork does not start when the microphone is on and when the respondent starts to talk, but already in the phase when the sociologist negotiates the access to the field. I wanted to enter a protected milieu, which generates a lot of money, and which feels threatened by many external actors. These

companies aim at avoiding “bad communication” with them. They had nothing to gain by accepting a study such as mine. For them, it implied only risks. Furthermore, if they would have wanted to know more about their “internationalisation processes”, they would have done it internally. Their image is the uppermost important and they felt threatened because I wanted to analyse a critical, and yet crucial, aspect of their work. If I wanted to have access to them, I would need to present my research in such a way that it would not be perceived as a threat. My intention to study four specific companies increased their fear and thus heightened the barrier to enter. In fact, these companies are afraid to see their name appearing in a study as much as people studying them specifically. This shows the difficulty to study multinational companies, as they restrict access to information concerning themselves.

One way to circumvent their fear was to change the “unit of analysis” of the study. Rather than analysing specific companies, I decided to study the “role” of the employees in multinational companies in general as well as their professional career. In other words, the “unit of analysis” changed from the company to the migrants. A personal contact gave me four email addresses of potential respondents, whom she had known through her professional activity. This contact asked the potential respondents beforehand to know if I could send them an email. It is only when they accepted to be contacted that I sent them my requests. Though I emphasised that I was interested in their personal experiences of migration and that I underlined that I will completely anonymise the interviews, only two of them accepted to meet for an interview. During the interview, the respondents did not fully trust me when I asked them questions about their employer. Their answers were brief and general. They were not at ease and defensive wondering about my questions. They did not know what to say when it came to the alleged strategy of their employing company. They could speak about their own experience and about their international professional career; but, speaking about the so-called company’s “strategy” corresponded to those questions I was asking in my study. It is only when I started to ask personal questions about their private life and the challenges they experienced during their various stays abroad that the respondents started to feel more confident. I felt a relief in their attitude when they understood that I was interested in their personal experience of migration. I will show in the empirical analysis the fear of losing one’s position in the labour force. The fear of saying something that could be used against the company and subsequently having consequences for the respondents themselves explain why many respondents were reluctant to agree to my first requests of interviews and why they felt so ill at ease to speak about their company as such. It is also an ethical question as the

researcher should not harm the respondents. Thus, these two first interviews were crucial to understand better the people I wanted to interview.

The “feedback loops” between the theoretical work and the fieldwork imply that the latter influences the former. I transcribed the first two interviews and decided to approach them by asking myself which question do these interviews answer – following the “trick of the trade” of Becker (2008, 196). I needed to account for what the respondents were telling me and not to consider their discourse as irrelevant just because it was not the one I wanted to hear. Analysing these first two interviews shows that a central concern of the respondents is their coordination between care work and labour force work. I reworked the research question and subsequently reformulated the way I was presenting my research to include this aspect. Doing so, the access to the field became easier. I specifically explained in my requests for interviews that I was interested in understanding better the “work life balance” (Wilding and Baldassar 2009) in the context of highly-skilled international professional careers (Appendix 1: Contact Letter, 327). This way, I managed to receive positive answers to my requests for interviews. Furthermore, the new interview grid (Appendix 2: Interview Grid, 328) focusing on the lived experience of migration was better understood by the respondents: they accepted the “contract” of a sociological interview (Kaufmann 2011) and begun to speak. It does not mean that the respondents spoke without “filters” telling the “truth” about their “work life balance”. Papinot (2014, 239) shows that such a naïve conception of the interview practice would mean that the moment of the interview would be out of the social, “floating in a social zero gravity zone”. It is not the case, the respondents judged me, as well as the situation, judged my questions as well as the relevance of my study and presented with a discourse they perceived relevant according to their judgement. Many of them told me before the interview that my study tackled a central concern for them, so assessing the perceived relevance of such a study. I assumed that changing the topic of the research, to go in the direction of what the first two respondents were concerned about, contributed to create a study which genuinely interested the potential respondent. They not only felt less threatened but also curious about my work. For me, it meant, that the respondents would agree to see me and to “play the game” of answering my question.

4.2.2 Constructing the Interview Corpus

Overall, I did four waves of interviews, each time focusing on another characteristic of the interviewees; my goal being to maximise the heterogeneity amongst the respondents. Thus,

I conducted the fieldwork between the Spring 2014 and the Summer 2017 in the Geneva Lake area, Switzerland, and the Rhein Main area, Germany. I ran semi-directive interviews with 36 skilled migrants, problem centred interviews with eight key informers, and participated in three meetings dedicated to skilled migrants and expatriates. Table 4 describes the main characteristics of the respondents of the 36 semi-directive interviewees.

Table 4: Interviewees Characteristics, Absolute Numbers

	Number of respondents (N=36)		Number of respondents (N=36)
Gender		Employer	
Male	19	Consumer-good MNC	11
Female	17	Pharma MNC	9
Age (years)		Marketing MNC	6
25-29	1	University, Research	5
30-34	4	Finance MNC	2
35-39	4	Unemployed	2
40-44	7	Education	1
45-49	8	Highest Qualification	
50-54	9	Master	24
55-59	1	Bachelor	6
60-65	2	Doctorate	6
(Dual) Citizenship		Family Situation	
France	8	Married	22
US	8	Partnerships	6
Germany	7	Divorced	4
UK	4	Single	4
Indonesia	2	Number of International Relocations	
Netherlands	2	1	8
Austria	1	2	6
Brazil	1	3	6
Portugal	1	4	5
India	1	5	2
Israel	1	6	6
Italy	1	7+	3
Japan	1	Children	
Mexico	1	Yes, at home	21
Russia	1	Yes, not at home	3
South Korea	1	No	12

Source: Own Elaboration

As Table 4 shows, the interviewees have some characteristics in common. In fact, these characteristics mirror the way I selected the respondents. They have all a university degree or equivalent: technically, they are all highly-skilled. They are all in the second period of their life-time – what Kohli calls the “period of professional activity” (1989, 2), compared to the “period of education” and the “period of retirement” (ibid). Thus, none are retired, and all finished their studies. Their age shows they are most likely to be in this second period of life, too: all are between 25 and 65 years old. Most of the respondents work in the labour

force and most of them are employees of a multinational company. In fact, most of the respondents are part of the upper category of the middle management in multinational companies. I carried out the interviews in six distinct companies active in various sectors. Also, five respondents are active in research and one is employed in education; namely a specialised school. On eight occasions, I conducted interviews with four couples, each partner separately; which means I have four times the story from the perspective of each partner. The two interviewees without a paid job are two (female) partners who – though they completed a university degree – stopped their professional activity for the sake of the (male) partner's work in the labour force. All the respondents are born outside of their current country of residence and all lived abroad for at least two and a half years, which corresponds to the time spent abroad by the youngest respondent who is 28 years old. In fact, most of the respondents lived at least a decade abroad and some more than 25 years. To take an example from the interviews, Hannah left Britain when 24 years old, lived in Germany, Ukraine, Russia, and Turkey, and is now back in Germany at the age of 52 hence is living abroad for more than 25 years. Thus, they all experienced professional mobility at least once. To conclude, it is important to underline that the respondents all correspond to a privileged group of professionals with relatively high financial means.

Though there are many similarities between the respondents, I maximise the heterogeneity of my sample. Many of the respondents had a position in the labour force before relocating, though with different types of contracts. Some had an “expatriate contract” and others were hired under a “local contract” – depending on the policy of the employer and the way they received the position – some applied abroad, others were transferred by their employing company. Yet, it is not the only configuration possible, as I also conducted interviews with people who relocated for the sake of their partner's professional activity and found a position after relocating. Furthermore, the respondents' citizenship varies a lot in the sample. It is a deliberate choice as my aim is to gather the knowledge which overcomes “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) by treating the nationality as one factor amongst others and in my cases not a determinant one. Their passport does not really play a role as most of the respondents come from the “global North”: underlining once again their privileged status. Besides, the respondents coming from countries in which the passport could have been a problem to settle in Germany or Switzerland were for most supported by the employing company. The procedure is straightforward as the status of being an expatriate employed by a multinational company unlocks the residency and the working permits.

a. Constructing the Corpus of Interviews

I collected the discourses in four distinct waves of interviews. The semi-directive interviews are the core empirical material of this study and correspond to 31 hours and six minutes of recorded, transcribed, and coded interviews. Two interviews were not recorded as the respondents refused. It is important to note here that I proceeded through a “theoretical sampling” (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 144). Corbin and Strauss (ibid) compare the “theoretical sampling” to detective work. For each “feedback loop” the research uses the new data gathered to explore another understudied aspect of topic. It means, that the people I was looking to interview changed slightly between each wave.

In Spring 2014 and after the first two interviews, I conducted a first wave of interviews focusing on the mobile background of the respondents as well as their family relationships. I got in touch with the first respondents through the website *Internations*²⁹. We met briefly at a meeting organised by the administrators of this website and agreed for proper interviews. After I did the interviews, one of the respondents showed interest in my study and acted as a “gatekeeper”, as he gave me the contacts of four of his colleagues. During this first wave, I mostly got to know pharmacologists working in a middle-sized pharmacological multinational company. Most of the interviewees are pharmacologists who have a position in the research department or the regulatory division of the company. The policy of the company concerning the mobility of its employees is specific as none of the interviewees have an “expatriate contract”. They all told me that the company does not offer this opportunity. Instead, they all have a “local plus contract” – a local contract with specific advantages for mobile employees such as tuition fees for the schooling of the children.

After the first wave of interviews, I looked for different profiles, diversifying the employing companies. During the spring of 2015, I carried out a second wave of 12 interviews. This time, I contacted the respondents not only via *Internations*, but also via *Facebook*³⁰ and *Glocals*³¹. The various entry points allowed me to get in touch with skilled migrants having position in marketing and consumer goods companies. Once I managed to get the first interviews done I used the “snowball sampling strategy” (Atkinson and Flint 2001) to get in touch with more respondents. While some gave me an additional contact, one specific

²⁹ Website of Internations, retrieved April 13, 2018, from www.internations.org

³⁰ Website of Facebook, retrieved April 13, 2018, from www.facebook.com

³¹ Website of Glocals, retrieved April 13, 2018, from www.glocals.com

interviewee – manager in a large consumer goods multinational company – organised four interviews with her colleagues. During this second wave, the profiles of the respondents are more diverse emphasising the heterogeneity behind the category of skilled migrant. I got in touch with skilled migrants working in research, education and/or in smaller companies too. I noticed that the way the partners divide the care work and the work in the labour is a central topic of the interviews, and that I was lacking interviews with respondents working for large multinational companies under an “expatriate contract”.

I prepared the third wave of interviews by modifying the interview grid and adding specific questions on the coordination between the care work and the work in the labour force. In Spring 2016, I started the third wave and contacted an organisation supporting dual couple career. I did an interview with one of the persons responsible for the program. Thanks to this individual, I manage to get in touch with an employee of a consumer goods company who found employment in the labour force with the support of the program. This employee gave me the contacts of two of her colleagues and I launched the “snow ball sampling strategy”. During the third wave, all the interviews were done in a large multinational company based in Lausanne. I managed to make seven more interviews in this consumer goods company. Many respondents emphasised their problems in finding day care arrangements for their children which was hindering the possibility of a dual career couple. Many complained about the price and/or the lack of availability of such care in Switzerland.

Thus, the fourth wave of interviews corresponded to a wish to explore the role of the locality on the corpus. Hence, I went outside the Lake Geneva region and chose the Frankfurt Rhine-Main region³². For this wave, I did not want to change the characteristic of the people I was interviewing but rather to interview them somewhere else. I did the last interviews during the spring of 2017 in multinational companies active in consulting and marketing located there. I activated a contact that a former interviewee in Switzerland gave me. I did six more interviews which allowed me to contextualise the data I gathered in Switzerland. I stopped doing interviews as I reached a state in which the new interviews were not bringing anything that I did not know already; what Bertaux (1981) and Pires (1997) call the “empirical saturation”. In other words, it is not that I was knowing more than any respondent on the

³² For the in-depth justification of the reasons of the choice of these two regions, as well as the main differences between them, see the subchapter 5.2 Contextualising the Lake Geneva Region and Frankfurt Rhine-Main Region, 98.

topic but I knew what they all knew (Becker 2008, 150). Of course, each new interview would bring a specific configuration of the different elements of the former interviews, but each topic has already covered at least once in a former interview. Thus, the whole process of gathering the material is deeply imbedded in the analysis itself: the distinction is mostly theoretical as usually, after an interview, I started to transcribe it, analyse it and develop further my concepts. A circular model drives my research. For Corbin and Strauss (2008) this process takes shape as following:

Unlike conventional methods of sampling, the researcher does not go out and collect the entire set of data before beginning the analysis. Analysis begins after the first say of data gathering. Data collection leads to analysis. Analysis leads to concepts. Concepts generate questions. Question lead to more data collection so that the researcher might learn more about those concepts. The circular process continues until the research reaches the point of saturation (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 145).

This quote summarises how I collected my material for this study. I did it hand in hand with the empirical analysis. Thus, I develop a “theoretical sampling” characterised by a “feedback loops” between the fieldwork and the analysis.

b. Interview Grid

In order to conduct the interviews, I use an interview grid which serves me more as a guide than a strict list of specific questions to ask. More than following the interview grid, I focus on what the respondent is saying, encouraging him or her to develop and to explain concretely his or her answers. Following the method developed by Kaufmann in *L'Entretien compréhensif* (2011), the goal is that the respondent feels at ease in front of the interviewer; encouraging him or her to speak freely. This does not neutralise the power play during the interviews. In order to do so, I use a grid which is a combination of an open-biographical question and semi directive questions. I systematically start with the question asking: *How did it happen that you are in Germany (or Switzerland) now?* The open question aims to elicit a narration of the respondent about his/her journey to the place he or she is currently living in, getting relevant information on the mobile background of the interviewees and their families. It also aims at breaking a “question answer model” in which the respondent gives short answers. The goal is to encourage him or her to speak. The first part of the interviews consists of the story of the respondents and lasts approximatively 20 minutes in each interview. After the first part, I switch to the semi directive questions which composes the second part of the interview. I organise the semi directive question through different topics:

the choice of the country of destination (and who did it), the daily life at the new place, the situation of the partner and their activity, the “work care integration” of the partners (Halpern and Murphy 2005), the schooling of the children, the social life of the partners, the support of the company, the formal and informal support, the relation with the different state bodies, and questions regarding self-identification. Thus, the interviews encompass both the former trajectory to today (the social processes and physical movements of the respondents) and specific questions about the subjective experience of expatriation abroad (Appendix 2: Interview Grid, 327).

4.2.3 Analysing the Interview Corpus

So far, I have explained how I created the corpus of interviews. In this part, I will show how I analysed it through three angles each corresponding to an empirical chapter. I conducted the analysis of the corpus using the free software for qualitative research Sonal³³. The strength of the program is that it proposes an “all integrated” solution to analyse qualitative data; from transcribing to coding audio files and later text documents.

a. Objective Data

Yet, the tool does not make the research. The first part of the analysis was about organising the data. To that purpose, I completed the corpus of interviews with “objective data”. At the end of each interview, I asked the respondents to fill in a form in which I asked for basic sociodemographic data: the country of birth, the nationality, the highest qualification achieved, the marital status, the children, the current place of residency of the partner and the year of birth (Appendix 3: Data Sheet, 333). Furthermore, I used the LinkedIn profile³⁴ of the respondents and I combined it with the data of the interviews to recreate the mobile background of each respondent. Thus, I could see the professional career of the respondent (the succession of position in the labour force) (Baruch 2006). Furthermore, I combined it with the situation of the partner and the children to get an overview of the family-strategy of the partners over time. In order to do so, I use another free software called FreeMind³⁵ to create a map for each interview. The map below is the example of John and Aurelia. I conducted the interview with John at his office and recreated his background as well as the

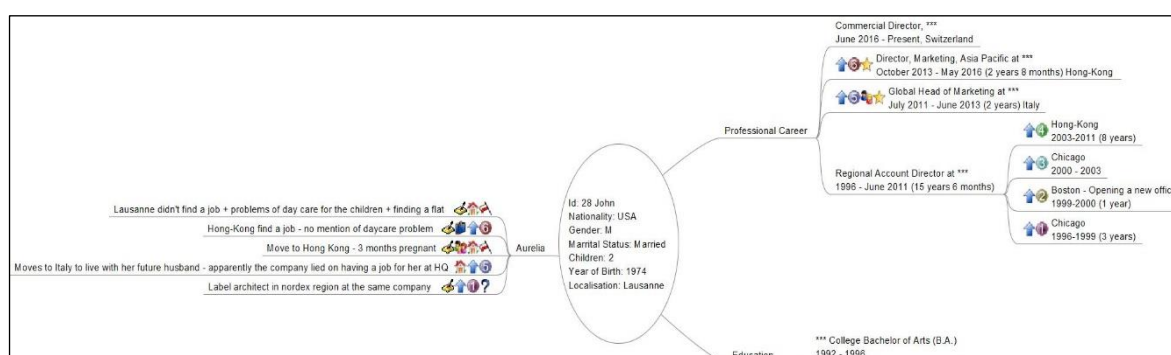
³³ Website of Sonal, retrieved April 13, 2018, from www.sonal-info.com

³⁴ Website of LinkedIn, retrieved April 13, 2018, from www.linkedin.com

³⁵ Website of Freemind, retrieved April 13, 2018, from www.freemind.sourceforge.net

one of Aurelia on this map, crossing the information from the interview, the data sheet and his LinkedIn profile. These maps would be central to understanding the family dynamics in the long run. The circle at the middle of the map summarises basic sociodemographic information about John. The numbers symbolise the different professional moves. The right-hand side of the map emphasises the John's background while the left-hand side of the map highlights Aurelia's background.

Figure 6: John's and Aurelia's Mobile Background



Source: Own Elaboration based on the free software Freemind (www.freemind.sourceforge.net)

The map (Figure 6) helps to visualise the impact of one career on the one of the partner as well as the “family-strategy” that the partners develop: in this case, we shall see that the “family-strategy” is gendered as Aurelia consented for moving to follow John and to do the care work for their children. In other words, her professional career is strongly impacted by her move in order to live with her future husband and by arrival of their children which seems not to be the case for John.

b. Subjective Data

The bulk of the data is composed of transcribed qualitative interviews. I coded systematically the interviews by using a list of pre-set codes and developed a list of emergent codes (Appendix 4: Code Book, 334). The list of “pre-set codes” (also known as “*a priori* codes”) corresponds to the codes that I developed before assessing my data. These codes were in fact coming from my conceptualisation and my research interests. They corresponded to what I looked for. I prepared the list, as the name suggests, before assessing the interviews. Examples of “pre-set codes” are: professional career, support of the company, support of the state, private life, self-identification, etc. The list of “pre-set codes” was mostly a tool that I use between the different waves of interviews. It allowed me to see if my conceptualisation fitted with the interviews, or if I needed to change my conceptualisation and rework my

interview grid. It is a controlling tool to anchor the study in the interviews, to avoid the risk of over-conceptualisation. Thus, it creates a discussion between the fieldwork and the analysis, allowing the construction of a study which takes advantage of the information gathered during the fieldwork. This is a strategy to enrich the study and increase its quality. Thus, the pre-set codes are crucial to recalibrate the interview grid after having done interviews in order to explore new dimensions in the next interviews.

Table 5: Example of a List of Codes

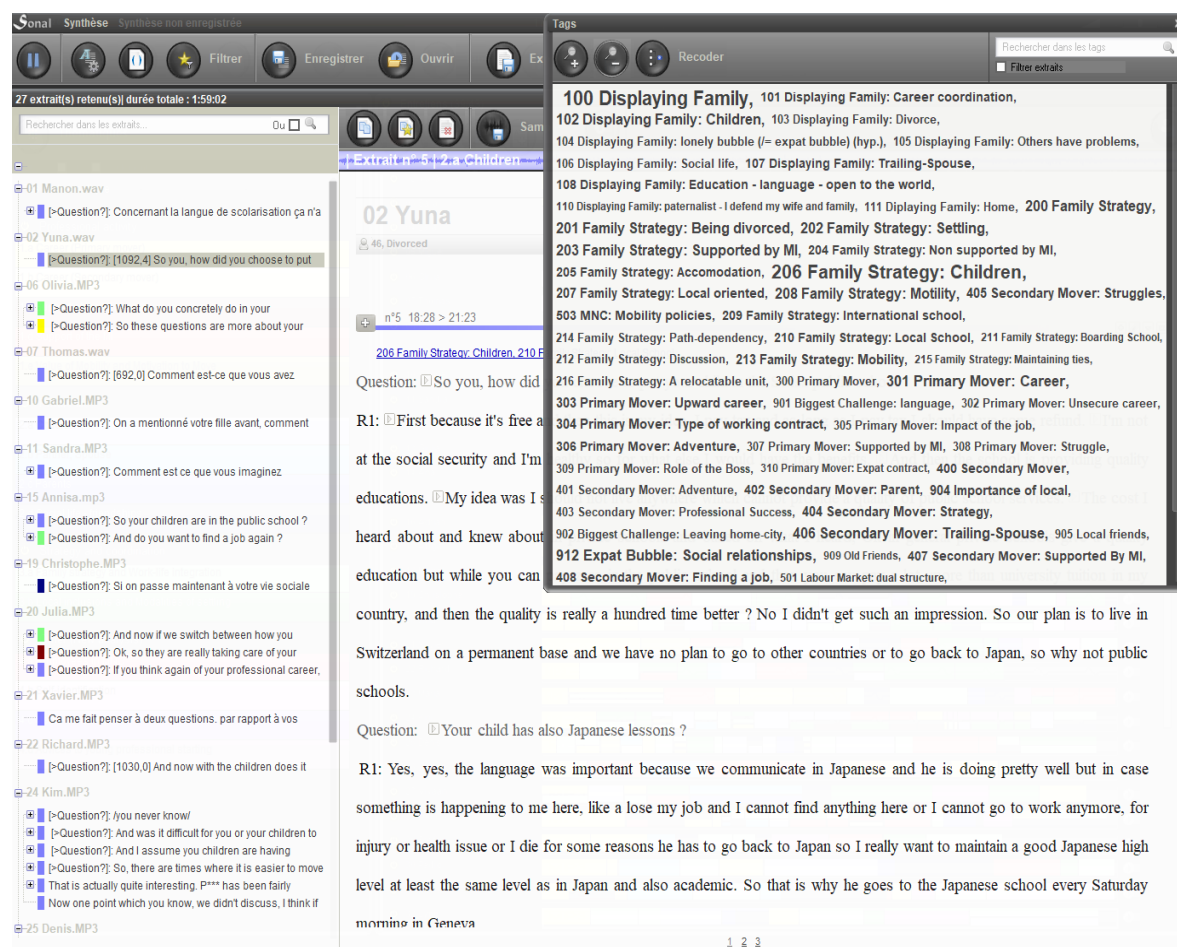
Selective Coding	Axial Coding (Grouped Open Codes)	Main Idea (of the Research Notes)
200 Family Strategy	201 Family Strategy: Being divorced	Doing family: Dynamic primary <-> secondary mover
	217 Family Strategy: Marriage	A new organisation needed
	212 Family Strategy: Discussion	To make it work, I accept sacrifice
	218 Family Strategy: Division care-work	Negotiation, Rupture, and Power - I will not stop working for you!
	202 Family Strategy: Settling	Egalitarian Families and Patriarchal Families
	203 Family Strategy: Supported by migration industry	Difficulties to settle when arriving in a new place
	204 Family Strategy: Not supported by MI	Different types of support - Heterogeneity of MI
	205 Family Strategy: Accomodation	Local Move - Do it yourself
	207 Family Strategy: Local oriented	Where they live
	208 Family Strategy: Motility	The wish to stay
	216 Family Strategy: A relocatable unit	The perceived likeliness and possibility of a further move
	215 Family Strategy: Maintaining ties	Motility - We move when we want - patriarchal family
	213 Family Strategy: Mobility	Boomerang to maintain friendships
	206 Family Strategy: Children	Mobility as a strategy!
	209 Family Strategy: International School	Organising the care-work
	210 Family Strategy: Local School	Types of Schools
	211 Family Strategy: Boarding school	Types of Schools
	214 Family Strategy: Path-dependency	Types of Schools
		Language of education for the children -> path dependency

Source: Own Elaboration

An “emergent coding” (also known as inductive coding) develops the empirical analysis based on the content of the interviews. As its name suggests, the codes are emerging from the interviews. In other words, the researcher creates the analytical categories through codes coming from the data. Furthermore, the research notes, the memos are an important tool to develop the “open codes” as they contain a multitude of thoughts, “hypotheses”, ideas, and notes taken, for instance, just after an interview. Strauss and Corbin insist on the importance of this tool (2008, 164). The goal of using “emergent coding” is to stick as much as possible to the content and the context of the interviews. It is about developing codes based on the interview and the research notes. The first step is to develop “open codes”, that is a significant list of codes very close from the text, describing and pointing at specific processes and topics develop by the respondents. “Open coding aims at developing substantial codes describing, naming, or classifying the phenomenon under study” (Flick 2009, 309–10). To illustrate this

method, I present in Table 5 a part of my code book. In this example, the “open codes” are being divorced, marriage, discussion, division of care work, etc. They correspond to various excerpts of the interviews and I linked them to research notes and memos that I collected during the research process. In the list of code, I summarised the main idea of the research note.

Figure 7: Open Codes and Excerpts



Source: Own Elaboration based on the free software Sonal, www.sonal-info.com

Each “open code”, corresponds to parts of the interviews in which the respondents talk about a specific topic. Thus, the process of developing and arranging the “open codes” is the engine to develop the empirical analysis. Figure 7 is a screenshot of the program I used to transcribe and code the interviews. Concretely, I coded the entire cursus of interviews. The right table entitled “Tags” refers to a part of the list of “open codes”. In this example, I selected the code “206 Family Strategy: Children” which corresponds to 27 extracts; then, I selected the interview of Yuna in which she describes the challenges she faces to raise her five years old

boy while living in Switzerland. The advantage is that I can focus on a thematic rather than an interview as it is possible to see all the excerpts corresponding the “open code: children”.

The second step regroups the “open-codes” in key categories, through a process named “axial coding”. The “axial coding” refers, so to say, to code the codes, to group the “open codes” in meaningful categories and to create connection between the codes. The “axial codes” regroup usually dozens of “open codes”. It is a tool to organise the “open codes” and to create a meaning out of the multiple anecdotes, lived experiences, and memories which compose the interviews. It allows the researcher to focus on the main topics of the analysis by regrouping for instance all the codes related to the “professional career”, or the “family-strategy”. In Figure 7, the process of “axial coding” corresponds to the way by which I group all the “open codes” in the category “family-strategy”.

The last step is the “selective coding” which refers to the selection of the core analytical categories for the study. Flick (2009), while presenting this method, speaks about “the categories that are most relevant to the research question are selected from the developed codes” (2009, 312). The “selective coding” refers to the way the researcher selects the core categories which are going to structure the research. They are going to be the core material of the three following empirical chapters. In the list of codes Figure 7 (the window “Tags” on the screenshot), three groups of codes can be distinguished. I distinguish three analytical categories which correspond at the same time to the last step of the coding and to the structure of the empirical analysis. These three analytical categories are namely the codes 300s and 400s called “primary-movers” and “secondary-mover”, the codes 100s entitled “displaying family”, and the codes 200s named “family-strategies”. These three groups of codes correspond in turn to three concepts that I distinguished while presenting the “methodological individualism”: the practices, the narratives to “display family” and the “family-strategy” that the partners adopt. The first chapter of the empirical part (Chapter 6) deals with a typology of moves and movers based on the concept of initiative. It distinguishes the partner who gives the initiative of the move (the “primary-mover”) and the possible reactions of the other partner (the “secondary-mover”). It adopts a collective perspective encompassing the partners and not just one of them to understand the various motivations and the consequences of a professional move. The second chapter focuses on “displaying family” (Finch 2007) and deals with the narratives to present and justify decisions taken regarding the organisation of the family. It shows that while the discourse regarding the traditional heteronormative family

with a male breadwinner and a woman doing the care work is rejected by the respondents; it often contradicts their own practices. The third chapter stresses the development of “family-strategies” in the long run and develops different types of “family-strategies” allowing a better understanding of the interplay between professional migrations and organisation of the family. Before switching to the empirical part, I will present the two central epistemological foundations of my work. I will show that both epistemological foundations underline the necessity to situate the researcher in the context of the study he or she is producing. The next chapter concerning the methodology gives information about the researcher who conducted this study as well as the regions where this study was conducted.

5 Contextualising the Study

5.1 Contextualising the Researcher

By presenting my position as a researcher, I contextualise and objectify the conditions of elaboration of the study. While doing the fieldwork, the researcher is not neutral. Rather he or she rather influences and learns from the empirical material produced. This point is central. It does not only justify the “feedback loops” between the fieldwork and the analysis, but also stresses that the same respondents would probably have answered differently to another researcher, in another place, at another time. Thus, the material collected in qualitative studies is highly contextual and relational. In this context, the researcher needs also to be contextualised. His or her endeavour to deconstruct or decentre cannot be fully understood without knowing from where he or she speaks. “What is his or her position?” and “who is he or she?” are central questions to give the reader an opportunity to understand the context and the person creating the perspective of the deconstructive and decentring processes. Here, the researcher cannot be neutral: he or she is historically, geographically, and socially situated. There is no such thing as a “disinterested researcher” floating above the world creating a “pure theory”. The researcher is part of the world and what he or she thinks is subordinated to his or her historically and contextually situated knowledge.

Doing this research implied moving. Being on the move myself surely led me to understand better the challenges of coordinating family life and professional career. I lived in different places in Switzerland and Germany during the time of this research, namely Neuchâtel, Lausanne, Frankfurt, Bochum, and Nurnberg. I moved for my own research, but also to live with my partner and then for the sake of her career. Thus, my partner and I faced some of the challenges that my respondents faced: finding a new flat in cities we did not know, discussing about our next step, our possible next move. Are we going to move if I find a position abroad? My personal situation helped me to understand the topic I was investigating from a subjective perspective. The downside of it is that I may see the world as being nothing but a world of migrants, of people moving for professional reasons whereas it is not the case. In order to overcome this possible bias, I developed the term of “secondary-stayer” and referred explicitly to the term of “(im)mobility” (Wieczorek 2018). However, my empirical analysis strongly focuses on the ones on the move, which is a direct consequence of studying highly-skilled migration. Yet, it is important to remember that the bulk of the world is “sedentary” – only 7.5% of the total OECD countries was foreign born in 2000 (OECD 2008, 13). My

study deals with a share of this population, namely the ones with tertiary education, that is my study deals with an exception.

Furthermore, I am a Swiss national and a white male moving between Switzerland and Germany. My citizenship, my gender, and my ethnicity put me in to a privileged position. Thus, I did not encounter administrative difficulties to settle in to any place where I chose to live. Also, I did not encounter the “controlling policies” of the nation-states, neither are visible in my work. In fact, for many of the respondents, it is not a topic either; as most of them have a passport from a country of the “global North” and are white. This study is a study done by a privileged person on privileged persons. Yet, it is not only a question of privilege but also a question of power. For the most part, the respondents are powerful, in their organisation but also in the social world. In fact, their privileges are a mark of their power. Their economic capital, their position in the labour force, and their “family-strategies” all show that people around them often do what the respondents want. By decentring the analytical framework and the empirical analysis, I take this point into account. During my fieldwork, I systematically asked questions regarding the relationship with various state-bodies (Appendix 2: Interview Grid, Relationships with State-bodies, 327). The respondents did not really understand my question and were answering succinctly referring to a straightforward process. For the privileged ones, the “controlling state” is more a “welcoming state”: they are “wanted and welcome” (Triadafilopoulos 2013). It is central to remember that amongst the foreign-born population only a part is “wanted and welcome”: again, my personal situation and the situation of most of my respondents cannot be generalised and need to be contextualised. It does not mean that it is a “frictionless mobility”, for I show how other constraints emerge. In their case, however, the “controlling state” is mostly absent. As soon as we diverge a little from this pattern, the constraints of the “controlling state” appear. I interviewed respondents from Indonesia aiming at staying in Switzerland for the long term. In their case, the constraints imposed by a “controlling state” appeared in the interview as they are struggling, for instance, with the renewal of their residency permit which will not be granted if they want to travel back to Indonesia. Otherwise, they would take the risk to be refused at the boarder while coming back to Switzerland. This challenge is totally out of scope for a lot of the other respondents.

The same can be said about discrimination, xenophobia, or racism: I do not face them personally in my daily life, and the same is probably true for many of the respondents. I asked

questions about discrimination and xenophobia in the interviews. Some interviewees were shocked by the xenophobic rhetoric in many Swiss electoral posters but were also saying they did not feel targeted by these posters. The “migration binaries” act as a “category of practices” (Brubaker 2013) in which the respondents imply that they are part of the “us”, a form of “temporal adaptation” in Switzerland. Furthermore, their presence benefits the country, they argue. As soon as we diverge a little from this pattern, some respondents say they are victims of xenophobia. The respondents from the “global South” who are not imbedded in a multinational company seem to face it the most; for example, the partner of a Russian respondent who was asked to “go back home” in a supermarket. For those working for a multinational company, they are systematically referring to the “truly international ambiance” of their workplace and their lack of contact with the “local population”. Their partners, however, more often experience xenophobia and racism. This could be a reason explaining why the “expat bubble” (Fechter 2007a) is so important to some of the respondents. It acts as a barrier against the xenophobia and the discrimination they could face in a new local space. Although I do not investigate this topic here, there is a lack of research dealing with the racism that highly-skilled migrants from the “global South” face while relocating to countries like Switzerland and Germany.

Another element which could influence the insights of this study is my position as a researcher while being in the field. I am not a colleague or a friend of the respondents, but a student in sociology specifically studying family relationships amongst couples of highly-skilled migrants. In chapter 7, I will discuss the discrepancies between the discourses and the practices of the respondents when it comes to display their family. I will interpret it as the development of a norm of what the respondents say “family should be” in 2018, yet, this insight shows an attempt to provide a “good answer” to a sociologist working on family in 2018 also. Garfinkel notes that individuals (which includes those agreeing to participate in a sociological study) are not “cultural idiots” (Garfinkel 1986). I made a similar point with Papinot (2014) earlier. The moment of the interview is not “floating in a social zero gravity zone”. The respondents knew well with whom they were talking to, they knew from the moment they received the contact letter (Appendix 1: Contact Letter, 327). Thus, it may be the case that they “prepared” a discourse specifically adapted to answer the questions of a sociology student. Furthermore, I have my own opinions, in part, because of what I studied: sociology, and what I did not study: law, for instance. Therefore, I also have an idea of what “a good family should be”. In this work, I aim at suspending my own judgement to develop

the empirical analysis; however, it would be illusionary to believe it did not influence my work. The first empirical chapter, for instance, focuses on the work in the labour force of both partners, implying, in part, my normative conception of “what family should be”: that the two partners should work in the labour force. It replicates the same image of the family that some of my respondents provided during their interviews.

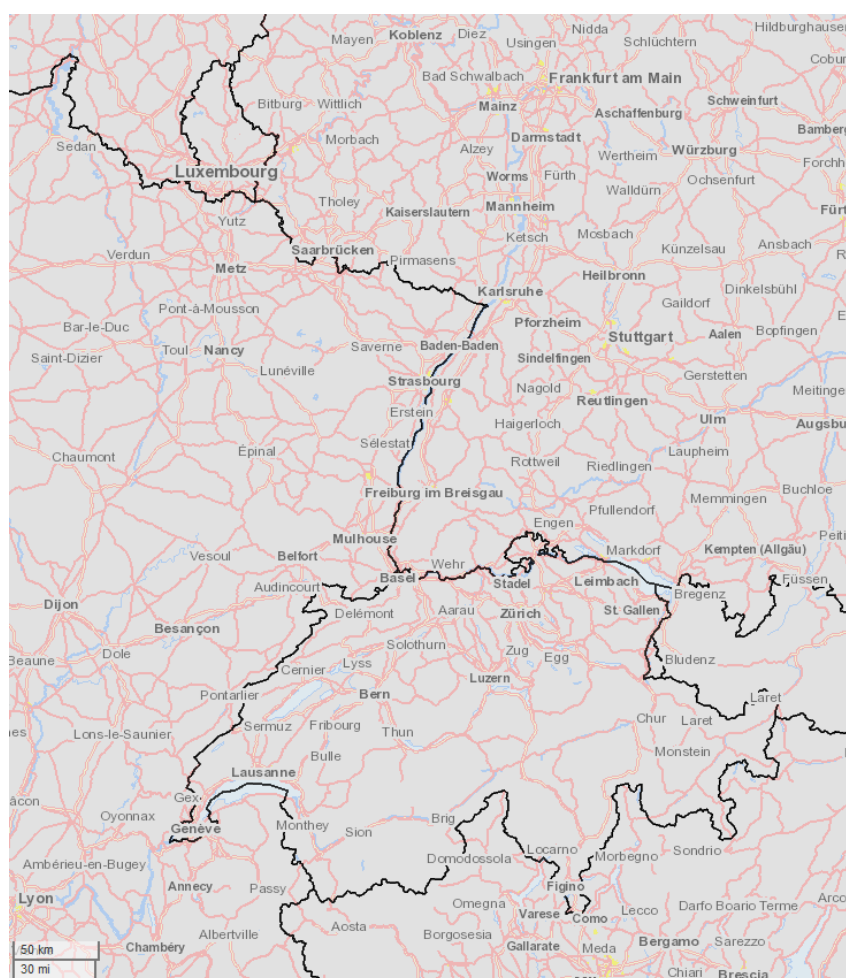
These four points stress various aspects which could influence the whole study as well as the discourse of the respondents during the interviews. I call the first one “nomadism”. It implies the belief that the whole world migrates, which is empirically not the case. My study deals with a specific population, which is not representative of the whole population. Not everyone is on the move. The second refers to my experience of being a privileged person while moving from Switzerland to Germany and living in Switzerland and Germany. It could lead to an ignorance of the “controlling nation-states” when it comes to migration: a form of “methodological nationalism”. In this study, nation-states seemingly do not control or do not attach much importance into controlling the privileged migrants. I see two reasons for that. It stems out of a political choice formalised in multilateral agreements like Schengen and the very conceptualisation of the study itself is a proposition to deal with privileged migrants. The third one is the same argument, but concerning discrimination, xenophobia and racism. The fact that they are absent in this study does not mean that I did not ask the question. Furthermore, the fact that many respondents did not feel they were victims of racism, xenophobia, or discrimination tells us something about the structure of domination in contemporary societies. In this context, I have also suggested that the “migration binaries” are a “category of practice”. In other words, it shows my privileged position as well as the one of the respondents and it underlines the necessity to deconstruct these categories as they convey a strong normative load. The fourth point refers to the fact that I presented myself as a researcher in sociology while asking for interviews. The respondents may have seen me as someone to whom “good” answers should be given and produce a discourse according to that.

5.2 Contextualising the Lake Geneva Region and Frankfurt Rhine-Main Region

I decided to change my access to the field. Instead of focusing on four multinational companies, this work deals with the experience of highly-skilled migrants. Yet, an approach starting with the migrants themselves required another conceptualisation than, for instance,

the “ethnic lenses”. In the theoretical part (3.3 Methodological Nationalism, 64), I showed the advantage of using the “cities as the entry points” – understood as “critical places” (3.3.1 Changing the Entry Points, 65) – to overcome the array of biases summarised under the term “methodological nationalism”. One of the keys to conceptualise my study is the process of “decentring”. Following this logic, I do not only focus only on one region, but on two, developing a study in which the knowledge on one region is “decentred” by another perspective, namely a second region. Thus, this study deals with the Lake Geneva region, Switzerland and Frankfurt Rhein-Main region, Germany. Though I conducted the bulk of the interviews in the Geneva region (30 interviews), I completed the corpus of interviews by doing six more interviews in the Frankfurt region. This allowed me to see what is specific to the Lake Geneva or the Frankfurt Rhein-Main regions and what they have in common: the experience of highly-skilled migrants may differ, in some respects, when we change the place of investigation. I developed a “bi-local fieldwork” to be able to contextualise these differences. The “bi-local fieldwork” creates a more heterogeneous corpus of interviews. However, I do not develop a formal comparative analysis, but rather “decentre” my study to escape from the traps of the “methodological nationalism”. Yet, the fact that I will not analyse the qualitative data in a comparative design does not mean that the contexts where the respondents live at the time of the interview do not play a role. In fact, acknowledging the context where the respondents live, addressing the central characteristics of these regions, and showing how they differ participate in situating the conditions of production of the qualitative material. To present the context of the study, I will first paint a broad socio-economic portrait of these two regions. Then, I will focus on the “family policy” in these two regions, as the capacity of the partners to reconstruct childcare arrangement after a relocation is central in understanding the “family-strategy”. In the discussion part (Chapter 10.1), I will rely on the elements I develop in the current chapter to show the differences between these two regions in terms of childcare and “family policy”.

Figure 8: General Map Situating Frankfurt am Main and Geneva



Source: Eurostat (2017c)

Figure 9: Map of the Geneva Region



Source: Office fédéral de la topographie (2018)

Figure 10: Map of the Frankfurt Region



Source: Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie (2018)

The three maps show the two regions where I conducted this study. First, Figure 8 is a general map of the “centre of Europe” showing Eastern France, Southwestern Germany, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Liechtenstein, and a part of Austria, Belgium, and Italy. The Lake Geneva region (later on called the Geneva region) is in the French-speaking Western part of Switzerland, on the Northern shore of the Geneva Lake. It refers to the “metropolitan area” between Geneva and Montreux (Figure 9) composing of Swiss Cantons of Geneva and Vaud. The Frankfurt Rhine-Main region is in Southwestern Germany. The official language is, unsurprisingly, German. This region (later on called the Frankfurt region) corresponds to the “large metropolitan area” of Frankfurt (Figure 10) implying the cities of Frankfurt am Main, Darmstadt, Mainz, Offenbach, and Wiesbaden. Thus, the “large metropolitan area” of Frankfurt spans between the German Bundesländer of Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Bavaria. The city of Frankfurt am Main itself is the regional capital of Hesse. According to the definition of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “metropolitan areas” and “large metropolitan areas” are “functional urban areas” [FUA] with, respectively, “a population between 500’000 and 1.5 million people [for the “metropolitan areas”] and a population of 1.5 million people or more [for the “large metropolitan area”]” (OECD 2013). Furthermore, a “FUA consists of a city plus its commuting zone” (Eurostat 2017b) and a “commuting zone contains the surrounding travel-to-work areas of a city where at least 15 % of their employed residents are working in this city” (Eurostat 2017a). In other words, the two entry points of this study are the “metropolitan area of Geneva” and the “large metropolitan area of Frankfurt”. Truth to be told, Geneva and Lausanne correspond to two specific FUA, according to the conceptualisation of the OECD, but scholars in urban development refer to a single “metropolitan area” (Dessemond, Kaufmann, and Jemelin 2010, 2975).

In 2014, out of the 1,238,831 inhabitants living in the Geneva region, 36.1% were foreigners (Rietschin and Imhof 2017, 4). Furthermore, for the same year, 42.8% of the total immigrants arrived for professional reasons (ibid). The Frankfurt region corresponds to the “Frankfurt Rhein-Main Metropolregion”, in which 5,525,603 people were living in 2009 (Bürgeramt, Statistik und Wahlen 2016, 43). Amongst them, 12.2% were foreigners (ibid). Both regions are characterised by the presence of international organisations (The UN in Geneva and the European Central Bank in Frankfurt) and multinational corporations (L’Oréal, Nestlé, Monsanto, Rolex, etc. in the Geneva region and AEG, Deutsche Bank, PwC, Lufthansa, etc. in the Frankfurt region). The two regions offer many professional opportunities for highly-

skilled migrants, as they both are well known economic hubs in Europe and the world. As for the Geneva region, the Frankfurt region is richer and more expansive than the rest of the country. According to the Reports on prices and earnings (Höfert and Kalt 2015), the “net annual income” is higher in the Geneva region (128.3) than in the Frankfurt region (97.0) (100 being New York City [NYC]); yet, the prices (including rent) are also higher in the Geneva region (91.8) compared to the Frankfurt region (55.1) (100 being NYC) (2015, 6 – 11; thus, both regions provide a high “domestic purchasing power” to highly-skilled migrants. The professional opportunities and the relatively high standard of living make them an attractive place for highly-skilled migrants. Another similarity between the two regions are their economic promotion policies to attract foreign investment and to favour the settling of multinational companies on their territory. For the Geneva region, a whole network of private and public organisations develops the economic promotion (e.g. the “Greater Geneva Bern Area” (GGB) and the “service de la promotion économique et du commerce Vaud” [SPECo]). In Germany, similar organisations can be found such as the “FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH” doing the economic marketing of the region or the “Wirtschaftsförderung Frankfurt” in charge of the economic development. Furthermore, they both have an international airport and are “mobility nodes” with intercity trains reaching most of Western Europe.

5.2.1 Family Policy in the two Regions

In chapter 3, I decentred the research on highly-skilled migration through three “methodological premises”. When it comes to the “methodological nationalism”, I emphasised the necessity to acknowledge the nation-states without naturalising them. In this chapter, I have quoted the studies of Pfau-Effinger (1998) and Esping-Andersen (1990) to show that various “welfare state regimes” provide different types of support favouring or hindering the participation of women in the labour force. Doing so, I showed the relevance of considering the inner heterogeneity of “welfare state regimes” pointing at their subnational variations (Bühler and Meier Kruker 2002; Riaño et al. 2015). While chapter 3 was theoretical and aimed at developing a suitable approach overcoming the “methodological nationalism”, the present section (section 5.2.1) is contextual and focuses on the support effectively available within these two regions. To do so, I will focus on the “family policy” in the two regions. Neyer (2003) defines the “family policy” as:

Policy that targets parenthood (...) most closely related to fertility: maternity policies, parental-leave policies, childcare services, and child benefits (Neyer 2003, 8).

I will present these policies at the national level, using the “OECD family database”³⁶ and the country reports of Germany and Switzerland published by the Population Europe Resource Finder and Archive (PERFAR)³⁷. To contextualise my study further, I will also focus on the specific *Bundesländer* and *Cantons* where this study takes place, by presenting the support concretely available in the two regions. To refer to the “family policy” in each specific region, I will speak of the subnational variation of the “family policy”. In other words, I will look at the possibilities – in terms of the support to the care work required to raise a child – that highly-skilled migrants have when they settle in a local space after a relocation.

Harrison Villalba et al. (2012) distinguish the “formal care”, “the non-formal care”, and “the informal care” (2012, 14). They define the “formal care” as the “organized structure with qualified staff, at a day care centre or at organized family day care” (ibid). The “non-formal care” implies “no organized structure and no notion of qualified staff, parents arrange for and pay the services directly to the nanny or care-giver” (ibid) and the “informal care” corresponds to the “unpaid care provided by family and friends” (ibid). I will start by presenting the “family policy” and the “formal care” in the regions Frankfurt and Geneva, then speak briefly about the “non-formal care” and “informal care” in these regions. In the last part of this subsection, I will propose the idea of “privatised formal care” to refer to international (semi-)privatised (pre-)schools. Over all, I ask the following question: what is the structure of the childcare in these two regions and what are the difference between them?

a. Formal care

Quoting Pfau-Effinger (1998) and Esping-Andersen (1990), I said that Germany and Switzerland have similar “welfare state regime”, namely a “conservative-traditionalist welfare regime” (1998, 162). While the concepts they develop are going to be central for the next decades of research on the topic, the studies as such are quite old. Besides, the “welfare state regimes” encompass more than the family policy. In this subchapter, I specifically focus on the “family policy” and some of its elements which have changed since then, according to more recent studies. Andersen (2009) and Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser (2015) speak of

³⁶ Website of the OECD Family Database, retrieved August 6, 2018, from <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>

³⁷ Website of the Population Europe Resource Finder & Archive (PERFAR), retrieved August 6, 2018, from <https://www.perfar.eu/>

the silent – yet incomplete – revolution of the family policy which occurred the last twenty years, in rich OECD countries. Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser (2015) stress the expansion of “family policy,” “leading to a socialisation of family care responsibilities, traditionally disproportionately performed by women” (2015, 23). They analyse the family policy in rich OECD countries and show that Germany undertook significant changes during the last two decades, emphasising an important increase in the public provision of childcare with consequent parental leaves (2015, 14). The “family policy” in Switzerland did not significantly change, constituting an exception amongst rich OECD countries. The Swiss family policy remains conservative with short maternal leaves, no paternal leave, and low public investment in childcare (2015, 16). Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser (2015) underline significant differences between Germany and Switzerland when it comes to the family policy. In the following paragraphs, I will show with examples what these differences are all about, focusing on the childcare provision, the parental leave system, and the schooling system available to highly-skilled migrants.

The childcare provision corresponds to the services provided to parents to ease the coordination between being at work in the labour force and doing the care work. It includes day nursery, kindergarten, pre-school, out of school care, etc. In Germany, children from age one are entitled to the right of childcare, according to the Federal Social Security Law (*Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) - Achtes Buch [VIII]*)³⁸. The effective attendance of children to day care (*Kindertagesbetreuung*) varies between the *Bundesländer*, because of historical reasons (the former socialist East have a more extensive program of day care for young children). According to Federal Statistical Office of Germany (Destatis), in Hessen (which is in the former West Germany), in 2013, 25.7% of the children between zero and two years old and 93.1% between three and five attend a day care centre (*Kindertageseinrichtungen*) (compared to respectively 57.7% and 95.5% in Saxony-Anhalt (a former East socialist *Bundesland*) (Destatis 2014). Radenacker (2014) stresses that these numbers hide the fact that the vast majority of the children attend day care on a part-time basis. In fact, 75% of the children attending day care spend less than seven hours per day in day care (Radenacker 2014). As

³⁸ Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) - Achtes Buch (VIII) - Kinder- und Jugendhilfe - (Artikel 1 des Gesetzes v. 26. Juni 1990, BGBl. I S. 1163). Retrieved August 6, 2018, from https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_8/BJNR111630990.html

we shall see, the possibility of having parental leave influences the rate of attendance of young children.

In Switzerland, unlike in Germany, there are no legal provision to enforce day care. At the federal level, only a federal law gives an incentive to the *Cantons* to develop day care solutions on their territory. It is called the Federal Law on Financial Aid for Non-Family Homes for Children (*Loi fédérale sur les aides financières à l'accueil extra-familial pour enfants*)³⁹. Article 1 paragraph 1 of this law aims at “favouring a better coordination between family life and professional life or studies”. This law does not create any legal obligation to the *Cantons* but rather gives incentives to develop better day care solution throughout the country. The *Cantons* are responsible for implementing the day care solutions. For historical reasons, the *Cantons* are responsible when it comes to education: the Swiss constitution safeguards the prerogative of the *Cantons* to organise public education, including day care. The result is that there is no harmonised policy at the national level and each canton develops its own policy. Zufferey and Widmer (2014) note that parents across Switzerland do not have equal access to childcare. In the Canton of Vaud 27.2% of the children between zero and four years attend a preschool day care centre, in 2017. It is 7.2% more than in 2010, showing that the development of pre-school day centres is an important topic of the family policy of the Canton of Vaud. Furthermore, 14.5% attend an out of school day care centre (Statistique Vaud 2017). In Geneva, the numbers are similar (30.9% for the children between zero and four years attend a preschool day care centre, in 2017) (Statistique Genève 2017). This rate is on the rise, too. Still, the Swiss figures are significantly lower than the German ones, especially if, as we shall see, parental leave is taken into consideration. In fact Switzerland has the third lowest enrolment rate for pre-primary education for three to five year old children amongst all the OECD countries (just above Greece and Turkey) (OECD 2016, 6).

There is not only the enrolment rate but also the costs for the parents and the waiting time to have access to any form of day care support. The figures of the OECD are striking in this regard, as the “Gross fees for two children (age 2 and 3) attending full-time care at a typical childcare centre, as % of average earnings, in 2015” is 70.3% in Switzerland against 10.5% in Germany (OECD 2017a)⁴⁰. In other words, it is comparatively much more expensive to

³⁹ Loi fédérale du 4 octobre 2002 sur les aides financières à l'accueil extra-familial pour enfants (LAAcc) ; RS 861. Retrieved August 6, 2018, from <https://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/20020609/index.html>

⁴⁰ These statistics are for Zurich in Switzerland and Hamburg in Germany. Thus, they are not completely accurate for the Geneva region and the Frankfurt region but rather gives some idea.

send children to a day care centre in Switzerland than in Germany. Furthermore, the waiting time reflects an insufficient offer in terms of day care services. According to a study of the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration, in the Canton of Vaud, 21.2% of the demand for day care centre is not satisfied in the city-centres, in 2012 (Bonoli and Vuille 2013, 47). This figure reaches 32.1% for children under 2 years old (2013, 48). In Germany, 13.3% of the demand is not satisfied, in 2016 (IWD 2017). In Hesse, 13.7% of the children under three year did not find day care though their parents were actually looking for one (ibid). It means 293,486 missing places for the country and 23,049 in Hesse (ibid). All in all, there is significative differences between the two regions. The Frankfurt region has a higher enrolment rate for preschool day care centres than the Geneva region, and it is cheaper for the parents to send their child there. Though the figures show an increase of available places in the Geneva region.

Concerning the parental leave system, the differences between the two regions are striking. In short, the parental leave system is more developed in Germany than in Switzerland. The results of Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser (2015) reflect these difference. The OECD (2017b) distinguishes several forms of parental leave. The most current forms of parental leave systems are the maternity leave, the paternity leave, and the parental leave. The maternity leave corresponds to the “employment-protected leave of absence for employed women at around the time of childbirth, or adoption” (OECD 2017b, 1); the paternity leave refers the “employment-protected leave of absence for employed fathers at or in the first few months after childbirth” (ibid); and the parental leave is defined as the “employment-protected leave of absence for employed parents, which is often supplementary to specific maternity and paternity leave periods, and frequently, but not in all countries, follows the period of maternity leave” (ibid)⁴¹. Switzerland has a statutory maternity leave arrangement of 16 weeks, 14 of them being paid at 80% of the last income up to a ceiling of 196 Swiss francs per day (OECD 2017b, 16). In Switzerland, there is neither paternal nor parental leaves, or to put it in the OECD’s language: “no statutory entitlement” (ibid). In Germany, the system proposes more possibilities for the parents. The idea is that the parents can freely share the 12 months they are entitled to after the birth of a child (BMFSFJ 2017). In fact, if they decide

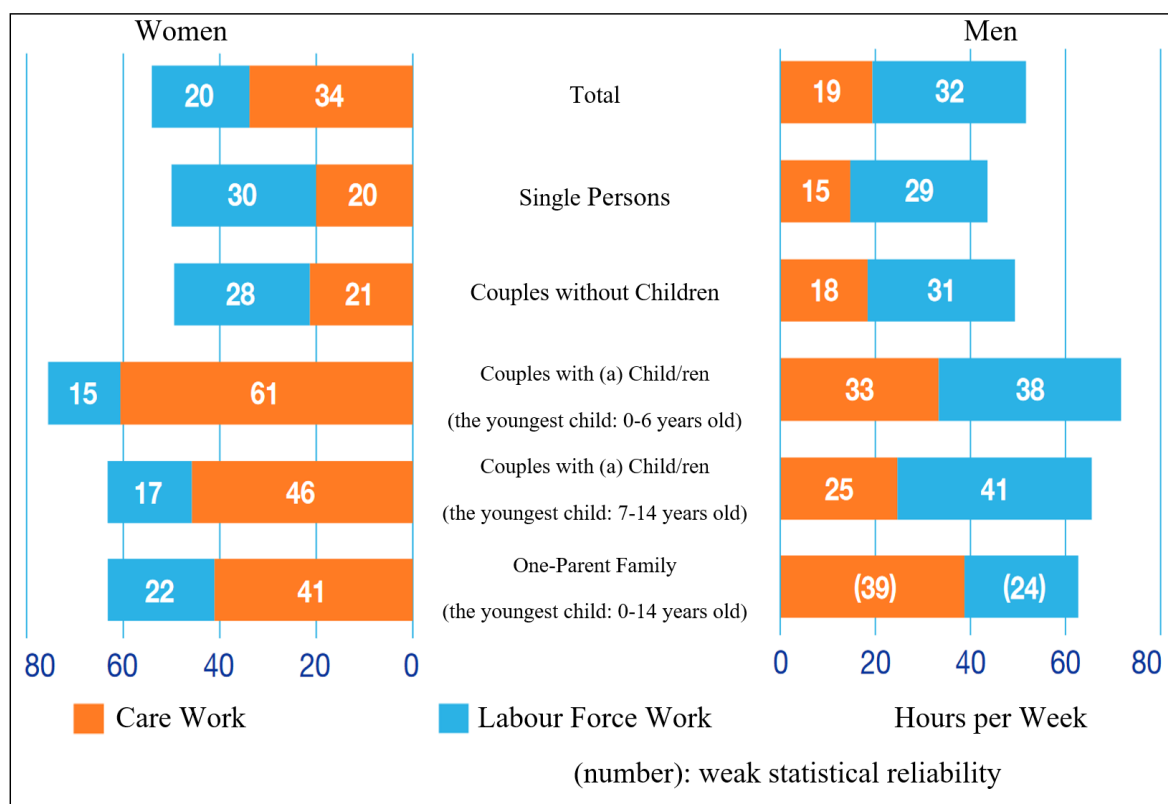
⁴¹ What is important in law is relatively easy. The specifics of these maternity, paternity, and parental leave systems are, however, complex and involve a lot of actors, covering a lot of individual cases. One could write a whole dissertation on this topic. For the present work, I took the decision to present only the general aspects of these systems.

not to share, the mother receives 12 months and if they do share the care it can be divided between 14 months. This system is called the *Elterngeld*. Another possibility is the *ElterngeldPlus*, which is longer and offers the possibility to reduce the time of work in the labour force and to receive the insurance for the day spent doing the care work of the child. Thus, while both possibilities maintain the working contract, the basic *Elterngeld* implies a concrete break in the work in the labour force to fully do the care work for the child/ren: a 100% break for at least a month, so to say. The *ElterngeldPlus* offers the possibility to work part time in the labour force and receiving benefits to compensate for the reduction of the professional activity. In other words, the partners can divide the care work between them, reduce their activity in the labour force without fully stopping it⁴².

