

The life transitions of Polish migrant parents in the North East of England

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Abstract

This study considers the intersection between the transitional phases of migration and parenthood. Using ethnographic, biographical interviews conducted with twenty-one Polish families, the research addresses themes such as work, household organisation, pregnancy and birth and family relationships. In order to make a contribution to an otherwise under researched dynamic in migration studies, the project takes a regional perspective, drawing informants exclusively from the North East of England.

The research shows how Polish migrant parents' aspirations and expectations about life in the UK, and more specifically about life the North East of England, rely on a series of romantic preconceptions and meet with conflicting realities. The study refutes the concept of the lone migrant worker, approaching migration from the perspective of the transnational family, and recognising that decisions to migrate are based on an enmeshment of economic, social, cultural and personal conditions. The study challenges traditional models of the Polish family by referring to a diverse set of Polish migrant family formations such as lone parent families, dual heritage families and families enduring periods of separation and reunification.

This study takes a gendered perspective, finding that in Polish migrant households migration is a catalyst for the renegotiation of household duties and caring responsibilities. The thesis argues that in terms of livelihood, Polish migrant parents negotiate rather than strategise their employment opportunities, educational prospects, acquisition of languages and social networks. Additionally Polish migrant parents navigate a complex set of identities in order to legitimise their migration and consider their future options. The study rejects the over simplified 'stay or return' migration dichotomy, giving platform instead to the emotional geographies of migration: the anxieties, fears, and apprehensions Polish migrant parents have about their continued residence in the UK, and similarly the possibility of returning to Poland, give their lives a messiness and uncertainty. For Polish migrant parents, life transitions unravel

between the planning and unplanning of events, as such they experience an everyday tussle between pragmatism and idealism, reality and imagination.

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Prologue: Project development

When I was 16 I read an article in my local newspaper, The Chichester Observer, about a group of residents calling for the removal of European flags (namely the flags of Italy, Germany, France and Spain) from adorning the high street. Chichester is a very conservative city (conservative with a big 'C' and little 'c'). This objection to the flags, and wider objection to the UK being a member of the European Union, angered me, so I led a protest of students down Chichester high street one autumn afternoon. I was quoted in the local paper saying, 'Europe is a great thing- and the flags are good for tourism'. So I didn't have any real political or philosophical knowledge about why being a member state of the European Union might be advantageous, at that age, at that time, I simply felt it might make travelling and working in Spain or Italy easier in the future. Ten years later I found myself sitting in the living room of a Polish family in the North East of England, and they would tell me that Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 meant that travelling and working in the UK was now that bit easier. Presenting Polish migrants as 'accession 8 economic migrants' loses sight, I feel, of a bigger picture, questions about mobility, generation, and aspiration.

My first taste of political activism led to my interest in studying for a degree in politics at the University of Sheffield. I knew the city had been dubbed 'The Socialist Republic of Sheffield' at various points in history, and as an undergraduate the theory of Marxism and socialist politics really appealed. Poland appeared on the degree syllabus fleetingly, a reference or two to the charismatic leadership of Lech Wałęsa, little more. I did indeed study European politics in my third year, at a time when the accession countries were taking tentative steps toward integration, but the potential repercussions of these legalities seemed very remote and extraneous from my life at that time. At that point in my life I was more taken with the arts than the social sciences, so on leaving Sheffield I went to Nottingham University to study for an MA in Film Studies. My academic interest in media representation began at this time, as did my appreciation for Eastern European cinema.

On completion of my Masters degree my boyfriend and I decided to immigrate to Australia. Many of our friends had done the same, some for “gap years”, and others, like us, “forever”. Like the informants in this study I too was optimistic about my career prospects; ‘any job’ at first I imagined, and then I would be scouted as a top film critic for the Australian Centre for the Moving Image. I was twenty-four at the time, and one of just 28,353 fellow UK citizens to have been granted an Australian working holiday visa between 2005 and 2006 (Australian Government Department of Immigration Report: 2005-6). On arrival in Australia the reality of my job prospects dawned so I borrowed money and I took the Cambridge English Language Teaching Assessment qualification: qualified teachers would definitely be in demand, surely. The work available was ad hoc and temporary; colleges would phone me at 8am and I would be teaching at 9am, maybe for an hour, with the rest of the day waiting by the phone. In many of the colleges I found that I was not really employed to teach, but instead I was sent round classrooms to talk to students in my ‘authentic English accent’. The ‘right accent’, according to the parents of the largely Korean, Brazilian and Japanese strong student body, was crucial in language learning, a principle again later echoed by Polish migrant parents in this study. Meanwhile I discovered that academic terms were short and unpaid. I had little option but to sign on with recruitment agencies, where I obtained short term assignments in low skilled clerical work, mainly photocopying, filing and reception work on building sites, for engineering companies and in schools. My boyfriend however, having completed his fourth year ‘in-industry’ of an architecture degree fared better; taking clerical work at first and then being employed, albeit at the bottom of the ladder, by an international architecture firm working on Melbourne Southern Cross station. Just like informants in this study, our fortunes were mixed.

Saying this, my boyfriend and I were both recruited on the famous Australian ‘working holiday visas’ (which permitted, at the time, just three months work in any one job), so life as migrants was uncertain. We had a lack of job security, relatively low wages, and we had not planned for ‘unexpected costs’ such as paying super annuation (the Australian tax and pension system), and paying

our student bank loans in another currency. Our experiences of bureaucracy, particularly the immigration office, were nerve wracking. We lived in various places and shared accommodation with other migrants. There were times of real camaraderie (such as communal cooking and television watching) and times of in-fighting (often over stolen food and unpaid bills). The emotions of migration really struck me, we were excited that we were independent, renting our first flat together, we felt a real sense of loneliness at Christmas being far from our families. There were practical aspects of migrant life to learn, such as where to buy international call cards and how to make the most of public library Internet access. Migration heightened our ethnic awareness; we experienced racial abuse in the street for being 'pommies', we tried to distance ourselves from 'the British community' wherever possible and at the same time relied on the kindness of British expatriates who gave us essential commodities for our unfurnished rental flat. There were differences in my experiences of migration to my informants then, mainly the climate, the relatively high cost of living in Australia, the lifestyle and culture perhaps, but I also found pragmatic and emotional aspects of migration that were similar.

One of the biggest differences between my migration and that of my informants, was I feel, that I had imagined 'permanent migration to Australia'; my informants put no initial timeframe on how long they imagined being in the UK. In the end my migration to Australia only lasted a year. Our return had been motivated by many factors; further training and work prospects for my partner, and emotional pulls, such as having missed family, and friends. On arrival home in the UK I was served by Czech baristas in Heathrow airport's Costa coffee shop and we joked about swapping countries. Later that day I marvelled at the newly opened 'European Foods', a Polish deli in my home town of Bognor Regis. I then picked up the newspaper and found myself reading some truly damning articles about young Eastern Europeans who had allegedly arrived in 'hordes' to take jobs in Britain. In the Sunday Times, for example, a Conservative town councillor was quoted saying, 'they're a nice bunch but we just don't have the room' particularly it seemed given the 'demands' the 'accession 8 migrants' were supposedly making on local services (Swinford: Sunday Times, 2006). I was

amazed. Just yesterday I was this “job-stealing, drain on public resources” in Australia, an analogy I felt was unjust. The reception of migration in the press as purely a matter of economics astounded me. I tried to think about my own economic worth as a migrant, when I was teaching English in Melbourne, as an agency worker, during the periods in which I wasn’t working and served as a conservation volunteer, and during periods as a tourist. It seemed strange to condense my migration into this. The media dichotomy over whether migrants might stay in the UK or return to Poland grabbed me also. I thought again about my own return migration, driven by both pragmatics and emotions. In light of my own experience, I objected to the emotions of migration being left out of debate, and I also found the term ‘migrant worker’ fairly offensive. My objection to the way migration and the experiences of migrants were reduced, went on to motivate my application for this study.

Learning about this new ambition, my partner’s mother posted me an advertisement from The Guardian newspaper publicising cross disciplinary scholarships at a new inter-institutional ‘Centre of Excellence’ in Russian, Central and Eastern European Studies (CRCEES), led at the University of Glasgow. The scholarship was to be funded under the Language Based Area Studies initiative, a joint funding programme by the Economic Social Research Council (ESRC), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

On reflection my original research title had been too broad: ‘The social, economic and political impact of Polish migration to Glasgow’, though at the core of the proposal were two themes which remain fairly under-represented in Polish migration literature to this day: I proposed a study which focussed on the relationship between the city and migration, and a study which proposed looking at Polish migration as more than the product of economics. My interest in the city and built environment had developed during my year in Melbourne, largely thanks to accompanying my partner to lectures and seminars based on the discipline of urban studies. My proposed focus on Polish migration rather than

'A8 accession migration' was related to practicality, as with limited time and access to resources in which to prepare my proposal, I had relied on Glasgow's Mitchell Library collections to start initial research. Included in the collection were numerous historical books about Scotland's exile and wartime Polish community, and through these sources, I imagined exploring how the relationship between this 'old' and 'new' Polish 'community' might sit within the city. At the time of the initial study proposal I hoped to use content analysis as a research method; a reflection on the critical literary skills I had developed during my Masters degree in film. This proposal was handed to Professor Alison Stenning (based at Newcastle University, one of the seven research institutions which formed CRCEES), and after completing a review of selected literature and telephone interview with her, a panel at CRCEES agreed to award me the '2+3' scholarship which funded this study. Thanks to Alison's open minded direction as a supervisor, I was able to develop and move my research on, refining my research title as the study developed.

In September 2006 I began the '+2' element of my award, which involved a year of research training (studying for a Masters of Research in Eastern European Studies) and a year of language learning (studying for a Postgraduate Diploma in Polish Language) at the lead institute of CRCEES, the University of Glasgow, in what was then called the School of Slavonic, Central and East European Studies. The formative years of my research programme offered a cultural, historical and linguistic awareness of life in Russia, Central and Eastern Europe and a grounding in research methodologies. For me, these years nurtured so much more than a contextual background for this study. The research and learning environment at Glasgow was vibrant; I was swept up in a heavy curriculum of fieldtrips, research seminars, film festivals, poetry readings, music recitals, conferences, guest lectures, led by, I felt, very enthusiastic academics. There was an engaged postgraduate research culture, and I left with real respect and passion for Eastern Europe, and Polish culture specifically. I spent my holidays travelling around Poland with backpack and boyfriend in tow. I struggled my way through Polish grammar classes (I am not a natural linguist), and I engrossed myself in audio-visual resources available in the Slavonic

section of the language library. I watched Polish soap opera and (tried to) listen to Polish radio in the evenings. I watched every Krzysztof Kieslowski film I could get my hands on. I made some firm friendships with a number of Polish students, and found myself a tandem language partner through the free ads website, Gumtree. I enjoyed the first few years of this study no end, and had an absolute love affair with the university, and the city of Glasgow, and with research. This is what it was all about, I felt, this amazing self-indulgent academic hedonism – it was fabulous; this was the life for me.

For the '+3' element of my research programme I moved, initially for one year, to the city of Newcastle upon Tyne, to study under the supervision of Professor Alison Stenning, based at Newcastle University. At this point Professor Peter Hopkins kindly took up the helm as joint project supervisor, and it was agreed that I would spend the first year of this project refining my research interests, project title and improving my subject knowledge of geography, the discipline in which this thesis stands. Staff in the geography department at Newcastle agreed I could attend classes for the taught Masters programme, which proved invaluable in strengthening my grasp of key concepts in the social sciences more broadly. At this stage I imagined the project would be focussed on urban ecology, seeing 'the city of Glasgow' as a malleable and transitional entity, with 'new wave' Polish migration shaping its very form and presence. I envisaged returning to Glasgow the following September, to conduct fieldwork. But life didn't quite work out as I had imagined.

Four weeks into my PhD study I found out I was pregnant. I feel far removed from this period in my life now, but at the time feelings of doubt, denial, excitement, shock, and anxiety left me in several mindsets about the future of this project. During my pregnancy I felt frustrated that progression on this project was 'slow', and somewhat distracted, but now I appreciate that this development in life eventually enhanced the research and added new perspective. A turning point in this study came after a particularly difficult day in university library when I felt overwhelmed by this impending and unplanned parenthood and increasingly disengaged from the project. I stood at the metro

station, about six months pregnant, waiting to catch a train home. An elderly lady moved closer and started a conversation. She had a thick local accent and was eager to talk: 'You'll be having the bairn at the Royal Victoria? When are you due?', she said, pointing to 'the bump', 'I used to work there. It's a good hospital. You'll be okay there. How long have you got left?' 'Three months?! No, you look like you've only got one to go! That's a huge bump, is it a boy?', and she continued to talk all the way home. This simple interaction got me thinking - I was new to this city, and yet I felt a strange sense of belonging to the city. The pregnant body seemed to invite people to converse; the pregnant form seemed to signify that I was 'safe', 'dependable', 'trustworthy', 'maternal', 'vulnerable' even. I was aware of becoming a sort of 'pregnant public property' (an idea I later found referenced by Longhurst: 2008) and more surprisingly still, this made me feel a sense inclusion. Before this point I had felt transient, living in different cities, but becoming a parent was changing things, changing how I imagined the future, changing my day-to-day needs and interactions, and most importantly perhaps, changing my understanding of 'home' and 'community.' The postman had learnt my name, the cashier in the supermarket remembered my due date, I was on first name terms with the receptionist at the doctor's surgery, and friends insisted on introducing me to their friends who had children, and I liked this. I started to use different public spaces too. I felt increasingly self conscious in the student union or in pubs, and took to walking through the local park to get to the shops, just to see who was pushing babies on swings. Several academics in my department (Jane Pollard, Anoop Nayak, and Peter Hopkins) recommended the work of Longhurst (2008); a scholar who wrote about these very observations. Longhurst's work encouraged me to appreciate the value of the reflexive biography in research, and in so doing helped me assume a more ethnographic approach to the project, and develop my interest in social geographies of parenting.

My son was born in June 2009. While I technically took six months maternity leave from this study, on reflection, this time-out was definitive in the refinement of the project. Becoming a parent changed my emotions, my relationship with my family, my relationship with my partner, my finances, my sense of self, my

interactions, the public spaces I used, my daily routine, my intimacies, my consumer choices, my sense of time and scale; in fact my transition into parenthood had changed my entire geography. I was governed by a routine of feeding, changing, and endless walks around the neighbourhood to get baby to sleep. My day-to-day encounters were increasingly localised in scale, with the familiar and convenient becoming easier and my priority. Most days I talked to the same people, frequenting the same shops, cafés, the bank and the park. The doctor's waiting room became a real focus of my week when the baby was little, getting baby weighed, getting him immunised and attending postnatal checks. While I was there I met other parents, who willingly offered tips on winding, feeding, bedtime routine, teething. I started to attend local playgroups and baby classes. I soon spent the vast majority of my day with other parents, women mainly, who I had met at these groups, who had children the same age as mine and who lived within my immediate neighbourhood. We would go to each other's houses and we would talk about our experiences, sometimes our intimate experiences. These women offered me practical support, their surplus baby equipment and advice on breastfeeding for example, and emotional support and companionship. My networks had changed, my sense of neighbourhood and community had changed and I felt real sense of belonging; and yet other mothers I had come to know, particularly those new to the area and living far from extended family, reported to having feelings of longing and loss. The emotional geographies of parenthood really gripped me then, as did notions of home, belonging, the everyday and identity; support networks also seemed integral to my experiences, as were the concepts of community and neighbourhood. In hindsight I approached the study with a loose hypothesis based on my experiences, in that I imagined Polish migrant parents would be likely to feel a sense of attachment and belonging to this region due to their everyday interactions with the geography of their children, so for example schools, playgroups and clinics.

Thanks to these experiences and this new line of inquiry, I returned to this project at the beginning of 2010 with a refined title, 'the life transitions of Polish migrant parents to Glasgow.' Shortly afterwards I took a trip to Glasgow with my

son, on public transport, staying with friends. The practicality of situating the study in Newcastle soon dawned. I also felt that there had been little research to date on the intersection between regionalism and migration, so changed the research location to North East England (see appendix ii for definition). As such the development of the project title ended there, though the development of the project was ongoing. I had my second son in August 2011; what I feel he brought to this project, besides an increased number of sleepless nights, was better perspective on life course. Having two children helped put the liminal phases of childhood, and parenthood for that matter, into perspective so, for example, the 'newborn phase' governed the needs and behaviour of parents, changing transitionally into fulfilling the demands of toddlerhood, preschoolers, school aged children and so forth. Thinking about parenthood as transitional persuaded me to write chapter four of this thesis, in that the experiences of relatively new parents with children born in the UK compared to those with older children born in Poland, really seemed to deserve a fuller analysis. In the middle of 2012 my partner and I began the process of adopting our third child. This process undoubtedly helped me develop my thinking in chapter six, helping me recognise for example, how intrinsic emotions are in constructions of attachment and estrangement to people and place.

Less significant landmark events shaped this project too of course. My line of inquiry during interviews for example, was drawn through my own experience of having to renegotiate aspects of life such as livelihood, work, household organisation, childcare provision and family routine in the event of parenthood. Coffey (1999) warns that autobiography seems 'epistemologically productive' but that data collection itself should avoid the relational, problematising and forced reconceptualisation of the self. I would argue that thanks to a conversational style interview technique Polish migrant parents were able to guide the interviews toward their own concerns and experiences, enabling me to return to the data and appreciate the presence of themes that I had not necessarily seen during research collection, due to the immediacy of my own biography in the project.

It is probably worth saying, that while parenthood inspired the construction of this project, it made implementation of the project a real challenge. I struggled constantly to be able to afford childcare provision to give me time to analyse my data and physically write up my research findings, and so had to balance study with periods of paid employment. Typically my children were in nursery for a day to two days a week for two years of this study, meaning that I worked at weekends and in evenings for the main duration. I had to find inventive ways to work on this project; I would listen to my transcripts while I did housework and I took a notepad to the park to write down ideas while also entertaining the children. Having a lack of childcare provision also prohibited taking a more active role in the university research community and engaging in knowledge transfer, sadly, both aspects of research I had found so rewarding in the early stages of my career. This research was not developed in isolation though, as my supervisors were kindly flexible in scheduling our meetings, and I found informal academic networks, which fit around childcare, immensely helpful in supporting my thinking. I was fortunate enough to meet a number of academics (at parenting groups) with whom I could bounce ideas off. I have very fond memories, for example, of talking about transcription coding with my friend Dr Abigail Schoneboom (The University of York) while supervising our children from her kitchen, and pushing buggies around the park with Katherine Jackson (a research fellow at Newcastle University) while we talked about ethnographic fieldwork. Even now, doing the school run with my older son, I find great support from the five or so mums at the school gate who work at Newcastle and Northumbria universities (in various faculties), who seem eager to advise on how best to further my career and contend with these last days before thesis submission. Although I was lucky enough to find good support for this study through these informal academic networks, I feel my story also highlights how postgraduate parents are at risk of being isolated from the research community, and as such I would urge universities to better support their student parents.

Parenthood has at times truly hindered progress on this project; there have been times of sleep deprivation, illness, family events, and the daily grind of household chores which consistently seemed to assume priority. Yet

parenthood has also helped enculture me in this topic, allowing me, as England (1994) might argue, to add a human dimension to my research. I feel that this project has developed and grown up with me, I started it as a young child-free woman and I end it now as a mother of nearly three. Essentially though the relational, problematised or forced reconceptualisation of the self (Coffey: 1999) ends there, as I also appreciate how my biography differs from the project. The study explores the junction between migration and parenthood, a point in my own biography which never met. Although this project was conceived through my own experiences then, it has in essence been the opportunity to study an intersection removed from my own experience that has sustained my interest for so long.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Project aims and key arguments

It is argued in this project that post accession Polish migration has been largely dominated by an economic rationalist scholarship, which works with the intention of predicting policy outcomes and labour trends. This literature has cast Polish migrants, and European migration more generally, as cheap labour (Dúvell: 2006, Drinkwater et al.: 2006, Pollard et al.: 2008), often referring to European migrants as 'seasonal' and 'temporary' 'migrant workers' with reference to previous labour force trends (Romaniszyn: 1996 and Dúvell: 2004). This study takes particular interest in Okólski's description of Polish migration as 'incomplete migration' (2001) asking where Polish migrant families might fit into or undermine this typology. Likewise this project questions the relevance of the 'stay or return' dichotomy in Polish migration literature (Drinkwater et al.: 2006) which offers similar predications about Polish migrants' 'temporariness'. This study therefore aims to bridge gaps in migration literature which has tended to treat family migration and temporary migration as mutually exclusive.

Although research on the transnational family is expected to meet this intersection, currently literature tends to consider the effects of migration on sending countries alone, so for example the sending of remittances (Stark and Lucas: 1998, Cohen: 2005), chain migration (Lazidaris and Romaniszyn: 1998), and the effect on those left to care for children left behind (Parreñas: 2005). As Zentgraf & Chinchilla (2012) argue, this concern with the effects on sending countries has framed migrant parents in a dialogue of abandonment. This study attempts to override the stereotype of migrant parents as deserters of the family by highlighting how decisions about family migration, particularly decisions to endure periods of separation, are often very conditional and not devoid of emotional deliberation. This study does not deny that there are some economic motivators behind Polish migration, but questions where social, cultural and personal ambitions also fit within the migration process.

This study makes a timely contribution to the 'emotional turn' beginning to permeate in migration research (Mai and King: 2009). Work on the social and

personal circumstances of Polish migrants is starting to emerge in the literary field (Fabiszak: 2010 and Parutis: 2013) but so far work on Polish migrant families (Ryan et al.: 2009 and White: 2011a) has concentrated on social and personal networks rather than the decision making process. The personal and emotional worlds of migrant parents have largely been forgotten with migrant parents typically portrayed homogenously as determined and self sacrificing (Pessar: 1994, Waters: 2006). This assumption is now repeated in Polish migration literature (Rodríguez Lopez: 2010, White: 2010) with scholars concentrating on Polish migrant parents as having high levels of educational and cultural capital, which is seen as awarding unfettered access and choice, particularly over aspects of identity, so casting them as motivated and driven. This project offers a more holistic approach to the study of Polish migrant parents, showing how they navigate the unplanned as well as the planned, and so questioning the extent to which they hold agency.

The field of social identities in Polish migration research is growing in popularity (Ryan: 2010a, Rabikowska: 2010 and Kempny: 2010). This is perhaps understandable as there remains a window of opportunity open from which to analyse Polish social identity while a post socialist transitional dynamic is still apparent in Polish life (Stenning: 2005 and Stenning and Hörschelmann: 2008). The literary field on social identity is currently meeting some interesting intersections, so for example the historical and generational identities in Polish migration (Burrell: 2006bc, 2011a, 2011b) sit aside work on migrant mobilities and postmodernities (Krings et al.: 2013). This study takes particular interest in Garapich's (2008) reading of Polish migrant social identity as multilayered, though it is argued Garapich's response still neglects ties of family. In Polish migration research there have been contributions to this field of social identity from a translocal perspective (Kempny: 2010 and White: 2011a), from a specific gender perspective (Datta: 2009a and Siara: 2009), and looking at the practice of social identity in the everyday (Rabikowska: 2010 and Ryan: 2010). This study steps into this intersection placed between all three, addressing migrant identity formation from a spatial, gendered and everyday perspective.

With the exception of work from White and Ryan (2008), Ryan et al. (2009a) and White (2011a), this project finds research on the lives of Polish migrants which put women and families at the forefront of the research, largely reliant on scholarship conducted on pre accession Polish migration to the UK (Winslow: 1999, Nocon: 1996 and Burrell: 2002). The economic agenda in Polish migration studies can again be seen as giving little voice to issues of care, parenting practice and family, but where such studies do exist (Hardy: 2009, Stenning: 2010) focus has stayed with the domestic sphere in Poland rather than looking at the composition of the Polish migrant household. This is an exciting and appropriate time to redress this departure, with models of family life in Poland (Domański: 1995, Goodwyn and Emelyanova: 1995, Ornacka and Szczepaniak-Wiecha: 2005 and Titkow and Duch: 2004) in conflict. By giving attention to the dynamics of Polish migrant households this study offers valuable insight into changing generational values which may be indicative of Polish family life more broadly. The project helps to update the gendered perspective on female Polish migration set out in pre accession accounts (Morokvašić: 1984, Lutz: 2003), which framed Polish women as lone workers effectively being transnational 'commuters' shunting back and forth to their families. By taking a relational rather than a reductionist perspective on gender this study aims to provide insight into the dynamics of Polish migrant parents' decision making and livelihood negotiations, examining gender roles in the Polish migrant household, with particular concern for patterns of work and childcare.

This study locates Polish migration in the regional scale, a scale largely neglected, according to Stenning and Dawley (2009), in migration literature. This neglect of the spatial conditions of Polish migration can be seen with particular reference to Polish migrants identity and cultural preferences (Drinkwater et al.:2006 and Rodriguez Lopez: 2010) wherein there is little consideration given to the geography of research location. With the exception of the work of McDowell (2005), Eastern European migration scholarship has generally been more concerned with migrants attachments' to people over place (particularly in the sense of support networks, White and Ryan: 2008).

Taking leave of Tuan's (1976) notion of having levels of acquaintance to place, and Pascual-de-Sans (2004)'s work on place making in migrants' life histories, this study aims to show how integral attachments to place are in prolonging or ending migration. Situating this study in the North East of England positions it as a counter study to those contemporary micro structural studies on Polish migrant families based in the South of England (White and Ryan: 2008 and Ryan et al.: 2009). The North East also presents an interesting case study from which to view migration with regard to its viability and history as a host region.

As Polish migration is a significant and new dynamic in the North East population, the study intends to make certain policy recommendations to help ensure that the needs of this fast changing population dynamic are met. These recommendations may be of interest to policy makers more broadly, as herein is a study concentrating on a minority group with legal status and entitlement to resources, and whose number has dramatically risen this decade. The Polish migrant population in the UK rose following Poland's accession to the EU in May 2004, subsequently placing Polish migrants as Britain's second largest ethnic population. According to Pollard et al. (2008) (who based their findings on the Labour Force Survey) there were approximately 447,000 Poles in UK in 2007. Despite these numbers there has been limited research conducted on Polish migrants' experiences of welfare provision. Those studies which do exist report to Polish migrants experiencing specific difficulties in terms of access to resources (Metcalf and Rolfe: 2009 and Hudson et al.: 2010). More importantly, studies on Polish migrants' use of healthcare services (Bray et al.: 2010) and Domaszek et al.: 2007), report a worrying underuse of provision. This study offers insight into the use of second language provision, education, maternity provision (including relationships with health visitors) and use of parent and child welfare services. A number of cultural observations are also made in order to highlight where advice and policy might be made clearer. It is hoped that by going beyond the remit of the stereotyped 'Polish migrant worker' and viewing migration in terms of family units, this study will urge policy makers to treat Polish migrants not as lone visitors to the region, but as family units.

1.2 Research Questions

Building on these debates, this thesis seeks to explore the following questions:

What are the decision making practices of Polish migrant parents?

To what extent do Polish migrant parents have agency in livelihood and identity construction?

What do Polish migrant parents' social identities indicate about their 'stay or return'?

What are the gendered, ethnic and spatial dynamics of Polish family migration?

Can Polish family migration be described as 'temporary'?

1.3 Conceptual framework

This study proposes a move away from the analytical models used to investigate the field in the past, namely economic rationalism, transnationalism/localism and social network theory and concentrates instead on 'transition' as the thread of analysis. The notion of 'liminality' used by Turner (1987), who was influenced by the anthropological work of van Gennep (1908), is used to define what is meant by 'transition'. Turner proposed that life falls into 'in between phases' where people experience being 'betwixt and between'. As such this study essentially seeks to explore the nature of this experience in the context of Polish migration. 'Transition' is an extremely undervalued concept in migrant parent research, surprising given that the work of McMahon (1995) and Miller (2007)'s shows how integral liminal phases are in framing the passage of parenthood. The concept of transition is also very relevant to the field, as migrant parents are interesting examples of being 'betwixt and between' across competing transitions, namely migration and parenthood in unison. The concept of transition also helps to highlight how evolutionary the process of migration is, a perception of migration supported by relational scholars such as McDowell

(2004a), and falling away from the more static representation of 'the migrant worker' championed by economic rationalism. What is also arguably missing from previous readings of Polish migrant families is an appreciation of the greyness of migrant life. Previous scholarship has been very focussed on the structured events in the lives of migrants, such as work, household and social networks, while looking at 'transition' anticipates overlaps and comparisons across a phase of time. As such this study shows how the lives of Polish migrants are messy and an entanglement of circumstances both planned and unplanned, a depiction of Polish migration rarely explored before.