This does not exist in Switzerland. In the Swiss circumstances, (a lack of childcare provision combined with nearly non-existent parental leave), it is the women who most often do the care work for the children. It shows that the “family” is still predominantly a patriarchal institution, as when the institutional, formalised, and stated support is low, it is the women who are making the sacrifices in terms of professional advancement in order to do the care work. The lack of available places in day care centres combined with a weak maternity leave system, and non-existent paternity and parental leave systems impact mostly on the female partner, as she is the one who does the care work in the absence of day care arrangements and support from the father. In these conditions, the male partner is free to continue his professional career.

⁴² For more information on the parental leave arrangements possible in Germany, see *Elterngeld, ElterngeldPlus und Elternzeit: Dans Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetz*, (2018) Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend. Retrieved August 6, 2018, from <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/93614/883f631806ac368da9d4a5a1cce66aa8/elterngeld-elterngeldplus-und-elternzeit-data.pdf>

Figure 11: Average Time Spent for the Work in the Labour Force and the Care Work in the Canton of Vaud, in 2013 (only includes people working in the labour force):



Source: Imhof (2015, 33)[Data: OFS, ESPA](Own translation)

Based on statistics of the Canton of Vaud, Figure 11 exemplifies this. It shows that the arrival of a child – with the care work it implies – is predominantly done by women. Thus, women raising a child between zero and six years old spend 61 hours per week doing the care work. Two times more than their male counterparts who spend 33 hours. The difference works the other way around, as men, with a child between zero and six years old, spend 38 hours per week in the labour force. More than twice the time that women spend (15 hours). But that is not all, as – according to the same study – many of women doing the care work say it is restraining their professional activity. In fact, according to Imhof (2015, 33), 38% of them say they are restricted in their professional activity because they do the care work for the child/ren. They would rather prefer to have the possibility to mobilise day care provision. Comparatively, the figure is only about 10% for the men (ibid). It shows that the lack of day care possibilities in the Geneva region impacts predominantly on the professional activity of the women. They predominantly do the care work until a day care solution is found, not the men.

In sum, the family policy – grounding the “formal care” – is more developed in Germany than in Switzerland, introducing an important distinction between the Frankfurt and the Geneva regions. However, highly-skilled migrants arriving in a new country typically do not have access to the full package of “formal care”. The access depends on multiple factors, such as the country of origin, where the person already contributed, etc. While presenting the “dual labour market theory” (Piore 1979; Berger and Piore 1980), I showed the distinction between the “primary sector” and the “secondary sector” of the labour market. According to this theory, migrants typically hold positions in the “secondary sector”. Highly-skilled migrants seem to be a liminal case, as they usually have position considered to be in the “primary sector”. Basically, it raises questions that my study seeks to clarify. One could ask, for instance, how does the “formal care” happen under the conditions of repeated professional mobility? When one partner resigns to follow the other partner for the sake of their professional activity, is this person going to receive “formal care” services? If not, how does the partners coordinate and organise the care work? As we shall see in the empirical part, the individual situations are diverse, and it is difficult, if not impossible to bring clear cut answers to these questions. It will depend on the “family-strategy” that the partners adopt while settling in a new local space, I will argue. However, the local conditions and the access to “formal care” is a central consideration for the partners while making decision concerning the division between the work in the labour force and the care work.

b. Informal and Non-Formal Care

In the context of “informal care”, I have shown the relevance of the “economy of kinship”, yet, replicating, once again, gender hierarchies, as it is most often the female relatives who contribute to the care work. I have already mentioned this in the previous chapter (3.2.2 Hidden Economy of Kinship, 61). In the empirical chapters, we shall see the difficulty to develop “informal care” practices for families who frequently mobile for professional reasons. Relating to “informal care”, the relevance of the so-called “expat bubbles” may correspond to practices of “informal care”, whether it is in the Frankfurt or the Geneva region.

When it comes to the “non-formal care”, the partners can find “private care arrangements”. There is the possibility to hire an *au pair* or a nanny. We shall see in the empirical part that it is a common way to compensate for the lack of “formal care” when both partners want to continue to work in the labour force. These practices are, however, not specific to highly-

skilled migrants⁴³. Websites such as *Motherworld*⁴⁴ in Germany or *Ma Nanny*⁴⁵ links potential employer and employee for the provision of child care. There is also the possibility to hire an *au pair*. This possibility is limited due to the need to speak the language spoken in the region; that is French in the Geneva region or German in the Frankfurt region. It is difficult to spot differences between the Frankfurt and the Geneva regions when it comes to the “non-formal care”.

c. Privatised Formal Care

Another possibility is to mobilise organisations dedicated to highly-skilled migrants, namely a specific form of “migration industry” (Groutsis, Broek, and Harvey 2015). For Hernández-León, a “migration industry” corresponds to:

The ensemble of entrepreneurs who, motivated by the pursuit of financial gain, provide a variety of services facilitating human mobility across international borders (2013, 156).

Thus, they are “private organisations” facilitating the settling in a new local space after a relocation. Initially, the concept of “migration industry” was mostly used in the context of “undocumented migration” (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen 2013; Hernández-León 2013; Salt and Stein 1997). Only recently, scholars started to use it to understand better the nexus of organisation surrounding highly-skilled migration such as relocation offices, outplacement agencies, and international schools (Groutsis, Broek, and Harvey 2015; Tissot 2018). Both the Geneva and the Frankfurt regions offer international schools, European schools or non-German or -French speaking (semi-)private (pre-)schools. An advantage of these schools and pre-schools is that some offer an education in English or another non-local language, though English is the most common. However, private international (pre-)schools are expensive and without the support of the employing company, difficult to afford. The annual gross fees for a child (age two and three) attending full-time care at a private childcare centre is 18,860 euros at the Frankfurt International School⁴⁶. In the International School of

⁴³ This topic corresponds to the “global care chains” developed by, amongst others, Amelina (2016) or the “transnational care work” developed, amongst others, by Shilliger (2013). These studies focus on migrants doing the care work in Western Europe.

⁴⁴ Website of Motherworld, retrieved August 6, 2018, from www.motherworld.de

⁴⁵ Website of MaNanny, retrieved August 6, 2018, from www.ma-nanny.ch

⁴⁶ Website of the Frankfurt International School, retrieved August 6, 2018, from <https://www.fis.edu/page.cfm?p=945>

Geneva, the annual tuition fee for one child between the age of two and three is 27,060 Swiss francs⁴⁷. In both region, what I call the “privatised formal care” is expensive. In fact, the international schools are amongst the most expensive while other schools such as the European school in Frankfurt is more affordable⁴⁸. In the Geneva region, the network of private school is – for historical reason – quite developed. Nevertheless – and as we shall see in the empirical part – these schools are often full, or at least a place for the children is not necessarily immediately available: in other words, these (pre-)schools have waiting-lists, too. For many respondents, finding a day care centre or a school for the child/ren after a relocation is a major challenge, regardless of the kind of care they are looking for. In fact, they often take what is available.

Although, the two regions share large socio-economic similarities, when it comes to the “family policy”, I see significant differences: it is a key reason why I chose them. The Frankfurt region has a more developed “family policy” than the Geneva region. In these conditions, I expected it to be easier for the parents to find suitable day care arrangements in the Frankfurt region than in the Geneva region. I have not developed a comparative study which would imply a systematic review of the samples, but rather I used the region of Frankfurt as a “shadow case” to have another point of view on my data. Though both regions offer many professional opportunities for highly-skilled migrants, the differences between them can be found at the level of the “family policy”. Thus, by having two entry points in two regions which have different “family policy” is a way to decentre my study as I can conceptualise the nation-state in which the migrants are imbedded without naturalising it. This allows me to grasp the contrasts between the two localities. Spotting similarities and differences between the lived experiences of highly-skilled migrants in two regions strengthens the results of the study, as similar social processes in two localities are less likely to be only typical for the very location the investigation takes place. The recurrence of similar challenges in the two localities speaks in favour of a phenomenon less likely to be typical of one location. In other words, using two cities as entry points broadens the relevance of the results as it allows the researcher to take a greater distance with the singularity of each city. By doing so, I am able to reassess and contextualise the interviews. It allows me to produce

⁴⁷ Website of the International School of Geneva, retrieved August 6, 2018, from <https://www.ecolint.ch/admissions/tuition-and-fees>

⁴⁸ Website of the Europäische Schule Frankfurt am Main, retrieved August 6, 2018, from https://www.esffm.org/fileadmin/downloads/infos/schulgeld/Info_School_Fee_18-19_EN.pdf

a more solid theoretical framework that deploys a broader empirical scope, enhancing the validity of my results (by overcoming methodological nationalism) and broadening the scope of my research (by a bi-local framework). In the methodological section, I have not only contextualised the study itself, but I have shown how I developed the structure of the empirical part around three chapters: the practices, the narratives, and the strategies.

Empirical Part

6 Professional Careers Coordination

The present chapter aims at analysing the decision-making process to migrate for professional reasons. The question of who gives the initiative of such a migration and its consequences for the partners are the central topics of this chapter. Thus, I take into consideration the partners and not an isolated individual. In the state of the art, I mentioned that overcoming the “gender binaries” does not mean forgetting about the professional activities of the partners to focus only on the division of the care work. Not that the division of the care work is not important but rather that the ways the partners (try to) coordinate two professional careers after a migration for professional reasons is equally relevant. Thus, this first empirical chapter focuses on the initiation of a migration for professional reasons and the ways that this migration reorganises the coordination of the professional careers between the partners. The chapter stresses that understanding the decision-making process to migrate requires a focus on the initiator of the migration; as I show that the initiator is in a privileged position compared to the other partner.

This chapter is composed of three main parts. I start the analysis by using a framework coming from expatriate studies (Al Ariss et al. 2012; Andresen et al. 2014) in order to explore this idea of spotting the initiator of a migration for professional reason. In the second part, I present a model grasping the coordination of the professional careers in a partnership differentiating the “primary mover” taking the initiative of the move and the “secondary mover” responding the decision to move. In the third part, I explore the social consequences of this model, showing not only a complementarity with the framework of Andresen et al. (2014), but also offering a perspective which emphasises differentiated consequences for the partners depending on who initiates a migration for professional reasons.

6.1 Migration Triggering: Individual Approach

In the state of the art, I have presented one study (Andresen et al. 2014) which develops types of expatriation according to the initiator of the move⁴⁹. These authors work in the larger framework of expatriation studies; logically, they use the term “expatriates”. I have already shown the reasons why I prefer the term “highly-skilled migrant” in the current study. Yet, one of my objectives is to create bridges between migration studies and expatriation studies,

⁴⁹ Andresen et al. (2014) are by far not the only ones working on the topic.

as they both deal with similar topics. I will stick to the terms used by the authors in the first part of the analyse before presenting concepts which link these two fields of studies. Andresen et al. (2014) focus on the concept of initiative: who is giving the initiative of a move? For them, it is either the expatriate, the employing company or another company. It allows a differentiation between the “assigned expatriate”, the “drawn expatriate” and the “intra and inter self-initiated expatriates”. What do these four categories mean when it comes the empirical cases I analyse? They are all focusing on an individual professional perspective, as I am to show in four empirical cases. We shall see that they explain the situation partially but offer a relevant perspective to make sense of the decision to migrate. Let us give “flesh and bones” to these four types of expatriates to present the relation between an employee and an employing company.

6.1.1 Assigned Expatriate

In the case of an “assigned expatriate”, the supervisor proposes him or her a new position abroad, the initiator of the relocation is the employing company. Katia’s and Dennis’s case⁵⁰ illustrates this. Katia and Dennis are both German and have three children. Katia does not work in the labour force anymore while Dennis works for the same consumer goods multinational company for more than twenty years, after having studied management. He started in 1996 to work for this company in Germany. Since then, the company assigned him to the United States, Italy, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and lately Switzerland. Altogether, the family relocated to three continents and five countries for the sake of his professional career. They discovered Hong Kong and lived there for five years: they “loved it” as Dennis told me. His position in Hong Kong was coming to an end and his supervisor proposed him a relocation to Switzerland, but Dennis and Katia wanted to stay in Hong Kong. Thus, he looked for another position in the labour force there – within the company and out of it – but did not find any. He thinks that one can always refuse to move, but once the opportunities are exhausted, one needs to move:

Well, the final decision was that my job in Hong Kong was over and that the new job was here [in Switzerland]. (...) So, that is why, in the end, when all options exhausted, we still had to go (Dennis, 49yrs, married).

⁵⁰ All the names have been changed to protect the privacy of my interviewees.

Favell (2014) underlines that highly-skilled migration may have its own constraints and this quote gives a first hint on how to track them. It shows the paradox between the well-to-do life they were having in Hong Kong and their inability to stay there though they wanted it. Not forced migration, neither wanted migration, could we speak of unwanted professional migration? It shows that the life of Dennis and Katia is fragile in the sense that it depends on where the company wants him to go, some kind a disguised dependency. Thus, the initiator of the relocation is the company employing Dennis, who perceives the relocation as a necessity to stay employed in the labour force. The company led the move and assigned Dennis on a new position. When it comes to the decision-making process of this move, it is a professional one which Dennis did not really take. The employing company gives him a new assignment, as he already received four of them. In sum, Dennis would have resigned if he would have found something in Hong Kong, but he did not, underlining the assigned character of these types of migration.

6.1.2 Drawn Expatriate

A “drawn expatriate” is hired by another company abroad (Andresen et al. 2014). In many cases, a head-hunter calls the (soon to be) “drawn expatriate” and tells him or her: “Listen, the company B has an opportunity for you. Would you be interested? The job is in Geneva, Switzerland”. Another company then hires the “drawn expatriate”, and thereby initiates the migration. Most “drawn expatriates” that I met possess “hard-skills”; e.g. managerial, scientific, and technical skills, which are more easily transferable than softer skills like and proficiency in a given language (Cornelius et al. 2001; Liversage 2009). Gabriel studied in Paris and has gained a Ph.D. in chemistry. He is French and works in the industrial pharmacological sector for more than twenty years now. Contrarily to Dennis, he changed employers several times during his career. He was contacted by a head-hunter who proposed him a position in another company. Here is his answer when asking him how he started to work for this company:

A head hunter. At the time, they [the people hiring him] wanted to develop here [in the subsidiary of the new company] a function similar to the one I had created in Basel. [In Basel,] I was one of the two leaders of this group as I created the function (Gabriel, 54yrs, divorced)⁵¹.

⁵¹ Un chasseur de tête, à l'époque, ils voulaient monter ici en Suisse une fonction similaire à celle que j'avais créé à Bâle. J'étais un des deux responsables de ce groupe. J'avais créé la fonction quoi (Own Translation).

The quote emphasizes the competitiveness of the pharmaceutical sector⁵². Gabriel's new employer asked him to recreate what the system he developed for his former employer. Gabriel is the typical example of a "drawn expatriate" – a social process resulting from combining "hard-skills", a competitive environment, and head-hunters. The initiative of the move comes from another company which wanted to hire Gabriel, while he was employed by a competing company.

6.1.3 Intra Self-Initiated Expatriate

The initiator of the move can also be the individual him-or herself. There are two types of "self-initiated expatriates". Some of them move and remain in the same company – these are the "intra self-initiated expatriates" – while others resign, move and switch to a new company – these are the "inter self-initiated expatriates".

The "intra self-initiated expatriate" is someone who takes the initiative of the move but continues to work for the same company, like Carlos. Carlos was born in Mexico, having a German father and an American mother, and studied marketing in Mexico City. His career started in the marketing industry in Mexico. After a few years, his employer proposed him a position in the Dominican Republic; in other words, an "assigned expatriation". Carlos then spent a few years there and at a point, felt totally blocked in this position. He did not see to be able to move further in his career while staying there. He felt he needed to move. He then took the initiative of the next relocation as there were no opportunities for him in the Dominican Republic. He told me about his feeling of having been forgotten by his company when working there as the director of the national subsidiary:

You already know from a professional point of view that the corporation says: 'We cannot move you further, that is where you end' (Carlos, 44, in partnership).

These difficulties made him almost return to Mexico without having a position. When Carlos told me his experience about the Dominican Republic, the feeling of being left alone is striking. Things changed as he met one of the directors of the European subsidiary of his company in a "global meeting" at the headquarters. In a conversation, this director told him

⁵² I interviewed Gabriel at his workplace. He opened the door of the conference room with a retinal scan. This anecdote expresses well how cautious the milieu is: doing the interview was the outcome of a long process as only getting his e-mail address was already a hard undertaking.

that they would have a position at the European headquarters. Soon after this incident, he quit his position in the Dominican Republic. This is how he tells this episode:

If I was not there, that May in *** without having met ***, then probably the network would have let me there until I die, so yeah, I mean I am really grateful, that *** was there and that the stars aligned in my favour (Carlos, 44yrs, in partnership).

The difference between the “intra self-initiated expatriate” and the “assigned expatriate” is at the level of the initiator of the move: nobody in the company wanted to move Carlos (“[they] would have let me there until I die”). Carlos was lucky to be in the right place at the right time. He found an opportunity abroad in the same company though he could have stayed in the Dominican Republic. He relocated as an “intra self-initiated expatriate”, which contrasts with Dennis’ experience who wanted to stay in Hong Kong but left due to the lack of perspective there. Dennis’ only option was to accept what the company would offered him in Switzerland after an unsuccessful search for other positions in Hong Kong. Carlos wanted to leave the Dominican Republic and found another position in Germany. Yet, both are moving within the same company.

6.1.4 Inter Self-Initiated Expatriate

The last case refers to the expatriates who decide to switch to a new company after having personally applied for a new position. Emma is an engineer who worked in France for some years after her graduation. After she temporarily ended the relationship with the man who was to become her husband (they met, got together, separated, got back together and got married), she answered to a call for applications in Switzerland and was hired there:

In fact, we met at work and then we broke up and so it is the moment when I came across the announcement in *** and I applied. I accepted the position and once I accepted the position, we got back together (Emma, 37yrs, married)⁵³.

In Andresen et al.’s typology (2014), Emma is an “inter self-initiated expatriate”, since she took the initiative to move abroad and switched to another company within this process. She came to Switzerland with an employment contract prior to the relocation. Being single was a

⁵³ En fait, du coup, moi, je suis, on s'est rencontré dans le boulot pis après on s'est séparé et du coup c'est le moment où je suis tombée sur l'annonce à *** que j'ai postulé, que j'ai accepté le poste et une fois que j'ai accepté le poste ben on s'est remis ensemble (Own Translation).

factor which motivated her to accept a position abroad. For her, it is clear that she would not have moved if she and Blaise – her husband – would not be separated during this time:

Yes, yes, of course, otherwise I would not have left. I was in Grenoble for 10 years. It wasn't so bad. The fact that we broke up and the feeling that I did not have much to lose any more in Grenoble [convinced me]. So, I left (Emma, 37yrs, married)⁵⁴.

She decided to move to Switzerland in the first place and being single was a factor at least not hindering this decision. Yet, they made up a few times later. While Eva was already working in Switzerland, Blaise joined her there. In Switzerland, he started to seek for employment in the labour force and found a position in a research institute. They got married and have a child now. What is it, then, the role of Blaise when it comes to the initiation of the move? Blaise is an outlier when it comes to the typology of Andresen et al. (2014). He could be conceptualised as a “inter self-initiated expatriate”; yet, he did not have a work contract prior to arriving in Switzerland, showing the blurred boundary between expatriation and migration. Furthermore, the centrality of his feelings for Eva in his decision to move would be lost with a focus only on the professional aspect of Blaise's move. While he is the initiator of his move, he does it to come to live with his partner and not for professional reasons; yet, he still found a position in the labour force corresponding to his skills, blurring the “migration binaries”. He takes the decision to move for sentimental reasons. By introducing a family sensitive approach, the typology of Andresen et al. (2014) can be completed, I argue. How is it possible to develop a better understanding of Blaise's and Eva's situation, in which a migration for professional reasons is followed by a migration for sentimental reasons?

6.2 Migration Triggering: Collective Approach

I call the approach assessing the perspective of both partners who aim at maintaining their relationship while at least one of them moves for professional reasons a “collective approach”. Thus, I propose an interpretation of the initiation of a move from the perspective of the coordination of two professional careers. From this perspective, the decision to move proceeds from one of the partners; which we can grasp by using the analytical distinction between a “primary-mover” and a “secondary-mover”. *One gives the initiative; the other one*

⁵⁴ Oui, oui, bien sûr, sinon je ne serai pas partie, ça faisait 10 ans que j'étais à Grenoble, je n'étais pas si mal, le fait qu'on ait rompu et que j'avais l'impression que je n'avais plus grand chose à perdre à Grenoble, donc je suis partie (Own Translation).

reacts to it – this configuration introduces a model with two types of movers. I draw on the work of Schaer, Dahinden and Toader (2017, 1298). They use a distinction between a “primary-mover” and a “tied-mover”, wherein the “primary-mover” causes the impulse of the move by accepting the position abroad and the “tied-mover” reacts to it. My conceptualisation considers the “tied mover” as one specific configuration of “secondary-mover” amongst others. In my empirical cases, the reaction of the “secondary-mover” to the move of “primary-mover” is not always to follow him or her. The partners can decide to live apart for a time. I understand the “tied-mover” as one possibility amongst others, which underlines the fact that the “secondary-mover” is not (and thus should not be conceptualised as) passive. The “secondary-mover” is an active member co-producing the “family-strategies”. Such an understanding provides the basis to deconstruct the “gender binaries”, as it allows to study the negotiation and the coordination of the partners when it comes to their professional careers.

6.2.1 Primary-Mover and Secondary-Mover

The odds that both partners receive a job offer at the same place and at the same time are low. Even in this unlikely case, we can still identify a “primary-mover” and a “secondary-mover”. Lynn and Alex, for instance, moved together from the United-States to Germany 14 years ago. At that point of time, they just got engaged and wanted to start a family. They were about “to be married the following year, in May, and so we moved in January” (Alex, 52yrs, married). Lynn, working for a multinational marketing agency received an offer in Frankfurt first. She remembers the conversation she had with the director of the department:

I said: ‘Well, I am interested to go but I am kind of a fiancé now. So, I have to think about it.’
 And I said: ‘Actually, he works here.’
 He said: ‘He does? Who is he?’
 I said: ‘Alex, Alex *** [last name]’
 He said: ‘Is that the same Alex *** that I worked with on *** [name of a company]?’
 I said: ‘Yes’
 He said: ‘He has a job, too!’
 I mean that was so lucky, so lucky (Lynn, 51yrs, married).

Obviously, her superior already worked with Alex together on a project, who is a creative designer working in marketing. Back then, Alex was working as an external contractor in the same company. As a result of this conversation, Lynn’s superior proposed him a position, too:

I was not with *** [name of the company] but I met my wife at the agency and one night we went out to dinner and she said: ‘They offered me this position and to you this position, too. Do you want to move to Germany?’ and I just said: ‘Ok’ (Alex, 52yrs, married).

Even when the partners get simultaneously two job offers at the same place in the same time, it is one of the partners who gives the initiative of the migration. As in the case of Lynn and Alex, they offered a position to Alex because they wanted to transfer Lynn. In most of the cases, however, the distinction between the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” is more obvious. In the four cases used to exemplify the professional approach, the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” are easily recognisable. One of the two partners receives a job offer and seriously considers to accept it; thus, she or he speaks with her or his partner about it. In sum, I introduce two types of movers within a couple: the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover”.

However, according the framework of Andresen et al. (2014), Lynn is an “assigned expatriate”. She works for a company which proposes her a position in Germany. From the relational perspective, she is the “primary-mover” for she would be initiator of her and Alex’s move. But, in fact, it is not she herself but rather her company, proposing her a position in a new local-space. Thus – I argue – the notion of the “initiator of a relocation” is multi-faceted depending on the perspective that the researcher adopts. In the case of Lynn, both approaches are not mutually exclusive. She is an “assigned expatriate”, because she accepts a position in the same company abroad; at the same time, she is a “primary-mover”, because her husband moves with her to Germany.

Yet, in the case of Alex, what would be his position according to the two perspectives? From a “collective perspective”, he is admittedly a liminal case of a “secondary-mover” for he does not initiate the mobility. From an “individual perspective”, his case corresponds to a “drawn expatriate” as he was working for another agency on mandate; fulfilling missions in the company which was to hire him. According to the “individual perspective”, the initiative to move comes either from the company or the employee him- or herself. Alex’s and Blaise’s cases are difficult to understand when we only use the “individual approach”, because the initiative to ultimately move came from respectively Lynn and Emma. Allegedly, Alex got the position on the initiative of Lynn, who was offered a position for him, as the company wanted her to go to Germany in the first place. If we take the “collective perspective” into account, Alex and Blaise differ from the definition of respectively the “drawn expatriate” and the “inter self-initiated expatriate” because their moves are *partner-initiated*.

I argue that the “collective perspective” completes and strengthens the “individual perspective”, as the former stresses the coordination between two professional activities. In this context, I introduce the “*partner-initiated mover*”, which differs from the other types of Andresen et al. (2014) in that it underlines the relation between the partners in the initiative of a relocation. It does not reflect the same process as we have seen, for instance, in the case of Emma seeking employment in the labour abroad. She applied abroad because one of her friends showed her a call for applications: this is the classic “self-initiated expatriate”, relocating to where the work is. Yet, Blaise – her husband – sought a position in the labour force in Switzerland because Emma already worked there. In brief, the concept of the “partner-initiated mover”, underlines that the initiative of the move relies in the professional career of the other partner. What is specific to the situation of the “partner-initiated mover” is the scope of the choice, I argue. A “partner-initiated mover” will neither choose the country, nor the length of the stay. It is a very common case in my sample. The distinction between “self-initiated, assigned, or drawn expatriate” and “partner-initiated mover” underlines different challenges while moving; introducing different individual situations cumulating into the development of a specific “family-strategy”. We shall see now what I understand by “family-strategy”, as it is a central concept of this study.

6.3 Conceptualising the Professional Careers Coordination

I just presented a distinction between the “primary mover” and the “secondary mover”. This distinction has deep consequences on the ways to assess the decision-making process of a move, as it is not only the relationship between an employer and an employee which is considered, but also the fact that the employed position of one of the partners in the labour force can trigger the move of the other. How is it possible to conceptualise further this seminal distinction?

The work of Halpern and Murphy (2005) addressing the “family-work integration” between the partners offers a way to develop further the relationship between the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” in the context of highly-skilled migration. They call to reassess the metaphor of the “work-family balance” proposing instead the “work-family integration”. The “family-work integration” can be defined as *the ways the partners coordinate their work in the labour force while struggling to divide in an efficient way the necessary means and time to do the care work*. This definition implies many potential points of tension between the partners on the one side, and between the partners and their employers on the other.

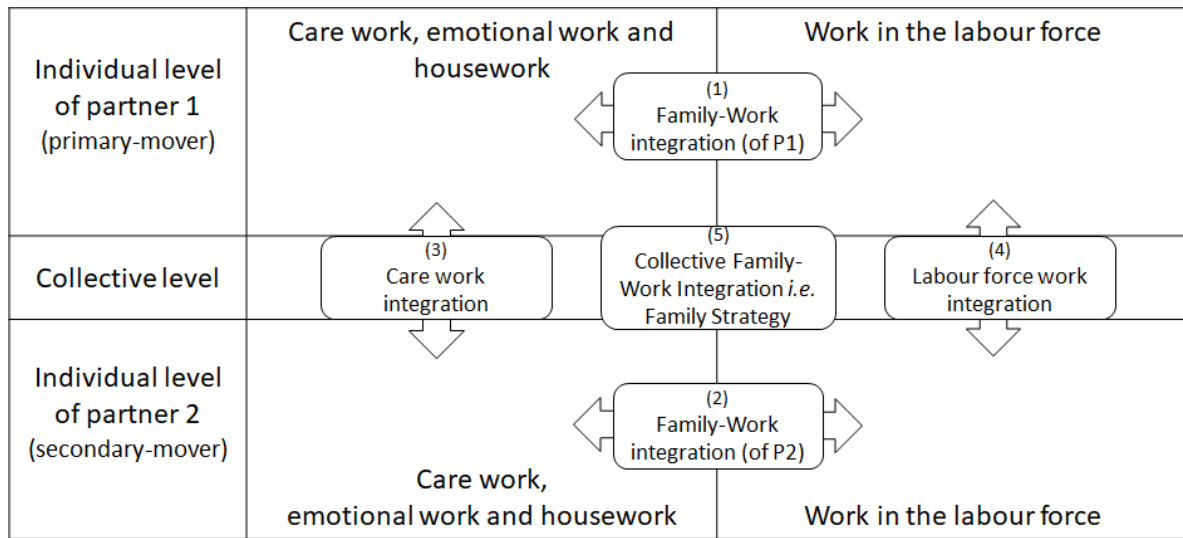
Sharing the care work requires finding arrangements, as the partners need to find an equilibrium between the time and the energy they invest in the labour force and the ones they invest in care work. Finding this equilibrium may lead to conflicts between the partners. I use the concept of “work-family integration” because it emphasises more than a “balance” between two times of the day that the individuals need to arrange⁵⁵. The “work-family balance” implies a zero-sum game. On the contrary, an integration implies that the partners can find a *more or less efficient* arrangement to combine the work in the labour force and the care work (e.g. home office, day care centre at the workplace, etc.); thus, overcoming a zero-sum game. Besides, I prefer the term of integration to the one of interaction as an interaction implies dealing between two spheres of life, while the integration presupposes a conscient strategy to cope with both simultaneously. Integrating does not refer to a zero-sum game nor a mere interaction but rather to how the partners develop a “family-strategy” which works for them, in their specific situated case. The “work-family integration” underlines that dealing with the work in the labour force and the care work is a collective and reflexive process. Wilding and Baldassar (2009) argue in the same direction:

Rather than trying to devote balanced time of each day, week or even year to the pursuit of employment or the care of family members, the participants in our study instead aimed to find an appropriate integration of work and family activities (2009, 185).

Thus, the “work-family integration” aims at overcoming the “gender binaries” by looking at the reciprocal impacts of work in the labour force and care work. In my study, migration for professional reasons complexifies the “family-work integration” even more.

⁵⁵ Truth to be told, Halpern and Murphy (2005) speak mostly of “work-family interaction”; yet, they refer to the concept of integration, too.

Figure 12: Family-Strategy



Source: Own Elaboration

In Figure 12, I propose a model to conceptualise these multiple interactions. This model is an analytical tool to study the “family-strategy”. I construct the model by combining an individual and a collective level of analysis with the spheres of work in the labour force and the care work (encompassing the emotional work and the housework). The levels of analysis are individual and collective; the spheres of analysis are work in the labour force and care work. The individual “family-work integration of Partner 1 or Partner 2” (1 and 2) refers to the way each partner copes between labour force work and care work individually, i.e. independently from the various dependencies between them. It is an abstraction to look at their individual situation. The “care work integration” (3) refers to the ways the partners share the care work (if they do share it at all), that is to say the care work concerning the housework, the emotional work and care work for the children as well as, in some cases, care for their parents. The “labour force work integration” (4) focuses on the arrangements of the partners to coordinate two paid positions in the labour force, independently from the care work. A “family-strategy” or “the collective family-work integration” is defined as *the negotiations and the decisions taken between the partners after one of them accept a relocation abroad*. They refer to the ways the partners cope simultaneously with all the elements of the model. The model highlights the simultaneous search of a new integration between work in the labour force and the care work. It opens a way to study the tensions and the conflicts as well as the ways of solving between the partners.

In this study, the professional move of at least one of the partners complexify the “family-strategy”. In other words, at the core of their “family-strategy” lies a tension between mobility and mooring. I understand mobility as an asset in terms of work in the labour force, as it facilitates an upward professional career, and as a socially disruptive force, as it compels the partners to reconfigure the “family-strategy”. To take an example, if one of the partners accepts a position in which he or she will lead the national subsidiary of a multinational company abroad, the other partner has to decide on what to do, too. The options are basically either following, staying, or finding a middle way. The mobility for professional reasons of one of the partners raises questions concerning the professional activity of the other partner, because the chance for both to find a professional position in their respective fields within the same local space is limited. Thus, mobility is a double-edge sword, being rewarding and disruptive at the same time; it is ambivalent.

Through this model, I can divide the topic under study and analyse its different facets separately. In the next part of this chapter, I will focus on the right-hand side of the model, that is the work in the labour force of P1 and P2 as well as the “labour force work integration” (4) *i.e.* the experiences and strategies of partners who both work in the labour force when at least one of them moves for professional reasons. Of course, I do have cases in which one of the partners stop to work in the labour force: I will deal with these cases in the next chapters. For now, I will analyse the consequences of the decision to move and the various reactions and challenges the partners face by asking the following questions: How do partners integrate two positions in the labour force when one has to move abroad for professional reasons? What are the individual consequences for their professional careers?

6.4 Primary-Mover

Let us start with the work in the labour force of the “primary-mover”, that is the top right corner of Figure 12. The “primary-mover” has a position in the labour force abroad for a time *under certain conditions*. In my conceptualisation, the “primary-mover” is the one who gives the initiative of the move; meaning that he or she already has a working contract before arriving in the new country. I argue that the working contract is one element amongst others to give meaning to a relocation for as not all relocations are perceived equally. I distinguish two types of move which typically refer to two employment contracts: the expatriate contract and the local contract. The partners’ interpretation of the “primary-mover’s” position in the labour market plays a significant role in the “family-strategy” as a whole. In other words, the

way they perceive a relocation impacts their “family-strategy”. Thus, I conceptualise two types of move for the “primary-mover”; these moves influence the way the “secondary-mover” will consider his or her situation and the way the partners will consider theirs.

6.4.1 Expat-Move

The “expat-move” can be characterized through three key components. (1) The company supports the partners. (2) The support maintains the “motility” (Flamm and Kaufmann 2006) of the “primary-mover”. (3) The members of an “elementary family” or a “couple” are in a “liminal state” (Van Gennep 1960; Turner 1967), trapped between “here today” and maybe “there tomorrow”.

a. Knowing What the Support is About

The “expat-move” describes a relocation in which the employing company supports financially and organisationally the partners and their children. The expatriate contract formalises this support and offers an expatriation package providing an extended support, which aims at facilitating the relocation. The case of Kim and Laura illustrates this: they are married for 22 years, he is Dutch, and she is British, and they have four children together. During Kim’s childhood, he was back and forth between Switzerland and South Africa, before studying in Belgium. By now, he works for a multinational consumer goods company for 25 years. Laura does not work in the labour force anymore, as she does the care work for the children. Altogether they relocated abroad eight times for the same company, each time with an expatriate contract. Frequent relocations are part of Kim’s career path for he uses mobility to climb up the company’s hierarchy; achieving an upward career, making him the director of a worldwide promotion program. At the beginning of his career, he was an “assigned expatriate” who relocated to work where the company needed him, but in the course of his career, climbing up the ladder of the company, he asked to come to Switzerland as “intra self-initiated expatriate”, by that gaining power to negotiate within the organisation. In this context, his employment contract is combined with an expatriate contract implying specific clauses to support mobility. It formalises the type of support Kim, Laura and their children receive:

I mean when you move, you know exactly (...) what are your housing allowances, whether you get the trip paid back home, whether you get entitlement for a car, schooling. It’s all black and white there. So, I think that makes it very easy. I mean 90% of your next position is a situation, you know (Kim, 49yrs, married).

In other words, the company sends them all around the world and provides support for this. The challenges of the relocations remain in the background, because the company backs Kim, Laura, and their children. The respondents doing “expat-moves” conceive migration as a straightforward process. They perceive a move as a technical detail that service providers such as relocation offices help to deal with: for a broken sink, we need a plumber; for a relocation abroad, a relocation office. The organisational support extends beyond the professional activity of the “primary-mover” and encompasses assistance to the whole family. When needed, the company will pay for language lessons or for the services of an outplacement agency for the “secondary-mover” as well as for an international school for the child to attend. Centrally, I understand an “expat-move” as a relocation supported by the company financially and organisationally and this support seemingly creates a “frictionless mobility”, but as we have seen it already, the constraints may very well be situated elsewhere. In the third empirical chapter, I will show concretely what kind of support does the company offer (8.2.3 Company’s Support, 221).

b. Not Knowing When and Where is the Next Move

Another characteristic of an “expat-move” is the high possibility of a further relocation. Stefan and Caroline are married. He is Austrian, she is German. They have three children. While Caroline does not work in the labour force anymore, Stefan directs the financial operations of a consumer goods multinational company. Though he worked only in Europe, he was on an expatriate contract, as he relocated frequently between and within Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. When I asked him about his plans to remain in Switzerland, he told me that he does not know. As “being ready” for a relocation is part of the job:

We don't know actually very exactly, it can be either here or somewhere abroad. Most likely abroad, but we don't know well. I mean mainly in the region of Europe, because I am not going anywhere else (Stefan, 48yrs, married).

Stefan perceives his stay in Switzerland to be limited in time; yet, he does not know for how long. Though, he has some conditions, as he would refuse to relocate outside of Europe, he also does not know where he will relocate. In fact, he knows where he could relocate, namely, in a place where the company has an office or a subsidiary in Europe. This corresponds to more than 15 different cities, from Lisbon to Moscow. Maintaining the capacity of Stefan to relocate – at a time and a place he does not know – has a price. Thus, the employing company pays for the international school of the children, for the apartment they rent, as well as for

the trips back home. In fact, the company pays for the family's settlement in a fashion that supports Stefan's "motility". "Motility" can be defined as how an individual or group takes possession of the realm of possibilities for mobility and builds on it to develop personal projects" (Flamm and Kaufmann 2006, 168) Thus, "motility" is not only the capacity and the potential to mobility, but also the acceptance and the will to move again.

"Motility" implies financial and organisational means. While the company pays to support Stefan's career, so he can maintain his availability to mobility, Caroline pays a price, too: the incapacity to maintain her own position in the labour force, as she does the care work and follows Stefan. Thus, Stefan's "organisational means" are not only the employing company but also and more centrally a division of the tasks, in which Caroline provides the care work. In other words, the support of the company and Caroline's care work maintain Stefan's "motility", by facilitating the settling of the "elementary family" as a whole. If Caroline and their children are "motile", it is because Stefan's "motility" requires it. Stefan and Caroline develop a "motile mobility", as the purpose of an "expat-move" is maintaining an employee's "motility". In that sense, their "motility" is oriented towards his professional career; later on, I will refer to that by saying that he is the depository of the family's "motility" (7.3.1 Ignoring Motility, 190).

Furthermore, the "motility" of Stefan has profound impacts on the capacity of Caroline to maintain a position in the labour-force, because she does not choose when and where to move. In fact, neither Caroline nor Stefan know where and when they will relocate again. Yet, their respective positions differ. Though Stefan does not know where and when he will move again, he knows that he will move for the sake of his professional career and will have a position in the labour force after the next relocation. In other words, their "motility" favours his professional career concurrently hindering hers. "We thought we need to move so she did not start [to look for paid work in the labour force]" (Stefan, 48yrs, married). This quote gives a clue on how the will and the acceptance of further mobility is constructed as well as its possible gendered consequences. Stefan does not seem to question anymore the division of the tasks, because *they* thought to move again for the sake of *his* professional career, *she* did not start to look for employment. His argument implies a strong hierarchisation between the partners. I will analyse this process in depth in the next empirical chapter (7 Representing Migration: Between Motilities and Anchors, 165). In sum, the concept of "motility" grasps

this extraordinary situation in that it has a deep gendered impact on the “family strategies”, explaining, in part, why Caroline does not work in the labour force but does the care work.

c. From an Expatriate Contract to a Local Contract

The “expat-move” requires the support of the employing company and the “secondary-mover” to maintain the quite expansive state of “motile motility” – it calls attentions to the “state of liminality” (Van Gennep 1960; Turner 1967) implying a tension between “here” and “somewhere else”. A “state of liminality” is a transitional period. Being in a liminal state between “here” and “somewhere else” has gendered consequences, as we have just seen it with Stefan and Caroline. Furthermore, expatriate contracts provide benefits only for some years, which is, generally, between three and five years depending on the company – in case there is no further relocation. Companies create expatriate positions under expatriate contracts, despite their costs, in order to have a “motile” workforce. Multinational companies need a pool of highly-skilled migrants who can move easily and fast. Thus, the expatriate contract formalises the support for a succession of relocations. It is the case for Kim, who works for the same company for 25 years and relocates every three to four years. Conversely, the company downgrades the expatriate contract to a local contract once the employees have stayed at the same place for three to five years. This happened to Nick, who is now the executive creative director of an international marketing agency in Germany. He relocated three times during his professional career as he moved from The Netherlands to Belgium, then to France, and finally to Germany. His last relocation was under a local contract, which implies less support:

F.T.: What kind of support does the company offer?

Nick: It is only the school, no housing, no nothing, I am actually on a local contract here.

F.T.: Were you once on an expat contract?

Nick: Because my expat contract expired when I was in Belgium, because an expat contract is three or five years after the move, but I stayed longer when I was in Belgium, about six and a half years. So, one and a half years too long. So, my contract was already transmitted to a local contract in Belgium (Nick, 54yrs, married).

An “expat-move” is not only about relocating in the sense of being mobile, but rather about giving the capacity to relocate *frequently* in the sense of being “motile”. To that end, the partners are supported by the employing company. When a relocation lasts longer, the employees are downgraded to a local contract. In conclusion, I propose three constituting elements of an “expat-move” as (1) the financial and organisational support of a company to

a family, (2) maintaining the “motility” of a family for the sake of the “primary-mover”, which introduces (3) a liminal settling between “here” and “somewhere else”.

6.4.2 Local-Move

A “local-move” creates more bounds between a highly-skilled migrant and the country of relocation than an “expat-move”, because the former includes less assistance or none at all. International schools, outplacement agencies, and relocation offices are not part of the service granted by a “local contract”, neither does it include financial, like paid home-trips, or organisational support, like support with the local administration. To put it bluntly, a “local-move” implies a local contract with no additional support concerning the settling and the mobility. The interviewees, who are employed on a “local contract”, need to sort out the challenges of a relocation by themselves. They are alone to finding, for instance, an apartment or a kindergarten. The lack of support implies that the move is more anchoring; it impacts the current move as well as further possible moves, it is an “anchoring move”.

a. Settlement Struggles

Emma and Blaise, who I have introduced earlier as an “inter self-initiated expatriate” (6.1.4 Inter Self-Initiated Expatriate, 123)⁵⁶ relocated to Switzerland on a “local contract”. She moved alone to Switzerland and struggled to find accommodation to settle right after the relocation as she did not receive any support from the company which was employing her, even though this company is a widely known multinational pharmaceutical company. She did not manage to find an apartment right away and thus needed to live at her uncle’s place for two months, which was more than two hours away from her workplace. She struggled between working, commuting and searching for an accommodation. Once she settled, she therefore wanted to remain at the same place for a while. Emma found another position, works since then in another region of Switzerland, and intends to remain there. Interviewees moving locally perceive a relocation as a challenging process as such, as opposed to the ones performing “expat-moves”. The former expresses their wish to stay longer for as they had to make much effort to settle there in the first place. Others, however, switch to a local contract when staying more than a few years in the same place, it is the case of Nick who was transferred into a local contract. These are two particular situations leading to the same

⁵⁶ When I will refer to respondents I already mentioned earlier, I will point at the chapter where I mentioned them in order not to repeat the context of their migration. Furthermore, the annex ?? contains the lists of the respondents used in the empirical analysis.

outcome: Nick and Anouk and Emma and Blaise relocated under the conditions of a local contract which implies less support.

b. Localising the Home-Base

The localisation of the “home country” of the employee is another element which creates bounds with a local space by that expressing the wish of an “anchoring mobility”. In order to develop more anchors with a country in which they like to settle in the long run, some of my interviewees ask to change the “home country” on their contract and thus expecting to return to their new “home country” in the case they have to relocate abroad. Julia is a good example for this: not only did she asked to be transferred on a local contract, but she also asked her company to change her contract’s “home country”. She is a British citizen and a senior manager in an American pharmaceutical company in Switzerland. In order to continue to see her daughter after her divorce, it was important for her to be on a local contract:

I might have to leave for a few years, but I've asked the company to consider that Switzerland is my home country to expatriate me out to come back. Not to consider the UK as my home country and take me back there (Julia, 42, divorced).

Julia strategically uses the “home country” to maintain strong ties to consider Switzerland as her “home country”. Yet, the decisions that Julia took concerning her work in the labour force – that is the upper right corner of Figure 12 – seems confusing without acknowledging her need to integrate work and family. The work in the labour force influences and is influenced by the “work-family integration”. Julia’s daughter is in a Swiss private school and not an international school as Julia decided together with her former husband to raise their daughter in Switzerland, which means that Julia wishes to stay in Switzerland on the long run. Julia’s situation illustrates that a “local-move” is more anchoring and that one can make strategic use of it. It thus does not imply as much “motility” as an “expat-move” would.

In sum, the “local-move” implies a different way to experience a migration for professional reasons as the employees usually do not receive support of the company and often struggle to settle in the new local space. Furthermore, a “local-move” implies less “motility” usually corresponding to the wish or the necessity of the partners to stay longer in the same local space.

6.4.3 Continuum of the Primary-Mover

I understand the “expat-move” and the “local-move” as two types of moves that a “primary-mover” performs which influences the settling of the whole family. The “expat-move” and the “local-move” correspond to the two ends of a continuum⁵⁷, symbolising two plain forms of mobility. When the “expat-move” introduces “motile mobilities”, the “local-move” emphasises “anchoring mobilities”. The expected frequency of further relocations is higher for “expat-moves” as it is for “local-moves”. The two types represent two internally coherent forms of mobility, that can be arranged logically in order to distinguish them. In that sense, the “types” are sociological tools, useful to structure the social world. I argue that some moves create more “anchors” to a local space, while others enable families to be “motile”, yet they introduce different “family strategies”.

a. Relocation of a Headquarter

Sometimes, companies use “expatriate contracts” when they relocate a headquarter; thus, not necessarily using “expatriate contracts” to enhance the “motility” of their employees. Manon, who was married to Charles, worked in the pharmaceutical industry as a national product manager, while Charles was a senior manager in the aggro-food industry. Both are French; they have three children together. When the headquarter of the company employing Charles was transferred from France to Switzerland, the company proposed “expatriate contracts” to all the employees of the headquarter in order to support them to relocate. It does not mean that the company was seeking to maintain a high “motility” for these employees. On the contrary, the goal was to make sure the employees settle in the best conditions in Switzerland, so that they would stay there:

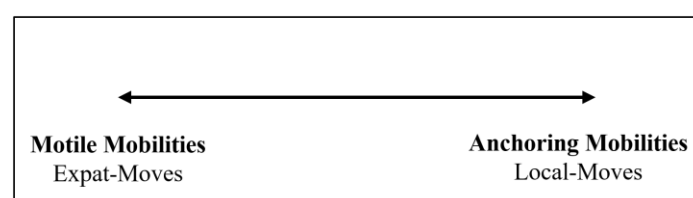
I think that initially the idea was to have an expatriate contract for three years and then switching to a local contract. It means to transfer my husband into a local contract. This relocation concerned many employees, because the headquarters of *** was moving from Paris to Lausanne. So, it was not just for my husband. It was for many of them and they absolutely needed these top managers. They moved them and they knew that / my husband might have

⁵⁷ I speak of a continuum because my empirical cases are usually in between two extreme poles. A “local contract” sometimes offers “expatriate benefits”, like paid language lessons or paid “home-leaves” for the whole family – known as a “local plus contract”. Indeed, some companies do not propose “expatriate contracts” and work only with “local contracts”, which does not mean that they do not provide any support in order to maintain the “motility” of their employees. Thus, a “local contract” does not systematically mean an “local-move”. Furthermore, it may be more advantageous to be on a “Swiss local contract” and to receive the salary in Swiss Francs than receiving an American salary, in American Dollars, in Switzerland. The companies’ policies regarding the mobility of their staff vary considerably.

moved for a few years, but if I had not found [a position] ... Good. Then, maybe I and my husband would have returned [to France] (Manon, 55yrs, divorced)⁵⁸.

A broader program to relocate the whole headquarter of the company triggered the relocation of the employees. It was part of the “grand strategy” of the company, for Switzerland seeks to attract headquarters of multinational companies. The direction of a company can also decide to move the company as such and may decide to relocate the whole staff, too. This case illustrates the complexity and the variety of the decisions to migrate for professional reasons: that is why I opt for a continuum which is a flexible tool to conceptualise these different experiences of migration.

Figure 13: Continuum of Relocations of the Primary-Mover



Source: Own Elaboration

For all these reasons, an expatriate contract does not always overlap with an “expat-move”, neither does a local contract overlap with a “local-move”. I have presented two typical moves precisely to avoid a rigid structure while still underlining different orientations in the way highly-skilled migrants relocate. The types of moves and the continuum, structuring their relation, highlight the centrality of “motility” to make sense of professional relocations. Charles, even if he would have been on an expatriate contract – performed a move which is locally oriented. Thus, the distinction between an “expat-move” and a “local-move” shows different conditions of moves, in which “motility” is more or less supported. It not only refers to the type of working contract, but rather to the importance given to further mobilities, and thus, “motility”, during a relocation. In sum, the two types of moves – the “expat-move” and the “local-move” – express a central qualitative difference between the relocations of the

⁵⁸ Je pense qu'au départ dans l'idée c'était d'abord d'avoir un contrat d'expatrié pendant trois ans et puis après d'avoir un contrat local de passer mon mari en contrat local. Cette mutation s'est faite bien pour beaucoup de salariés parce que le siège social de *** bougeait de Paris à Lausanne. Donc, ce n'était pas que pour mon mari ! C'était pour un certain nombre d'entre eux et ils avaient absolument besoin de ces cadres dirigeants, de les déménager et ils savaient que voilà/ parce que mon mari aurait peut-être déménagé pour quelques années mais si moi je n'avais pas trouvé bon ben peut-être qu'ils seraient revenus (Own Translation).

“primary-movers” (Figure 13). Some are more “motile”, others more anchored, but – as I understand it – all are mobile.

Some “primary-movers” are “ready to move” i.e. they face uncertainty about what is going to be the next step while some others develop more anchors to a local space. For the “primary-mover”, these situations do not imply much uncertainty, because – from a professional perspective – the move makes sense. The “types of move” of “primary-mover” has consequences on the “family-strategy” and on the organisation of a family. The “family-strategy” depends – *in part* – on the way the partners perceive the move of the “primary-mover”. However, it is not a one-way street because the strategies regarding the labour force work are – *in turn* – influenced by the need to “integrate” them with care work, as in the case of Julia who aims at staying in Switzerland due to the shared custody of her daughter with her former husband.

6.5 Secondary-Mover and Secondary-Stayer

Attentive readers may have noticed that many female partners of the “primary-mover” do not work in the labour force anymore. Through a “collective approach”, I can trace how the constraints of a so-called “frictionless mobility” appear. In this part, I analyse the various reactions of the “secondary-mover” to the relocation of the “primary-mover”, highlighting an intertwined relationship. One day a (soon to be) “secondary-mover” learns about an opportunity abroad for their partner i.e. the “primary-mover”. Though time to take the decision is short; the partners decide to accept the offer or did so at least once. Once they accept, the discussions on what to do next, start. At that point, the partners need to coordinate anew to find another “family-strategy” corresponding to their new living situation for their next relocation. Here, I focus on the work in the labour force of the “secondary-mover” – the bottom right corner of Figure 12 (6.3 Conceptualising the Professional Careers Coordination, 127) – and its integration with the one of the “primary-mover”: what I call the “labour force work integration”. Are there any specific challenges attached to the “secondary-mover” that the “primary-mover” does not experience when it comes to the work in the labour force? If yes, how do they look like? Does the “secondary-mover” try to maintain a professional activity? If yes, what is specific about this situation?

I analytically differentiate between two types of moves for the “secondary-mover”: the “total-move” and the “half-move”. The “total-move” implies a uni-local following-strategy to the

new local space while the “half-move” refers to bi-local or multi-local coordinating-strategies. In the latter, the “secondary-mover” maintains sustained ties with several other local spaces than the new location. On top of that, I will present a third possibility in which the “secondary-mover” is in fact a “stayer” who does not move. Yet, not every “secondary-mover” works in the labour force; I will address the “family-strategy” of couples adopting this configuration in the chapter 8.

6.5.1 Total-Move of a Partner-Initiated Mover

When the “secondary-mover” leaves country A – and resigns as the case may be – to follow the “primary-mover” to country B, I speak of a “total-move”. The place of residence, the place of work, and (if so) the place of the children’s schooling change. A “total-move” implies that the “secondary-mover” relocates from one place to another without keeping bounds with the former country of residence⁵⁹. The partners move together to a new local space; avoiding split-families, long-distance relationships, and frequent international commutings. When the “secondary-mover” moves with a “total-move”, I speak of the “partner-initiated mover” as it stresses that the “primary-mover” is the initiator of the move. How does a “partner-initiated mover” react professionally while going with the “primary-mover” abroad?

a. Coordinating before Relocating

In rare cases, both partners manage to find a professional activity at the same place before relocating to that place; as the case of Lynn and Alex (6.2.1 Primary-Mover and Secondary-Mover, 125) illustrates. They both moved from the United States to work in Frankfurt, Germany. During the interview, Lynn mentioned that they were “so lucky” since they both got a position at the same place, in the same company. Strikingly, they did not relocate for 14 years, even though they received some concrete offers abroad. They only relocated once. Some offers were more interesting individually, but they were neither at the same place nor at the same point of time. Such a situation clearly shows the difficulty to develop a “family-strategy” in which both partners move, work, and live together. Interviewing Alex revealed that they do not see how they could increase their financial and professional situation *as a*

⁵⁹ Transnational studies and mobility studies show that there is no such thing as a “one-way ticket” in contemporary migration processes (Wieczorek 2018). A “total-move” does not imply that the partners totally cut the ties with the country they formerly lived in but rather that the ties in the former country are not regularly activated to develop the “family-strategy”.

family by relocating again. “One of us”, he told me, “would certainly not find a position as good as we currently have” (Alex, 52, Married). The “labour force work integration” stresses how the partners concretely cope between two professional careers. Alex is the “secondary-mover” performing a “total-move”. He is a “partner-initiated mover”, emphasized by his role to relocate on the initiative of Lynn without keeping any professional bounds with the United States. Both moved together and since then they refused to move again in order to secure both their professional positions.

Lynn and Alex’s case corresponds to a “total-move”: *the “secondary-mover” is totally following the primary-mover to the new local space*. Their case also shows that making multiple relocations for the sake of one professional career is a risk that some do not want to take. Lynn and Alex feel both lucky to have good positions. The “family-strategy” they develop, in which both partners find a professional activity before relocating, is indeed a rare one.

6.5.2 Unique Challenges of a Partner-Initiated Mover

For most of the “partner-initiated movers”, relocating with their partner implies quitting their position in the labour force and starting to look for a new one once they arrive abroad: a second way to develop the “family-strategy” compared to the one that Lynn and Alex developed. When a “partner-initiated mover” seeks employment abroad, he or she faces challenges and difficulties, which often require rearranging their own professional career. Their experience of a migration is specific as three elements can be identified: (1) a gender imbalance, (2) a “new start”, and (3) concretely seeking work in the labour force abroad.

a. Gender Imbalance

Many “partner-initiated movers” are women and their specific situation promotes a dynamic in which they are often sent back to the “domestic sphere”. In other words, the “partner-initiated movers”, who want to continue to work in the labour force need to fight against the pressures of “house-wifing”, in which the most “reasonable” choice would be to do the care work. Indeed, their partner already has a position in the labour force as he has a mobile and successful professional career in a multinational company, thus why would *she* have to look for paid-work? She can very well take care of the family. François and Lara both work in multinational corporations in Switzerland: they are married and have two children. Lara is a “partner-initiated mover” who followed François to the different countries where he worked.

For each relocation she looked for an employment in the labour force and she found one in Switzerland, though she has to commute more than one hour a day to go to her workplace. While she was seeking a position in the labour force in Switzerland, she experienced the situation in which she implicitly understood that the recruiter believed that she should not work:

They suggested me that it was a little bit strange that I work while I should rather take care of the children (Lara, 61yrs, married)⁶⁰.

She speaks about the social pressures, the social barriers and the necessity to emotionally resist to them if one wants to find a job as a “partner-initiated mover” with children. The “partner-initiated movers” very often stop to work in the labour force and this process of “house-wifing” explains in part why⁶¹. I understand the process of “house-wifing” as a process by which women, all women, have to face remarks, comments implying they would be better at home doing the care work for the children rather than looking for a position in the labour force. It is a problematic situation if this person happens to be a possible further employer. Thus, it is more difficult for them to find a position in the labour force as some employer is reluctant to hire women who are also mother.

Yet, I believe “house-wifing” is not specific to the situation of “partner-initiated mover”; still it is an important element for those I interviewed. The specificity of their position results from the fact that “primary-movers” directly start their new professional activity while the “partner-initiated mover” needs to find one first. Furthermore, not only do they have to find a professional activity first, very often they have to find arrangements regarding the care work before starting to seek employment in the labour force. Thus, the situation becomes even more challenging for the “partner-initiated movers” when the partners have children, because of the need to find new day care arrangements or a school. Even though the “primary-mover” and the employing company can support; very often it is the “partner-initiated mover” who maintains or even rebuilds the arrangements regarding the care work in a new local space. Only then, the “partner-initiated mover” begins to seek work in the labour force. Often this situation is not questioned by the respondents as it seems logical to them that the one who works in the labour force should rather focus on the office duties. Thus, the one who

⁶⁰ On m'a fait comprendre que c'était un peu étrange que je travaille au lieu de m'occuper de mes enfants (Own Translation).

⁶¹ In this case, the “partner-initiated mover” is pejoratively referred to as the “trailing-spouse”. In chapter 8, I will return to this “family-strategy”.

seeks a position in the labour force after the migration does the care work and looks for care arrangement as – so it is often said – the “primary-mover” does not have time to do it, neither does he – it is often the male – feel responsible. The “primary-mover”, working full-time, does not perceive rebuilding care work arrangements of the family as his task. Accordingly, it is the “partner-initiated mover” who cannot start to look for employment straight after arrival. It partly explains why so many “partner-initiated movers” do not work in the labour force anymore as (re-)constructing the care work arrangement of the family can be extremely time consuming. Certainly, the phenomenon of “house-wifing” combined with a situation in which the “partner-initiated movers” do the care work just after a relocation are two powerful elements which hinder seeking for a position in the labour force as they usually resigned from a position in the labour force they may have had appreciated to look for a new one in a country they do not know.