Transition is therefore the anchor for the conceptual framework of this study. As my final mind map endeavours to show (see appendix ix), informants in this study also faced a number of personal variables such as work, social networks and family relationships alongside their experiences of interactions, routines, and return visits to Poland for example, which informed their transitions. The units of investigation in the study were outputs such as emotions, strategies (or lack thereof), decisions, aspirations, memories, and the way informants presented themselves in narratives. These units of analysis allow me to offer insight into the varied voices and identities of Polish migrant parents today. Once again, this pluralistic representation of Polish family life is largely absent in previous research, with little given over to the various compositions of modern day Polish migrant families, such as lone parents (the exception being White (2009ab)) and mixed heritage families. While my final visualisation of the conceptual framework of this project (see appendix ix) recognised certain conceptual overlaps, I also anticipated that linkages would not be exhaustive. In this sense I imagined that the left and right of the page would almost wrap around on itself, so that 'emotions' and 'expectations' on the peripheries of the page linked, and thus the entire framework was imagined to be in a constant state of spin, representing the 'ever changing' nature of migrants' lives.

With the exception of Svašek (2009), few scholars have attempted to address Polish migration using units of analysis such as emotions before. Svašek's work has left scope for this study, in that she frames her research findings specifically

to the location in which the her study is carried out, Northern Ireland, her work concentrates mainly on the emotions of kinship, and her foremost concern is to draw comparisons between Lithuanian and Polish migrant experiences. Coming from the perspective of social interactionism McDowell (2003a) looked at the emotions of work and place for Latvian migrants, a study yet to be replicated in the context of Polish migration. By adopting a similar feminist perspective to McDowell, allowing my research to be highly reflexive and relying where possible on intuitive analysis of the data, this study throws light onto the inconsistencies and intimacies of migrant lives, a theme largely neglected in previous research.

1.4 Thesis Outline

Chapter two concerns the study's research methodology. This chapter offers explanation of how the theoretical framework, sample, and research methodology for the project were decided, justifying and evaluating the strength and appropriateness of the chosen research method. Reflection is drawn on the use of second language learning in research practice, arguing that the period of language training involved in this study offered a valuable contribution to fieldwork. This chapter also reflects on issues of reflexivity, reciprocity, self-disclosure which arose during research and the 'befriending' of informants following interviews. Transcription and data analysis techniques are also discussed, as is the planning and writing up of the study. This chapter includes discussion on the theoretical perspective used in the study.

Chapter three finds migration understood as an ongoing process, a series of events and decisions which leave Polish migrant parents constantly reviewing and reconstructing narratives of the past and present and their future plans. Key aspects of the 'migration process' are discussed in the chapter including decisions to migrate, expectations about work and lifestyle, periods of family separation and reunion, and the circumstances of migration destination. Parallels are drawn between those who were already parents on their arrival in

the UK and those who became parents following migration. The dynamic between 'self' and 'family' is also considered, as are the gendered dynamics of decision making. Chapter one also gives regard to regional scale in questions about work and agency. Moreover this chapter will serve to introduce the reader to informants' life histories, providing biographical context for the chapters ahead.

Chapter four focuses on Polish migrants' reflections on their recent transition into parenthood looking particularly at reflections on pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period. The chapter takes a relational view of gender in an attempt to bring the voice of migrant fathers in from the peripheries of gendered migration scholarship. The reprioritising of life after becoming parents is found to be a complicated and emotive process. Changing relationships with extended family are explored, as are questions about generation, aspiration and continuing political and social transition in Poland. Polish migrant parents use their entry into parenthood as a way to redefine and realign their social identities and consider their parental responsibilities alongside their personal desires. This chapter also offers insight into how Polish migrants use maternity entitlement and provisions.

Chapter five considers Polish migrant parents' negotiation of livelihood practices. The chapter finds Polish migrant parents making decisions about welfare provision, education and language learning in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for themselves and their children. The chapter examines how intra-familial relationships are reconstructed as Polish migrant parents utilise virtual communications and organise care provision for their children. The experiences of Polish migrant lone parents are also given light, with facets of their livelihood differing from those in Polish migrant parenting couples. The gender dynamics of Polish migrant household organisation is also considered, with migration being seen as a catalyst for change.

Chapter six addresses Polish migrant parents' constructions of identity, exposing a disjuncture between identities parents perceive for themselves and

those they perceive of their children. Through use of social identity theory informants' construction of identities are explored. By taking a postmodern perception of reality where multiple identities are possible, the chapter addresses the generational, national, ethnic, aspirational, transnational, translocal and gendered identities of Polish migrant parents. These identities are found to be managed against a backdrop of familial relationships, wherein parents acts as intentional and unconscious agents of cultural reproduction. The chapter also finds a number of gendered differences between the way Polish migrants construct identities and subsequent patterns of social network building.

The thesis conclusion returns to the original research questions drawing arguments together on the decision making practices of Polish migrant parents, and extent to which Polish migrant parents had agency in livelihood and identity constructions. Also discussed is the extent to which Polish migrant parents' construction of social identities inform their decisions to 'stay or return', as are the gendered, ethnic and spatial dynamics of Polish family migration. The chapter concludes with an appraisal of whether Polish family migration can be termed 'temporary migration'. Possibilities for further research inquiry are offered, as is a summary of the key contributions made by this study.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter begins with reflection on my personal experiences of using a second language in research as chronologically a period of language training defined and contextualised the start of this study. Furthermore I feel this personal reflection offers a contribution to the broader epistemological debate about the value of learning a second language for the purposes of research. The chapter then goes on to argue that although my grasp of Polish language was by no means 'fluent', language training proved extremely valuable to the research process as it offered a route of access to my research population, aided participant recruitment, and was a way to display cultural knowledge and commitment to the research field. This chapter then reflects on decisions about the sample frame, recruitment, and the research methodology used in this study, discussing how the research method and technique developed and adjusted accordingly. This chapter reflects on issues about reflexivity, reciprocity and self-disclosure, and the 'befriending' of informants following interview. The research process post data-gathering is also explored, with a reflection on the transcription and data analysis techniques applied, and the planning and writing up of this project. The chapter concludes with clarification on the theoretical perspective used in this study.

2.1 Learning a second language for research

The epistemological debate about learning a second language for research purposes (see for instance, Temple and Young: 2004), is of great interest to me, as my research award included a year of Polish language training. I think I was sceptical about the value of language training at first but I have spoken at academic conferences regarding my experiences since, and I fully endorse the importance of language based area research now. My initial scepticism was rooted in my struggle with learning Polish; despite having taught English as a foreign language, I naively assumed that I might reach 'translation competency'

(Spradley: 1979), a point at which the researcher has the ability to translate the meanings of one culture into a form that is appropriate in another culture, within the year. As such I imagined myself conducting interviews in Polish and having a full bibliography in Polish by the end of this study. I realise now that this was a wildly unrealistic expectation, and I was pleased to complete my language training with a distinction: this equated to the ability to converse in simple sentences, skim read newspaper articles understanding the gist of arguments, and being able to understand about thirty percent of a formal conversation at normal speed. In hindsight I think that even if I had reached a level of translation competency, communicating in another language for the purpose of research, as O'Reilly (2005) argues, requires understanding of the subtle differences in dialect, having a grasp of colloquialisms, slang terminology, and knowledge about when to use polite or a casual tone (2005, p.26), language skills which take years to master.

2.1.1 Polish as a route of access

Despite not having the language competency to use Polish in interviews, or so I felt, I found that my efforts to learn Polish had been far from futile. Learning Polish gave me a route of access in to my research field. My language tutor at Glasgow had advised me to find ways to keep up with Polish language on finishing the diploma, warning me 'if you don't use it, you will lose it'. Heeding this advice I volunteered with '2B North East Polish Magazine' after moving to Newcastle in September 2008. '2B' produced a bi-monthly magazine that was run by and written for Polish migrants. I originally took on the role of writing a short English summary of the magazine, and then assumed the position of 'co-English editor' following the re-launch of the magazine as a glossy monthly with a readership of about a 1000, and online subscription of a few hundred more, a few months after. Writing for '2B' helped me improve my translation skills, but more importantly, brought me into regular contact with so called 'gate keepers of the community', as many of the volunteers at the magazine had affiliations with other 'Polish community' organisations. In turn they helped me recruit for interviews as the editorial board offered free advertising space and championed

my research. My association with the magazine helped me become a familiar, and to an extent, 'trusted' member of the organised face of the Polish community. Being a member of '2B' literally gave me a membership card; I showed this to get discount in 'Polish places' such as the Polish shops and restaurant in Newcastle, but more importantly it was useful in convincing 'Polish places' to display and distribute my research recruitment posters. Thanks to my voluntary work at '2B' I was then invited to 'Polish community' events and I was included in formal and informal community meetings. Attendance at these events kept me aware of 'Polish community' politics and arising concerns.

Again I should stress that although my language competency was not particularly good (I am ashamed to say that the team at 2B often conducted editorial meetings in English so I could understand), simply being able to demonstrate a willingness to help created a situation of reciprocity. At times, I admit, this relationship was not without complication, particularly in terms of issues of representation and voice. Occasionally, for example, I found myself asked to 'speak' on behalf of the 'Polish community'. Following the death of president Lech Kaczynski (April 2010), for instance, I was asked to write a public announcement for the local press telling people where to locate a book of condolences. Ironically it was my position as a native English speaker that local Polish organisations found valuable and not my ability (or lack thereof) in Polish. Temple and Young (2004, p.166), note that 'for people who do not speak the dominant language in a country, the idea that language is power is easy to understand. If you cannot give voice to your needs you become dependent on those who can speak the relevant language to speak for you.' Those at the organisational face of the 'Polish community' generally spoke excellent English and had good levels of cultural and educational capital. However the group was very pedantic about having a professional and perfected standard of written English in public issue, which is where I was able to help. Unable to preserve the authentic migrant voice directly (by not quoting informants using their native tongue for example), I hoped to write my research up in such a way that informants would find it easy to check that I had given them a fair and compassionate portrayal of their experiences. As Alcoff (1991) shows,

researchers claiming to 'speak for' or about certain minority groups are entangled in epistemological questions about cultural and political representation. She feels that if 'outsider' researchers like myself, shy away from studying and thus representing minority groups they are neglecting their political responsibilities (Alcoff: 1991, p.8).

The language power dynamic between myself and 'the Polish community', because of my attempts to learn Polish, was not one sided though, as they were in a position where they could help me as much as I could "help" them. On reflection now, questions of reciprocity in this relationship have become somewhat erroneous, as over the five years that I have worked for '2B' (made up of essentially the same core 6-8 members) our friendships have grown and there is less of a question about the 'why we help'. My friends at '2B' threw me a surprise baby shower in 2011, an organised event in a ceramics café. This illustrates I feel, that increasingly there are no underlying motives about being part of the group, as this is a friendship, a support network that helps regardless.

2.1.2 Using Polish in project recruitment

Although I was not as competent in Polish as I had imagined, I was not afraid to use my limited Polish for the purpose of fieldwork. I created publicity posters in Polish to recruit for the project (see appendix iv) and on this occasion I had a friend correct my errors to make the posters as readable as possible. I always followed up leads for potential participation with emails in English and Polish. Informants often reported their delight at receiving these emails (I spent hours writing them, making them as personal and approachable as possible). While never deliberate, the mistakes I made in written Polish correspondence seemed to help put informants at ease prior to the interview, as they after all, were experiencing the same challenge of acquiring a second language. I also felt that it was polite to begin interviews with some simple lines of Polish, asking about the weather and ages of children for example. This symbolic gesture I feel, helped shift the power dynamics of the interview, as essentially I too was in the

position of being a 'migrant other'. Informants often physically relaxed, and seemed intrigued by my attempts to speak their language. Informants talked about pitying me, empathising with me, and respecting me for trying to learn Polish. Informants were commonly amused by my mistakes, which helped me become endearing to them, and created an atmosphere of trust. Admittedly though, my use of Polish sometimes distracted informants from the interview as they were very concerned with correcting my errors. To rectify this I tried to position them as 'informant' rather than teacher; rather than going back to my mistakes I tried to move the interviews on.

After the first wave of recruitment, I decided to set up a blog about my research, partly in English and partly in Polish. The original purpose of the blog was for publicity, hoping to drum up more participation, and partly to provide information, as I was frequently being contacted following interview for advice. The fact that informants continued to return to me for advice speaks I think, of the lack of coherent information sources available to them, and as such policy provision might be made to address this. To some of these informants I acted, as Oakley (1981) found, as a point of information concerning issues of motherhood. Three of my informants for example, have asked me about such topics as childcare recommendations, school applications, child tax credits, and about music and social groups for children. In response I turned my research recruitment blog into a more informative local interest guide, intending this as a way to 'give back' something useful to Poles resident in the North East. I felt, and still feel, a tremendous sense of gratitude for all the help I received, in response to this I hope my blog might go some small way to readdress the lack of information available to Polish migrant families. Rather than having my blog proofread, I chose to leave my language errors for public display. Although it might be suggested that this compromises the credibility and professionalism of my work, I was keen to invite a human, fallible, face to my research. I gained one participant thanks directly to the blog, and as such this method of address worked, in that my informant replied: *'Rachel-I think you try hard to learn my language so I want to help you. I like to read your Polish. It makes me laugh. You try very hard'*. I wonder on reflection though, whether a lack of proofreading

created a higher rate on nonparticipation. I also wonder whether offering myself as this novelty, a British woman trying to learn Polish (quite hopelessly), would be both sustainable and credible as a research image in the event of further study in this same research field.

2.1.3 Language learning and cultural knowledge

I would also argue that the process of language learning itself was invaluable, as it gave me some explicit cultural knowledge (Spradley: 1979) which supported the elicitation of data. Thanks to learning basic vocabulary about education for example, I knew roughly when and how children in Poland were expected to move through education sectors. This cultural knowledge aided the flow of conversations, meaning interview time could be spent on exposition rather than explanation. In a way this allowed interviews to be more personable too, as I was confident in offering sound inferences. I found exchanges about Polish popular culture worked well as 'icebreakers' with male informants in particular; female informants were quicker to break into 'baby chat' welcoming comparisons with their own children. Saying this, I found all informants delighted in being asked about the popular Polish soap opera 'M jak miłość' (2000-), and I frequently used comments about the show to draw informants away from asking me questions, and into the substance of interviews. Interestingly, informants reported feeling that my efforts in learning Polish epitomised my commitment to and interest in my research. As such I think that learning Polish made me seem more genuine as a researcher, showing conviction to my cause. The same might be said of my travels in Poland, as again explicit cultural knowledge enabled me to solicit data without going through lengthy explanations. Informants from Eastern Poland, where British tourism is much less common, were especially delighted when I made observation on their home town. One informant was so thrilled he went out of his way help in further recruitment for the study. Again I think that learning Polish initiated situations of reciprocity.

2.1.4 Conducting interviews in English

I was reluctant to take a translator into my interviews as in 2007 I had been fortunate enough to sit in on some interviews with Polish migrants conducted by Dr Birgit Jentsch, a senior researcher at The National Centre of Migration Studies, who was working on behalf of the research consultancy Hall Aitken on a project about 'migrant workers' commissioned by the Scottish Government. This valuable experience helped me recognise that a structured line of inquiry and the presence of a translator made for very formal interviews. I aimed to take a more qualitative approach to my research and looked for more expressive and personalised line of inquiry which might elicit something of the emotional geographies of migration. Informants were generally very eager to practice their English with me, and I found, very sadly, that my southern English accent was much favoured by informants compared to the local dialect. Informants often told me they were pleased I was "easy to understand", and then digressed into stories about encounters with British regional accents. Like I say, I found this observation very sad as I personally value local accents and am very proud to have children who are starting to speak with this wonderful regional dialect.

After my introductory attempts at Polish in interviews, informants always insisted on speaking in English during the interview therein. This was largely because it was always clear that my Polish was weaker than informants' command of English. In some interviews I feel that greater intimacy might have been achieved, particularly on the subject of birth and pregnancy, if discussions had been conducted in Polish. However, these more intimate discussions were not planned as such but more evolved spontaneously in the course of conversations. In hindsight I should have familiarised myself with sufficient Polish medical related vocabulary, as informants sometimes struggled to find the correct terminology to express themselves in these discussions, resulting in them losing their trains of thought. So for example in an interview with one Polish father he was enthusiastically describing difficulties his wife had in her labour but was held up by having to communicate the action for an episiotomy. The situation could have caused embarrassment for the informant but thankfully

the communication difficulty was met with great humour instead. In other interviews speaking in English allowed informants privacy. On two occasions for instance, Polish grandmothers had been asked to take charge of children while the interview was in progress. In both cases Polish grandmothers did not speak English and their daughters seemed to revel in disclosing personal feelings about their mothers behind the privacy of English. On reflection though, this also caused an 'ethical delimitation' in that essentially we were talking about the grandmothers 'behind their backs', a scenario I found quite uncomfortable. After all, as Temple and Young (2004) state, translation should at least be a 'practical imperative' for researchers who are not fluent in their subject's native tongue, and at most it should be used to safeguard 'the voice of interviewee' (2004, p.165).

2.2 Participation and Recruitment

On reflection, I did not give enough thought to how I might introduce myself as a researcher. My recruitment poster featured a small photo of myself with my baby, an image I repeated on my research blog and I had not really considered what this might signify. Only once fieldwork was underway did I realise how instrumental the recruitment phase had been in influencing how those who are to be researched define the research (Burgess: 1990). What I had essentially done is offer my informants the dual-identity of researcher-parent. To justify my carelessness here, I think my dual identity was mainly passed on to informants through word of mouth anyway, as few informants reported having seen recruitment posters and my blog prior to interview, even though recruitment posters were well distributed across Polish migrant media, in Polish shops and restaurants, and in Post Office windows across Newcastle, Sunderland and Gateshead. It was telling I think, that at the end of one interview, my informant phoned her friend to ask if she wanted to take part in my study too, and although my aural comprehension of Polish was weak, I understood that she was telling her friend '*the lady wants to interview you, and she's okay, she's a mother too*'. Although I suspect informants participated in my study for all the reasons outlined by Clark (2010), these being subjective interest, curiosity,

enjoyment, individual empowerment, introspective interest, social comparison, therapeutic interest, material interest and economic interest (Clark: 2010, p.404), social comparison and curiosity I feel, were therefore the main motivators of participation.

Unlike Lavis (2010) I did not find the adoption and performance of a multiple researcher identity created tension for informants (Lavis: 2010, p.360); in fact I found the inverse, as I felt initial introductions were more natural, being full of curiosity and inquisitiveness on both sides because of my position as researcher-parent. Earle (2003), who researched breastfeeding women, fears that feminist research incorrectly privileges 'sameness' in the researcher informant dynamic. While I do not propose that my research is necessarily improved because of my position as a researcher – parent here, I do feel that it undoubtedly helped to initiate digressions into birth and pregnancy stories. I found the performance of these multiple researcher identities useful in that it helped naturalise initial introductions and encourage a conversational style of interview. Being a parent and researcher helped validate why I would be interested in this subject, particularly useful in light of the natural suspicion Polish migrants often take toward figures of authority, a cultural cast-off from life under communism. A disadvantage of having this researcher-parent identity were used by my informants in phrases like 'you know how it is Rachel', which implied that I had assumed knowledge about informants experiences. I tried to meet this phrase with follow up questions in order to further explanation.

I originally hoped to take a non direct approach to recruitment, as I felt this would be more ethically sound compared with offering informants incentives. I looked on web forums and social networking sites such as 'Nasza Klasa' to see how Poles were being approached by fellow researchers. Negotiating the etiquette behind how to approach Polish migrants seemed very important, as web users were talking about why research was being undertaken, whom by and what the purpose of this research was. There was much cynicism about research, and Soviet era suspicion about official research and researchers still seemed to prevail. A colleague in my department had received criticism on the

local Polnews web forum for offering a 'prize draw' incentive to take part in her study. Given that we were using the same channels of recruitment, and because I wanted to avoid 'the Polish community' feeling research saturated, I was especially careful about considering the protocol of 'the incentive'. Thanks to the ESRC's research training grant scheme I was able to access funds to offer participants a £25 shopping centre voucher. Again using my experience of sitting in on Birgit Jentsch's interviews in 2007, I learnt that putting the voucher in a sealed envelope made it clear to informants that this was a 'thank you' for their time, not payment for their thoughts, so I adopted the same practice. I accompanied the voucher with a thank you card which I wrote in Polish. If I was invited to informants' homes I always brought flowers, customary practice in Poland.

I feel that in hindsight, my fears about research saturation were unwarranted and I should have been less passive in recruitment for the project. I was given several mobile numbers for possible leads during the course of fieldwork for example, and while I left answer-phone messages I did not call back for fear of being seen as too pushy. As such I feel I lost valuable time at this stage of the research concentrating on indirect recruitment methods, such as the blog, which failed to move recruitment on quickly. Eventually, as recruitment was so slow, I relied on 'opportunistic sampling' techniques (Elam et al.: 2003), namely snowballing, to find my final participants. Snowballing, I feel, explains the slightly disproportional number of Polish migrant lone parents in the study (7 in an overall sample of 21), as lone parents tended to offer other lone parents friends as leads. This study makes no claims to be representative of the 'Polish migrant parent community' at large, as like in Ryan's (2007) study on Polish families, ensuring diversity of the study population, including a range of ages, class backgrounds, and family circumstances, was felt paramount (see appendixviii). Non-participation in the study following initial contact happened on three counts; all incidents involved candidates withdrawing due to work or childcare commitments. Scheduling interviews proved very hard, as many of the informants worked on an ad hoc basis or carried out shift work, and our childcare arrangements (both mine and my informants') often clashed. For the

majority of interviews then, it was mutually agreed that we would simply bring children along, as there was often no better alternative.

2.3 Interviewing Polish migrant parents

Based on expectations about communication difficulties (with either informants or I speaking in non-native language) I initially decided that a semi structured approach to interviews would be the most appropriate form of data capture for this project. Semi structured interviews seemed ideal in that questions were specified, but there was chance to ask for clarification and elaboration on answers given (May: 1997, p.111). I anticipated that recruitment for interviews might be difficult, based on the experiences of my postgraduate peers; as such I imagined having a sample of about 15-20 participants. Such a relatively small sample, I felt, needed to be delivered with utmost consistency, in order to cover the same material with a view to making generalisations. I imagined that interviews would take place over an hour and a half, so broke interview questions into three sections; family and household, questions about access and facilities, and questions about identity (see appendix vi), estimating 30 minutes for each. I thought like Stroh, that having an interview schedule would help me tame the 'messiness' and 'unpredictability' of the interview process (Stroh: 2000, p.27). One crucial 'mistake' I made in designing this semi structure interview in reflection, was rather than keeping contextual questions at the beginning of the interview, questions drew on aspects of informants' past, present and future experience throughout. As such I inadvertently found myself using a biographic model of interviewing.

Partly because of this biographic frame to questions, and partly because of good rapport, my first few interviews surprised me in that they were very relaxed, informal, and informants had been extremely willing to talk. Informants' command of English was much better than I had predicted too, and so I was finding semi structured interviewing quite restrictive as a result. While I had an interview guide sheet with me during interviews (one with detailed questions, one with just a few prompts, and another with a list of Polish vocabulary in the

event of comprehension difficulties) I found I was rarely referring to these sheets. As I had conducted pilot interviews with my friends to test my semi-structured approach, I had consequently memorised most of my research questions, and found myself able to make good mental notes on whether material had been covered. As such I allowed the interviews to move into a more conversational unstructured delivery. The resulting in-depth qualitative data elicited, pushed at themes not previously covered in Polish migration literature, so for example the emotions of separation and experiences of birth and pregnancy. I then took leave in developing my autobiographical approach to interviewing by looking at the life history interview technique used by Evergetti (2006) and Burrell (2006ab), wherein it seemed that offering informants uninterrupted storytelling' time to speak, yielded more emotional and personal narratives.

While I had initially planned to conduct semi-structured interviews then, I essentially left the interviewing process with 21 in-depth biographic interviews lasting between 1 hour 45minutes and 3hours in length. This decision to 'go with the flow' in terms of the interviewing, did indeed leave a 'messiness' about interviews that I had originally hoped to have avoided, with interview data left in an array of 'fleeting emotions and protracted stories' (Smart: 2009, p.301). As Smart (2009) argues though, this type of data is the mark of in-depth interviewing and the substance of social science research, and I am pleased in retrospect that I allowed the interviews to develop in this way; the data captured, I feel, was rich, original and very interesting.

I took certain measures to protect mine and my informants' personal safety during interviews. Each interview began by reading through and signing a statement of informed consent. Informants were also offered confidentiality in the form of a pseudonym. The need to ensure that informants understood how I would use and disseminate the interview data was heightened in some ways, by using more open ended line of inquiry, because as Johnson (2001) points out, such in-depth interviewing methods leave the researcher (and informant to an extent) unable to anticipate the consequences of their probing (2001, p.15). In

terms of safety I also sought enhanced child disclosure prior to fieldwork in anticipation of interviewing with informants' children present. I also generally tried to suggest meeting informants in public spaces. I often suggested Newcastle city library café as a good meeting place, as it was bright, easily accessible, child friendly and had a number of private seating areas. On reflection interviewing in a public space had been fairly disadvantageous as there had been countless distractions and recordings were often hard to decipher involving lots of background noise. To my surprise informants constantly requested being interviewed in their own homes, and although I was reluctant to situate interviews in the home at first for reasons of personal safety, I now appreciate the advantages of this arrangement, and would certainly look to interview in this way again.

Interviewing in the home proved more practical and convenient. Once I had agreed to interview the informant in their home, scheduling an appointment was generally quite straightforward, as being parents informants seemed to feel more able and at ease in caring for their children in their home environment. Nap and feeding times were not interrupted for example, and there were plenty of toys at hand to limit children pestering. Interviewing at home also provided informants with better anonymity and privacy, and as such I found the home environment stimulated intimacy. Objects about the home also provided natural reference for discussion. Equally I found the home environment useful for cross referencing what informants told me, particularly in terms of how 'Polish' the home might be. Informants frequently offered to show me the contents of their kitchen cupboards for example, in order to demonstrate how 'Polish' (or otherwise) their daily cuisine might be deemed. Interestingly informants often asked to be interviewed in their home on the grounds that it would help me see what a 'typical Polish family home' was like. In reality I think informants were keen to evidence the 'success' of their migration based their living arrangements. I was often given tours of the home, and children were typically asked to bring certain indications of success from about the home to show me, such as their homework. Interviewing in the home threw some insight then, into informants' personal agendas and lifestyle values.

There were also a number of problems caused by interviewing in the home. Informed consent was sought from just one member of the household on behalf of all. Interestingly parents were often keen to have their children speak 'on record' during interviews, and I did use some of this valuable data about children's perspectives in this thesis. In hindsight I should have perhaps been more thorough in obtaining informed consent from all individuals 'on record'. Interviewing in homes also presented me with the unanticipated situation of interviewing husbands and wives together. While Rubin (1990) believes husbands and wives should be interviewed separately as they tend to discuss more freely when their partners are not present, she also found that, like me, interviewing husbands and wives together had the advantage of observing parental interaction (Rubin: 1990, p.40). I found that interviewing couples in their own home helped provide a snapshot on household gender dynamics, as disputes between men and women were telling in highlighting gender constructions of the migration. Interviewing in the home certainly gave me more access to male informants as on two occasions men were at home, recovering from shift work, and entered the interview out of curiosity.

2.4 Bringing in baby

I found that having offered dual identity as a researcher-parent during recruitment stage led to informants requesting that I brought my 'family' to interviews. Most informants asked me to bring along my baby, but on three occasions (wherein male informants had been my key contacts), I was also asked to bring along my husband too. I think word-of-mouth that I was happy to accommodate this arrangement might have encouraged this invitation, as was simple curiosity, and the desire to make 'being interviewed' entertainment and a memorable family event. To illustrate what I mean by this, one informant wrote an email to me requesting: *'please come as you, husband and children; it will be like a weekend playgroup at my house!* While I appreciate that interviewing in this manner might leave my research open to accusations of being too subjective, I would argue that I was in fact less intrusive as a researcher on account of this mode of data collection. Bringing my partner and baby to

interviews had many advantages. I felt that it was better for my own personal welfare and safety to have my partner present. My partner proved excellent at supporting the interview, remembering questions when I did not, making sure the tape was recording and that it was best placed for audibility, and keeping command of the baby so I could focus on the interview. He was also good at note taking and remembering the 'incidental' moments of interviews, such as body language. I also trusted that my husband would preserve confidentiality, and anticipated that he would be polite, helpful and warm in interviews, which in some ways proved more ideal than having to pay someone I did not know so well to be my research assistant.

I brought my son along to the vast majority of interviews, generally on request of the informant and sometimes because I had no other childcare provision, but always with the prior and informed consent of informants. Bringing along the baby forced me to be extremely well organised for interviews; I was well rehearsed and well equipped for a number of eventualities. Originally I was anxious that the baby might disrupt the interview, but after he proved a wonderful icebreaker in the first interview, helping introductions flow, my confidence in managing the arrangement grew. Having young children (either my child or the children of my informants), present at interviews seemed to draw the physical proximity of the interview closer, with informants often wanting to hold the baby or help with feeding. I found that my reaction was equally to help my informants with their children; I warmed food up, picked up crying babies, wiped noses and helped change nappies both during and after interviews. In hindsight I think these involuntary interactions with children helped ensure a relationship of trust and sharing with informants, and made for a constructive environment in which to solicit detail about experiences of parenting. The downside of having my son present (without husband to help) was that it was harder to concentrate on the non-verbal dimensions of the interview, such as hand gestures, and to always keep completely abreast of the questioning. Although having young children present did inevitably interrupt the flow of the conversation, I think as parents, my informants and I were used to this conversation dynamic anyway. Rather than being frustrating, pauses in the

conversation felt natural and actually provided opportune moments to collect our thoughts.