The distribution of the responsibilities in “family-strategies” between the “primary-mover” and the “partner-initiated movers” is thus unbalanced as the latter face more challenges and endorse more responsibilities regarding the care work than their partners. The situation is stressful for them and leads to many anticipated returns. A way to analyse this situation is to conceptualise three “pillars” which maintain the sustainability of a “family-strategy”: if the “partner-initiated mover” does not find work in the labour force (1st pillar), does not speak the local-language (2nd pillar) and does not find satisfactory care work arrangements (3rd pillar), then the “family-strategy” does not work⁶². Once the three “pillars” break, the partners are not able to integrate work and family in a satisfying way. In such a configuration, the odds for the “partner-initiated mover” to be cast back in the “domestic sphere” are even higher. When she (or, in rarer cases, he) refuses it, it often leads to disagreements and dissatisfaction, cumulating into anticipated returns and even divorces.

b. Starting from Minus Zero

Right after a relocation, the “partner-initiated movers” typically do not work in the labour force but seek employment: a process which can be long and painful. It is especially complicated for ones whose absence in the labour force work is combined with huge load of care work – mostly because of parenting as we have just seen. In that sense, these mothers

⁶² It is one of my interviewees – Thomas – who told me about the three pillars metaphor, which I later noticed in the interviews. It corresponds to the three most recurrent challenges of the “partner-initiated mover” when they arrive in a new local-space.

(and fathers) “start from minus zero” as “starting from zero” would imply arriving and directly start to look for employment in the labour force. The “primary-movers” already hold a working position and are basically facing a familiar work environment though in a different location. Metaphorically speaking, they still use the same log-in to start their computer in the morning. When it comes to the “partner-initiated movers”, the situation is completely different. The case of Sara exemplifies this challenge, as opposed to John, her husband and the “primary-mover”. Both are at the beginning of their 30s and they do not have children giving them more time to focus on labour force work. Still, their individual professional situations and their experience of the relocation to Switzerland vary extensively. Sara comes from the United States. After her bachelor’s degree, she decided to move to Israel to study her master’s degree in social sciences. There, she met John and they got married. During her studies in Israel, she started to work for different NGOs and in the meanwhile, John found employment in Switzerland as an engineer. She perceives the relocation to Switzerland as a disruption of her former life:

I was very happy with my life and I had a lot of friends and I knew exactly where I wanted to go with my career after completing my master’s. The network that I had and contacts and the organisation I wanted to work in and coming here it’s starting from zero in every way. (...) That was a big step forward for his career with a big increase in salary and [John] had lived in the same place for a long time and he wanted to change (Sara, 32yrs, married).

Sara moved for John, who is the “primary-mover” and a “drawn-expatriate”, as she quit her position in Israel to follow him because: “in marriage, at the end, you have to make a couple” (ibid). She relocated for him and now she faces the difficulty to develop her own professional project – starting, as she says, “from zero in every way” (ibid). The relocation to Switzerland makes sense for her husband and his career; but not necessarily for hers. The only reason for Sara to be in Switzerland is their marriage. On any other aspects, the relocation disrupts her life: she has to find ways to meet new people in order to create a professional network for she seeks employment while John’s company does not provide support to the partners. Besides, she is alone, as she told me, the whole day as John works full time. On top of that, she does not speak French and lives in a remote area in the country side, so they can be close to her husband’s workplace. This case emphasises the accumulation of specific challenges faced by the “partner-initiated movers”.

In contrast, the “primary-movers” do not face a situation in which the new local space does not make sense for them as it often is the case for the “partner-initiated mover”. In Sara’s and

John's case, the specific place refers to a remote village in the country side in Switzerland. Actually, Sara and John have had, at least, two choices: Switzerland and Spain. They decided to relocate to Switzerland because they thought Switzerland provides more professional opportunities for Sara than Spain⁶³. Sara's relocation to Switzerland emphasises that the "partner-initiated movers" move where their partner have a position in the labour force. In other words, Sara would never have had the idea to come there. For them, a "total-move" is also a "bounded-move": *eine unbewegliche Bewegung*; as the place of relocation is often irrelevant for their own professional projects and they cannot move further as long as their partner works in the labour force there – unless they do, which raises the question of power within couples. I will deal with this central topic in the chapters 7 and 8. In any case, the "partner-initiated movers" face increasing challenges to find employment: it is not only about starting from zero; but starting from zero in specific conditions, at a specific place, at a specific time which may be very suboptimal for their own professional careers: metaphorically it is often starting from *minus* zero for them as they have to find new support regarding the care work before seeking work in the labour force.

c. Seeking Employment Abroad

Seeking a position in the labour force abroad is already a challenge *as such*; as a whole array of migration studies shows (Bommers and Kolb 2006). In my cases, it is a symptomatic challenge for the "partner-initiated movers". They move for their partner who already holds a paid position and it is up to them to find a position in the labour force if they want to continue to work in it. While the idea is to maintain a sense of "family-hood"; it becomes an individual responsibility for the "partner-initiated mover". That is why their position demands a lot of perseverance as well as a strong capacity to resist to social pressures such as "house-wifing", I argue.

Some of those who found a position in the labour force after a relocation perceive it as an exhausting adventure. The price is an important personal investment. Yet, this adventure does not have only negative aspects as they say that it broadens their perspectives: offering them an opportunity to work in a different sector or for a different company. Maria and Franz both studied management in Germany and they are both German. Franz works for the same

⁶³ When I checked the *LinkedIn* profile of Sara a few months after the interview, she mentioned to have moved to New York, where she found employment. It leaves the question open about what has happened to their marriage.

consumer goods company for almost 15 years and Maria also worked for this company for six years: it is where they met. Franz received an offer to go to England and they decided that Maria would resign to follow him. Since then, they relocated four times: from Germany to England, to Italy, to Japan, to Switzerland. Maria found employment after each relocation; yet, Maria and Franz do not have any children which is what makes the difference, I argue. I develop this point in the chapter 8. For the moment, it suffices to say that in nearly all my empirical cases the female “partner-initiated movers” either have a position in the labour force or have children: maintaining both simultaneously seem to be extremely rare in the context of frequent migration for professional reasons.

For some relocations, Maria performed “half-moves”⁶⁴ and for others “total-moves”. Here is how she recalled her first relocation as a “partner-initiated mover” performing a “total-move”:

The first move was maybe one of the most difficult ones, because at that time I did not have any intention to leave the company. I knew it was going to be difficult to enter *** in the UK because it was a very small office at the time there and I also love my job and had no / yeah / there was no reason for me why I should leave, but we also knew that we both wanted to move on and it was a good opportunity for my husband and London offers a great range of opportunity for workers, for employees. So, in the end I took it as a chance to learn something new and to get to know a different company. (Maria, 51yrs, married).

Another specificity of the “partner-initiated mover” is, as the quote indicates, to quit a possibly rewarding position due to the relocation of the “primary-mover”. Maria is very clear about her motivation: she does it for her husband and more especially for his professional success. The situation is similar to the one of Sara who move with her husband to “make a couple” (Sara, 32yrs, married).

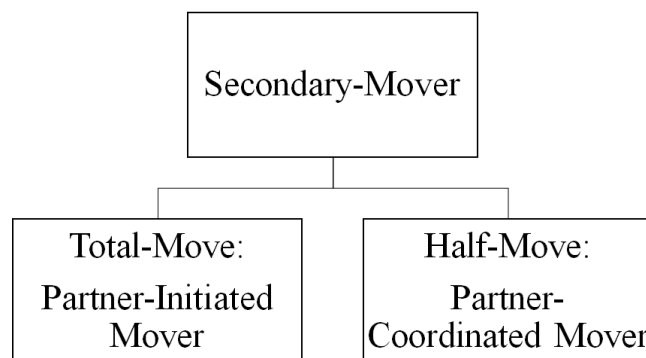
Doing so, the “partner-initiated mover” needs to re-enter the labour force in a foreign country. Truth to be told, they do not perceive it always as a sacrifice, as Maria, for instance, who perceives it as an opportunity. She worked in different sectors, on different continents, supported start-ups, worked as a creative writer, as an account manager or as a project manager. Today she is the leader of a strategic project within a consumer good multinational company. Though, some “partner-initiated movers” perceive the relocation as a professional opportunity; it implies an important professional risk for them. The choices of the “partner-initiated movers” regarding the place of living and the timing of the migration are restricted.

⁶⁴ I develop the concept of “half-move” in the second part of the present chapter.

This hinders their professional career; yet, in some cases their professional path can be rewarding and interesting: a point that Maria expresses many times during the interview. Equally, she expresses how exhausting it is to do so. The “partner-initiated movers” consent to move for the sake of their partner and spend a lot of time and energy to that end: something the “primary-mover” does not experience.

In sum, the “partner-initiated movers” face unique challenges while moving “totally”. They are very often women who seek employment in the labour force in a place they did not choose after having found a day care or schooling arrangement for the children. From a professional perspective, the place of relocation may be irrelevant for them. Thus, a “total-move” often means a risky professional move for the “secondary-mover”. Here, I focus on their labour force work, but in many cases the “partner-initiated movers” do not work in it (anymore) due to the challenges I have pointed out. The “secondary-movers”, who continue to work after a relocation, use other ways to integrate their work in the labour force with the one of their partner as performing “half-moves”.

Figure 14: “Total-Move” and “Half-Move”



Source: Own elaboration

6.5.3 Half-Move of a Partner-Coordinated Mover

Most of the “secondary-movers” – who stay employed in the labour force – perform “half-moves”, as the latter enable them to circumvent the unique challenges that the “partner-initiated movers” face. Rather than following the partner initiating the move and subsequently resigning from their professional activity, these “secondary-movers” find ways to coordinate their professional activity with the migration of their partner. They perform a “half-move”, meaning that they follow the “primary-mover” only partially as they maintain

professional ties with the former country of residence. Thus, the “*partner-coordinated mover*” refers to a “*secondary-mover*” performing a “*half-move*” (Figure 14). According to this configuration, the “*family-strategy*” is bi-local (if not multi-local) and the partners are mobile between the former and the new countries of residence. A “*half-move*” can take various concrete forms such as teleworking or commuting. Centrally, a “*half-move*” is an attempt to compensate the drawbacks of the migration of the “*primary-mover*”, as the “*secondary-mover*” uses mobility as a strategic mean to maintain a work in the labour force. In other words, the “*secondary-mover*” maintains bonds with the former country, let us say, country A and coordinates his or her career with the one of the “*primary-mover*”, instead of subordinating it. From the collective perspective, I refer to this phenomenon as a “*half-move*”, because only one of the partners relocates completely – at least at first. In other words, the “*primary-mover*” relocates abroad, let us say, to country B albeit the “*secondary-mover*” maintains a link with the place they were living in before; i.e. country A.

a. Commuting between the Workplace and Home

Some “*partner-coordinated movers*” decide to maintain a professional activity in country A, but to relocate to country B with the “*primary-movers*”. In this case, the “*partner-coordinated movers*” commute internationally, creating a specific “*family-strategy*”, in which the “*labour force work integration*” after the relocation of the “*primary-mover*” is maintained by frequent mobilities. The couple relocates to country B, but the “*partner-coordinated mover*” continues to work in country A. Such a strategy implies a strong coordination between the partners, as for Julia when her former husband, Jack, moved to Geneva (*Localising the Home-Base*, 136). She commuted between London and Geneva in order to work in England and spending the rest of the time in Switzerland with her husband and daughter:

I was working for a company called ***, which is an American company in the UK, in the European headquarters, which are based in London and my ex-husband, he was working for a Swiss pharmaceutical company called *** which is based in Geneva. He was relocated to the global or the international office in Geneva and so I came with him as his spouse, which meant that I was then living in Switzerland and commuting back to London for my European job, which was fine, because it is a lot of travel anyway. (Julia, 42yrs, divorced).

Julia and Jack integrated their careers with their family in a way which required extensive commuting between Julia’s workplaces in London and their new home base in Switzerland. When Ben, their son was born, they needed to simultaneously coordinate their two professional careers and the care work, which required a lot of organisation. In fact, both

Julia and Jack were constantly juggling between the need to have at least one of the parents to take care of Ben while the other one was working in the labour force, which required – according to Julia – a lot of organisation:

I was travelling with my job and my husband was travelling with his job so what we would do is to sit down with the diary every month and say: ‘ok, I am travelling ta ta ta and you are travelling these dates and so one of us be here all the time’ (Julia, 42yrs, divorced).

Couples usually live together and commute frequently for their professional activity when there is a child involving care work, while they more often do not mind living apart when having none. In Julia’s and Jack’s case, frequent mobilities were needed because someone has to do the care work. One way to “integrate the labour force work” of both partners is to intensively use international mobility, implying a stronger coordination between the partners when it comes to be present in order to do the care work a child requires. In chapter 8, we will see that such a “family-strategy” does, usually, not hold on the long run.

b. Teleworking

In the same vein, other “partner-coordinated movers” decide to follow the “primary-mover” to country B *and* to continue to work for their company in country A, yet without commuting between A and B. In other words, they find arrangements with their employers allowing them to work from abroad, what is known as telework. It is the case for Maria (Seeking Employment Abroad, 145), who continued to work for her employer in Italy while living in Japan:

In Italy, I worked for an online company. It was an online business and they allowed me to work from Japan. So, I worked remotely for the Italian company in Japan. It was not easy and it is also one of the reasons why I quit after two years. (...) So, I ended up working from 4 pm in the afternoon until midnight which didn't really fit my schedule. I was just too remote, because it was just me in this time zone (Maria, 42yrs, married).

Though Maria is physically not mobile on a daily basis to do her work in the labour force, the important mobile flows of information are a prerequisite to maintain her professional activity. The new information and communication technologies allow her to work in Italy while living in Japan as information is constantly shared and transferred between both countries. However, she develops a “labour force work integration” which is quite difficult to maintain on the long run as the working conditions are exhausting, as she tells me. After two years, Maria resigned from the Italian company as she found a new position in Japan in a start-up, but on a volunteer basis. For each relocation of her husband, she manages to find

a way to continue to work in the labour force. Still, she pays a high price for *his* frequent relocations, not being able to climb up in the hierarchy of a company – contrary to him. Approaching the relocation of her husband with a “half-move”, Maria circumvented the challenges of a “total-move” by continuing her former professional activity in the former country for a while. Indeed, she started to seek employment in Japan, for instance, only after two years, once the couple was settled. Maria was first a “partner-coordinated mover” while she was working for a company in Italy and living in Japan. After she resigned and accepted a voluntary position for a start-up in Japan, she became a “partner-initiated mover”; losing her income during the process and facing the specific challenges inherent to this situation.

This case emphasises how a “partner-coordinated mover” continues to work in the labour force when the “primary-mover” relocates. It highlights various uses of mobility to integrate two professional careers and underlines the dynamic between the “partner-coordinated mover” and “partner-initiated mover”. Truth to be told, Maria and Franz do not have children, a fact that facilitates the “work-family integration”. Moreover, Maria started to work in an unpaid position, which is usually easier to find than a paid one. The fact that Maria can ultimately accept an unpaid position shows the couples high social and economic status: not everyone can afford to accept an unpaid job.

c. Maternity Leaves

Some others decide to stop their professional activity in country A temporarily and use maternity leaves or sabbatical years as a means in order to follow their partner to country B. Manon (Relocation of a Headquarter, 137), working as a pharmacologist in the pet-food industry, has made this choice:

My husband had been transferred by **** to Italy to lead the Italian subsidiary, and, at that time, I was pregnant with my third child and so I said: “I will take a parental leave for two years”. So, for two years I stopped working. In fact, I followed my husband to Italy (Manon, 55yrs, divorced)⁶⁵.

The insurances and/or the paid leaves provide a support mechanism, which enables temporary “family-strategies” as the “partner-coordinate movers” reduce the “career cost” of the migration of their partner. The embeddedness in the French “welfare regime” is a crucial

⁶⁵ Mon mari avait été muté en Italie par **** pour diriger la filiale italienne et à ce moment j'étais enceinte de mon troisième enfant et donc je me suis dit : "pourquoi pas ? Je vais prendre un congé parental pendant deux". Donc pendant deux ans je me suis arrêtée de travailler, enfin j'ai suivi mon mari en Italie (Own Translation).

element of Manon's strategy as it is only because her position and her income are secured by the maternity leave that Manon accepts to move with Charles. Thus, the individual strategies are oriented by the opportunities and constraints that the structure of the various "welfare regimes" produce. Manon did not resign from her position in the labour force. However, it is only a matter of time until the need of a new "family-strategy" arises. Once Manon's maternity leave was over, she refused to remain in the "domestic sphere" longer than necessary, as she told me several times during the interview: "I refused to stop working" (ibid)⁶⁶. Since she did not find employment in the labour force in Italy and felt that her options there were limited, she told her husband she was going back to France as she was still having a position there after her maternity leave. During the stay in Italy, Manon maintained strong ties with France, as she kept her income and her employment there; exemplifying what I understand by a "half-move" and a "partner-coordinated mover". It contrasts with Maria's case, who resigned from the company in Italy to accept a volunteer position in a Japanese start-up: Maria lost her income and subordinated her career to that one of her husband's Franz. Manon, however, refused to subordinate her career to the one of her husband's Charles once she felt that her opportunities were running low in Italy; instead, she *initiated* the relocation to come back to France. She then became the "primary-mover":

"So, I came back and [Charles] followed me six months later, he was back to France, too" (ibid)⁶⁷.

While Charles was the "primary-mover" to relocate to Italy, he had to react to the mobility of Manon as she was the initiator of the relocation back to France. He was then confronted with the challenges of the "secondary-mover", and decided to perform a "half-move" in order to maintain his professional activity. Thus, he did not resign from his position in the labour force to follow Manon but rather negotiated his transfer back to France within his employing company: an "intra self-initiated expatriate". Generally, males as "secondary-movers" tend to refuse "total-moves" much more often than females. This case illustrates the challenges of the "labour force work integration" under the conditions of mobility, leading the partners to initiate relocation to safeguard their position in the labour force. Manon refused to subordinate her professional career to the one of Charles and thus took the initiative to return to France, becoming the "primary-mover". This case shows that the analytical categories of

⁶⁶ Je ne vais pas m'arrêter de travailler (Own Translation).

⁶⁷ Et donc, je suis rentrée et lui m'a suivi six mois après il est revenue en France (Own Translation).

the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” are relational and processual for that the roles may change. I shall analyse in depth this power dynamic in Chapter 8.

To summarise briefly the “half-move”, the modalities of settling are bi-local (or multi-local) as the “partner-coordinated movers” maintain ties with the former country A. The cases of Manon, taking a maternity leave in France to follow her husband to Italy; Maria, working at distance for two years, and Julia, commuting between London where she worked in the labour force and Geneva where her husband and daughter lived, exemplify it. Yet, these strategies are for most temporary and not sustainable on the long run.

6.5.4 Immobility of a Secondary-Stayer

Analysing my data reveals a third type of move or of non-move precisely, which occurs when the “secondary-mover” decides not to move at all, introducing a “split-family” and a “secondary-stayer”. It is difficult to speak of a “partner-initiated mover” or a “partner-coordinated mover”, because the “secondary-stayer” does not relocate at all. He or she decides to stay in country A, which is quite often the “country of origin”. In this case, the “primary-mover” travels back and forth between country A and country B. In this constellation, it is the “primary-mover” who comes back to visit the other partner. Metaphorically, we can think of a sailor who comes back home after six months at sea. In the context of the study, I did not encounter a lot of these cases, yet they are arguably frequent in sectors like the army, the shipping industry or the fishing industry. The coordination is diffuse because both partners continue their professional careers independently from one another. This is the case of Carlos and Raul (6.1.3 Intra Self-Initiated Expatriate, 122), as Raul never followed Carlos while he relocated to the Dominican Republic and Germany:

[Raul] owns his business, he is really successful in Mexico City financially, he is independent, I am completely independent. We don't share a common bank account, so our finances are separate (Carlos, 44, in civil partnership).

While his partner continues to manage his family company back in Mexico, Carlos moves extensively while working in a marketing company. Thus, they live their everyday and professional lives in different countries, however, it does not mean that they do not feel close as they make extensive use of the new information and communication technologies: “We call each other every day, we see each other every day”, Carlos told me (*ibid*). Besides, for twenty-two years Carlos travels back to Mexico to visit his boyfriend and family at least twice a year. The immobility of the “secondary-stayer”, as much as the mobility of the

“primary-mover”, create a split “family-strategy” in which both partners prioritise their own professional career, by that reducing the constraints implied by “total” or “half-moves” to a maximum. As it is often the case in “family-strategies” when both partners work in the labour force while at least one is (recurrently) mobile, Carlos and his partner do not have any children. According the collective approach, a “primary-stayer” is a contradiction in the terms, as the key defining criterium of a “primary-mover” is giving the initiative of a move.

6.5.5 Access to the Labour Force

So far, we have seen the unique challenges of a “partner-initiated mover”, the different strategies to circumvent them by adopting the position of a “partner-coordinated mover” or the by choosing immobility to avoid them. The “total-move” suggests difficulties for the “partner-initiated movers” to coordinate their own professional career with the one of their partner because they settle in a new local space they did not choose. In a different way, the “half-move” shows how the “partner-coordinated movers” may decide to maintain their work in the labour force in the former country, at least temporarily. Adopting the stance of a “partner-coordinated mover” is yet only a temporary solution, as, in most of the cases and on the long-run, only two solutions are available; either becoming a “partner-initiated mover”, as in Maria’s case, or becoming a “primary-mover”, as in Manon’s case. In this section, will identify the elements facilitating or hindering the access to the labour force of a “partner-initiated mover” after a migration, that is of a “secondary-mover” who opts for a “total-move” and who decides to live in the same local space where his or her partner relocates. I have shown earlier that a “partner-initiated mover” faces unique challenges because of his or her situation in an integration between two professional careers in which the one of the “primary-mover” is prioritised. The “unique challenges of the partner-initiated mover” (6.5.2) means a high possibility to be send out of the labour force to the “domestic sphere”. Thus, the aim of this section is to point out the elements which facilitate or, on the contrary, hinder, the access to the labour force of the “partner-initiated mover” acknowledging the specificity of their position.

a. Types of Skills

In line with the literature in migration studies, “partner-initiated movers” with technical, scientific skills and/or managerial skills find a professional activity after a relocation more easily than those with “softer” or more “contextual skills” such as the proficiency of a language or teachings skills. Technical, scientific and managerial skills are seen to be more

easily internationally transferable (Cornelius, Espenshade, and Salehyan 2001; Larsen et al. 2005; Liversage 2009; Schmid 2016). However, the same literature warns us: men tend to own these skills more often than women who more frequently hold skills in teaching and languages (Liversage 2009, 121). “Partner-initiated movers” are mostly women; thus, once again the odds are not in their favour. I illustrate this difference by presenting two empirical cases. It contrasts this social process as I witnessed it recurrently during my fieldwork; yet, I do not understand it as causal. In other words, I do not imply that engineers find a position in the labour force after a migration while lawyers do not. I contrast different cases to show in what they differ.

Annisa and Sara (Starting from Minus Zero, 143) are both “partner-initiated movers” when they arrive in Switzerland. Both have a university degree, but Sara studied social sciences while Annisa studied biology. They both seek employment in the labour force in Switzerland, both lacking the support of the husbands’ companies, both without knowing any French and both without having any professional network in the country: facing the “unique challenges of the partner-initiated mover”. Annisa obtains a position in the labour force while Sara ultimately leaves for New York where she finds one; therefore, she most probably did not get any in Switzerland. Annisa is from Indonesia, she studied in Jakarta before achieving a Ph.D. in microbiology in Germany. She moves to Switzerland for her husband Adrian: “we got married and I moved here” (Annisa, 39yrs, married). The similarities in the decision to move between Annisa and Sara’s case are striking – they both move because of their husbands and leave a position in the labour force, if not a career, behind. Annisa’s husband, Adrian, is also from Indonesia and works in research in the field of biology, too. After his move to Switzerland for the sake of her husband’s career, Annisa finds a research position at a university hospital through an employment website for “life and earth scientists”:

I moved here to reunite with my family. [...] So, I know it wasn't too difficult for my employer at that time to settle with the documents, because I was already here. It is not like he recruited me from abroad (ibid).

Contrary to Sara, Annisa⁶⁸ manages to find employment in Switzerland as her scientific skills are recognised and needed; thus, an asset in the labour force. Most of the “partner-initiated

⁶⁸ Annisa uses a vocabulary which strongly refers to schemes of the “controlled immigration” side of the “migration binaries”. Thus, she speaks of “family reunification” which is how she got her residency permit, as the end of the sentence confirms, “I was already here” before having a position in the labour force. As an

movers” have a “tertiary education”, yet, the heterogeneity of profiles show that they do not all have the same chance to find a position after a relocation since the types of skills play a role. It is not only about the “level of education” as most of them have a “tertiary education” but also about the types of skill that the respondents have. The demand of certain types of profiles as well as the experience and skills of the candidates are major factors to take into account while discussing the elements which support or hinder the access to the labour force after a relocation. In these conditions, “partner-initiated movers” who hold skills which are easily transferable have an advantage over the ones whose skills and diplomas are either difficulty recognisable or linked to a specific nation-state. Yet, I distinguish other elements – complementary to the employment outcomes of highly-skilled migrants (Dumont and Aujean 2014; Platonova and Urso 2012; Stirling 2015) – which play a central role when it comes to understanding better what facilitates or creates barriers when talking about a “partner-initiated mover” seeking a position in the labour force abroad.

b. Language

The role of the language is central for someone seeking a position in the labour force abroad. In the two regions where I conducted my interviews, one could think that a high level of French or German is a central asset which increases the chance of finding a position in the labour force. Certainly, speaking the local language may facilitate the search for a position in the labour force. Interestingly, many “partner-initiated movers” do not really emphasise the centrality of the local language while seeking for a position abroad. What they do underline, however, is the presence of a strong “international labour market” whom they distinguish from the “local labour market”. The “local labour market” refers to the “traditional” positions, which demand fluency in the local language as well as the recognition of the experience, skills, and diplomas according to the local standards. The “international labour market” rather corresponds to positions available in multinational companies, NGOs, and research institutes. The language spoken is mostly English and the experience, skills, and diplomas fit “international” standards. Interpreting Annisa’s case in the light of this distinction reveals that she rather found a position in the “international labour market” as she

Indonesian national, she needs a legal justification to settle in Switzerland. Her contact with a “controlling state”, due to her nationality, shapes not only her experience of professional migration but also how she refers to her own migration experience reusing the language that the administration used while allowing her to settle in Switzerland. My point is to underline the variety of people behind the label of “partner-initiated mover”: while the skills do play a role in finding a new position in the labour force, the way a person is categorised by the state shapes the migration experience as well, regardless the skill level.

was doing research in English. For many “partner-initiated movers”, the language spoken in the potential positions in the labour force is a crucial barrier to accessing the “local labour market”: they do not really consider it as an option. The “international labour market” in which the language spoken is English offers more opportunities to them, they argue. According to the Swiss “structural survey” (2013), English is the first foreign language spoken at the workplace in the Cantons of Geneva and Vaud, as 29% of the respondents of the survey in the Canton of Geneva, and respectively 21% in the Canton of Vaud say that their primary working language is English. This variable is useful to give an idea of the size of the “international labour market”. I unfortunately do not have the numbers for Germany.

c. Recognition of the Diplomas and the Recognition of the Previous Professional Experience

Even for the ones who speak fluently the local language, other problems arise when they try to access the “local labour market”. This case takes place in the Swiss context, Laura is French and resigned from a multinational company to follow her husband Thomas, to the French speaking part of Switzerland. She studied management and has expertise as well as professional experiences in human resources. At the time of the interview, she had found a position in Switzerland and was working in the labour force for a consumer good multinational company – speaking English. Thomas, a pharmacist by training, works in the pharmaceuticals industry. He came to Switzerland through an “expat-move”: the company paid for their accommodation and supported Laura while she was seeking employment. This is how Thomas presented the difficulties of his wife to find employment:

My wife worked in two international companies, which were non-Swiss companies. Despite the number of resumes sent or interviews done, she was never taken. (...) In fact, she was systematically asked to have a Swiss diploma. It was (...) a specific human resources certificate (...) As for me, I have never been asked to show my diploma. My diploma of pharmacist is French and I have never been asked for the equivalent in Switzerland (Thomas, 44yrs, married)⁶⁹.

Lacking a certificate to find employment, Laura had to obtain it first as to have a chance competing for a position in the “local-labour market”. Without it, her profile was incomplete. She found a position in a consumer good multinational company *i.e.* in the “international

⁶⁹ Ma femme a travaillé dans deux sociétés internationales, les deux donc pas des sociétés suisses et là malgré le nombre de cv envoyés ou d'entretiens passés, elle n'a jamais été prise. (...) En fait, on lui demandait systématique d'avoir un diplôme suisse. C'était (...) un certificat spécifique aux ressources humaines (...) Moi, pour moi, on ne m'a jamais demandé un diplôme, mon diplôme de pharmacien, il est français et on ne m'a jamais demandé l'équivalent (Own Translation).

labour market”, because the company “look(ed) more at the experience and less at the diploma” (ibid). According to my interviewees, the conditions of recognising professional skills differ between the “local labour market” and the “international labour market”. The “partner-initiated movers” feel to have more chances to find employment in the “international labour market”. In the latter, the recognition of their skills is more focused on the professional experience rather than on a specific diploma. Thomas contrasts the differences of treatment between him and Laura. While he did not have to present any equivalent of his diplomas, Laura faced this challenged, which is specific to the “partner-initiated movers” trying to access to the “local labour market”. In fact, the “local labour market” is perceived either inaccessible or disqualifying. The “partner-initiated movers” know they have much more chances to find a position in the “international labour market”.

d. Power of Place

In fact, many interviewees speak of two parallel “labour-markets” and express the difficulties to move from one to the other – underlined by the fact that there are nearly no Swiss people in their teams. Gabriel (6.1.2 Drawn Expatriate, 121), a French pharmacist, working as one of the senior manager for the regulatory affairs of a pharmaceutical multinational company and living in Switzerland for more than ten years, speaks of a dichotomy of the labour market in regions where multinational corporations settle. When he thinks about his colleagues, he emphasises that he does not have any direct Swiss colleague:

In my group, I don't have any Swiss employees. No, often they have the transversal functions like informaticians where there will be more Swiss employees. Obviously, also the human resources because one must know the legislation. In our company, the admins are Swiss, but most people of the skilled labour force, well I do not say that/ [I mean] for the specific labour force, it is people who come from elsewhere (Gabriel, 54yrs, divorced)⁷⁰.

For Gabriel, it is clear that he works in an international milieu which is not related to the local labour force except for the maintenance and security positions of their company's buildings and/or positions which require a knowledge of the specific local space. Interviewing Abigail - the head of the marketing of a consumer good multinational corporation - she told me while laughing: “where are the Swiss people?” (Abigail, 43yrs, Single) Being half a joke, this quote underlines the co-presence of two segments of the labour market in a local space which do

⁷⁰ Dans mon groupe j'ai personne de suisse, non souvent c'est les fonctions transversales genre informatique où il y aura plus de suisse, les ressources humaines évidemment parce qu'il faut connaître la législation. Chez nous ce sont les admins qui sont suisses mais la plupart des gens de main d'œuvre qualifiée enfin faut pas dire que/ main d'œuvre spécifique, c'est des gens qui viennent d'ailleurs (Own Translation).

not really interact with one another. When the “partner-initiated movers” arrive after a relocation, they very often lack the contacts and the professional networks to access the “local labour market”. Thus, the “power of place” is central as the presence of a strong multinational fabric in the region helps the “partner-initiated movers” to find employment in the “international labour market”. Different local spaces offer different professional opportunities. In this respect, the Lake Geneva Area in Switzerland and the Rhein-Main Area in Frankfurt are two regions where the multinational fabric is strong; offering them opportunities of employment in the local and international labour market.

e. Company’s Support for the “Secondary-Mover’s” Inclusion in the Labour Force

The types of moves of the “primary-mover” have an impact on the means available for the “partner-initiated mover” to seek employment. In fact, when the “primary-mover” performs an “expat-move”, the “partner-initiated mover” usually receives support to seek employment. Manon (Relocation of a Headquarter, 137; Maternity Leaves, 150) is a veterinarian specialised in pet food. She worked for different major actors in the sector, developing new products. As a reminder, her husband Charles is a senior manager in a consumer good multinational company. As part of the company’s strategy, the managers decided to relocate the headquarters from France to Switzerland. They transferred the whole team working there which implied the relocation of the families, too. Thus, they proposed “expatriate contracts” to soften this process. Part of the expatriate package was an outplacement agency for the partners. Manon received an extended support to seek employment in Switzerland; because: “the company really wanted us to stay” (Manon, 55yrs, divorced). During the interview, she explained the support that the outplacement agency offered as well as the personal investment it implied. In France, she was a national product director, but finding the exact corresponding Swiss position would have required fluency in French and German. She did not speak German and it was “out of question to learn it” (ibid)⁷¹. Accordingly, she could only find something at a global or European level. Furthermore, she was already in contact with the outplacement agency before the relocation. In order to continue to work after a relocation, she looked for a new position abroad while still working 100 percent in her former position:

Manon: They did everything they could to assist me to find a job in Switzerland, which does not mean that I relied only on them. I spotted all the recruitment agencies and I contacted all that could be contacted, to try/

⁷¹ C’était hors de question de l’apprendre [l’allemand] (Own Translation).

F.T.: /So there was also an involvement on your part/

Manon: /Enormous (...) I was working in France, in Paris. I came to Geneva every two months to meet people, to meet the recruitment companies, to meet my outplacement agency, to do job interviews (ibid)⁷².

The same combination of challenges is recurrent when it comes to seeking employment as a “partner-initiated mover”. The “power of place”, and, more specifically, the structure of the “local” and the “international labour market” affects the job opportunities; as many “partner-initiated movers” find employment within the “international labour market”. Moreover, the support of the husband’s company is central; not to find employment, but more to reorient and advice the “partner-initiated mover”. At the end of the day, the outplacement agency did not find employment for Manon, yet it helped her to prepare a resume and to present herself in job interviews. For her, it still meant an enormous investment in terms of time and energy. The support was nevertheless crucial for Manon, because it empowered when coping with such a situation:

They told me: ‘What can you do?’ And me to answer: ‘What can I do? After 15 years [in the same company] I don’t have a clue.’ I was so much into my work. So, they helped me to do a skill assessment and a resume. (...). So, they rebooted me/ actually it is not reboot, but rather they put me back on track” (ibid)⁷³.

In this case, the support came from an outplacement agency paid by the company of the husband. It gave Manon the tools to successfully seek employment abroad. In sum, she found a position in the labour force, thanks to her “hard-skills” and her “uncompromising will to continue to work” as she phrases it. She would not stop working, but in case she did not find anything in Switzerland, she would rather return back to France.

f. Dual career Network

Professional networks are another type of support which help the “partner-initiated movers” to seek employment; yet, mostly oriented towards the “international labour market”. Maria

⁷² Manon : Ils ont tout fait pour trouver un emploi en Suisse, ce qui ne veut pas que je me repose sur eux. Après avoir examiné toutes les agences de recrutement, j’ai contacté tout ce qui pourrait être contacté, pour essayer/ F.T.: /C’est donc aussi une implication de votre part /

Manon : / énorme. (...) J’ai travaillé en France à Paris, je suis venu à Genève tous les deux mois pour rencontrer des gens, pour rencontrer des entreprises de recrutement, pour rencontrer mon cabinet de déménagement, pour faire des entretiens (Own Translation).

⁷³ Ben me dire "qu’est-ce que vous savez faire ?" et moi de dire "Mais ce que je sais faire ? Mais j’en sais rien au bout de 15 ans", je suis tellement dans mon travail que voilà. Donc à faire un bilan de compétence et à refaire un CV. (...). Donc ils m’ont rebooté, enfin ce n’est pas rebooté mais remis sur les rails pour me présenter à un entretien (Own Translation).

(Teleworking, 149) found an auditor position in a consumer good multinational company through one of these networks. The network supports “dual-couple careers” and is born out of an alliance of a dozen of multinational companies. The goal is to facilitate the work arrangement of the “secondary-mover”. Interviewing the coordinator of the network unfolds that, on the one hand, companies support “dual careers couples”, being as they say “dual careers friendly”. On the other hand, the “partner-initiated movers” are often highly-skilled professionals seeking employment in the labour force which is, conversely, an opportunity for these companies looking for “talents”. According to the statistics of the network, more than 80% of the “partner-initiated movers” have a university degree or equivalent⁷⁴. Thus, they represent a recruitment pool for the company, too. Maria started to work for this network on a voluntary basis. She helped to organise events for the companies which are members of the network. An event usually focuses on a specific topic such as the recruitment process. Managers of the member companies, specialists in human resources and “partner-initiated movers” meet during these events. For Maria, “that really changed the whole game, because you get in touch with some people on a private level” (Maria, 42yrs, married). Due to her active participation in this network, she became aware of a job opportunity in a consumer good multinational company:

We had a meeting because we were organising an event here at ***, me from the *** [network] side and the *** employee and she told me about an opportunity they had in their own department, that they were growing and that they needed someone and [she asked] if I wanted to apply for the job (ibid).

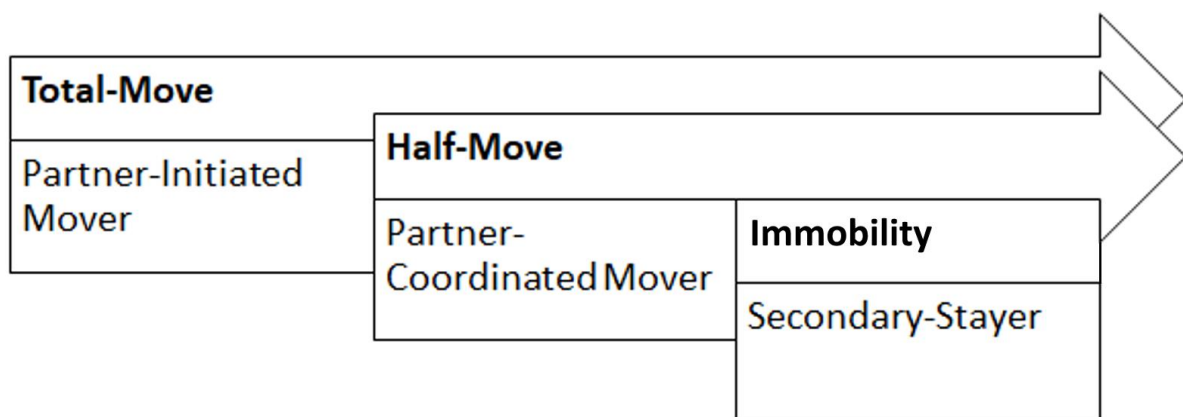
Maria found a new professional occupation in Switzerland through interpersonal contacts, which were ultimately possible because she was part of this network. It is dedicated to partners of employees of member companies, i.e. not everyone has access to it. Besides, the company of her husband financed a career coach and some language courses. In each case, however, the “partner-initiated mover” speaks of a very important personal investment to find employment.

In sum, the types of skills, the language, the recognition of the diplomas and/or of the experience, and the presence of an “international labour market” are central elements to understand the access to the labour market of the “partner-initiated movers”. Furthermore, their professional and social networks are oriented towards the “international labour market”;

⁷⁴ This statistic is part of an internal document that the respondent transmitted to me.

thus, the “local labour market” is mostly out of reach for them, either inaccessible or disqualifying. This combination of elements creates the conditions in which the “partner-initiated movers” have more chance finding employment in the “international labour market”. It shows what concretely facilitates their access to the “international the labour market”, while hindering it to the “local labour market”. Finally, it underlines that geography – that is the specific local space where a couple settles – has a strong impact on the chance for a “partner-initiated mover” to access the labour force after a relocation.

Figure 15: The Types of Move of the Secondary-Mover



Source: Own elaboration

6.5.6 Types of Moves of the Secondary-Mover

When it comes to the “secondary-movers”, I have identified three types of moves on grounds of whether living together or apart. The “total-move” refers to two partners and their possible children moving together and subsequently living together; meaning that the “secondary-mover” follows the “primary-mover” entirely to the new local space. The “half-move” stresses a situation in which the “secondary-mover” follows the “primary-mover” *partially* while maintaining ties to the former country. In the context of dual career couples, the “half-moves” are common, but temporary. They compensate the drawbacks of the relocation of the “primary-mover” by a strategic use of mobility of the “secondary-mover”. Third, I present the case in which the “secondary-mover” is, in fact, a stayer, deciding to remain in the home country (Figure 15).

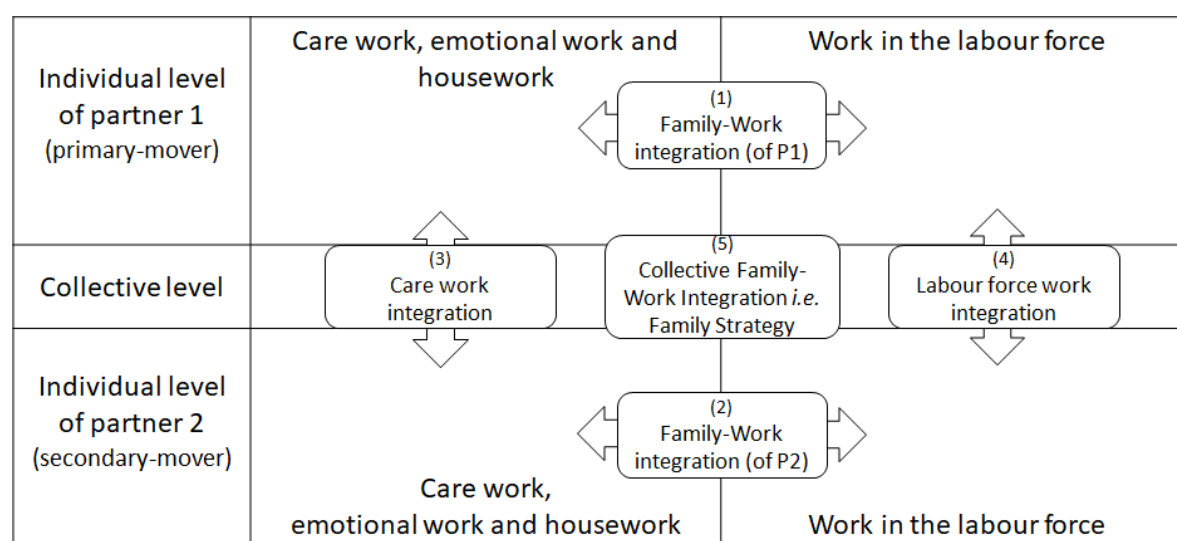
Each type of move implies specific challenges for the “secondary-movers”, I argue. Following this logic, the “partner-initiated mover” only evolves as such when the “secondary-mover” performs a “total-move”, implying the quest of a new position in the

labour force. The concept of “partner-coordinated mover” stresses the ways to circumvent the challenges of seeking employment in the local space after relocating yet creating new challenges when it comes to the “family-strategies”. It highlights the role of mobility as a strategic tool in the integration of two professional careers. However, it is either exhausting for the one carrying it and thus non-sustainable on the long run – as Maria who teleworked in Japan for an Italian company, or clearly restricted in time – as Manon who took a maternity leave.

6.6 Theorising the Professional Careers Coordination

Thanks to expatriation studies, I can develop better the understanding of the different challenges that the types of the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” imply, by focusing and conceptualising further the initiator of the move. In this chapter, I have described the different types of moves for the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” and will briefly conclude by summarising its main results. As a reminder, Figure 16 contextualises the scope of the analysis: so far, I focused on the right-column.

Figure 16: Family-Strategy



Source: Own elaboration

I started this chapter by showing the relevance of what I call the “professional approach”. It corresponds to an analysis focusing on the relationship between the employer and the employee (6.1 Migration Triggering: Individual Approach, 119), which emphasises the initiator of a relocation from a professional and individual approach. Then, I presented another perspective by focusing on who between the partners is the initiator of a move, what

I call a “collective approach” (6.2 Migration Triggering: Collective Approach, 124). This approach highlights a seminal distinction between a “primary-mover” and a “secondary-mover”, which grasps social and gendered dynamics. Developing my argument on that distinction, I analysed the “labour force work integration” of highly-skilled migrants. To that end, I proposed a continuum between an “expat-move” and a “local-move” which implies different perceptions of “motility”. Then, I proposed different types of reactions for the “secondary-mover”. I showed that the “secondary-movers” can circumvent the challenges of relocating “totally” with their partner for a time only: after a time, they will have to take a decision. The type of the “partner-coordinated mover” is only temporary. “One life in two worlds” at the same time seems very difficult on the long run. Besides, I pointed at a gender imbalance between the “primary-movers” and the “secondary-movers” as the latter are very often the female partner: thus, adding to the specific challenges of the “secondary-movers” the gender hierarchies. These specific challenges stress the specificity of the access to the labour force for the “partner-initiated movers”: the bottom right corner of the Figure 16. I showed that the “partner-initiated movers” have much more chance to access the “international labour market” after a relocation rather than the “local labour market”. I argued that the specific local space counts. One can never move but to somewhere – floating spaces do not exist as the space is always located. Thus, local spaces with an important “international labour market” offers more professional opportunities to the “partner-initiated movers”.

I showed that not all relocations are equal for the “primary-movers”: the next chapter will stress that the conditions of their relocation affect the whole family. In fact, not only the conditions of the relocation as such are central, but the way the partners interpret the “motility” of the “primary-mover” play a central role for the “family strategies”. Bluntly, the reaction of the “secondary-mover” is not going to be the same if the partners believe that the “primary-mover” will stay 6 months or 6 years in the same local space. In the following chapter, I will switch to analysing the discourses; that is the stories of the people I interviewed in order to grasp how this interpretation of a move influences the “family-strategies”. While the first empirical chapter is a “fine grained” analysis focusing on the mechanisms of decision making and their consequences, the second empirical chapter deals with the narratives of the interviewees at large.

7 Representing Migration: Between Motilities and Anchors

In the previous chapter, I distinguished different types of moves and I showed that they emerge through a relational process, which considers the partners rather than the sole relationship between the employee and the employer. The shift away from a professional and individual approach acknowledges the way the partners coordinate two professional careers, while at least one of them is mobile for professional reasons. In the current chapter, I will focus on the narratives that the partners develop when they settle in a new local space. Centrally, I will show that the “primary-mover”, whose continuum spans between an “expat-move” and a “local-move”, mirrors the ways the partners narrate their settlings in new local spaces, as well as their ways to “display family” (Finch 2007). By “displaying family”, Finch (ibid) refers to ways people communicate what they believe to be distinctive about their family, while relying and (re)producing a “repertoire of what family means” (2007, 78). In this context, I will stress how the notion of being “motile” (Flamm and Kaufmann 2006), which I understand as having the capacity and the will to be mobile, influences the way the partners “display their family” (Finch 2007).

Furthermore, Hannam, Sheller, and Urry (2006) speak of a “dialectic logic of mobility” (2006, 2) to emphasise that mobility must be conceptualised with the spatial anchors and artefacts it implies. Following this logic, I will pay special attention to the ways the partners talk about their “modalities of settling”. The “modalities of settling” are the set of practices and representations highly-skilled migrants develop when arriving in a new local space as they rearrange their “family-strategy”. To take an example of such modalities, nomads have tents because the tent, the central artefact in their way of settling, enables the nomadic way of life. A Mongolian *ger*⁷⁵ can be built (and unbuilt) in a few hours. It is because of the *ger* that the Mongolian nomads maintain their “motility”. This process is quite similar in the case of highly-skilled migrants – even if I do not understand them as contemporary nomads. Hotel rooms and corporate flats enable further moves faster and easier than other kinds of

⁷⁵ 'yurt, also spelled yurta, Mongol ger, tentlike Central Asian nomad's dwelling, erected on wooden poles and covered with skin, felt, or handwoven textiles in bright colours. The interior is simply furnished with brightly coloured rugs (red often predominating) decorated with geometric or stylized animal patterns. The knotted pile rug, first known from a nomad burial at the foot of the Altai Mountains (5th–3rd century bc), probably developed as a fur substitute to provide warmth and sleeping comfort in the yurt.' (Encyclopedia Britannica 2016, “Yurt, Shelter”)

accommodations, such as owning a property. However, when the partners narrate their “modalities of settling”, they also talk about the decisions they take concerning their “care work integration”, that is how they divide the care work between them, often relying on external support like day care services.

This chapter has three parts. First, I will clarify the concept of “displaying family” (Finch 2007) as it plays a central role. Second, I will emphasise how the narratives accepting the state of “*high motility*” contribute to justifying the process in which the women leave work in the labour force to do care work. Third, I will analyse the partners’ narratives who refuse the “constraints” of “motility” and are subsequently able to share the care work more equally. The perceived need of “motility” contributes to justifying a traditional “care work integration”. Thus, I propose the following questions: What kind of meaning patterns do the interviewees produce when they talk about settling in to a new local space? Do these meaning patterns guide them while taking decisions on their “care work integration”? If yes, how do they orientate their actions while taking these decisions?

7.1 Displaying Family

Human beings are not living in a “cultural vacuum”; the “family-strategies” are imbedded in representations and values. “Displaying family” (Finch 2007) underlines the centrality of narrative. Through this concept, I analyse the system of meanings and values developed by the respondents while “doing family” (Lutz and Amelina 2017). The “symbolic interactionism” (Blumer 1969) offers an epistemological background to ground an analysis focusing on the narratives of the respondents. It finds its root in the pragmatic philosophy (Dewey 1925; Mead 1932) but refines it further. For Blumer, “symbolic interactionism sees meanings as social products, as creation that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact” (1969, 5). The position of scholars analysing the various “doings” (“doing gender”, “doing family”, “doing migration”, etc.) all underline the primacy of human actions and interactions on the constitution of meaning. Thus, the respondents develop and attach meaning to what they call family and live it as their “family life”. Blumer (1969) underlines a fundamental triad between interaction, signification, and interpretation. This is the heart of “symbolic interactionism” as the signification that humans give to things first comes from the interactions between the individuals in order to be subsequently reworked in an interpretative process. This idea is at the core of the three famous premises of “symbolic

interactionism”⁷⁶. In the context of studying families on the move, the “symbolic interactionism” offers a way to understand the link between the narratives and the practices. I use the concept of “displaying family” as a tool to see how people imbed what they consider to be “family” into a system of signification. A “symbolic interactionist” approach is fruitful to analyse an object such as the way the respondents portray their family. For Finch (2007), “displaying family” refers to:

(...) the process by which individuals, and groups of individuals, convey to each other and to relevant audiences that certain of their actions do constitute ‘doing family things’ and thereby confirm that these relationships are ‘family’ relationships (2007, 67).

From an analytical perspective this concept offers a way to see how the notion of family is constructed as a “category of practice” (Brubaker 2002) by the ones doing it, by that exploring how do the respondents construct it. While as a “category of practice” the term family is meaningful for the respondents, the “category of analysis” must be explained and corresponds to the process of “displaying family”. Thus, I understand “displaying family” as a processual and dynamic “category of analysis” to be explained rather than be an explanatory concept. “Displaying family” is the strategic social operation occurring when the actors deploy means of categorisation to show that their family “works well”. Finch (2007) underlines that “a fundamental driving force in presenting families to an external audience is to convey the message ‘this is my family and it works’” (2007, 70). In other words, while speaking of the family, the partners construct a discourse to valorise and/or justify their practices; it is not *just* a neutral discourse in which the partners give a sociologist a description of how their family works.

The moment of the interview is a Goffmanian moment in which the interviewee creates a description of his or her family for the sociologist (Goffman 1990). It is a *mise en scène*. Thus, the “deconstructive tools” presented in the “methodological premises” (Chapter 3) are not only useful to assess the scientific literature on the topic but also to analyse discourses of the respondents. One of the main objectives of my work is to “decentre the discourse” of the respondents to stress which norms about the family are depicted as legitimate when others require a justification. As an example, I will show that frequently the respondents “display a

⁷⁶ The three premises of “symbolic interactionism” as defined by Blumer are: “The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. (...). The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (Blumer 1969, 2).

family” in which the two partners work in the labour force, providing a large understanding of what “working in the labour force” could mean, blurring the distinction between hobby and professional activity. It often leads to discrepancies between their practices and their discourses. When it is obviously not possible to provide such a display, the respondents provide a justificatory discourse explaining why one of the partners left the labour force. In turn, this tells us something about the normative aspects of doing and displaying family: “dual careers couples” seem to be the discursive norm.

I do not only aim at “decentring” the discourses of the respondents. I also intend to “decentre” the approach of the study itself, in this case the way I assess the interviews. In the previous chapter, I emphasised the access to the labour force of the “secondary-movers”: underlining the unique challenges they face. Doing so, I shed light on a topic forgotten for a long time: the “trailing-spouse” [*sic*] who have been considered primarily as a “burden” in many studies and certainly not as a partner with a tertiary education struggling to maintain a professional activity (for a discussion on the topic, see 2.4.3 Expatriate Adjustments, 32). In the present chapter, I propose to “decentre” the approach by focusing – except one exception – on how the “primary-movers” display their family and more precisely their coordination between the care work and the work in the labour force. In other words, this chapter analyses how the partner who works in the labour force coordinate the former with the care work. This is also a forgotten topic as studies traditionally analysing the work in the labour force of the highly-skilled migrants focus solely on the “masculine side” of the “gender binaries”, namely the “productive, economic activity” (for a discussion on the topic, see 3.2 Methodological Individualism, 57).

7.2 Motile Narratives

The way the partners perceive the move of the “primary-mover” shapes the “family-strategy”. Discursively, the types of the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” are not only about who initiates a move but also refers to explaining the reasons of the move. This point is absolutely crucial as one of the partners very often believes to have moved because of the other. The key to understanding the implication of the move of the “primary-mover” on the “family-strategy” is the perceived need of “motility”. Through three narratives, I will show that the perceived need to remain “motile” (re)produces gendered hierarchies. The narratives stress how the constant need of “motility”, for the sake of one professional career, implies an uncompromising focus on the prioritised career: reinforcing gendered hierarchies

in the “family-strategies”. This configuration is very often to be found when the male partners perform an “expat-move”; a “assigned expatriate” according to the professional approach of Andresen et al. (2014) and usually the reaction of the female “secondary-mover” to the mobility and the “motility” of their partner corresponds to the type of the “partner-initiated mover”.

7.2.1 Structural Constraints

The story of John and Aurelia highlights the development of care needs within a couple, a process by which the partners maintain and deepen a relationship of dependencies and responsibilities while relocating regularly. In the following, I will analyse John’s narrative. I conducted an interview with him at his office in an empty conference room, which he arranged for the interview. It lasted one hour. Aurelia and John are married and have two young children of one year old and three years old. Today, John is a senior manager in a consumer-good multinational company, while Aurelia seeks employment in the labour force since their last relocation. Furthermore, they grapple to find a day care solution for their children. So far, they did not find anything satisfactory. Since having children, John tells me, it is even more complicated for Aurelia to seek employment. How is it then that it is more complicated for her to seek employment and not more complicated for him to fulfil his professional activity? How did this situation develop and how does John display it?

John finished his studies at the beginning of the 1990s and started to work for a marketing company in Chicago. After three years working for them, he asks his supervisor for new challenges and was given the task to open an office in Boston⁷⁷. He took the challenge for one year before moving back to Chicago. During these first years of labour force work, John was in his late 20s. Young, ambitious and without care responsibilities, he can answer quickly to any professional opportunity. In that sense, he is the quintessence of a “motile” professional. When his previous manager thus calls him to know if he would accept a position in Hong Kong, he does not hesitate:

My previous manager called me and said: “Hey, we got this opportunity in Hong Kong, would you be interested?” and I said: “We pack on Thursday, let's go”. I mean [snap fingers] that was literally: “I'm in, Hong Kong, never been there, done anything about it, sounds great. Let's go”. I was really just right and ready for change. You know quite literally, the next week, I was on the plane to Hong Kong. (...) I was single at that point, in a relationship but not a serious one

⁷⁷ I have already presented a “mind map” of the story of John and Aurelia in the methodological chapter (4.2.3 Analysing the Interview Corpus, 63).

and was not worried whether that relationship was going to make the trip or not (John, 50yrs, married).

In this quote, John recalls his first international relocation and deploys a narrative in which the possible constraints, which could hinder the relocation, are not important enough to dissuade him. The use of the personal pronouns stresses how the decision to relocate leads him and his former girlfriend to end their relationship. “We pack on Thursday. (...) I’m in” (ibid). In fact, what happens is that *he* packs on Thursday. At the end of the quote, he clarifies the situation as he says that he prioritises the relocation over the relationship and/or she refuses to follow him. He is going to relocate there anyways, as he does not perceive the relationship as serious enough; meaning he can emotionally sacrifice it on the altar of his career.

The sentence “I’m in, Hong Kong, never been there, done anything about it, sounds great” (ibid) depicts an adventure of someone free from his bounds (“I’m in”) and happy to jump into the unknown (“never been there”). Retrospectively, he has some good reasons to depict it like that, as this relocation is going to be a crucial step for his professional career. It will allow him to take a challenging position, to develop key professional assets and to create a professional network, which is going to support him when he will experience difficulties. But that is not all, John narrates a high *availability to mobility* i.e. “motility”, too; by snapping his fingers expressing the high pace at which changes happen in his life: “quite literally, the next week, I was on the plane” (ibid). He can respond almost instantly to any opportunity around the globe, because he does not have any need to integrate his career with the one of a partner as they get separated, nor any care responsibility as he does not have children or relatives requesting care work. A separation and the absence of care responsibilities enable direct actions in the labour force: an unconstrained “motility”. Certainly, it is most likely to happen when the people are rather young, but circumstances are going to change. Thus, he speaks not only about a frictionless mobility but also about the speed of his acceptance to relocate. Accordingly, John moves to Hong Kong as an “assigned expatriate”, who is supported by his company as “the notion of being left alone [is] not on the table” (John, 50yrs, married). He works for an experienced company which send employees abroad, as the “expatriate package” he receives is formalised and comprehensive for it contributes to create the relocation as frictionless.