Informants often reacted to my position as researcher-parent with sympathy, curiosity and admiration, if I can use that word, in that they talked about being impressed that I could 'work' with my baby present. Informants were themselves very interested in how best to manage working life and parenthood, many of whom, as discussed in this thesis, took to practices of work sequencing in order to manage work and childcare. This contrasts with Crozier's (2003) research on ethnic minority parents in which she too assumed the identity of researcher-parent. She reported that her informants found little interest in 'her story', 'her space', and 'her voice' and felt that her self-disclosure had therefore been too premature (Crozier: 2003, p.88). The skill in self disclosure, I found, was disclosing enough to help informants feel that conversation was two-way, but at the same time keeping the focus of discussion on the informant. Crozier also reported that she did not feel comfortable in asking certain questions due to her researcher-parent identity, so personal details for example about income and the circumstances surrounding the lone parenting of children (Crozier: 2003, p.89). Again I felt comfortable in asking such questions, possibly because I was confident in asking informants for their discretion when I offered self-disclosure in return.

Interestingly I also found that parents with older children or more than one child frequently positioned me as a 'new mother', in that they offered me guidance and sympathy. I reacted to this advice with interest and gratitude, which again in hindsight, helped install the dynamic of 'informant as expert' in these interviews. The reaction of parents with multiple offspring and older children to my position as a researcher-parent was distinct from that of first time parents, who rarely took on this advisory capacity. Instead, fellow first time parents constantly drew age and developmental comparisons between our children. My own self disclosure (and I was careful to offer the majority of this input once the informant had talked about themselves for a good length of time), was obviously

an important factor in how subsequent friendships with informants formed, as was being at the same stage of life course I feel.

To put perspective on this notion of 'bringing in the baby' I should point out that at the time of the first interview my son was six months old, and toward the end of the interviewing period he was 18 months old. When I had a young baby to contend with, breastfeeding during interviews was sometimes necessary. A number of informants also breastfed their babies during the interview, and although I did not take official note of interviews in which breastfeeding occurred (as it was fairly unremarkable I felt, at the time) breastfeeding probably took place in seven interviews in total. I think breastfeeding deserves mention now, as on reflection it certainly helped illicit questions about breastfeeding experiences, often leading on to discussion about birth and pregnancy which I had not necessarily anticipated covering in the outset of the fieldwork. On several occasions the taboo that is sadly still associated with public breastfeeding in the UK, only hastened a sense of mutual alliance between the informant and I, I feel, as we helped each other find discreet places to feed, and screen each other with seating, for example.

In the latter stages of fieldwork I was pregnant with my second son. Pregnancy added a new dimension to interviewing. On one occasion it caused an interesting self-disclosure dilemma, in that I was very early into my pregnancy and so was keeping the pregnancy a secret. Polish hospitality however, generally requires guests to consume alcohol during their visit. I had obliged in trying homebrew during a couple of interviews, and informants at this interview were aware of this. Subsequently I had to manage the situation as politely as possible, while making decisions about self-disclosure spontaneously. Having a visible pregnancy bump caused great interest for informants and made for a good invitation into pregnancy related discussion too. Male informants seemed particularly at ease in talking to a pregnant woman about their wives birth experiences I found. My second pregnancy also happened to coincide with the second and third pregnancies of a number of my informants, and so again this gave us reason to build friendships.

2.5 Becoming parents

As I have suggested, the presence of birth and pregnancy stories in the data capture was at first quite unintentional, induced in part by me being pregnant, breastfeeding and having my baby present at interviews, but also possibly because twelve of the informants had very recent (within three years) experience of pregnancy and birth, and so in terms of life histories these experiences had immediacy. On reflection this response should have not been completely unexpected, as in her study on global care chains, D'Ottavio (2008) found Polish women extremely receptive to talking about aspects of mothering across place. The 'surprise' I think, was the level of personal detail informants were willing to disclose on record. This may have been facilitated by the fact that I was careful not to move off sensitive discussion subjects too quickly, allocating plenty of time to these digressions which helped to validate the topic further. I also offered informants confidentiality and anonymity (through the use of pseudonyms) which perhaps helped them feel secure in exposing personal detail.

On reflection I also recognise that for some of these informants, their social networks, thanks to migration, were still relatively small and this may have been one of the first times they had been asked to recall their pregnancy and birth experiences (in English at least). As Mahon-Daly and Andrews (2002) found in their participatory research with breastfeeding support groups, the sharing of personal experiences, especially when being discussed for the first time, was extremely productive in eliciting information. Mahon-Daly and Andrews (2001) also found, as did I, that informants seemed to feel empowered by the process of intimate recollection. Following interviews, some informants described enjoying the opportunity to reflect on their birth stories complaining that others did not have the time to listen (presumably they meant work colleagues, health care professionals, languages teachers - other possible situations where informants may have been asked to recall their birth stories by professionals). I feel that by engaging in 'active listening' (Holstein and Gubrium: 1995)

informants found offering their personal stories a cathartic process, as intimate exchanges were met and validated by further questions and disclosure.

I only became truly aware of the 'value' of these digressions in the research interviews during data analysis. In a way I felt compelled to dedicate space in this thesis to birth and pregnancy, as this was a subject that clearly interested informants; they were very animated on the subject and often steered conversation back to this theme from discussion elsewhere. As such I feel a sense of social duty as a researcher to give fair voice to these concerns, but I also feel that there is real scope to return to this particular area of the research in the future, as it was of such interest to informants.

2.6 Befriending

Following interviews I became friends with a number of my informants; these friendships were always unintentional and motivated only by a genuine interest and respect for those concerned. Following interviews with female informants who had a similar aged child to mine, there would often be a bout of natural curiosity, and these informants would generally suggest a second meet up. Six of the mothers I interviewed had a baby born within a few months, if not days, of my son, so our relationship was very much like any other mother I had met at playgroup or at a social event. We had essentially experienced pregnancy, birth and early motherhood at the same time and so looked for support, companionship, and further social comparison. I also sustained regular contact with three of the eight Polish fathers I interviewed based on our interests in Polish film and current affairs. A year on from the research I was in regular contact (via text or email) with 14 of the 20 families interviewed. From this number I became very firm friends with seven of the informants. This constituted visiting their houses, meeting at least every two months, attending their children's birthday parties, going on family outings together, meeting each other at the swimming pool, in the park, or at playgroups, or in cafes, and speaking regularly on the phone. Now, over two years on from our initial meeting, I consider four of my informants to be good friends.

I appreciate that 'befriending' raises concerns in the research community, in that it might have the propensity to breach anonymity and confidentiality agreements, and personal involvement with informants is seen to make writing-up research more difficult (Oakley: 1981), however, as Oakley also advocates, befriending it is 'ultimately unhelpful to avoid' (Oakley: 1981, p.42). According to England (1994), research is, after all, always personal, in that, 'the researcher cannot conveniently tuck away the personal behind the professional, because fieldwork *is* personal' (England: 1994, p.249). Alder and Alder ask whether knowing informants personally or professionally makes researchers adhere to increased obligations and a sense of duty, and so encouraging them to self-censor (Adler and Adler: 1993, p.255). Rather than self censoring I would suggest that my relationships with informants have helped to validate comments made in interview; these friendships have not, as yet, led me to discredit any aspects of interview, though they have given rise to contextual detail explaining why informants took specific lines of thinking at that time. I would also argue that friendships which evolved with informants only heightened my desire to present them in fair and reflexive light. Befriending did, as Reinharz (1992) also found, help maximise engagement with the field. Having access to the long term outcomes of Polish migrant parents' decisions was useful in order to highlight how their unfurling prosperities and opportunities differed. I would also justify the ensuing friendships I built with informants, on the grounds that they seemed more ethically appropriate than abandoning the research field immediately, in that I was able to follow up and check that informants had been comfortable in disclosing personal details, clarifying that my interest in their personal stories has been genuine. De Laine (2000) argues that 'the formation of friendships with subjects functions to balance the power differential between the researcher and subjects (De Laine: 2000, p.134), but in the case of this study I feel that the positionality between researcher and informants was naturally conducive to friendship, friendship had no balance of power differential to rectify. Befriending perhaps had a degree of inevitability on account of the interviewing method, given the intimacy of interviews, the good rapport, and the personal nature of disclosure from the start.

2.7 Transcription and Analysis

At the outset of the project I had intended to transcribe my interviews myself, having been concerned by the experience of Poland (2001) who found that his interviews had been 'tidied up' by the transcriber who thought his interviews 'would benefit from reading better' (Poland: 2001, p. 633). To ensure the best recall, I planned to transcribe each interview as soon after the event as possible. Gillham (2000) anticipates that an interview lasting 1 hour normally takes 10 hours to transcribe (2000, p.9), so in total this project required approximately 450 hours of transcription. Transcription of the first two interviews was slow as I procrastinated over the task, and there was soon a backlog of transcription to complete. By the time I started transcription again I was pregnant with my second son, and started to suffer from Carpal tunnel syndrome in my hands which made typing very painful. As I was anxious about sourcing my interviews out for third party transcription, my partner offered to transcribe: the arrangement worked well as he cost nothing, could be trusted in terms of keeping the data confidential, adhered to transcribing verbatim and understood how I wanted the transcription formatted and laid out. My partner had also attended some of the interviews, so recalled the non verbal interactions well, and kept the 'inaudible' to the bare minimum. We sat together in the evenings for the best part of a year, listening to the interviews aloud: he transcribed and I took notes. Every so often we would break to discuss the new data. The environment in which I was initially analysing the data could have been more discursive though perhaps, as my partner had no academic interest in the data, and although his observations were valid they had no social scientific basis. I fit this stage of the study into life as best I could though, as when I was heavily pregnant I was able to remain busy thanks to working at home and having my partner's support. We used my second maternity leave as time in which to complete the transcriptions; this helped keep on track with the project deadline.

I tried to be careful to not over-read 'parenthood' in the data analysis, as I was aware that taking inspiration for the study from my own experiences should not

compromise the integrity of informants' voices. So for example, I talked about feeling overwhelmed by parenthood during the project development, but I was aware that some informants shared this feeling, while others did not. Equally I recognised that I should be careful not to see 'parenthood' as all consuming (Rich: 1976). As such I tried to look on the data as having been captured during a liminal phase of parenting. Befriending informants also helped to highlight to me quite how fleeting some of the concerns and feelings of informants had been at time of interview, given that many of the informants felt differently two years on. As such I feel I was better able to approach the data realising that experiences of 'migrant parenthood' and 'parenthood' did exist independently, even though this study was interested in the intersection between the two. Paulina, for example, talked about attending a toddler group with her neighbours: *'I went there with all the people from here but then when I went there by myself they wouldn't speak to me'*. In isolation Paulina's comments might assume that she felt an 'outsider' at the playgroup as a migrant parent, but close and full analysis of the interview latterly revealed that her feelings were based on being the youngest mother in her social circle. Sometimes the distinction between new parent experiences and migrant parent experiences were integrated, so for example Krysia talked about suffering from postnatal depression, which she felt was caused by feelings of tiredness and exhaustion, her lack of job security, the breakdown of her relationship, and her feelings of isolation and loneliness having a lack of support network. In this scenario then, multiple identities (new parenthood, migrant parenthood and other life circumstances) interweaved. As such I tried to make note of any other variables to 'migrant parenthood' which might explain the data during write up.

Once the transcriptions were complete I used a theme-building approach to code the interview data, referring to several transcripts at the same time. Having used this technique I agree with Cope that it aided in 'seeing trends' (Cope: 2003, p.448), as I started to link interview themes together thanks to colour coding. I noticed certain colours (themes) beginning to dominate the transcripts, working across transcripts simultaneously rather than working them in isolation. To visualise how these themes might fit together I created a final mind-map for

the project. I am a huge fan of mind-mapping and used the approach at the end of every year of this project in order to show academic review panels where I felt my project was heading. I also used the three main areas of 'migrant parenthood' in my second year mind map (family, household and identity) to frame my interview guide anticipating that these would create three large chapters for my thesis. Having analysed the interviews inductively though, themes arising seemed to interlock on the mind map into four distinct sections, these being: informants' migration processes (with emphasis on work), informants' transitions into parenthood (with emphasis on birth, pregnancy), informants' livelihood negotiations (with emphasis on language, education and structure of households), and informants' social identities (with emphasis on local and national identities, and cultural comparisons between Poland and UK). These distinct sections of the mind map then became my four final chapter topics.

2.8 Planning and Writing-Up

Planning and structuring my work was something I struggled with as an undergraduate, so I appreciated the need for strong organisation at this level. I also knew that that I no longer had the luxury of having 8 hour writing up periods daily, where there would be time to think and develop through my work slowly in between cups of coffee and procrastination. As my day was often splintered into childcare commitments, I found 'thinking time' and 'writing time' were two separate entities. 'Thinking' often happened while doing something practical, like making the tea and playing with the children; I would leave myself post-it notes by the computer to remind myself of ideas. Writing time was snatched in 2 hour spaces in the evenings or 1 hour while the children napped for example, so having a thorough structure and plan to my thesis was essential in moving the project along, ticking off what was written and what was next systematically. As such I produced a detailed thesis plan, breaking each chapter into 7 or 8 sections and then each section was planned into paragraphs of 250-500 words. I modelled my sections on themes from the data, and extracts from each interview were copied and pasted into sections and then

broken into paragraphs as the project was written. I was wary about having 'extracted' sections of interview so early on in the writing up process, so continually listened to interview recordings in order to check that I maintained the meaning and context of extracts.

This systematic approach to the writing up worked well to a point. When reading back through the chapters I feel that they develop logically which I think is testament to having a good working plan. However, to the detriment of the study perhaps, I also separated periods of reading and writing, reading for chapters before I sat down to write rather than reading while chapters developed for example. This left my reading quite broad, and occasionally I had read material not necessarily directly relevant to furthering the project (symptomatic of lengthy research project too perhaps). Each chapter took roughly 4 months to draft in full. I was conscious of making my writing style accessible beyond my immediate academic peer group aiming for a readable and legible writing style in order to demonstrate transparency to my research group. The project also aimed to inform policy, with particular regard to the accessibility of services for migrant parents in this region, so making practical use out of the project enquiry. Once again having an accessible and straightforward writing style was anticipated but on reflection, this is something I have found difficult to master.

2.9 Theoretical perspective

As an undergraduate I enthusiastically described myself as a Marxist, and imagined I would always write and research from that perspective. My objection to the concept of the 'migrant worker' when I first approached the study again spoke of my Marxist leanings, as I aimed to refute the neo-liberalist agenda in migration literature. However, during the course of research, I found myself taking an increasingly more inductive stance on the data, seeing patterns and themes emerge which led me away from my own political convictions. In the fieldwork stage of this project, my research methodology developed quite organically into long in-depth biographic interviews supported by in- field observations made as a 'Polish community' volunteer. As such my research

embraced an ethnographic framework, which demanded that I was 'as open and honest about preconceptions as possible' (O'Reilly: 2005, p.6). I also brought this reflexivity into analysis of the data, seeing the empirical evidence as constructivist accounts of reality.

I would argue that this thesis adheres to a constructivist epistemology then, understanding the construction of reality as based on social interactions (Berger and Luckmann: 1967). Taking inspiration from Ryan's use of social identity theory in her study of Polish migration (2010), I too adopted this theoretical model to analyse my data, feeling that it allowed for a holistic explanation of how Polish migrants defined and categorised themselves and their children into social identities. In the discipline of psychology social identity theory evolved in response to social constructionism (Hogg and Abrams: 1988). Social identity theory is useful to migration scholars as it helps explain how people define and identify themselves as part of social groups. Hogg and Abrams (1988) believe individuals place themselves in social groups by a process of self categorisation, drawing contrasts of prestige and power against other groups. The founding fathers of social identity theory, Tajfel and Turner (1979), see these group identities as a source of self esteem and pride, whereby positive self-image depends on the group's continued positive status. As such, people understand the world in the form of 'in-groups' (us) and 'out-groups' (them) and rely on stereotypes of similarity and difference to continually recognise themselves as part of the 'in group' (Hogg and Abrams: 1988). Social stereotyping is an 'in-group' cognitive behaviour used to emphasise homogeneity (Oakes et al.: 1993). Application of social identity theory is in particular evidence in chapter six of this study, which explores how Polish migrant parents constructed and negotiated identity.

Using a constructivist epistemology to understand the research data in the context of the study at large, eluded to a number of gender differences in the way men and women approached the migration process, transition into parenthood, livelihood negotiations and construction of identity. My emphasis on these important gender differences in Polish parent migration takes this

study then, to a feminist perspective. It might also be suggested that the value I place on reflexivity in research is a typical facet of feminist research too (see for example Longhurst: 2008). I also feel that this study leans toward a postmodernist reading of migration, in that migrant narratives are argued to be ever-evolving, and emotions are seen as cyclical and constantly changing, leaving migration with indefinable end, and taking migration as a process. Saying this, negotiation of this 'state of migrancy' (Chambers: 1994) is seen as giving Polish migrants agency and a sense of stability over their migrations, so this state of being 'content at being temporary' becomes an 'end' in itself. As such, this study might be described as supporting a feminist (post) modernist perspective.

Chapter Three: The Migration Process

Introduction

Polish migrant parents see migration as an ongoing process, as a series of events and decisions which they constantly review and reconstruct. In this chapter, key aspects of the migration process are discussed, including decisions to migrate, expectations about work and lifestyle, periods of family separation and reunion, and the circumstances of migration destinations. Parallels are drawn between those who were already parents on their arrival in the UK (approximately half the sample), and those who became parents thereafter. Through analysis of Polish migration on the micro-structural scale of family, the economic rationalist framework, which has dominated scholarship on Polish migration in the past, is challenged. Polish migrants are found to consider the needs of all family members in migration decisions, seeing 'self' and 'family' as compatible and at the same time conflicting entities in this process. Informants compare the economic conditions in home and host country, but their decisions to migrate are essentially based on emotional, familial and personal motivations. Gendered dynamics inform these decisions, with Polish migrant women being found as active if not decisive players in the decision making process. The migration process is also found to be shaped by geographical contingencies, with regional scale instrumental in questions about work and agency. Polish migrants present as pragmatic, seeking to gain agency in all aspects of the migration process; their lives evolve however, between planned and unplanned events, making chance an important element of migration. Polish migrants are also optimistic and aspirational, their hopes and expectations about life in the host country, are found to collide with the hard realities of their situation. In varying degrees, informants imagined worlds and real life experiences support and contest one another then, leaving informants constantly evaluating and revising their plans, and hypothesising their futures. This chapter also serves to introduce the reader to informants' life histories, providing biographical context for the chapters ahead.

3.1 Literature Review: The Migration Process

3.1.1 Polish Migration

It would be wrong to suggest that literature on Polish migration has exclusively considered young, single and childfree Polish migrants, only this is, in the large part, where literature on Polish migration has focussed. Accounts of the post war Polish migration in the UK have centred on the militaristic content of Polish residency, seeing Polish migrants in terms of displacement and victimisation (Sword: 1996, Hope: 1998, and Stachura: 2004). Social and historical research on this migratory generation (Winslow: 1999, Nocon: 1996, and Burrell: 2002) did, however, capture something of the everyday lives of Polish migrants, and depicted the movement of Polish people as multifaceted, putting women and families at the forefront of the research. In its infancy this study took early leave of these studies, inspired not only by the humanistic framework from which migration was viewed but also by the in-depth qualitative life history research conducted. With the exception of these works of social history the exile and wartime Polish migration to the UK was mainly a review of political and military history, largely writing migrants, their families, their emotions and their everyday out of history completely.

Following the demise of state socialism in Poland, migration debate defined Polish migrant pathways politically, in terms of an East-West dichotomy (Miles and Kay: 1994, Górny and Ruspini: 2004) and economically, as a result of seasonal and temporary labour-force trends (Romaniszyn: 1996, Dúvell: 2004). Okólski's typology of 'incomplete migration' (2001) which supported the latter classification, cast Poles as short term migrants. Together with the concept of the liberal 'paradox' set by Glick Schiller and Wimmer (2003), which saw European migrants as having economic advantage over other migratory groups, Polish migration scholarship was dominated by the reading of Polish migrants as cheap labour supposedly easily integrated into the host society (Dúvell: 2006, Drinkwater et al.: 2006, Pollard et al.: 2008, Garapich: 2008). The domination of these two neoliberal concepts in the field of Polish migration studies reflects trends in migration literature at large, which has generally

followed an economic rationalist framework with the intention of predicting policy outcomes and labour trends in recent years.

3.1.2 The transnational family

This economic rationalist convergence in migration literature (as espoused by Castles and Millar: 1998, Hollifield: 1992) has favoured viewing European migration as mobile and temporary and thus explains a dearth in European family migration literature. Temporary migration is assumed to be an uncomfortable fit alongside family migration, as Western cultural connotations associate 'family' with 'stability', 'home' and 'belonging' while temporary migration is seen in binary opposition as being 'transient' and 'mobile'. As such this study seeks to show how 'family' and 'temporary' migration can be consistent, arguing that family, and the emotions and negotiations that accompany family life, make this neoliberal insistence on the 'temporary' nature of migration futile.

Even when intersections between family migration and temporary migration have been considered, emphasis remains on the effects of migration on sending countries; studies for example on remittances (Stark and Lucas: 1988, Cohen: 2005), chain migration (Lazidaris and Romaniszyn: 1998), and on the affects of those caring for the children left behind (Parreñas: 2005). Zentgraf & Chinchilla (2012) believe that separation, reunification and the entrenchment of familial outcomes have formed the main themes of family migration literature, these having essentially placed migrant parents in a dialogue of abandonment (1.1). In this chapter an interpretive approach to the data is used in order to highlight how decisions to endure periods of separation were reached. As such this study attempts to override the stereotype of migrant parents as deserters of the family, showing how separation and reunification should involve questions of emotions over economics.

Research on the transnational family can be traced to Bailey et al.'s redefinition of the family unit in the global context (1996) and through concepts such as 'transmigrants' (Glick Schiller: 1995), 'transnational commuters' (Morokvašić:

2004) and 'global care chains' (Hochschild: 2000). Transnational family research also has explicit overlaps with gendered migration studies such as studies on migration, work and women by Kofman (2004a) and McDowell (2003a, 2003b). In Polish migration literature there are two recent micro structural studies which feature as contemporaries to this study; White (2011a) and Ryan et al. (2009a). This existing body of research is however, south centric and neglects something of the 'spatial turn' that Smith (2011) argues should form the backbone of transnational family study. Smith succinctly argues that 'geographical contingencies influence the specifics of family migration and decision making processes give rise to particular post migration experiences such as familial, gender and home relationships' (Smith 2011: p.653). This study seeks then to encapsulate something of the geographical contingencies which Smith deems influential in the future of migration research.

3.1.3 The regional scale

Stenning and Dawley (2009) argue that there is a 'missing' local and regional scale in studies on migration, and believe that this scale is increasingly recognised with more credibility because it forms a response to concerns about regional productivity, unexpected migrant influx, and to academic and policy discourses. British localised studies of migration which heed geographical contingencies as a main variable have clustered around London (Datta et al.: 2006, 2008) and have focussed on the migrant division of labour. As have many local authority commissioned and research consultancy led projects with region or city specific interests in post accession migration, for example Hall Aitken (2007), Green et al. (2007) and Morris et al. (2009). Findings here have understandably been policy driven and so centred on issues of work, housing and education. The assumption that post EU migration is wholly temporary and based on economic motivation has seen the use of the term 'migrant worker' in these studies too. The worry here is that this then allows local authorities to set aside provision for the Polish migrant population on a 'temporary' basis only. This project seeks to go beyond the remit of the stereotyped 'Polish migrant worker' then, viewing migration in terms of family units. This study aims to urge

policy makers to treat Polish migrants not as lone visitors to the region but as family units who have made, and continue to make, a valuable contribution economically, socially and culturally to this region and nationwide.

3.1.4 The North East as a migration case study

The North East of England is characterised by economic decline demonstrated by slow economic growth, high levels of unemployment and high levels of localised deprivation. 'In the period 2001 to 2008 the population of England grew by 4.0 per cent with the North East only accounting for 1.4 per cent of this overall growth. This was the lowest growth of all English regions' (Worthy and Gouldson: 2010, p.32). According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the Government's official measure of deprivation, the North East contains a staggeringly high proportion of the most deprived areas in England (ONS: 2007). The IMD (2007) shows that over a third of Super Output Areas in the region fall within the 20 per cent most deprived in England and nearly 18 per cent fall within the most deprived 10 percent. At a local authority level, 7 of the 12 authorities in the North East are within the 50 most deprived in the country (Government Office for the North East: 2010). The unemployment rate in the North East is much higher than the national average too; the North East's unemployment rate stood at 8.2 per cent of the total population of working age in the April 2008 to March 2009 period and this compared to the British average for the same period of 6.2 per cent (ONS: 2012). Despite this economic decline an estimated 11,000 Polish migrants reside in the region, the vast majority of which entered the UK following EU enlargement in 2004 (ONS: 2011). The North East therefore presents an interesting case study for migration, as its viability as a host region seems on paper, somewhat depleted.

The North East has also traditionally been characterised by a declining population with significantly low ethnic minority representation. In 2008 the North East was estimated to have had a population of 2,575,500 which comprised of 1,259,600 males (48.9%) and 1,315,900 females (51.1%) (Government Office for the North East: 2010). Approximately 4.5 per cent of the region's total population are from ethnic minority backgrounds (ONS: 2011). In

comparison to the other eight regions in England, the North East has the highest proportion of White British residents (Worthy and Gouldson: 2010). There is growing evidence however, to suggest that the ethnic fabric of this region is fast changing. Between 2007 and 2008 for example, 'natural change accounted for only 34 per cent of the North East's population increase, suggesting that the majority of this population increase was caused by migration from other regions or from abroad' (Worthy and Gouldson: 2010. p.31). Net inter-regional migration to the region was small 'with roughly equal numbers of people arriving from and leaving for other regions (about 40,000 in each direction). International migration had a greater effect on the population, in fact only London and Yorkshire and The Humber had higher levels of net international migration per 10,000 residents' (Worthy and Gouldson: 2010, p.32). ONS data shows that Polish born residents are now estimated to be the third biggest foreign born population in the North East, behind Indian and German minorities, so it can be assumed that Polish migrants are contributing significantly to the new demographic shape and dynamic of the North East population.

The exact speed at which the ethnic fabric of the North East is changing is highlighted by the example of the North East's regional capital. Newcastle upon Tyne had a population increase of 1.5% in 2008 (an actual increase of around 4,200 people), and since ONS data notes no changes in the number of births and deaths in the city, migration numbers are determined as the main reason for this increase (Newcastle City Council: 2011). The image below shows shelves in a local community library dedicated to foreign language books, in this case Polish books for adult readers. This illustrates how the city's changing population dynamic is being translated into local service provision. The North East therefore presents an opportunity to examine how efficiently the needs of local user groups have been met in relation to this fast changing population dynamic.

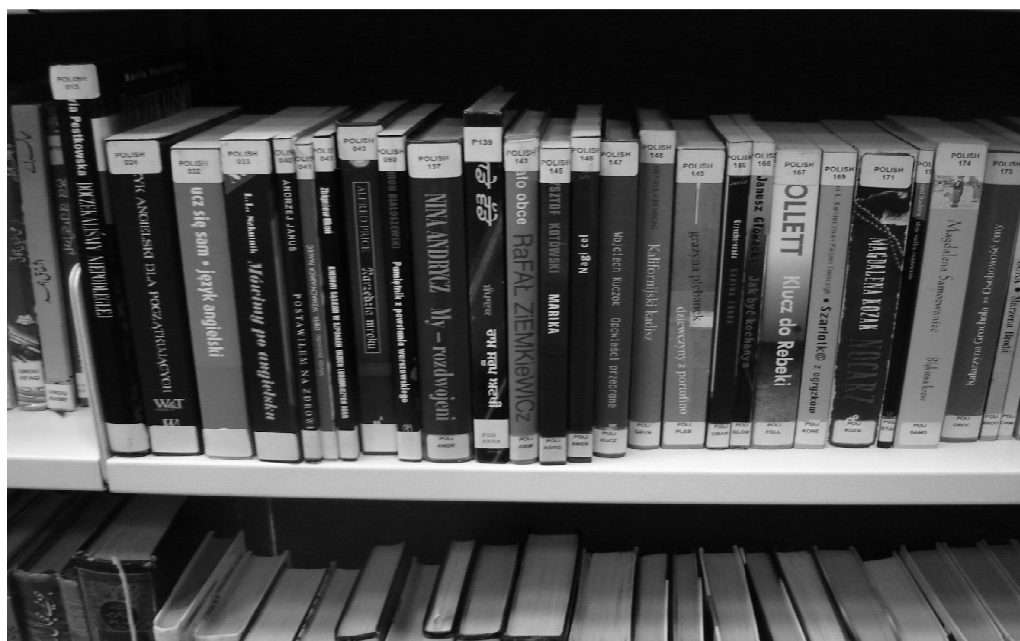


Image a: Shelf of Polish books in Byker Library, Newcastle

3.2 Decisions to migrate

3.2.1 The nature of decisions

Polish migrant parents perceived migration to be an ongoing and evolving process. The migration biographies of Polish migrant parents typically started in childhood or adolescence with the majority of informants having lived in various regions of Poland, and having experienced periods of travel and work abroad prior to arriving in the UK. These narratives about past mobility merged, sometimes chronologically and sometimes anachronistically, into descriptions of more recent events. Informants' present lives also involved mobility: Lech, for example, described his life in Darlington as '*a long vacation*', while Czesław saw his migration journey and subsequent acclimatisation to life in Sunderland as '*a very big adventure*'. Informants' points of departure (and for that matter, return) were ill-defined and open ended. Czesław initially stated that his migration had begun on the date of Poland's accession to the European Union, then offered alternative points of departure, the day he secured a job in the UK, the day he left Poland, the day he started work in the UK following training elsewhere for example. 'Migration process' does not refer then, to a single event in the lives of Polish migrants but a series of past, present and future negotiations.

The evolving nature of their migrations led informants to offer multiple explanations, rather than a single deterministic reason, for their migration to the UK. While not exhaustive, informants' explanations included: migration in pursuit of opportunities, lower living costs, to further career development, as a way to experience something new and different, in order to improve English, due to curiosity, thrill seeking, and aspiration, by chance, due to encroaching moments of life course, for personal and familial reasons, and in pursuit of love. These explanations number just some of those given and highlight the diversity in Polish migrant parents' decisions to migrate. It should also be stressed that decisions to migrate often overlapped, supported and contradicted one another. Even when specific reasons for migration to the UK were offered, informants' migrant biographies often alluded to other factors. Edyta, for instance, stated: '*I had one purpose, to save some money and then back*', but her confessions and exposition in the wider context of the interview suggested desire for freedom from her parents, self fulfilment and thrill had also featured in her decisions to migrate. Polish migrant parents were not 'economic migrants' then, in as much as their decisions to migrate were not solely about improving their living and working conditions (Castles and Millar: 1998); decisions to migrate drew on a catalogue of social, cultural and personal reasons too.

3.2.2 Self fulfilment

Much of the literature on transnational family casts migrant parents as purely self sacrificing, working only to provide a better life for their children (so for example Pessar: 1994, Waters: 2005). Informants in this study did indeed portray their migration as an act of paternalism. Talking about his decision to migrate, Czesław, for example, likened his motivation to holding his baby daughter for the first time and feeling a primeval urge to provide for her: '*I think, I must do something!*', Acts of paternalism, such as hoping to guard their children from experiencing certain hardships and emotions, as discussed in chapter six (6.3.1), helped informants legitimise their migration narratives further. This corresponds with research conducted on Polish families by White (2011a); she too found a theme of self-sacrifice running through interviews with

Polish parents. Informants in this study were also though, willing and honest about their ambitions to see 'self' and 'family' coexist: although depictions of self sacrifice were evident in this study so too was talk about a personal desire for self-fulfilment.

Polish parents saw migration as a way to realise aspirations for themselves and for their children. For Edyta and Łukasz forging self-fulfilment and family had been particularly important. Edyta reported that the couple had become parents unexpectedly early (during university), but never let go of their childfree aspirations to travel and spend time abroad like their peers. Edyta felt that her urge to '*do something different*' could only be justified while she and her daughter were '*young*'. Edyta saw her age (mid twenties) and her daughter's age (her daughter was about to reach compulsory school age in Poland), as signalling a benchmark in her life course. As such Edyta felt it was the 'right time' or '*the only moment*' as she put it, for her and her family to migrate. Edyta continued: '*if we didn't do it, wouldn't do it after that, we would just stay and you know accept what came.*' This comment from Edyta was particularly interesting as in the wider context of the interview and thereafter she talked solemnly about migration as a way to accept parental 'responsibility' at the same time as having 'personal' freedom. Similarly Miron, felt that his migration had been a way to find thrill and excitement without shrugging his responsibilities as a parent. For both informants though finding 'the right time' to migrate seemed crucial, this tussle between the family and the self appearing to be easier to legitimise if a 'right time' was found. Edyta for example reported seeing the growing wave of emigration from Poland as meaning opportunities in the UK were available to her. She reported feeling that if she did not join the wave those opportunities would pass her by irreversibly. Basia, a lone parent, reported experiencing this same anxiety when she was presented with an unexpected job opportunity and chance to migrate. For those with dependents, decisions to migrate were shaped by anxieties about how arising opportunities sat within the life course of the family. For Polish migrant parents 'the self' and 'the family' was cohesive, but decisions to migrate were also compounded and pressurised by this union. It should also be noted that this union between self and family was highly

emotive. Edyta for example, talked about feelings of guilt and regret about a period of separation she briefly endured from her daughter Nelka in a previous 'working holiday' she took to London, prior to her migration to the North East. Edyta explained: '*no I would not do this now, besides the money, no I would not leave my family [again].*' In my friendships with informants I was able to see this emotional tussle between self and family continuing to preside over the evolving migration process, and hence this angle presents good scope for further analysis. The union between self and family is complicated then, one of deliberation, emotion and role conflict.

Decisions to migrate were rooted in aspiration by those informants who had been childfree at the time of migration too. All previously childfree migrants reported having earmarked a period of migration or travel abroad, if not always to the UK, into their rough life plan. Lidia, for example, reported being unfazed by migration as she felt that '*travelling or doing something different*' would always have been a feature of her life anyway. Ludmiła perceived herself as '*a bit of a rolling stone, as somebody who is always somewhere else around Europe*' and again felt that migration had always been on her agenda too. Both informants however, had in this circumstance, been compelled to migrate to the UK in order to further romantic relationships. Lidia had met her British husband Daniel in Poland, but the couple felt it '*not realistic*' to remain in Poland. Ludmiła had met her British partner Paul, on a social network forum. The couple had again agreed that it would be 'easier' to live in the UK rather than Poland. This illustrates how plans in life met with unplanned events and chance encounters.

3.2.3 Life in Poland

Polish migrants often reported that relatively low wages coupled with the relatively high cost of living in Poland, had been part of their motivation to migrate. This contrasts with the reports of Ukrainian mothers in Tolstokorova's study (2010), whereby migration was seen as crucial rather than critical to livelihood. Ukrainian mothers migrated to the UK in order to 'provide immediate care for their children' (Tolstokorova: 2010, p.189). Migration was not, by comparison, vital to survival for Polish migrants, though it was reported to have

made life more comfortable. Informants were not necessarily classic 'lifestyle migrants' (as defined by Benson and O Reilly: 2009) either. Initially Polish migrants often took work which offered them less job security, less pay and fewer prospects than their previous jobs in Poland. Lech is a good example of this; he was single, childfree and had trained as physiotherapist before migration. Lech felt his decision to migrate had come out of curiosity, as a chance glance in the Polish equivalent to the job centre had led him to take a position working as an auxiliary care assistant in a residential home for adults with autism in the UK. Lech pointed out that the work he took was low paid in both Poland and the UK, the difference he felt, was that the cost of living in the UK was lower, leading him to anticipate affording a higher standard of living in the UK. While Lech's decision to migrate had been rationalised by economics, curiosity and chance had played a part in securing migration opportunities.

Those informants who had been employed in highly skilled professions were keen to cite poor pay and working conditions in Poland as having been a main impetus for migration. Truda, for example, had been annoyed by working conditions as a junior doctor: '*I was fed up with the way they treated us, forced I would say, nearly forced to work overtime, and [I] hadn't been paid properly, so I said no, it's enough, I leave to learn English!*', Those in highly paid and skilled professions placed emphasis on leaving behind conditions in Poland rather than being lured by specific conditions (such as the lower cost of living) elsewhere. Bogdan, for example, was a university academic; he had found academic wages too low in Poland: '*You need two jobs in the academia - and the other one to earn some money!*', so migrated first to Germany. In Germany he found his career prospects limited, as he felt systems of nepotism had prevented him from being promoted. Migration to the UK was presented as the next host country to 'try out'. Interestingly these reactionary decisions were often reported by informants as decisions of resistance and protest too. Highly skilled informants were keen to stress that their migration had been about urging for increased fairness and competition (conditions of neoliberalism) in the Polish job market. Those in minority groups (such as the single parents for example). by contrast, felt their migrations had helped push the agenda on social provision

in Poland (6.4.6). It seemed, that informants' reports about migration decisions were clearly informed then by the benefit of hindsight, though further research on political resistance as a root cause of Polish migration might also be useful. In the meantime this suggests that migrant biographies were added to, and migration decisions reconceptualised, by informants on reflection of their migration.

Imagining how life might be if they remained in Poland also featured in Polish migrants' decision making processes. Lech reported feeling fortunate in being single at the time of migration; not having dependents had made him feel that 'risk' of migration was more inconsequential. Lech had imagined though, that life was harder (relatively) for those with families: *'If I had family [in Poland], I would be starving probably, so I was single and I barely could manage the day to day'*. As such Lech had encouraged his brother-in-law, Teodor, to migrate to the UK with him. It was agreed that Lech, without dependents, would trial life in the UK first; Teodor followed later. This arrangement was fairly typical, with Polish migrant parents showing greater hesitation than their childfree contemporaries in the decision making process, generally preferring to secure support networks and jobs prior to migration.

Saying this, those informants who were childfree on migration were still not immune from thinking about issues of family, having to consider the needs of extended family back in Poland (a number of informants had widowed and elderly parents for example), and also anticipating that they might have children themselves in the future. Elżbieta and her husband Paweł for example, were disappointed by their earning capacity and terms of employment in Poland, and recognised that this situation might be exasperated if they were to start a family:

'[My husband], he worked in Poland as a dentist, and he just earned very little, and I worked as a teacher of English as second language, I earned a lot... I earned lot but it was only because I didn't have a proper contract... When you fall ill or when you get pregnant you just earn nothing... I know the law is changing now but back six, five or six years ago it was the case. Basically when

[if] I got pregnant it meant that when I stopped working, I would stop earning money. I would just [have] been in total trouble.' (Elżbieta)

Elżbieta and Paweł did not necessarily migrate to the UK with the intention of starting a family then, but they did emigrate from Poland in the knowledge that their immediate working situation was not conducive with this long term aim. Decisions to migrate were thus, shaped by comparing how the present might look in a different country, as well as hypothesising what life would be like in the future.

Biographies of mobility had helped normalise the migration process for many informants. A number of informants were already accustomed to working abroad. Czesław had been a bus driver for 21 years for example. In recent years he had taken a job as a long distance bus driver, travelling between Poland and the Netherlands twice a week. On a day-to-day basis, Czesław felt that there would be little difference in the routine of his life if he migrated to the UK or stayed driving buses to and from the Netherlands: he already spent time with his family periodically, slept in between shifts and arrived home late at night. Czesław imagined that life driving buses in the UK and making regular return visits to Poland would be similar. This presents the argument that migration was seen as a way of life for many. The flow of emigration Jarek observed from his hometown helped him reach this conclusion too. Jarek reported observing, *'many many people, nearly all families had somebody abroad,'* which led him to see migration as conventional, a normal process of family life *'in Eastern Poland.'* For some, decisions to migrate had not been 'decisions' at all; migration was simply the next most obvious step in work or family life.

A desire to seek independence from extended family was also intrinsic in many informants' decisions to migrate. Despite biographies of mobility, over half of the sample reported still living with their parents prior to migration as the high cost of living in Poland had prevented financial independence. Those informants who had children prior to migration reported a keen desire to move out of multi-generational households. Edyta, Łukasz and daughter Nelka, for instance, had

lived with Edyta's parents when resident in Poland. Edyta explained: *'We wanted to live, just as three... without all background, family background'*. Migration often proved a catalyst for changing the dynamics of informants' households, as multigenerational care provision was lost and informants took on new household roles and responsibilities (5.5.1, 5.7.3). A desire for independence from their parents was also sought by those who were childfree at the time of migration. Olga, for example, reported: *'Like with me for instance, I wanted to move away because of my parents were very sort of strict...I think this is why, I try to plan and move here.'* Economic circumstances, namely the lower cost of living in the UK, helped informants realise possibilities, but decisions to migrate were actually entrenched in more personal and familial motivations.

3.2.4 Destination UK

A number of informants in this study had experienced life in the UK previously. Krysia, for example, had led a Scout Camp at Kielder Water, Northumberland, four years prior to her migration to the UK. Following the camp, Krysia intended on returning to the North East of England specifically, and as soon as possible, learning English in the intervening period in preparation for her return. For Krysia, Poland's accession into the EU was merely a technicality which made her return easier; she felt sure that she would have migrated to the UK anyway. Iza and Paulina moreover, talked about having had long held plans to take 'gap years' in the UK. Iza reported delighting in learning that the UK had permitted open entry to Poles: *'Once we joined European Union, I could work in England as a pharmacist and I said, that's great opportunity, I'm going to take this advantage'*, though once again she felt she would have migrated to the UK anyway. Ease of access to the UK in the wake of EU accession, had not always been a precursor in migrants' destination decision then.

For many informants the desire and perceived need to learn a foreign language (5.4.1) was instrumental in decisions to migrate, and decisions to migrate to the UK specifically. English was seen as a widely spoken and useful language. Walentyna and her husband Zbigniew, for example, felt that improving their

English would help with career potential. Zygmunt saw English as *'the global language of business'*; a language he needed to learn to expand his business enterprise. For Iza, learning English was part of a more aspirational agenda, an antithesis to her childhood under socialism: *'because I was born when still was communism in Poland, so I 'had' to learn German and Russian!* Moreover, those who had learnt English in Poland, such as Ludmiła, found the process of language learning in itself encouraged interest in migrating to the UK. Informants saw English as a pragmatic and aspirational language choice, whilst migration to the UK offered an opportune language learning environment.

Informants' aspirational expectations of life in the UK had also been influential in their migration decisions. Ludmiła's expectations had been based on literary representations of 'British life':

'You complete this image of the people and the country in your head that's more sort of like, ah, from the Bronte's times, you've got the image of what Britishness is but it doesn't really represent the modern Britain, and so I had the stereotypical image of Britain, what people here are like, and what life is like, the perfect British gentlemen and this sort of thing' (Ludmiła).

For those who had not previously been to the UK, expectations of life in the UK were often drawn from literary, media or sporting representations, so being very romantic and rudimentary. Male informants frequently referred to aspirations based on exposure to televised British football league. Teodor, for example, explained: *'all my friends in Poland, they dream of come to England and see some big match, for Polish people and for me that's a huge dream'*. So some informants had very idealistic expectations about life in the UK, based on their limited exposure to 'British life.'

Chance opportunities and luck encounters were also divisive in decisions to migrate. A number of informants had come to the UK through chance job offers. Basia, for example, had applied for a job with a company based in Poland. When the job offer came through she was surprised to have been offered a position located in the UK. Although surprised by the offer, Basia deduced: *'I am*

in European Union so I can apply for the job in the UK, so I think 'ok I just try!'. A similar chance opportunity arose for Paweł and Elżbieta; this couple were keen cyclists so took a holiday in the North East in order to try the famous 'Coast to Coast' cycleway. A positive experience of the UK while on holiday had left them considering migration as a possibility, when a chance encounter with some North East locals led to a job offer for Paweł. This shows how informants' migration pathways were often multifaceted, meeting with several events and turns and chance encounters along the way. Moreover the process of migration evolved then, through a series of planned and unplanned events.

Finally chain migration had been instrumental in encouraging informants to migrate, particularly women. Paulina had been encouraged to migrate by a relative already abroad. This relative he had reported stories of a prosperous life: *'my cousin's husband was here and he was saying, "oh they're super lucky, in England you've got easy money, easy life"'*. Chain migration provided instant support networks for migrants. Elwira for example, had preferred to imagine migrating to Sweden or the Netherlands but felt that migrating to the UK where her brother lived would be a more sensible option. She reported thinking, *'it will be much easier for me because my brother is here so he will help me if I've got any problems'*. The need to set up support networks prior to migration was not exclusive then to those who migrated with dependents. Chain migration was instrumental in encouraging informants to not only migrate, but to migrate to specific destinations in order to secure support networks.

3.3 Securing work

3.3.1 The nature of the work available

Just under half of all informants in this sample arrived in the North East with job offers in place, though these jobs did not always transpire on arrival in the UK. Those informants who had 'secured' work prior to arrival in the UK had generally found employment through the Polish version of Job Centre Plus and through Polish recruitment agencies subcontracted by British recruitment firms. Research by Elrick and Lewandowska (2008) found that Polish migrants were

likely to find employment through these channels too. In this study informants' job offers were often based on verbal rather than written contracts. For those who did have written confirmation of jobs, details and conditions were vague and did not always come to fruition. Basia, for example, had been offered work by written agreement with a large British insurance company. When she arrived in the UK her employers were surprised to see her and there was uncertainty about whether her position was still available. Basia was initially worried: *'I was upset because, you know, I saw that every day I am paying for like bed and breakfast'*. Struggling to pay for basic necessities and support her daughter in Poland, Basia was left with no option but to look for alternative employment: *'I just started er, looking for other job by myself, just by print-out CV.'* For many informants the job security they had imagined in the UK was not the reality of their migration.

Informants typically went into areas of work where there was growing job availability in the regional economy. A number of informants were employed in the microelectronics and automotives industries, areas of recent diversification in the North East's traditional economic base (Worthy and Gouldson: 2010). The majority of informants in this study were employed in public administration, education and health; the region's service sector having been another area of significant growth in the past decade . Informants were generally realistic about the low skilled nature of work available. Lech, for example, felt: *'I knew [that] no one in the UK wanted that work'*. Informants were, though, optimistic that they would soon leave these jobs for better opportunities. Drinkwater et al. (2006) and Garapich (2008) found this same scenario, wherein Polish migrants typically saw the UK as having better and fairer opportunities for upward social mobility compared with Poland (6.4.4). In this study it seemed it was Polish migrants' long-term objectives in particular which led them to ignore or be resolute about their short term realities. Miron, a graduate from Warsaw University, for example, took initial employment as a care assistant in a home for elderly people in South Shields. Miron recalled how the Polish recruitment company, who had offered him the position, had stressed to him that the job was *'physical'* and would entail *'the personal hygiene of people'*. Relatives had

also tried to advise Miron about the nature of the work ahead. Miron ignored this advice: *'I wasn't probably too interested in the very detail of the job. All that I wanted was just to go abroad'*. On arrival in the UK Miron was shocked by the hard realities of the work and the lack of opportunities he found to further his career: *'I just didn't know, I mean, I was – imagine! I [had] graduated from one of the best universities!'* Polish migrants lives were caught then, between belief in this idealistic opportunity rich life as a migrant, and the harder realities of migration.

Polish migrants imagined futures and immediate realities also conflated. Those informants who had not 'secured' work prior to migration again relied on the belief that the UK was opportunity laden. Zygmunt, for example, had felt that being Polish eliminated him from the usual rigours of job seeking, giving him special dispensation in terms of employment: *'Now we Poles, we don't have any difficulties in factories, just coming we have very good fame, so everybody says, Polish? Come! You don't need your CV, just come and work'*. Zygmunt's optimism was not necessarily unfounded. The image below shows how recruiters targeted Polish migrants, advertising work in Polish on a busy high-street. Zygmunt had been realistic about the type of work available; factory work. Several informants in this study had indeed worked in, or were still working in, factories at the time of interview. They confirmed that they had been recruited through indirect and informal channels, having secured those positions on the recommendation of friends. This supports Stenning and Dawley's (2009) belief that word of mouth and network recruitment was one of the main explanations for the segmentation of migrants in to low skilled positions (2009, p.17). Zygmunt's optimistic claims about his prospects as a Polish migrant were then, not completely unrealistic. Polish migrants' preconceptions about life in the UK were sometimes supported by their realities as well as negated.



Image b: *The recruitment company '247 Staff' advertise in Polish from their prominent city centre location on Northumberland Street, Newcastle. The advertisement reads: 'Ask inside for more details on job opportunities.'*

3.3.2 De-skilling

A high volume of informants in this study took work which did not match their skills set (a characteristic of European accession migration as discussed by Ruhs (2006) and Stenning and Dawling (2009). It would be wrong to say that all informants were happy to accept work outside of their skill set though. Krysia for instance stated categorically: *'I was looking for a job but I always been ambitious in life as well: I'm not going to start going cleaning!'*. Similarly, Truda and Kazimierz planned to leave the UK if they could not find work within their trained professions. Truda recalled: *'we wanted to work in our professions, never wanted to work in different professions, I was qualified as a doctor so I wanted to work here as a doctor'*. Generally though, informants in this study were prepared to accept jobs below their skills set. Those with dependents were more likely to take low skilled work from the outset of migration, more reliant on immediate income in order to support accompanying children or those left in Poland.

It is argued then, that looking at migration through a micro-structural lens helps show how so-called 'economic' factors of migration, such as work, were embedded in more complex personal and emotional motivations. De-skilling was found to have caused a number of problems for informants, including emotions of despondence and frustration, which I found extremely hard to witness in my subsequent friendships with informants. Edyta, for instance, a qualified teacher in Poland, had taken a job as a teaching assistant in the UK. At the time of interview she was satisfied that she had fulfilled her short term goals of migration (these being to 'earn money' and experience 'something different'). She felt frustrated though that her longer term ambitions (such as career progression) had been seemingly set back. Edyta felt particularly aggravated by her 'work quality' (Cieślak: 2011), namely a lack of opportunities for creativity, low levels of personal autonomy and a lack of job security. Remaining in low skilled work had had ramifications for the whole family as Edyta reported suffering from low self-esteem, while her lack of job security continued to govern how the family prepared the household budget and planned return visits to Poland. De-skilling thus caused informants a range of emotional and personal difficulties.

The difficulties of de-skilling were not limited to those with dependents, as those Polish migrants who were childfree at the time of migration had similar long term aims to those with children. Wiktor for example, had come to the UK as a 'trailing husband', his wife Iza having secured work as a pharmacist first, setting-up home before Wiktor arrived. In Poland Wiktor had been a graduate mechanical engineer; in the UK he took a job as a battery technician on the factory production line of a car manufacturing company. Again Wiktor was optimistic about his career prospects in the UK and imagined that 'hard work' would be enough to get his skills recognised. This belief that 'hard work reaps rewards' has long been seen as symptomatic of migration at large, as evident in communities studied by Massey (1988) and Portes and Rumbaut (2006) for example. For Wiktor the imminent arrival of his first child acted as impetus to push for those rewards. As Wiktor's wife Iza, explained: *'we try to ask them if they've got any like voluntary job or anything like that, in order to secure [Wiktor]*

a position suiting his skill, but [Wiktor's] requests weren't realised. Iza described the situation as *'difficult and frustrating'*, feeling angered that her husband was not given an opportunity to realise his potential, and so effectively having to *'start his career from the beginning'*. At the time of the interview Iza and Wiktor had decided to return to Poland if Wiktor's job prospects did not progress. Informants therefore negotiated these periods of de-skilling by setting themselves lucid timeframes with which to achieve results, constructing new plans as migrations evolved.

The notion of migration being ever-evolving, informants making and then reconstituting their migration plans, strengthens the case for using longitudinal research methods in the study of migration. From friendships I formed with informants subsequent to interview, I was fortunate enough to see these plans then transpire. Wiktor eventually secured promotion with his car manufacturing employer and has had active career progression since. Although Wiktor and Iza were happy to prolong their migration in response to the promotion, they were still hesitant about whether this stay would be made permanent. Edyta meanwhile did not secure a job as a teacher and in fact faced a period of redundancy, then further low skilled work in a factory subsequent to interview. Edyta continued to remain in the UK too, again in response to wider personal circumstances and emotions. These case studies undermine Cook et al.'s (2011) argument that migrants' experiences of the labour market was the mainstay of informing their decisions to settle in the UK permanently. As argued in chapter six, the emotional outcomes of life in the UK more broadly, not just working life in isolation, were found to be equivocal in decisions to 'stay or return' (6.5.7).

By further contrast, Mariola's experience of deskilling resulted in great career progression and return migration. Mariola had worked as a marketing professional in Poland and had taken a job as an officer runner in an engineering company in the UK. In interview she reported: *'[it's] not necessarily something that I'm going to be in [all] my life, so for now it's ok'*. Following interview Mariola had several promotions, eventually being offered the

opportunity to set up a wing of the North East based engineering company in Poland. Interestingly Mariola was the only informant in this study to have returned to Poland and yet at the time of interview she was the most convinced she would stay. For some Polish migrants then the plan to take short term low-skilled work did pay dividends in the long run, but for others it did not: life, for Polish migrants, did not always run according to plan.

Life course also had an effect on Polish migrant parents' experiences of the workplace. Barbara, a bank clerk in Poland, had taken work as a teaching assistant on arrival in the UK. Although disappointed by the job at first, Barbara later found the job surprisingly convenient, as working in the education sector once her daughter started school limited the need for costly after-school and holiday care provision. Edyta also found this to be a benefit of her job: *'I'm a teaching assistant so whenever I have a break she has it too...Normally if I was a teaching assistant I'd hate it probably'*. The liminal phases of parenting, going from having a newborn to a toddler to a pre-schooler and onward, added then, another evolving dimension to the migration process, as the needs of Polish migrant parents changed with the age of their children. While Barbara was pleased to be in the education sector when her daughter was of school age, prior to this the inflexible working hours and holiday periods of her job had caused Barbara and her husband Teodor a number of childcare problems (5.7.2). Barbara's second pregnancy also caused another turn of events as work-life demands changed again. In response to maternity legislation the school where Barbara worked as a teaching assistant moved her away from the classroom into a temporary clerical position. This gave Barbara an unexpected opportunity to prove her administrative skills, and she was later offered a secretarial role, better suiting her skill set, permanently. Barbara and Teodor were, at the time of interview, thrilled by the turn of events. In this instance then, long term aims were realised earlier than anticipated. Life course and family did not always conflict with 'the self', the twists and turns of life sometimes saw these roles sit in unison.

Informants negotiated periods of de-skilled employment to the best of their ability. Like many informants, Lech for example, had convinced himself of the emotional benefit of deskilling, seeing lower levels of responsibility and stress alongside comparable wages to those in Poland as empowering: *'No, is not too complicated, I check the wages and what I am doing now and doing physio, it's similar money, and er physio got much more responsibility and I would be stressed!'*. Hania, meanwhile, a government civil servant in Poland, who worked as a secretary in the UK, concentrated on the practical advantages of her low skilled employment, comparing her daily two hour commute to work in Poland with her ten minute bus ride in the UK: *'even holding a simple position in city council in Warsaw I wouldn't be able to have this life'*. Many informants reported gaining qualifications in their de-skilled positions. Lech and Teodor, for example, were sitting work-based NVQ's in healthcare, and Hania's employers were contributing to her degree in human resources. Informants also felt that their 'short term' low skilled employment had left them with both time and motivation to set up business ventures. Lech for example, was setting up his own physiotherapy client base and Hania eventually hoped to have her own recruitment firm. Informants sought to claim agency in the labour force by negotiating the circumstances of employment to the best of their advantage.

3.3.3 The Recession

This project met issues of work and employment at an interesting time, interviewing Polish migrants two to three years into the UK economic downturn. One of the main grievances informants had in relation to the recession was that they had not been issued with incremental pay increases. Lech, for instance, said: *'I expect wage will be bigger after five years and actually everything is the same'*. In response to this Lech and his brother-in-law Teodor constantly evaluated how the cost of living in the UK compared with Poland, checking for any fluctuations in the economies and job markets of both countries which might indicate that a return to Poland would make financial sense. The pair reported checking currency exchanges, reading the business section of newspapers and asking family members about the costs of commodities in Poland. At the time of

interview Lech and Teodor had concluded that the cost of living in the UK had remained lower than in Poland, though like the majority of informants, they saw themselves as constantly poised for return. Financial sensibilities were not the only factor, contributing to stay or return decisions. Both Lech and Teodor noted that the happiness of their wives and children, emotional measures, were also fundamental in decisions to return (6.5.7).

It also seemed that the economic recession had heightened informants' ethnic awareness. Informants feared that as the migrant 'other' their position in the job market had weakened as competition for jobs increased. Jagoda, the only informant who arrived in the UK prior to Poland's accession to the EU, worried that the influx of Polish migrants following accession had saturated the job market, and limited her own opportunities for further employment: *'I'm saying, job wise, I thought it was better when there was less of us, because people don't have opinions about you, when you writing your application form- people form a connection'*. Zygmunt and Hania also talked about their fellow compatriots as competition in the job market, but at the same time were optimistic that the recession would bring 'hidden opportunities', particularly in terms of establishing ethnic enterprise. Both informants were setting up businesses at the time of interview; Hania for example was setting up a recruitment firm aimed at Polish migrants. National and ethnic identification was therefore complicated, understood by informants as promoting both rivalries and yet supporting enterprise (6.2.2).