After a few years in Hong Kong, John switches to another company, this time in Italy: a fairly bad experience for him as he feels that this new company has important management issues. He accepts this position because it is “the best job on paper” (ibid) but it turned out to be “the worst job in reality” (ibid). Yet, it is where he meets Aurelia, whom he is to marry few years later. Aurelia is employed by the same company but in the North European market. She is Swedish, working and living in Scandinavia, and he is American, working and living in Italy. For a year, they date each other across the continent “where *EasyJet* would take us” (ibid). Then, they want to give a real chance to their relationship and they decide that she resigns from her position and moves to live to Italy with him. At this point, they try to find a position for her in the same company. She should receive a position, but the arrangement does not work out as planned. This is how John recalls the situation:

So, my job was the bigger of the two in *** [company]'s headquarter in Italy and she was a label architect at *** [company] in the North European region. So, a lot of conversation happened before and when she arrived that job never materialized and that is another reason that I was very happy to leave *** [company], that is just a company that was very willing with bracket promise and I don't think that was ok, good organizations don't work that way (John, 50yrs, married).

The circumstances of John's and Aurelia's life change as soon as they decide to live together in an atomic heterosexual partnership. Now, they have to coordinate two labour force positions and a little care work for as long as they do not have any children. The decision to move in together takes a specific shape, as Aurelia moves to join him because his job was “bigger” according to him. In John's narrative, they take a rational decision; yet, it can be interpreted as the construction of a gendered hierarchy in the newly created partnership, too. John is aware of that and produces a justificatory narrative to contextualise the specificity of their situation as he explains what she does to maintain her position in the labour force. Expressing his frustration, John actively displays that he does not push Aurelia out of the labour force but that the incompetency of others does so. The couple planned this relocation, they were not reckless, it should have worked out; but, some people were probably not frank – and/or at the very least incompetent – and their whole plan did not work. The argument emphasises two justificatory moments to display why a (female) partner stops her labour force work for the (male) counterpart, while denying a patriarchal organisation of their partnership. These two justificatory moments are *the hierarchy of the positions* and *the incompetency of others*.

As John has the “bigger” job, Aurelia resigns to join him: this is the hierarchy of positions. In the interview, this crucial moment is very briefly mentioned but expresses a strong power relationship: the one with the better position maintains it. In their case, as in so many cases, the males have the “bigger” positions. A configuration which corresponds to the social and structural trends, as the women still do have worse positions in the labour force, and the lesser paid activities, compared to the men (Hausmann, Tyson, and Zahidi 2009, 64). Structural inequalities are (re)produced in John’s and Aurelia’s partnership because their rational calculus (re)produces them. A Foucauldian argument in which the big strategies of power become imbedded in micro-relations of power (Foucault 1994, 66). John thereby neutralises the gendered argument following the motto that he and Aurelia take a rational decision in a difficult context, where there is no good choice. As the argument goes, it would be unfair to pejoratively assess their choice because they are coping with heavy structural constraints. Therefore, John refuses to be seen as yet another patriarchal male.

John provides a second justification to underline that he is not trying to create a patriarchal partnership as Aurelia manages to find a position in the labour force before relocating. In their plan, she has found a position in the labour force at the moment she moves for him. In fact, the company betrays them as it does not hold its promises. It is the second argument to display the partners struggling against what could lead to a traditional division of the tasks. In sum, John underlines the external circumstances which lead Aurelia to lose her professional activity once in Italy. As their story goes further, they marry and Aurelia gets pregnant with their first child. John resigns from his position in Italy and takes up another position offered by one of his former employers in Hong Kong. He underlines that this decision takes her perspective into account:

She was personally very unhappy and that was having an impact on her and therefore on our relationship and I knew that she was the one that I wanted to marry. So, that wasn't going to be able to continue, so we both decided we go to Hong Kong. When we arrived in Hong Kong, my wife was three months pregnant, so she started looking for work again with the assistance of the company. The way that Hong Kong and I think China and part of Asia work, a lot of employers said: “Great, we'd love to hire you, come back when you are ready to work after your baby. We are not going to hire you while you are pregnant, because we know you are going to go on maternity leave. So, great but later. Yeah, no offense, but kind of we don't want to talk to you right now” (John, 50yrs, married).

In the first part of the quote, John underlines that Aurelia wants a job in the labour force as being out of it is a painful shift: she refuses to leave the labour force. John emphasises her unhappiness by adding the adverb “personally”: not to say we *collectively* are unhappy. Here,

John actively displays family as he implies that they are not unhappy partners; they are happy to be together. By specifying that she is personally unhappy (while he is not) and that it is impacting their relationship, omitting to mention himself, he stresses that Aurelia's unhappiness comes from the fact that she is unemployed. Her unhappiness is directly linked to the fact that she does not hold a professional position in Italy. Contrarily to what happened concerning John's former girlfriend in the United States, this time he takes Aurelia's need into consideration as "she [is] the one I [want] to marry" (ibid). Thus, they decide to move together, but not anywhere: to Hong Kong. At that point, there is little doubt that John must convince her: "You have to trust me on this one. It is going to be great" John tells Aurelia (ibid). He invests his credibility and metaphorically asks her for a "blank cheque" when relocating there. It explains his irritation when he recalls why, at first, she does not find any employment in the labour force in Hong Kong. Furthermore, they are about to relocate under a similar pattern that already led Aurelia to resign from her position to come to Italy in the first place. She is – once again – going to be the one out of the labour force, which allegedly scares her. She leaves a familiar place and a good position in multinational company to join someone she met one year ago in a foreign country. But that is not all, as the initial plan did not work out, she is now unemployed and their collective answer to that, if she would accept, is to relocate to Hong Kong. It takes her a lot of courage to accept but she ultimately does so. John, however, does not want to move without securing a position in the labour market, which explains why they decide to move to Hong Kong. It is important to secure a job for him, but not for her. Here is another inequality revealed. He manages to get a position there by activating his professional network. Arguably, they can also move back to Northern Europe, but they decide to relocate to Hong Kong; concretely, John is again going to be the "primary mover".

In the second half of the quote, John explains how it becomes more complicated for Aurelia to find an activity in the labour force as she is pregnant. He displays his reaction to the deepening of their relation as the one of someone who does what he can to make it possible for her to continue to work in the labour force: refusing once again the patriarchal narrative in which he would push her out of the labour force. As he wants to live with her and seemingly refuses to make her unhappy, they take the decision to move to Hong Kong. Yet, it is not the logical decision to answer to her need to have a position in the labour force. Logically, they would move where she finds a job, which is not Hong Kong. He speaks again according to his needs and his professional career. When they arrive in Hong Kong, Aurelia

seeks employment in the labour force, while being pregnant, but does not find anything: nobody wants to hire a pregnant woman. John justifies why Aurelia does not work in the force work by underlining structural constraints; namely the sexism of employers who do not want to hire a pregnant woman. The reported speech, of the potential employers who could have hired Aurelia, highlights an answer that he considers to be inappropriate. “We do not want to talk to you” (ibid) implies John’s critic of these employers by that transferring the responsibility of Aurelia’s unemployment to others. After the birth of their first child, Aurelia finds a position in the labour force and takes a maternity leave for their second child. John expresses his relief as, for once, his narrative sticks to the situation:

Everything went very smoothly and after the birth of our first child, my wife found work and she was hired by one of the company that she's spoken with previously. We were in Hong Kong for a little of two and a half years and she worked for the last year and a half that we were there. She took a short maternity leave when our second child was born, so we had two kids while we were in Hong Kong and then moved with two young children here (John, 51yrs, married).

There are two moments in this quote, the first one corresponds to their situation when the “order” is restored, it lasts for the time they stayed in Hong Kong. The way he wants to display his family and their objective situation are aligned. “Everything went very smoothly” (ibid) expresses, in John’s view, this sense of normality – of what corresponds to normality in his view – where the two partners work in the labour force. It expresses his ideal when he displays family and how he would like to live if things were only the way he wanted. He proposes a discourse in which both partners should work in the labour force; yet, when it comes to the care work, the narrative is more univocal. He mentions her maternity leave but there is no sign of a paternity leave. Hochschild and Machung (2012 [1984]) show that women mostly do the care work in addition to their work in the labour force which is not the case for men. When the two partners have a position in the labour force, it is most often the women who take up the “second shift” (2012 [1984], 24) of care work. The meaning patterns of what family means are also about what is unspoken, unquestioned, taken for granted. In John’s case, the fact that *only* Aurelia takes a maternity leave is one of these taboos. Furthermore, his “order of things” – in which both partners have a position in the labour force (a maternity leave corresponding to that case, as Aurelia is still employed in the labour force) – does not last long as the disruption of a new relocation comes; “and then [we] moved” (ibid) expresses it. Indeed, *then* the company asks John to move to Switzerland and Aurelia resigns and the whole arrangement has to be created again for Aurelia to have a paid position and for John to be able “display family” (Finch 2007) in a way which suits their situation. He

does not mention the fact that he can resign too, so she can continue her activity in the labour force; by that he creates again the “hierarchy of position” that leads Aurelia to resign first. According to my former conceptualisation, John does an “expat-move”, Aurelia following him and reacting as a “partner-initiated mover” for the third consecutive time.

When they arrive in Switzerland, the circumstances have changed, as there is more care work to be done as they raise two children. Thus, the relocation implies not only coordinating two professional careers but also integrating the care work required by the newly arrived children. In these conditions, Aurelia struggles to find enough time to seek employment in the labour force as they cannot find day care arrangement for the children. The situation is frustrating according to John:

We are technically repatriated but in reality we are expatriated and the way that we've been/ the way that we need to come and manage our life here is basically like we are Swiss, like we have lived here before, like we do have family that can help us to take care of the kids while my wife is looking for a job and maybe while my wife starts working while we are waiting for our number to come up on the day care list and we don't have that facility available to us. So, this move has been more personally challenging for us, but we are managing through it (John, 51yrs, married).

Now that they have two children, they need external help in terms of day care if Aurelia wants to have the time to seek employment in the labour force. John expresses his frustration about the lack of availability of day care opportunities in Switzerland, they are number 41 on the waiting list, he told me. He emphasises the lack of support they receive. Since he already has a position in the labour force and because they do not have any members of their extended family living in Switzerland, only Aurelia can, allegedly, take up the larger share of care work. It is as if he is blinded as if he does not see he could help, too. For John, they are stuck in a vicious circle since the only way to be prioritised on the waiting list for the day care solution is that the two partners work in the labour force; but they need this day care solution so that Aurelia can properly seek employment. Thus, John shows his irritation during the interview as he remembers arguments he has with the company around the spouse support. He wanted his company to pay for language courses or professional memberships for Aurelia: “You guys seriously have to put your money where your mouth is”, (ibid) as he puts it. On top of that, Aurelia works in a sector which is not really developed in the specific city where they live now in Switzerland for she would have more chances to find something in a larger city like Geneva or Zurich which would imply daily commutes. Several times during the interview John emphasises that he hopes she will find a job but the combination of constraints

they are facing, and his blindness to the help he could provide, seem to make it very difficult to happen. His narrative shows, nevertheless, what kind of external constraints appear when it comes to integrating care work within a partnership. Since they arrived in Switzerland, many challenges arose; especially regarding Aurelia's involvement with the care work and to find a position in the labour force at the same time as, apparently, he does not think about reducing his working time in the labour force. Besides, the next move is never far away:

I don't expect to be/ we don't expect to live here for all that long. You know, this is a two to three years assignment, just like my last one and at that point we'll move out of Switzerland to another geography where we'll be on an expat package again (John, 51yrs, married).

For Aurelia, the next relocation can be expressed as a *sword of Damocles* over her employment in the labour force as they will both move when the company employing John will ask him to do so. On the one hand, John's narrative is the one of someone justifying himself as his professional career is, at least partly, responsible for Aurelia's *unprofessional* situation. The conditions of "motile" relocations create gendered constraints as it is very often the women who lose their professional activity in the process and John's narrative is one example how to justify this. On the other hand, at no point during the interview he mentions how he could help; he is blind to his scope of action. The conditions of his professional activity in the company seems to be an unspoken priority, something that cannot be touched. They came to Switzerland for the sake of his professional activity and a reduction of the time he spends at the office in order to help Aurelia having more time to seek employment seems to be in contradiction with the purpose of their stay. The narrative is defensive because he knows well what kind of interpretation their situation mirrors: the pejorative display of a "trailing spouse" and a "breadwinner". He refuses (and at the same time reifies) these "membership categories" (Sacks 1972; Watson 1983). The "membership categories" are designations coming from the common sense to refer to entities of the social world. Through them, the actors can identify individuals and social groups and attempt to (re)define a situation, while giving meanings to these individuals' or social groups' actions. The "membership categories" (ibid) of the "trailing spouse" and the "breadwinners" refer to a patriarchal organisation of a partnership, which John continually reuses in his narrative. "We are not like that" captions his argumentation. However, for him, Switzerland is only a temporary assignment. Why should they invest time and energy for a position in the labour force that she will have to quit anyway? Because, of course, they will leave for his purpose. This situation expresses a tension, if not a paradox. To provide a discourse which aims at

resolving it, John proposes an alternative to the traditional and patriarchal “repertoire of what ‘family’ means” (Finch 2007, 78) but practices the very opposite of it. He does not accept this repertoire and thus proposes another categorisation in which the structural constraints are the central elements to understand why Aurelia does not work in the labour force. The key to understand the tension, in his discourse, between how he wishes to display his family and their practice is a narrative on the (gendered) impact of “motility”. The fact that he is the “primary-mover” blinds him to any kind of negotiation with regard to the division of the care work with Aurelia because he has to perform for his company: being an “expatriate” and being paid “top dollars” (ibid). In order to display “his” family, he provides a discourse focusing on the constraints they face and how the family struggles against them while, at the same time, he is inflexible on the prioritisation of his career. It is one way of displaying a traditional family while refusing the discourse that comes with it. The case of John shows the discrepancies between his discourse and their practices. The narrative stresses that structural constraints – which hinder the capacity of the “secondary-movers” to find a position in the labour force, after a relocation – are omnipresent. This narrative responds to the challenges of the “partner-initiated movers”, that I developed in the previous chapter, when she (or he) resigns from her (or his) former professional position and accepts to relocate for the sake of the “primary-mover’s” career.

7.2.2 Career Men and Career Women

Stressing the structural constraints is a first element of narratives “displaying family” under the constraints of “motility”; it passes the responsibility of the women’s loss of professional activity on the context. Some, like John, develop their whole narrative around this element. Others rather take these constraints for granted while “displaying family”; naturalising them and thus contributing to create a “no alternative narrative”. Kim, for instance, develops this “no alternative narrative”: he stresses why there is no alternative to the decision in which the female partner stops to work in the labour force. I interviewed Kim at his office and he started the interview by telling me that he married his company before marrying Sandra, which is already a clue on his priorities. Together, they have four sons and relocated to seven different countries within the last 20 years. In fact, he works for the same company for more than 25 years now. He is Dutch and currently the director of the recruitment program of a large multinational company in Switzerland: a senior manager in a big organisation. His career is the one of an “assigned expatriate” as he worked the whole time for the same company and relocated many times to different countries. He accepted higher and higher positions with

more and more responsibilities, being sent abroad either to develop “new markets” or to supervise existing subsidiaries. In other words, he, Sandra, and their children relocate at least three times per decade. How does he display the “care work integration” then? Kim is very straightforward: he does the paid labour force work while Sandra does the unpaid care work for the household. In contrast to John’s narrative in which he explains Aurelia’s difficulties to find a position in the labour force, Kim focuses his discourse on the value of family and the trust needed between the partners:

A relocation is certainly a stressful time. But the great thing is, I think it makes the family bounds stronger because the only thing which is always consistent is the family unit. No matter how many times it moves, or where it moves to, it moves together as a team, and I think you kind of go through the different challenges together in terms of picking up new languages and yeah dealing with new cultures. But I have to say that I have been very fortunate: my wife is very much very organised, and she does most of it (Kim, 49yrs, married).

The family is the sole consistent unit in a context where everything is subject to quick modifications. The stress generated by a relocation reinforces the bound within the partnership, according to him. For this equation to work, he adds nevertheless a condition: the family needs to work as a “team”. The metaphor of a “team” is striking, as it refers to different players having different functions such as defenders, midfielders and forwards. The analogy implies a traditional division of the tasks between him and Sandra; though, he does not name explicitly the care work, referring to the latter as “it”. Indeed, in a team, the players know what they have to do and how to play. Furthermore, the analogy stresses a strategic vision of the family able to function under the constraints of “motility”. He explicitly links a high “motility” (“no matter how many times it moves, or where it moves” [ibid]) and the strength of a family organised along traditional lines (“it moves together as a team” [ibid]). Kim offers a narrative in which it is clear who does what. In other words, there is no “care work integration” between him and Sandra as she does all the care work while he focuses on the labour force work.

For him, this way of not dividing the tasks offers advantages when it comes to multiple relocations. He speaks about a traditional division of the tasks, as he knows that the only possibility to have such an uncompromised focus on the professional career while, at the same time raising four children, is to have a spouse doing all the care work: “my wife is very organised, and she does most of it” (ibid). He needs someone to do the care work, so he can focus exclusively on his professional activity right after the relocation, as he explains it:

When you move it tends to be the most stressful time in your new job. You have to go training, you have to go to the market, so it's just not the right time to be spending a lot of time with the family and integrate things. That is, I think, the challenge. I think the work takes on the front role and it is going to be/ hum/ very busy at that time (Kim, 49yrs, married).

He contrasts doing “training” and “going to the market” (ibid) – which is a professional term implying doing the “real work” to increase the profits of the company – with “spending time with the family” (ibid). The latter is a euphemism, as he phrases it in a way which could imply spending free time having fun with the children. It depreciates Sandra’s care work, because she does not “spend time with the family” (ibid), but rather invests her time in a vital, yet unpaid work for the “elementary family” in order to be able to live in the new local space while her husband is factually absent all-day long. She needs to rearrange the children’s integration into new schools as well as doing all the care work for them and Kim. The time just after a relocation is the busiest time in terms of care work, too. In other words, he depreciates the care work because he refuses to explicitly compare “going to the market” to sell digitalised marketing products and finding a school for the children. The difference of value attached to the different types of work is another way to create gender inequality for the care work is very often depreciated when it is compared to the labour force work. It is, nevertheless, of at least the same importance, because Kim’s life would be simply impossible without the dedicated and constant support of Sandra. In his discourse, he does the important labour force work and Sandra does the less important care work:

We decide a house and the rest she can manage it there and it works for us like that in terms of/ because I have, you know, I have full confidence in her and she is actually very decisive and knows what she wants and it works better that way when you decide, one person should focus on it because if you do it all together you get just more stressed I think. She is the one who does most of the logistics (Kim, 49yrs, married).

“She can manage the rest” (ibid) – except buying the house which is a male thing after all – is again a clue of the difference of value he attaches between the labour force work and the care work. Kim develops a patriarchal argument to display the organisation he has with Sandra. A patriarchal organisation is not only about a clear division of the tasks between the labour force work and the care work within the partnership; rather it is also about “the domination of women and younger men by older or more powerful men. Literally the ‘rule of the fathers’” (Levy 2007). Thus, it refers about a difference of rank and of power within the partnership, which Kim expresses by giving Sandra his confidence: “I have full confidence in her” (ibid) reveals this hierarchy between them; as if he delegates the care work to a subordinate. It shows once again his devaluation of care work.

This hierarchy reinforces (and is being reinforced) by a patriarchal organisation of the family: the labour force paid work being synonymous of financial capital, rarity and power which outclasses the care work categorised as devotion and abnegation. Thus, the father, the *pater familias* takes the decisions, is the one who leads; it is not only about the choice of the next relocation but concerning the choice of what he wants to take care of outside the paid work, leaving no choice to the other partner to accept taking on the rest – except in the case of a separation or divorce.

The constraints of “motility” and of multiple relocations become a way to justify a traditional model of the family in which everyone knows what he or she must do. Kim presents the way of disintegrating care work as a rule, something they have tested, which works best like this for them: “one person should focus on that” (ibid). This way of presenting the division of the tasks corresponds to the analogy of the team he developed earlier. For him, it is the model that fits best his career as there is no compromise to be done between two professional careers. Furthermore, he does not even have to bother about the care work as “she does most of the logistics” (ibid). However, he does not take the last step and does not accept the full package of what such a family organisation would imply as he says that Sandra works in the labour force, too. In that sense, the traditional model of the family, even in a family strongly organised along traditional lines does not seem to be fully legitimate – especially doing an interview with a student in sociology working on the topic. A clue of his discursive discomfort is the way he narrates what Sandra concretely does. Each time he speaks about it, his words fall short. In the first quote, he pronominalizes her work without giving a concrete subject (“she does most of it” [ibid]), in the second quote he depreciates it (“it’s just not the right time to be spending a lot of time with the family” [ibid]) and now he simply does not mention it, interrupting his sentence: “it works for us like that in terms of/ because” (ibid). When I ask him if Sandra works in the labour force, Kim provides a shaky argument:

The company during our expat assignment supported her to become a yoga instructor. Throughout these moves she always has been able to find, I would say, employment. That is not financially that lucrative but something that she is passionate about that she loves to do, meet new people, in particular local people I would say depending on which country, Japan is very difficult to meet with new people but in Mexico (...) So, for her, finding a supporting profession which is flexible/ I mean if you want to be a career woman and you both want to have a career it is much more difficult I think if you want to be able to move (Kim, 49yrs, married).

In this excerpt, Kim blurs the lines between a hobby and a paid activity in the labour force. She should be thankful to a company who is kind enough to pay her training to gain a

certificate to teach yoga. Kim is not really convinced about the first part of his argument: “I would say, employment” (ibid) he told me; but others would not say so. He offers here a politically correct answer. He proposes what he thinks I want to hear; namely that the partners of “assigned expatriates” (Andresen et al. 2014) can find a position in the labour force even in the context of multiple relocations. Is not his company “a dual career friendly” company after all? At the end of the quote, he, however, rejects the possibility of a dual career while being “motile”; expressing a central tension between the “work care integration” and the “labour force work integration”. His clause “if you want to be a career woman” (ibid) emphasises this perceived impossibility for him; yet, as we have seen it in the case of John, he does not raise the possibility to support the care work. In other words, he is creating the impossibility he refers to in order to explain why Sandra does not work in the labour force. The meaning of “career women” is central here, as it expresses a perceived impossibility. The “career women” mirrors the “career men”, the female counterpart of the professional, uncompromisingly focusing on their professional career. For him, it is an impossibility as these professionals do not do the care work: they solely focus on their professional advancement and does not (want to) have the time to do it. Because he wants to be a “career man”, he needs someone agreeing to compromise her career as he, certainly, will not do so. As his company was asking him, his partner and their children to move from Lithuania, to Switzerland, to the Philippines, to Australia, to Mexico, and so on, it is difficult to see how Kim and Sandra could have developed a dual partner career without him agreeing to negotiate a larger space for Sandra to develop an activity in the labour force. Concretely, it would probably mean staying longer at one place or accepting a move for the sake of her professional career, maybe even resigning from his company. Would he accept such a compromise? He would probably not; after all, he married his company before marrying Sandra as he told me at the beginning of the interview.

Without considering the “career women” option, just maintaining an activity in the labour force seems complicated for Sandra, especially when Kim depicts how fast they have to take the decision to move: “We have a job for you in Mexico, talk to your wife about it, we’ll call you tomorrow” (ibid). The time between the decision to relocate and the actual relocation is so short that they had to cancel their holidays to do an exploratory trip to Mexico. In these conditions, how can she maintain an activity in the labour force? She does not, because her husband prioritises only his own professional career, letting her do the care work. He tries to save the argument as he mentions that the income is not so important compared to other

advantages of teaching yoga which are to “do something that you love” (ibid) and to “meet local people” (ibid). So, what is the purpose of this activity in his narrative if it is not to earn money? I would argue “to keep her happy” (sic.). Here, I move to another aspect of these narratives that I will analyse in the next section.

In sum, Sandra sacrifices her professional career to follow the pace of her husbands’ relocations. In these conditions, Kim’s narrative offers an assumed division of the tasks as having a dual career is not an option anymore and was never an option for him. It contrasts to John’s narrative, who proposes a different line of argumentation, in which he underlines the way he and Aurelia fight against difficult circumstances: ultimately trying to reverse them. Kim accepts nearly the whole package, as he admits, at the end of the last quote, that it is not possible to develop a dual career in their case. Thus, he develops a narrative valorising a patriarchal model of the family, which implies a depreciation of the care work, coupled with an uncompromising focus on his career. Such a narrative eliminates other ways of organising the family as the intensity of his investment in the labour force work is non-negotiable and only his acceptance to negotiate it could give Sandra more time to seek employment in the labour force. Furthermore, they integrate work and family following that pattern for decades now and it is very difficult to reintegrate the labour market after decades out of it. While Sandra struggles to find a position, Kim is a director, displaying a “no alternative narrative”. When there is no other option, there is no reason to feel responsible about a one-sided “care work integration”. In fact, it is a confirmation that the choices taken in this respect were the good ones because they are the only “realistic” ones: a self-fulfilling prophecy. The drawback of such a family organisation is that it requires the female partner accepting to sacrifice her independence. That point is central because it underlines that the price of successful international careers is not paid by the “primary-mover” himself but mostly by their female partners. The self-fulfilling prophecy takes years to become irreversible and the partners do not take the decision to organise their family in a traditional way once and for all. At a point, the (female) partner – being ejected out of the labour force by the uncompromising focus of the (male) partner on his career – can refuse to continue to follow such a scenario in which she will certainly lose her independence and may divorce. I will deal with the consequence of divorce and separation in the next chapter.

7.2.3 Paradoxical Family Men

Besides the discursive elements stressing a fight against the external constraints and the ones underlining a “no alternative” scenario, I see a third way of putting into words a traditional division of the tasks within a partnership: the (male) partner working in the labour force underlines that he, in fact, prioritises the family. The narratives of the interviewees who mobilise the “paradoxical family men” element, in fact, combine the two former elements, by that showing that the narratives are dynamic and that their constitutive elements are not mutually exclusive. The “paradoxical family man” takes the external constraints for granted and develops a “no other alternative narrative”; yet, he does it by emphasising that his priority is the family. It is paradoxical: while the “secondary mover” and the children follow him for the sake of his professional career, he emphasises being a “family man”. Dennis develops a narrative of that kind. He is married to Katia and both of them have relocated several times. They moved to many places including Germany, the United States and Hong Kong before relocating to Switzerland. Dennis told me straight away that he is a “family man”. When I asked him the question of how it is to combine his professional career with his family life, he provided me with the following:

It is not difficult. I am a family man anyways, so I like to have a job, it's fun, but career is not everything for me. (...) I do my job as efficiently as I can, I try to be home for dinner latest. Diner time at home is religion; so, we try to always be there, all the family. So, I just try to work as quickly and effectively as I can; so, do not let the organization suck me (Dennis, 49yrs, married).

Here, his argument in favour of the family is related to their organisation of the daily life, the daily organisation of time. The explanation he develops is somehow curious: he comes back in the evening for dinner. Leaving in the morning and having a full-time job, then coming back for dinner in the evening is what apparently makes him a “family man”. He starts the quote by asserting that for him working in the labour force “is fun”, expressing the idea of a game compared to the family which is the serious matter. He develops a discourse in which he diminishes the perceived importance of his activity in the labour force. He underlines that he achieves easily the integration between labour force work and family because he prioritises the latter.

However, many elements in this quote show that the discourses and practices do not concord, highlighting a tension between both. “Dinner time at home is religion” (ibid) is the example on how he builds his argument. Yet it is, analytically spoken, a clue for the discrepancy

between the discourse and the practices as he uses a figure of speech; namely, a hyperbole. He implies that family is central to him and being back at home for dinner is part of his priorities, but the use of such a figure of speech is designed to increase the credibility of a clause. In fact, when he says he comes back home for dinner time, he uses the verb “to try” (ibid) two times. It may be not as easy as it seems. Though he presents “being at home for dinner” (ibid) as an evidence, but one can wonder if it is not, in fact, a daily fight for him to achieve it. Maybe he even wishes he would be a more present “family man”.

His words “not letting the organisation suck me” (ibid) are revealing the pressure that the “primary-movers” face in their labour force work. In many interviews of employees of multinational company, their narrative underlines the pressures pushing them to invest a lot of time in the labour force. As the employees’ incomes are high as the benefits mentioned in their contract are numerous, and as they (the expats) are expensive for the company, the pressure on them to work hard and to “perform” is strong. During the interview, Dennis differentiates himself explicitly from the “stereotypes that high level managers are terribly busy and important and that they do not have time for their family” (ibid). He deploys a narrative in which he emphasises being a “family man”; yet this image is more oriented towards his colleagues than his family: he is actively comparing himself to his colleagues. He speaks of being a “family man” compared to his colleagues who are “career men”. The “paradoxical family men” captions this element in his discourse. He cares more about his family than some of his colleagues; yet in both cases, the family is subordinated to the professional activity – something he does not see or mention. He does not speak, for instance, about a fairer division of the care work: the topic he raises is to come home for dinner. But, who cooks the dinner? He develops a discourse which provides an answer to the pressure on the work place and displays his struggle to safeguard his modest objective to be at home for dinner. In sum, the explanation of his daily practices and his discourse – the meaning he is attaching to them – do not concord, and this reveals the difficulties he is facing to find time with the family. It seems that it is not as easy as he would like me to believe.

This first excerpt is about the daily organisation of time and how he positions himself compared to his colleagues rather than his partner, I argue. Hypothetically, he is telling me: “I try to be a little bit better than some of my colleagues who are all the time at the office”. In the second excerpt, Dennis still positions himself in comparison to his colleagues, but this time it happens with regard to a broader organisation of time. For him, it is important to

control the pace of his professional relocation for the sake of the family and at the expense of his career, he argues:

So every time you look at getting a different job, it also probably means that you move in the company and for me personally I think I've made much a slower progression throughout the organization that many other people have because I like the stability more, because moving family as you probably have heard from many other people is very difficult, that is why for the sake of the family, I'd rather move much more slowly and hence six years in Indonesia and five years in Hong Kong which is way over average of time for much of the people (Dennis, 49yrs, married).

In this excerpt, Dennis says that he relocates more rarely than his colleagues. While his discourse superficially focusses on the family, the competition he faces at the work place is flagrant, too. The conditions of the labour force work do not only have an impact on the daily organisation of time but also on the organisation of time on the long run. In this respect, Dennis, while aiming at controlling the pace of the relocations, perceives being disadvantaged compared to his colleagues who do not seem to have such priorities. His prioritisation of the family explains why he refuses to move when the company wants it. In that sense, the organisation of “motility” is again at the core of the narrative. The higher the “motility”, the more difficult it is to combine labour force work and care work: Dennis argues in that way. Conversely, the lower the “motility”, the slower the progression in the company, too. Thus, the tension between care work and labour force work is exacerbated by the organisation of time at two levels: at the level of the daily life – when it comes to the organisation of the day – and at the level of the family – when it comes to decisions regarding a possible further relocation. So far, I have shown how Dennis “displays family” compared to the one of his colleagues, but how does he concretely display his children and his partner?

Speaking with Dennis about the children is a large part of the interview. He underlines a positive and a negative aspect in raising children while being on the move. The positive aspect is that they are “colour blind” (ibid) and the negative aspect is that they do not have any “anchors” (ibid). These two aspects are deeply intertwined since it is the mobility of the family which allows the children to live and discover many countries while growing up. During the interview, Dennis speaks about the positive aspects of such a life for the children first:

I have three children, to grow up in an international environment, which means that they are colour blind, they do not really understand what racism is, they are open-minded, so that nationalities are a typically different concept than for us. That is a huge reward to see that people

can grow up as if they do not see any physical, ethnical, national boundaries (Dennis, 49yrs, married).

More than Dennis' career, the biggest advantage of frequent relocations is to raise the children in an international environment. However, he is afraid of not being able to offer them stability and continuity in their social life. In fact, at the time of the interview, Katia and the children were on holidays in Germany, while he was working for his company in Switzerland. They just left Hong Kong, but they did not really arrive in Switzerland yet. They have no place to live; they are in an "in-between situation of homelessness" (ibid) as he told me. In Germany, they go to their parents' place to spend the holidays. In Hong Kong, the accommodation has been terminated. In Switzerland, they still did not move in as their pieces of furniture are somewhere in the ocean on a freighter. This situation is especially complicated for the children, Dennis tells me. In his view, the children are paying a price for their frequent relocations because they lose friendships as well as an unstable sense of where "home" is:

Stability for children is, I believe, very important and I can't give them that stability. So, you need to be extra sure that you have a place for them where they have an emotional anchor and that can be very dangerous if you don't have that because then they just go through life, never investing in meaningful relationships (Dennis, 49yrs, married).

Though Dennis has constraints because of his professional activity, he emphasises during the interview that he is in a better position because relocating is much more challenging for Katia and the children. Concerning the children, his biggest fear is to raise "superficial assholes" (ibid) who do not engage with anyone, knowing they are going to leave in a few years anyways. He is afraid because they do not have an "emotional anchor" (ibid). That is why Dennis tries to stay in touch with their former friends in Hong Kong, but it seems very complicated. Thus, they planned to go back to Hong Kong for holidays; so, the children can see their friends and play soccer with them. Generally, his discourse and the families' practices contain a tension. Dennis is afraid of not being able to give them stability and an anchor. As they do not have any place to return to, he feels he has difficulty in offering them this emotional bond. Yet, he perceives this instable situation as potentially dangerous for the development of the children. He reconciles this tension by trying to maintain ties with the friends of his children though they live in Jakarta and Hong Kong. It shows the constraints when relocating and raising children. "We don't have an anchor. We don't have a home base. We don't have a place that we go to" (ibid) summarises well this intense feeling of uncertainty and fear which lurks behind the smiley, welcoming, and open Dennis I interviewed. He is

aware that the price of his mobile career is high on the family. Thus, he tries to diminish the pace of the relocations to offer the children a chance to build friendships, but at the end they all have to move anyway. “When all options are exhausted, you have to go” (ibid), by it emphasising the fragility of the social networks that highly-skilled migrants create when they arrive in a new place. As soon as the position in the labour force is away, there is nothing left and the whole “modalities of settling” that they may have enjoyed becomes part of the past. They tried to stay in Hong Kong and no doubt that if they could have done so they would have stayed. This case shows that “motility” is not always chosen: a “forced motility”. The children are not the only ones paying a high price as it is also complicated for the partner as we have seen it in the first chapter. While proposing an explanation of the reasons of the difficulties for couples to maintain a dual career under the constraints of “motility”, his discourse stresses the price of Katia’s sacrifice:

I think because (silence) it's much much much more difficult now, so because at the time my wife also used to work for *** [company] and she quit her job at the time. I know that we support dual careers and so forth, but it is very difficult to have two working spouses who put equal weight on their work life. (...) So, one of the trouble that I've/the discussion that my wife and I have before we move, every now and then, we go back 15 years: “I have to quit my job for you, so we can live this lifestyle, bla bla bla, you, never forget that” and those are unfortunately the worse moments that we have to go through (Dennis, 49yrs, married).

This quote speaks of the gendered inequalities that the prioritisation of one career contributes to create; though the “expats’ narrative” displays it in a softer way. This excerpt gives insights at the way Dennis and Katia divide the care work and the labour force work: it is, as in the first two cases, a traditional division of the tasks since Katia quits her position in the labour force to follow her husband. Not only do the children pay a high price for Dennis mobility, but Katia also seems to suffer a lot. Accordingly, Dennis implies the higher difficulty as not only men but also women want to work in the labour force nowadays (“it's much much much more difficult now” [ibid]). The underlying message is that it would be so much simpler if they (the women) would not try to do so as it complicates the life of the “career men”. He repeats his implicit message in the next sentence when he speaks about the “dual careers *and so forth*”⁷⁸ (ibid): these unimportant things that the company provides as if these programs were derisory compared to the challenges that a high “motility” raises for the partners. He expresses a frustration which reveals the difficulty to integrate two professional careers. A simple way to diminish the tension is when the (female) partner accepts to abandon the idea

⁷⁸ Own emphasis

of working in the labour force. He starts the next sentence with “the problem that I have/” (ibid) before correcting to “the discussion” (ibid). Dennis tries to rectify his discourse to fit an accepted narrative of what family should be. Thus, he actively “displays family” (Finch 2007) as he changes the term “problem” to “discussion”. Analytically spoken, the “problem” belongs to the realm of his practices; while the “discussion” to the realm of his narrative. A discussion implies a shared division of power in which the two partners can express their interests equally; while “my problem” corresponds to a professional perspective in which he needs to coordinate his professional career with Katia and the children. This quote reveals the many paradoxes and tensions of Dennis’ narrative on the one hand, and his practices, on the other.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to completely show Katia as a “happy partner”; there are indications that it is not the case. First, the temporal markers indicate that Katia’s acceptance to follow him and to giving up her independence was not a punctual discussion they had one time 15 years ago: rather it is a recurrent discussion – a recurrent argument – because it is a recurrent decision to maintain to prioritise his career. She allegedly does not accept the division of the tasks. It seems that he never convinced her to fit with the role he wants her to play. When she speaks about her pain, about what she did for him in order to enable his career, he depreciates her words by summarising them with “bla bla bla” (ibid). His answer to her pain and sacrifice is a devaluation. They have probably never overcome this topic as she mentions “never to forget” it (ibid). Compared to John’s narrative in which the order of things was restored when he and Aurelia were both having a position in the labour force; in Dennis’ case, the order of things would be restored if Katia would not try to discuss to work in the labour force, I argue. It is an example in which Katia, the female partner, is being sent back to the sphere of the household, doing the care work for the family. Dennis mobilises a “no alternative narrative” to explain why Katia left the labour force:

I think it is becoming more and more difficult in a dual working spouse relationship to have one person who is not, who does not have to take the back seat, because one person always has to make a switch. Let's say you are married and your wife gets the job and you move, so you have to start a new job, three years down the road, you have to quit your job again and start another one, which is more than suboptimal (Dennis, 49yrs, married).

Dennis underlines the tension inherent to the prioritisation of one professional over the other when mobility and even more so, “motility”, is implied. He proposes an example in which the female works in the labour force while the male does the care work – a configuration I

did not encounter in my interviews. The first sentence of the quote highlights the tension when it comes to integrate two professional careers in a partnership but takes up an allegedly more accepted perspective in which it is the man who stops working for the sake of the female partner. It is difficult for the interviewees to accept the traditional and patriarchal organisation of family within their narratives. As in the cases of John and Kim, the “accepted repertoire of what family should be” contains a tension with Dennis’ practices. In their views, the “accepted repertoire of what family should be” does not correspond to the division of the care and labour force work they develop in practice. It also does not correspond to the imposition of their power over the partnership; as their partners ultimately do what they want to refer to a patriarchal organisation of the partnership. John, Kim, and Dennis develop discursive strategies – discursive tricks – to emphasise that they agree with a more egalitarian integration of the labour force work between them and their partner, but that they have difficulty finding a way to legitimate their family organisation. The path-dependency of their previous choices explains why they continue to follow this path. After a certain time having the same “family-strategy”, they find themselves in a position in which it is difficult to change the organisation of the family. Thus, this discursive trick reveals the difficulty to change the “family-strategies” as they have to keep up their professional activity in order to maintain the family’s living standards. Nevertheless, the practices remain invariably the same; none of them seem to acknowledge that their partner would need support in the care work in order to achieve a more egalitarian integration of the positions in the labour force.

I have shown three types of narratives, three different ways of explaining and justifying why and how one of the partners – the woman – leaves the labour force to do the care work. The common points of these narratives are to stress that mobility and dual career are allegedly impossible to reconcile as the pace of the relocations is too high for the other partner to coordinate his or her professional career. Their discourse on “motility” orients their way to settle. The meaning pattern they produce is the one implying the impossibility of a dual career leading them to impose a traditional division of the tasks to their partner.

Up until now, we have seen narratives in which the availability to a next relocation is high, at least discursively. Another range of narratives is the one refusing “motility”, or to put it another way: valorising more the localisation and the development of local anchors after a relocation. In the first part of this chapter I have shown the discursive construction of the concept of “motility” from an emic perspective. Through these discourses, I have stressed

that the availability to mobility for the sake of one professional career reinforces inequalities of gender roles. To conclude, I would like to add that I propose a critical analysis of their discourses, or more precisely I deconstruct these discourses. The respondents told me their story in good faith, kindly accepting to answer to my questions; though I am critical, my goal is to show how gendered hierarchy are constructed while “displaying family”.

7.3 Anchored Narratives

In the second part of this chapter, I will analyse the narratives which stress a lower availability to “motility”. These narratives focus more on settling in a local space on the long run, which, however, does not mean that the partners are going to stay for long. When the perceived need and/or wish of “motility” is low, the choices in the “modalities of settling” correspond to a long run perspective implying other kinds of narratives to display family. These narratives emphasise the challenges that the partners face to share the care work, their fear to lose their position in the labour force and running out of option in the local space, or their struggles to find a new position in the labour force. In this section, I will still analyse narratives of highly-skilled migrants who display their family in a certain way after having moved, but whose perceived lack of “motility” contributes to create another field of possibilities as, for instance, they may consider public local schools for their children. Contrarily to the partners who develop a narrative strongly stressing “motility”, the narratives emphasising localisation offer broader choices in the care work integration. It implies sometimes – and by far not always – more room for the partners to manoeuvre in order to share the care work in a more equitable way.

7.3.1 Ignoring Motility

The practices and the discourses concerning “motility” may be contradictory: there is no need for coherence between the two realms, though actors aim to make them coincide, it does not have to be that way. In other words, when it comes to the frequency of their mobility and the discourse they develop the practices of the partners do not always coincide. Maria (Teleworking, 149) is a striking example of an interviewee developing a discourse *a priori* contradictory to her highly “motile” situation. She followed her husband, Franz, to many different countries as the company was offering him positions across the globe. Maria and Franz relocated to England, to Italy, to Japan, and to Switzerland. While she found employment in the labour force after each relocation; she also resigned for the next

relocation. She is an example of a “partner-coordinated mover”, who struggles to maintain a professional activity due to her husband’s relocations. As they do not have any children, their care work integration is quite straightforward; they did not have to deal with the increased load of care work children imply. Furthermore, she did not have to fight against the “housewifing” (Kanter and Halter 1978) pressures of her husband, in specific, and society, in general, when it comes to raising children. The “housewifing” process is the process by which the female partner is pushed away from the labour force to the sphere of the household doing the care work. Thus, Maria had time to look for paid work after their different relocations because she did not have to invest her time in care working. These circumstances, nevertheless, did not remove the “Damocles sword” of her husband’s next relocation on her professional activity, for there is a “hierarchy of position” within their partnership. He never resigned as she describes his career as the “steep upward career” (Maria, 51yrs, married) of a financial manager in a multinational corporation. Actually, the possibility that he could have left his position for her is not a topic in the interview: the “hierarchy of positions” is naturalised to a point, it is simply not a question anymore. When I asked her about an earlier discussion, Maria told me that:

We always discuss it together, whenever the offer came. Well, we would have a discussion and see where we both stand if it the right time for us, if the job is interesting enough, if my husband wants to do it, if I would be willing to follow (Maria, 51yrs, married).

The first clause is all about “displaying family” (Finch 2007) as Maria underlines the systematic discussions leading to a common decision of the partners. They talk on equal grounds; though always at her expense, I argue. The crucial point of the excerpt is the kind of categorisation it implies. She does not question the division of the types of the “primary-mover” and of the “secondary-mover” in their partnership. It is as if it is unconceivable for her to accept a position abroad while her husband would follow. Though they meet while working in the labour force for the same company, though they both start in the same company at the same hierarchical level with a similar university degree, though they do not have children (which is usually *the* excuse to explain why the female does not achieve such a “steep upward professional career”). Though all the elements in their partnership suggest they could focus on a dual career, she develops a narrative in which the possibility that she could move and he could follow is never mentioned. Her narrative emphasises how deeply incorporated the “hierarchy of the positions” is between them. The meaning patterns – she (co)produces – orient her actions; it offers her a certain field of possibilities. This field

conditions her (re)actions as the question of knowing if they could relocate for the sake of her professional career does not seem to be a “realistic” possibility. Thus, she is vulnerable to the “Damocles sword” of her husband’s career: this sword could be called “motility”. Indeed, she develops an argument which shows the disruptive side of “motility” and how she avoids its consequences:

We never considered any move, any move, we never considered it as being temporary. Maybe we knew, of course, it would be temporary, but in terms of integration, in terms of the job, in terms of me looking for a job, I never thought about the temporarily, about the time limitation, because otherwise, I think I would not have been able to really find the energy to start from scratch (Maria, 51yrs, married).

In this quote, she narrates how she purposefully ignores their “motility”; though the practice develop is “motile”. She distinguishes *considering* and *knowing* which is an interesting way of depicting the situation in which she is in. She knows that they are going to move; but, in order to “find the energy to start from the scratch” (ibid) and to ultimately get a position in the labour force, she acted as if they would stay in the same local space in the long run. In this quote, Maria reflects on how she managed to maintain a professional activity through the series of concessions – if not sacrifices – she had to do in order to follow Franz. For her, it is clear that arriving in a new local space while already knowing about leaving it, discourages her to seek employment there; she would not have the energy to engage in this local space so much. The words she is using, “starting from scratch” (ibid), to describe each of her arrivals in a new local space, implies an exhausting process; therefore, accepting “motility” while relocating would be destructive for her motivation to continue seeking employment. The idea of being available to leave a local space at any time while trying to get a position in this specific local space creates a “double bind” (Bateson et al. 1956), I argue. A “double bind” refers to two conflicting messages, as for instance, “I give you the order to disobey me”⁷⁹. Indeed, either Maria accepts that she is about to leave or she looks for a position in the labour force to stay: seeking a position in the labour force to leave it straight away highlights the conflict between the two messages. In order to answer to this “double bind”, one of the binds needs to be removed; otherwise the situation is insoluble. It is the same argument as the one pushing many “secondary movers” out of the labour force, it is the same dilemma, it is the same “double bind”; yet, Maria decided to ignore the *other* bind. She refuses the ever waiting

⁷⁹ Example found on the blog “la boîte à outil du montieur éducateur”, retrieved April 13, 2018, from <http://laboiteame.unblog.fr/double-contrainte-injonction-paradoxe-ecole-de-palo-alto/>

situation as she steps in to find employment, by that lying⁸⁰ to herself about how long they will stay. Only this lie can comfort her in that her efforts are not in vain as she invests a lot of time and energy to find a position in the labour force after frequently relocating. This is how she narrates her arrival in Italy:

I was quite excited to go to Italy, but I knew that I had to learn the language first, before I could actually approach the local job market. So, what I did in Italy: I moved and immediately went into a full-time language course for almost a year and then I started to/ well it was after 8 months, I started to look for a job when I thought I was quite comfortable with the language, and then after one year, I started working in the local market (Maria, 51yrs, married).

In this quote, Maria speaks about what she does to find employment after she arrives in Italy. It is as if she is taking the “integration express line” so to speak. She learns Italian in eight months and after one year she works for an Italian company specialised in online translation: using her German skills. Doing so, Maria constructs a discourse to distinguish herself from the “membership category” (Sacks 1972; Watson 1983) of the “trailing spouse”. Following the logic of the “double bind”, the “trailing spouse” typically does not work in the labour force, by that removing the other bind: seeking employment in the labour force. Maria refuses this categorisation and its implications and creates a discourse against it: after one year, she speaks the language and works in the local labour force. The price to pay is a lie to herself; she has to ignore that she may leave tomorrow. Doing so, she constructs a discrepancy between the narrative and the practice. The situation of Maria reveals the dilemmas that “motility” creates in her situation. It also highlights that “motility” is not an abstract concept: it contributes to (re)produce a power differential within her partnership along gendered lines. “Motility” is *for* someone and it is a privilege to be the “depository of motility” in a partnership. The discourse of Maria mirrors the narratives on “motility” of John, Kim, and Dennis, yet in a reversed form. She implies that high “motility” in the case of two working partners in the labour force does not work; thus, she develops a discourse ignoring “motility” while John, Kim, and Dennis acknowledge it. Yet, they do not have to pay its price as the three have the privilege to be its depository within their partnerships. All of the four narratives highlight a high practice of “motility”, depicting an incompatibility between “motility” and

⁸⁰ I use this expression to underline how Maria copes with the “double-bind” that I spot in her discourse. As for the rest of my analyses, my goal is to critically assess an interview as a discourse, not to judge a respondent as a person.

dual careers. Yet, the “meaning patterns” they develop offer different realm of possibilities to react to it.

7.3.2 Refusing Motility

In other cases, the partners develop discourses corresponding to their (low) practice of “motility” as in Lynn and Alex’s one (6.2.1 Primary-Mover and Secondary-Mover, 125; 6.5.1 Total-Move of a Partner-Initiated Mover, 140). They relocated once and did not relocate anymore since, even though they would have had the opportunity to do so. They both work for the same multinational company in Germany. They do not see how they could coordinate their professional careers and the care work that their daughter requires better. They both have a good position in the company while having developed a “care work integration” which allows them to both work in the labour force. To do so, they hire a nanny and pay for a private school. I interviewed them separately and each interview lasts a bit more than an hour. When I asked Lynn if they would have the possibility to relocate abroad, she gave me the following answer:

They were a few chances for that, all within *** [company]. (...) I mean either we changed our mind or the situation changed, or the position changed, and it wasn't relevant anymore. So yeah, I mean but I think we've always consciously felt that in order to live here we have to have something really really good that makes a lot of sense for probably both of us and not just one of us. So, we both have a lot of earning here so and we, that would be obviously a prerequisite at this point and that does not come up every day, so I think that is why we are still here (Lynn, 51yrs, married).

Compared to the narratives presented earlier, Lynn explicitly considers the two careers when it comes to decide if they would relocate again. She emphasises that they “both have a lot of earnings here” (ibid) and that maintaining the same income is a condition to maintain their lifestyle in Germany or somewhere else. Their “care work integration” requires two paid positions in the labour force as it is expensive. She focuses on maintaining what they have rather than considering where they could go. When she says that they need something that “would make sense for probably both of us and not just one of us” (ibid), she sends a message to her employer and to her husband. The message is directed towards the company which proposes them individually different positions and asks if they would agree to relocate again. She wants something that would make sense for both of them; which the company does not propose. The message is directed towards her husband, too; as she underlines that a prerequisite for any move would be that, not only they both keep an activity in the labour

force, but also similar incomes than the ones they have now. Therefore, she argumentatively recuses the beginning of a “hierarchy of positions” between them.

Lynn also uses the first person plural (We) to speak about their professional careers, which contrasts the other interviewees who nearly systematically use the first person singular (I). In her eyes, to be convincing enough to be considered, a new relocation would need to be attractive for both of them: a situation they did not encounter anymore since their first relocation. It shows, once again, yet from a different angle, that frequent relocations create a context in which it is difficult – if not nearly impossible – for both partners to develop a professional activity.

The arrival of Mary, their daughter, emphasises even more, the development of a sceptical discourse regarding further relocations. In Lynn’s narrative, the arrival of Mary corresponds to practical and discursive shifts at different levels. She has to face (1) the pressures of displaying “being a good mum”, while (2) continuing to labour force work at a high position – she is as an account director – and (3) explaining why she does not want to move higher in the hierarchy of the company, since it would imply a further relocation. This is what she answered when I asked her about the advice she would give to someone starting a career such as hers:

I worked really, really hard for a long time to, you know, to achieve that and I think I was on a good way all along to doing that and achieving that and I think I was living this success and then once you have kids – like they say – everything changes anyway, and you start to look at things a little differently, and now I am not sure anymore what success really means (Lynn, 51yrs, married).

The first sentence of this quote stresses the shift of perspective caused by the birth of Mary. Her use of the past tense is striking in that regard. Lynn is currently the account director of the European subsidiary of an American multinational company, but she speaks as if she gives up on success. What else could success mean to her? For her, living success is about continuing to climb the hierarchy of a company to reach the top of it. It means aiming at the position of an executive director. When she speaks about working hard, she means more than 60 hours a week, and when she speaks about achieving and living success she means to accepting that relocation that she received a few years ago, which would have let her into that race. Though, she is using the past tense to speak about it, she still develops the narrative of the young and ambitious professional she was incarnating; just as the male counterparts that I analysed at the beginning of the chapter. The difference between Lynn and them is about

gender and children, I argue. The relocation of John, Kim, and Dennis allows them to continue to climb up and, for some of them, it means effectively reaching the highest position. Lynn refuses to do so, but is it really her choice? Yes and no, I argue. She ultimately decides so; though she ultimately decides through the lenses of the “meaning patterns” she (co)creates and uses. She decides yes, but who would decide against being a “good mum?” She decides, yes but who would take care of Mary? Her husband is supportive yes, but he works in the labour force, too. He will not resign to relocate for the sake of Lynn’s career and to take care of Mary. Thus, the fact that she is a woman and a mother as well as the network of constraints safeguarding their lifestyle in Germany orient her decision. To put it bluntly, her child makes her fall; for Lynn, Mary was her glass ceiling. Many studies show that the arrival of children diminishes the women’s participation in the labour force and their subsequent chances to achieve an upward professional career (Gerson 1986; Slaughter 2012) as it statistically the fathers systematically do much less care work for their children (Imhof 2015, 33). Accordingly, their careers are not at stake when they have children.

“Like they say, everything changes anyway” (Lynn, 51yrs, married). Who says it? Male interviewees never say something like that. Actually, most of them say “she took a maternity leave” (John, 50yrs, married). Things stay the same for them as they managed to develop a (non) “care work integration” – a division of the tasks in which the (female) partner does all the care work – which is actually free of charge, except for their partner’s professional sacrifices. In Lynn’s case, blurred social pressures from her partner, colleagues, parents, me (a male interviewer), and society in general, push her to display herself as a “good mother”. She speaks a lot about the notion of success and she draws a distinction between success at work and success in life:

I think, you look at success in your job is one thing, in your career, and as you get older, I think you begin to start to think about success in life and so how you reconcile those two things. It is probably the biggest question, challenge (Lynn, 51yrs, married).

Doing so, Lynn distinguishes two scales of values which express the tensions between two arguments which collide. Such a narrative stresses the tension between the professional career and the care work. In cases in which the division of the tasks between the partners is clear cut and patriarchal, these questions do not appear as they seem to align. Since the (female) partner does all the care work, the (male) partner measures his success in life through the lens of the professional career. It is not the case for Lynn who is struggling between these two scales of values. She actually has to maintain a contradiction. So, she took the decision

to give up “motility” in her professional activity. However, she speaks about a stronger attachment to the local space where they live, because under these circumstances, she can manage the tension between paid work and care work better. While comparing these two scales of value, she stresses that the price of an ambitious professional career is high. She has to be careful of the daily and the long term organisation of time, which is practically the opposite discourse as the one I showed while analysing narratives valorising “motility”. They were saying that “it's just not the right time to be spending a lot of time with the family” (Kim, 49yrs, married). Lynn has to find a compromise between these two scales of values and has to find the time to spend with her family, as she explains it:

Once, you've hit a point when you just kind of say: "Ok, my goal now is much more around maintaining, insuring, supporting, helping, growing versus having to be the one in the front line all the time". It takes that shift today. (...) I am not willing to, that is just a no go, you know, if we were forced into a move which will significantly reduce my time with my family or increase the complexity of that time, I would say no. I've learned that, you know (Lynn, 51yrs, married).

This quote denotes the compromise she made. It exemplifies the construction of gendered social pressures sending her into the household, what can be called as a process of “housewifing” (Kanter and Halter 1978). She takes a defensive stance and refuses to aim at higher positions as seeking for a higher position would probably mean a relocation and/or longer working hours. Doing so, she argues – similarly to the narratives we have already seen – the narrated incompatibility of a “career women” taking care of her child. Narratives contribute to shape reality, offering specific lenses to take decision; yet they do not alone construct reality. In absolute terms, it is certainly possible to be a woman, have a career, and raise children. However, it requires the to overcome practical constraints, to organise time, to manage the integration of the professional activity and the care work. Thus, the second half of the quote relates to my argument that “motility” deploys strong gendered effects. In contrast to the narratives in which the interviewees embrace “motility” – or at least take its constraints for granted – Lynn refuses it all together. Her message could not be clearer as she uses phrases such as “a no go [even] if we were forced (...) I would say no” (ibid). The tension between the two scales of values leads her to adopt a defensive position to maintain her current professional activity and minimising the risks of a relocation which would considerably disrupt their “care work integration”: Lynn and Alex, her husband, both live and work close to Mary’s school, Mary has the same nanny for more than five years, they found a school which they both like for her, and ultimately, they just bought a house. A further relocation would put this whole arrangement into question. Lynn’s and Alex’s choice

shows – once again – the disruptive character of “motility” on the capacity of the partners to integrate the care work and the work in the labour force. Lynn refuses it as she perceives it as a threat. Their “modalities of settling” in Germany are more and more anchored, meaning that a further move would require important reorganisation, would be time consuming and risky. They would have, for instance, to sell their house rather than terminating a lease agreement.

7.3.3 After Motility

So far, I have shown the narratives of interviewees accepting, ignoring or refusing the pressures of “motility”, as well as the broad range of discourses attached to it. Centrally, I have stressed that “motility” increases the complexity of the organisation of the care work as well as the “labour force work integration”. These two processes very often take place at the expense of the women’s professional careers. Furthermore, “motility” not only complexifies the organisation between the partners but it also implies an emotional price, for instance, in terms of losing one’s independence and friends. The partner and the children pay for its consequences. In other words: the situation of being “motile” is an uncomfortable position and it is usually a matter of time before the partners want to settle somewhere. It often coincides with later stages of the “life cycle” (O’Rand and Kreckler 1990) as the circumstances change. The fact that the children are getting older and graduate school or that the interviewee’s parents require care work are reasons expressed by the partners to reduce the pace of their relocations. Thus, the discourses which emphasise the development of anchored “modalities of settling” are common, because they express a way to control the emotional and social costs of “motility”. Dennis’ narrative expresses these costs – as he speaks about the fears and pains of Katia and the children – yet, he is saying that he and Katia do not want to stay in “orbit” their whole life (Dennis, 49yrs, married). Another interviewee, Julia, speaks about “floating in space” (Julia, 42yrs, divorced) and the need to land. Kim speaks about “floaters” (Kim, 49yrs, married), too:

If you can do that, it is nice to have a centre, because otherwise you become a floater. I think some people are absolutely fine with that. Others, I think later on, well, all of a sudden, they say, well, I don't even know where I would invest in real estate, where I would want to live and, yeah, to some extent you could say well, that is a shame. (...). I think it (silence) I mean, for us it [owning a house in Switzerland] is a key component, and also, we are a very close family. So, I enjoy, you know. Now, I also have the opportunity of living closer to my parents (Kim, 49yrs, married).