3.3.4 Employment vulnerability

Polish migrants had differing levels of agency in the workplace. Those informants who had dependents in Poland commonly sought employment contracts before migration. Once resident in the UK they lacked agency, bound by their commitments, compared to their childfree contemporaries. Miron, who had dependents in Poland, recalled being reassured by the job security a fixed term two-year work contract had offered him (and his family) at the outset of migration. However, the realities of the job were harder than Miron had anticipated; he found working in the residential care home physically and

emotionally exhausting and so tried to terminate his contract early. Miron was asked by his employers to pay back his airfare, his accommodation and training costs as outlined in his contract. Having no money to pay the forfeit and maintain his dependents Miron had no choice but to stay in the job: *'I felt, I felt locked! You know they were relying on me; I felt locked!'*. Paulina and Waldemar, by contrast, were childfree at the time of migration. They had signed a six month contract to work in a factory after arriving in the UK. Although the work was as they expected, the accommodation included in their terms of employment saw them in overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions. Far from being the vulnerable and powerless underclass which characterised previous waves of Polish migration (Lazidaris and Romaniszyn: 1998), Paulina and Waldemar understood and asserted their legal rights, disclosing the discrepancies of their employment to local police and media when their challenges were not met by their employers. It might be argued then that those Polish migrants with dependents generally had the same high level of cultural and political capital as their childfree contemporaries, but in practice were less able to use this capital, being reliant on jobs for themselves and for their children.

Several informants had experienced periods of unemployment since their arrival in the UK. The fixed term employment contracts informants had taken on arrival in the UK were the main cause of this unemployment as contracts were rarely renewed once expired. Miron had been unemployed for over a year following the expiration of his contract in the care home. He used this period of unemployment to actively undertake further training opportunities and work placements. At the time of interview Miron was in employment, having taken a position as an office assistant to a small businessman. Miron was optimistic about his future, believing that he would not experience unemployment again: *'I don't think anymore this would apply to me because of my background, I just think now I'm advancing on my career ladder'*. Following interview Miron again endured another phase of unemployment as the local business where he worked cut back staff in the recession. This illustrates something of the

vulnerability of Polish migrants in the workforce, commonly employed on fixed contracts and in low skilled work where they had little job security.

To avoid this workplace vulnerability Polish migrants frequently set up as self-employed or undertook furthering training and learning. Several informants were combining paid work, parenting and studying for higher degrees or alternative qualifications at the time of interview. Informants were extremely active in furthering their employment prospects. When Hania was turned down for a job on the basis of not having the correct qualification for example, she enrolled at college to obtain the exact criteria stipulated. Krysia, meanwhile, reported hating her experience of unemployment, particularly disliking attending review meetings at the job centre which she found patronising and difficult to manage with her young son. Krysia set herself up as a self-employed translator: *'I thought, 'ok, I'm sick of it', so I thought well I need some money to live and the best way is become self employed'*. No less than a third of informants in this study had set themselves up as self-employed or had started their own businesses since arriving in the UK, often using very resourceful techniques to start businesses. Zygmunt for example, started his successful online Polish newspaper by using free Internet access provided at his local library. Once again, Polish migrants negotiated their position in the job market where best they could, demonstrating high levels of cultural capital and seeking to gain agency.

3.4 Separation and Reunion

3.4.1 Decisions to separate

Just under half of all informants to this study spent a period of separation away from their partner and/ or children when they first came to the UK. Reflecting on periods of separation was an extremely emotive topic for Polish migrants. Informants who had become parents once resident in the UK often objected to periods of migratory separation. Walentyna, for example, argued: *for me there is no chance to go alone, I should stay with my husband, I am his wife!*. This moral objection highlights something of the media sensationalism on migrant

family separation in Poland and Europe more widely. The sensationalist media term 'Euro orphans' for instance, has been critiqued by Iglicka (2008) and White (2011a). In contrast to media reaction, those informants who had endured periods of separation from children and spouse, presented their decisions to leave dependents in Poland as fairly unremarkable. When asked about his decision to separate from his son and wife, Jarek for instance, shrugged: *[They] invite me good proposal so I agree and arrived here*. Decisions to separate were seen as sensible, rational and having worked in the best interest of the family unit at large. Teodor and Miron for instance, felt that their lone migration had been the only plausible option at the time, with their partners unable to work due to the care demands of having young babies. There was also a sense that migratory separation had also been normalised for informants. Teodor for example, surmised: *'Yer but I was only one to earn at that time, and because everyone was doing it, it felt like the right thing to do'*. Polish migrants who had endured periods of separation from their children and partners presented their case as pragmatic and everyday; in opposition the Polish media and fellow compatriots presented the case against them on the grounds of morality.

Polish migrant parents commonly justified their separation from children on the grounds of it being the 'wrong time' to move them. Jarek for example, reported that the decision to leave his son and wife in Poland was based on not wanting to interrupt his son's formal education, waiting instead to move him during a break in his education. Jarek also reported wanting his son to remain in Poland until he gained a proficient command of the Polish language. The desire to see children reach a certain level of education and retain their cultural identity as a way of ensuring future mobility was seen across the sample (6.5.3), as was the desire to find 'right time' scenarios in which to move children (5.3.1, 5.3.6). Finding the 'right time' to move with younger children was also thought crucial. Basia for example, talked about not wanting to disrupt her daughter's childhood routine and not wanting to cause her daughter any unnecessary uncertainty: *'I arrived by myself because I didn't know where to live, how it will be ...I didn't want to break her routine so it was safer to leave her with my mum and wait you know, how all these things will be sorted out here'*. For Basia the uncertainty of

migration was seen as potentially more harmful than temporary familial separation. Teodor reported turning down opportunities to migrate prior to his daughter reaching six months of age, the agreed time frame that Teodor and his wife Barbara felt appropriate to separate following the birth of their first child. Decisions to separate were therefore well planned and governed by pragmatics, considering the needs of all family members.

3.4.2 Negotiating separation

In practice Polish migrant parents kept the period of separation undefined, though they found it helpful to imagine timeframes at which the separation might end. This strategy was also used in relation to deskilling, whereby informants said they imagined timeframes to make withstanding the job more bearable (3.3.2). Kazimierz and Truda, for example, planned to review their separation once Truda had been resident in the UK for a year. Miron had imagined being separated from his wife and child for a year: *'one year would be without the family... I wouldn't leave my family for longer than that, so it was, no matter what would happen, we would need to be together'*. In reality the separation period was endured for much longer due to Miron's lack of job security. Miron explained that having a hypothetical time limit on separation had made it easier for his family to cope: *'I believed it was easier for them to sort of survive the waiting time'*. Polish migrant parents imagined timeframes then, in order to cope with the reality of their situation.

Looking for ways to maximise time spent together was another technique informants used to cope with migration. Kazimierz and Truda, for example, reported meeting up regularly in Amsterdam, as this was a cheap and convenient 'half way' point from where they were each based. Teodor found flying to Poland too expensive so returned on overnight buses sleeping off the shifts during the travel. In six months Teodor was able to see his family five times. Informants typically worked in shift patterns which they negotiated to maximise time off. Truda knew that under the European Directive on working hours she was only allowed to work 48 hours a week. As a junior doctor in a hospital working 12 hour shifts was common, so Truda crammed eight 12 hour

shifts into the end and beginning of two week rotations, meaning that she would frequently accrue a full week off. Teodor also worked four shifts consecutively in order to maximise periods of leave. By choosing the cheapest and most convenient locations to meet, modes of transport, and organising their working patterns, Polish migrant parents reported being able to maximise the frequency and duration of meetings with their loved ones.

During periods of separation, Polish migrant parents with older children prioritised having regular communication with children. Jarek talked about buying equipment in order to use Skype, subsequently enabling him to communicate with his son and wife in Poland on a daily basis. Basia phoned her school aged daughter every night: *'you know it was like telling stories by phone, doing homework by phone'*. This type of 'virtual parenting' was also practiced by migrant parents studied by Parreñas (2005). In her study of Filipino migrants strong ties with children were maintained by parents despite the physical distance apart, thanks largely to modern technology mediums. For younger children however, Polish migrant parents prioritised the sending of presents to tokenise their affections. Miron recalled for example: *'When I was sending something for the little one, he knew that this was from me'*. The sending of gifts and communicating regularly were ways in which Polish migrant parents organised periods of separation.

Polish migrant parents frequently reported that spending time apart was the most difficult aspect of separation. Basia experienced conflicting emotions, feeling that she should enjoy the 'break from motherhood', but feeling at a loss, missing her daughter and not knowing what to do with her time.

'First time, you know, the break from them, some kind of motherhood, huh? You know that you stay by your own, you have free time but you're completely, you know, not enjoying it, but you have free time, and [you] completely don't know what to do. So I just went to work and worked and worked and didn't think about it, you know.' (Basia)

Informants frequently relied on the tactic of absorbing themselves in work in order to mute the feelings of separation; emotions such as loss and longing (as discussed by Huang and Yeoh: 2007). Thinking about the burden placed on those left in Poland was another strategy used. Miron, for example, reported to imagine his wife struggling with the everyday tasks of caring for their baby in Poland, in order to help repress his feelings of loneliness. Polish migrant parents thus navigated the emotional geographies of migration in order to last out periods of family separation.

3.4.3 Reunion

Decisions to end periods of separation show that Polish migrant parents were able to maintain agency despite their structural position in the labour market. Teodor and Barbara decided to reunify when, in the wake of the recession, it seemed no longer economically viable for them to live apart. Teodor remembered concluding: *'I will probably get much more money because I don't have to spend so much, but then I will never see them for long time, and I said, no, it's better to keep it here'*. Reunion was often performed in stages, with spouses taking an initial trip to the UK to assess living conditions and the local area, and then arriving for a trial period. Teodor explained: *'Like at first, she came, that was like holiday, then she came [longer] time'*. In terms of Polish migration then, so-called 'trailing wives' wielded tremendous, if not decisive power in decisions to migrate. Czesław and Zygmunt for example, talked about readying their accommodation for the arrival of their wives, both laughing about how they feared that preparations would never live up to their wives expectations. Zygmunt, Czesław and Jarek noted how their wives had only agreed to migrate for trial periods; if wives could not be convinced that life in the UK was to their satisfaction, they threatened to return to Poland without their husbands. Women were found to take an active role in the decision making process more broadly too, often carrying responsibility for the migration either as single parent mothers or as lead migrants. This gender dynamic has not been seen in Polish migration literature previously. Phizacklea (1999) for example, cast Polish migrant women as 'wives and followers'. While Ryan et al.

(2009a) found Polish women to be very active players in the decision making process, but felt Polish women were rarely proponents of the migration process. In this study both Polish migrant men and women had been involved in the decision making process, but generally Polish migrant women had the ultimate and casting vote in decisions.

Informants' use of imagined timeframes and idealised reunions to help them cope with periods of separation, often clashed with the realities of reunification. Miron, for example, reported imagining being reunited with his son many times. Stoltz, Chinchilla and Zentgraf (2012) note the same phenomenon in their study of migration in Latin America, wherein parents and children mitigated 'the cost of their separation by visualising a happy and harmonious reunion' (2012: p.357). In reality Miron's reunion with his son was far from idyllic:

'I see him at airport, he just ignored me. Well I just accepted that, and I knew that it was the end of certain times which was very difficult in our lives [pause]. So you know since then, we are together and that's probably what's most important.' (Miron)

Miron's facial expressions and body language at this point of the interview suggested that memories of a hard reunion had not been easily forgotten. Basia concluded that one of the hardest aspects of separation for her had been the transition period immediately after reunification.

'I think for [Mila] was more difficult because she was waiting for me, you know, for so long time and so much, but we came here and start normal life as usual, to go to school, to, you know, go through normal days routine. So not for me but for her it was difficult; so she was using it, 'but you left me for one year!' (Basia)

Both Basia and Miron rationalised their children's reactions to separation as being transitory, believing that emotions would soon fade. This corresponds with Polish migrant parents' wider belief that children were emotionally malleable and easily adapted to migration (5.3.5, 6.2.1). Basia's decision to send her child to school immediately following separation in order to 'start life as normal' as quickly as possible, was also typical of how Polish migrant parents

managed their children's transition into British education (5.3.5). For Polish migrant parents though, emotions seemed harder to erase. Edyta, for example, felt: *'I wouldn't do it now I guess...it's not worth it if you have to leave your family'*. Polish migrant parents continued to navigate the emotions of their migration decisions long after events had passed, again showing how these decisions were constantly reconstituted.

3.5 Destination North East England

3.5.1 Pragmatic considerations

Polish migrants reported having anticipated that the North East of England had received less recent migration than other regions in the UK. They generally came to this conclusion based on the idea that they had heard little about the North East as a migration destination before. Jarek for example, said: *'Very many people from [my] area, er, they migrate to England, but they go to London or South areas'*. Informants were concerned about the numbers of migrants in host localities based on their perception that more migrants meant increased competition in the job market (3.3.1). In a similar vein, informants felt that the relatively small size of cities in the North East of England was indicative of a less competitive job market. Walentyna felt, for example, that big cities had *'lots of people from other countries'*, and so it was *'easier to get somewhere in a small city'*. As such, informants generally cast big cities as competitive, while smaller cities were seen as calmer and friendlier. Elżbieta explained: *'in small cities people don't chase the work, they don't hunt for money. In London they are constantly in a rush, lots of people [of] different nationalities.'* Polish migrants generally felt then, that the North East had a less competitive job market than other regions in the UK, based on the perception that it had relatively low migration and smaller cities.

When selecting a migration destination informants looked to distance themselves from other migrants, fearing job competition, but by the same measure they hoped to find evidence of other Polish migrants with whom to build enterprise and networks of support (6.2.2, 3.3.4). Edyta for example

reported looking for signs of other Polish migrants in Newcastle: *'being a foreigner it is something that you look at'*. Elwira, moreover, hoped to find Polish migrants but no *'established [Polish] communities'* when moving to the North East, as she rather entrepreneurially hoped that she might be instrumental in setting up support networks herself: *'If you go to London now you're just one of millions of migrants or Poles there, but if you come to places like Newcastle you can just do something and you can change something and I believe that you've got power and possibilities here'*. Informants viewed their compatriots through the lens of both 'otherness' and 'sameness' then, hoping to find levels of both which they deemed 'just right' in their migration destination.

Informants also reported knowing that the North East was one of the cheapest places to live in the UK prior to their arrival. Informants generally drew this knowledge from previous experience of living elsewhere in the UK or from information passed on from friends. Jarek, for example, reported learning from his friends that the North East was one of the cheapest places to live in the UK; in response he purposefully searched for opportunities to work in the North East where he felt the 'national wage' offered by his bus company employer would go further. Iza and Wiktor, moreover, had lived in London and reported wanting to move to the North East as they felt they had a better chance of affording to buy a house there. This contradicts the story of their 'accidental' move to Newcastle detailed shortly (3.5.2). As argued, informants' migration decisions were often multi-layered and a mixture of planned and unplanned events, as were their decisions to move to the North East of England in particular.

Chain migration was influential in bringing Polish migrants to the North East specifically too. Hania had *'tried out'* life in the North East when visiting some friends who lived in Newcastle: *'I saw the city and I like, 'wow it's so beautiful city, so convenient to live in here'*. Edyta moved to the North East on the recommendation of her best friend: *'So it was like, you know, she knew the city before we came, and she recommended it. She said, "it's very nice and it's not too big, it's not too small, it's like, you know, the 'right' one.'* Edyta's friend also

helped her find her first job and a house to rent, as well as introducing her to further friends. As with Polish migrants in Janta et al's study (2011) chain migration was responsible for both encouraging migration and securing first jobs and facilitating adaptation. A number of informants also talked about using Internet chat forums to source opinion about places to live. Zygmunt, for instance, reported asking forum users about their experiences of Newcastle, even phoning a trusted forum user in the airport for her advice on the final destination to stay. In this study then, chain migration took many forms, with encouragement to migrate to the North East being offered by friends, family, and even 'virtual' strangers.

3.5.2 Chance and agency

Some informants had little or no agency over the destination of migration. Czesław, for example, signed a contract to work for a bus company in the UK, but knew nothing of the specifics of the job. His four week training period in Northern Ireland came as quite a surprise:

'We get off in the London Victoria Station, one man come, er give us envelope with tickets and say - 'Boys see you later, go into Londonderry'. 'Like Irish!?...You know, where is town?' 'Limmer Valley, [he says] 'you know, Northern Ireland - over there!' [pointing vaguely]. (Czesław)

Czesław only found out that he would be stationed in the North East of England a few days before his deployment. He had expected to be posted to London, Manchester or Liverpool continuing, *'most normal Polish people have never heard of Newcastle, South Shields or Durham'*. Czesław described the rudimentary manner in which he and his colleagues were dispatched to their intended work destinations. They were sat on a bus which was stopping intermittently to drop off new employees at various bus depots. Czesław saw a road sign for Sunderland: *'I never heard before that town and we asked, 'where we come now?' And man says, "go there"'*. Czesław explained how the driver pointed to each man randomly giving them a destination point 'Newcastle', 'Gateshead', 'Sunderland'. In this scenario then, it was a mixture of the

demands of the regional economy and more literally third party chance decisions, that essentially brought migrants to the North East.

Other Polish migrants had varying degrees of agency in decisions about destination. Truda (a doctor) and Iza (a pharmacist) for example, talked about selecting their migration destinations from available work placements. Although the possibilities of migration destination were limited, these informants had some agency in their own deployment. Again though, the planned often collided with the unplanned. Iza, for example, had selected a job in 'Newcastle' where some Polish family friends had already migrated. When the details of the job were dispatched Iza realised that she had selected 'Newcastle upon Tyne' rather than her intended destination, 'Newcastle under Lyme'. Iza accepted the job offer anyway, reporting being excited by the prospect that fate had lent a hand in her future. Ludmiła too depicted her migration as one of chance encounters and thrill, having taken a gamble on an Internet love match; Ludmiła was pleased to report this love match had worked out well. The scenario of leaving migration destination to chance was also reported by Paulina. Having acted as whistleblowers to the local authorities on migrant working conditions, Paulina and Waldemar had been keen to move on from their factory job in Carlisle:

'We were thinking, 'what to do?' whether to go back to Poland, and there was nothing we wanted to do in Poland, so we thought 'which city to choose?' and we just bought a map and looked at England. 'Which city to choose?' So we just decided Newcastle, and that was a good decision.' (Paulina).

Although these informants had some agency in coming to the North East, it was often chance and unplanned events therefore, which set the need to make migration decisions foremost.

Migrants constructions of the planned and unplanned events of their lives, also illustrate how gendered migration narratives are tantamount to Polish migration. Paulina's romantic portrayal of putting a pin in the map and taking a punt on a destination (or a 'destiny' as it would seem) is illustrative of a wider gendered

power discourse which ran through migration biographies. Polish migrant women tended to depict their migration journeys as ones governed by fate. Hania for example, talked about her arrival in Newcastle: *'I just opened the taxi door, and I was shocked, I felt like I've been living here before, I don't know how it [was] possible but I felt like it's the place I know really well, and it's in my heart and in my soul.* Male informants however, presented themselves as intrepid travellers. Zygmunt, for example, narrated the story of his destination decision, setting the scene with him stood underneath a departures board in an airport terminal having noted that there were two planes leaving for the UK that morning:

'...One to London and one to Newcastle. I thought, so many Poles in London and so expensive so I said, 'maybe Newcastle?' [pretending to address the airport terminal crowd] 'Anyone been to Newcastle?' They said, 'don't go, there is crime, unemployment, drugs... everyone was advising me don't go.' (Zygmunt)



Image c: A plaque in Monkwearmouth Museum, Sunderland, displaying the photo image of five Polish bus drivers with 'thumbs up'. The exert reads: 'five drivers came to Sunderland from Poland in May 2005 to work

for bus operator Go-Ahead.' Above this reads an exert beginning, 'Emigrants were seen as pioneers...'

Zygmunt depicted himself allegorically going against the crowd, choosing the underdog city of Newcastle, and presenting himself as an intrepid migrant pioneer. The image above supports this notion, showing a group of male Polish migrants in the North East depicted as 'emigrant pioneers'. Male informants were found here acting out masculinities of being strong and brave pioneers, while female informants cast themselves in femininities of being gracious and lucky. This relates to Butler's (1990) notion of 'performative' identities suggesting that migrant narratives were foremost gendered constructions of reality.

Chapter Conclusion

For Polish migrant parents migration was an evolving process; there was no single deterministic reason for migration, and there was no one event which had encouraged informants to migrate to the UK or the North East of England more specifically. Migrants talked about mobility as a feature of their past, present and anticipated future lives. Migration was also presented as a normalised process of family and working life in Poland. The ongoing and normalised nature of Polish migration did not though, as Okólski (2001) argues, automatically result in 'temporary' migration. Seeing migration as evolving and continuous helped informants justify why they should stay in the UK longer, new opportunities and enterprises for example, were always imagined to be on the next horizon. Capturing data on decisions to migrate in the form of interviews some years after migration journeys to the UK, gave informants the benefit of hindsight from which to recall decisions. As such it was recognised that migration decisions were reconceptualised and expanded, and migration narratives were constantly reconstructed. By using longitudinal research, being able to return to migrant biographies, it was also apparent that the emotional landscape of migration also changed and evolved as events unfurled, and revisions about the migration were made accordingly.

Informants offered multiple explanations for their migration to the UK. Reasons to migrate overlapped, contested and supported each other. While decisions were not based on economic rationales alone, economic conditions such as the lower cost of living in the UK and a perceived fairer and more meritocratic system of career progression, allowed informants to imagine realising certain aspirations. One such desire was to gain independence from parents or extended family in Poland, as living in the UK afforded many informants the opportunity to move out of the family home for the first time. Economic possibilities then, allowed migrants to make emotional and personal decisions.

Similarly access to the UK in the wake of EU accession had not been an inevitable precursor of Polish migration alone. Informants often had long term aspirational and short term pragmatic reasons for migrating to the UK. Chain migration had been undoubtedly instrumental in decisions to migrate, encouraging informants to leave Poland, and making migration seem more feasible by offering support networks. Having established networks and secured jobs in place were not regarded as crucial to migration though. Decisions to migrate drew on a catalogue of social, cultural and personal reasons, with Polish migrants basing these decisions on both present circumstances and their hypothesis for the future. Decisions were not always methodical and deliberate, informants reported impulsive reasons for migration too, such as a desire for curiosity and thrill. Chance played a part in securing migration opportunities, leaving migration decisions multilayered; a mixture of both planned and unplanned events.

The collision between imagination and reality was also intrinsic to the migration process. Informants were for example, idealistic about life in the UK, basing their expectations on previous experiences of the UK and romanticised representations of British life gleaned from media exposure. On arrival in the UK, Polish migrants were optimistic about their employment prospects, but met with some of the harder realities of the job market. Informants experienced great vulnerability in the workplace, often being on temporary employment contracts, in low skilled work with little job security. The preconceptions and aspirations

carried with Polish migrants in their migration were sometimes supported and sometimes negated in reality, with reports of negative, positive and unexpected long term outcomes of work.

Polish migrant parents met the realities of their migration pragmatically, constantly reconstituting migration plans and finding ways to cope with certain situations. They imagined specific timeframes and ideal outcomes to situations of deskilling and separation for their families, in order to withstand the everyday realities of work and family life. Informants tried to guard themselves from job vulnerability through self-employment and taking further training and learning opportunities, often balancing paid work, with parenting and studying. Polish migrants tried to be active players in negotiating their positions in the job market generally having high levels of cultural and educational capital with which to manoeuvre. This negotiation and constant reworking of plans often took place around events beyond their immediate control, leaving their levels of agency in the decision making process compromised.

Polish migrants had differing levels of agency in the workplace. Informants across the sample took low skilled work in industries where there was growing job availability in the regional economy. Initial job offers did not always transpire or met with expectations. Highly skilled professionals were keen to cite poor pay and working conditions in Poland as having been the impetus for migration, generally having greater say over migration destinations. Polish migrants tried to assess the viability of host locality in terms of ethnic 'otherness' and 'sameness', seeing the virtues of positioning and distancing themselves from both identities. Polish migrants anticipated that the North East of England had received less recent migration, and had a less competitive job market than other regions in the UK. Although historically this was true, with the North East having been traditionally characterised by a declining population and having low ethnic minority representation, in reality Polish migration was quickly becoming a significant demographic in the North East population: once again the imagined and anticipated migration scenario did not always correspond with reality. For

Polish migrant parents national and ethnic identification was complicated then, seen as promoting both rivalries and networks of support.

Polish migrants with dependents had immediate anxiety about life course pressures and reliance on work in order to sustain those accompanying them or left in Poland. Migrants without children were not immune from these pressures though, often considering the needs of extended family and anticipating their own future circumstances in migration decisions. Bringing periods of separation to a close shows that Polish migrant parents were able to maintain agency despite their structural position in the labour market. This power dynamic was however, complicated, as although migrant parents were seen in migration literature as self sacrificing and they themselves legitimised their migration as an act of paternalism, yet conversely Polish migrants' decisions to migrate often focused on the desire for self-fulfilment. It was argued then that 'family' and 'self' coexisted in Polish migration, though this union between self and family sometimes caused role conflict (4.6.4). Polish migrant parents again had varying degrees of agency in decisions, having to navigate a complex set of emotions and aspirations on behalf of themselves and their children.

Migrants' constructions of the planned and unplanned events of migration were reported through gendered migration narratives. Women cast themselves in narratives of luck, chance, fortitude and graciousness, while men cast themselves as pioneers and adventurers, being intrepid and brave. Although in narratives of migration women lacked agency, supporting conventional construction of Polish migrant women as vulnerable and lacking agency, having little or no voice in decision making process, the actuality of Polish family migration suggested otherwise. In this study Polish migrant women were often the ultimate and casting vote in decisions to migrate, being lead migrants, migrating as lone parents, presenting as young independent women migrating for self fulfilment and personal motivation, and presenting as assertive and formidable wives.

Chapter Four: Becoming Parents

Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the intersection between migration and parenting from the transitional point of origin, when formerly child-free Polish migrants entered into parenthood. The chapter takes a relational view of gender using the family, rather than women in isolation, as a unit of analysis in an attempt to bring migrant fatherhood in from the peripheries of gendered migration scholarship. In the sample for this study, twelve families (out of a possible twenty one) had children under three years of age, a further three families had children aged under five, and fourteen families in total had become parents for the first time when resident in Britain. As such, this chapter is based mainly on data from those fourteen interviews with informants whom had become parents for the first time within five years of being interviewed.

The chapter shows how once again tensions between planning and not planning were operational in the lives of Polish migrants, *when* to have a baby takes priority over *where* the family should be located for example. Informants stress that age is a determining factor as to when parenthood is entered into; interestingly this leaves informants with fertility and age of first childbearing rates similar to their British counterparts rather than to their fellow compatriots. Polish migrants are also likely to rely on state maternity provision when living in Britain (rather than private medical provision), and are generally impressed with the choice and freedoms these services allow compared to expensive and restricted maternity provision in Poland. Experiences of cultural differences in prenatal, birth and postpartum care do however cause problems for Polish migrants, namely language barriers and feelings of disorientation. Confusion and frustration occasionally places informants into situations of conflict with British healthcare practitioners. A number of informants meet these cultural differences as an opportunity to embrace the 'British way' and enter into a dialogue of enculturation.

The reprioritising of life after becoming parents is a complicated and emotive transition for Polish migrants. Relationships with extended family are shown to be reorganised and reassessed, with many informants aware of a culturally attuned generation gap opening between themselves and their parents. This quest for independence amongst informants appears to be symptomatic of changing social attitudes in Poland more broadly, particularly in terms of a desire for greater gender equality and increasing political and social distance cross-generationally. Entry into parenthood is used by informants as a way to redefine themselves and set new ambitions. Finally the chapter highlights how Polish migrants value and maintain a strong work ethic during periods of paternity and maternity leave, but experience considerable role conflict as new parents. This sees informants finding inventive ways to bridge their caring responsibilities with personal and career expectations.

4.1 Literature Review: Becoming Parents

Gender analysis is currently a progressive and popular theorising framework in migration studies (Mahler and Pessar: 2006). Gendered migration scholars are nonetheless divided on whether or not reductionist accounts of female migration present an adequate way to locate the narratives of migrants. In this instance a relational analysis of gender is preferred as it is crucially felt to offer greater insight into the dynamics of the family unit. Likewise preference is given to the term 'parenting' over 'mothering' or 'fathering', in recognition of the dual responsibility mothers and fathers have in the childrearing process. The term 'parenting' also stands in reaction to existing literature that sits at the intersection between migration and parenting scholarship which concentrates on migrant motherhood and subsequently sidelines discussion on migrant fatherhood. Finally it is argued that work on migrant parents' transitions into parenthood has thus far been fairly alarmist and statistical in approach (see for example Rowe and Garcia: 2003). The literary field is therefore ready for work which takes a more ethnographic stance on migrant parenthood.