This excerpt underlines the need to develop a centre, a “home base”. Kim refuses to make it a rule as there is always exceptions – and he is “absolutely fine with that” (ibid) – yet, he speaks of this “moment” in which people usually want to settle down. Though, he is very careful about not generalising his argument, he takes a stand and argues in favour of what he thinks is better. He argues normatively: the normal thing to do is to settle down at a point. The normal thing is to be “integrated” somewhere. In his view, being a “floater (...) is a shame” (ibid), because “floaters” miss many moments with their family and parents; moments they cannot buy back. Besides, they have nowhere to go back to: they are in “orbit” as Dennis puts it. The “floaters” do not go back somewhere, as they stay in a liminal state between here and an unknown next relocation, having nowhere to come back to, but merely the next place to go to. They lost their sense of having a home. Metaphorically, they are like a kite whose rope was broken, having no guidance except from the external constraints; the wind. In other words, Kim speaks of “floaters” as people who relocate where they are told to. There is nothing bad about that, he says, until the perception of missing important moments of life becomes too important, that the “tipping point” is reached. Kim interprets this “moment” – which comes “all of the sudden” (ibid) – as the realisation of the losses that living far away from their relatives imply. Later in the interviewee, he complains not having been at any marriage of his cousins, he also missed many funerals. Thus, he implies that he experienced what it feels like to “float” between relocations which forbade more contacts with his relatives. Then, “all of the sudden” (ibid), he reassessed the price of living far away with a different perspective as solely the professional one. A key component for him to have taken the decision to settle down in Switzerland is the possibility to see his parents more often as they also live there. Kim implies that – at one point – the “motility” that has driven his professional career needs to be approached differently as he and Sandra want to live closer to their relatives. Kim argument continues as he expresses the centrality of geography, but also the complexity of narratives talking about “motility”:

Neither my wife and I are Swiss, I have a Dutch passport, but I never lived there, as I said, I moved all of my life with my parents. My wife is British and we all feel that this is home. That is why we invested our money in buying a house here as well, and that is why we wanted to move here, maybe there is an opportunity to go and do another assignment, but I enjoy coming back here and enjoy living here. I mean, Switzerland for me is home, so we may do another assignment you know (Kim, 49yrs, married).

The “sedentary bias” is to be criticised in migration and mobility studies (Wieczorek, 2018) and it is not as if Kim would now enter the “sedentary order of things”. His narrative is more

complex and is a reminder that there is no such a thing as settling for good (“so we may do another assignment, you know” [ibid]). Developing more anchored “modalities of settling” as buying a house do not equal a “sedentary life” governed by immobility⁸¹. Kim’s narrative shows quite the contrary as settling somewhere does not mean immobility: settling in Switzerland means being able to visit Sandra’s relative in England. By developing a place to return to, Kim highlights that developing more anchored “modalities of settling” is not about being immobile. In sum, the binaries between “mobile/immobile”, “motile/immotile” are oversimplifying lures as the narrative of Kim expresses more various degrees of mobility/immobility and “motility/immotility”.

In fact, Kim’s case highlights that “motility” and mobility are concepts which need a spatial and a temporal context to make sense of them; *in abstracto* they almost mean nothing. For Kim, the contextualisation about where to settle corresponds to a sense of proximity to the larger family. The temporal element corresponds to periods of the “life cycle” (O’Rand and Kreckler 1990) and refers to choices related to the children and the parents of the interviewees. Kim and Sandra’s children are doing their baccalaureate and Kim speaks about living in Switzerland for a while as to give their children better chances of success:

If you do the baccalaureate because, hum, that was ideal for my son, because then he had one year to start of preparing for the IB [international baccalaureate] and then you have the last two years where you do the IB. Those are the three years where you keep and stay at the same school, that is the most important and I think. At a younger age, it does not really matter that much. What is very difficult is when at the middle of your baccalaureate you change schools or if you come from a non-IB standard and then you want to do the IB, I think then it is difficult (Kim, 49yrs, married).

Kim emphasises that the time in which the children are doing the baccalaureate is a risky time for a relocation as being in the same school for some years increase their chances of succeeding in their studies. Thus, he implies that the age of the children matters when deciding for more or less “motility” (“at a younger age it does not really matter that much” [ibid]). Many interviewees corroborate his interpretation as high “motility” seems to be less risky for younger children. During the three years of high school of one of his sons – when children are usually between 15 and 18 roughly – the “motility” of the family needs to be controlled, he stresses. We have seen that it is not an absolute and definitive decision.

⁸¹ State power and (im)mobility is a crucial but understudied topic. (Im)mobility is a tool to govern. Karl Polanyi, for instance, describes the relationship between the British Victorian Laws on geographical mobility of workers, industrialisation processes, and the action of the legislator to provide “social services”, – the “Poor Laws” – while not obstructing the economic development of Britain.

However, as long as their children are doing their baccalaureate, he will not relocate and only once the children will leave to go to university, they may accept another relocation.

Moreover, Kim talks about constructing a place to return to, assuming they relocate once more. He also speaks about periods in which he considers it too risky to relocate for the sake of their children's education. Thus, I distinguish a specific form of "motility" which is difficult to maintain in the long run: a "motility oriented towards the unknown" compared to a "controlled motility". Essentially, the "motility oriented towards the unknown" complexifies the care work organisation as it implies spatial (where) and temporal (when) uncertainties. The "controlled motility" refers to a "motility" in which the partners have spatial and temporal restrictions. They know, for instance, that they are not going to move too far away, too soon, but rather are going to stay where they are for a while; in a local space that they chose ("that is why we wanted to move here" [Kim, 49yrs, married]).

Another issue when it comes to more anchored "modalities of settling" is the emergence of care work directed towards the parents of the interviewees as new care responsibilities appear when the parents of the interviewees get old and require attention. In the case of Lynn and Alex, for instance, the couple arranged a room in their house in Germany so that Lynn's mother can visit whenever she wants. They hope that she is going to come more often. It is rare that the parents move to join their children, but it is still a possibility; yet in these conditions, relocating every three or four years becomes extremely complicated. More often, the children, *i.e.* the interviewees, aim at living closer to their parents, *i.e.* the interviewees' parents; which implies relocating to a place where they can integrate this new care responsibility with the labour force work and the care work they already have. These new circumstances lead the interviewees to be reluctant to being open to relocating opportunities as they try to stay close to their parents and relatives: a "controlled motility", I argue.

I will use Hannah's narrative to show how "motility" can be encouraged or, on the contrary, hindered at different stages of her life; especially now that her parents are getting old. She is British and arrived in Frankfurt 24 years ago. Since then, she relocated to Kiev, Moscow, and Istanbul, Turkey. Hannah is one of the few female "primary-movers" I interviewed. She is now in her fifties and a group account director in a marketing multinational company. She married Hans and they relocated together during a decade. Now they are both back in Germany for six years. They do not have any children. They separated since they came back from Turkey, their last relocation. When I asked Hannah what motivated her to accept the

relocation, she speaks of adventure and offers a discourse similar to the one I presented at the beginning of this chapter, in which the career seems more important than the relationship:

My husband (...) was studying architecture actually in Frankfurt but his studies were taking longer and my career started taking off, and then in 2003 the company asked me if I would move to Kiev. (...). He gave up studying and he came with me and for me that was actually quite/ I would have done it without him. Well, no, I wouldn't have divorced him but if I've been single. If I have been single, I would have done it (Hannah, 52yrs, separated).

Here too, the “hierarchy of position” plays a role in the decision to relocate as the one with the highest position acquires power in the relationship to impose his or her views. However, there is a narrative “ping pong” as a straightforward quote is directly followed by a sense of restraint to expose the power. The discrepancy in the discourse often highlights ways of “polishing power”. She actively “displays family” (Finch 2007) by highlighting a discourse focusing on the mutual agreements based on a rational choice (“his studies were taking longer and my career started taking off” [ibid]) over a pure imposition of power (“I would have done it without him” [ibid]). Thus, she corrects herself saying that she would have done it if she were single emphasising a restraint to “display family” through the lenses of power imposition. Nevertheless, it implies her intention not to compromise and to relocating, too. In the narratives, “displaying family” is about coordination and mutual agreement; in practice, it may be more often about power relationships. In a similar fashion to John’s case, Hannah prioritises her career and convinces Hans to come with her. They had a lot of discussions about this possibility to relocate to Kiev. Contrary to John, she was not ready to end the relationship, but similarly to John, she was still very willing to relocate there as her “career was starting off” (ibid). Allegedly, the fact that her partner was not very “motivated to finish his studies” (ibid) and having no deadline to finish them convinced him to follow her, which he did for a decade, supporting Hannah with the care work. In Hannah’s narrative, the challenges they faced together while being abroad strengthened them as a couple. It is only when they came back to Frankfurt that they separated. Single and without children, Hannah still has care and emotional work to do as her parents are getting older:

My parents are very elderly, my father died 18 months ago and I just felt that it would be wrong to be on the other side of the world, because my parents are in England/ My mum now/ and for me, it just felt kind of the wrong thing to do, to go to the other side of the world, but honestly, I think if we had gone to Melbourne, we would be probably still together, because I think that the unit that you feel, like to get through life (Hannah, 52yrs, separated).

In this quote, Hannah points out why she develops a “controlled motility” as to be able to care for her parents in England. Thus, developing a certain stance toward “motility” may

change through the “life cycle” due to different reasons. In her narrative, it also comes with a consequence; namely, a separation from Hans. Fifteen years ago, Hannah’s parents did not require any care work as they were still much younger, allowing Hannah and Hans to accept relocations to Kiev, Moscow and Istanbul. After Istanbul, the company proposed Hannah a relocation to Melbourne. At that point, she decided to refuse and to take control of where she wanted to live: Frankfurt, showing the distinction between “motility oriented towards the unknown” and a “controlled motility”. In Hannah’s and in Kim’s cases, I highlight the need of modifications toward “motility” during the “life cycle” (O’Rand and Krecker 1990), the idea of a continuum expresses the way the interviewees narrate their mobile and “motile” background as there is no “either/or” situation. Hannah, for instance, mentions having two homes and constantly travelling between England and Germany. It shows that going through the challenges implied by living abroad reinforce, in some case, the feeling of commitment between the two partners. In sum, Hanna’s narrative shows different stances regarding “motility”. While younger, she accepted and convinced her partner to accept this “motility towards the unknown” and as the circumstances changed, she decided to control more where and when to move.

7.4 Gender and Motility

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the narratives of highly-skilled migrants in order to assess the role of “motility” in their “family-strategy”. I started this chapter by asking the following questions: What kind of meaning patterns do the interviewees produce when they talk about settling in a new local space? Do these meaning patterns guide them while taking decisions on their “care work integration”? If yes, how do they orient their actions while taking these decisions?

To answer these questions, I distinguish two stances regarding “motility” which influence the “modalities of settling” and by that the “family-strategy”. These two stances correspond to two constellations of narratives: while the first one accepts and even valorises “motility”, the second one stresses the disruption an acceptance would cause on the “care work integration”. Furthermore, while the first stance refers to a “motility towards the unknown”, the second stance concerns a “controlled motility”. Yet, these two stances both deal with different meaning patterns and both have concrete consequences for the “care work integration” of the partners. A strong availability to “motility” disrupts a more equal “care work integration” and offers little opportunity to the (female) “secondary-mover” to develop

her own career in the labour force. A controlled stance towards “motility” is often the basis of a narrative emphasising the wish of the partners to maintain a more equal “care work integration”.

The first stance corresponds to narratives accepting “motility” and, at the same time, accusing it as under its constraints the partners find it difficult to maintain an egalitarian division between the care work and the paid work. A fruitful way to engage with these narratives is to spot the discrepancies between the narratives and the practices. Thus, the interviewees emphasising a narrative in which “motility” is “oriented towards the unknown” do all – in one way or another refuse – the possibility of strong dual career couples, while distancing themselves from the “membership categories” (Sacks 1972; Watson 1983) of the “trailing spouse” and the “breadwinner”. They do it in a paradoxical way when acknowledging that two careers should be possible but fail to see that the univocal prioritisation on their own professional career hinders their partner’s career, as they do not step in to support her in the care work. This point creates the narrated impossibility of developing a “dual couple career” as frequent relocations force the partner to continually reorganise her professional activity, keeping in mind that she has to do the care work, too. The paradox lies precisely here: between the practices preventing a dual career and their narratives acknowledging its relevance. This insight corroborates the results of studies in sociology of family emphasising that the parity in terms “care work integration” as well as “labour force work integration” in families and couples “exists in the minds but not in the family practices. Notwithstanding these transformations, the couple remains protective of a traditional sexual order” (Déchaux 2010, 49)⁸². In other words, the change in the discourses is a cosmetic change which does not seem to affect the practices.

The second stance highlights narratives which adopt a more critical view of “motility” trying to control it and to reduce its impact on the partnership. A “controlled motility” usually implies a strong need of coordination between the partners, may it be between two professional careers or when it comes to dividing the care work. Some interviewees purposefully ignore “motility” in order to find the energy to start from zero after each relocation, by that creating a discrepancy between the narratives and the practices. Maria’s case stresses how she distances herself from the “membership category” (ibid) of the “trailing

⁸² La parité existe donc dans les esprits à défaut d'exister dans les pratiques familiales. En dépit de ses transformations, le couple reste le conservatoire d'un ordre sexuel traditionnel (Own Translation).

spouse”; as she underlines having been able to find a professional activity after each relocation of her partner. Doing so, she offers another perspective on the “no other alternative narrative”, too. The question of knowing if dual careers are possible becomes, in fact, irrelevant, because the way to shape reality through narratives orientates the realm of possible reactions. Maria manages to find a position in the labour force after several relocations because she was “lying” to herself, trying to convince herself that this time was the last relocation. Thus, she creates a specific way to give meaning to her settling in a new local space, considering the future from another angle than what it is: Maria will probably relocate again for the sake of her husband’s professional career. In other words, “motility” is a potential concept oriented towards the future: it is practiced in the way it is narrated. In that sense, the subjective interpretation of the interviewees’ situation creates different meaning patterns of what they perceive to be possible for them, in a given context, but always tomorrow. Metaphorically, the “motility” can be seen as a “horizon concept”, one that is always perceived ahead but can never be reached. Thus, one can only act on it by relying on today’s subjective interpretation of what tomorrow may be. The narrative guides the action, because it creates the possibility to act when the outcome of the action is seen as realistic. Besides, I presented a case in which the practice and the narrative tend to concur; yet, not without tensions as refusing “motility” also means maintaining the *status quo*: keeping two professional activities in the same local space. Through Lynn’s narrative, I show the construction of a tension between two scales of values as she has to simultaneously deal between “being a mum” and “being a successful professional”. Furthermore, I underlined in this section the changes that occur during the “life cycle” (O’Rand and Krecker 1990). Having a high “motility” today does not mean having it forever as children and elderly parents of the interviewees usually invoke reasons to aim at a “controlled motility”. Thus, I argue to assess the concept of “motility” through “the gender lenses”, as dividing care work in a “couple” or an “elementary family” seems to become increasingly complex when accepting a “motility oriented towards the unknown”.

8 Family-Strategies of Highly-Skilled Migrants

In the first empirical chapter, I dealt with the reactions of highly-skilled migrants after they took the decision to migrate. I developed several types of moves corresponding to the two types of movers (the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover”) from the perspective that acknowledges the partners more than the employer/employee relationship. The “collective approach” stresses that migration implies differentiated challenges for the partners, as specific constraints appear for the “secondary-mover”. In the second empirical chapter, I analysed the narratives of the partners and showed that the ways they narrate the settling influences their “care work integration”. The partners who stress the importance of “motility” for their professional career tend to develop a traditional and patriarchal way of “doing family”, while others, struggling to maintain a more equal division of the tasks between them, narrate how they try to control the impacts of “motility” in their daily-life. Hence, I have developed two narrative stances regarding “motility” showing that the perception of a further move is a key to understand the way the partners integrate the care work and organise their “modalities of settling”. I have shown the consequences of their decision to relocate as well as the meaning they give to their settling, but I have not spoken, so far, about possible forms of “family-strategies” between the different cases. It is the objective of the third and last empirical chapter: to distinguish plain forms of “family-strategies” corresponding to different ways of “doing family” on the move.

Table 6: Conceptualising the Family-Strategies through the Different Types of Move

		Types of Move of the Primary-Mover	
		Expat-Move	Local-Move
Types of Move of the Secondary-Mover	Total-Move	Motile Family-Strategy	Local Family-Strategy
	Half-Move	Mobile Family-Strategy	Mobile Family-Strategy

Source: Own elaboration

8.1 Conceptualising the Family-Strategies

By combining the types of moves of the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” (“expat-move” or “local-move” associated to “total-move” or “half-move”) (chapter 6) and the narrative stances on “motility” (chapter 7), I develop three forms of “family-strategies”. They correspond to specific ways of “doing family” on the move at a given time of the biographies of the partners and ultimately emerge out of the empirical cases. Table 6 shows

how and under which specific circumstances these forms of “family-strategies” emerge. Each form of “family-strategy” is related to a typical constellation of moves and specific ways of making sense out of it. This model is not causal but rather emphasises the most common pattern for each combination. When a “primary-mover” performs an “expat-move” while the “secondary-mover” reacts with a “total-move”, very often the partners develop a narrative valorising “motility”: I name this as a “motile family-strategy”. When the “primary-mover” performs a “local-move” while the “secondary-mover” still performs a “total-move”, the narrative is, in most of the cases, anchored and I speak of a “local family-strategy”. When the “secondary-mover” coordinates their professional activity with the one of the “primary-mover”, introducing the type of the “partner-coordinated mover”, the narratives emphasise the mobility as a way of coordinating the partnership: I will speak of a “mobile family-strategy”.

It should be stressed that the various forms of “family-strategies” correspond to the combination of moves and the narratives given to the relocation at a given time through the biographies of the respondents. I am not creating boxes to classify the respondents once and for all but rather I have developed a framework which explains multiple forms of “integration” between the care work and the work in the labour force. The “family-strategies” are flexible and dynamic, as the partners continuously adapt these to their circumstances. In other words, the partners may very well switch from one “family-strategy” to another several times. The “family-strategies” change over time and are subject to conflict, as the interests of the partners are not always aligned. In sum, I conceptualise the ways highly-skilled migrants integrate professional career(s) and family-life by analysing not only the relationships between different types of moves but also the ways they perceive their relocation. This approach combines the results of the two first empirical chapters but add a biographical perspective to emphasise the dynamics of the “family-strategies”.

8.2 Motile Family-Strategy

The “motile family-strategy” corresponds to a “primary-mover” performing an “expat-move” (being supported by the employing company) linked with a “secondary-mover” who reacts with a “total-move” (facing the challenges of the type of the “partner-initiated mover”). The support of the company is extended to the “partner-initiated mover” and the children for the sake of the “primary-mover’s motility”, though it does not mean that the “secondary-mover” is “motile”, too. She is restricted in her “motility”, precisely because the “motility” of the

“primary-mover” – because of the need of the “primary-mover” to maintain his capacity to be mobile for the sake of the employing company. In other words, the support of the company encompasses all the members of an “elementary family” in order to safeguard the “motility” of the “primary-mover”. This situation gives the partners the incentive to develop “motile modalities of settling”, which correspond, for instance, to choose an international school for their children instead of a local public one.

As we shall see, the “motile family-strategy” refers to a traditional division of the tasks within an “elementary family”, as the “partner-initiated movers” are nearly always women and they often do not work in the labour force, or struggle to find a new professional activity after the relocation (6.5.2 Unique Challenges of a Partner-Initiated Mover, 141). In fact, they do the unpaid care work, including (1) the care work for the children as well as the housework, and (2) the process of settling in a new local space (like finding a new house, finding the school for the children, dealing with the administration, etc.). While the company offers support for the settling process, the “partner-initiated movers” must sort out the daily unpaid care work by themselves. We shall see that this “family-strategy” does not rely much on the nation-stated “family policies” (5.2.1 Family Policy in the two Regions, 105) or on the “hidden economy of kinship” (3.2.2 Hidden Economy of Kinship, 61) but more on an “expat-bubble” (Fechter 2007a) and a traditional division of the tasks within the “elementary family”. I distinguish three core aspects to describe the “motile family-strategy”: the prioritisation of one professional career over the other, the unpaid care works of the “partner-initiated mover”, and the support of the company – allowing the children to receive a private education and at the same time integrating the parents in specific networks of support.

8.2.1 Prioritising one Career

Pedro and Marta met in Barcelona where they both studied. He graduated in business administration and she in industrial psychology and they finished their studies at the same time. Pedro received an offer to work as an auditor in Germany and as he told me: “Marta said very quickly that she would be very happy to embark in the venture” (Pedro, 50yrs, married). So, Pedro performed an “expat-move”; being the “primary-mover”. Marta followed him through a “total-move”; being the “partner-initiated mover”. They spent two years in Germany where Marta did not work in the labour force, but took German language courses while Pedro was having his first professional experience. They started to prioritise Pedro’s career. Pedro’s father was German and Pedro spoke German and having professional

opportunities there, their strategy was to develop the conditions for a long term stay in Germany, hence, it was important for Marta to learn German, too. After two years, Pedro's employer offered him a position in New York which they accepted, because it was their "dream to live in such a city" (Pedro, 50yrs, married). Thus, their second relocation happened under the same configuration; Pedro was the "primary-mover, expat-move" and Marta the "partner-initiated mover" still prioritising Pedro's career.

In New York, things changed as Marta found employment for the United-Nations. At that point, the "family-strategy" changed because they decided to stay longer in New York, thus starting to prioritise Marta's career. When Pedro was asked to come back to Spain, it was too early for her to leave; she did not want to resign as she wanted to maximise her first professional experience. Besides, working for the United-Nations was giving her a "motile" trade. Marta and Pedro saw it as an opportunity to have two professional careers that they could more easily coordinate. Thus, Pedro declined to return to Spain even though there was no position for him in his company in New York anymore. He resigned and began to seek employment in the labour force as they had decided to remain in New York. It shows that once the "partner-initiated mover" finds a position after a relocation, the "family-strategy" is subject to increased negotiations as the professional interests diverge; being dynamic and sometimes conflicting. After a few months seeking employment, he found a position in the consumer goods company for which he still works today. In total, they spent six years in New York and this stay corresponded with a reorganisation in the prioritisation of their two careers.

Yet, two nearly simultaneous events were to reverse the prioritisation of the two careers, giving Pedro a decisive advantage: his employer offered him "a great position" in Switzerland, while Marta became pregnant with triplets and stepped back from the labour force in order to do the care work for the newly arrived babies. The arrival of children is a "critical moment" (Riaño et al. 2015) which can affect decisively the "family-strategies"; especially when it coincides with a relocation. Marta combined the challenges of a "partner-initiated mover" and an increased load of care work in the "elementary family". For the "partner-initiated movers", this combination creates a difficult situation to find employment in the labour force, because they are mostly alone to do the care work. In other words, the load of care work is too important to be coordinated with a professional activity without any support. When Marta and Pedro arrived in Switzerland, neither she, nor he had any relatives

or knew anyone who could help them with the care work. When I asked Pedro about the support they receive from their own parents or relatives, he told me that they go to visit them during their holidays or that their parents sometimes come to visit them:

We always go in the Summer at least for a week if not two and then we go easily during Easter or any other weekend we will be there anyway. It is what we do mostly. They also come here. So, I would say they also come once or twice a year (Pedro, 50yrs, married).

Thus, they could not rely on the “hidden economy of kinship” because their own parents and relatives were not there. While in other types of “family-strategy”, the partners often try to develop a more coordinated relationship with their relatives to be able to receive help with the childcare, it is not the case in the realm of the “motile family-strategy”. Moreover, the children were born shortly after Marta’s arrival in Switzerland and at that time she was not employed in the labour force. Therefore, she was not entitled to a maternity leave and did not find any day care centre. It means that she was completely out of the labour force, having to do all the care work for the children, without external support: giving her no chance of joining the labour force for a time. Thus, she was not included in the nation-stated “family policy”. This situation is common amongst the partners developing a “motile family-strategy” and is emphasised by what a respondent called the “vicious circle of day care”:

In order to be on the priority list [for a day care centre in the Geneva region], the two parents must work in the labour force. But, for the two parents to be able to work or to seek employment in the labour force, you need time. If you do not have a place at the *crèche*⁸³ [kindergarten], then you do not really have time [to seek employment in the labour force] (Christophe, 37yrs, married)⁸⁴.

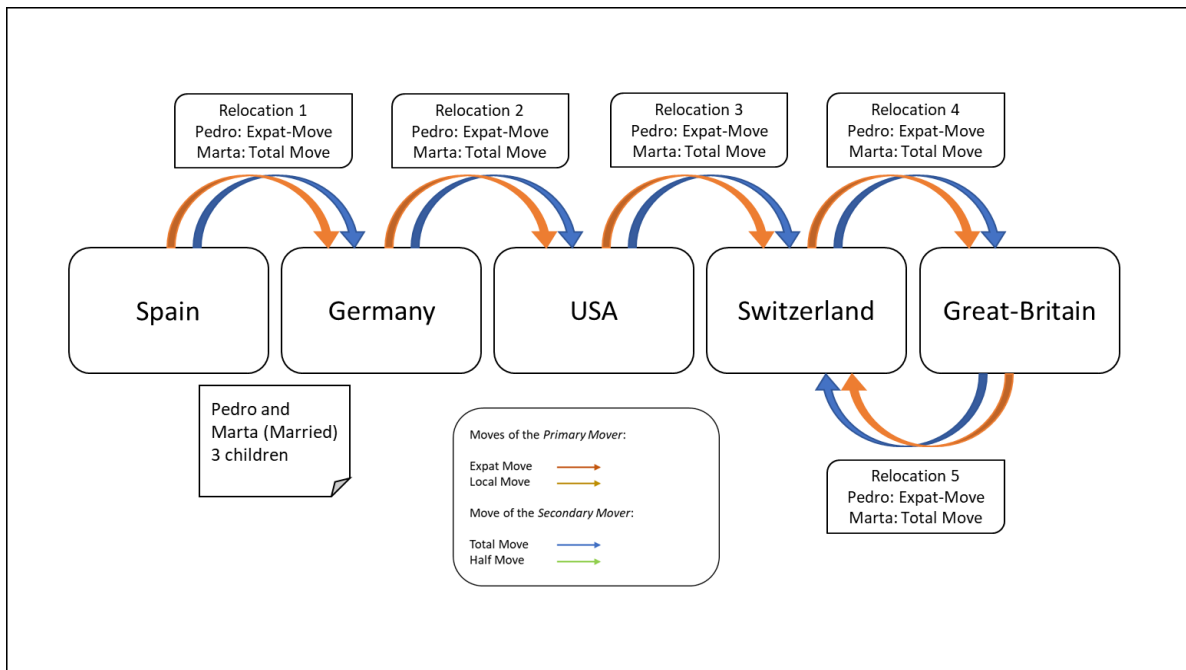
The “partner-initiated movers” typically arrive in a new country without a position in the labour force. Thus, they are not prioritised when it comes to receiving a place in a day care centre. For the “partner-initiated movers”, a wide range of support for the childcare is out of reach; there is no formal support and no “hidden economy of kinship”. In these conditions, they usually do not have the time to seek employment in the labour force. On the top of this, I will show that the “partner-initiated movers” do another type of invisible care work in the context of a relocation, that is “homemaking” (next subchapter).

⁸³ In French in the original interview.

⁸⁴ Pour être prioritaire, il faut que les deux travaillent mais pour vraiment travailler ou chercher un boulot il faut avoir du temps et si on n'a pas de place à la crèche ben on ne peut pas vraiment avoir de temps (Own Translation).

The only person who could help is the male partner. Marta's husband did not help her because he was (over)working for the company, being paid very well, as he told me, creating a strong "hierarchy of position" (7.2.1 Structural Constraints, 169). It is a central point because the narrative of the "hierarchy of position" justifies the "motile family-strategy" and opens the way to an undisputed division of the tasks. The combination of young children – significantly increasing the load of care work in the "elementary family" – and a relocation for the sake of the husband's career is disastrous for the balance of the prioritisation of the careers: it creates a "path-dependency" as the more the prioritisation of a career goes, the harder it is for the other partner to challenge it. I do not want judge Pedro or Marta, neither their division of the tasks and the way they organise their "elementary family". Rather, I want to show how, for Marta, all the support she could receive became unavailable due to the relocation in the position of a "partner-initiated mover". The changes in a "family-strategy" can also go in the direction of a "sedimentation" of the division of the tasks, being reinforced over time. Though, I have emphasised that the "family-strategies" are flexible and change, it may not always be the case. The "family-strategies" may be flexible while the partners do not have the increased care work of raising children (as it was the case when Pedro and Marta were living in New York), to then become much more rigid when children are involved. I see a similarity with what West and Zimmermann (1987) understand as the construction of an "essentialisation of gender" as "once the differences have been constructed, they are used to reinforce the 'essentialness' of gender" (1987, 137). I witnessed similar process in the context of "doing family". When I speak of a "sedimentation" of the division of the tasks, I want to underline that once the prioritisation of one career becomes too strong, it is used to reinforce the stability of the division of the tasks between the partners. A few years later, Pedro and Marta moved from Switzerland to Great-Britain, as Pedro was climbing the hierarchy of the company; investing a lot of time in the labour force work for and also achieving an upwardly mobile professional career. Again, Marta did not work in the labour force in London but did the unpaid care work for the family. Pedro and Marta are now back in Switzerland for some years and the prioritisation of Pedro's career is not questioned anymore (Figure 17). Though Marta returned to a paid position in the labour force since they found a day care arrangement for the children, the prioritisation of one career is definitive, I argue.

Figure 17: Mobile Trajectory of Pedro and Marta



Source: Own Elaboration

Frequent relocations favour the prioritisation of one career over the other and creates a strong “path dependency”, as once Pedro is working in the labour force and earning good money while Marta does the unpaid care work for the family, reversing the trend is increasingly difficult, especially when there are three children in the equation and that the partners are living in a foreign country. Pedro explained to me how they came to this situation:

The idea was clearly *someone*⁸⁵ would have to take care of the children and I think at the moment we embarked in the international career it was going to be more *probably*⁸⁶ me leading the professional career and she would more be looking for where the opportunity would be arising. I think we were always clear from the beginning that it was very difficult to have a very let's say strong dual career (Pedro, 50yrs, married).

In my interpretation, this quote is revealing. Admittedly the division of the tasks is not going to change anymore though Pedro phrases it as if it could have been different. After the arrival of the children, Pedro worked in the labour force and Marta did most of the unpaid care work in the family; yet, he uses an unspecific language to talk about the division of the tasks within the family. This unspecific language is in fact an understatement. His clause “someone would have to take care” implies that there was a 50% chance in which he could have been the one doing the care work. Metaphorically, it is as if they flipped a coin when the children arrived,

⁸⁵ Own emphasis.

⁸⁶ Own emphasis.

and he got heads, “I’ll work in the labour force”. Yet, it is not a 50% chance, the more cases taken into account, the more show that women are nearly always the ones who leave the labour force to do the care work. Thus, it is not ‘someone’ but clearly Marta (and it is not only about them specifically, but it is a general trend). In the same sentence, he is clearer when he says that this decision was taken at the moment they “embarked in the international career”. Notice that he uses a singular noun here, allegedly it may never have been a question for him, he was going to be the one to have the career and someone would do the care work. It expresses the far-reaching consequences of the choice to embark in an international career, as it exacerbates gender hierarchies within the families, especially when it comes to the chances for women to have an upward professional career. In fact, if their husbands are not extremely supportive and agreeing to share more fairly the care work, it is very difficult for them. In chapter 7, I have shown that this support is rare because the idea that the “primary-mover” can support for the unpaid care work is very often absent.

It is not a coincidence that Pedro continued to work in the labour force while Marta did not do so; as the conditions of the international careers favour a traditional division of the tasks when the partners have children, I argue. Marta and Pedro’s case is extreme in this sense as they had three children at the same time, with one requiring special medical attention. But that is not all. The fact that none of Pedro or Marta’s parents or relatives live nearby – when the amount of care work increases drastically in the “elementary family” – takes away the possibility to mobilise the “hidden economy of kinship”. The only person who could have helped with the care work was Pedro, but he was working around the clock for the company. Thus, they were not able to mobilise broader family networks due to distances between family members, leaving Pedro and Marta with seemingly few choices. This is another social consequence of the “motile family-strategy”, the “motility” of the “primary-mover” makes it very difficult for the partner to mobilise the “hidden economy of kinship” to help with the care work. Marta, without formal care, nor informal care, nor non-formal care, is alone to deal with the care work. Being a “partner-initiated mover” and a caregiver, Marta was combining various layers of challenges: she resigned to follow him, but she did not have the time to seek a new position in the labour force because of the care work. It shows how choices regarding mobility contributes to (re)produce gender hierarchies in the professional sphere due to the absence of support in the division of the tasks which exacerbates it.

This division of the tasks is unquestioned in the interviews I carried out with the male “primary-movers” living in a family deploying a “motile family-strategy”, as frequent relocations favour their professional careers while their partner often withdraws from the paid labour force. The difficulties of the female “partner-initiated movers” to find employment in a new local space (which I showed in chapter 6), the increased load of care work in the sphere of the household (which I shall develop in the next section) and the interest of the male “primary-mover” in a *status quo* in the division of the tasks lead them to present their situation as if there were no other way (7.2.2 Career Men and Career Women, 177). The other way would be that men agree to take a larger share in the care work which would free some time for the “partner-initiated mover” to seek employment. Yet, from the “primary-mover’s” perspective, the whole purpose of the relocation is their professional career, and I would argue their interest is to believe there is no other way. That is why I speak of a naturalisation of the division of the tasks. It is usually accompanied by an *ex-post* justification which stresses the difficulty to “have a strong dual career” and that “we knew it”. Thus, in the case of the “motile family-strategy”, the division of the tasks overlaps with the types of the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” creating the prioritisation of one career over the other: a prioritisation which tends to reinforce over time. In that sense, the “family-strategy” still changes as it deepens the fixation of individuals in traditional “gender roles”. The arrival of a child is critical when it comes to the “work family integration”, as it does not always put an end to the female “partner-initiated mover’s” professional activity but reinforces the prioritisation of one career over the other. In fact, it is one of these pivotal points in the partner’s organisation of their “family-strategy”. Gender studies speak of a “critical moment”. Pedro and Marta’s children were born during their first stay in Switzerland, then, they moved to London, to come back to Switzerland a few years later. Marta was not employed in the labour force during their first stay in Switzerland and their stay in London. As Pedro told me:

That was a very conscious choice to make sure that she was not looking for a job unless there was something which would fit easily with her ability to really take care of the children. (...). So, the children were born here in Switzerland, so they didn't go to school there and when we were in the UK, they joined the school in the UK, when we came back here [in Switzerland] unfortunately they could not join ISL [International school of Lausanne] at the beginning, so they had to go to St. George for one year and then they joined ISL (Pedro, 50yrs, married).

This quote shows, once again, the *quasi* naturalisation of the “hierarchisation of the careers”: it was not going to be him who will do the care work. The first sentence of the quote shows

the patriarchy imbedded in the narratives justifying a “motile family-strategy”. Interestingly, however, even when the hierarchisation is so strong, the children starting primary school coincides with Marta finding a position in the labour force in Switzerland. In absence of the “hidden economy of kinship” (informal care) she could only find a position in the labour force when the children could join a day care centre (formal care). In the realm of the “motile family-strategy” it is very often a private English-speaking primary-school, for which the company is paying (hence the importance of the support of the company). I will show later on the relevance of the international schools in the “motile family-strategy”. For now, the coincidence between a day care centre for the children and a professional activity for the “partner-initiated mover” underlines that the prioritisation of one professional career does not mean that the “partner-initiated mover” will never find a position in the labour force anymore. The absence of appropriate support contributed to Marta being pushed out of the labour force. As soon as a private, formal care could be found for the children, Marta had the time to seek and subsequently find employment in the labour force. It does not question the “hierarchy of position” in the family, but I argue it shows the specificity of types of support needed in the context of “motile family-strategy”. This support is not part of the “childcare provision” of the public “family policies”, but primarily using the privatised sector of day care provision paid by the company to support the “motility” of their employers.

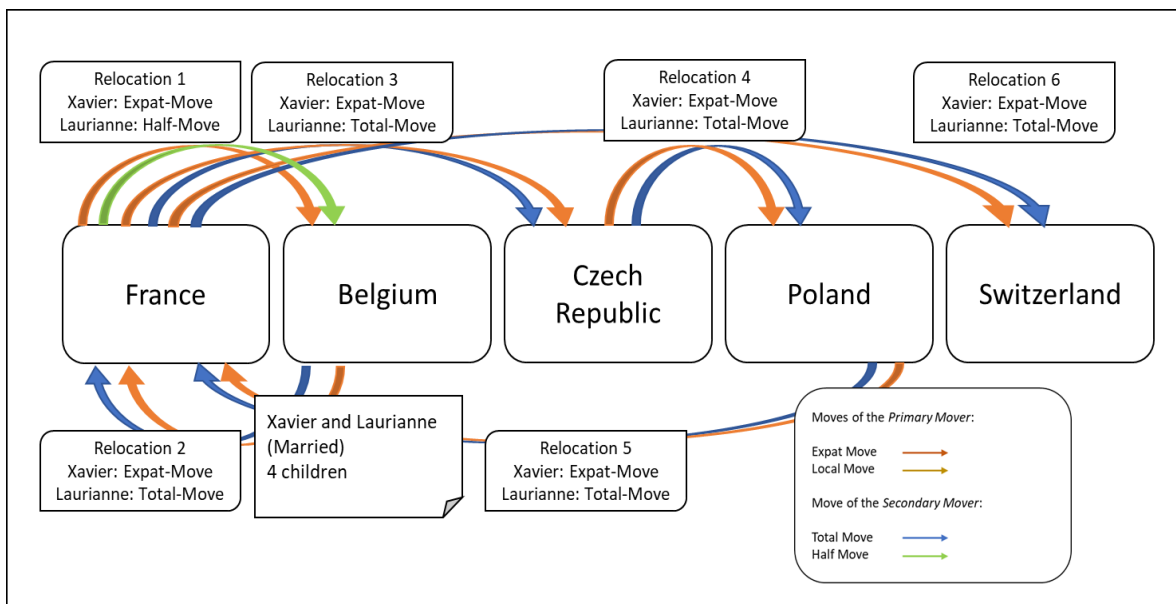
To conclude with the construction of the “prioritisation of one professional career”, we saw with Pedro and Martha that before the arrival of the children, they negotiated in different ways the integration of their two careers on the labour force. Admittedly favouring Pedro’s professional career for the first relocations; yet, Martha managed to find an occupation in New York and they decided to stay longer there, emphasising the prioritisation of her career for a time. Nevertheless, when the children come, it is nearly always the woman who stops – at least for a time – to work in the labour force. In some cases, she only reduces her work in the labour force to have the time to do the care work with the child. In both cases, it still contributes to prioritise the man’s professional career over woman’s one. Truth to be told, the “motile family-strategy” is another example in which the seminal result of gender studies is confirmed: women do most of the unpaid care work such as caregiving (World Economic Forum, 2016: 31) when the load of care work in the family rises. It is still very often the women who takes up the “second shift” at home (Hochschild and Machung, 1989) after the arrival of children. In this context, the “motile family-strategy” depicts a non-shared “collective work family integration”: a traditional and patriarchal division of the tasks to

integrate work in the labour force and the “elementary family”. It comes with a naturalisation of the “gendered roles” within a family which overlaps the “gender binaries” I presented in the state of the art as well as the types of the “primary” and the “secondary movers”. This situation has little to do with the level of education of the partners. In fact, in many cases both spouses attained comparable degrees.

8.2.2 Homemaking and Caregiving

The “motile family-strategy” highlights a traditional division of the tasks; as the women do most of the care work while the men are active in the labour force. In this section, I will explain the specificities of the care work done by the “partner-initiated movers” as they face an increasing amount of care work that stems directly from the very fact of “doing family on the move”. I will show that this supplementary amount of work is usually invisible but necessary. Centrally, this work provides a crucial support which contributes to the success of the professional careers of the male “primary movers”. The case of Xavier and Laurianne is striking in this regard. Both are French, married more than 25 years ago and have four children. Together, they lived in five different countries and relocated six times. Figure 18 summarises the history of the various relocations they did together.

Figure 18: Mobile Trajectory of Xavier and Laurianne



Source: Own Elaboration

In their “family-strategy”, the configuration of the moves is almost always the same; introducing Xavier as a “primary mover” performing “expat-moves” and Laurianne as a

“partner-initiated mover”. A constellation of moves which refers to the “motile family-strategy”, according to my conceptualisation. As in Pedro and Marta’s case, the exception to this configuration is to be found in one of their first relocations when Laurianne continued to work for her former employer when they relocated from France to Belgium, a “half-move” according to my conceptualisation. We shall see that in their case, too, the arrival of the first child coincides with an irreversible push towards a strong prioritisation of the husband’s professional career. Xavier is a general manager in a pharmaceutical corporation and did a steep upward career move in the industry; being close to becoming the CEO of the company. In contrast, Laurianne does most of the care work, raising four children between five different countries while relocating at least two times per decade, but does not work in the labour force. In fact, it would have been impossible for Xavier to have such an upward and mobile career as well as four children without Laurianne doing the care work for the family. As Xavier told me during his interview, Laurianne ensured the “stewardship” of the family:

When you have a family, the success of mobility is a tacit agreement between the spouses. That is to say that the other must be perfectly convinced as well as trusting the spouse. Unfortunately, at the beginning she worked one year or two in Belgium and then we moved to the South of France and from that moment we did a life choice, we knew that I would probably have this life and she, if she agreed/ it was meaning that we defined our priorities. Our priorities were that we wanted children, several children and to be mobile. It meant that one of the two had to take care of the stewardship of the family and she did it during many years (Xavier, 48yrs, married)⁸⁷.

Xavier speaks of trust and conviction to underline the responsibilities they took together. He told me being a practicing catholic, going to mass regularly, which fits with the way he describes the “elementary family” as a basis for their mobility and their marriage as a pact underlying their “family-strategy”. For him, the conceptualisation of the partner as a burden does not fit as he perceives her more as an indefectible ally⁸⁸. It means that he leads the professional career and is responsible to maintain the living standards of the family. In his view, Laura has responsibilities too. Her responsibilities are the care work for four children

⁸⁷ Quand on a une famille, la réussite de la mobilité c'est vraiment un accord tacite entre les conjoints. C'est à dire qu'il faut que l'autre soit parfaitement convaincu aussi, fasse confiance, en l'occurrence, c'est ce qui s'est passé, mon épouse m'a fait confiance. Au début elle a malheureusement travaillé en Belgique un an ou deux et puis on est parti dans le Sud de la France et à partir de là on a fait un choix de vie, on savait que moi j'allais sans doute vouloir avoir cette vie-là et donc elle, si elle était d'accord, ça voulait dire qu'on définissait nos priorités et en fonction de ça, nos priorités ça a été on voulait des enfants et avoir des enfants plusieurs et être mobile, ça veut dire qu'il faut que l'un des deux assure l'intendance et elle a assuré l'intendance pendant de nombreuses années (Own Translation).

⁸⁸ We shall see later in this chapter the case of the divorced couples. No doubt that if Xavier and Laurianne would divorce, the alimony that he would have to pay would be substantial.

and himself abroad, which concretely means “enabling family” in a foreign context. He proposed me a traditional vision of the family which fits well with the contemporary career of a business manager. I shall come back on this apparent paradox in the conclusion as this point is a central element of the “motile family-strategy”. Laurianne and Xavier’s case corresponds to the typical “collective work family integration” of couples developing a “motile family-strategy”. In this context, the care work of the female “partner-initiated mover” is crucial for the male “primary-mover” as it allows him to simultaneously be mobile, have an upward career and experience the joys of a family-life. But what is this so-called stewardship about? In their seminal study, Hochschild and Machung (1989, 30) speak of three spheres of work: job, children and housework. The experience of the “partner-initiated mover” is specific in the three spheres. While I developed the unique challenges they face in the labour force in the chapter 6, I will speak here of the specificity of the challenges concerning the children and the housework. Unfortunately, I did not have an interview with Laurianne, thus, I will present the case of Lara and François to provide more insights on what is specific about the care work of the “partner-initiated mover”. The housework is specific as it is concretely about “homemaking”. Lara and François (Gender Imbalance, 141) are married for more than 25 years. He is an IT specialist working for an aggro-food multinational corporation and was relocated to Saudi-Arabia, Russia, and India. For each of these relocations Lara was the “partner-initiated mover” and for each she struggled to find a position in the labour-market. This is how she relates what “homemaking” is about:

In general, you are transferred as a cell. You arrive and Sir, the next day, goes to the office and you're there, I must find something to eat (...). The rest, the facilities, the housing, it is Madam who will manage (...). You are looking for the school and they [the company] pay for it. You put your kid where you can (Lara, 61yrs, married)⁸⁹.

The “homemaking” is at the core of an iterative process of multiple relocation as the same array of problems and questions repeat time and again with each relocation. The “partner-initiated movers” need to find a new school, eventually find a nanny, settle in the new house, make the administrative tasks related to the moving, etc. Though, the company supports, it is concretely the female “partner-initiated mover” who does the care work, including supervising furniture removals, for the moving or looking for a new school for the children.

⁸⁹ En général, t'es transférée comme une cellule. T'arrives, monsieur, le lendemain part au bureau et toi t'es là, faut que je trouve à bouffer (...). Le reste, les installations, le logement, ma foi, c'est madame qui va se débrouiller (...). L'école c'est toi qui la cherche et eux ils la payent. Tu mets ton gamin où tu peux quoi (Own Translation).

The straightforward “expat-move” of the “primary-mover” hides, in fact, the invisible work of the “partner-initiated mover” to manage and sort things out by herself. It is not a “frictionless mobility” but a “differently tracked mobility” as Favell (2014, 136) points out. Several times during the interview, Lara mentions that the company helps and gives information, yet, the support is perceived as a costly burden by the employees of the company. Very quickly, the “partner-initiated movers” feel that their problems and questions are not well received, at least according the experiences I have collected. This is how Lara describes the situations:

It is worth for them that we figure out our problems by ourselves very quickly. We are cheaper when we solve our problems by ourselves (laugh) than when we are completely lost (Lara, 61yrs, married)⁹⁰.

The “homemaking” is a time-consuming care work which the “partner-initiated movers” usually do alone for the most part. Furthermore, the “homemaking” work is a supplementary work which comes on the top of the usual housework, such as cleaning the house, doing the laundry, ironing, grocery-shopping or cooking.

When it comes to child care work, the organisation of the daily routine and the organisation of time dominate as the “partner-initiated movers” are usually the only one to do it. Lara always tried to work when she was a “partner-initiated movers” but in some places, it was simply not possible because of the constraints of the “caregiving” for their son, Julien. She explained to me how, in New Delhi, she could have worked in an embassy but that the distances between their flat, the international school and the embassy were too far so she had to decline the offer from the embassy. Furthermore, finding a school and/or a day care arrangement for the children is already a challenge as such. I shall develop in depth this point in the next section.

In this configuration in which the female “partner-initiated mover” does most of the care work, the “primary-mover” can fully dedicate himself to his activity in the labour force, which gives him an important “mobile capital” (Urry 2007) or, to put it in other words, to be “motile”; it contributes strongly to his successful mobile professional career as he can dedicate himself to be “efficient” directly after a relocation. The interviewees developing a “motile family-strategy” speak regularly of the family, the central unit for mobility, as a team.

⁹⁰ Ils ont intérêt à ce qu'on se démerde très vite. On leur coûte moins chère en se démerdant (rire) qu'en étant complètement paumée (Own Translation).

The family is a relocatable unit and its members follow the lead of the “primary-mover” as they all move together knowing that they could not do it without the crucial care work of the “partner-initiated mover”. If mobility needs anchors, the care work of “partner-initiated mover”, who is most of the time the woman, may be the ropes which docks the family.

8.2.3 Company’s Support

Another characteristic of the “motile family-strategy” is the support of the company. In fact, without the support of the company, a “motile family-strategy” would not be sustainable in the long run, as it is a financially expensive strategy. This means that a “motile family-strategy” usually implies that the “primary-mover” holds an “expatriate contract”. In the chapter 6, I showed how the company can support the “partner-initiated mover” to find a position in the labour force. I mentioned companies paying, for instance, for a career-coach or developing dual career networks (see Company’s Support for the “Secondary-Mover’s” Inclusion in the Labour Force, 158 and Dual career Network, 159). In fact, it corresponds to a first form of support, explicitly aiming at helping the “partner-initiated movers” to find a position in the labour force after a relocation. Yet, amongst the couples developing a “motile family-strategy”, it is rare that the two partners hold a position in the labour force, for all the reasons we have just seen. I argue that there are two other types of support which are nearly systematically implemented when it comes to the “motile family-strategy”: the support to relocate and the financial support for the schooling of the children. I will deal with both of them in the current subchapter.

a. Support to Relocate

In chapter 6, I argued that the company’s support is not disinterested, but rather aims at maintaining the “motility” of the “primary-mover” (6.4.1 Expat-Move, 131). Both Pedro and Martha, Xavier and Laurianne, as well as Lara and François received extensive support from their respective companies during their multiple relocations. Specifically the support to relocate (this subchapter) usually implies three main areas: (1) help to settle straight after a relocation, (2) paid access to a relocation office (which will help the partners to find an accommodation for the stay others than a corporate flat), and (3) administrative support to deal with the various state-bodies. For the company, it means paying for most of the relocation process. Pedro and Martha’s case demonstrates the way the company provides them with a corporate flat for the first months in Switzerland:

The company has temporary flats that they make available, so you arrive the first day and they give you straight/ maybe the first day you go to an hotel but the second day you have your flat, so they give you the keys. (...). You have time to find your own apartment and even if you were not able to find it, you can rent that one out for some time until you find your apartment. So normally, they make you available the apartment, they provide you a car, so they really provide everything that you need at the beginning to get started (Pedro, 50yrs, married).

This quote of Pedro underlines how the company contributes to creating the *capacity of being mobile* i.e. being “motile”. It implies not only financial capital, but also properties. The company provides significant means for the partners to relocate quickly, without having to care too much about finding, for instance, a new flat. In fact, this practice allows the “primary-mover” to be directly available for the company, reducing the amount of time for the move to a minimum. This is especially true if the “partner-initiated mover” does the care works of “homemaking” and “care giving”. The support of the company in the Geneva region and the Frankfurt region is especially important when it comes to find an accommodation as – in the two regions – the housing market is tight, if not saturated – so benefiting from the support of the company in softening the relocation. The company does not only provide a flat for the first months, but also offers the services of a relocation office to find new accommodation. In this context, Xavier and Laurianne moved to the Geneva region and decided to buy a house there. They wanted to settle in the region on the long term, showing once more the dynamics of the “family-strategies”. As Xavier told me:

Now, I would say that I try to communicate within the company that I would like to stay several years, here [in the Geneva region]. Yet, I am not immune to the fact that someone comes to me in one year and a half and tells me: “Xavier, we have a mission for you in the United-States, at the company’s headquarter and we would like to send you”. If this happens, I will have to think (Xavier, 50yrs, Married)⁹¹.

Xavier is not sure how long he can stay in the Geneva region, but still tries to convince his employer, by communicating informally within the company. In these conditions, he and Laurianne decided to buy a house in the region, which implies a decreased “motility” that Xavier perceives as a risk. It shows that the state of “motility” is not always wanted in the future. Although they want to settle for a longer period in the region, the risk that Xavier’s employer may ask him to relocate somewhere else will always exist. This expresses the state of liminality, implying uncertainty regarding a further move. Nevertheless, the company

⁹¹ Je dirais, aujourd'hui, j'essaie de communiquer en interne que, moi, j'ai envie de rester ici plusieurs années mais je ne suis pas à l'abri qu'il y a une personne qui vienne me voir, dans un an et demie, et qui me dise "Xavier, on a une mission aux Etats-Unis au siège et on aimerait bien que ce soit toi". Bon là, il faudra que je réfléchisse (Own Translation).

offered Xavier and Laurianne the services of a relocation office. For Xavier, the relocation office is not so important in finding the property – as they could have found one by themselves, he told me – but because it offers a guarantee of reliability. By that, it increases their chances to effectively get the property. This is how he summarises the help of the relocation office to settle in the Geneva region:

They [the people working for the relocation agency] do the logistic of the moving and since it is an agency, often, the person who rents or sells has guarantees. They say: 'it's serious.' The contact is easier because when you do it directly, you can always have people saying: 'who is this person?' 'What are the guarantees of this person?' It helps, but the price did not change (Xavier, 50yrs, Married)⁹².

The company helps in two aspects. First, it softens the relocation by providing a corporate flat and/or a hotel room. Second, it gives guarantees. The service of a relocation agency creates credibility and offers local contacts. Furthermore, working for such a company is already a guarantee as such.

The third type of support that the company offers is an administrative support to deal with the local state-bodies. Very often, this service is provided by the company itself, which has the know-how internally. In fact, big companies where I did the interviews, usually have a full service specialised in the mobility, the relocations, and the settling of their employees. Pedro speaks of a support which transforms the administrative work of settling in a new country as a formality:

They prepare everything for you, your work-permit and everything. They tell you: 'listen you need to go to the commune on Monday right 8 o'clock and here are the papers and you go and you sign and present and you are good to go' (Pedro, 50yrs, married).

In all these examples, the company supports concretely, either by having internally the resources (corporate flats, know-how) or by mobilising other organisations specialised in facilitating the mobility of highly-skilled migrants. The use of private, for profit organisations which helped the respondents to settle in a new local space also provides a lucrative market in which these private organisations are competing. In other words, these companies are doing business by offering services to highly-skilled migrants and based on the ideas of

⁹² Ils [les employés de l'agence de relocation] font la logistique et puis comme c'est une agence, souvent ça permet à la personne qui loue ou qui vend d'avoir des garanties. Elle se dit : 'c'est sérieux,' ça facilite le rapport (...) parce que quand vous faites en direct et bien il y a des gens qui peuvent toujours dire : 'c'est qui cette personne ?' 'Quelles sont les garanties de cette personne ?' Donc passer par un tiers ça vous aide mais c'est tout, le tarif il n'a pas changé (Own Translation).

Groutsis, Broek, and Harvey (2015), I put forward the concept of a “migration industry” for such migrants (Tissot 2018). In this article, I distinguish three main areas of support: the basic needs to relocate (this subchapter), the support for the partner to find a position in the labour force (6.5.5 Access to the Labour Force, 153) and the schooling of the children, mostly through international schools (next subchapter). These are the three domains in which the “migration industry” supports highly-skilled migrants.

To summarise the support of the company, the employing company helps by giving information, furnishing a flat, and offering access to private organisations such as relocation offices or outplacement agencies; yet in most of the empirical cases, the contribution of the “partner-initiated mover” to the resettlement is also crucial. In fact, one could say that it is a combination of the two: the unpaid care work of the female “partner-initiated mover” and the resources provided by the company, which creates the “motility” of the “primary-mover”. Yet, not only the “partner-initiated mover” and the employing company provide support, but also other private, for profit organisations. As we can see, the state of “motility” of the “primary-movers” is maintained by a specific “family-strategy” and a complex network of organisations. These organisations provide concrete support to relocate. Others provide support when it comes to the day care and the schooling of the children. It is the third, last, and most expensive realm that the companies support financially, the schooling of the children. The companies provide the means to the parents, so they can afford a type of schooling maintaining the “motility” of the “primary-mover”.

b. International Schools

The choice of school for the children is a striking element to explore the role of the “modalities of settling” in the “family-strategies”. In the “motile family-strategy”, the parents decide to send their children in an international school. Two elements are central to this choice: the language of the schooling and the availability of the same curriculum abroad. It is usually referred to as “the international baccalaureate”. Yet international schools are expensive. One year of tuition fees for one child varies between approx. 20,000 Euros and 30,000 Swiss francs in an international school (5.2 Contextualising the Lake Geneva Region and Frankfurt Rhine-Main Region, 100). The support of the company is important for the family to be able to send their children to international schools – especially when there is more than one child involved. It shows that “motility” is financially costly. Besides, the choice of the school creates a “path-dependency”. It is not easy to change once the decision

to go for an international school has been taken – that is why some families develop a “motile family-strategy” without being mobile anymore, ending up paying costly tuition fees for an international school because the children do not have a high enough level of “local language” to go to a public school.