4.1.1 Gendered Migration

Prior to the 1980s there were few gendered readings in migration studies. Critics such as Leeds (1976) were infamously damning of the field declaring it reductionist and motivational. Morokvašić's (1984) seminal work '*Birds of Passage are also women*' evaluated this predicament concluding that gendered analysis in migration studies was extremely valuable but was suffering from male bias and had little impact on policymaking. Recently Donato et al. (2006) has credited Morokvašić for having lifted 'female migration out of the shadows', having fought against stereotyping women as 'dependants, wives or mothers', as 'unproductive, illiterate, isolated, secluded from the outside world and being the bearers of many children' (2006, p.13). Morokvašić's work represents then, a pivotal moment in the history of gendered migration studies.

Kofman's campaign (1999) to reassess the field of gendered migration a decade on from Morokvašić was a similar turning point for the field. Kofman criticised models of understanding migrant labour for oversimplifying the position of women; she felt that women were primarily understood as dependents, as trailing wives and as the carers of children but rarely as migrant workers. Following Hirschman's complaint (2001) that migration studies remained a marginal discipline due to its lack of a theoretical core, the credibility and legitimacy of gender analysis in migration studies escalated as it was then increasingly put forward as a theoretical framework for the discipline. This coincided with mounting empirical evidence on the feminisation of labour migration led by Ho (1999) and Raghuram (2004), and arguments put forward by Erel and Kofman (2003) and McDowell (2004a) that migrant deskilling was rendering women migrants invisible as migration literature continued to be dominated by the model of economic migration.

It might also be argued that the style of gender analysis in migration studies has changed alongside its reputation too. Szczepaniková (2006) believes that early contributions to the field can be seen in the work of Phizacklea (1983) and Sassen (1984) who gave historical accounts about the displacement of women.

Today scholars offer more exploratory narratives on the gendering effects of migration. Studies by Mahler and Pessar (2006) and Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford (2006) for example, take gender to be the principle variable of their studies. This has helped champion gender analysis in migration studies, meaning it was no longer a reactive theory but a progressive and popular component of migration analysis.

4.1.2 Units of analysis for gendered migration

As gendered readings of migration grow, so do divisions within the scholarship, namely whether or not gendered readings should focus on women alone or take a more relational account of gender. Pettman (1996) is notable for having taken a reductionist approach to gender, arguing that it was the only valid way to secure proper representation for women migrants. Pettman worried about 'a postmigratory identity politics' where studies of female migration too readily replaced the term 'women' with 'community' (1996, p.64). Pettman feared that this left the voice of migrant women vulnerable as they were then left in bureaucratic and political 'category cracks', reconstituted by political movements and state provision as an alternative group (Pettman: 1992). Pedraza (1991) also supported a reductionist analysis of female migration criticising dualist studies of migration for backing the myopic case of the 'male pauper' where typical migrants were assumed to be single or married men travelling alone. As noted in chapter three (3.1.1), Polish migration literature very much adhered to this male pauper analogy, with more holistic exceptions seen in the work of Burrell (2004) and Stenning (2005).

Kofman (2004a) also defended a reductionist account of female migration as she feared that persistent classification of women migrants as dependents enabled governments to grant only attendant rather than citizen rights to women migrants, which essentially left women migrants politically powerless. For Kofman (2004a), Pettman (1996) and Pedraza (1991) concentrating on women's experiences of migration was about offering representation to a vulnerable social group. Evergetti (2006) hesitated as to whether gendered

readings should always consider women migrants exclusively. She felt that such reductionism had the propensity to produce homogeneous accounts of migration which might overlook variables such as class. Evergetti was skilled at overcoming this predicament however, conducting rich autobiographic interviews with Greek migrant women to reveal the very complexities of their lives. The methodological stance taken by Evergetti inspired how I conducted the interviews for this study as I was especially taken with the way she negotiated sensitive topics and conflating issues of gender (2.3).

Although Polish migration literature has largely been dominated by the male pauper analogy, in the wider context of Central and Eastern European migration a bedrock of gendered migration studies has been laid down by aforementioned scholars Morokvašić (1984), Phizacklea (1983) and Kofman (2004a). Research on gender relations following the collapse of the Soviet Union have been spearheaded by Pilkington (1998) and Katz (2001) and provided useful context for this study, as have contemporary gender based accounts of Polish migrant parenting such as Ryan et al. (2009a) and White (2011a). At the outset of this study it was noted that Ryan et al. (2009a) had found Polish migrants in London presenting themselves as family units, with both men and women migrants working together using a diversity of migratory strategies in order to better their lives in the UK. It was therefore decided that to examine these family units effectively a relational analysis of gender would be appropriate as it would help expose gendered ideologies and inequalities from within the family dynamic.

The tendency in gendered migration to locate research in the context of family and household can be seen as an academic response to the increasing globalisation of parenting. Examples of globalising parenting offered by Chavkin (2010) include worldwide trends such as delayed age of childrearing, decline in birth rates worldwide, and mounting accounts of global care chains, world adoptions and reproduction technologies. In a practical sense drawing attention to the domestic sphere in migration provides an opportunity to locate women migrants. As already noted in chapter three (3.2.4), and identified by Pettman, women migrants are more likely to migrate through informal migration networks

such as kinship links and so they fall through 'political and bureaucratic category cracks' which then leave them underrepresented (Pettman: 1992, 1996). Taking migrant families as a unit of analysis is therefore not only a good way of avoiding the overworked concept of the lone migrant worker, but a way to obtain a better representation of female migrants. Family and household also provide excellent foci from which to observe gender dynamics in a relational setting. By studying family relations the researcher is able to measure the extent to which migrants' attitudes are conveyed in their parenting practice. For migration scholars this provides a unique opportunity to predict which taught traditions and values might then be passed down to the next generation or second generation migrants. In this chapter we in fact see that generational relations between first generation Polish migrants and their parents back in Poland form a key component in how values are negotiated.

4.1.3 The study of parenting

Academically an interest in parenting gained pace in the 1960s: this was more accurately an interest in motherhood alone, led as a reaction by feminists to the idealisation of the 1950s housewife. Shortly thereafter functionalist sociologists such as Parsons (1969) celebrated the rise of the nuclear family as a natural expression of what constituted 'female' and 'male' behaviour. Radical feminists deplored this suggestion, Firestone (1970) for example argued that women were burdened by the task of reproduction and were thus innately disempowered by biology which resulted in their oppression in the domestic realm. This was an important turning point in the study of parenting as questions about what exactly the role of a mother or father entailed were brought to prominence. Rich's seminal book (1976) '*Of woman born*' made a significant reply to radical feminism, saying that the emotional investment women gained from reproduction had the possibility of making it an empowering rather than oppressing process. Rich was, however, concerned with the subsequent way in which motherhood was regarded as all consuming, both personally and politically, in so much as motherhood was wrongly used to substitute the concept of womanhood. In this chapter Polish mothers embrace a

similar stance in that they do not see parenthood as all defining; Polish mothers look to find room for personal self fulfilment in their lives, seeking for example, to better combine parenting and professional life. Saying this, the intertwining of 'family' and 'self' causes tribulation for new parents particularly in terms of negotiating between their dependence and independence; a similar deliberation between parenting 'responsibility' and personal 'freedom' was found among those who were parents at the outset of migration (3.2.2). In the study of parenting, as with the study of migrant parenting (4.1.4), 'the self' has been too readily forgotten: this study redresses something of that departure.

The body of literature on parenting suffered from a dearth in the 1980s when the everyday task of mothering was academically relegated in favour of studies on women in the workplace and evaluation of the nuclear family under post industrialisation. Essentialist views of parenting then gave way to deconstructionist accounts; Richardson (1993) for example, pulled apart the historical idealisation of motherhood, Phoenix et al. (1991) questioned the cultural idealisation of motherhood, and Holloway and Valentine (2000) looked at the geography of childhood finding that expectations of parenting were dependent on time and place. In particular, Smart (1992) took a Foucauldian view of history to reveal how practices and understandings of childhood and parenting have been reinvented since the onset of industrialisation in nineteenth century Europe, when an emerging middle class increasingly distinguished between a public and private life or more generally work from family. She traced the dominant ideology that mothers are positioned as nurturers and homemakers and fathers, in binary opposition, exist as protectors and providers to this era. Post-structuralist scholars such as Longhurst (2008) and Aitken (2009) have worked to provide examples of how these connotations are conflated in modern society, redressing notions of power and agency by finding pluralistic expressions of maternities and paternities. In this study lone parent migrant mothers provide further evidence of this scenario.

In this study Arendell's definition of mothering 'as the social practice of nurturing and caring for people' which is not the exclusive domain of women (2000,

p.1192) is used in conjunction with Phoenix et al.'s preference for the term 'parenting'. Phoenix et al.(1991) began to use the term 'parenting' in favour of 'mothering' in response to deconstructionist output, feeling it conveyed recognition of the dual responsibility that both mothers and fathers had in the child rearing process. However it might be argued that by accepting this definition of parenting as 'the nurturing and caring of people', appropriate examples of parenting practice have been inadvertently excluded. Polish migrants who had temporary charge of nephews and nieces, for example, were originally rejected from the sample, and on reflection would have made good informants to better this understanding of parenting practice. Equally, as Letherby (2006) very poignantly argues, understanding what is and is not a convention of parenthood can only be marked against non-parenting practice. By this Letherby refers to, for example, child-free couples possibly with future parenting intentions. Once again, willing informants on this subject were turned away from participating in the study, making the sample mistakenly narrow against the definitions used.

4.1.4 The migrant parent

Literature at the intersection of migration and parenting is dominated by the discourse of the migrant mother. This goes to highlight how women have been written in and out of migration scholarship, being relatively absent as the 'migrant worker' and present but ill-defined as the 'migrant mother' when research concentrates on the domestic sphere. It is also important to note that the role of the 'migrant father' has been severely neglected by the body of knowledge on migrant domesticity. This has been seriously detrimental to understandings of both migrant men and women only helping to propagate a male migrant worker / female migrant mother dichotomy further. Charsley's study on men in Pakistani marriages (2005) and Waters work on Chinese fathers as lone parents in Canada (2010) have helped to bridge the peripheries of this gap, but there needs to be better inclusion of men in mothering, fathering and parenting migrant studies to really give volume to their voices.

I also suspect that migrant fathers are perceived to be a harder to access research group, in that they are imagined to be less likely located in the domestic realm and less likely interested in discussing issues of family and household. These assumptions were certainly held by academic colleagues to whom I have presented this research at conferences previously; my professional peer group has generally been surprised at the numbers of Polish fathers who did agree to be part of this study. In fact I found Polish migrant fathers very willing to talk about their families, likely to be at home recovering from working night shifts at the time of interview, very receptive to taking part in research and voicing their opinions (more so than women often), and on four occasions it was Polish migrant fathers who were my initial contacts for interviews.

Feminist readings of male hegemony may also have helped sideline the migrant father. Spivak's (1988) work on women in postcolonial societies for example depicted native women as unconditionally oppressed as a 'subaltern' or 'marginal group' by all men, colonisers and native men alike. According to Yuval Davies (1997) this male hegemony was responsible for tarnishing migrant women as a perceived threat to nationhood and national identity, seeing them as 'the producers of the future generation of undesirable racial 'others'' (1997, p.45). Lentin (2004) then explored this historical perception of the migrant mother further, looking at how the Irish media portrayed migrant mothers as the carriers of 'baby strangers' (2004, p.302) and equated them with 'representations of strangerhood' (2004, p.304). Lentin was critical of the press for homogenising ethnicity, putting migrant mothers, regardless of their ethnic origin, into the category 'black' and their children into the category 'black babies' (2004, p.303). Lentin deemed this a serious misrepresentation of migration, the vast proportion of incoming migrants to Ireland at the time of her study being white Eastern Europeans. Lentin concluded that the overriding cultural and political reading of the 'migrant mother' therefore worked through an orientalisating gaze. Although Lentin's paper was essential in founding my own understanding and interest in the migrant mother, it left me also wondering where representations of migrant fathers might belong.

4.1.5 Migrant parents' transitions into parenthood

This chapter specifically addresses migrant parents' transitions into parenthood, a topic which can be justified for a number of reasons: most notably it fills gaps in the existing body of literature on migrant parents; it also forms a response to some alarming evidence on migrant maternal health; and in the wider context of this thesis, this chapter furthers a discussion on migrant identity. The literary field on transition into parenthood has been well attended by anthropologists. Liamputtong (2007) and Hoang, Le and Kilpatrick (2009), for example, conducted cross cultural analysis into birthing traditions which demonstrated how experiences of pregnancy and labour were culturally determined. Equally psychoanalytic studies focus on the process of 'becoming a mother' (Winnicott: 1957, Stern and Bruschweiler-Stern: 1998). Growing scholarship on the 'body and place' and on 'sexuality and urban space' in geography advocated by Bell et al. (2001) and Valentine and Skelton (2003), and Cresswell's work on the politics of transgressions (1996), set the stage for Longhurst's (2008) study on women's perceptions of their changing corporeality and social status in pregnancy. This was a groundbreaking study which examined how space and place affected ideas of order and propriety for women, and as yet has not been replicated into a study on migrant maternities. This is surprising given the historical literary departure already noted between nationhood, migration and birth.

As well as being a site where national and ethnic identities are reproduced and re-imagined, pregnancy and birth are also thought to promote moments of self definition and reflection for parents. Feminists such as Kristeva (1982) and Cixous et al. (1976) for example, helped legitimise pregnancy as a centre of philosophical debate talking about a woman's pregnant form and reproductive system as playing a crucial role in defining symbolic order. More recently sociologists such as Bailey (1999) and Miller (2007) have looked at pregnancy and birth as life course moments; Bailey believing that pregnancy is a period of time when self identity is naturally reconfirmed, and Miller concentrating on the liminality of identities in pregnancy and breastfeeding. Hadfield et al. (2008)

take a more Marxist approach to new motherhood seeing it as an arena where socio economic differences are defined and compounded, showing how the volatility of new mothers is governed by their own personal and economic experiences. An exploration of migrants' transitions into parenthood therefore has the scope to be extremely exciting as it meets two typically self defining moments in people's lives (pregnancy and birth, and migration) at the moment when they collide.

This chapter on Polish migrants' transitions into parenthood is also intended to provide appropriate response to a plethora of quantitative studies which have recently exposed inadequacies in the provision of migrant maternity care in Britain and Ireland. Such reports have been funded by health care providers and concentrated on policy recommendations with little evidence on the lived experience of migrants. Through use of hospital audits and questionnaires these studies picked up a genuine concern that antenatal and postnatal care for migrant and ethnic minority women is wrought with institutional racism, offers inadequate translation services, and have long waiting lists for treatment (Clarke et al.: 2008; Harding et al.: 2008).

Moreover, these studies noted a concern that migrants exhibited certain behavioural characteristics, typically booking appointments late (after 20 weeks of gestation) and lacking familiarity and understanding of UK healthcare provision. Bray et al. (2010) found that Polish migrants in Scotland were likely to fall into this typecast, booking appointments late or missing appointments altogether. They then cite the work of Rowe and Garcia (2003) to show the significance of this finding, detailing how poor continuity in antenatal care and booking appointment, late, left complicated pregnancies unnoticed, and so explained why ethnic and migrant maternity death rates were significantly higher than those of the majority population. A report into maternal deaths by Lewis et al (2007) reached similar conclusions. This is a fairly high profile subject, with interest in maternal deaths worldwide well pushed in the left wing UK media (Boseley: 2012 and Rogers: 2010). In contrast to this, Polish migrants are typically portrayed by the right wing British media as a drain on

British health services and as being a vulnerable and difficult user group anyway (Morton: 2008, Saner: 2008). Interestingly an investigation into local NHS service used by Polish migrants in Aberdeenshire by Domaszek et al. (2007), found that in fact Polish migrants underused both primary care and secondary care and suffered differential experiences of accessing the NHS in general.

It is therefore paramount that there are more qualitative studies in this field, with the ability to unearth root causes of these serious and potentially life threatening access and underuse of health service issues. Sadly this study did not have the scope to go into great detail about access specifically; it did however pick up some interesting findings about how Polish migrants perceive and access childcare provision, maternity and paternity entitlement, and time based provision such as maternity leave and flexible working hours. It is hoped that tentative ideas in this study might help form a basis for further work in health geographies that explicitly address qualitative research on the health inequalities of Polish migrants.

4.2 Birth Trends

According to the Office of National Statistics, Polish migrants have the fastest growing birth rate of any migrant group in Britain, going from having the ninth highest birth rate in 2005 to having the second highest birth rate of any migrant group in Britain by 2008 (ONS: 2009b). Data compiled by the Annual Population Survey in 2009 also confirmed this finding, showing that the number of births in Britain to women born in Poland increased from 3,403 births in 2005 to 16,101 births in 2008 (ONS:2009a). In a three year period therefore, the Polish population born in the UK more than trebled. Academic explanation for this increase has been scarce leaving British right wing politicians and press able to repeatedly link the increasing Polish migrant birth rate to EU accession migrants' entitlements to claim (and supposedly live on) state benefits (Hickley: 2009, Morton: 2008, Firth: 2009). In this chapter, this misleading association is refuted, showing instead how Polish migrants understood their financial

entitlements during periods of maternity and thereafter, but valued and maintained a strong work ethic throughout this time. Such a mindset then led Polish parents into periods of role conflict whereby they enjoyed new parenthood but constantly desired a return to work or an opportunity to improve their standing. Polish migrant parents found inventive ways to unite the two aspects of their lives: caring responsibilities for their children and a desire to further their skill set. Polish migrants commonly set themselves up as self employed or used periods of maternity leave to take college courses or further language training.

This chapter also acts as a timely response to growing debate in Poland on the long term stability of the Polish population. Poland's population is in decline with 9.96 births per 1000 of the population, measured against Poland's significantly higher death rate of 10.24 deaths per 1000 of the population (IndexMundi: 2011, CIA World Factbook: 2012). Reports issued by Poland's Central Statistics Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, GUS) in 2010 and 2011 estimated that Poland's declining birth rate coupled with high emigration figures were significant enough to cause a population deficit leaving the country experiencing its lowest population figures since the Second World War (GUS: 2010, GUS: 2011). In March 2011 Poland's business daily *Parkeit* predicted that if the population continued to age Poland's economy would shrink by 1% within eight years as the working population (people aged 15-64 years) would have fallen under a critical 70% (Parkeit: 2011). Until this point Poland's press had largely blamed falling birth rates on a perceived increase in the levels of Polish youth hedonism following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Leszczynski: 2011). Early last year attention turned to the increasing Polish birth rate outside of Poland, with *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Poland's largest daily newspaper) estimating that almost 21,000 Polish children were born in England and Wales in 2011 (Kadluczka: 2012). Current concern in the media (in the UK and Poland) is not simply that Polish children are being born abroad (Poland has a proud tradition of emigration and a strong ex pat community known as 'Polonia', which it embraces), but more that Polish women abroad are having more children than

their counterparts back in Poland (Iglicka and Gmaj: 2008, Wrabec: 2008, Brennan: 2011, Hartley-Parkinson: 2011). By looking at grassroots reasons as to why Polish migrant parents chose to have their children in the UK rather than return to Poland, this chapter makes a valid contribution to current British and Polish population debates.

4.3 Experiences of pregnancy and prenatal care

4.3.1 Planning a baby

Polish migrants in this study, who were child-free on their arrival in Britain, did not by and large migrate with the intention of starting families. One informant, Mariola, as discussed in chapter one, used her pregnancy to justify to her family in Poland why she should stay in the UK, but this pregnancy had been unplanned. Mariola was an exception in this respect as her pregnancy became instrumental in determining where she would live, but in general informants did not associate having a baby with committing themselves to living in a certain place. Iza for example explained that her and her husband's decision to start a family was entirely isolated from the idea of where the couple would have their baby and live more permanently:

'We were here anyway, and because of our age I thought it's time to have a child, uhur, and so it was planned, but no, we never thought ever 'she is to be born in Poland', no, no.' (Iza)

For Iza the decision to start a family was about life course; it was simply the right time for this aspect of her life to begin which happened to coincide with her migration. This pragmatism was shared by all of the new parent informants, and correlates well to the pragmatic attitudes of the migrants who were parents prior to entering the UK (3.2.1). Polish migrants who did have children prior to their arrival in Britain did not regard having a child or children as an obstacle to migration or as something that might hinder their experience of living abroad. Parenting and living abroad was regarded as compatible by both new and more experienced Polish migrant parents alike. The question for many informants

though, was how to make these two facets of their lives even more compatible, finding the best possible outcomes for both 'the family' and 'the self.'

Iza's narrative also highlights another widely held opinion found across the sample in that she identified her age as her reason for deciding to start a family. The age of thirty was noted by nearly all participants as the right, perfect or ideal time to start a family. Edyta, who had become a mother at the age of twenty one, identified thirty as the appropriate time for childbearing. She felt that she had become a mother too young, and described how she and her husband Łukasz, as they approached their thirtieth birthdays, felt like they needed a challenge of another kind to mark this transitional age, the challenge for them would be their migration. When Polish migrants talked about thirty as a transitional life course moment which prompted childbearing it was clear to see, once again, that this tension between planning and not planning aspects of their lives was in evidence. Lidia, who regarded herself as very unconventional and followed a liberal parenting ethos (wherein children are discouraged rather than disciplined, and children are encouraged to learn through play and exploration, rather than formal learning) said, '*We didn't really plan but I always planned to have my first baby by thirty*'. In Bailey's study (1999) on British expectant mothers, pregnancy was met by similarly pragmatic but uncertain planning, in that informants wanted to secure house purchases and life insurance policies prior to the arrival of their babies (two families in this study talked about wanting to secure house purchases) but left career paths vague. As discussed shortly (4.7.2) Polish migrants left their plans following maternity leave equally ambiguous. This contestation between planning and not planning is perhaps more indicative therefore of being new parents here rather than migrant parents specifically.

It is interesting though that Polish migrants so uniformly regarded thirty to be an appropriate childbearing age and measured their plans against this, given that the average age of a first time mother in Poland is significantly younger at 24.5 years (CIA World Factbook: 2012), compared to the average age of a first time mother in the UK, which currently stands at 29.1 years (ibid). According to a

report conducted by Eurobarometer (Testa: 2006), the average age for women (of childbearing years) across the 25 European Union member state countries in 2006 to have her first child, was 24.6 years. The same report found that the ideal age to become a mother was on average higher by one year than the mean observed for first childbearing (Testa: 2006). This suggests that the idealised age of thirty for first childbearing reported by Polish migrants in this study is surprising.

It is also worth noting however, that informants in this study had a higher fertility rate than the Polish national average, with all but two of the two parent Polish households in this study having two or more children by 2012. This again corresponds to behavioural characteristics more common in the UK, where the total fertility rate stands at 1.91 children compared with the significantly lower total fertility rate in Poland of 1.31 children in 2012 per woman of childbearing age (CIA World Factbook: 2012). Whether Polish migrants resident in the UK really are behaving more in line with their British parallels rather than Polish counterparts which is what these findings seems to suggest, would definitely benefit from wider and possibly more quantitative study before confident conclusions can be drawn. Tentative suggestions from this study do however, correlate to press speculation in both Poland and Britain that Polish migrants have more children and wait longer to have those children when resident in the UK (see for example, NPE: 2012).

4.3.2 Experiences of prenatal care

Although health care in Poland is provided through a heavily regulated public care system known as Narodowy Fundasz Zdrowia (NFZ) (National Health Fund), which is paid for through a government budget and employee social insurance contributions, the continued practice of making heavy out of pocket payments for more thorough health care (as was practised in the Soviet era) persists, and together with the perceived inadequacies of this state system, this has caused uptake of private health care in Poland to dramatically rise in recent years (Eurostat:2012). Furthermore, prenatal care provision in Poland in particular, has essentially been privatised as a result of the government

classifying midwifery a 'therapeutic entity', an area of care increasingly outsourced to private health care providers (according to the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies report, 2010). In spite of reliance on private prenatal services in Poland, when presenting as pregnant in the UK all informants in this study used state health care provision (provided by the National Health Service) and reported high levels of satisfaction with this prenatal service in the UK. Walentyna, for instance, said: *'I wasn't sure if I could be able to get the same level of care in Poland. Actually I was sure, there was no possibility'*. However, the different ethos of prenatal care in Britain compared to Poland caused informants frustration, confusion and, on occasion, distress.

In Britain midwifery provision is scheduled according to a 'pyramid of prenatal care', based on a memorandum issued by the Ministry of Health in 1929, which deems that mother and baby experience the greatest threat to life toward the end of pregnancy (Nicolaidis: 2010). In Britain routine appointments at the beginning of pregnancies are therefore relatively few compared to regular close appointments in the third trimester. Typically a first pregnancy in its first trimester will incur a booking appointment usually offered at around 6 weeks followed by an anomaly scan offered between 11-13 weeks of gestation, appointments with the midwife at 16 and 20 weeks and a further routine scan at 20 weeks. In Poland prenatal care is extremely paternalistic having its historical roots in Catholic tradition which teaches the sanctity of all life. This means that early pregnancy is regarded as having high risk, and so the Polish system of prenatal care seemingly works on an almost inverted version of the British system, with numerous early scans to detect complications. Obstetric practice in Poland is interventionist rather than reactionary. For Ludmiła these differing approaches to early prenatal care caused confusion, as she thought this meant she would not be offered assistance to halt miscarriage if the situation should arise:

'So to me a major difference was that in Poland, you are pregnant from day one and you're looked after from day one, and life has to be protected from day one, there is no room for, natural miscarriage...They fight for every pregnancy, if

there's something going wrong early in pregnancy you're straight in hospital and you're there for sometimes the duration. In England its first three months, nobody is interested in you, because you might still miscarry as a natural cause and that [is] just nonexistent in Poland.' (Ludmiła)

Ludmiła translated the approach of British obstetrics as callous and unholy almost. In particular Ludmiła deplored the autonomy she was given over her pregnancy in Britain, as it made her feel solely responsible for the survival of her baby. This is an anxious prospect at the best of times but possibly this feeling was accentuated for informants by the continued significance of Catholicism in Polish culture which positions pregnancy as sacred. In Poland the recent celebrity awarded to Polish mother Joanna Krzystonek, who lay upside down in a hospital bed for months in order to prevent the premature births of her twin sons (July 2012) (see Leszkowicz and Halawj: 2012), is testament to how perceived acts of strength in pregnancy and maternity itself are revered.

Ludmiła's condemnation of the British approach to prenatal care (I should stress that she was not unsatisfied with the actual care she received) was shared by Teodor who believed that the medical attention his wife Barbara had received in her second pregnancy in Britain was paltry compared to that received during her first pregnancy in Poland. In interview with Teodor and his brother-in-law Lech both felt that medical professionals in Britain had not asked Barbara enough questions during consultation; they interpreted this lack of interaction as neglectful. Once again this attitude was based on the assumption that the pregnancy carried great risk and so would automatically incur a problem. Teodor for example stated that, *'during a pregnancy in Poland you've got every month, ultrascan, to discover the...er...problem'*. The outcomes of these cultural attitudes should not be overlooked. Ludmiła for example talked about how she had expected healthcare professionals to *'look after'* her the minute she presented as pregnant. This expectation then led Ludmiła to misread a quite typical delay between registering her pregnancy and having a booking appointment as meaning there was a problem with her pregnancy:

'They said that this midwife is going to come to the house and talk to me, and I spend two weeks waiting and there's no phone call, no nothing, I actually was getting really worried and impatient.' (Ludmiła)

The transcript here does not do justice to the emotion Ludmiła used retelling this story, and in subsequent discussions with Ludmiła about her early pregnancy with her first child (following interview she had her second child), her desperation and anxiety at this time really came to light. Ludmiła resorted to calling her midwife to seek reassurance, as she struggled to believe her pregnancy was stable having not had the frequency of early assessment offered in Poland.

Polish migrant women may also anticipate interventionist prenatal care simply due to their constant cultural familiarity with gynaecological procedures. In Poland women are expected to attend biannual cervical smear tests, being routinely screened for cervical cancer and sexually transmitted infections. The Polish government is currently proposing to make this screening compulsory for working women aged 25-59 (Sutherland-Kay: 2011). It is understandable therefore that from a culture where reproductive health is so interventionist, and so enveloped in the pro-life teachings of the church, Polish migrants present as confused by what they interpret as the deficient under assessment of early pregnancy in Britain.

It would be wrong to assume that differing prenatal practice in Britain always resulted in such distress; the more likely outcome I feel was that presented by Walentyna in that the lack of information she received in early pregnancy, compared to what she knew she could obtain in Poland, was frustrating. To quell her curiosity, she told me off record, she had booked herself extra prenatal scans and appointments using her private healthcare insurance in Poland. Walentyna also noted use of Polish hairdressers, trips to her gynaecologist and to her dentist in Poland which illustrates how more affluent migrants, like Walentyna, serviced their lives so transnationally. The very transient global existences of the more affluent informants are revisited in chapter six.