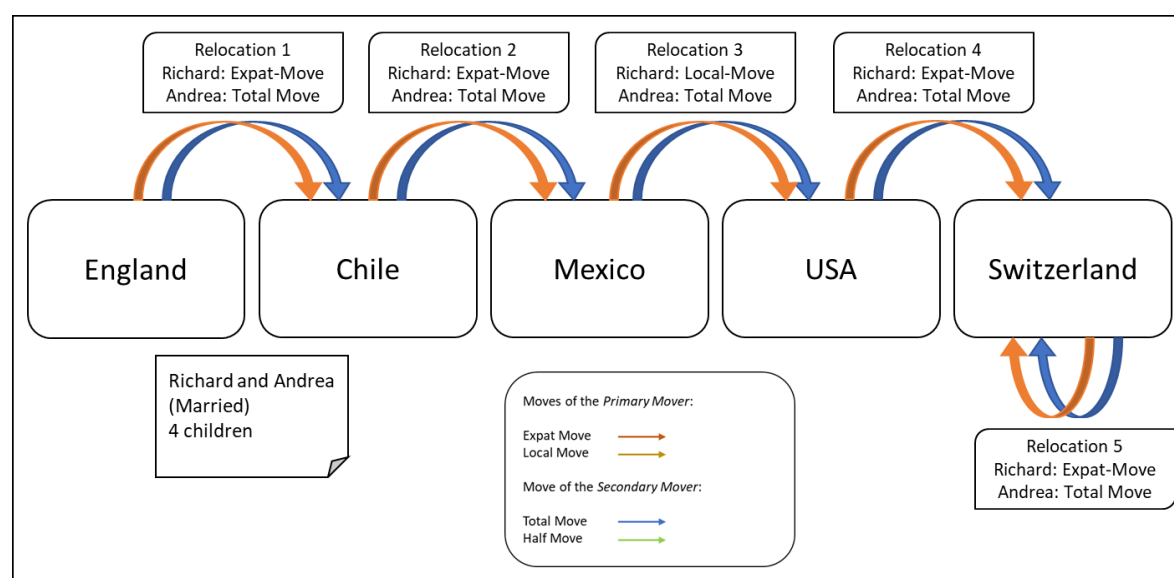
Usually, the international school is the cornerstone of a “motile family-strategy”. It is an important place of social integration for the “partner-initiated mover” who does not work in the labour force, as the school contributes to create a community of “expatriates” after a relocation. The school offers an environment and a network of support composed of other parents who can give tips to those arriving. Due to the imposing tuition fees, the established network is selective, not everybody can afford these types of schools. It contributes to connect people with the same background (though different countries of origin), who are going through the same challenges. As the partners arrive in a new local space not knowing anybody and having to go through the challenges of a relocation, the other parents at the school provide a valuable organisational and psychological support. In the case of “elementary families” having a “motile family-strategy”, the social network around the international school is a central element of their social-life.

Richard and Andrea met at university both studying international business. They got married, have four children, and lived in 7 different countries. He works in the pharmaceutical industry for more than 20 years now. As Pedro and Xavier, Richard is doing an upward professional career in his sector (thanks to the support of their partners). Richard is today the “worldwide-market president” of the pharmaceutical company which employs him. In Great-Britain, he started as a sale representative at the bottom of the hierarchy and through his many relocations he climbed the ladder within the industry. After a few years in Great-Britain, he was offered a country-manager position in Chile. At that point, Richard and Andrea took a central decision in the way their “family-strategy” was going to look like for the rest of their careers. She resigned from her position to join him on “this adventure”. At that time, they still did not have any children. During the relocation in Chile, Andrea wrote her dissertation and travelled extensively in Latin-America. He was going to be the “primary-mover” performing “expat moves” and she the “secondary-mover” reacting with “total-moves”, expressing once again the sedimentation of the division of the tasks. They both did the same academic course but *he* got the offer to go to Chile and they decided to go there together. I interviewed only Richard and this is how he recalls this crucial moment of their careers:

She was working for *** in the marketing in the head office and said: “Ok! I am good to go! So, I can give up work now and I’ll come with you”. (...) So, wherever they would send us, we said we are open to mobility. So, at that early stage we were very open to move because we’ve both done an international business degree (Richard, 48yrs, married).

When Richard says that they are “open to move”, he means that he does not have a problem to relocate the “elementary family”: both partners accepted this distribution of the tasks. Apparently, they “solved” the conflict related to the division of the tasks; at least, it is the way Richard “displays” it. I have shown in chapter 7 that it does not imply an absence of conflicts and/or that Andrea did not suffer in the process. After Chile, they moved to Mexico, the United-States and Switzerland as the summary of their mobile trajectory shows (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Mobile Trajectory of Richard and Andrea



Source: Own Elaboration

They develop a strategy which makes further relocations easier – because there is only one career remaining. The strategy enhances the “motility” of an “elementary family”, a “motile family-strategy”, for the sake of the “primary-mover’s” career. Choosing an international school for their children stresses the importance they give to their “motility”:

Because we didn't know wherever we would move again. We want to keep it flexible because wherever we would move the international baccalaureate was available so that was one of the key drivers (Richard, 48yrs, married).

Richard and Andrea emphasise a family in a liminal state between “here” and “somewhere else”. The price is the difficulty, if not the impossibility, to both maintain a professional

career and to live together. Andrea did further studies in personal coaching and is now working part-time in the labour-market, yet, her main occupation is the one of a “care giver” and a “homemaker” for the family as they have four children. Thus, not only mobility but also “motility” deploys strong gendered effects (7.4 Gender and Motility, 203). Those families, which are extensively mobile and able to remain “motile”, are in many cases organised along a traditional gender model. In this strategy, the wives represent the “social-side” of the “gender binaries”, while the male the “economic one” as these “elementary families” are able to cope with mobility and children only because the female partners are the caretakers.

In Richard and Andrea’s case, the international school is the central place where they develop their social network and friendships during their stay in Switzerland. They develop this network mostly because of Andrea’s reliance on it for Richard works more than full-time. They find it difficult to engage with locals, as they do not speak French fluently and as they do not “experience the same thing” (Richard, 48yrs, Married). Thus, they invest much more time in the group of parents gravitating around the international school. As Richard told me:

Yes, for all the new arrivals at school we organised a barbecue where we bring in 15 families and they just get to know each other for the first time before school starts. (...) My wife is on the parents and teaching association, the PTA so she is very active in school now because we've been here for some years. She is very well, so she very much takes a leadership position in that school community, of integrating people (Richard, 48yrs, married).

Thus, the school works as a place which creates contacts between people experiencing the same challenges. Yet, the turnover in the group is high as there is always a family leaving and a new one arriving. Many of the interviewees developing a “motile family-strategy” prefer the social networks constructed around “fellow expatriates” as they all know that today’s situation is only temporary. “We have no time to break the ice” as one of the interviewees told me (Nick, 54yrs, Married). The parents of the international school offer a social network which is able to give tips for the ones who just relocated. This network is exclusive and contributes to create the sense of a community after a relocation. Thus, the international school is a place of socialisation and networking after a relocation. When I asked the partners – developing a “motile family-strategy” – where do they create their social contacts, they answer me systematically in two places: the company where one of the partners work and the international school where the children attend. Thus I understand the social relations of the families having a “motile family-strategy” as an “expat-bubble” (Fechter

2007a) which is strongly structured around the poles of colleagues and children – reproducing again a “gender binary”. In some rare cases, the respondents mention also some social websites like *Internations*⁹³. This “bubble” works as a *forum* for social contacts, supports and tips for the newly arrived family.

Yet some families arrive with a “motile family-strategy” and end up staying much longer than expected, and in this case they may adopt a “local family-strategy”. In other words, not all stay in this “bubble” because those staying, in the long term, in the same local area may develop other networks elsewhere. The “path-dependency” created by sending the children to an international school is, however, high. Some consider sending their child to a local school; but the language, the fears of not being able to help, or that the child will not succeed in a local-school, often convince the parents to keep on with an international school – at high cost when the support of the company is not available anymore.

c. Summary of the “Motile Family-Strategy”

The “motile family-strategy” enables the partners to raise children abroad while the “primary-mover” is “motile”; yet, the “partner-initiated mover” has typically problems to develop an activity in the labour force. In fact, the “motility” of the “partner-initiated mover” is low; because it is constrained by the “motility” of the “primary-mover”. Cangia (2018) speaks of a state of “precarity” describing the feelings of one of her respondents as following:

Tina tries to make sense of ambivalent feelings, such as the frustration, impatience and sense of uncertainty regarding her husband’s unknown next work destination and her immobility, alongside the expected excitement associated with moving to a new country on the other (Cangia 2018, 25).

The constant prioritisation of one career between the partners create a state of “precarity” for the “partner-initiated movers”, as they constantly are in the ambivalent situation of creating provisory arrangement, may it be in the labour force and/or regarding the care work. In fact, it leads (in most of the cases) to a traditional model of the “elementary family” in which the male is the “breadwinner” while the female the “homemaker/caretaker”. The “work-family integration” is gendered, as the partners prioritise one career over the other; the woman does not work in the labour force, but in the sphere of the household, while the man is professionally active. A striking element amongst the partners developing a “motile family-

⁹³ Website of Internations, retrieved April 13, 2018, from www.internations.org

strategy” is the rarity in which the partners mobilise non-formal care. Furthermore, the seemingly disruptive consequences of *the availability of the “secondary-movers” to the “motility” of the “primary-movers”* restrains the partners’ capacity to mobilise non-formal care. In the previous chapter, I showed the case of Maria who managed to continue to work in the labour while often relocating, by refusing her partner’s “motility” i.e. by telling herself for each relocation that it was in fact the last relocation (7.3.2 Refusing Motility, 194). By accepting their partner’s “motility”, the “secondary movers” find themselves in a crippling situation, in which any kind of family organisation not implying a traditional division of the tasks seems useless or unachievable.

This strategy generates a liminal state for the members of the family. They are stuck between “here” and “somewhere else” making it very difficult for the “secondary-movers” to develop a professional career while caring for the family as the next move of the family is unpredictable, it could be in two months, two years, or 20 years. This strategy favours a successful career for one of the partners. It is only possible because the “primary-movers” receive a crucial support of the “secondary-movers”. Thus, the “secondary-movers” are a constitutive element of the successful career of the “primary-movers”. Far from being a “burden”, as they have often been presented in the scientific literature, the “secondary-movers” allow the “primary-movers” to have a successful professional career and to live the delights and miseries of raising children. Yet, the “partner-initiated movers” pay a high-price for this, their own professional career and independency.

In terms of support, a “motile family-strategy” combines the support of private organisations to (partially at least) replace the nation-stated “family policy” and a specific constellation of social networks: some called this constellation an “expat bubble” (Fechter 2007a). It refers to a private (financially expensive) type of day care for the children that the company finances, a non-inclusion in the nation-stated “family policies” such as “maternity leaves” or “childcare provision”, the absence of relatives able to help with the care work (“hidden economy of kinship”), and the constitution of a network of “peers” of “partner-initiated movers” getting to know each other through these (company supported) private day care organisations. Through this combination, the strategy can be durable and may potentially initiate many relocations. It is not a question of comfort but of making a relocation possible under the conditions of a maintained “motility” for the “primary-mover”. It does not mean that the “partner-initiated movers” suffer extensively, as raising children abroad as a

privileged foreigner can be an enriching experience as many interviewees told me, but still the loss of one's independence and work in the labour force is very often a painful experience. The "motile family-strategy" enables further relocations (more easily), enhancing the "motility" of the "primary-mover" introducing it the "elementary family" as a complementary relocatable unit. Yet, these families have social contacts and social networks. In other words, they are not an independent unit as the metaphor of the "nuclear family" might imply. On the contrary, they are integrated in a complex network of support financed by the company. This integration creates the liminal state of "motility" and has deep consequences on the social-life of the family. In this context, the international school plays a key role as it brings together families facing similar challenges when they arrive in a new local space. In sum, the "motile family-strategy" implies a clear gendered division of the tasks between a "breadwinner" and a "homemaker/caregiver" which favours a "motile" organisation of the "elementary family" in which the husband can answer quickly to any professional opportunities abroad: an unsettling "modality of settling" facilitating mobility and children but hindering a dual career.

8.3 Local Family-Strategy

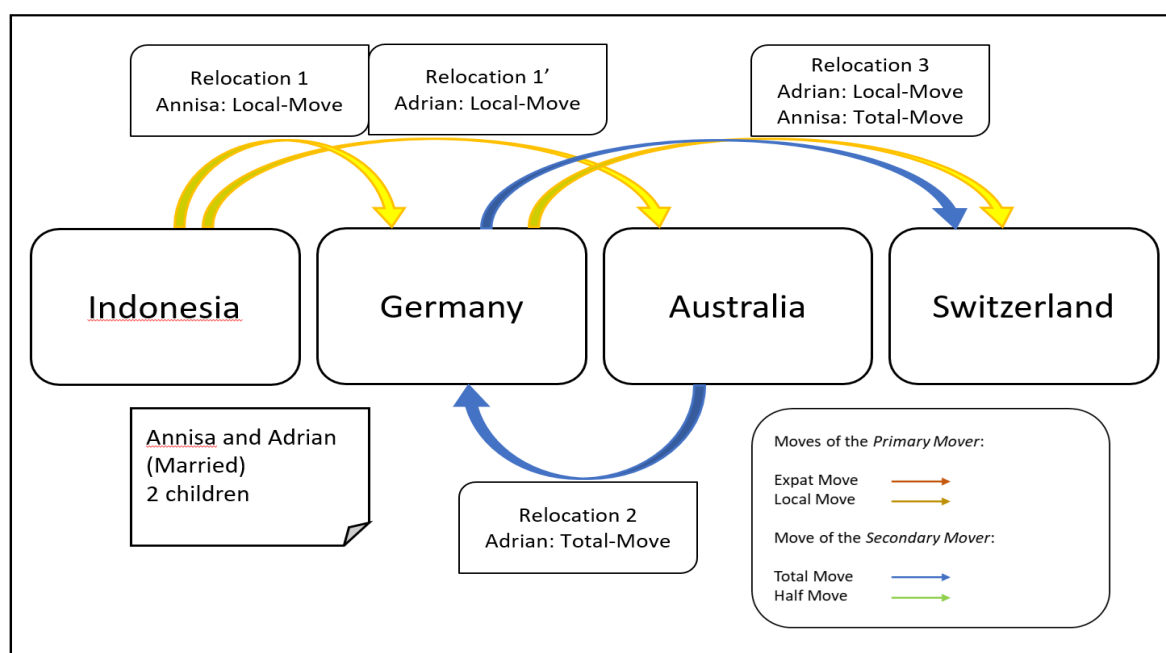
Alternatively, the "local family-strategy" emphasises anchoring "modalities of settling"; diminishing the "motility" of the "primary-mover." The most current combination of moves leading to this "family-strategy" is a "local-move" of the "primary-mover" while the "secondary-mover" performs a "total-move"; though – in some cases – the partners develop a "local family-strategy" by staying longer in the region. After ten years at the same place, some may want to buy a house where they live; thus, they develop a more anchored "family-strategy" implying stronger bonds with the local space. The "primary-mover" performs an anchoring move, which I call a "local-move"; introducing a relocation with less or no support at all from the employing company. He or she works in the labour force and migrates under a local-contract. The combination of the two creates more roots with the new local space; making a further move less likely and/or at least more complicated. Compared to the "motile family-strategy", the mobilisation of the local nation-stated "family policy" is more common, in the realm of the "local family-strategy". More often, the partners opt for a local-school (instead of an international school, as they typically do not receive financial support from the company: being on a "local-contract"). In the "motile family-strategy", I showed that the combination of frequent relocations and young children favours one professional career. In the context of a "local family-strategy", the partners do not face the same simultaneous

combination of challenges. We shall see the cases of partners who receive “parental leaves” and who both managed to stay employed in the labour force. The mobilisation of non-formal care such as nannies or *au pairs* is also more common, than in the “motile family-strategy.” Furthermore, some partners manage to mobilise to “hidden economy of kinship” (informal care). All this increases the capacity of the “secondary-mover” to have the time to seek employment in the labour force; while correspondingly decreasing the “motility” of the “primary-mover”. Through a “local family-strategy”, the members of an “elementary family” develop a better capacity to mobilise the different kinds of support available when it comes to the care work of the children. Subsequently, it offers them more possibilities to coordinate two professional careers; though it is not always the case. When it comes to the type of accommodation, they may decide to buy a house (instead of renting a furnished flat). The families developing a “local family-strategy” typically does not relocate a lot (anymore). As we shall see, they have different financial means, different status, and typically no support from the employing company (anymore).

8.3.1 Low Support for the Care Work

Annisa and Adrian (6.5.5 Access to the Labour Force, 153) are both scientists working in biology. Their case shows how the lack of support in “critical places” (Riaño et al. 2015) influences the “family-strategy”. They started their studies in biology in Indonesia, since the two of them are Indonesian. They both have a doctorate; Adrian gained his in Australia and Annisa in Germany. After Adrian graduated in Australia, they wanted to live together after years of separation. They decided that he will come to Germany since she was finishing her PhD there. He did not find a position in Germany but in Switzerland – so they decided to move together to Switzerland. They moved and he started his new position in a research institute (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Mobile Trajectory of Annisa and Adrian



Source: Own elaboration

At that time, they were still without children and she sought employment in Switzerland. As we saw it in the chapter 6, she found a position at the local hospital until the arrival of their first child. When I asked Annisa why she stopped working, this is how she explains their situation:

It was insane to keep two kids at the *crèche*⁹⁴ [kindergarten] with that salary, because I wouldn't have anything at the end. It is really expensive and difficult because they were not so many, they are more now but still it is not. It is not sufficient (Annisa, 39yrs, married).

The arrival of children is a tipping-point in the “family-strategies”. We have already seen it. Without the support of the company, the partners cannot afford an expensive privatised day care and Annisa takes up the domestic work of the “caregiver”. In this context, I agree with Riaño et al. (2015), who not only speak of “critical moments” reproducing gender hierarchies, but introduce the term of “critical places”. The combination of a “critical moment” – the arrival of a child – in a “critical place” – the specific location where they are – led Annisa to withdraw from the labour force to do most of the unpaid care work for the children. She points at the difficulties to find a day care centre for the children, its costs, and the lack of availability. Though, she received a Swiss maternity leave of 18 weeks, then, she did not find any day care arrangement, which would have allowed her to coordinate the work in the labour

⁹⁴ in French in the original interview.

force and the care work. She resigned after the maternity leave. Compared to the “motile family-strategy”, the circumstances are different, but the consequences are the same: the female partner is out of the labour force. Annisa’s case still contrasts with the respondents mentioned in the subchapter on the “motile family-strategy”: none received a maternity leave. This reflects a difference between the “motile” and the “local family-strategy”. According to my conceptualisation, the “secondary-movers” in both strategies are “partner-initiated mover” (as they perform a total-move). Yet, under the constraints of a “motile family-strategy”, the “partner-initiated mover” faces several challenges simultaneously and are typically not employed in the labour force at the time they arrive. Annisa found a professional activity before resigning. It is not the simultaneous challenges but the lack of childcare provision which pushed her out of the labour force.

Moreover, and as I stress it throughout this study, the support of the husband is not questioned in both interviews, neither with Annisa nor with Adrian. Adrian was not entitled to a paternity leave, as it does not exist in Switzerland – the fathers receiving only one day off. Without his support, without the support of the employer, without access to the “hidden economy of kinship” – their parents living in Indonesia – Annisa has only the local variation of the national “family policy” available; this policy favours a traditional model of the family. Thus, Annisa is subject to the local “gendered” constraints of a patriarchal “gender culture” (Pfau-Effinger 1998). Her situation reflects the studies analysing the national Swiss “family policy” as well as its subnational variations (Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser 2015; Imhof 2015). In the Canton of Vaud, Imhof shows that the female partners do the vast majority of the childcare for the children between zero and six years old (2015, 33). Annisa and Adrian are no exception, as Annisa does most of the care work in their “elementary family”. Thus, the constraints of the “critical place” send Annisa back to domestic work without any remunerated working position because as she told me: “I have to wait until they [the children] are older and then I can easily start something” (Annisa, 39yrs, married), emphasising the lack of childcare provision in the region. Another example of the impact of the subnational variation of the “family policy” has to do with their first son who just started school. He is enrolled in the public school and has a midday break. As there is no school canteen, one of the parents must be at home at midday. Yet, they live in the countryside and the trips back and forth two times a day between the workplace, the school and home would be extremely time-consuming (as far as it is possible). Even without these midday breaks, Annisa would still have to do the care work for the second younger child. Annisa is frustrated about this

situation as she tells me that when the two children will be at the age of going to the public school, she still does not know how to deal with this midday break. The very organisation of the day care system creates barriers for Annisa to join the labour force. This point is crucial, as Annisa actually wanted to stay in the labour force and had to resign because she (not he) needed to do the childcare work. We shall see in the next subchapter that in Germany where the “family policy” is different, the parents, in the interviews, manage to share differently the care work and the work in the labour force.

The fact that Annisa is out of the labour force contributes to unsettling their situation in Switzerland. They have been in Switzerland for ten years, they have bought a house in the countryside and both express many times during the interviews their wish to stay. They took a mortgage to buy the house, however, since Annisa cannot work in the labour force, even though she would like to, Adrian is the only member of the “elementary family” having a paid position. He works on projects which last between two and three years; yet, the residence permits are linked with his work contract. This is how he presented me the stressful and precarious situation they are experiencing:

You can't be unemployed so to speak, to put it whereas now its tied to your permit. Your permit is tied to your employment, if you cannot continue with your work then you have to leave (Adrian, 41yrs, married).

The whole family-strategy is oriented towards a local settling and relies on Adrian's capacity to maintain his position in the labour force. Their first child just started public school in Switzerland anchoring further the family in the same local space, as he will learn French at school. I interpret this situation as a “trickle-down” effect of the lack of support of the employing company. They develop a “local family-strategy” and their situation can become very quickly problematic if Adrian loses his position. A “dual couple career” would safeguard their settling in Switzerland but the lack of support pushes Annisa back in the sphere of the household. Thus, only one partner can work full-time in the labour force. Their situation differs from the families developing a “motile family-strategy” in the sense that any further move is more complicated. At the same time, Adrian and Annisa are not sure to be legally allowed to stay in the country, their stay relies on Adrian's career as long as they do not have a permanent residence permit – the Swiss C permit. The situation is ambiguous because they develop a “local family-strategy” without knowing if they can stay.

When it comes to the integration of work and family, this case shows that the “local family-strategy” and the “motile family-strategy” both generate gendered hierarchies between the partners, though through different ways. Whereas it was the liminal state between here and somewhere else which was the major challenge in the “motile family-strategy”, the “local family-strategy” underlines problems linked with the lack of support for the partners. The lack of support and/or the lack of (extended) financial means tend to push the “secondary mover” out of the labour force.

8.3.2 Combination of Formal, Informal and Non-Formal Care Support

Let us now contrast Annisa and Adrian’s case with the one of Alex and Lynn. I already presented their case twice so I will be brief (6.2 Migration Triggering: Collective Approach, 124; 7.3.2 Refusing Motility, 194). As a reminder, Lynn and Alex work for the same company in Germany. They moved from the US to Germany 14 years ago; Lynn having an expatriate contract and Alex a local one. In the first years, they receive an expat-package, which is over now. Since then, they are both on “local-contracts” and have both good earnings; from their perspective, finding such conditions on a further relocation “does not come up every day” as Lynn told me (Lynn, 51yrs, married). Initially, the plan was to stay only a few years in Germany. Alex stressed during the interview that “we were here 14 years, but the original plan was two or three years” (Alex, 52yrs, married). Progressively, what was a “motile family-strategy” at the beginning has become a “local family-strategy”: they recently bought a house in Germany and Alex talked to me about selling his flat in the US.

Today, they have a daughter of eight, Mary. Mary was born in Germany and both Lynn and Alex took parental leave. They could share the care work that Mary required when she was a toddler. Lynn explained to me that it was a difficult experience for her, but still, she had the opportunity to do so:

When I had my child, I had some time off, seven months off, which I never could have had in the States but in Germany you can and I took seven months off to feed my daughter in the beginning (Lynn, 51yrs, married).

In fact, the time of her maternity leave corresponded with important changes within the company. During her maternity leave, one person who she hired became her boss. Her former boss, who supported her and whom she trusted did not work for the company anymore following her maternity leave. As she told me:

The guy who had brought me here and I could build my career with and I had a lot of trust with, he was out (Lynn, 51yrs, married).

The situation was personally difficult for Lynn, as she refers to it as the biggest challenge of her professional career. Still, she managed to maintain her position in the labour force and continued to work for the same company during and after her maternity leave. The maternity leave also meant that she kept 80% of her last income during the nine months she had leave. It certainly helped Lynn and Alex not to spend their savings, which will allow them later on to pay for private formal and non-formal childcare for Mary. Furthermore, Alex took paternity leave for three months. He did not perceive it as a risk or something unusual to do, as he explained:

I was sure that I was going to be taken back at the agency, I didn't really question that. (...). People do it all the time, it happens almost all the time, they take this time off (Alex, 52yrs, married).

In other words, he did not feel he would lose his position in the labour force by taking a paternity leave to do the care work for his daughter. In fact, he was legally protected not to lose his position in the labour force due to his choice to take parental leave. This corresponds to what Pfau-Effinger (1998) called the “gender culture” and shows that the region where the respondents settle does really play a role, favouring or hindering the capacity of the partners to share fairly the increased care work implied by the arrival of a child. Nevertheless, both Lynn and Alex express the difficulties to find a place in a public day care centre and they opted for a private one. In fact, Mary went to a private day care centre since she was one year old, and she is now going to a bi-lingual private school that they pay personally. Yet, it is not an international school, as Lynn told me. Most of the children are German and the school is subsidised by the German state. It follows that the tuition fees are less significant than in an international school. They decided to send her there because of the language skills she would acquire through this school, as it is private German school with a strong focus on English. Indeed, the first four years of teaching are all in English with a German class; it then switches in the fourth grade, the teaching being in German with an English class. This format corresponds to the needs of Alex and Lynn as they want to stay on in the long term in Germany but also want Mary to have a written and spoken native-speaking level of English.

They also hired a nanny who takes care of Mary during the day: it corresponds to non-formal care. I already mentioned it, but Lynn and Alex are close to what we can call an “equal” dual career couple. Furthermore, both of their positions in the labour force are demanding. They

do not have the time to both continue their professional activity and to do all the care work for Mary, so they hired an external help. As Lynn says:

I mean my husband says to be a modern family these days you need three parents because two isn't enough and I think that's right if you look at a lot of family these days they live close to the grandparents or they have you know have like a living uncle or an aunt or they have a nanny like we do or they have an au-pair (Lynn, 51yrs, married).

The “work-family integration” of Alex and Lynn contrasts with the one Annisa and Adrian. In the latter, the gender roles overlap the “gender binaries” of a male “breadwinner” and a female “caregiver”. In the former, they both have a position and need to delegate a part of the care work to a third person, in their case a nanny. Alex and Lynn’s “local family-strategy” requires important financial means because the company does not support them anymore in the way they would support the partners under an “expat-contract”. Yet, they manage to compensate this lack of support by both working in the labour force and by both receiving maternal or parental leaves. It means that they did not “lose” one income when one of the parents did the care work for Mary. It allowed them to coordinate two professional careers while raising their daughter. This combination does not only include the mobilisation of (private) formal and non-formal care but also informal care – that is the capacity to mobilise the “hidden economy of kinship”. Actually, when I asked Lynn and Alex about their parents, they both tell me that their parents and relatives come to Germany for extended period of time. Furthermore, some of Lynn’s relatives live in Germany, too. Lynn told me that:

We see them relatively often for the fact they are on the other side of the world. My mum is German, she just spent three and a half months with us and she'll come and spend the summer with us. So, she lives in the States. She is getting older you know, she is almost 80, so I think we will see her more and more here and we bought a home a couple of years ago and we had in mind that we may see more and more my mum. (...) My husband's family, we see it at least once a year, usually for three to four weeks because they come here. (...) Alex's parents also come to Germany for extended periods of time (Lynn, 51yrs, married).

Not only Lynn’s mother comes often for extended period to literally live with them, but Alex’s parents come quite often to Germany for long visits, too. Moreover, some of Lynn’s relatives live in Germany. According to Alex, they can help with the care work, too:

My wife's family can help with these family things, so they can take Mary for a weekend or you know help babysitting sometimes and things like this (Alex, 52yrs, married).

In Lynn and Alex’s case, an extensive network of relatives and parents can help for the care work. They are imbedded in an “hidden economy of kinship” which allows them to mobilise

regularly informal care. Interestingly, they consciously develop a “modality of settling” which allows them to mobilise informal care. They do so by creating a space in their house where relatives can come and live for long period. In other words, it is not that their parents and relatives live nearby (except for Lynn’s niece and nephew), but that they create the conditions to welcome relatives and parents in their home. As Alex told me:

When we decided that we were going to stay and decided that we were going to buy a place and so I found a place that the layout had not been determined yet and so I could say, you know put a wall here and put a bedroom there and put the bathroom there and we made a place where her mum could stay as long as she wanted. So, the idea would be that she would come and move in with us and live with us now that her husband there had died (Alex, 52yrs, married).

In fact, it is not only Lynn’s mother who comes but also Alex parents. Thus, Lynn and Alex organise the childcare for their daughter through a combination of different forms of care available to them. They combine formal, informal, and non-formal care. Whereas in the “motile family-strategy”, I speak of a combination of nearly simultaneous challenges (“homemaking”, the specific challenges of the “partner-initiated mover”, and the “caregiving”); in the “local family-strategy”, I see more opportunities to develop a combination of support to do the care work. An “elementary family” can more easily enable a dual-couple career and have children, because the care work of “homemaking” is done once for all and they do not find themselves in the liminal state of an ever-imminent departure, a state which incites the “secondary-mover” to focus on the care work. The members of the “elementary family” perceive a stay for the long term in the local space where they live, knowing they will not receive the support of the company as the “primary-mover” is not “motile”. Therefore, the incomes of the two parents play a central role in their capacity to maintain a dual couple career and the “family policy” helps them to share the care work for their child without losing an income. It follows that the parents have, then, more possibilities to mobilise different types of support for the care work. The contrast between Alex and Lynn and Annisa and Adrian is striking. From this perspective, a dual-couple career while developing a “local family-strategy” is either favoured or hindered by the “family policies”.

That said, Alex and Lynn are also bound to the region where they live, because they both have a good position there. Since they have a child, their “family-strategy” demands more financial means (for the private-school and the nanny) to continue to work in the labour force, which means that the incentive to move is low. Indeed, it would not only imply relocating but also probably reducing the standard of living which they do not want since it could hinder

the education of Mary. Metaphorically we could see their situation as an expensive “gilded prison”; paying for it by working a lot in the labour force, as they work more than 50 hours per week each; Lynn told me: “a normal week is between 50 and 60 [hours a week]” (Lynn, 51yrs, married). As for Annisa and Adrian, Lynn and Alex’s situation is hanging by a thread, working in the labour force. By deciding to stay where they are, they aim at safeguarding their professional positions. But their situation contains also risks. Here comes the normative charge of mobility, success and career. The situation is paradoxical, as Alex sees mobility as a driver for success – answering to a widespread social discourse – but their own success is built locally, thus excluding mobility and the “motility” of one of the partners. This is how Alex described why they stay in Germany:

Job security, *** [Lynn] is doing especially well at her job. In fact, she's been offered other bigger positions in other cities, such as Lausanne but she does not want to move to Lausanne. She does not want to take the whole family there and she didn't want that job anyway so. It looks like as we stay, we have our positions and they are secure but we are not so ambitious about advancement anymore. It is hard for me to advance without working in German. There is not many places where I can go. I could probably, I am a writer-creative, I could probably write in English and have a good freelance job like that but as for working in an agency and moving forward and advancing more and more it is really difficult for me and it would also be difficult for me to go back to the United-States as a 52 years-old man and a creative, to get a job. There are younger cheaper you know people who can do this (Alex, 52yrs, married).

They both told me several times that one of them received an offer abroad. Thus, a further relocation would be meaningful only individually and not from a family perspective. Collectively, a further relocation does not make sense, since the chances to lose one income in the process, or for one of the partners to experience a deskilling experience is high. They do not want to lose the “arrangement of care” they have today to raise Mary; as Alex told me: “I like the security of knowing that I can pay for Mary’s school, I can pay for Mary’s house” (ibid). Relocating is not an option but staying is risky, too; they do not have a lot of other opportunities in Germany, in case one of them gets fired. They invest a lot in their work in the labour force because they fear to lose it. In other words, they diminish the risk of losing their positions by investing a lot of time in them. At that point, the “local family-strategy” becomes ambiguous. The need to keep their current positions turns out to be a central objective precisely because they want to maintain the possibility to live in a place where they came for professional reasons, knowing that finding another position in Germany is difficult for them.

a. Intermediary Summary of the Local Family-Strategy

These two cases underline the central element of the “local family-strategy”. The “work-family integration” of these two “elementary families” creates hinderances to further relocations because they want to keep their current positions in the labour force: either because they fear to lose the residency permit (Annisa and Adrian) or because they fear to lose the combination of incomes, allowing the “arrangement of care” they developed (Lynn and Alex). Consequentially, they are all developing “modalities of settling” which aim at staying in the long term in the same local space. The factors within the “family policy” – including parental leave and other types of schooling (other than an international school) – as well as the type of accommodation, are a part of a strategy to stay in the same region: a “local family-strategy”. In other words, the “modalities of settling” are more anchoring and oriented towards a long term stay. Compared to the “motile family-strategy”, the “local family-strategy” offers better conditions to raise children while having a dual career couple (assuming the parents can mobilise enough support for the childcare) but hinders further mobility. Another family organisation in which the “local family-strategy” is common are international divorced couples with children. Usually, they develop a “local family-strategy” so that both parents can still see their children.

8.3.3 Separations and Divorces

When children are involved, I will show that a divorce or a separation creates bonds to a local space. I will stress that the “local family-strategy” is a way to solve the complexities of coordinating the care work between the former partners. Yet, in my cases I have only access to only one of the partners who decided to maintain bonds with Switzerland or Germany after their divorce or separation. Some of the respondents are in this situation, but I did not interview all the ones who decided to return, for instance, to the city or the country where they grew up. These people are invisible in my corpus of interviews because they had left. That said, all the divorced partners with children who I interviewed develop a “local family-strategy”; none developed, for instance, a “motile family-strategy”.

Not all (married) partnerships function for there are conflicts in each family; yet, in some partnerships, (at least one of) the partners believe that the problems are unsolvable and that they need to end the relationship. The partners decide that they cannot live together anymore and/or that they do not want to be married anymore. It is not a rare situation; many of the interviewees are divorced or separated and some have remarried. Gabriel (6.1.2 Drawn

Expatriate, 121) arrived in the specific local space where he lives and works now as a “drawn expatriate”, as he was recruited by a head-hunter. He relocated from Paris to Basel and from Basel to Neuchâtel returning to Basel 15 years ago. Like Alex and Lynn, his mobile trajectory differs strongly with the ones of the families developing a “motile family-strategy”, as he did not successively migrate the last 15 years. He moved from France to Switzerland. He was married to Karen, who is American, and they have one daughter together, Martha. Martha and Karen lived in Zürich after the separation. When I asked him about his private situation, he answered me with the following:

[I am] divorced, I live here in Switzerland with a partner who is not Swiss, and I have a 19 years old daughter who is studying in England now but before who was living in the Canton of Zürich (Gabriel, 54yrs, Divorced)⁹⁵.

In this context, Gabriel decided to keep bonds with Switzerland in order to be able to see Martha while she was still living in Zürich with her mother. Meanwhile Gabriel met Irina at work, a Spanish national. They now live together in a house they bought. During the interview, Gabriel does not want to speak about his divorce but behind his words I understand a difficult and painful process. “I cannot comment on this” (Gabriel, 54yrs, divorced) as he told me. When I asked him if he would accept a position somewhere else, this is how he answered:

There are family criteria that come into play. I have a daughter who studies in England. I don’t exclude it [to relocate abroad], but for the moment I am not looking abroad either (Gabriel, 54yrs, divorced)⁹⁶.

When he speaks about “family criterion”, I interpret it as his wish to keep up seeing his daughter on a regular basis. To say the least, the “family criterion” was a part of a wish to stay in Switzerland at one point of his life. Yet the interview with Gabriel reveals that his motives evolve as the circumstances of his life changes. His motivations to stay are comforted since he lives with Irina. Thus, his wish to stay is multifaced, his divorce and his daughter being two elements of a broader context. It was probably a much stronger element when Martha was still living in Zürich but now that she studies in Great-Britain, the incentive to stay in Switzerland decreased in that regard. Yet, in the meanwhile, the circumstances of his

⁹⁵ Divorcé, j'habite ici en Suisse avec une compagne qui n'est pas Suisse et j'ai une fille de 19 ans qui étudient en Angleterre maintenant mais avant qui était résidente dans le Canton de Zürich (Own Translation).

⁹⁶ Ben après il y a des critères familiaux qui entrent en compte. J'ai une fille qui étudie en Angleterre. Je ne l'exclus pas je ne l'exclus pas du tout mais pour l'instant je ne le cherche pas (Own Translation).

life changed, dating a colleague and ending up buying a house with her in the region. He is now starting a request for the Swiss citizenship. He sees it a “testimony that he is serious guy” (Gabriel, 54yrs, divorced) and expresses many times his “cultural closeness” to Switzerland, though he still feels as a “foreigner”. Thus, he aimed at staying in Switzerland close to his daughter as long as she was under 18 years old, but many other elements come into play to explain his wish to stay where he is.

When it comes to his divorce, Karen (Gabriel’s ex-wife) had the custody of Martha and he needed to find ways to continue to see her, which implied living not too far away from her; even though he was not the “caregiver” on a daily-basis. Historically, women have more often the custody of the child after a divorce or a separation than the men in both countries, Switzerland and Germany. This trend, however, tends to diminish in Switzerland (from 86% of the cases in 1986 to 58.4% in 2008 with the increase of the shared parental responsibility which was attributed in 36.3% of the cases in 2008) (De Flaugergues 2009, 26) and is nearly non-existent in Germany nowadays (as in 96% of the cases a shared parental responsibility after a divorce or a separation is given) (Krack-Roberg, Krieger, and Weinmann 2016, 51). Thus, the situation of Gabriel refers to someone without the custody for the child.

When one of the divorced partners has the (shared) custody of a child under 18 years old and migrated for professional reasons, this person needs to integrate work and family by him or herself (and, when necessary, coordinates with the former partner). This situation creates a strong incentive to develop local anchors to be able to cope simultaneously with the work in the labour force and the care work. For these people, the situation is a real “balancing act”, as the integration between work and family relies nearly exclusively on the shoulder of one adult. In this context, they mobilise formal, non-formal, and informal care.

Yuna is from Japan. She works for an American multinational company in the treasury department, in Switzerland. She first studied in Japan and then went to New York. There, she did an internship in a Japanese bank and subsequently was hired by the bank. She did not like the position of assistant; thus, she decided to study further and joined a university in New York. After she graduated in economics, she sought employment in the labour force. At that point of her life, after eleven years in the United States, she is at the beginning of her 30s. The recruiter of a Japanese multinational proposed her a position as an auditor at the headquarter of the company, in Europe. Yuna accepted the position and relocated to France. After 2 years in France, she received a position in Switzerland which she accepted. She

relocated as an “assigned expatriate” to Switzerland. During her stay in Switzerland, she had a child, Kazuhiro, who is now at school-age, and then she divorced. During the whole interview, Yuna does not mention her former husband, though I asked twice about him, but she avoided the question, thus, I have no idea who he is. I just know he is apparently totally absent and out of her life. Yuna has the full custody of Kazuhiro. The interview is much more about how she manages to simultaneously “integrate work and family” as well as the big social impact of her child in her life. Though she has a mobile background and arrived in Switzerland with an “expat-contract”, Yuna develops now a “local family-strategy”. Two elements are central to understand how she manages to develop such a “family-strategy” on her own: the availability of a “childcare provisions” for Kazuhiro since he was three months old, and her employers understanding.

Yuna’s case underlines the centrality of the children in the creation of a social network in a new country. While we have seen the socialising role of the international school for partners developing a “motile family-strategy”, in Yuna’s case, the public kindergarten at the beginning and now the public school are going to foster her inclusion in parent networks, thus learning more about the local space in which she lives by having, for instance, to increase her competence in speaking French. This is how she remembers it:

The only people I knew were just my colleagues and the majority was Japanese at that time. The first two years it was not really easy and also due to the language. (...) But since I got the child, I was almost forced to get to the community because raising a child you really have to be in a community. For the services, for instance, my son, he was taken care since he was three months old. That is public service. He goes to the public service and he was at the day care and then of course he meets friends. So, I started to socialise with their parents and then that was the really first time I felt I was accepted. We had something in common, we had the child, we were mother and most of them working mother. Yeah, they are doing invitation *laugh* and through that I improved my French a lot (Yuna, 46yrs, divorced).

During the interview, Yuna mentioned many times her wish to stay because of the quality of the public-schools in Switzerland. A key element is the availability of public services. Due to the strong “path-dependency” that the schooling of children implies, the choice of the school system indicates the perceived need of “motility” of the parents. The fact that Kazuhiro goes to a Swiss public school underlines Yuna’s wish to stay in Switzerland for the long term. In the quote above, Yuna speaks of her improvement in the local language as well as the feeling of “being accepted” (ibid). The school is a central place to socialise and it also orients the kinds of contacts which are going to be made. While it is mostly people self-identifying themselves as “expatriates” in international schools, who (believe they) are not

going to stay long in Switzerland or Germany (as we have seen it, for instance, with Richard and Andrea), in the case of Yuna, she gets in touch with the “local population”. It implies a completely different range of social experiences; yet, Richard and Yuna are both colleagues and both have a similar mobile and “motile” background. Yuna was also “motile” and mobile at the beginning of her career, moving from Japan, to the United States, to France, to Switzerland, but now with the full custody of a child, she needs to find “arrangements of care” which she can hold on in the long term, as she is alone in doing the care work and the work in the labour force. A further relocation would mean for her a complete disruption of the “family-strategy” she has developed in Switzerland. Managing the integration of both a position in the labour force and the care work requires either a “partner-initiated mover” doing the care work or giving up the “motility”. It is not that Yuna does not intend to move again. She does not exclude returning to Japan, for instance, yet, she does not want (or can) be “motile”.

The second element is her employer’s understanding of her situation. She switched companies while she was in Switzerland. Her former boss became the CEO of an American biotechnology company having its headquarter in the Geneva region and he asked her if she would like to join the new team he was creating to manage this company. What convinced her to accept his offer was the assurance that the new position did not imply further relocation as well as too many business trips. Holding a position which does not require too much travel is a precondition for Yuna, as she is raising her child alone:

It [my job] usually involves relocation. But fortunately, since I get my child as a single parent, I was lucky to be offered a position which doesn't require travelling much. When I moved to Switzerland I was an auditor, and internal auditor, I travelled a lot. The boss I had, he was promoted to CEO in the company and he offers me a new position in the treasury (Yuna, 46yrs, divorced).

A professional position which does not imply mobility is necessary for Yuna’s integration between work in the labour force and care work. The working conditions are crucial in her “family-strategy”, as without an employer who considers her challenges allowing her to overcome them, she has no other resort. Yuna works in the labour force, is a “single mother” but is also in a country in which she has not mastered the local language and in which she does not have any relatives who could help her to deal with the care work if needed. The interview reveals a characteristic common to all the respondents developing a “local family-strategy”: their fear to lose their professional activity by being, for instance, fired as they

know it is complicated for them to find another position in the labour force. For Yuna, the fact that the company employing her acknowledges her “work-family integration” is a necessity. We shall see below with Julia the same central role of the company. In that sense, being a “family friendly” company while managing staff internationally is not only about developing, for instance, programs to help the “secondary movers” to find employment in the labour force after the relocation of the “primary mover”. It implies supporting employees facing complex situations while living abroad, such as the one of Yuna, as the challenges she faces are heightened by the very fact that she lives abroad.

We have already met Julia, as I was analysing the “local-moves” of the “primary-movers” (Localising the Home-Base, 136) and the “half-moves” of the “secondary-movers” (Commuting between the Workplace and Home, 148) in chapter 6. She is a British senior manager in an American pharmaceutical multinational company based in Switzerland and she asked to be “localised” in Switzerland; meaning that she wanted Switzerland to be her home-base. She was married to Harry, who is Australian, and now lives and has a position in Geneva. They have one boy of eight years old, Ben. Her choice to be localised in Switzerland is closely linked with her family situation, meaning that she has a share-custody of the child with her former husband. For them, their “local family-strategy” is also a legal question as one parent could not leave Switzerland with the child without further legal agreement in front of a judge, if they do not do so, it could be treated as child-abduction. Compared to Yuna who is relying on public services for the day care of her son, Julia’s “modalities of settling” rely on (private) formal and non-formal actors. She hires an *au pair* and Ben goes to a Swiss private school. It is not an international school and refers to the same configuration of schooling as we have seen earlier in this chapter with Lynn and Alex. The organisation for the care work used by Ben does not only rely on an *au pair* and a private school, as her parents as well as Harry, are also supporting her too. Her parents come to Switzerland every six weeks and take care of Ben during a part of the summer holidays. Ben also spends a part of the summer holidays with his father. Yet, Julia does the bulk of the care work. In these conditions, Ben’s school timetable and the school’s specific location are central:

Two things, one is the timetable of the school and also because of the fact that it was central between me and my ex-husband (Julia, 42yrs, divorced).

Time-management is indeed a central topic for Julia and she mentioned it many times during the interviews. She is constantly juggling in order to integrate her work in the labour force

and the care work for her son. She does not want to relocate but it does mean that she does have to do some business-trips; it is for this reason that she took an *au pair*, in order to have someone to stay overnight with Ben. Besides, her assistant has access to her private and professional timetable and the company seems to be very understanding. This is how she presented the situation:

So, it's a/ but it's juggling, it's very complicated, you have to be very well organised and you have to have great support in your company, so my assistant, she knows my schedule with my son, so she books my travel around the time she knows he is with his father, my boss also, will always set meetings on the days he knows my son is with his dad. So, everybody, it is a real team effort (Julia, 42yrs, divorced).

For Julia and for Yuna, this “balancing act” of being a “working mum” in a foreign country could not be possible without the flexibility of their company, allowing them to organise their daily life in a fashion that renders the “work-family integration” possible. It contrasts with Gabriel’s case, who wanted to stay in Switzerland to continue to see his daughter, he was unable to shape his daily life in a way to cope with both family and work on a daily basis. Yet, the three cases emphasise the necessity to understand professional life and family life together; otherwise the professional choice may not make sense at all. The two last cases also show that the employer’s understanding of their employee’s complex family situations – no matter how they arrived and for how long they intend to stay – is a precondition for these employees to be able to integrate the care work and the work in the labour force.

a. Summary of the Local Family-Strategy

The “local family-strategy” enables ways of “doing family” in which the integration between care work and work in the labour force leads the (former) partners to anchor their lives in a local space, hindering further relocations. The complexity of integrating two professional careers and the care work with different levels of dependencies (raising children) and coordination (the dual career or share-custody of the children) is not compatible with a succession of moves. In fact, the more the family relationships are complex, the more it is difficult to perform multiple relocations. Thus, the “local family-strategy” favours complex ways of “doing family” and dual careers while it hinders mobility. Yet, this “family-strategy” comes with its own cost which is the stress and the fear generated by the necessity to keep the current position in the labour force.

The biggest difference between the “motile family-strategy” and the “local family-strategy” is the organisation of childcare. While a traditional and patriarchal division of the tasks characterises the “motile family-strategy”, a mobilisation of formal, non-formal, and informal care – to support the care work implied by the arrival of a child – is a central element of the “local family-strategy”. Contrarily to the “motile family-strategy”, the members of an “elementary family” developing a “local family-strategy” are more often imbedded in the “family policy”, meaning that they use parental leave, and local “childcare provisions.” They acknowledge more often the “hidden economy of kinship” while taking decisions regarding childcare and may hire a nanny or an *au pair* to help. Due to a stronger bond with the local space where they live, the “local family-strategy” reflects the differences between the region of Frankfurt and the region of Geneva, as we have seen that a more developed “family policy” in the former supports the capacity of the partners to maintain their own professional activity.

8.4 Mobile Family-Strategy

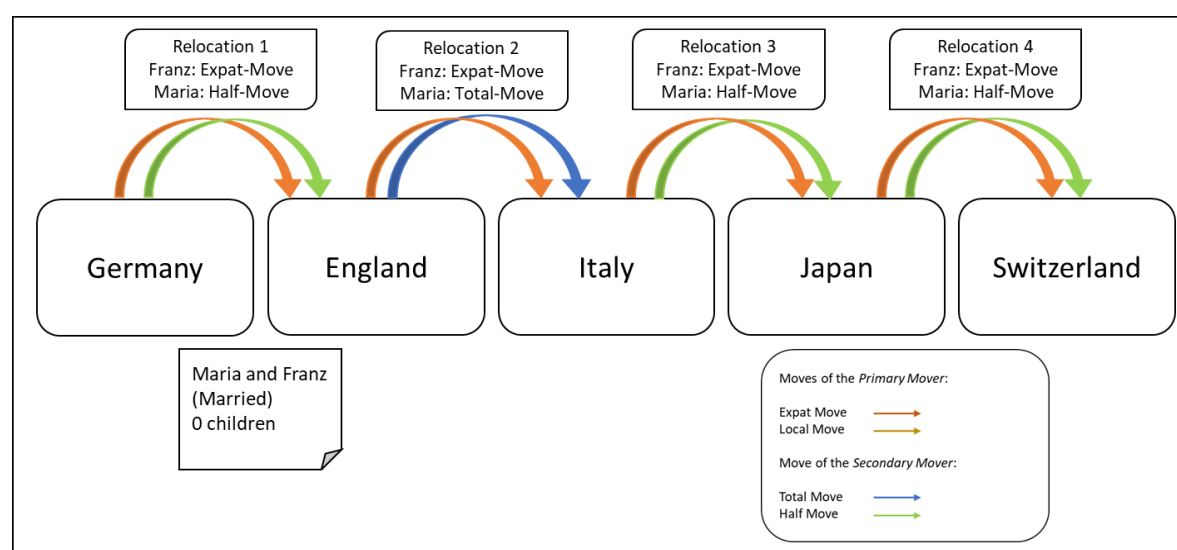
We have seen that the “motile family-strategy” and the “local family-strategy” are both implying a specific “work-family integration” and various “modalities of settling”. I see a third “family-strategy” in which these two elements are also distinctive: the “mobile family-strategy”. The “work-family integration” of the “mobile family-strategy” is characterised by the prioritisation of the professional careers of both partners over the family, as the large proportion of the “couples” and “elementary families” developing this strategy do not have children (which does not mean that both careers are considered equal between them). When it comes to the “modalities of settling”, the “mobile family-strategy” underscores bi-local or multi-local anchors which span beyond the borders of a nation-state by linking different working and living local spaces with one another; for, the strategy itself implies frequent mobility. Therefore, the partners make a strategic use of mobility to compensate the drawback of “motility” implied by the design of their careers. They are mobile and “motile”, relocate often, have a dual career and tend to prioritise their professional careers over the family life.

8.4.1 Succession of Half-Moves

A first way by which the partners develop a “mobile family-strategy” is through the “half-moves” of the “secondary-mover”, corresponding to the type of the “partner-coordinated mover”. In that case, the “secondary-mover” finds an agreement with his or her current

employer to stay employed after a relocation. I have shown three main ways of doing it in chapter 6: commuting, teleworking, and taking a sabbatical or a maternity leave. Analysing the biographical trajectories of the respondents who develop –immediately or in the long term – this strategy reveals that, though, a succession of “half-moves” allows a dual career, it still creates a hierarchy between the professional careers. In other words, the “secondary-mover” invests a lot of time and energy to stay employed, often at the expense of raising children; yet, the members of the family still prioritise the career of the “primary-mover”.

Figure 21: Mobile Trajectory of Maria and Franz



Source: Own Elaboration

Maria and Franz are both German and got married more than 15 years ago when they were both working for the same consumer-goods multinational corporation (I analysed Maria’s narrative in the subchapter 7.3.1 Ignoring Motility, 190). They both studied business administration and management in Germany. Franz has worked for the same company for about 15 years. He corresponds to the type of the “assigned expatriate” and Maria followed him for each relocation fitting to the type of the “secondary-mover”. She found employment in the labour force after each relocation; they both have nearly continuously a professional activity for more than 20 years as Maria told me and as their LinkedIn accounts show; yet, they do not have children. Purposefully or not, they prioritised their professional activity over family life. During their four relocations, he was always the “primary-mover” performing an “expat-move” and Maria refused to stop working in the labour force; thus, she frequently performed “half-move” in order to coordinate her career with that of her husband’s. When they first moved from Germany to England, she continued to work in Germany for six months

to finish the project she was on. At that stage Maria and Franz travelled extensively to continue to see each other at the weekends. Only after she was finished with her work in Germany, she moved to London to live with her husband; thus, she started to seek employment and found a position in marketing after six months. After a few years in London, her husband was called to Italy. Their second relocation from England to Italy is the only time that Maria performed a “total-move”, as she resigned from her employer in London in order to follow her husband. They moved together, and Maria started one year of intensive Italian lessons before successfully finding a position in an online translation company in Italy. A few years later, when they relocated to Japan, the Italian company allowed her to work for them from Japan for some months. In chapter 6, I showed how exhaustive such a working arrangement was for her. Therefore, she resigned and started unpaid work for a start-up in Japan. Three years later, her husband was relocated from Japan to Switzerland and Maria performed again a “half-move”, continuing to work for the same start-up. She was working for a Japanese company while living in Switzerland (Figure 21). At that point it was clear for her that such a working arrangement was not possible for the long term:

I worked for a start-up company in Japan and actually when I came to Switzerland I did the same thing again. I continued to work for the Japanese start-up from Switzerland. Although I already knew that the same problem would come again and of course it happened, because of the time difference, because the distance is rather large and the culture are so different. (...) It was not really feasible to live in two worlds basically (Maria, 51yrs, married).

For the second time, Maria developed bi-local “modalities of settling” in order to coordinate her professional occupation with the imperative of her husband’s career. In a first step she continued to work for the Japanese start-up and then she switched and found a company which was based in Switzerland. She did not resign from the Japanese start-up at the moment of the relocation but later on. This impossibility to live in two worlds, as she says, underlines that such arrangements are only temporary. When the time difference is so big and the distance so large, you have to choose between continuing your professional activity or following your partner. In the long-run, there is no other choice; after one year of working for a Japanese company in Switzerland, Maria told me that she resigned because she did not see any perspective of advancement with them:

I think, I continued for a year. Hum, also because it was quite exciting and I was very happy to support this start-up further and if I would have stayed in Japan for more time /I really liked it/ but I mean realistically I knew we would probably not go back to Japan for work. (...) I could have continued but there were no perspective in moving forward (Maria, 51yrs, married).

In fact, she felt that she was not going to come back to Japan, though she enjoyed working and living there. Instead, she accepted to follow her husband from Japan to Switzerland. After having quit the Japanese start-up, she found employment as a project manager in the same company she was working for more than 15 years ago. Though Maria maintained a professional activity during the different relocations; her career has been systematically subordinated to the one of her husband as she did not choose the destinations and the calendar and had to start over and over again to look for new positions after each relocation. I interpret the fact that she accepted to work voluntarily, feeling lucky to receive the support of her husband, as a clue which indicates such a subordination. This is how she presented me the situation after she resigned from the Italian company, when she was in Japan:

I found something else although this was more/ I mean I was lucky that I didn't have to rely on my own salary. So, I decided to join start-up company where I started to work first of all voluntarily and then when they got the first business it got into a paid position. But, this took almost two years (Maria, 51yrs, married).

Thus, the succession of “half-move” is a way for the “secondary-movers” to maintain a professional activity but it does not allow them to compete with their partner’s career. As such it not that important; yet, the consequences of the lack of competition between the two careers creates possibly frustrating situations for the “secondary-mover” repeatedly leaving in the middle of something they find interesting and enriching. Maria “really liked” her position in Japan for instance. When she resigned from the Italian company, she was left with nothing except the support of her partner in Japan. She found a professional position in a start-up which was first non-paid as the company was just starting as she told me. She invested a lot of effort and energy while developing the company with its founders and at the moment the company begins to generate profits, at the moment the things begin to take shape for Maria, she is leaving because Franz is being relocated to Switzerland. Maria manages to stay active in the labour force by settling in a new local space in a *desynchronised* way compared to her partner, as she maintains bonds with the former country before switching to another established settling in the new country.

The settling occurs twice for the “secondary-movers”, as they adapt their career to the one of the “primary-mover” and do not sacrifice it. Thus, the “half-move” is a first step to soften to impact of the relocation on the “secondary-movers” career. After a time in the new local space, the “secondary movers” seek another employment in the new country. The term of “partner-coordinated mover” emphasises these attempts of *coordinating* two professional

careers under the conditions of mobility. This first way of developing a “mobile family-strategy” stresses a succession of “half-moves”; I see a second way in which the “secondary-movers” dispute the division of the roles within the family. Although the succession of “half-move” does not lead to the sacrifice of one professional career for the sake of the other partner, it still leads to the subordination of one career over the other one, which is not the case when the division of the roles itself changes.

8.4.2 Power-Dynamics

The types of “primary-mover” and “secondary-mover” are *a priori* not fixed once and for all between the partners. One of them can very well contest the division. In other words, a division based on who gives the initiative of a move is the result of a power-dynamic between the partners and can therefore be challenged. We have seen many cases in which this division is most often not challenged and overlaps the “gender binaries” of the “productive male” and the “reproductive female”. The “motile family-strategy” shows between the lines situations which became unchallenged or in which the unbalance of power between the partners is so large that the “secondary-mover” cannot compete anymore; this hierarchisation can ultimately lead the female partners to sacrifice their professional activity to do all the care work. The agreement on who is the “primary-mover” and who is the “secondary-mover” in a family contributes to (re)produce gender hierarchies as it is usually the male’s professional career which pays more; subsequently being perceived as more important than that of his female counterpart. A minority of partners, however, try to coordinate two upward, equal, professional careers which, I argue, is visible through a recurrent challenge in the division of the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover”. Most of them can prioritise their professional life because they are not imbedded in a complex network of mutual dependencies and responsibility *i.e.* family life, which means that they are either young and arguably still do not have children, have children but the latter are in boarding school, or homosexual and decided not to adopt (if the option to adopt was ever given to them).

The partners may challenge the gender hierarchy, as long as the “secondary-mover” challenges the distribution of the roles. The stakes are high because repeated relocations within the same roles may give one of the partners an important advantage in the power-dynamic. Manon and Charles are one of the rare cases of a dual career in which one career is not subordinated to the other (6.5.2 Unique Challenges of a Partner-Initiated Mover, 141). As a reminder, Manon is the product manager of the European region in a pharmaceutical

company while Charles is a senior manager in an aggro-food company. They both have a university degree and met while they were living in Paris where both were starting their careers in different companies. At one point, Charles' company proposed him to move to Italy to manage the subsidiary branch there. He and Manon would need to relocate there. Manon accepted but took a maternity leave to follow Charles to Italy. She performed a "half-move" according to my conceptualisation but she never went further by accepting a "total-move". For her, it was out of question to totally cut the bridges with her professional activity in France, as she puts it:

I told my husband: "I must go or I have to find a job in Italy otherwise I go because I will not stop working". So, I returned to France and he followed me. Six months later, he was back to France (Manon, 55yrs, divorced)⁹⁷.