Studies which have looked at how Polish migrant women use maternity services in the UK (Domaszek et al: 2007, and Bray et al: 2010) have noted this tendency for Polish women to attend scans and prenatal advice outside of the British state healthcare system, but have identified that this practice causes an additional problem in that Polish women are then more likely to miss their routine appointments in Britain. Health statisticians have then linked poor continuity in prenatal care to a greater risk of maternal mortality (Lewis et al. 2007). What has been lacking from this health research in the past is any emphasis on the reasons why Polish women seek these supplementary health checks, be it to calm their anxiety, curiosity or frustrations as argued here. For Walentyna attending these scans in Poland was also a matter of trust and empowerment; she felt that she could better trust what was familiar to her, in particular she noted the specific way she was examined by gynaecologists in Poland, and the questions she anticipated she would be asked. Walentyna also felt better informed about her pregnancy having received the information in her native tongue. For Walentyna the 'advantages' of Polish antenatal care left her happy and willing to travel in pregnancy.

Informants also reported tensions between themselves and healthcare providers if they asked for actions to be completed which were seen as standard practice in Poland. Olga for example reported feeling surprised that she had not been offered a blood test to confirm her pregnancy; her midwife had been taken aback when she requested the procedure. Simple differences in prenatal practice such as this had a significant emotional impact on Polish migrant women. Olga had anticipated that her pregnancy would be met with a fanfare of medical procedures. Although Olga understood and appreciated that pregnancy was regarded as a 'normal' process in Britain, she also described feeling a sense of disappointment that the reception of her pregnancy had not been more medicalised. Olga felt angry that the British system had taken away from her the experience of pregnancy as '*a magical issue*', the normalisation of the experience making it almost too blasé to satisfy.

Olga's description of this anticlimactic experience is resonant of the disappointment felt by the Chilean exile women in Kay's study (1987) when they

came to terms with the cultural devaluation of motherhood in Britain compared to its celebration in Chile. As with many of the informants in this study, Olga's reflection on her feelings contained conflicting ideas however. Prior to the interview she had told me that the British system of maternity provision made her feel empowered as the woman-centred approach to birth and the management of pregnancy had helped her escape the medicalisation of childbirth which she claimed to fear. Polish migrants' experiences of pregnancy in Britain were extremely complex therefore, and while they found cultural differences in prenatal care distressing, frustrating and confusing, they also reasoned through cultural differences to find aspects which they preferred.

4.4 Birth

4.4.1 Alternative birthing practice

The Winterton Report in 1992 introduced the principles of 'Choice, Continuity and Control' to maternity care in Britain (HMSO: 1992). These principles transformed maternity provision into a woman-centred and wherever possible, midwife led practice. In Poland a similar campaign to make maternity care less authoritarian known as 'Rodzić po ludzka' (Childbirth with Dignity) and led by social activist Anna Otffinowska, is now underway but access to alternative birthing practices such as the use of water births, doulas, and home birth remains in its relative infancy in Poland (Pacewicz: 2010). It might be considered surprising then that five informants in this study came forward as impassioned advocates of this approach to birth; four of whom had known that British maternity services would be led in this way, and one for whom this approach to birth came as a welcome surprise.

Polish migrant women interested in alternative birthing techniques found access to advice and training from various sources. Walentyna and Lidia both attended active birthing classes with a private clinician who advertised at the local hospital maternity ward. Olga attended National Childbirth Trust classes which she had learnt about through a family member. Elżbieta had chosen to give birth in a specialist NHS midwife led unit recommended to her by her attending midwife at the local GP surgery. Informants who sought alternative birthing advice tended to be the more highly educated informants in the sample. They

also tended to be the women who spoke about migrating to Britain as a way to experience something new and different, their liberal values clearly governing an array of their lifestyle choices.

4.4.2 The use of translators

From discussions about birth following interviews it was interesting to note that most informants assumed that any male health care professionals present at the births of their children in Britain had been qualified doctors. This assumption can be explained by the scarcity of male midwives and indeed nurses in Poland (Belcher and Hart: 2005) which meant that Polish migrants were not always familiar with men acting in this capacity, and secondly because birth in Poland is always presided over by a qualified doctor (generally a gynaecologist or obstetrician). Male staff present during labour had therefore been assumed to be doctors rather than nurses, midwives or auxiliaries. This same scenario was recently chronicled by the Channel Four fly-on-the-wall documentary series *One Born Every Minute* in an episode broadcast on 11th January 2011 in which a young Polish woman constantly refers to her attending male midwife as 'doctor'. Polish migrants' lack of familiarity with men attending them at birth may have been depicted as humorous in the programme, but by ignoring the more serious outcomes of cultural expectations migrants needs are at risk of being underheard. When I interviewed a Polish interpreter in Glasgow during the early piloting phase of this study, he recalled how he and male colleagues had been sent to attend Polish women in birth who felt uncomfortable with having a male translator present in such intimate circumstances. Literature on migrant experiences of maternity care (such as Clarke et al.: 2008 and Harding et al.: 2008) has thus far identified that having relatives act as translators for labouring women is less than ideal, but equally the gender of the translators for certain migrant groups, including Poles, might also need to be reconsidered in future policy.

Saying this, informants in this study generally refused the use of translators of either gender believing that it would impinge on the privacy of their birth. Olga

for example rejected the offer of a translator: *'I didn't want to have you know, other strangers with me'*. The ability to have privacy during birth was valued very highly by informants, especially because, as the vast number of informants told me, privacy during birth in Poland was regarded as a luxury and came at great expense. As Elżbieta informed me: *'there is an option for paying for having like separate, erm, room, or for having extra care, and er, like a personal nurse to look after you, you can do it [laughs]; at an extra cost!'* Olga however, worried that the presence of a translator would undermine her control of the birth as she was not sure whether information would be passed on to her accurately: *'During the labour you know, that was the problem, er, because I expect that I want to just speak in Polish but no... I choose to speak in only English as I wanted to know what is going on around.'* This question of who to trust in the birthing room came up with Elżbieta too. She recalled having to learn the idea that midwives rather than doctors were the professionals to trust during British births. Some informants were more ambivalent about how their births were conducted. Mariola for example spoke a mixture of Polish and English during her labour and recalled enjoying the language barrier as a means of distraction. She seemed very proud that the bilingual confusion of her birth could be retold to great comedy affect, re-enacting herself saying *'push'? tutaj?'* (*here?*). For both Mariola and Elżbieta the experience of giving birth in Britain was recounted as a new cultural experience and learning opportunity.

4.4.3 Cultural differences in the approach to birth

As with prenatal care, cultural differences in the approach to birth also created concern and frustration for informants. Elżbieta, for example, experienced complications with stitches following the birth of her first child. She was happy to be referred by her midwife to her GP but then expected to be referred again to a specialist gynaecologist, referral to specialists being typical practice in Poland. Elżbieta was not referred, and offered help instead by her GP: *'I really wanted to see one [a gynaecologist] so this was quite difficult, I didn't see the reason behind that'*. Again, insisting on a process that was common in Poland brought the informant into conflict with her health care provider. Elżbieta's GP offered

advice but Elżbieta felt: *'I couldn't, I didn't trust them, I don't know why...Erm, it was probably because I'm used to something different'*. Other informants however were satisfied that British practices differed from those in Poland. Teodor for example described how doctors had demonstrated to his wife how an episiotomy was performed differently in Poland. Barbara and Teodor were reassured by this explanation and Teodor even sounded victorious that they had managed to experience 'the British way' of birth.

Resoundingly Polish migrant parents were appreciative of the universal choice and freedoms they were allowed in British births. Teodor, for instance, reported having to pay to be present at the birth of his first child in Poland so he was particularly grateful that he had been able to attend his second child's birth for free. Paulina appreciated having choice and free access to pain relief during her birth in Britain: *'It's whether you want epidural or anything else: you haven't got that choice here, in Poland you would have to pay'*. At the time of these interviews the Polish Ministry of Health was refusing to fund free epidurals for labouring women in Poland, a controversial injunction brought about by its director Ewa Kopacza (Janczewska: 2008). I suspect that if this sample had been larger, or possibly more representative given the proportionally high number of women in the study who sought natural and drug free deliveries, free access to pain relief during labour would have been celebrated by more informants.

4.5 The postpartum period

4.5.1 Breastfeeding

All but one of the fifteen new mothers in this study breastfed their baby. This high uptake on breastfeeding corresponds to increasingly high breastfeeding rates in Poland. According to the World Health Organisation Global Data Bank the exclusive breastfeeding of infants under four months of age has increased in Poland from 1.5% in 1988 to 17% in 1995 (WHO:2011). La Leche League International found that in 2003 93% of new mothers in Poland initiated breastfeeding following birth compared to an initiation rate of just 69% in the UK. Polish breastfeeding rates are only slightly behind those of Scandinavian

countries (La Leche League: 2003). Sweden, Denmark and increasingly, Poland, buck the trend of low breastfeeding rates typically found elsewhere in Europe. The pro-breastfeeding culture in Poland was well represented in this study with informants feeling proud, purposeful and uninhibited by their breastfeeding experiences when in the UK. Truda for example reported, *'It's good that I am breastfeeding, I do it for this purpose'*, and Elwira stated, *'I'll just feed her anywhere, I don't feel any er, I'm not embarrassed, I just don't care really'*. Attitudes toward breastfeeding were also characteristically pragmatic, with informants often referencing the convenience of breastfeeding and the health benefits to their baby while the emotional benefits of breastfeeding such as the promotion of bonding, were mentioned rarely.

It is also important to specify that it is exclusive breastfeeding rates which are on the rise in Poland, not combination feeding (whereby breastfed infants are supplemented with formula milk). Unicef calculated that combination feeding was practised by 54% of breastfeeding mothers in Poland in 1988, and that combination feeding rates fell to 22% in 1998 (Storms et al.: 2003). Exclusive breastfeeding in the UK, by contrast, is fairly low with only 21% of mothers still breastfeeding exclusively when their infant reaches 4-6 months of age (La Leche League: 2003). Informants seemed very aware of this difference in breastfeeding behaviour and were critical of British women for ending exclusive breastfeeding early (as they perceived):

'My wife was [breastfeeding] for six months. Midwife was surprised because British women just did one week and something, and then getting drinks' [mimics making up a bottle] and then feed from bottle. We were getting six months!...Because in Poland it's normal that women feed like this, all the time.' (Lech)

For Lech this encounter with the midwife (I suspect that he means health visitor) was one of enlightenment, in that he became aware, and inadvertently pleased about, a cultural difference. Polish migrants drew on their cultural expectations to inform their assessment of British breastfeeding practice in a similar vein to how they weighed up prenatal care. As will be argued in greater depth in

chapter six, Polish migrants enjoyed this intercultural exchange, celebrating their Polish identity when they perceived a cultural preference in Poland, and showing acculturative attitudes when they perceived a preference to cultural practice in Britain.

In terms of breastfeeding support, Polish migrants generally stated that they had found access to support services in the UK good. I anticipate however, that their actual footfall on services has been low because a number of informants shared the opinion that expressing difficulty or discomfort with breastfeeding was tantamount to complaining. Mariola for example said: *'I didn't complain to - ever, on breastfeeding...I just can't understand women who complain, er, about that. They want to finish very early; it's such a big pleasure!'* Indeed informants reported not needing to access breastfeeding support rather victoriously, rather than as a matter of course. Elżbieta for instance said: *'I didn't really need a support' [defiant tone]. 'Any support I needed was there, available' [dismissive tone].* On some occasions I found the expectation that babies should be breastfed (and in particular for a very minimum of four months) so ingrained in the mindset of informants, that struggling to breastfeed was associated with failure. One informant whom had struggled to breastfeed even likened giving her baby a bottle for the first time as the same feeling she had when attending her father's funeral. Informants whom had been successful with breastfeeding, however, were extremely triumphant about their experiences (as conveyed in the above interview extract with Lech). Those who did access breastfeeding support did so by contacting large national and international organisations rather than their assigned midwife or health visitor. Two informants contacted La Leche League International for guidance; this organisation later asked these informants to become breastfeeding guidance volunteers, and one of these informants did agree to take up a voluntary peer support role. Another informant reported contacting The National Childbirth Trust for breastfeeding advice but was less satisfied by the advice offered viewing it as old fashioned.

4.5.2 The health visitor

On record informants were extremely pleased with the help and advice they had been offered by their health visitor following the birth of their child. Health visitors were noted as having introduced informants to their local support networks, including telling informants about their nearest Sure Start Centre, helping to reassure informants about parenting skills and on one occasion a health visitor even aided an informant find a job. Krysia for example explains, '*I got a letter in the post with all printed advertised from NHS website, with a note from health visitor, 'I saw it and I thought of you, good luck.'*' Informants felt surprised that health visitors would visit them at home but typically found visits useful rather than intrusive. One informant felt that the postpartum care she received in the UK had been so useful she credited it with helping her to become a good parent, Iza remarked, '*It's all so well organised, so that helped me to be a good mum.*' Others felt that the regular home visits from health visitors and midwives had helped them feel that their care was personalised. Elżbieta compared this to the Polish approach saying that, '*With doctors it just seemed so medical.*' In this situation a more naturalised less authoritarian approach to health and social welfare than might be expected in Poland, was well received.

Off record however, situations of conflict between informants and health visitors came to light. In one case the health visitor had suggested that an informant should stop smoking. While reasons for the suggestion were understood by the informant she nonetheless regarded the smoking cessation advice as futile and found the conversation confrontational, eventually requesting to be attended by a different health visitor. Smoking rates are extremely high in Poland; a report from The World Health Organisation in conjunction with The Ministry of Health in Poland (2009) estimates that 29% of Poland's adult population smoke, with 23% of Polish women smoking on a daily basis (WHO/MZ:2010). In the second incident an informant was given advice on sleep training. Once again 'rooming-in' and 'co-sleeping' with newborns is practised fairly commonly in Poland, having increased as a backlash to former Soviet style maternity care when

newborn babies were traditionally put in collective nursery incubators away from mothers (Wojdan-Godek: 2005). Co-sleeping is currently advised against by some health practitioners in the UK (ABM: 2008). On this occasion the informant found the advice of her health visitor unwarranted viewing the exchange as a personal rather than cultural disagreement. Given that both examples of conflict demonstrate cultural norms in Poland clashing with British healthcare advice, I expect that these incidents may be fairly typical of interaction between Polish migrants and British healthcare professionals but more research in this field would be beneficial to check whether these are not just isolated cases.

4.6 Reflecting on new parenthood

4.6.1 Independence versus dependence

A key theme which emerged from informants' reflections on their entry into parenthood was whether or not this transition in their lives had renewed their sense of independence or caused them to feel greater dependence on either friends or family. Elwira felt that becoming a parent had forced her to be more self-reliant and confident in her own decisions: '*[Having Ruta] just help me to, I think, understand that I can actually decide about many things and that I don't need to ask anyone*'. Elwira realised however that this independence was ensnared against decisions she had to make about when to accept and decline offers of help. As a lone parent Elwira recognised that she needed assistance but felt reluctant to return to Poland believing that it might undo her newfound independence:

'I'm sure my parents would help me a lot in Poland, and I wouldn't be that independent as I am here, because I have to be and I don't mind being independent, so it's alright.' (Elwira)

Returning to Poland was associated with the past and being dependent on her parents, which leaves this narrative meeting the same 'coming of age' dilemma discussed shortly. In the end Elwira accepted an offer of assistance from her

octogenarian grandmother, who moved to Newcastle from Poland to aid the everyday running of her household. Elwira's story highlights how the conversation between independence and dependence was an ongoing and adjusting process for informants. In chapter three I described how Elwira choose to come to Britain to be close to her sibling, yet as she became a mother she rejected a return to Poland for fear of being too dependent on family. For many informants, particularly those who were young and child free at the time of migration, there was great deliberation over the fine tuning of this independence according to the ever-changing circumstances of their lives.

The reprioritising of life following children was not seamless. Krysia, another lone parent, had revelled in a very full and active social life prior to the birth of her son and now felt restricted and isolated, feeling that her independence had been compromised by not having extended family close by to help her. At the same time Krysia was proud that she did not rely on what she termed '*the grandparent's institution*'. As an example Krysia cited evenings as particularly frustrating, explaining how she was grateful that her son slept well but annoyed that she was then unable to go out. Krysia also recognised that she had swapped her reliance on her parents when in Poland for reliance on friends, a situation which she felt uncomfortable with: '*it's frustrating when you need to ask, you know, friends for help; they have their lives, and it's like battering [pestering] them*'. The mixed feelings Krysia had about her life as a new parent (restrained, proud, grateful, annoyed, frustrated and dependent) shows how the relationship between parenthood and migration was not always as straightforward and compatible as Polish migrant parents willed it to be.

On the other hand Mariola, again a lone parent, believed that migration actually allowed her greater independence as a parent. Mariola had not planned her pregnancy but found that it provided her with an appropriate reason to rebuke her mother's requests for her to return to Poland. Mariola believed that as a result of having a geographic boundary (literally time and distance) separating her from her mother, she felt better able to share her child and accept occasional help:

'Er, she is very sensitive about me and we had before very strong relationship, we probably, even too strong. And now when Zosia is around er, there's all feelings, and love got divided by, erm, us three....and it's more balanced'.
(Mariola)

Mariola imagined that her mother might have been *too* involved in the upbringing of her daughter if she had returned to Poland. By parenting abroad Mariola felt in control of this relationship and able to enjoy the help her mother provided in regularised month long visits to Britain and on Mariola's own extended holidays to Poland.

It is also clear that for informants this contestation between independence and dependence was very much entrenched in their extended family relationships, and in particular the relationship between mothers and daughters. Krysia for instance, essentially experienced the opposite of Mariola in that she found her mother less helpful on regularised visits than she had expected:

'The first time when she arrived here to help, er, she was helpful but I think my expectations were bigger, let's put it this way [Laughs]...Er, well she knows that I found my place in here so she's started asking questions of, you know, "baby come back, I worry- to Poland, you get help [from] both of us with Jakub", and stuff, but, no, what would I do over there?' (Krysia)

This extract is also a good example of how informants depicted their Polish mothers as somewhat stereotypically overbearing. Krysia and Mariola for instance mocked the pressure their mothers had put on them to return to Poland. Although both informants met this pressure with resistance, they ultimately came to different conclusions about what migrant parenting had achieved: Mariola thought that migrant parenting had given her greater independence, but for Krysia it equated to furthering her dependence. This shows that even when informants' experiences were similar, outcomes were processed very differently. Attempts to categorise the true intentions of Polish migrant women, such as that by Grzymała-Kazłowska (2005), might be treated with caution therefore, in favour of using more narrative based inquiry.

4.6.2 Changing family dynamics

Informants frequently noted how new parenthood had changed their levels and modes of interaction with extended family. In a conversation with Elwira subsequent to interview, she remarked on how the arrival of her baby had changed her relationship with her parents simply by increasing the frequency and style of her correspondence with them. Prior to the arrival of her daughter Elwira exchanged emails with her extended family weekly to fortnightly. Having her grandma resident in her flat following the birth of her daughter then increased communication between Elwira and her parents, as her Grandma phoned Poland on a daily basis and Elwira was generally party to these conversations. Once her daughter became more vocal levels of interaction changed once again, as extended family members expressed interest in wanting to hear and see the baby communicate; correspondence then took place more frequently, conducted over the telephone and using Skype. The ever-changing life courses of Polish migrants meant that modes and levels of interaction with extended family was commonly reported as in a state of flux; illness and bereavement being cited alongside pregnancy and transition into parenthood as reasons why interaction may have been intensified for any length of time.

Transition into parenthood was also noted as impetus for changing amounts and durations of face-to-face interactions between Polish migrants and their extended families. The majority of new parents in this study had their parents stay with them for periods of up to six months on the arrival of their first baby. It was also interesting to note that informants' parents commonly travelled independently from one another in order to maximise their assistance with childcare. So for example the maternal grandmother would stay for one month, followed by her husband; then the paternal grandmother would arrive and leave after a month, followed by the visit of the paternal grandfather. For couples Truda and Kazimierz, and Iza and Wiktor, who reported using this 'one-in, one-out' system of grand parenting care provision, the disadvantages of the system noted, included interfamilial conflict and feelings of lessened independence due

to having a parent residing in the home continuously. Iza and Wiktor for example, had used this method of childcare immediately after Iza had returned to work from maternity leave, as they felt their daughter Luisa was still too young to attend nursery. Like Truda and Kazimierz, at the time of interviewing Iza and Wiktor they looking to end the arrangement as it was deemed very 'intense'. This system of grand parenting care provision should not be overlooked as it shows grandfathers as well as grandmothers taking up the mantle of childcare responsibility alone. This finding has great potential for further research, as exploration of gender dynamics in transnational grand parenting has not be covered in the literature previously (see for example, work on 'grand mothering' by Plaza: 2000).

For other informants, ultimately becoming a parent in itself seemed to be the mainstay of promoting generational understanding. Mariola for example talked about an increased sense of equality and empathy between her and her mother after becoming a parent herself: *'Yes, I feel more independent, I think I have to go my way, my own way because I got a child...And my mother can understand it now better than before when I was alone.'* These improved intergenerational dynamics were liberating and empowering for Mariola, and as such she narrated her story once again around the theme of independence. Likewise entering into migrant parenthood specifically had improved familial and generational relationships for Paulina and Waldemar. As previously noted, Paulina's family members encouraged the couple to migrate seeing migration as offering great opportunity and adventure (3.2.4). Following interview Paulina told me how proud she and Waldemar were of themselves, and how proud her parents were of her, for 'succeeding' in parenting abroad. Paulina talked about how her parent's generation saw migration as a great endurance as they had had friends and relatives who had been raised outside of the 'Iron Curtain' following World War II, and so associated migrant life with this exile hardship. Becoming parents abroad did not always change family dynamics for the negative then, as feelings of increased intergenerational admiration were also reported.

4.6.3 Coming of age

Interestingly, Paulina and Waldemar (the youngest informants in this study) conceptualised their entry into parenthood and their migration story and as part of their wider coming of age saga:

'Well we've looked at our lives here, because we were so young, you know, learning how do it all... cos we were just kids when we were living in Poland, young kids, but now we've got responsibilities. I don't know how [we] will feel going back and living with my mum, I couldn't. We've got our own routines and our own way to do things [now]. So that's what I don't miss, even though I really love my mum.' (Paulina)

For Paulina, Poland (which she left when she was 22) had come to represent her youth and dependence, while life in the UK represented adulthood and independence. Paulina preferred her way of life in Britain particularly the ability to exercise autonomy over her decisions, but this feeling of freedom was countered by feelings of loss and longing for her mother, albeit not the lifestyle her mother represented. For Paulina 'independence from' and 'love for' her mother were almost put on conflicting trajectories. As with the narratives presented by Krysia, Mariola and Elwira migrant parenting carried complex and emotive feelings, particularly so when they were met by the juncture of extended familial relationships. Entry into parenthood was therefore used by Polish migrants as a way to redefine themselves and those relationships around them. Paulina, for example, used migrant parenthood to redefine herself as mature and responsible; Mariola similarly redefined herself as autonomous and liberated, while those who were parents prior to migration, such as Miron and Edyta, saw migration as helping them couple parental responsibility with personal freedom (3.2.2).

Paulina's narrative might also be reflective of changing social attitudes in Poland. Paulina talked for instance, about how husband Waldemar had been a 'typical' Polish mummy's boy and the youngest most 'spoilt' son in his family prior to migration. The couple agreed that migration had then forced them to become more domestically adept and that this secured their independence from

their parents. Paulina spoke about feeling proud that she had been able to witness Waldemar learn how to cook, clean and organise himself, and joked about how quickly he reverted to his former ways when visiting Poland. This potential for the couple to regress into their past roles as a result of a more permanent move back to Poland worried Paulina as she liked the equality she now had with Waldemar. This desire for more gender equality and greater autonomy from the previous generation recurred across informant narratives and was perhaps indicative of a wider social movement in Poland.

4.6.4 Negotiating responsibility

Like Paulina, Elżbieta (who was 33 at the time of migration) saw her migration as marking her 'coming of age.' Elżbieta and her husband Paweł had moved to the UK in an attempt to find improved financial stability in readiness to become parents (3.2.3). Like Paulina, Elżbieta saw her migration as beset with taking responsibility, but for Elżbieta it was parenthood specifically that defined this growing-up, not, as Paulina perceived, migration more broadly. Elżbieta credited the arrival of her first child as having changed her '*whole perception of the world*'; she proclaimed to seeing parenthood as a time for seriousness and stability, a time when '*life starts revolving around children and their problems*.' Interestingly Elżbieta perceived parenthood to be all consuming which contradicted the perception of the majority of informants who tended to understand entry into parenthood as a less definitive aspect of their lives. Elżbieta reflected, for example, on her previous migration experience of her early twenties when she worked as a seasonal agricultural worker just outside of London. Elżbieta regarded this period in her life as being a previous incarnation of herself, as someone prepared to take risks and seek frivolity. Elżbieta stressed that this previous migrant self had not been a migrant parent: '*No, I'm just scared of doing it [now], but back then I just didn't think about such issues*'. For Elżbieta being a migrant parent meant making her migration as 'low risk' as possible. Although Elżbieta and Paweł were childfree at the time of migration, they migrated with thoughts of starting a family in mind, only migrating when they had secure work in their trained professions (dentistry and

academia). This contrasts with the migration decisions set by Miron and Edyta, who were already parents at the outset of migration. They migrated to low paid, low skilled jobs with a view to seek further employment opportunities on arrival, this being part of the 'thrill' of migration.

While Elżbieta's migration was about taking responsibility, planning for her future as a parent, Edyta's migration was imagined as a way to escape responsibility:

'So I feel like I'm still you know, I don't want to grow up, I don't want to be like a proper adult...It is a bit, not responsible, but I just don't feel like you know, staying at home all the time and like ironing and all this stuff. With me I feel sometimes that I am not responsible... I think it's, it's age, it's- I feel like I'm not really getting older.' (Edyta)

Edyta had become a mother when she was just 21 years of age. Edyta and husband Łukasz had not planned this pregnancy, and so migration was a way to reclaim also a missed youth (3.2.2). Both during and after interview Edyta talked about negotiating between finding personal freedom in migration and accepting her responsibilities as a parent. For Elżbieta however, migration was instrumental in ending her youth and redefining her as having parental responsibility. Elżbieta represented a more conservative cohort in this study (also evident in the narratives of Iza and Truda). These migrants had deliberately put off childbearing until they felt they had financial security, understanding parenthood as beginning a separate phase in their lives. Age of first childbearing was a significant factor then, in the way Polish migrant parents understood and defined migrant parenthood.

For those informants who had recently entered parenthood, new parental responsibilities were often seen as having renewed their ambitions. Elwira, for example, truly embraced the idea of having greater responsibility in life due to parenthood, and used this to drive her ambitions:

'It's like more serious now, it was like kind of game and you know, you have fun before -and now I would actually say it's all about her, and I've got [the] power

to change her life...I can't be shy or I can't be afraid of asking because I'm not asking about, well, I'm not just representing myself, I'm representing us.'
(Elwira)

Like Paulina, Elwira talked about thriving on her newfound responsibilities. In contrast to Paulina though, Elwira's narrative construction and her negotiation of responsibility was perhaps symptomatic of her being a lone parent, in that she imagined herself as an ambassador for her whole family unit. Elwira described herself as having this quite authoritarian role (one more aligned to traditional readings of fatherhood) over her family, positioning herself as having '*power to change*' her daughter's life. Elwira's focus and determination was reminiscent of the 'masculine masquerade' McDowell (1997) found characterised younger women in the workplace; this defensive 'we can do it all' attitude having been used to hold rank against male and competing female colleagues. Relative to the rest of the sample the six migrant lone parents (all women), in this study, had particularly entrepreneurial and ambitious attitudes about their professional lives. While this similarity might be attributed to the problem of snowball sampling (some of these informants were friends which explains their comparable mindset), it might also suggest that having sole day-to-day responsibility for children did not impede Polish migrant parents' ambitions. If anything, Polish migrant lone parents presented as some of the most motivated migrants in the study.

Informants also reported that becoming parents had helped them realise some of their original migratory ambitions. Parenthood offered migrants the new perspectives, thrill, and new 'culture' that they had sought from migration. As such informants responded to parenthood with the same resolve that they used to describe their migrations. Elwira, for example, came to a stoic conclusion about her life as a migrant parent: '*It's quite funny because often people say they've got like problems or something and I'm saying I don't have problems, I got challenges!*' For some informants the definition between migration and parenthood was blurred then (Elwira, Paulina), for others the definition was

more distinct (Elżbieta) and for others still the merging of the two identities was a source of role conflict (Edyta).