There is much to be said about this quote. It breaks with what we have seen until now as the initiative of their second relocation, from Italy to France, is not the one made by Charles. It is Manon, by refusing to subordinate (or scarify) her own professional career, who decided to come back to France. As a reaction, Charles did not follow directly, as he also refused to subordinate (or scarify) his career; he needed six months to finish his work in Italy, performed a "half-move" and continued to work for the same company. Manon challenged the division of the roles and re-established the balance between their respective professional advancements. Not only was she able to continue her professional career in the same company, but when Charles needed to relocate from France to Switzerland a few years later, she obtained a sabbatical year from her employer. She could not have had it if she would have resigned in order to stay in Italy with her husband. It allowed her to seek employment in Switzerland with the help of an outplacement agency paid by Charles' company while knowing that her position in France was still secured if she would not find anything in Switzerland. She explained to me that it was a way to protect herself from the risks of a relocation.

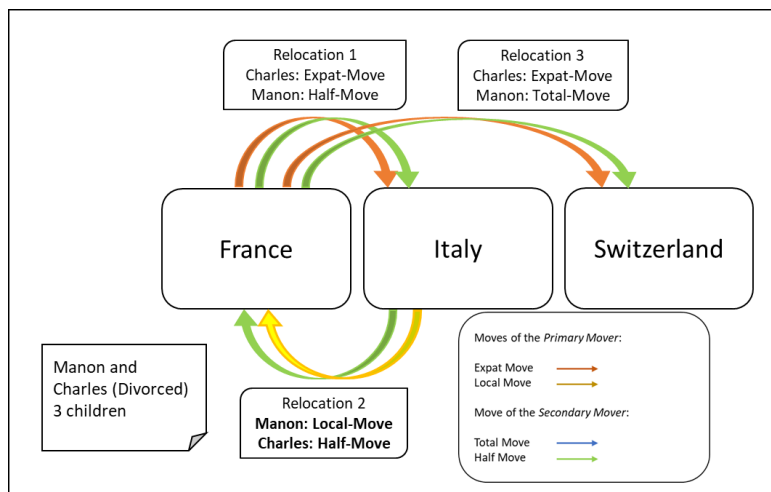
I secured my back because, until I found a job, I asked *** for a sabbatical and it was when I found a job [in Switzerland, that I resigned from my position in France]. (...) But it is true that

⁹⁷ Je lui ai dit : « moi il faut que je rentre ou il faut que je trouve un travail en Italie ou il faut que je rentre parce que je ne vais pas m'arrêter de travailler ! » Et donc je suis rentrée et lui m'a suivi six mois après il est revenu en France (Own Translation).

it was anticipated. I worked since September with the outplacement firm (Manon, 55yrs, divorced)⁹⁸.

Manon performed a “half-move” and maintained ties with the former country by still having an actual position in France. It allowed her to have time to seek and find employment in Switzerland as she was working for the same company for a decade and was entitled to a sabbatical year. The Figure 22 summarises the mobile trajectory of Manon and Charles.

Figure 22: Mobile Trajectory of Manon and Charles



Source: Own Elaboration

The path-dependency also works the other way around. It does not only trigger and reinforce conditions which prioritise one career over the other one but it can also create and maintain the conditions of an equal hierarchisation of the careers between the partners. The case of Manon is striking in this regard. It is because she refused to subordinate her career in the first place, as she refused to resign from her position with her former employer, that she was entitled to a sabbatical year for the second relocation of her husband. In other words, if she would have accepted to resign in the first place, the path-dependency of their trajectory would have more likely been leading to a subordination, I argue. It underlines the importance to challenge the division of the roles (if both partners want an upward career), as once a path-dependency towards an unbalance of the prioritisation of the professional careers in a family is triggered it is exhausting to go against it. We have just seen with Maria and Franz how much energy Maria gave to recurrently persevere to maintain a professional activity. Manon,

⁹⁸ Si vous voulez j'avais assuré mes arrières parce que tant que je n'avais pas trouvé de travail, j'avais demandé à N*** un congé sabbatique et c'est quand j'ai trouvé un emploi. (...) Mais donc voilà, mais c'est vrai que ça avait été anticipé. J'avais travaillé depuis septembre avec le cabinet d'outplacement (Own Translation).

too, speaks of an exhaustive process but she took, arguably, less risks and relied more on insurances and paid-leaves to maintain a continuity in her career, staying with the same employer, which gave her benefits that Maria did not receive. Besides, when Maria was starting from “zero each time, being unplugged” as she told me, Manon managed to progress within the hierarchy of the two companies she worked for. Manon and Charles provide an example of a balanced power-dynamic between the partners; the roles switch between the members of a family, as the “secondary-mover” becomes the “primary-mover”. The “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” do not share the same standpoint and refusing the power-dynamic hinders the career of one of the partners. Maintaining a balance in the hierarchy of the careers implies maintaining this tension alive. Yet Manon and Charles divorced while Maria and Franz are still together.

a. Dual Career and Secondary Stayers

I already presented Carlos and Raul in depth in the former chapter while I was introducing the “secondary-stayers” (6.5.4 Immobility of a Secondary-Stayer, 152). This option is the third way of performing a “mobile family-strategy”, that is when one partner simply refuses to move and follow the other one. As a reminder, while Carlos is the global account director of a multinational corporation; Raul, his partner, is the director of a trading company of raw-materials in Mexico. Carlos worked in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Germany while Raul stayed in Mexico. Since Carlos left Mexico-city, he comes back at least once a year to see his partner, his parents and his friends; *using mobility as a means to maintain the bonds with his partner and relatives*. I interpret it as bi-local “modalities of settling”. In this case, the question of the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” is clarified at the beginning by a “no go”, meaning “I will not follow you”. It emphasises that the partners decide to continue their professional career independently not prioritising one over the other, but rather prioritising work over family.

8.4.3 Mobile Family-Strategy and Children

Thus the families developing a “mobile family-strategy” prioritise work over the family. Maria and Franz do not have children and will probably not do so since they are now over fifty. The truth be told, it would be risky to say that partners, who develop “mobile family-strategies”, prioritise their professional-life at the expense of their partnership as a whole, as it would be inappropriate to say that homosexual couples focus only on their jobs because they do not have children. The fact of *prioritising* work in the labour force over the

partnership does not have to imply a total subordination of one over the other. In other words, it does not have to mean that only the professional occupations count because they do not have children. Maria and Franz or Carlos and Raul have developed a relationship over decades; who am I to say that their relationship is not important to them? Yet, I distinguish a difference in the complexity of interdependencies and mutual responsibilities as Maria and Franz, for instance, do not have the same “work-family integration” as a family with three children developing a “motile family-strategy”.

The case of Manon and Charles underlines the flexible nature of “family-strategies”. They have three children and yet both maintained an upward professional career. How did they integrate mobility, work, and family? The most crucial support, I argue, is that Manon received French maternity leave. It was due to the maternity leave that she could follow her husband to Italy, that she did not have to resign from her position and that she subsequently was entitled to the sabbatical year for their second relocation. Besides, their three children did not systematically follow them; leading to a split-family. Interestingly, Manon and Charles’ way to integrate work and family reflects their “mobile family-strategy”, as one of their children preferred to stay in France and attended a boarding school before going to university. Two of their children followed them. One of these two left to study in England once he was done with his French baccalaureate, attending a private school in Switzerland. The other one studied in a Switzerland university. Manon and Charles’ case shows that the “family-strategies” are dynamic and change over time. Age and life cycles are central to explain how Manon and Charles maintain both a position in the labour force while raising children. By that I mean not only the age of Manon and Charles but also the one of their children. When they arrived in Switzerland, two of their children were nearly adults already and only the last one was requiring care work, as Manon expresses it:

We have a child who preferred to stay in France in a boarding school, a girl who came to the French school of Valmont and then third too / so the eldest one and last one followed and the middle one remained in France. [When we moved to Switzerland], the oldest children were semi-adults, they had something like 15 or 16 or 16 and 17 so they had almost finished their schooling in France, while the girl was still very young (Manon, 55yrs, divorced)⁹⁹.

⁹⁹ Et puis alors, on a un enfant qui a préféré rester en France en internat, une fille qui est venue à l'école française à Valmont et puis troisième aussi/donc l'aînée et la dernière nous ont suivi et celui du milieu est resté en France. Nos grands étaient semi-adultes, ils avaient quelque chose comme 15 ou 16 ou 16 et 17 ans donc ils avaient quasiment fini leurs scolarités en France tandis que la petite était encore très jeune (Own Translation).

In other words, one of their children is using mobility as tool of family coordination, too. “Mobile family-strategy” implies more often split-family as the case of Manon and Charles shows. The different members of the family do not live together, at least for a time, and they use mobility to meet up. Now, Manon and Charles are divorced, and the children are grown up. When I interviewed her, she told me many times that she wants to stay in Switzerland, enjoying the place. The third child, who was still young when they arrived is now studying at university in Switzerland. Her interview reveals the traits of someone adopting a “local family-strategy”, aiming at settling in the long term. The “family-strategies” are dynamic and can change to another strategy over time as for Manon who develops a “local family-strategy” now that all the children are adult and that she divorced Charles.

“Family-strategies” are dynamic and change over the life-cycle but the “mobile family-strategy”, especially, is temporary and relies on age and life cycle. Very often the partners adopt a “mobile family-strategy” when they are young and then changes to a “local” or a “motile family-strategy”. Young people without children tend to develop a “mobile family-strategy” more often, until the arrival of the first child. I interviewed Tyler in Frankfurt shortly before he was being relocated to Amsterdam. He and Vanessa, his girlfriend, have been together for seven years and both are in their late twenties. Tyler is American, and Vanessa is bi-national Austrian and Dutch. They met in the US when he was studying, and she was an au-pair there. They never lived together during the seven years of their relation as Vanessa moved back to Austria in order to finish her studies. Tyler started to work for a marketing agency based in the US after he finished his bachelor degree. After two years working for this company, he asked if they would have a position for him in Europe thus using the options offered by the company as a means in order to live closer to Vanessa. Tyler lives in Frankfurt, while Vanessa lives in Graz, Austria and they extensively travel to meet each other. One client of his current employing company proposed him a position in Amsterdam and he accepted knowing that Vanessa is about to come there, too. This is how he presented me the situation when I asked him how he found a position in Amsterdam:

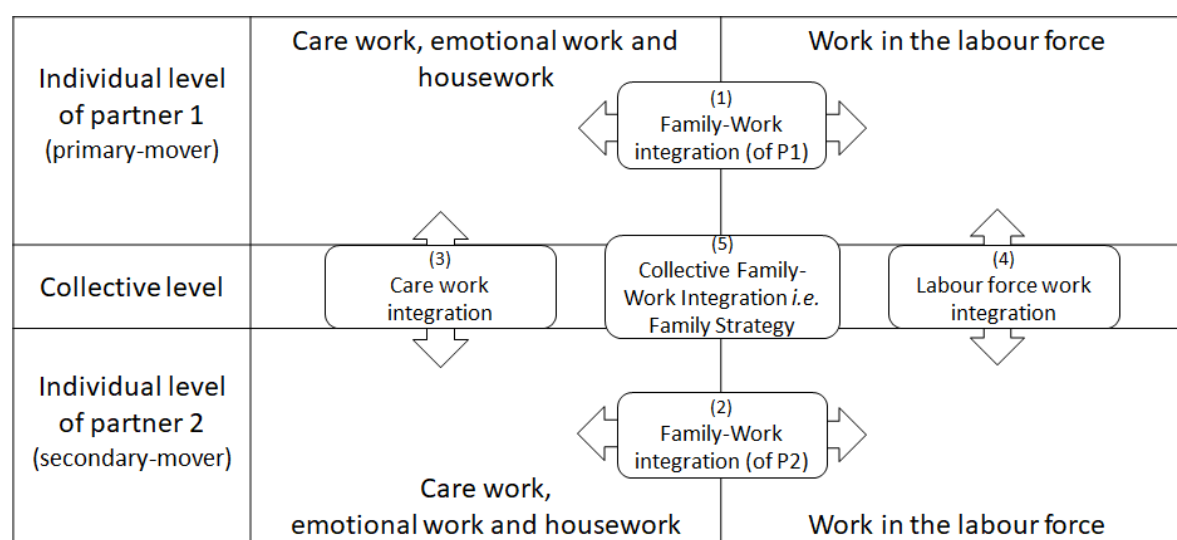
It is an offer from another company that was, I mean, that was, it was like professional growth for me and also personal, my girlfriend wouldn't be able to work in Germany because the teacher, because of her degree wouldn't be transferred to Germany for some reasons. (...). [Vanessa] got a Dutch passport, so she doesn't need anything to be able to work there, so that is pretty easy, and I love Amsterdam so [laugh] this is a kind of win-win for both of us (Tyler, 28yrs, in couple).

He accepts to relocate to Amsterdam because Vanessa is Dutch and speaks Dutch. He sees the situation as win-win as he already has a position in the labour force there and believes that Vanessa has good chances of finding one. After seven years of “long distance relationship”, which corresponds in my terminology to the “mobile family-strategy”, they managed to live together in the same place for the first time having been able to find a place that both accept and that both see as a place where he or she could find a professional position. His plan is that she will be able to find a position in the labour force as a teacher, there. The “mobile family-strategy” is common amongst young and/or bi-national couples and implies mobility as strategic resource to maintain the relation, at least for a time. They develop a “mobile family-strategy” leading them to live separately for a time and then may manage to live together both having a professional position, but as this chapter stresses, things can change drastically with the arrival of the first child especially when the partners live abroad. In summary, “family-strategies” are dynamic and should not be seen as static.

a. Summary of the Mobile Family-Strategy

The “mobile family-strategy” favours the professional career over family life, it implies bi-local or multi-local settlements, and emphasises the strategic use of mobility. I distinguish two ways of doing so. A succession of “half-move” in which the “secondary-movers” continue their professional activity and a power-relation within the family in which the “secondary-movers” contest their position and take the initiative of the move. While the former implies a subordination of one career over the other, the latter enables both partners to develop their professional career. Besides, “mobile family-strategies” are more common amongst young people without children. This strategy requires a constant organisation of daily life because the family uses mobility to coordinate and meet up. It involves a lot of travel back and forth. This strategy is exhausting either because of the frequent travelling or because of the distance between the place of residency and the place of work as it is in the case of Maria. Thus, it is often a temporary strategy.

Figure 23: Collective Family-Work Integration or Family-Strategy



Source: Own Elaboration

8.5 Theorising the Family-Strategies

Now that I have presented the three types of “family-strategies”, I will conclude this chapter by developing a deeper theoretical understanding of these three types of “family-strategies”. I will point at three elements. First, I will underline various constellations of care work organisation and social networks that allow a finer distinction between the “family-strategies”. Second, I will show the dynamic and relational nature of the “family-strategies”: how they evolve, change, and are subject to conflicts over time. Third, I will stress the specificity of each type of “family-strategy” to explain, in part, the “glass ceiling effect” (Cotter et al. 2001) that women face in the labour market.

8.5.1 Care Work Organisation and Social Networks

A “family-strategy” corresponds to the outcome of the negotiations, the decisions, taken by the partners after at least one of them accept a relocation abroad. To analyse the “family-strategies”, I developed a “collective approach” in chapter 6 (Figure 23). A “family-strategy” simultaneously corresponds to the individual level of the “work-family integration” of the partners ([1] and [2]), as well as the collective levels at which they discuss, negotiate and fight to share and subsequently divide the care work (3) and the work in the labour force (4). The “family-strategy” is at the centre of the collective approach (5). It is a comprehensive concept to assess the “collective family-work integration” of highly-skilled migrants and it reflects the dynamic and relational nature of “doing family” (Baldassar et al. 2014; Jurczyk, Lange, and Thiessen 2014) on the move. So far, I have shown how the “family-strategies”

take shape empirically. Based on these empirical analyses, I will develop a finer understanding of them.

I use the “collective model” (Figure 23) to analyse the process of “doing family”; but the model lacks the environment in which an “elementary family” or a “couple” live. The analysis of the three types of “family-strategies” show that none are developed in a social and contextual vacuum. A “family-strategy” is always imbedded in a specific context. As presented here, the model misses the social inclusion of the partners in a broader context. In the current chapter, I show, however, that the context influences the “family-strategies”. The Frankfurt region offers a more comprehensive “family policy” than the Geneva region. The partners have then more possibilities to integrate the work in the labour force and the care work in a way which does not imply the sacrifice of one professional career. Thus, each region offers different possibilities in terms, for instance, of childcare provisions. Furthermore, the partners can surround themselves with different people, create different networks, and mobilise different types of care within the same region and not all are actively mobilising the “family policy”.

Throughout the chapter, I underlined (1) the way the partners organise the care work and (2) how they develop social networks. Each strategy I argue is specific in these two respects. It includes asking help to and/or keeping or creating ties with, for instance, the “family” (understood here as encompassing the kinship), the friends, the colleagues, the nanny, or the members of a parent teacher association. The partners developing a “motile family-strategy” are supported by the employing company of the “primary-mover”. It means they have the means to pay for international schools. The “motility” of the “primary-mover” and the frequent relocations of the members of the family favours a traditional model of the family. Thus, the (female) “secondary-mover” does the care work, while the (male) “primary-mover” works in the labour force. Thus, their social network is constructed around the other parents (and especially mothers) at the international school and by the colleagues of the “primary-mover”: I speak of an “expat-bubble” to express this configuration. They do not really rely on other type of care than the unpaid care work of the female partner. The support of the company is crucial to maintain this type of “family-strategy” and the parents do not actively mobilise the “family-policy”: often because they are not entitled to it.

In contrast, the “local family-strategy” relies much more on the “family policy”. The partners mobilise parental leaves or send their children to a public school or a public kindergarten

when these options are available. Instead of the support of the company, they rely much more on the local variation of the nation-stated “family policy”. However, they do not only rely on the “family policy” but also develop a more complex organisation of care, mixing formal, informal and non-formal care. They try to share the care work and/or find external support so that both partners can continue to work in the labour force (it is not a guarantee that it will work as we have seen it with Annisa). Yet, the mobilisation of non-formal child care such as hiring a nanny, or an *au pair* is part of this strategy to get support for the childcare. The partners developing this strategy also tends to develop social networks which are more linked with the “local population” as we have seen it with Yuna, who sent her son to a local school.

The “mobile family-strategy” is a mix of both, as it is a strategy implying a prioritisation of the professional careers on family-life. It implies typically less care work, as the partners (still) do not have children. I show that, more than the two others, this strategy is in many cases temporary. Still, I see care arrangements related to this strategy, too. The boarding schools in which the parents sent their children for a semester is an example of that (as we have seen it with Manon and Charles). The use of a maternity or a parental leave to follow the “primary-mover” for a relocation is also typical of this “family-strategy”. It creates a bi-local anchoring of the partners, as the one having the “maternity leave” maintains a position in the labour force in another country than the one she lives today. When it comes to the social network that the partners develop, I did not find a pattern which would subsume this strategy.

This point aims at showing that the “elementary families” and “couples” that I analyse here are not “nuclear family”. I develop this concept at the beginning of the current study (3.2.3 *Doing Family*, 62). All the “family-strategies” imply a specific range of social networks and way to organise the care work. It shows the centrality of contextualising the “family-strategies”. The partners rely on different constellations of social supports and social networks but still always rely on these support and networks.

8.5.2 Iterative Logic, Path-Dependency, and Conflicts

I have underlined the pivotal periods in which the agreement on a “family-strategy” changes between the partners. These pivotal periods are a relocation, the arrival of the first child, or a divorce. They lead the partners to negotiate anew in order to seek a new common agreement; which does not necessarily mean they are going to find it. In other words, the “family-

strategies” are most likely to change during these events. I differentiate two sociological phenomena to understand better how the “family-strategies” evolve over time. The “family-strategy” evolves following an “iterative” logic creating a “path-dependency”. In fact, the modification of a “family-strategy” is neither (pre)determined nor totally random, as each relocation raises the same array of questions for the partners every time anew, e.g.: “Should I quit my job to follow you?” or “Who should care of the child after school?” A similar array of challenges emerges after each migration. Dealing with the local administration, finding a new flat, finding a new school for the children, or for some “secondary-movers” finding a new professional activity are all challenges which appear for each relocation. Therefore, I talk of an *iterative* logic, as an iteration according to the Oxford English Dictionaries is “the repetition of a process or utterance” (OED 2018). This element is central to the conceptualisation of the “family-strategies”. For most, these questions are related to the integration of work and family and need to be answered after each relocation. The same matrix of questions appears repeatedly while the conditions change.

The conditions refer to the “local conditions” and the “biographical conditions”. The local conditions correspond to the local constraints and opportunities of the new place of residence. In this context, the “gender culture” (Pfau-Effinger 1998) or the “critical places” (Riaño et al. 2015) emphasise that not all places are equal, bringing back the importance of geography in the dynamic of “doing family”: the world is not flat and the “local conditions” do matter for the partners. The “local conditions” refer to the new environment after a migration which influences the capacity of the partners to integrate work and family. Their capacity is impacted by where they live: the “family-policy”, a good public school systems, a strong “international labour market”, or the availability of “mobility nodes” (Hannam, Sheller, and Urry 2006, 12) are all elements shaping the experience of living in a new place.

The “biographical conditions” refer to the individual situations of the partners *as they evolve*. In this context, the age and the “life cycle” (Kohli 1989; O’Rand and Krecker 1990) are central to explain the dynamic of the “family-strategies”. The age of the children, the number of children, the need of care work that the parents of the respondent may require are all elements that change during the life course of the respondents. I have shown that a “mobile family-strategy” tends to occur when the partners are young and do not have children. When young children are involved, the partners usually develop either a “motile family-strategy”

or a “local family-strategy”. Thus, the “family-strategies” are dynamic, as the local and the biographical conditions change.

The modification of the “family-strategies” happens under various circumstances but they are not extremely frequent thus expressing a kind of “rigidity” of the “family-strategies” over time. A way to integrate two professional careers, for instance, implies the prioritisation of a career over the other. It facilitates the answers to the iterative array of questions raised by a new relocation until, in some cases, there is no further question; the partners develop a traditional division of the tasks as the husband works in the labour force while the wife does the care work. In fact, the longer the wife is out of the labour force, the more unlikely a switch in the prioritisation of the career, and the more likely a sedimentation of the “family-strategy”. Another example is the choice of the school system for the children. The choice to go for an international school, a public local-school, or a private school impacts strongly the “motility” of the partner but not only this. It also creates a “path-dependency” impacting possible further migration. In fact, in these two examples, the previous decisions create a “path-dependency” which determine the next decisions. Thus, the previous organisation of the “family-strategy” influences the upcoming choices or to be more precise, the decisions taken to perform previous “family-strategy” influence the next ones, as the new decisions have to take in consideration the “path-dependency” that former decisions imply.

The pivotal periods (relocation, children, divorce) in the life of the respondents impact their “family-strategy” and force them to adapt to these new circumstances. Two sociological processes shape the “family-strategies”: the “iterance” and the “path-dependency”. These two processes help to understand how the adaptation of a “family-strategy” takes place. A “family-strategy” can change during the life course as they are not fixed once for all, but it also creates a “path-dependency” which is not easy to overcome: explaining at the same time the possibility to change during the life course and the tendency to remain the same in the long run; being neither totally random nor completely predetermined. The metaphor of the river and its stream furnishes an idea of how I conceptualise the way “family-strategies” may change during the life course¹⁰⁰. The riverbed – the life course of the respondents – constantly orients the water – the “family-strategies” – while the water continuously erodes the riverbed,

¹⁰⁰ If I remember well, the metaphor is originally from Georg Simmel while explaining how life influences social forms and vice versa. Yet, I do not recall where I read it.

changing the riverbed over time which leads the river – the life-course – through another direction. In other words, they mutually influence each other.

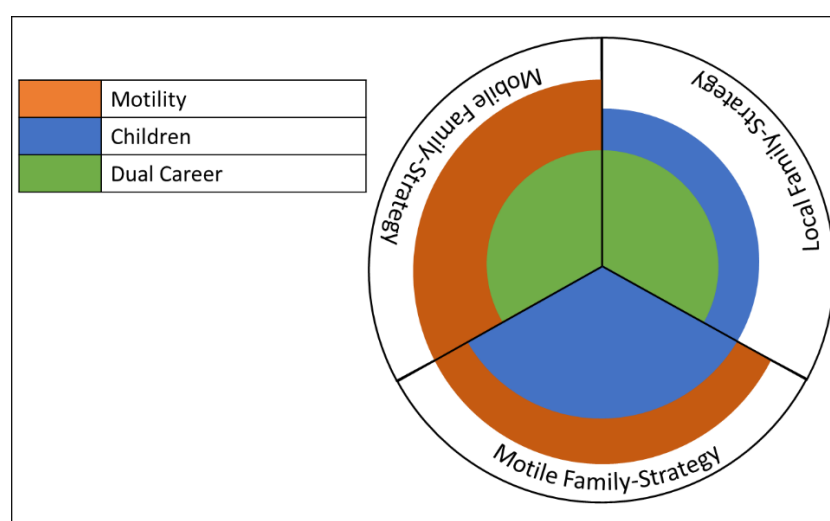
Another element, which explains the circumstance under which the “family-strategies” change, is the possible conflict between the partners. There is no family without conflicts and the “family-strategies” reflect them. The choice to move or to remain in the same local space can be a source of conflict. The way to share the care work and the work in the labour force can be another one. For conflicts are dynamic by essence, the “family-strategies” change over time, too. “I will not stop to work to move for you” (Manon, 55yrs, divorced) refers to a situation in which the partners need to negotiate again to integrate further work and family. The conflict can lead to a change in the “family-strategy”. In Manon’s case, the partners split for a time, developing a “mobile family-strategy”. In order to maintain their work in the labour force, they decided to live apart for a time, no one agreeing to subordinate his or her professional career to that of the other. My interviews suggest that when a man is asked to subordinate his career to that of a woman, he is much less likely to accept, as Manon’s case shows it. Charles refuses to move directly back to France with her but waits for a meaningful professional position for him to be secured before joining her; a process which took around six months. He does not resign but rather coordinates his career to the one of Manon, corresponding to the type of the “partner-coordinated mover”. The “family-strategies” evolve with conflicts, too. By emphasising the flexibility of the “family-strategy”, I aim not to place the partners in the different boxes or types of “family-strategy”. In fact, I highlight the process leading the partners to develop various forms of “family-strategies” over their life courses under various circumstances.

8.5.3 Mutually Exclusive Model

In chapter 8, I have developed three types of “family-strategies” and I have just shown how the “family-strategies” evolve during the life course of the respondents. However, I still have not spoken about the relationship between the three types of “family-strategies” as developing this idea shows a “hidden form of gender hierarchy”. To do so, I spot three elements which are partly overlapping with each “family-strategy”. These three elements are (1) “motility”, (2) children, and (3) dual career. I understand “motility” as the capacity to be professionally reactive and ready to answer to an opportunity abroad; to relocate for the sake of one’s career. The term “children” illustrates the capacity of the partners to integrate the work in the labour force with the care work required to raise children. The “dual career”

indicates the ability of the partners to develop two upward and successful professional careers. The underlying form of gender hierarchy is that while the men can have it all at the same time (“motility”, children, and upward career), women can only have two of them simultaneously. This is related to the fact that the three types of “family-strategy” are mutually exclusive (Figure 24). The “family-strategy” is a collective concept accounting systematically for the relationship between the partners while the “hidden form of gender hierarchy” refers to the individual consequences (for each partner) of the “family-strategies”.

Figure 24: Mutually Exclusive Model



Source: Own elaboration

I argue that each “family-strategy” favours two of three elements at the expense of the third one. Figure 24 underlines this configuration. According to my former conceptualisation of the concept of “family-strategy” and in the various empirical cases I have analysed in this study, the empirical form of a “family-strategy” needs to be understood through its inherent flexibility and dynamic. In that sense, the empirical shape of a “family-strategy” follows the dynamic logic of “doing family” (Baldassar et al. 2014). Yet, it is also possible to analyse the different types of “family-strategies” *per se*. In each individual case, the “family-strategies” are not static as they evolve during the life course. In the theoretical analysis which follows, however, I will analyse the consequence of each “family-strategy”.

The “motile family-strategy” favours the “primary-mover’s” “motility”. In this configuration, the partners prioritise the career of the “primary-mover” while the “secondary-mover” does the care work, that is “homemaking and caregiving”. The “work-family integration” follows a clear division of tasks between the partners and relies on the “gender

binaries". The division of the tasks create an interdependency between the partners; elevating the family itself to the keystone of the "family-strategy". The strategy relies on a "motile family" which can be easily relocated. Thus, the traditional "work-family integration" favours the career of the "primary-mover" as he (or rarely she) can answer quickly to new professional opportunities while the "secondary-mover" takes care of the children and does the care work. A dual career couple is especially difficult to develop because of the need of the "primary-mover" to be constantly ready to move, keeping up their "motility". Thus, the "secondary-mover" faces the challenges that the type of the "partner-initiated mover" faces (6.5.2 Unique Challenges of a Partner-Initiated Mover, 141). In this configuration, the man has it all, I argue: the international professional mobility, the upward professional career, and a family life with children. He can have it all precisely because it is very often the female partner who does the unpaid care work. It refers to the "gender imbalance" as the women are more often the "secondary-movers". Favell (2008) shows the same:

Spouses might "choose" to follow their partner, and feel they are completely liberated from the usual discrimination in society, but their apparent agency is locked into a structured set of constrained options further down the road that produces the same result (i.e. life as a housewife) as if their choices had been deliberately restricted (2008, 73).

The "motile family-strategy" underlines a gendered hierarchy between the partner emphasising the gendered consequences of "motility", in the "decision making process" (Chapter 6), the narratives (Chapter 7) and the "family-strategies" (Chapter 8). In fact, it appears that the men are much more reluctant to accept a subordination of their own career either for the sake of their partner's career or to do more of the care work. I have shown through the "motile narrative" stance how this hierarchy is created discursively. Why is this so? An element of the answer could be their (motivated?) "blindness" to see the help they can provide in terms of care work (7.2.1 Structural Constraints, 169). Another element could also be the strong expectations they have to face at their work place, not only from the hierarchy but also from their colleagues (7.2.3 Paradoxical Family Men, 183). The "essentialness" of the "gender binaries" may also be at play here in the sense that the male partners reify these binaries as "categories of practice" in which it is "natural" that the female partner does the care work. The narrative stance of the "career men" is in fact very close to this "essentialness" (7.2.2 Career Men and Career Women, 177). Thus, the "motile family-strategy" favours "motility" and children at the expense of the dual career.

The “local family-strategy” facilitates the doing and organising the care work for the children as well as it favours partners developing two professional careers, but it hinders the openness to further relocations. In this type, the “work-family integration” that each partner adopts is more nuanced, as the gendered constraints of “motility” do not apply here (7.4 Gender and Motility, 203). Yet, the “gender culture” (Pfau-Effinger 1998) implied in the subnational variation of the “family policies” contributes also to produce a gender hierarchy, as one partner stops to work in the labour force when the day care solutions for the children are unaffordable or unavailable. The contrast is striking with the support that second generation female Italian migrants receive from their parents to be able to pursue an upward professional career (Fibbi 2005). In my cases I deal with “first generation migrants” who do not have this support available. It explains why the financial capital of the family can prevent the (re)production of the gender inequalities, as “well off” families can pay for day care solutions which allow them to develop a dual career while having children. In this context, I have argued a dual career couple is a luxury. (8.3.2 Combination of Formal, Informal and Non-Formal Care Support , 235). Thus, the local “gender culture” (Pfau-Effinger 1998) contributes to (re)produce the gender hierarchy within the family itself. I have showed two contrasting cases Annisa and Adrian (8.3.1 Low Support for the Care Work, 231) and Lynn and Alex (8.3.2 Combination of Formal, Informal and Non-Formal Care Support, 235) to emphasise the relevance of taking into consideration the “family policies” existing in these two regions, as they are by no means neutral. In this context, my work corroborates studies focusing specifically on “family policies”, as I show that the respondents who settled in the Frankfurt region have access to more comprehensive childcare provision than in the Geneva region.

Still, the gender hierarchies are (re)produced primarily within the families, I argue; the assumption that it is the women’s share to adapt their professional occupation for the birth of a child is ubiquitous. This assumption is not questioned by the male partners enjoying the *status quo* on this topic. Truth to be told, one of the few couples who maintain a dual upward career and who live together are Lynn and Alex: “Lynn and I are both working so somebody had to watch Mary during the day” (Alex, 52yrs, married). They developed “local family-strategy” in Germany and Alex underlines his role in doing a fair share of the care work required to raise their daughter. Furthermore, separated or divorced partners with children often opt for a “local family-strategy” as it allows them to have complex family relationships and two professional careers at the same time. The “local family-strategy” highlights the

difficulty to maintain “motility” in the professional career(s) of the partners when the family relationships are complex and when both (former) partners work in the labour force. In short, the “local family-strategy” favours children and a dual career but hinders “motility”.

Finally, the “mobile family-strategy” favours “motility” and dual careers but renders the coordination to do the care work for the children more complicated. This strategy implies a prioritisation of a dual career couple over family life. When it comes to the “family-work integration”, the partners prioritise their professional careers over children. While some (still) do not have any children, others send them to boarding schools or the children are older and are independent, studying abroad. The prioritisation on work in the labour force over family and care work does not mean that the partners treat the two careers equally. Thus, when the roles are fixed within the family and the same partner is repeatedly the “secondary-mover”, the family prioritises one career over the other. A dual-couple career is possible when the “secondary-mover” (the wife) challenges the division of the roles and manages to have her career being prioritised at least for a while. This configuration implies that the husband accepts the challenge in the first place and then that he accepts the subordination of his career for a time. Truth to be told, I did not encounter such a configuration in my interviews as each time I encounter a family in which the wife successfully challenged the division of the tasks, the family split. An interpretation of this is that the men tend to systematically prioritise their professional career (and thus independence) over the professional career of their female partner. When the female partner effectively overcomes the “hierarchy of position” and has a concrete professional offer higher than the one of her partner but that this offer implies that he has to quit his professional activity, then he prefers to separate and then divorce. From this perspective, the women achieving upward professional career abroad are either single or divorced. Yet, I argue the “mobile family-strategy” is often only temporary and families successfully develop a dual career couple who settle locally and form a “local family-strategy”. The case of Lynn and Alex is striking in this regard (8.3.2 Combination of Formal, Informal and Non-Formal Care Support 235).

To conclude, in this chapter, I have analysed the formation of three types of “family-strategies” showing their respective challenges and opportunities. Then, I have developed theoretically the results of the analysis to show that the glass ceiling for women is not only in the labour market but lies also – and even more centrally, I would argue – within the realm

of the family itself: the family is a central institution in which the gender inequalities are (re)produced.

Discussion Part

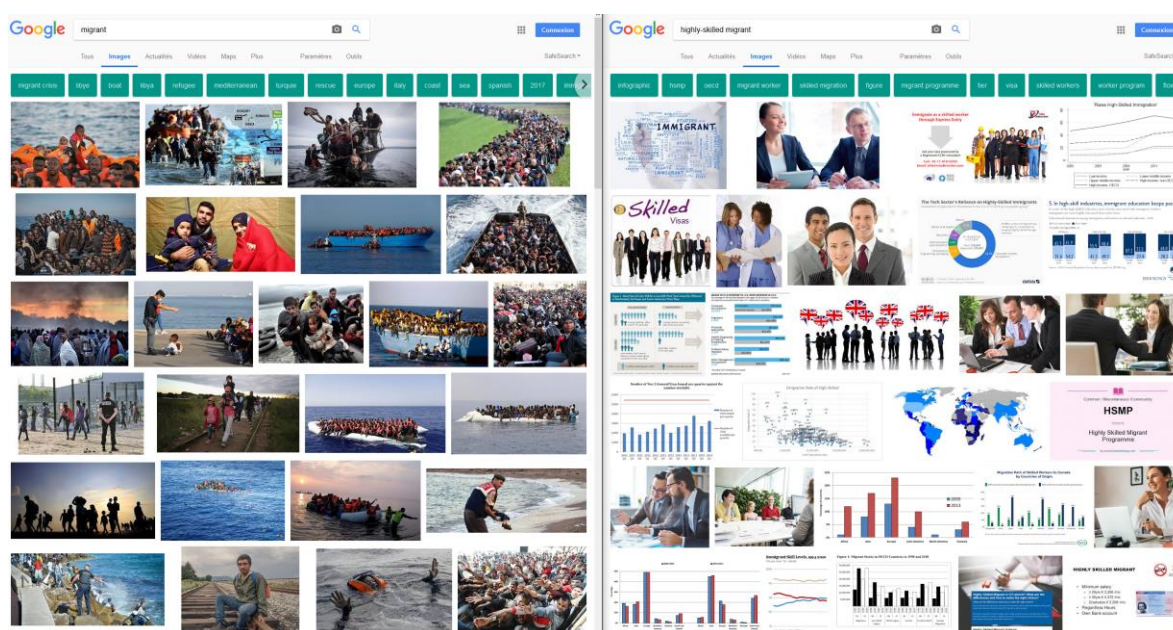
9 Theoretical and Empirical Insights

Two chapters structure the discussion part. In the first (Chapter 9) I review and summarise the main contributions of the current study. I answer the posed research questions and point towards some ideas for further research. In the second (Chapter 10) I discuss the theoretical and empirical insights of the study. I emphasise some differences that I have spotted between the Geneva and the Frankfurt region, combining the contextual chapter (Chapter 5) and the three empirical chapters (Chapters 6, 7, and 8). Though this study does not develop a formal comparative design, some elements for instance, to the “family policy”, deserves some comments. Finally, I focus on the different actors I encountered during this study to offer them some recommendations. Let us start by reviewing the crucial insights of the study to answer the research questions.

9.1 Decentring the Literature and the Research Design

The main purpose of the theoretical part is to decentre the current literature on highly-skilled migration and expatriation. In other words, I develop a decentred theoretical framework which is an innovative way to assess the scientific literature on highly-skilled migration and gender. Doing so, I create the term “polarisation of migration” to express the way research opposes “*Normalfall Migration*” and “highly-skilled migration”. I presented two seminal theories in migration studies, the “neoclassical theory of migration flows” (p. 18) and the “dual labour market theory” (p. 20). These two theories are usually opposed: one is seen as “mainstream” and the other one “critical”. Yet, I argue, both are developing a “polarisation of migration”, opposing two types of migration, which allegedly answers to different social processes. Opposing two types of migration does not only go beyond the level of the skills of the migrants, but also implies normative categorisations which span far beyond the realm of social sciences. In fact, these categorisations are at the core of a worldview, which largely transcends social sciences: a widespread oversimplified worldview (“*Weltanschauung*” in German).

Figure 25: Opposing “Migrant” to “Highly-Skilled Migrant”



Source: Own Elaboration based on Google.com

Figure 25 is a way to illustrate what this worldview is about. It shows the opposition between a “controlled migration” and a “frictionless mobility” (Favell 2014) and represents the “migration binaries” opposing “us/them”, the skilled professionals who move by choice versus the unskilled migrants forced to move. In fact, it represents a seminal distinction in Western social sciences, that Edward Said discussed in *L’Orientalisme* (2003 [1978]). He spoke of the “Europeans [and] in front of them, the non-Europeans” (ibid., 38). The argument is close to the one of Bhabra (2017) speaking of “methodological whiteness”. For her, “it is clear that the category of ‘class’ is not being used as a neutral or objective one, but rather as a euphemism for a racialized identity politics” (2017, 227). Al Ariss (2010) makes the same point emphasising that as soon an “expatriate” comes from a country of the “global South”, he or she is considered as a migrant. In his words, this conceptualisation “comes to replicate and support a stereotyped image of migrants who are less advantaged in terms of their originating country and ethnic origins” (2010, 80). Through the “migration binaries”, I deconstruct a worldview implying “white upper middle-class mobile professionals” opposed to “racialised under-class [sic.] migrants forced to flee a scorched country”. Therefore, I develop a decentred theoretical framework to reflexively deal with the scientific literature in order not to reproduce a “polarisation of migration” in my study. The distinction does not only imply normative assumptions but also produces performative effects, as the collective image of a phenomena already contains, in part, its political answers. Thus, it should not be

taken for granted in the scientific literature. One of these assumptions is that highly-skilled migrants will not stay in their new country of residence: they are here only temporarily. They are not a “threat” to the “imagined community” of the nation (Anderson 1991) because they have somewhere to return to, where they “belong”, as if the “normal” status is to live in the place “where one comes from”. My analysis challenges this assumption and shows a type of “family-strategy” which precisely allows a long term stay in the host-country. The migrants, or to use a more derisory term, the refugees come by necessity and will not only be a burden as they, allegedly, do not work in the labour force but will also stay, as they have no place to return to. These are the normative considerations that the “polarisation of migration” carries.

However, it cannot be denied that the life of a highly-skilled migrant working for a multinational company in the Geneva or the Frankfurt regions is diametrically different than the one of an asylum seeker in the same regions; the two terms also refer to different lived experiences. Yet, they not only express different lived experiences but also different theoretical frameworks in order to study them and this is where it becomes problematic. My work is an attempt to propose an analysis bridging the theoretical frameworks they presuppose; this is what I referred to earlier as overcoming the “migration and the gender binaries”. In chapter 6, I develop, for instance, the “partner-initiated mover” and the “partner-coordinated mover”. The analytical tool is a combination of studies focusing on the family relationships – mostly developed on the “migrant” side of the binaries – while spotting who is the initiator of a move – coming from studies on expatriation (Andresen et al. 2014) – referring to the “highly-skilled migrant” side of the binaries. Thus, the goal is to decentre both sides of the “binaries” to propose an innovative framework. Doing so, I create a discussion between disciplines which are, so far, nearly hermetic to each other, focusing on the strong points of both: a mutual prosperity. This is the first theoretical implication of my work which will encourage further research.

By exposing a “polarised worldview”, the theoretical part stresses the necessity to acknowledge the “polarisation of migration” and to simultaneously deconstruct it. This idea comes from the work of Derrida (1978) who advises us to treat the existing concepts as old tools to be used *à défaut de mieux*. I have developed the “migration binaries” and the “gender binaries” on the idea of a “polarisation of migration”. Yet, my proposition to overcome this worldview is to develop a “decentred theoretical framework” based on the “migration and the gender binaries”. This decentred framework aims at deconstructing the unquestioned

assumptions that the “polarisation” implies. In order to do so, I develop three “methodological premises” (3 Decentring the Research on Highly-Skilled Migration and Expatriation: Three Methodological Premises, 55). Respectively, these three “methodological premises” are the “methodological individualism, the methodological nationalism, and the methodological economism”. While the first two are not new and can be found in many studies, the third one, the “methodological economism” is a theoretical insight of the current study. It relies on the “migration binaries”, because it refers to the biases of opposing permanent controlled migration to temporal frictionless mobility. Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002, 2003) coin the “methodological nationalism” to denounce the biases of either naturalising or ignoring the nation-states in various studies: it refers to a methodological position acknowledging the nation-states without naturalising them. I develop the “methodological economism” following the same logic and propose a position depoliticising migration while problematising mobility.

Table 7: Summarising the Methodological Premises

Methodological Premises	Methodological Individualism	Methodological Nationalism	Methodological Economism
<i>Unquestioned Assumptions</i>	Migrants as individuals abstracted from their family relations Economic is relevant Social is irrelevant	Studies on migration develop “ethnic sampling” Studies on highly-skilled migration do not specify the country of origin	Frictionless mobility and controlled immigration Temporal adaptation and permanent immigration Employed skilled mobile professionals and unemployed unskilled migrants
<i>Ways to Overcome Them</i>	Developing a collective approach assessing simultaneously the work in the labour force and the care work	Using two cities as entry points to contrast the lived experiences of the respondents	Differentiating the “categories of analysis” and the “categories of practice”

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 7 summarises the main ideas of a decentred framework to study highly-skilled migration. Each “methodological premise” corresponds to a set of biases that I aim at overcoming in the empirical analysis. Thus, I construct an original research design that breaks

with the unquestioned assumptions of the three “methodological premises”. It forms the second theoretical insight and, again, demands further research.

My proposition to overcome the “methodological individualism” relies on the socio-constructivist approach developed by West and Zimmerman (1987) coining the phrase “doing gender”. Many scholars use this approach to study topics other than gender. Amelina and Lutz (2017) speak “doing migration” and Baldassar et al. (2014) speak of “doing family”. Such a perspective goes beyond the “methodological individualism”, as it overturns the conceptualisation of an isolated migrant by re-imbedding him or her in the social context in which they live. In fact, I answer to Baldassar et al. when they propose:

We need to further develop our understanding of the meanings, actual practices, and obstacles related to doing family in a context of increased mobility and geographical distance (2014, 171).

Thus, my endeavour is to develop further empirical research about the process of “doing family” in the case of highly-skilled migration. I analyse the process of “doing family” on the move by taking into consideration jointly the care work and the work in the labour force in the context of a migration initiated for professional reasons.

When it comes to the “methodological nationalism”, my proposition is to take two localities as entry points to be able to contextualise the lived experiences and the narratives on professional migration. By choosing the Geneva and the Frankfurt regions, I can develop an analysis which takes into consideration the specificity of each region while being able to see what is common between them. Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2010) develop this idea to overcome the “methodological nationalism” in their book *Locating Migration: Rescaling cities and migrants*. Thus, the two first “methodological premises” are not original as such, as scholars have already proposed ways to overcome them.

However, what is original is the third “methodological premise”: the “methodological economism”. It is a combination of the thoughts of two scholars: Favell (2014) who denounces the opposition between a frictionless mobility and a controlled migration and Wieczorek (2018) who points at mobility after migration. In fact, the “methodological economism” tackles the “migration binaries”. It opposes migrants who need to “integrate/assimilate” as they are allegedly immobile after their migration and who are part of “them” to the mobile professionals who need to “adapt” as they are hyper-mobile and are

part of “us”. In order to overcome these biases, I underline the need to be reflexive about the “categories of practices” and the “categories of analysis” of the study (Brubaker 2002, 2013).

I do so by purposefully articulating the scientific discussion on expatriation and highly-skilled mobility in the semantic realm of migration studies. It helps clarify what the “categories of analysis” and what are the “categories of practices” are. From this perspective, I decentre the discussion on highly-skilled mobility and expatriation emphasising that these also include migration. It is not a frictionless mobility. At the same time, I use concepts drawn from expatriation studies to depoliticise the discussion on migration, hence decentring the core concepts of migration studies.

Instead of focusing on the “integration” of highly-skilled migrants, I focus on their ways to cope with (multiple) relocations and their “family-strategies” while settling in a new geographical region. Decentring is a barrier against normative concepts which are hard to define such as the one of “integration” that I deliberately avoid. Research on expatriation develops rather a pragmatic approach concretely focusing on the challenges that highly-skilled migrants face. Such a focus allows the researcher to examine the problems that the migrants face when they arrive in a new local space, the people who can help them, and the kind of support they can receive.

Implication box 1

Implications for further research:
The “methodological economism” is a tool: 1. to deconstruct a worldview contrasting “white upper middle-class mobile professionals” to “racialised under-class [sic] migrants forced to flee their scorched earth” by problematising mobility and depoliticising migration. 2. to bring together expatriation studies and migration studies, which have not spoken to each other so far. A fruitful approach for further studies is based on the strengths of each field opening the way to original concepts, such as the one of “partner-initiated mover” or “partner-coordinated mover”.

Source: Own Elaboration

Simultaneously I continue to use the concept of migrant in order to counterbalance the “polarisation of migration” that these terms imply. In other words, a “highly-skilled migrant” is a “category of analysis” to which none of the interviewee identifies with. For most, they self-identify as “expatriate”, “citizen of the world”, “cosmopolitan” or “employee of their company”, which are all “categories of practices”. The very use of these categories, I argue,

is an act of power; it is a way to create an order by “naming the world”, the goal being to differentiate themselves from others, namely migrants. While this is quite a common aspect of a “category of practice”, I aim not to reproduce this “polarisation of migration” into my work and thus use a different “category of analysis”: the highly-skilled migrant. Implication box 1 summarises the possibilities for further research focusing on the theoretical part.

9.2 Doing Family on the Move

While the theoretical part contains some new insights, the core of the innovative results is the empirical part. The empirical part offers a way to analyse “doing family” (Baldassar et al. 2014; Jurczyk, Lange, and Thiessen 2014) on the move through three facets – corresponding to the three empirical chapters – the practices, the narratives, and the strategies. Through these three facets, I show the variety of family dynamics when it comes to highly-skilled migration. Thus, each of the three facets corresponds to a central element of “doing family” combining the impact of migration on the professional careers of the partners (Chapter 6: Professional Careers, 119), the narratives of the partners explaining their division between the care work and the work in the labour force (Chapter 7: Representing Migration: Between Motilities and Anchors, 165), and the development of their “family-strategy” on the long run (Chapter 8: Family-Strategies of Highly-Skilled Migrants, 207). In a nutshell, “doing family” combines the consequences of the decision to migrate, the narratives, and the strategies.

9.2.1 Consequences following the Decision to Migrate

The empirical section starts with an example of the “professional approach” (6.1 Migration Triggering: Individual Approach, 119). Four empirical cases stress the variety of professional moves behind the term “expatriation”. Following the work of Andresen et al. (2014), I show the difference between the “assigned expatriate”, the “drawn expatriate”, the “intra self-initiated expatriate”, and the “inter self-initiated expatriate”. While noting the relevance of these types to understand better what drives “highly-skilled migration”, I also develop a complementary “collective approach” (6.2 Migration Triggering: Collective Approach, 124) to analyse the consequences of professional migration for the partners. This approach acknowledges the social embeddedness of highly-skilled migrants in an attempt to overcome the “methodological individualist” bias. I use the same principle to differentiate different types of moves like Andresen et al. (2014): I too spot who is the initiator of a move.

Implication box 2

Implications for further research:

The “collective approach” aims at overcoming the “methodological individualism” and further research should systematically imbed highly-skilled migrants in their family relationship while studying their inclusion in the labour market.

Source: Own Elaboration

The difference is that, while the “professional approach” focuses on the relationship employer/employee, the “collective approach” focuses on the partners. By decentring the “professional approach”, I develop two seminal types of movers: the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover”. Each of these types corresponds to a position regarding who is the initiator of the migration. Doing so, I show that the consequences of a migration for professional reasons follow different logics for the “primary-mover” and for the “secondary-mover”. This distinction is at the core of my work as it changes the way to conceptualise highly-skilled migration (Implication box 2).

Table 8: Summarising the Types of Move

Primary-Mover		Secondary-Mover		
Expat-Move	Local-Move	Total-Move	Half-Move	Secondary-Stayer
		Partner-initiated mover	Partner-coordinated mover	

Source: Own Elaboration

In a second step, I analyse in what way the experience of a professional migration differs between the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover”. It leads to a differentiation of two types of moves for the “primary-mover” and three types of (im)mobility for the “secondary-mover” (Table 8). These types of movers and types of moves are the foundations of my research. I build the whole empirical section through combining and analysing, in greater detail, each of these types. In chapter 6, I analyse individually each type of move for each type of mover. In chapter 7, I show in each type of move the prominence of the “primary-mover” in shaping the narratives of “displaying family” (Finch 2007). In chapter 8, I combine the different types of moves in order to construct patterns of “doing family” (Baldassar et al. 2014): patterns that I call “family-strategies”. Thus, Table 8 illustrates the conceptual bedrock of my work.

The second part of chapter 6 (i.e. the first chapter of the empirical section) explores the different types of moves, showing that the “expat-move” implies “motility”, which is not the

case of the “local-move”. The analysis of the types of moves of the “primary-mover” reveals another concept which is absolutely central to my work: the concept of “motility” (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004; Flamm and Kaufmann 2006). I classify the types of moves of the “primary-mover” through a continuum on which the capacity as well as the openness to “motility” differentiate the “expat-move” and the “local-move”. This distinction does not really refer to the mobility as such, as all the respondents are mobile for professional reasons, but rather refers to their openness and capacity to be mobile: that is the “motility” of the “primary-mover”. This way of typifying the moves of the “primary-mover” through a continuum based on “motility” may seem harmless. However, once the perceived need to be “motile” is put into perspective with the situation of the “secondary-mover”, it deploys a strong gendered effect which leads many “secondary-movers” to leave the labour force. The truth to be told, analyses of the types of moves of “primary-movers” are numerous as they constitute the bulk of all studies analysing professionally triggered migrations.

Table 9: Conceptualised Questions and Corresponding Answers for Chapter 6

Conceptualised Questions	Brief Answers
How do couples “integrate” two positions in the labour force when one has to move abroad for professional reasons?	In most of the cases, the “secondary-mover” decides to follow the “primary-mover” to the new location through a “total-move”. Doing so, this person will face the challenges of the “partner-initiated mover”. Some others develop a “half-move” facing the challenges of the “partner-coordinated mover” while some decide to stay where they live.
Is the “secondary-mover” facing specific challenges regarding their professional career? If yes, what are these challenges about?	Yes, the challenges vary depending on the type of move. Through a “total-move”, the “secondary-mover” has to find a position in the labour force in the new location, through a “half-move” or with a “secondary-stayer” the partners need to deal with a bi-local settling.

Source: Own Elaboration

Analysing the situation of the “secondary-mover”, which corresponds to the challenges and reactions of the other partner, has proved to be interesting and rather innovative. I show three types of reactions: following, coordinating or staying. Each reaction emphasises specific types of moves and of movers (Table 8). While the “partner-coordinated mover” circumvents the challenges implied by a “total-move”, the “partner-initiated mover” faces this unique set of challenges. I show not only what these challenges are (6.5.2 Unique Challenges of a Partner-Initiated Mover, 141) but also what different factors are that favour or hinder the

access to the labour market in the context of a “total-move” (6.5.5 Access to the Labour Force, 153).

An important point that I want to make concerning chapter 6 is that adopting a “collective approach” does not necessarily mean that the professional activity of the partner is left out of the analysis. In fact, the “collective approach” encompasses the way the partners coordinate their professional careers which I conceptualise under the term of “labour force work integration”. Though it is a complicated path, some “partner-initiated movers” find a position in the labour force after having followed their partner abroad. Table 9 summarises the main answers to the questions I ask for the chapter 6.

9.2.2 Narratives Displaying the Division of the Tasks

The second empirical chapter (7 Representing Migration: Between Motilities and Anchors, 165) focuses on the narratives of the respondents. The originality of this part is to adopt a decentred perspective analysing how the “primary-movers” display their family. The goal is, once again, to decentre the “migration and the gender binaries” by looking, this time, at how one partner considered *par excellence* to develop a professional migration, for the sake of his (and more rarely her) professional career, portrays family. The two first empirical chapters respond to each other as they both decentre the analysis, yet from various angles. While the first chapter analyses the often forgotten professional activity of the “secondary-movers”, the second deals with how the “primary-movers” display family. In other words, the second chapter reinserts the “primary-movers” in the context of family. There is a small nuance to add here, as I analyse the narrative of one “secondary-mover” in the second part of the chapter; Maria’s narrative (7.3.1 Ignoring Motility, 190). Yet, the bulk of the chapter focuses on the discourses of the “primary-movers” and is structured around the concept of “motility”. I differentiate two discursive stances towards “motility”.

The cases of the “primary-movers” developing a narrative emphasising “motility” reveal a discrepancy between their narrative and their practices. It shows that the respondents avoid to depict their family as a “traditional family”. They all aim at displaying a fair “family-strategy” in which both of the partners work in the labour force but, paradoxically, they discursively devalue the care work, implying that they would not do it. I spot three discursive stances. One emphasises the “structural constraints” (7.2.1 Structural Constraints, 169) which hinder the “secondary-movers” capacity to find an activity in the labour force. Another one

consists of accepting the perceived impossibility of having two upward professional careers under the conditions of “motility” (7.2.2 Career Men and Career Women, 177). The last one underlines the alleged efforts of the “primary-mover” in the sphere of the family (7.2.3 Paradoxical Family Men, 183). The common point between these three narrative stances stressing “motility” is the absence of reference to the support that the “primary-movers” could provide. They never mention the possibility of helping their partner in the care work so that she can have more time to develop her professional project. These discourses reveal the normative standpoint of the respondents concerning the care work: they seem to systematically devalue it. While they adopt a narrative, which implies that they wish they could be, or that they tried as much as they could, to support a “family-strategy” in which both of the partners would work in the labour force, they are blind to the help they could give in order to achieve such a “family-strategy”.

Implication box 3

Implications for further research:

In my study, I show that the “secondary-movers” are most of the time women. Further studies should focus on the male “secondary-movers” to analyse the reorganisations of gendered hierarchies within these couples.

Source: Own Elaboration

Truth to be told, while some are blind, others probably enjoy a *status quo* in which they get (all) they want. Nearly all of them imply they could not invest more in the care work without consequences on their professional career. By emphasising that he is a “family man”, Dennis emphasises that he tries to invest more time with his family, compared to his colleagues. Yet, when he speaks about the daily organisation of the family, he invests nearly all his time in the labour force, referring systematically to a competition between colleagues. In fact, Dennis is in the upper category of the middle management, and for him, as for many of the male respondents, it is either a more balanced “family-strategy” or the career. This point is central to understand the reproduction of gender hierarchies within the families, as one of the ways towards more equalitarian “family-strategies” is a bigger implication of the male partners in the domestic and care work (Implication box 3). Yet, they perceive it as a choice which would hinder their career, giving them a disadvantage against competitors who do not do it. They perceive it as an “either/or” situation. It is a striking paradox. They valorise an organisation of the family in which both partners have a professional activity but at the same time there is no clue of a greater investment on their part in the care work required to achieve it. Even the

narrative of Dennis (7.2.3 Paradoxical Family Men, 183) who underlines his investment in the family does not mention a fairer division of the tasks. In fact, I show that he considers himself to be a “family man” compared to his colleagues and thus, does not talk *per se* about his actual engagement in doing a fairer part of the care work at home.

Table 10: Conceptualised Questions and Corresponding Answers for Chapter 7

Conceptualised Questions	Brief Answers
What kind of “meaning patterns” do the respondents produce when they “display family?”	The respondents develop two kinds of “meaning patterns”; one accepting the “motility” of the “primary-mover”, the other controlling it. Yet, all the respondents try in one way or another to portray their partner as working in the labour force.
Does “displaying family” guide them while taking decisions on their “care work integration”? If yes, how do they orient their actions while taking these decisions?	Yes, it does. The respondents emphasising “motility” hardly speak about how they could help their partner with the care work while the ones developing a more controlled stance towards “motility” refuse its disruptive impact on the organisation of the care work. It shows that maintaining a high “motility” for the sake of one professional career (re)produces gender hierarchies.

Source: Own Elaboration

The second part of the chapter deals with “anchored narratives”, that is narratives which adopt a stance either ignoring or refusing “motility”. In this part, I refer to the singular case of Maria (7.3.1 Ignoring Motility, 190) who lies to herself in order to have the courage to find a new position in the labour force each time her partner relocates. It underlines the difficulty for the “secondary-movers” to find employment when they migrate every four to five years. I also show the case of Lynn and Alex (7.3.2 Refusing Motility, 194) who refuse further migration acknowledging that they could hardly find a better situation than the one they have currently. Both are employed in a multinational company in Frankfurt, both have a position matching their professional competencies. Furthermore, both are aware that finding a better position abroad for one of them is not impossible but finding a better position or at least a similar one for the two of them is, they argue, very difficult: they do not want to take the risk. In fact, they receive individual offers but what about the other partner? Their problem is that collectively they are convinced that they could not find better, thus, adopting a narrative stance in which they refuse “motility”. I show how their “family-strategy” becomes a “golden prison” to them as they must maintain their professional activity. Thus, they are in the difficult situation of wanting to stay in a place they did not choose. All in all, the three narratives show a will of the respondents to control the “motility” of the “primary-

mover”, in order to be able to integrate the care work (towards their children or their parents when the latter aging) and/or their “labour force work integration”. They show a narrative stance which refuses “motility” and its openness to an unknown destination implied by another relocation, which contrasts strongly with the first three narratives accepting “motility”. Table 10 summarises the main answers to the questions I ask for the chapter 7.

9.2.3 Family-Strategies

The last empirical chapter aims at conceptualising three types of “family-strategies” for highly-skilled migrants and showing their inherent dynamics. I stress three processes leading to change and/or sedimentation of the “family-strategies”. First, the “iterative logic” of the “family-strategies”. It refers to the same array of questions which appear after each migration that the partners have to answer. Second, the “path-dependency” of the “family-strategies” which implies that former decisions have an impact on the next decisions – as when the partners settle in a new local space they have to take into consideration the consequences of their former choices. Third, I underline the possibility of conflict between the partners, leading to a change in the prioritisation of the careers. By this I mean that in some cases, the “secondary-movers” challenge the “family-strategy” in order to maintain their position in the labour force (8.4.2 Power-Dynamics, 251). In most of the cases, however, the unequal nature of the “family-strategy” is not challenged leading to its sedimentation: the types of the “primary-mover” and the “secondary-mover” do not switch between the partners. Through these three elements, I emphasise the dynamic and flexible nature of the “family-strategy” as being neither (pre)determined, nor totally random.

To conceptualise the “family-strategies”, I develop three patterns of “family-strategies”, namely the “motile family-strategy”, the “local family-strategy” and the “mobile family-strategy”. Each “family-strategy” facilitates and hinders specific constellations of “labour force work integration” and “care work integration”; leading me to speak of a “mutually exclusive model”. Furthermore, I show that each strategy implies a specific relationship to the local space as the partners develop different kind of social networks and mobilise various forms of care support. I construct each pattern by crossing the types of moves (Chapter 6) and the narrative stances towards “motility” (Chapter 7).

The “motile family-strategy” stresses the difficulty to maintain two professional careers under the constraints of the “motility” of the “primary-mover”. In fact, the “secondary-

mover” corresponds to the type of the “partner-initiated mover” and faces the challenges of redeploying the care work arrangements. In most of the cases, as care work is too important, the “secondary-mover” focuses exclusively on it without seeking external care support (such as the informal or the non-formal ones). Consequently, she does not have the time to seek employment in the labour force. This “family-strategy” corresponds to the respondents who usually self-identify as “expatriate”. Their “modalities of settling” are coherent with their idea of moving again soon, since the “primary-mover” is “motile” and the “secondary-mover” follows. I demonstrate that the “motility” of the “primary-mover” is supported financially and organisationally by the employing company. This can result in the children studying at an “international school” as the parents have the means to pay for it through the employing company. It follows that the partners and the children are included in an exclusive social network around the international school and that of colleagues of the “primary-mover”. I refer this as being an “expat-bubble” (Fechter 2007a). Their “peers” face the same challenges and they usually help each other. This strategy, which deploys gendered hierarchies as the division of the tasks between the partners, is traditional implying a male “breadwinner” and a female “caregiver”.

The “local family-strategy” corresponds to a strategy which favours long term anchors in the new local space. The difference from the “motile family-strategy” is that, in the case of the “local family-strategy”, the respondents try as much as possible to stay in the local space to which they migrate. This often implies negotiations with the employer to secure a long term professional position in the new local space as we have seen in the case of Yuna and Julia (8.3.3 Separations and Divorces, 240). In this context, the respondents develop a strategy to stay, as they need to deal with a more complicated “family-work integration” than the ones developing a “motile family-strategy” and this is often the case with separations and divorces, in which a child is involved. Another situation leading to this particular strategy is when both partners have a relatively good position in the labour force, and do not want to take the risk of one partner losing his or her professional activity as a result of a further migration: this strategy decreases the “motility” of the “primary-mover”. Thus, the “local family-strategy” favours dual career and children at the expense of “motility”. When the partners are able to develop a “family-strategy” in which they maintain two professional careers abroad, they often rely on formal, non-formal and informal forms of care support. They can mobilise the local variation of the nation-stated “family-policy”; as they worked in the labour force in the same region for a few years, they are entitled to, for instance, maternity or paternity leave or

take a place for their child/ren in a public day care centre. It is also common in the realm of this strategy that the parents hire nanny or an *au pair* or that their own parents come to help them with the care work”. In the case of a nanny or an *au pair*, they delegate the care work to, usually, other migrants. It emphasises the “global care chain” (Amelina 2016; Degavre and Merla 2016) and underlines the privileged position of the respondents of the current study. More than reducing the gender inequalities, they transfer them to other women.

Implication box 4

Implications for further research:

My work deals with highly-skilled migrants; yet further studies could use the “mutual exclusive model” to focus on the resident population. What are the “family-strategies” of commuters, or even “extreme commuters” (commuting more than 90 minutes for one trip to reach their place of work in the labour force)? Can the “mutual exclusive model” be generalised? Further studies could thus focus on the impact on the time of commuting and the development of gendered “family-strategies”.

Source: Own Elaboration

The last pattern of “family-strategy” is the “mobile family-strategy” which corresponds to a daily and extensive use of mobility in order to maintain the “family-work integration” of the partners. In fact, their integration between the work in the labour force and the care work is difficult to maintain, as the partners tend to travel extensively. This strategy is often temporary as it is an exhaustive strategy on a daily-basis, though the amount of care work is low. This strategy favours the “motility” and the “careers” but not the “children”. The case of Maria working for an Italian company in Japan exemplifies the difficulty in maintaining this strategy in the long term. Though partners usually do not have children as the strategy implies a prioritisation of the professional careers over family-life, some do. In this context, sending their children to a boarding school is an option fitting with the type of the “mobile family-strategy”.

Table 11: Conceptualised Questions and Corresponding Answers for Chapter 8

Conceptualised Questions	Brief Answers
How can the “family-strategies” be conceptualised to study “gendered hierarchies” within families? What kind of model can I construct for them?	I distinguish three types of “family-strategies”. Each “family-strategy” favours two elements while hindering a third one. The “motile family-strategy” favours the “motility” of the “primary-mover”. Strong “gendered hierarchies” support a traditional division of the tasks between the partners; the female “secondary-mover” does the care work which hinders a dual career couple. The “local family-strategy” favours dual career couples and a fairer division of the tasks when it comes to the care work, while hindering the “motility” of the “primary-mover”. The “mobile family-strategy” favours a dual career couple and the “motility” of the “primary-movers” (if not both partners) while hindering family-life. I articulate the three types of “family-strategies” through a “mutually exclusive model” and show how the strong “gendered hierarchies” of the “motile family-strategy” allows the male partners to combine a career, motility, and children. At the same time, it undermines the female partners’ capacity to coordinate concurrently the three elements. This model shows that unlike their male counterparts, the female partners cannot have it all.
What is the relationship between the “family-strategies” and the region where the respondents settle?	Each “family-strategy” stresses a specific social network as well as a distinguishable organisation and mobilisation of support for the care work. The “motile family-strategy” requires the financial support of the employing company, which implies the mobilisation of international schools and favours networks of fellow “expatriates”. The “local family-strategy” relies more on the local variation of the nation-stated “family policy” as well as a mobilisation of a mix of formal care, informal care and non-formal care. The “mobile family-strategy” implies an extensive use of mobility and refers to boarding schools.

Source: Own Elaboration

From a “collective perspective”, the three strategies offer an innovative way to tackle the (re)production of gender hierarchies within the families: what I call a “mutually exclusive model” (Implication box 4). I distinguish three elements: “motility”, children, and career. I show that while men can have an upward and successful professional career, “motility” for professional reasons (explained in part by the success of their career), and children; but, women can only have two of them simultaneously. At the core of the model lies a recurrence: women do the unpaid care work more often than men. The question is: what can be done to diminish this discrepancy? Table 11 summarises the main answers to the questions I ask for the chapter 8.

10 Recommendations for Practice

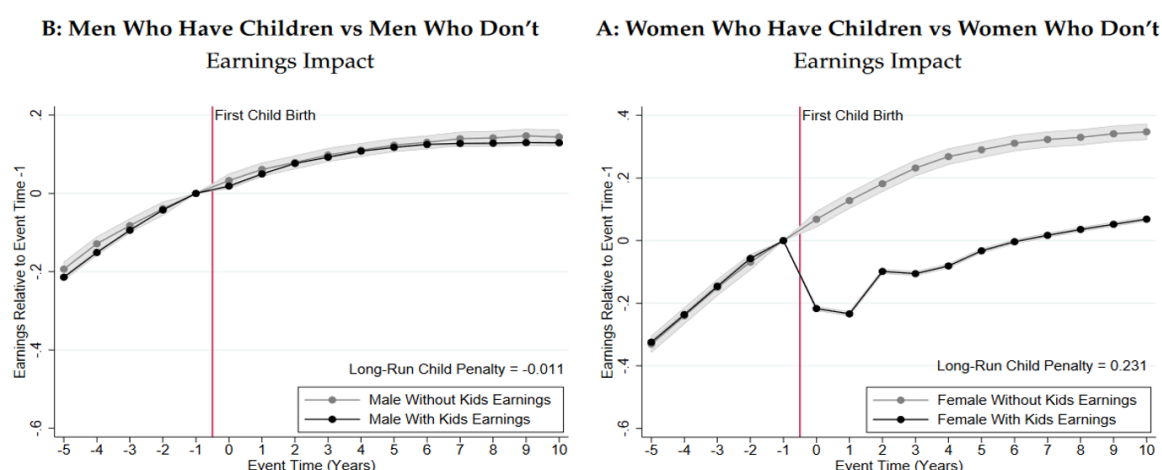
Chapter 10 considers recommendations to create a fairer division of care work and labour work between partners by focusing on three elements: (1) the division of the care work after the birth of a child, (2) the childcare provision and the “family policy” available to the partners in the two regions of investigation, and (3) the support of the employing companies. Thus, the chapter is structured around three main parts. In the first part, I discuss the “critical time” corresponding to the arrival of the first child. I show how this crucial moment, combined with a lack of care support, leads to the hierarchisation of one professional career over the other between the partners in the long term. The second part deals with the “critical places”. As mentioned earlier, my study focuses on the development of gendered hierarchies in two specific regions; namely the Geneva region and the Frankfurt region. I point out differences between the Geneva and the Frankfurt regions when it comes to the childcare, by combining the empirical results and the contextualisation of the two regions (chapter 5). I stress that the “family policies” of the Frankfurt region are more attentive to the challenges of coordinating family life and professional careers. The third and last part addresses the companies. Here, I underline the importance and the relevance of the company’s support to the partners, by acknowledging the complexity of doing family on the move.

10.1 Migration, Children, and Gender Wage Gap

Many recent studies in economics show that the birth of a child creates inequalities in the labour market between the partners (Blau and Kahn 2017; Goldin et al. 2017; Hausmann, Tyson, and Zahidi 2009; Hirsch, Schank, and Schnabel 2010; Kleven, Landais, and Søgaaard 2018; Schmid 2016). Though these studies take place in a “sedentary” context (in which mobility and “motility” are not accounted for), they underline a range of gendered dynamics within couples and “elementary families” which explain the construction of the “gender wage gap” (Blau and Kahn 2017). The interruption or the diminution of the female partners’ labour work force, because of child care work, is central to explain earnings differentials between men and women¹⁰¹.

¹⁰¹ Kleven, Landais, and Søgaaard (2018) focus on Denmark, a country known for having “family friendly policies”, thus, I suggest a similar trend exists, if not such a strong one, in the rest of Europe.

Figure 26: Impacts of Children in a Difference-in-Differences Event Study Design



Source: Kleven et al. (2018, 42)

According to Kleven et al. (2018), the impact of children on women's earnings is long-lasting; women do not catch up with the loss of income even after ten years. This creates a critical gap between men and women as women receive a lower income for the rest of their professional career. It also impacts the career progression; studies show that women still get a lower income for the same qualifications and have less chance to reach the top positions (OECD 2012; Webb 2017), corresponding to the metaphor of a "glass ceiling". The impact of the children on the construction of the "glass ceiling" is central, according to the aforementioned studies. Figure 26 shows that women reach the same level of income they had before the birth of a child only 7 years after it. To put it bluntly, a child gives men 7 years advancement, contributing to the "hierarchy of position" (7.2.1 Structural Constraints, 169). It exemplifies a crucial "critical moment" (Riaño et al. 2015). Centrally, the division of the care work between the partners is the underlying generator of inequalities in the labour market. If women earn less, it is mainly because they either completely stop or decrease their working hours to do the unpaid care work. On top of that, reducing to part-time work is often not a temporary strategy but a permanent one (OECD 2012, 159). Men do not do so and maintain their earning while becoming a father, as the left graph of Figure 26 shows. Moreover, Hirsch, Schank, and Schnabel (2010) – focusing on Germany – speak of the "monopsonistic firms power" to explain how employers take advantage of the fact that women's labour supply is less elastic than men's. Indeed, women tend to take other considerations into account such as the necessity to do the care work for the children when considering their position in the labour force. They will, for instance, only accept positions that are not too far away from the children's school. The authors argue that this situation

explains why there is up to one-third of a gender pay gap in Germany (2010, 314). In other words, men are more “motile” when it comes to consider interesting positions independent of the care work. The “motile family-strategy” corroborates this, showing once again the gendered impact of “motility”. The fact that men and women work in different sectors is another factor explaining the gender wage gap (Schmid 2016, 462). The male dominated sectors pay typically more than the female dominated ones. All these factors are important to understand the “gender wage gap” and the “glass ceiling”; but centrally, recent studies underline that “the gender gap increases with family foundation and bringing up children” (2016, 455). My study corroborates this result, as it shows the process of the construction of gendered hierarchies between the partners. In the context of highly-skilled migration, the female partners, however, have to face another layer of challenges linked to the very experience of migration. My analysis stresses how “motility” (Flamm and Kaufmann 2006) is a factor leading to the prioritisation of one (and only one) professional career creating an unequal division of the care work. In fact, the “motile family-strategy” often implies the sacrifice of the career of the female “secondary-mover” to support the “motile” career of the “primary-mover” being cast to do all the care work.

The worst-case scenario for a female partner – who wants, not only, to stay employed in the labour force, but who also has the ambition to develop an upward professional career– is to face simultaneously a resignation, a pregnancy, and a relocation. This combination creates a strong hierarchisation of the professional careers, favouring a traditional “family-strategy” potentially leading to a “motile family-strategy”. This combination of resigning and relocating while being pregnant (or having a baby) comes with another striking element: the lack of mobilisation of any kind of external care support. When the partners arrive in the new region, the female does not have the time to mobilise any kind of support, as the care work for the baby is extremely time-consuming. Even though she may want to seek child care, she usually does not have local knowledge and the appropriate networks to find it as the family has just relocated in to the area. Here, the male partner and the employing company can help by providing relevant and trustworthy information. I will develop this point in the recommendation for the “primary-movers” and the companies. Furthermore, this takes time; waiting-lists for day care centres are important in both the Frankfurt and the Geneva regions. In other words, the partners relocate at the moment when external care support would be of uppermost importance in order for the female partner to maintain a professional activity. The “primary-mover”, typically as seen in the case studies, does not help either. It is often a

combination of moving while being pregnant or having to take care of a baby which creates the conditions for a total lack of external support.

In addition, the state of “liminality” implied by the “motility” of the “primary-mover” is destabilising for the “secondary-mover”, as she is always trapped between one place and another. This situation is already discouraging when the “secondary-mover” wants to look for a position in the labour force, but when she needs to develop the right conditions to be in the position to seek employment i.e. to have the time to do so, the task is even more discouraging. The Damocles sword of a next relocation is always there and is upsetting. I exemplified this with Maria’s cases, who developed a narrative to hide the possibility of a further relocation, always convincing herself that they have settled for good (7.3.1 Ignoring Motility, 190). This situation gives the “secondary-mover” even more reasons not to seek external support.

This array of factors, discouraging the “secondary-movers” to seek external support for the care work, is linked with a third aspect, which I call the “illusion of the independence of the nuclear family”. When the respondents display their family as a team, as Kim does (7.2.1 Structural Constraints, 169), I argue that they imply its self-sufficiency. Sentences like: “you can move your family if it works well, it’s your base” (Xavier, 50yrs, married)¹⁰² are common in the discourses emphasising “motility”. They encourage the “secondary-mover” to do all the care work when they settle in a new region and again discourages her to find care support for the children. Again, the absence of support from the male partners is striking in these cases. This contrasts with the other types of “family-strategy”, in which the “secondary-mover” uses a mix of different types of care support. Through a “half-move”, I showed how Manon maintains her inclusion in the labour market by making use of her maternity leave. The absence of support for the care work of a small child, while being abroad, is one major reason that prevents /forbids the female partner to join the labour force. Hence, she has to do all the care work leaving little or no time to develop her own projects. When the children reach school age, she has, arguably, more time to seek a position in the labour force but the “hierarchy of the position” is already established and the time of care work has created a gap in her CV, with which it is hard to compete to men or women (who haven’t had any) in the labour market.

¹⁰² La famille vous pouvez la bouger et si elle fonctionne bien (...), c'est ça votre socle (Own Translation).

Implication box 5

Recommendations for the Female “Secondary-Movers”

The combination of a pregnancy, resigning a current position, and a relocation – especially when the “primary-mover” is “motile” – creates a dearth of care work support. This lack of support makes it very difficult for the female partner to have the time to seek employment in the labour force. To stay employed in the labour market, I would recommend the female partner not to follow her partner abroad while being pregnant or with a baby, as the absence of support after the relocation creates the conditions for being out of the labour force for a long time. Some women follow while being on maternity leave creating different conditions of support and subsequently different possibilities of reintegrating the labour force.

Source: Own Elaboration

The female partner does not only lose (a part of) her income, she also loses a part of her capacity to negotiate on equal terms with the male partner when it comes to further professional decisions. In the empirical part, I develop the concept of “hierarchy of positions”. It emphasises a process which increases the capacity of the male partner to negotiate to his advantage, because he earns more, “so it made more sense for us like that” he could argue retrospectively. The male partners develop a justifying discourse on how the “family-strategy” becomes unequal because it is, allegedly, the choice that makes more sense for them collectively. I speak of a Foucauldian moment (1994, 66) because the micro relations of power – in this case the male partner using his higher income to maintain his professional activity and thus maintaining his independence – contributes to reinforce the large scaled strategies of power – patriarchy in contemporary societies – which are in turn used to justify the micro relations of power (Implication box 5).

Yet, many male partners work hard in the labour force, as they feel they need to maintain the living standards of the family. Many of them do not help with the unpaid care work. They do so because they are the only ones working in the labour force, since the female partners resigned to follow them, doing the unpaid care work. In this configuration, the male partners rarely acknowledge the possibility of decreasing their working hours to support their partner with the care work. They fear that this would put their career at risk, as they work in a competitive milieu. In fact, it is exactly what happens to the female partners and this situation generalised at a large scale that creates the gender wage gap. Furthermore, it creates a vicious circle within an “elementary family”. As long as the female partner does the care work and cannot have time to look for a position in the labour force, her chances to find a paid position in the labour force are low, if not non-existent. At the same time, as long as the male has the

only income, he invests a lot of time in the labour force, as he is afraid of losing or reducing the single income of the family. He feels he is responsible to maintain the living standards of the family and, by this very feeling, does let her have time to seek employment. If she would have time to seek and find employment in the labour force, he would not have the only income – creating more financial security for the family. How is it possible to break this “vicious circle”?

Implication box 6

Recommendations for the Male “Primary-Movers”
The “primary-mover” can support the “secondary mover”. Principally, it implies negotiating with the employer to be able to better integrate the work in the labour force and care work. A first step is about raising these issues in the labour force. This does not have to mean reducing the number of hours worked in the labour force per week (though it can mean that); but rather it means speaking about the integration of the care work and the labour force work and finding arrangements to give the “secondary-mover” the necessary time to seek employment. Sharing the private agenda with the employer in order to better integrate both or looking actively for a day care solution are helpful first steps.

Source: Own Elaboration

I argue that better coordination between the work in the labour force and the care work is the key. I showed some cases of respondents who managed to coordinate both. Though, these cases are the ones of divorced mothers, they stress the possibility of a better coordination between both. Yuna and Julia (8.3.3 Separations and Divorces, 240) find arrangements with their employer. They speak and negotiate in the labour force; they use their “voice” in Hirschmann’s terms (1970). Acknowledging that they can help is central for the “primary-movers”. They can either reduce their working hours, develop a better coordination between their work in the labour force and the care work or look for a day care solution in order to create better conditions for the “secondary-mover” to have the time to look for a position in the labour force. In turn, it could reduce the pressure of (over)working as he would not have the only income of the family. Julia shares her private agenda with her employer, allowing him or her to know when it is best for Julia to have meetings or to plan business trips. She also specifically asked not to be relocated in the next years. By creating a better coordination and by reducing her “motility”, she is able to maintain a full-time position in the labour force while doing as well as delegating the care work. Her case stresses the necessity of mobilising care support, as she cannot rely on a partner to do it; which is, coincidentally the case for dual career couples. A better coordination could imply flexible home-office arrangements to fit

with the schedule of a day care centre as well as flexible working hours to allow the partners to share the care work. He could start earlier, and she brings the children to a day care centre and vice versa in the evening. I argue that for dual career couples with children, childcare provision is a necessity, especially while being on the move. The central point is that the “primary-movers” must speak about coordinating both with their employer and generally consider it as a valuable topic. For this to happen, it requires a change in the mentality of both the employers and the employees. I will show it in the next subchapter that legal provisions for paternity leave are positive in this regard, as they normalise the fact that a male reduces or stops his activity in the labour force for a time to do the care work (Implication box 6).

In the first part of this chapter, I have dealt with the “critical moment” of the arrival of a child by focusing on the partners. I will now switch to the “critical places”, contextualising the regions of Geneva and Frankfurt through the lens of childcare.

10.2 Childcare in the Geneva and the Frankfurt regions

Those female partners, who are able to maintain a position in the labour force, mobilise external support for the care work. Here I refer to a mix of care work support to emphasise the use of formal, non-formal and informal care support. Maintaining a position in the labour market is conditional on the arrival of a child, also on the notions of inclusion in the labour force and the availability of comprehensive “family policy”. If the mother works in the labour force in a region where the “family policy” truly supports her, the pressure to quit the labour force is small. On the contrary, if she works in the labour force where the “family policy” is conservative, the need to resign is high. For the OECD, the “family policies” have an economic significance as “gender equality and a more efficient use of skills are essential to achieving strong and sustainable growth” (2012, 23). Thus, there is an economic case for both regions to develop comprehensive “family policies”. In sum, the “family policies” are essential for the regions and determinant for the parents who want to develop a dual career.

At the end of my contextualisation in the subchapter 5.2.1 (p. 105), I asked how does the “formal care” happen under the conditions of repeated professional mobility? The concept “family-strategies” give some insights to this question, as the type of “family-strategy” impacts strongly on the capacity to receive care work support. I just showed the case of the “motile family-strategy”, in which the “formal care” is more difficult to facilitate because the “female partner” relocates without a position in the labour force. The situation is different

for the partners developing a “local family-strategy”. Dual career couples are more common in the realm of the “local family-strategy” because the partner out of the labour force has more time to find a new position. Thus, the “local family-strategy” is a fruitful field to understand the differences between the regions of Frankfurt and Geneva when it comes to childcare.

In the contextual chapter, I showed discrepancies in terms of “family policy” between these two regions and these were corroborated by the empirical evidence. The more developed “family policy” of the Frankfurt region favours the inclusion of the two partners in the labour force. For those partners who wish to develop a dual career, maternity and paternity leave create favourable conditions of maintaining two professional careers. In fact, these insurances are even more important for highly-skilled migrants as they have less opportunities of receiving informal care support as most of them cannot have access to the “hidden economy of kinship”.

Implication box 7

Recommendations for both Regions
It is not only about developing the formal conditions to allow the fathers to take a paternity leave, but also encouraging behaviours leading to a fairer share between the partner of the care work for a child. Thus, in both regions fathers should be encouraged to take more time for the care work of their child. The mothers who want to develop a professional career could thus have more time to seek employment in the labour force. Achieving both these objectives requires a strong childcare provision by increasing the accessibility of the offer of day care centres for pre-school children.

Source: Own Elaboration

It is not a coincidence that Lynn and Alex manage to maintain two positions in the labour force while Annisa and Adrian cannot (8.3.1 Low Support for the Care Work, 231; 8.3.2 Combination of Formal, Informal and Non-Formal Care Support, 235). Annisa mentioned many times her wish to stay in the labour force after the birth of their children, but ultimately had to resign. The lack of childcare support in the Geneva region explains largely her situation and in that sense, Annisa lives in a “critical place”. When it came to the “formal care”, Annisa’s maternity leave was shorter than Lynn’s. Furthermore, Alex took a paternity leave while Adrian did not, as the possibility did not exist in the Geneva region. A key sentence of Alex’s argument was: “people do it all the time, it [fathers taking a paternity leave] happens almost all the time, they take this time off” (Alex, 52yrs, married). In fact, it is not only about the possibility to do so, it is also peoples’ attitudes towards a paternity that

need to be open to this possibility. By mentioning that “almost everybody is doing it” Alex underlines a change in the “gender culture” (Pfau-Effinger 1998) within his company. The data of the OECD corroborates this and shows a general trend in Germany. The attitude toward the statement that “women should be prepared to cut down on paid work for the sake of the family” diminished slightly in Germany while it remained the same in Switzerland (OECD 2012, 210). Yet, both in Switzerland and in Germany more than half of the respondents agree with this statement. It is still far away from countries like Denmark or Sweden where less than 25% of the respondents agree with this statement. For the OECD: “the shortage of formal childcare for very young children (...) reinforce parent’s attitudes towards employments and care” in which the women does the care work (ibid). At the beginning of the current chapter, I said that the key to reduce the gender wage gap is a fairer division of the care work between the parents. To achieve this, the partners need external care support as well as other attitudes regarding “who should do the care work”. These two elements argue in favour for more formal childcare provision as it, arguably, impacts both partners (Implication box 7).

Implication box 8

Recommendations for the “Family Policy” in the Geneva Region
In the Geneva region, the lack of paternity leave and a short maternity leave push many women out of the labour market or force them to reduce their working hours. This situation is even more acute for migrants as they typically do not have the possibility to make use of informal care. A longer maternity leave and the possibility for the father to do his part of the care work by having access to a paternity leave would create better conditions for an inclusion of both parents in the labour force.

Source: Own Elaboration

Another recurring problem is the lack of adapted day care solutions for the parents. Here too, the difference between the Geneva region and the Frankfurt region are striking. One factor which pushed Annisa out of the labour force is the price of the day care solution in Switzerland. The combination of a short maternity leave, the absence of paternity leaves and expensive day care solution were detrimental to Annisa’s professional career. The waiting lists and the time spent by the “secondary-mover” to find place for the children hindered her capacity to find time to seek a position in the labour force. In the Geneva region, it is an often-repeated claim by the respondents that they could not find day care solutions for small children. Or if they manage to do so, the solution was not satisfactory: either too expensive because it is a private day care centre without subsidy or not providing enough places as, for

instance, only one child out of every two can get a place in Geneva. This situation corroborates the results of Imhof (2015) and Bonoli and Vuille (2013) that I presented in the contextual chapter. In the Frankfurt region, the respondents complain less about the day care solution for their children. Though most of the parents in the Frankfurt region send their children to a private day care centre, it also means that they can afford to pay for (as in my empirical cases, the ones without expat-contract are dual earners). This point is central and corroborates the recommendation of the OECD, to “ensure that work pays for both parents” (2012, 216). For Annisa, her work in the labour force did not pay enough; she made it clear when she told me that: “It was insane to keep two kids at the *crèche*¹⁰³ with that salary, because I wouldn’t have anything at the end” (Annisa, 39yrs, married). This is not the case for the respondents in Frankfurt, as they have access to longer parental leaves. In the Geneva region, the female partner has to find an arrangement for the day care 16 weeks after the birth of the child (corresponding to the end of the legal maternity leave). In Germany, the partners can share 14 months i.e. 56 weeks. Thus, they can seek and organise a day care solution and the possibility to use an even more flexible parental leave which can last until 24 months (*Elterngeld+*). I argue that the length of the parental leave creates a trickle-down effect on the capacity of the partners to share and organise the division of the tasks (Implication box 8).

Implication box 9

Recommendations for the Parents
For highly-skilled migrants, a successful coordination between two professional careers and the care work for a child implies the use of a mix of day care arrangements. I did not encounter a single case in which the parents found a full-time place in a kindergarten. Many of them talk of long waiting lists and as they do not know where they will be relocated, they cannot plan ahead by booking a place in advance. Thus, the solution comes with mobilising a mix of different day care arrangements.

Source: Own Elaboration

That said, the partners in both regions do have the possibility of, and need to develop, a mix of care support. I showed how Lynn and Alex, do not only use formal care, but also informal and non-formal care, or how Julia hires an au pair and sends her son to a private school which takes care of him throughout the day. On the contrary, I showed how Annisa struggles with the mid-day breaks or how Christophe (8.2.1 Prioritising one Career, 209) has not found a

¹⁰³ in French in the original interview.

satisfactory day care solution: both “elementary family” living in the Geneva region. The partners succeeded in maintaining two professional careers while doing family on the move by effectively making use of different organisations and people for the care support. In the Geneva region, for instance, there are possibilities such as day placement in a family, “home kindergarten”, a nanny or *au pair*, a kindergarten or a nursery. In many interviews, it is striking that the parents do not speak about facilitating such different forms of day care. In other words, since the parents are unable to find one successful form of day care, they should aim at combining a range of care provision simultaneously (Implication box 9).

10.3 Family-Friendly Companies

To understand the capacity of the partners to maintain two professional careers while being on the move is to introduce a third actor: the employing company. The employing company can be supportive in many ways, but I will restrict myself only to the ways it can help in the coordination between care work and the work in the labour force. In the empirical section, I noted several measures that some companies took to support the partners. I will summarise them here, treating these as examples of good practice by increasing the ease with which the partners can coordinate both.

A problem, while relocating with small children, is the need to be on waiting lists before getting a day care solution. This is a common struggle for the respondents either in the Frankfurt or in the Geneva region. In many cases, the absence of day care solutions creates a vicious circle for the “secondary-movers”, as they do not find the time to look for employment after a relocation. When possible, the company should inform their employees of a next relocation in advance encouraging them to look for day care solutions in the region where they will relocate before doing so. An easy step, that helped many of the respondents, is to give accurate information: through, for instance an informative booklet, to the employee before the relocation. An informative booklet focusing on the different forms of formal, non-formal and informal care available in a region offers the possibility to the partners to start seeking day care solutions before relocating. At the age of the internet, more than summarising information, these booklets should rather orient the partners to trustworthy information sites. In other words, they should direct the partners towards appropriate resources, persons or organisations in advance of a relocation. Another possibility would be to ask the relocation offices to take some steps to finding a day care solution. When the partners take a two day planning trip to visit the different accommodations available, they

could also start the procedure of making applications and/or visit some of the day care centres. The sooner they begin the application procedure the better, as in the Canton of Vaud statistics show that a little bit more than 30% of the parents need more than six months to find a day care solution for a small child (Imhof 2015, 37).

Many interviewees emphasise that the time during a relocation is stressful, not only for the family-life but also for the professional activity. The months just after the relocation are the most stressful because the employee starts a new job, in a new region, with new colleagues, and new tasks. At the same time, the situation is hard for the “secondary-movers”; especially when they perform a “total-move”. In fact, the moment of a relocation is critical for both partners. The employer can contribute to create the necessary conditions for the partners to develop an adapted care support for their family. The employer should not prevent “primary-movers” to ask for a reduction in their working time for a limited period, typically, just after a relocation; though the timing is (by far) not ideal, as just after a relocation the work load in the labour force is typically high. Yet, the conditions of an early return or a “failed assignment” are potentially exacerbated if the “secondary-mover” has to do all the care work by herself in a desert of care support. If she aimed at continuing a professional career before relocating and she notices that she does not even have the time to seek employment, she can also decide to return home. In the review of the literature (2 Moving with Skills: A Review of the Literature, 13), I showed studies that showed how important is the satisfaction of the “secondary-mover” in both supporting the “primary-mover” and triggering early returns. Thus, it is in the interest of the company that “secondary-movers” are comfortable to settle for the length of the relocation and so not wanting to leave after a short period. The capacity of partners to create a mix of day care support is a key to increasing the satisfaction of the “secondary-mover”. Yet, the “secondary-mover” needs to have the time to organise this which implies the support of the “primary-mover”. Of course, no one can guarantee that a “secondary-mover” will find employment in the labour force or that she will find the “dream-job”. The respondents are aware of that. They underline, however, that their biggest frustration comes from not having the chance to seek it. In other words, they need the support of the “primary-movers” to have a concrete opportunity to seek employment. From this perspective, giving opportunities to the “primary-movers” the possibility to either (1) reduce working hours, (2) have access to home-office or (3) organise their time more freely with flexible working hours for a few months after a relocation, could help the partners to seek a day care centre. These would contribute to creating the conditions for the “secondary-mover”

to seek employment in the labour force which subsequently decreases the chances of an early return or a “failed assignment”.

Furthermore, the cases of Yuna and Julia, both “divorced mothers” living in a foreign country, show the capacity of closely integrating both professional and family life. Julia shares her private and professional calendars with her assistant and her boss. It is certainly not the wish of everybody to have such a close integration between both, but companies could propose to take more in to account the importance of child care has in the day to day planning of an employee. In fact, I showed that this solution works for both Yuna and Julia. It does not require a diminution of the working hours of the employee but a relationship of trust allowing a deeper integration of the work in the labour force and the care work. This can be done through flexibility of working hours with a greater freedom to work at home some days or to have irregular working hours. Similarly, some companies have agreed to keep an employee on even though s/he was going to move to the other end of the world; the case of Maria working for an Italian company in Japan is striking in this regard. Being open to unconventional ways of integrating professional and family life, making an intensive use of the new technologies of information and communication, can offer (temporary) solutions. However, one has to be careful since such a strategy could be exhausting in the long term and also be a cause of isolation, which “secondary movers” precisely do not want.

Implication box 10

Recommendations for the Companies
- Informing the employee about a further relocation as soon as possible. - Producing informative booklets summarising the different forms of care support available in a region - Offering the possibility to reduce or rearrange the work time in the labour force directly after a relocation. - Favours flexible working hours and home-office. - Being open to unconventional ways of integrating professional and family life. - Creating and/or supporting the offer of day care services in the region. - Developing dual career networks.

Source: Own Elaboration

Last but not least, the company can help create an environment in which both partners can work in the labour force while managing to organise the care work. This comes close to the idea of Scott (2004), which gives “attention to the environment within which the organisation operates” (2004, 5). I would go one step further and argue that a company does not have to

adapt or react to a static environment but can, to a certain extent, modify it. When it comes to the possible support for care work, a company can, for instance, invest in the creation of a kindergarten within its walls or nearby. This is the case of Philip-Morris in Lausanne. It is a financially expensive solution, yet it can also be done in collaboration with the local authorities. In the case of this kindergarten, some places are reserved for children of the employees and some are open to others. Another example of companies aiming at changing their environment is about creating programs to favour the dual partner career – like the International Dual Career Network (ICDN) in the Geneva region. This allows the partner, who wants to find a position in the labour force after a relocation, to receive support and to be included in professional networks. In sum, as much as the “primary-mover” can, the employing companies can help, too (Implication box 10).

10.4 Summary of the Implications for Further Research and the Recommendations for Practice

In this chapter, I gave practical recommendations for a better coordination between professional careers and the care work. It is a central problem for all families who want to maintain two professional activities in the labour force while raising children, yet the challenges are exacerbated with mobility and “motility”. As a conclusion for the discussion part, in Table 12 (below), I summarise the implication boxes of chapters 9 and 10.

Table 12: Summarising of the main Implications and Recommendations of the Study

Implications for Further Research (Implication boxes 1 and 2) - Considering the “methodological economism” as a tool: 1. to problematise mobility and depoliticise migration. 2. to bring together the fields of highly-skilled migration studies and expatriation studies. - Imbedding systematically the family relationships in studies on highly-skilled migration and expatriation.
Ideas for Further Research (Implication boxes 3 and 4) - Focusing on the male “secondary-movers”. - Focusing on (extreme-)commuters and the development of gendered “family-strategies”.
Recommendations for the Female “Secondary-Movers” (Implication box 5) - Avoiding the combination of a pregnancy, a resignation, and a relocation as it creates a dearth of care work support. - Being aware that the division of the tasks after the arrival of the first child creates a path dependency difficult to challenge.
Recommendations for the Male “Primary-Movers” (Implication box 6) - Negotiating with the employer to be able to better integrate the work in the labour force and care work and being able to do more care work. - Helping with the care work and with the search of a day care centre. - Finding flexible professional arrangements to give the “secondary-mover” the necessary time to seek employment.
Recommendations for Parents (Implication box 9) - Mobilising a mix of different day care arrangements.
Recommendations for the “Family Policy” in the Geneva Region (Implication box 8) - Creating a paternity leave and developing longer maternity leaves.
Recommendations for both Regions (Implication box 7) - Developing a strong childcare provision by increasing the accessibility of the offer of day care centres for pre-school children.
Recommendations for the Companies (Implication box 10) - Producing informative booklets on childcare. - Valorising flexible working hours, home-office, and unconventional ways of integrating professional and family life. - Offering the possibility to reduce or rearrange the work time in the labour force directly after a relocation.

Source: Own Elaboration

11 Conclusion: Motility and Mobility

From a broader perspective, “motility” and flexibility are close concepts. One could say that “motility” is a form of geographical flexibility. Flexibility is an ability to answer to a professional opportunity quickly without having to rearrange the “family work integration”. Someone who can go on a business trip over the week end and take two compensatory days out during the week is deemed flexible. Someone single without a child can accept a 100% position abroad, which requires working in the weekend without having to rearrange the care work (as it is low if not inexistent), is “motile” and flexible. It is the case of, for instance, John at the beginning of his career. He moved from the United States to Hong Kong in less than two weeks between the moment he learned about the position and his actual migration (7.2.1 Structural Constraints, 169). At this time of his biography, he was “motile” and flexible. From this perspective, pointing at the gendered impact of “motility” is not a trivial result, as it explains, at least in part, the difficulty of the female partners to be professionally successful while raising children simultaneously and being on the move for the sake of their partners’ careers. It gives a new perspective to explain difference in career achievement between men and women.

I show that the “motile family-strategy” favours the career of one of the partners, very usually the male partner, to achieve high positions in the company. In fact, the ones being able to make their way to the very top of these companies are, in most of my empirical cases, the ones developing a “motile family-strategy”. Crossing the interviews with the “objective data” that I collected on the *LinkedIn* profiles of the respondents shows that the respondents developing a “motile family-strategy” can make it to the top of their company. The companies are all big multinational companies employing thousands of people worldwide. Pedro (8.2.1 Prioritising one Career, 209) is the director of the planning and business development of his company, Xavier (8.2.2 Homemaking and Caregiving, 217) is the general manager (CEO), and Richard (8.2.3 Company’s Support, 221) the president of the marketing worldwide. In contrast, the ones developing a “local family-strategy” or a “mobile family-strategy”, though they have “good” professional careers, tend not to reach these top positions and stay in the upper part of the middle management. Lynn and Alex, whom I mentioned to be amongst the rare respondents having successfully developed two professional careers, do not hold these top positions within their employing company (which does not mean they do not have a good income). They are middle managers rather than top-managers. Lynn is an

account director and Alex a creative designer implying a qualitative difference with the positions of the Pedro, Xavier, or Richard. In fact, during the interview and in my analysis of Lynn's narrative (7.3.2 Refusing Motility, 194), she mentions several times that she refused positions abroad at the headquarter of the company, where she could have continued to compete in order to reach top-management positions. The way she explains how she has now another idea of what success means (7.3.1 Ignoring Motility, 190) is striking and contrasts greatly with the narratives of Pedro, Xavier, or Richard. A "traditional" and heteronormative division of the tasks between the partners allows the male "primary-movers" to develop his professional career, as he can answer positively to any opportunity abroad, knowing that the "secondary-mover" will follow and do the care work. In fact, this model is close from the one of the *bourgeois* family of the end of nineteenth century. This type of "family-strategy" not only reproduces the gender hierarchy but also contributes to a successful professional career. For these "primary-movers", such a strategy is extremely gratifying as at the end he makes it to the top of the company having, allegedly, a loving spouse and beautiful children. The ones more careful about their "family-work integration" – who integrate two professional careers – cannot compete because at one point they usually have to refuse an opportunity abroad.

My analysis leaves us with quite a pessimistic result as it shows how the respondents are locked up in seemingly binary choices. For the male partners, it is either a "winner takes all" model, in which they have to focus solely on their work in the labour force in order to compete with colleagues who do so. Taking more time to help the female partner with the care work is perceived as a disadvantage in the labour market and a sacrifice of their capacity to achieve a career which will lead them to the top of the company— just as it is for the female partner. Thus, they have to choose between success and fairness. For the female partners, the choice is also binary as having children hinders their capacity to pursue an upward professional career— just as it is *not* for the male partners. Their choice is between the children or the career as male partners accepting to follow them in a highly motile international career seem to be (very) rare. Thus, the concept of "motility" is a central and underused concept to understand the migration, career, and gender nexus. It explains, in parts at least, how some develop their career to the highest position in a company, while others must give up their professional advancement. This combination is toxic for gender equality. All in all, it underlines the gendered impact of frequent migration on the "family-strategies". On a more positive note, research done by the OECD (2012) shows the impact of "family policies" to

reach a greater gender equality between men and women in the labour force. A more important and accessible offer in terms of day care arrangements is a key policy. It has trickle down effects on not only the capacity of the female partners to coordinate better the work in the labour force and the care work but also on favouring fairer attitudes of the parents when it comes to know “who should do the care work”. The context can be changed and the recommendations I develop in the current research go in this direction.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Contact Letter



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Faubourg de l'Hôpital 106
2000 Neuchâtel, Suisse

Swiss Forum for Migration
and Population Studies



12/05/2016

PhD on Household Strategies and Professional Careers of Highly-Skilled Migrants

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

As part of a PhD in social sciences at the University of Neuchâtel I am studying the experiences of the households of highly-skilled migrants and expatriates in the Lake Geneva region.

My work is an empirical study, using qualitative methods of social sciences research. It focuses on highly-skilled migration and its organisational surroundings. The intense and frequent international mobility of highly-skilled professionals influences career paths and private-lives. Besides their professional activities, highly-skilled migrants, however, have also other social roles: as wives or husbands, mothers and fathers. The households face challenges which are typically linked with their localisation under the condition when – at least one of them – is mobile for professional reasons. The situation can be challenging since the chance for both partners to find a professional position in their field within the same local space is limited. In this context, I examine the different household strategies they develop. Do they both decide to come to Switzerland to work or do they choose to live apart for a time? Are they both continuing to work or is one stopping his or her professional activity in order to be able to follow his or her partner? Besides, state-bodies, employing companies like multinational corporations, research institutes, and sportive federations, as well as specific organisations, like outplacement agencies, and relocation offices are more and more aware of the challenges international careers imply. In this context, they develop programs and policies which aim at facilitating the settling of highly-skilled migrants and the coordination within the household. Do the highly-skilled migrants use these programs at all? If yes, what is the concrete help they receive and what are the social consequences for the households? My project explores the experiences and situations of highly-skilled migration by linking the everyday experience of professional mobility with potential organisational support highly-skilled migrants may receive when they settle in a new place.

This is why I take the freedom to ask you if you would agree to meet and discuss your experience of international professional mobility. In order to be able to know how this mobility is actually experienced, I intend to do interviews with highly-skilled migrants and/or expatriates settled in the Lake Geneva region. Let me add that my work is conducted by using proven scientific methods. The interviews will take approx. 1 hour. In order to evaluate my data better, I will record these interviews. However, they will be anonymized, so that neither name of people will ever appear in publications.

Would it be possible that we meet in the coming weeks? Do you have any date proposition? I will move to the place that suits you best.

Yours faithfully,

Florian Tissot

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Appendix 2: Interview Grid

This is the last version of the interview grid that I used to interview the respondents in Frankfurt during the spring of 2017.

Subject of the PhD Ethics	Interview Grid 2017 My work focuses on two points; first the path of your mobility and your professional career. Second, the way you dealt with your family/private-life Respect the anonymity - I keep personally the records and I do not transfeere them
1. Experience of mobility	
Biographical question (Provide a detailed account of .../ /... previous career and current assignments) /... previous migration path) /... private life)	Q You're in Germany right now, how did it happen? <i>R How did you find a job in Germany?</i> <i>R1 What were your different positions during your professional career so far?</i> <i>R2 Before living in Germany, did you live in another country for a period of 6 months or more?</i> Q How difficult or easy is it to maintain a family life or a private-life next to a professional career? <i>If you think of the former places you live, how did you deal with professional life and family/private-life ?</i> <i>R</i>
Professional careers (subjective level) (motivation to go for such a career)	Q What have been the most important choices you have made concerning your professional career? Q What was your motivation to go abroad? <i>R Did you yourself make the decision to go for an international career?</i>
Choice of destination (move wanted - unwanted) (Is the place important?) (reasons to stay or leave)	Q When did you arrive in Germany? Q Did you choose yourself to come to Germany? <i>R Why Germany and Frankfurt?</i> Q Does your stay in Germany fit in a larger career plan? Q Are you intending to stay in Germany?

(language)	R <i>Why?</i> Q Do you speak German? R <i>If no, was it a problem when you were looking for a job in Germany?</i>
(employed - unemployed) Career of the partner (qualification recognition - blockage mobility) (Stuck in the global market) (language and labour market) (Intra-familial strategies (pro))	Q Is your partner working now? R <i>In Germany?</i> Q Can you tell me more about his or her professional career? R <i>How is the professional life of your partner going?</i> R <i>Did your partner have some trouble to get his/her qualifications recognized in Germany?</i> Q (If so) How did your partner find a job here in Germany? R <i>Is (or was) the local language important?</i> Q Do you remember the discussions you had with your partner when you choose to come here? R <i>How do you combine professional career and private life? What are your arrangements?</i>
Family (Different types of collocations) (Living together) (Different forms of family organisations) (Children)	Q What are the greatest challenges regarding the family? Q How are you coping with these challenges? Q Are you living in the same household your partner lives in? <i>or do you have any other ways to live together?</i> Q How is it in the daily life? Q Who is in charge of the household tasks? Q In what kind of school is your child/ren being taught? Q In what language is this schooling?
Family abroad (NTIC)	Q Do you have family members abroad? If yes, how do you keep in touch? R <i>How do you maintain ties in other countries?</i>
Daily-life in Germany	

(Bubble?)	Q If you think of your two closest friends in Germany, who are they? <i>R</i> What are they doing here? Q Have you developed new friendships in Germany? If yes, with whom? <i>R</i> Do you use social media to get in touch with new acquaintances in Germany? <i>R</i> Where and how did you meet these people?
(Associational life)	Q In which groups are you active? Are you member of an association? (Germany and abroad) Q Did you have some difficult moments in your social life in Germany (loneliness, etc.)? <i>R</i> How have you solved these problems?
(Discrimination)	Q Did you make bad experiences living here?
advices	Q Would you recommend to someone of your family to come in Germany? Q Which advices would you give him or her?

2. Support received

(In)formal help (un)received	Q Were you helped at all to find a job in Germany? Q Who helped you to find a job?
(Landing in Germany)	Q How would you describe the time just after your arrival in Germany? <i>R</i> Have you encountered any problems or challenges?
(Mapping of support)	Q Who helped you since you arrived in Germany? (persons or organisations) <i>R</i> What are the most difficult pieces of information to find? Q How did you find... ... a flat? ... a school for your child/ren? ... a doctor?
Support of the employing organisation	Q Did the company you work for helped you in your installation process? Q Tell me specifically what steps and aid the company offers <i>R</i> Are there specific programmes supported by the company? Q If you have been working in another country, these programs vary depending on the country?

Glocal organisation [motility - inclusion]	Q Have you been supported by specialized organisations such as head-hunters or relocation offices? <i>R+</i> Could you tell me how it happened? Q Which concrete help did you (or are you still) receiving? Q Have you encountered any specific problems? Q Did you have to pay for these services? <i>R</i> Are these services supported by the company?
Relation with the state-bodies (relation with specific state-bodies)	Q You performed various administrative tasks on your arrival (permits, control of the inhabitants, etc.). Q Were you supported? <i>R</i> Have you encountered any specific problems? Q What is your experience with... ... the immigration office? ... the public administration (contrôle des habitants, service des automobiles, impôts) ? ... the social security system? ... the public school Q Is there any other problem we did not mention?
Permit and pensions	Q What is your residence permit? Is it related to your employment contract? <i>R</i> And your partner? Q What about your pensions? <i>R</i> And your partner?
Summarising	Q To summarize, what helped you the most while arriving here?
Self-identification (Clarify position towards key-words)	Q How would you define yourself in the first place? <i>R</i> Why, could you explain?

	Q How define yourself when asked?
--	---

Concluding questions something missing?	Q Is there something you want to tell me we did not speak? Something to add?
Interview with the partner	Q I would like to make an interview with your partner, do you think it is possible?
Snowball	Q Would you know people who would be likely to want to participate in this study?

Appendix 3: Data Sheet



Thursday 23 March 2017

Identification:

Where are you born?

What is your nationality? (passport)

What is the highest diploma you achieved?

What is your marital status?

Do you have (a) child/ren?

Where is your partner living now?

When were you born?

Appendix 4: Code Book

Coding PhD		
Pre-set codes	A priori codes	
1. Professional activity	a. Career (Primary mover)	// Professional Career and biographical background
	b. Career (Secondary mover)	
	c. Support of the MNC	// MNC - internal support
	d. Support of the MI	// externalised support, outplacement agency, etc.
	e. Value of Mobility and Motivation to Move	
2. Private life	a. Children	
	b. Partner, Spouse	// relationship (getting married, divorce, etc.)
	c. Parents	
	d. Social life – friendships	
3. Strategy and coordination	a. Family strategy and work-life integration	// coping family life professional career, negotiations between partners
	b. Local inclusions and Modalities of settling	// motility, glocalisation, bi-local settlings, local-expatriate contracts
4. Other	a. Employees in MNC Role of Expats in MNC	
	b. Self-identification	// identification file
	c. Media consumption	
	d. Advices to young professional starting	
Emergent codes	Emergent codes	
100 Displaying Family		// Portraying family
	101 Displaying Family: Career coordination	
	102 Displaying Family: Children	// Raising the children
	103 Displaying Family: Divorce	
	104 Displaying Family: lonely bubble (/= expat bubble) (hyp.)	
	105 Displaying Family: Others have problems	

	106 Displaying Family: Social life	
	107 Displaying Family: Trailing-Spouse	
	108 Displaying Family: Education - language - open to the world	
	109 Displaying Family: Career coordination	
	110 Displaying Family: paternalist - I defend my wife and family	
	111 Displaying Family: Home	floating , stable, etc
200 Family Strategy		// Doing family - Dynamic primary <-> secondary mover
	201 Family Strategy: Being divorced	
	202 Family Strategy: Settling	// Difficulty to settle - arriving in a new place
	203 Family Strategy: Supported by MI	// different types of support
	204 Family Strategy: Non supported by MI	
	205 Family Strategy: Accommodation	former: 205 Family Strategy: Buying a house
	206 Family Strategy: Children	use 206 instead of 943 Nanny
	207 Family Strategy: Local oriented	
	208 Family Strategy: Motility	//perceived likeliness and possibility of a further move - age of the children may diminish it
	209 Family Strategy: International School	
	210 Family Strategy: Local School	
	211 Family Strategy: Boarding school	
	212 Family Strategy: Discussion	// negotiation
	213 Family Strategy: Mobility	// Mobility as a strategy! + decision to move
	214 Family Strategy: Path-dependency	// language of education for the children e.g
	215 Family Strategy: Maintaining ties	// go back to former place with children for instance
	216 Family Strategy: A relocatable unit	//linked with trailing-spouse /=local oriented
300 Primary Mover		
	301 Primary Mover: Career	

400 Secondary Mover	302 Primary Mover: Unsecure career	// From project to project
	303 Primary Mover: Upward career	// explanation how careers in MNC work
	304 Primary Mover: Type of working contract + company culture	// expat contract - local contract
	305 Primary Mover: Impact of the job	// Global impact
	306 Primary Mover: Adventure	// thrilled about the opportunity
	307 Primary Mover: Supported by MI	
	308 Primary Mover: Struggle	
	309 Primary Mover: Role of the Boss	// in decision to move
	310 Primary Mover: Expat contract	
	401 Secondary Mover: Adventure	
500 Labour Market	402 Secondary Mover: Parent	// parenting - housewifing - arriving of the 1st child!
	403 Secondary Mover: Professional Success	
	404 Secondary Mover: Strategy	
	405 Secondary Mover: Struggles	
	406 Secondary Mover: Trailing-Spouse	// supporting the relocatable unit + may look for something once settled
	407 Secondary Mover: Supported by MI	
	408 Secondary Mover: Finding a job	// process of find a job in a new local space
	501 Labour Market: dual structure	// international or local position -> language difference!
900 Others	502 Labour Market: hierarchy within MNC	// senior manager more support
	503 MNC: Mobility Policies	// modification of the conditions
	901 Biggest Challenge: language	// to be classified, incorporated in the analysis
		// locality,

902 Biggest Challenge: Leaving home-city	
903 Local	//904 difference?
904 Importance of local	//903 difference?
905 Local friends	
906 Power of place	
907 Relevance of the local: Language	//problem of language in new local space for secondary mover to find a job
908 The most difficult ("multiple choices")	
909 Old friends	// abroad know before arrival
910 Expat Bubble	// as a family strategy + as a barrier
911 Expat Bubble: Media consumption	// coherent to FS
912 Expat Bubble: Social relationships	// School as an important way to socialise
913 Expat Network	
914 Biggest challenge: rebuilding social fabric	
951 Dural career couple	// Doing family? - family strategy?
953 Nanny	// We pay – nanny: migrant, too!
954 Raising children	
955 Pregnant	
956 Mobile lifestyle as an enrichment	
960 Decision de live abroad	
961 Structure of the couple	binational mononational
961 MNC: move of the HQ	

Appendix 5: List of the Respondents for each Chapter

6.1.1	Katia and Dennis.....	120	7.2.1	John and Aurelia	169
6.1.2	Gabriel.....	121	7.2.2	Kim and Sandra.....	177
6.1.3	Carlos.....	122	7.2.3	Dennis and Katia.....	183
6.1.4	Emma.....	123	7.3.1	Maria and Franz.....	190
6.2.1	Lynn and Alex.....	125	7.3.2	Lynn and Alex	194
6.4.1	Kim and Laura.....	131	7.3.3	Kim and Laura.....	198
	Stefan and Caroline.....	132		Hannah and Hans.....	198
6.4.2	Emma and Blaise.....	135	8.2.1	Pedro and Marta.....	209
	Julia and Jack.....	136		Christophe.....	209
6.4.3	Manon and Charles.....	137	8.2.2	Xavier and Laurianne	217
6.5.1	Lynn and Alex.....	140		Lara and François.....	217
6.5.2	François and Lara.....	141	8.2.3	Pedro and Marta.....	221
	Sara and John.....	143		Xavier and Laurianne	221
	Maria and Franz.....	145		Richard and Andrea.....	224
6.5.3	Julia and Jack.....	147	8.3.1	Annisa and Adrian.....	231
	Maria and Franz.....	149	8.3.2	Lynn and Alex.....	235
	Manon and Charles.....	150	8.3.3	Gabriel.....	240
6.5.4	Carlos and Raul.....	152		Yuna.....	240
6.5.5	Annisa and Adrian.....	153		Julia.....	240
	Sara.....	153	8.4.1	Maria and Franz.....	247
	Thomas and Laura.....	155	8.4.2	Manon and Charles.....	251
	Gabriel.....	156	8.4.3	Tyler and Vanessa.....	254
	Abigail.....	157			
	Manon and Charles.....	159			