4.7 Working parents

4.7.1 Maternity and Paternity Entitlement

Looking at changing maternity laws in Poland, Dulewicz and Stobinski (2009) note how maternity leave in Poland rose from a statutory 18 weeks to 20 weeks in 2009 in order to put it in line with European workers' rights legislation. In the UK women are currently entitled to 26 weeks leave with an option to take a further six months unpaid leave. The first six weeks are at 90% of pay and the next 20 at £102.80 per week (HMO: 2013). By contrast, in Poland remuneration is paid at 100% for the duration of leave. New fathers are allowed two weeks' paid leave at a maximum £102.80 a week in the UK (Michoń and Kotowska: 2012). In Poland new fathers could expect one week paid leave at the time of these interviews (this rose to 2 weeks in 2011) (ibid). Informants were quick to compare leave entitlements: *'I was working that time so, I got nine months maternity leave, that's better as well because you've got only four months in Poland'* (Paulina), and commonly deduced that pay and leave entitlements were better in Britain, even though remuneration rates were actually better in Poland. Informants generally surmised that if they continued to live in Poland they would struggle more financially: *'In Poland if I don't go to work it's more of a struggle'* (Ludmiła), often referring to high unemployment and the high cost of living in Poland as reasons for this conclusion. As argued in chapter three (3.3.4) informants held high levels of cultural capital and were well informed about state provision and their entitlements. This finding runs contrary to research conducted by pressure groups *Maternity Action Organisation* (Bragg and Owens: 2010) and *Medact* (Gaudion: 2005) who both find migrants unclear of their maternity entitlements. As argued latterly in (5.2.1), much of this cultural knowledge about provision and entitlement had been passed on by 'word of mouth' and was sometimes inaccurate. This study agrees with those pressure

groups then, that there is a need to make maternity entitlements clearer to migrants.

4.7.2 Maternity Leave

As with their plans for migration, informants typically left plans for their maternity or paternity leave indefinite and flexible as well. Some informants based this flexibility on how the early months of parenting transpired. Truda for example extended her maternity leave when she realised that breastfeeding was going well:

'I planned to be off for six months but because I was ok with breastfeeding with no problems. I know that the more you breastfeed the better...So I said yes I will stay another three months and extend my maternity leave to nine months.'
(Truda)

Olga's work contract terminated when she was on her maternity leave. She had decided to put off looking for a new job until her son became easier to settle allowing her time to feel happier putting him in childcare. Other informants were willing to shorten their leave in response to employers' needs. Mariola for example experienced pressure from her human resource manager to return to work early and not take her full leave entitlement. Rather than begrudging this pressure Mariola was conciliatory about the needs of her employer:

'My human resource manager, she did not want me to take my full maternity leave...it wasn't very important, unpleasant or something like that... er, my company experienced erm some financial problems, so basically they had to fire er fourteen people, so you can imagine! And er, I understood the time; it's very hard time for, for company, they just wanted to have a staff to work in the office. So it's quite understandable.' (Mariola)

Mariola's dedication to the company paid dividends later; when business picked up she was quickly promoted and offered increasing amounts of autonomy within the company. Similarly (and as previously noted in (3.3.2), Barbara's agreement in her pregnancy to swap a classroom assistant role for a clerical position also led to a permanent promotion.

Adopting a flexible approach to their jobs during pregnancy and maternity leave had not necessarily been a strategic attempt by informants to further their career progression. This 'wait and see approach' of Polish migrants has been previously identified by Krings et al. (2009) who found that it related to fears about job security. This corresponds to Cieślik's (2011) study which found that Polish women considered flexible maternity leave an important component of job security. While Mariola notes sympathy for the plight of her company, she also realised that her employment was threatened by the recession; this suggests that her flexibility in returning to work early was a precautionary measure in order to retain her employment in the long term. This once again questions where agency lies in the lives of Polish migrants, whether Polish migrants presented as flexible and adaptable in order to be active agents of their own futures or whether this flexibility was a response to macro economic pressures, as discussed in chapter three (3.5.2).

Many of the informants in this study presented the same characteristics as those described in Kasic and Triandafylidou's 2004 study of Polish migrants, in that they were actively seeking better jobs, shorter working hours, higher salaries and typically they held entrepreneurial attitudes. This is especially evident in the ways informants talked about utilising their paid leave to advance their prospects. Paulina for example used her maternity leave to access North Tyneside Council Family Information Service who then helped her enrol on a childcare course so she could become a registered childminder. Elwira used her leave to further her university studies. Lech talked about using his leave and holiday entitlements to further his physiotherapy business plans. For these informants paid leave from work was treated as an opportunity to advance their skills and ambitions without compromising their household income. For informants who were less reliant on their own personal income, Walentyna, who used her maternity leave to attend language courses in the evenings, and Elżbieta, who started a PhD shortly after the birth of her first son, using maternity leave was about gaining long and short term gratification. These informants talked about the immediate personal fulfilment of studying alongside parenting (both referring to their fear of 'baby brain'). This spirit of enterprise

and personal gain cut across the socio economic divide however, in that these more affluent informants also talked about their long term goals to further their qualifications and advance their skills.

4.7.3 Returning to 'work'

It would be wrong to present all informants in this study as fitting Kotic and Triandafylidou's career orientated model. Ludmiła and Olga presented more like the Polish women in Cook et al's (2010) study in that they were anxious about balancing paid work with their caring responsibilities. Ludmiła found looking after her son extremely personally rewarding and decided not to return to work when her maternity leave ended. For Ludmiła her decision to become a so called stay-at-home parent surprised her as she recognised how she had been socialised from an early age to associate work with independence:

'I saw myself as a working person, I needed work, to feel, you know fulfilled and successful plus my mum was always like, er, she was always reporting a woman needs to be independent, even in a relationship, she needs to be financially independent, [she said] 'you can't just rely on the man or you'll be stuck at home'. So I grew up with that need to work.' (Ludmiła)

The attitude of Ludmiła's mother is symptomatic in the Soviet era, a time when women were expected to participate in the workforce under the guise that it conquered gender equality and espoused communist ideals. While the regime promoted a very regressive vision of motherhood (women should have big families and raise strong children ready for the workforce), it also pretended to champion this idea of female independence through work, providing workplace crèches in order to retain mothers in the workforce (Lapidus: 1978, Katz: 2001). A study by Fodor et al. (2002) shows how women in Poland are today extremely likely to drop out of the workplace after the birth of their first child. A considerable backlash in Poland against the former ideals of the regime has seen many such Soviet practices reversed, particularly in terms of parenting. Ludmiła's awareness that she was rebelling against her mother's opinions were testimony to this: she talked about finding an '*inner peace*' in deciding to opt out of '*professional society*' as she termed it. Interestingly Ludmiła talks about being

more able to realign her priorities and enjoy being a stay-at-home parent in the UK on the grounds that in Poland she feels life is '*financially more of a struggle*'. Olga believes that choosing to be a stay-at-home parent had been momentarily easier in Britain, although at the time of the interview she had begun to apply for jobs stressing that life was now financially compromised in both Poland and the UK.

Elizbeta's situation presents a similar scenario. Elżbieta decided to continue studying full time at university after having her second child, placing the children with a nanny. This decision came into conflict with the opinions of her mother-in-law who felt that education was not work:

'Well in principle I could just stay at home with the kids seven days a week erm and not work on, not do anything else, so this is a problem, this is a very big problem! [laughs] ...my mother-in-law had a good career in dermatology which she resumed when her son was just six months old... I remember my parents working, my grandma working even, er, out of necessity erm, it was different perhaps as far as education is concerned I think.' (Elżbieta)

According to Ludmiła and Elżbieta work was defined by their relatives as paid employment only. As such these informants reported being in attitudinal conflict with extended families in Poland, as they felt their caring responsibilities deserved better acknowledgement. Such intergenerational contestation is perhaps indicative of the expansion of neo liberalism in the domestic sphere in Poland, a field explored in depth by Stenning et al (2010). So for example, Ludmiła's position as a stay-at-home mother might be seen as symptomatic of the continued feminisation of the domestic realm in Poland, as discussed by Stenning (2010), while Elżbieta's position as a self-funded postgraduate, seems indicative of the increasing neo-liberalisation of the higher education system in Poland. The persistent quest for personal fulfilment which resonates across informants' migration narratives then, can be pinned more broadly to the cultural and political rise of the neoliberal agenda in Poland.

A neoliberal manifesto was also evident in informants coupling of personal fulfilment with their careers. Lidia, for example, looked forward to returning to

her work as an artist after the birth of her first child: *'I have to do something in order to be happy, it's not just like, I can't just like confine myself to being a mother'*. Lidia was pleased about being able to combine work and parenting when living in the UK. She recalled how she witnessed friends in Poland struggling to combine work and parenthood (both in a creative capacity as artists and by physically finding it difficult to obtain childcare provision). Lidia also cited an example of her friend in Poland being challenged by an employer when she returned to work. Lidia had a network of friends who combined their careers as artists with parenthood in the UK: *'you know it's great, they still can make art, still can, you know, be creative'*, and hence she believed that this workplace discrimination against parents did not exist in the UK. Mishtal (2009) found that discriminating practices by employers in Poland against pregnant women and women with small children were divisive in Polish women's decisions to postpone or forgo childbearing altogether. Informants unanimously perceived legislation in the UK to be more supportive of parents than in Poland, not only in terms of their maternity entitlements (4.7.2), but also in terms of workplace legislation, as exemplified here.

4.7.4 Flexible working initiatives

Informants felt better protected and empowered by flexible working laws in the UK compared to in Poland. At the time of these interviews working hour initiatives were being introduced in Poland (2010) as required by EU employment law. Parents with slightly older children were very vocal on this topic, possibly because the incoming legislation in Poland did not offer them any provision. Childcare leave in Poland, which includes the ability to request a reduction in working hours, is only permitted until the child is four years of age. Basia for example complained that in Poland: *'flexible or full time work, you don't have. No. It is not possible to work part time work like here so you have to work full time and nobody can give you any preferences because you have kid'*. As identified in chapter three Hania had based her migration on the perception that life as a parent in the UK, and more specifically the North East, would be more compatible with work. She was not disappointed: *'I think it's very easy to,*

to combine work and being a mother [here], because there are many like opportunities for flexitime, part-time which is not available in Warsaw or in Poland. This compatibility between working and parenting was a pressing concern for migrant lone parents, specifically Basia and Hania. Interestingly, both informants believed that UK legislation was in fact more favourable to lone parents, Basia saying: *'and also here, you know, family law it is different. [It] give the mother rights of who looks after their children, important for single parents'*. Likewise this perception that British employers were much less discriminatory toward parents than Polish employers was held by Elwira. She even took this conviction further saying that British society seemed more receptive to combining parenting with professional and community life in general:

'[In the UK] people don't see children as, as a problem, as a barrier to actually, erm, still participate in er community life or in professional life as well...they understand your situation or they value your views or your presence somewhere and they will help you to actually participate.' (Elwira)

4.7.5 Childcare provision

Entitlement to working tax credits and childcare voucher schemes were, however, causing great confusion for informants. On several occasions following interviews informants contacted me to ask for advice about how they could apply for both entitlements. There was also confusion about how to apply for preschool places, with one informant later asking me to clarify what preschools were in her catchment area. Informants were also anxious about their child's eligibility to attend Catholic schools, with one informant assuming her child would qualify for a Catholic school outside her catchment area if she attended a playgroup held in a Catholic church hall. There was concern about long preschool waiting lists, and complaints that childcare provision did not fit successfully around the working day.

Informants generally obtained their knowledge about local childcare provision from medical practices and Sure Start Centres. Informants commonly used Sure Start crèche facilities, though there were two families who hired a private

childminder and nanny, and one family who used a private day nursery also present in this study. Two families expressed a preference to have a Polish childcare provider, though generally informants felt that their child would benefit from being with British speaking children, Elwira for example said: *'I would like to put er Ruta in nursery because I want her to have contact with other children, not only stay at home, and learn some English because we speak in Polish'*. Interestingly informants with preschool-aged children were anxious that their children were not communicating enough either in Polish or English (5.4.2). As such informants reported feeling the need to put their children in nursery sooner than they had previously anticipated. This again demonstrates how parental responsibility sometimes contested against informants' own personal desires (3.2.2).

Despite confusion and anxiety about British childcare it was again perceived as favourable to that offered in Poland. Following interviews Polish fathers were particularly scathing about budget cuts to former workplace childcare facilities in Poland and talked about the difficulties in obtaining childcare places due to this under funding and perceived mismanagement of the Polish childcare system. Other informants concentrated on the in-house differences in childcare provision between the two countries, even when they had not experienced Polish childcare first hand. Krysia for example believed, *'Over here you've got like two ladies looking after six children. In Poland you get two ladies looking after maybe twenty five, thirty!'*. Moreover the majority of informants viewed their parents as a possible source of childcare. This corresponds to the analysis Garcia-Morian and Kuehn (2011) conducted on data collated in the SHARE survey (wave 2: 2006-7) which suggested that more than 40% of Polish grandparents provided daily care for their grandchildren aged ten years or younger. An increasing number of multi-generational households in Poland explains the phenomena, as does the inadequate provision of state childcare provision noted by informants.

Informants often presented the benefits and disadvantages of using grandparents as childcare provision. Olga for example was aware of the

dilemma: *'I think not having family around means that we don't really have anybody to leave Jaś with, which causes positive and negative I suspect'*. Grandparents as childcare was deemed free, flexible, reliable and trustworthy but also noted as being interfering, overbearing or old-fashioned. In the case of Olga for example, her mother showed disdain for her early difficulties in breastfeeding her son. Olga rebelled against her mother's opinions and at the time of her interview regarded her continued breastfeeding as having won a personal battle. As argued previously, this scenario is typical of how informants constantly found themselves locked in familial and generational conflict with their parents (3.2.2).

Conclusion

Polish migrants did not move to Britain with firm and deliberate plans to have children: their decisions to become parents centred on reaching their ideal age to start a family. This ideal age was significantly older than the average for first childbearing in Poland and more in line with the average age of first childbearing in Britain. The more conservative cohort of the study sample saw migration as a way of preparing themselves financially to become parents in the near future. This cohort had tended to anticipate better job security and career prospects living abroad but were crucially prepared to see how events unfurled before deciding to commit to a longer residence in Britain. The more libertine fraction of the sample had sought independence from extended family and a new way of life through their migrations. These relatively young Polish migrants presented migration and parenthood as a linear narrative, interpreting both as part of their wider 'coming of age' drama. On the whole informants found that their approach to thirty simply colluded with already unfolding migration pathways, meaning that their continued residence abroad was treated as a coincidental aspect of starting a family. This echoes how many informants saw the destination of their migration, in that it was often coincidental, even for those who intended to bring children and partners into residence at a later date.

As with the more experienced parents (3.2.2) those Polish migrants new to parenting overwhelmingly regarded life in Britain as more compatible with parenthood relative to life in Poland; the compatibility of work and self fulfilment with parenting being their main concerns. Compatibility was constantly reassessed, with Polish migrants being acutely aware of cultural differences in the provision of childcare and employment legislation, in prenatal care and childbirth. Polish migrants occasionally exercised a challenge to these differences which brought them into sporadic conflict with health care providers. The outcome of this cultural exchange was the visualisation of a 'pick 'n' mix' culture, wherein Polish migrant parents imagined picking and choosing between the conventions that they preferred, negotiating acculturation where appropriate. The more affluent members of the sample were even able to manifest this vision, servicing their lives transnationally according to their preferences.

Questions about agency were therefore very evident, with Polish migrants presenting on the whole, as an assertive migrant group; an entirely different wave of Polish migration relative to previous waves of displaced persons. High levels of cultural capital were again in evidence, with Polish migrants knowing for example, how to access maternity provision and resources in order to bridge their caring responsibilities with a desire to work or to seek personal fulfilment. Polish migrants characteristic 'wait and see approach' (evident in this chapter by their utilisation of maternity and paternity leave allowances), their wily pragmatism (evident in their view of breastfeeding as purposeful), and their constant desire for autonomy (their desire to have control over childbirth for example), makes them appear very in control. However, they also presented underlying vulnerabilities, a mistrust of the British healthcare system, specifically their resistance to translators and insecurities over prenatal care, and their recurrent confusion about the British education system, specifically anxiety about securing preschool places and enrolling at schools (difficulties revisited in chapter five). Despite wanting to have very amenable and open-minded frames of mind, strong cultural expectations often resulted in Polish

migrants being susceptible to distress, frustration and confusion. As such a number of policy suggestions were made in this chapter identifying where welfare provision for this group might be improved.

This chapter also highlights how new parenthood allowed Polish migrants a way to redefine themselves and those relationships around them. Levels and modes of interaction with extended family were altered for example, as were more emotional and hierarchal interfamilial relations. This left informants readily re-evaluating whether migrant parenthood had brought them a new sense of independence or had in fact reinstated their dependence on others. This fierce dichotomy between independence and dependence was felt to be symptomatic of changing societal attitudes in Poland, particularly in terms of the quest for greater gender equality where there was felt to be intergenerational conflict. In this chapter, migrants' everyday lives, particularly internal conflicts between themselves and their parents, conveyed how Soviet traditions and attitudes were giving way to a neo-liberal agenda, particularly in terms of work, education and childrearing practice.

Although macro-structural explanations, such as agency and culture, have been used to understand migrant parenthood in this chapter, what should not be lost is the sheer amount of grey area present in the lives of Polish migrants. Migrant parenthood in itself was seen as competing against other identities, lone parenthood, being a younger parent, being a more affluent parent for example. This meant that the experiences offered by informants were not always indicative of being a migrant. It also meant that even when Polish migrants experienced similar events they spoke with great plurality, perceiving outcomes differently. Many of the informants contradicted themselves on and off record, and through friendships with informants I can now see how attitudes have changed and continue to change over the course of time. The complication about meeting migration at this intersection between migration and new parenthood is that the transitional phase is in the least two dimensional, inviting the reconfiguration of identity from two directions. This has been an exciting

departure, in that informants have been found reprioritising their lives, a complicated, emotive and fluid process. Looking at migration from this intersection has once again highlighted how the lives of Polish migrants have unravelled between the planning and the not planning of events. There has been real humility about the way Polish migrants have resisted and adapted to change and a messiness about their everyday lives despite their careful pragmatism. Migrant parenthood is above all a very deficient label for a process which enjoys many facets, many identities and many phases of transition.

Chapter Five: Livelihood Negotiations

Introduction

In this chapter it is argued that Polish migrant parents make negotiations about their livelihood rather than have any rigid livelihood strategies. Polish migrant parents make decisions about welfare provision, education and language learning in an attempt to achieve the best possible outcomes for themselves and their children. Intra-familial relationships are also restructured as Polish migrant parents seek the best possible forms of contact with their extended family members, such as utilising virtual communications or arranging visitation patterns to suit their needs and preferences. Polish migrant lone parents meanwhile, present both marked differences and similarities in the way they negotiate working lifestyle, welfare provision and the division of household labour compared with Polish migrant parent couples. In households which include two parents there is a common reliance on work and childcare sequencing in order to optimise childcare provision and career opportunities. This negotiation of work and childcare lends itself to a discussion on the organisation of labour in Polish migrant households, looking at how the process of migration itself works as a catalyst from which Polish migrant parents navigate new roles for themselves within the domestic realm. Despite Polish migrant fathers' eagerness to represent themselves as 'hands-on' parents, and Polish migrant mothers reclamation of what stay-at-home mothering should involve, gendered divisions in Polish migrant households remain manifest. It is concluded then, that rather than maintaining unreasonable expectations about their new livelihoods in the UK, Polish migrant parents tend to make a series of compromises, meshing their needs, desires and aspirations with their circumstances.

5.1 Literature Review: Livelihood Negotiations

5.1.1 Family migration

In chapter three (3.1.2) it was argued that an economic rationalist convergence in migration literature (Castles and Miller: 1998, Hollifield: 1992) has caused European migration to be consistently portrayed as temporary in nature. The idea that academic literature on European migration has tended to direct attention at the economic effect on sending countries, so for example remittances (Stark and Lucas: 1988, Cohen: 2005) and chain migration (Lazidaris and Romaniszyn: 1998) was also put forward, and it was argued that concepts such as family, home and belonging, traditionally associated with ideas of permanence and stability, have been slow to be applied to the context of European migration. In chapter four I showed how the bridging of gendered migration perspectives with social network theories at the turn of the millennium (Glick Schiller and Wimmer: 2003, Morokvašić: 2004, Hochschild: 2000, Kofman: 2004a) have now gone some way toward helping marry the idea of the transnational migrant family to the study of European migration. In this chapter I pick up from this pivotal intersection between family studies and migration studies, a departure in the literature at which scholars find interest in how families live, work and parent across borders.

As this intersection emerged, those critical of a family centred approach to migration theory, such as Malkki (1992), worried that contextualising migration in this way was manifest of a wider sedentary agenda to fix people to place. Some early studies of the transnational family perspective (Boyd: 1989, Bailey et al.: 1996) were indeed culpable of this desire to locate and fix migrant groups, emphasising how the family was responsible for binding citizenship rights and emotional mindsets; family was regarded as the linchpin to both migrants' legal ability and their emotional drive to seek residency in their host countries. In this study the degree to which family alone has such an omnipotent influence in decision making processes is contested. As shown in chapter three for example, decisions to migrate were found to be complex and did not absolve individual's desires or the pressure of agency. This goes against

the uncomplicated transition between family and society envisioned by Boyd (1989) and Bailey et al. (1996). By approaching family migration as an ego-centred experience, in the vein of Wellman and Wortley's (1990) ego-centred accounts of social networks, rather than by taking the family unit as something predetermining, it is hoped that a sedentary agenda can be avoided.

This holistic interpretation of family life follows those early transnational theorists who were quicker to challenge the idea that family migration was the sole driver behind migrant settlement. For Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) migrant family life was seen as fluid and dynamic requiring urgent academic attention in order to safeguard snapshots of current life for historical posterity. Rather than noting its adhesive qualities, they portrayed family as an arbitrator of mobility and change. Kofman (2004b) likewise, emphasised the ever evolving nature of family life by examining the changing flux of life course. This portrait of a dynamic and mobile lifestyle stands against Lien and Melhuus's (2007) complaint that the study of migrant families requires essentialising notions such as kinship, which they believe represents an academic desire to seek continuity and timelessness in the face of an increasingly globalised world. In this study the notion of parenthood is examined at various stages in life course. In chapter four for example, Polish migrants' entry into parenthood was shown as a liminal phase, a period in which they renegotiated their lifestyles and both resisted and adapted to change. In this chapter, the focus shifts to more experienced parents and their decisions about schooling, language and the organisation of their households. By understanding parenthood as transitory this project hopes to avoid reducing and oversimplifying family migration to something static and consistent, debunking essentialist ideas about the family.

Returning again to this idea that an economic rationalist convergence in migration literature was responsible for the incompatibility between economic migration and family migration, is of course too strong a postulation. A pocket of literature exists in which the dialogue between the migrant worker and their caring responsibilities has been examined: (Anwar: 1979, Gilbert: 1998, Reynolds: 2001, and Dreby: 2009). This relationship was theorised by

Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2003) with their depiction of the 'care deficit', wherein housework and childcare was deemed to be experiencing shifting global dimensions as women migrated West to work as nannies and carers. This phenomenon has been well covered in a Polish specific context (Hardy: 2009, Stenning: 2010), though interest in the neo-liberalisation of the Polish economy has tended to keep focus on how the domestic sphere in Poland has been altered, rather than how the form and composition of the Polish migrant household has responded accordingly. To my knowledge the only truly comparative study on domesticity in Poland measured against immediate Polish migrant domestic arrangements is that conducted by Bloch (1976), though White (2011b) compares family life more broadly in a translocal context. By failing to include a comparative element in this project then, it might be suggested that an opportunity to update the research field has been missed. In defence I would say that during interviews I encouraged informants to consider how their lives had changed, both materially and emotionally, making explicit comparisons to lifestyle and livelihoods in Poland, but because over half of the sample became parents in the UK, informants often insisted that no comparison could be made as many perceived their transition into parenthood as changing their lifestyle unrecognisably from their previous pre-migratory selves. If this study were to be conducted again, better consideration of how the sample might compromise certain lines of inquiry might be appropriate.

5.1.2 The changing composition of the Polish family

While many informants felt unable to compare their Polish to British lives explicitly, it is possible (as has been shown in chapters 3 and 4) to think about how their attitudes might implicitly tell of societal change. In this chapter, literature on the changing model of family life helps to further contextualise these attitudes. According to Synak (1990) the typical model of the Polish family in the decade which saw the collapse of communism comprised of working parents and two children who would remain steadfast and solid as a unit throughout any future hardship. Synak attributes this supposed durability of the Polish family to its success under the Soviet regime, whereby the family was

seen as helping to protect its members against the difficulties of everyday life and so functioned 'as the fundamental self-help group of the society' (Synak: 1990, p.342). Synak believed that nostalgia for life under the Soviet yoke would naturally secure the future longevity of the Polish family in this close knit, collaborative format.

Buchowski (1996) described the typical model of Polish family life in the 1990s as an extended family which formed its own microstructure; society was thus based on a form of 'amoral familism' whereby the family held influence and power and would again remain as unshakeable. Other theorists thought that it was the position of women who were the backbone of the Polish household. Jaworski and Pietrow-Ennker (1992) for example, believed that the celebration of Polish women as homemakers through historical and cultural traditions, specifically the culture of 'benign patriarchalism' and the religious iconisation of the 'Matka Polska' (Mother Poland), would keep women held in high esteem for their governance of the household; as such, women, and mothers in particular, acted as a cement to Polish family life. Domański (1995) meanwhile, pointed to the dominance of a conservative political tradition in Poland, which helped maintain the sentiment that women had an obligation to sustain the household while men should be concerned with providing the monetary resources to fulfil lifestyle.

A revision to this model of stability and endurance was made by Goodwyn et al. (1995) who pointed to increasing abortion rates in Poland as evidence that teachings of the church were no longer taking precedence. Goodwin et al. speculated that Poland was moving toward becoming a secular society wherein the model of Polish family life would be reshaped. More than a decade on from the socialist era, the durability of the Polish family was questioned once again, as Ornacka and Szczepaniak-Wiecha (2005) noted how Polish families were increasingly imitating families in Western countries in respect to legal affairs and patterns of behaviour. They also saw the dynamics of Polish households as changing, seeing greater acceptance of egalitarianism for all family members marked by an increase in the number of women taking on the role of co-

breadwinners and in men engaging with home activities. Ornacka and Szczepaniak-Wiecha (2005) concluded that the standard family model in Poland was moving from a patriarchal family unit to a modified nuclear family, and childrearing practice was moving away from authoritarian methods in favour of using more democratic techniques.

Titkow and Duch (2004) however, imagine a less radical rethinking of the model, pointing to some traditional values that continue to be upheld by young Poles, an emphasis on the desire to have a successful marriage and importance placed on having children for example. Although Titkow and Duch accept that the role of Polish women is changing, seeing them as more likely to adopt progressive gender roles both in the public and private realm for instance, they believe that Polish men persistently continue to favour more traditional gender patterns for themselves. As is discussed at greater length in this chapter, both the more recent depictions of Polish family life and the more unyielding visions from the 1990s are evident in informants' discussions. If this project were to be revisited then, further engagement with currently untranslated literature which theorises the Polish family, through collaboration with a Polish researcher for example, might make for richer cross reading and interpretation of interview data.

5.1.3 The changing composition of the Polish migrant family

Although Central and Eastern European migration has been particularly fortunate in attracting a number of pioneering gendered migration scholars (Morokvašić: 1984, Phizacklea: 1983 and Kofman: 2004a), they have too readily portrayed women as predisposed care providers offering little critique of how caring responsibilities have or have not been negotiated. Morokvašić (1984) for example, was realistic about the unevenness of employment opportunities for Polish women and the difficulty they had in breaking cultural expectations, though she still essentially depicted female migrants as being innately willing to travel back and forth to their offspring. Twenty years later Lutz (2004) replicated a similar conclusion, showing undocumented female migrants

to be shunting backwards and forwards assuming key and unfettered responsibility for their family's welfare. Lutz's later work (2008) was perhaps more contextualised, citing changing education levels of women in Poland to explain an increase in the number of ambivalent reasons women offered when asked about their decisions to migrate. A study by Ryan and White (2008) pushed this holistic approach further by shifting the typical model of Polish migration analysis from individuals to families. In this study Ryan and Waite (2008) argued that the Polish family should be analysed as a single unit, as family considerations, mutual support and continuing loyalties were shown to be intrinsic to Polish migrants' way of life. The work of White (2009a, 2011a) also takes family as a unit of analysis, and has recently begun framing this against the notion of locality which she argues is key to understanding the subjective dimensions of migrant's lives. White's case study locality is the South West of England, and in direct and perhaps useful contrast, I have located this study in the North East of England. Moreover, unlike previous studies on Polish migrant families which have embraced the family as a working unit, attempts are made in this chapter to defragment the family, looking for example, at how Polish migrant parents negotiate between 'family' and 'self'. With the exception of Lopez Rodriguez's study on Polish migrant parents educational aspirations for their children (previous studies on Polish families, the ego-centred aspects of Polish migrant parents lives are not considered, their desires and ambitions for example. While it has been argued that this helps to avoid a sedentary perspective, it also helps, I feel, to avoid seeing the family as a collaborative given, working together strategically for the benefit of all members.

Previous studies on Polish migrant families have indeed covered such topics as family life, household organisation, gender roles and daily routine from a range of perspectives. Ryan et al. (2007, 2008) and White (2011a) approached these questions with reference to social and personal networks using social network theories for example, while Burrell (2008a) drew on more exacting theories of the everyday to examine Polish migrants social patterns. More direct analysis of the emotions and intimacy of Polish migrants such as Galasińska and Galasiński's understanding of migration experiences (2007) and Galasińska and

Kozłowska's study on Polish migrant mental well being (2009) are perhaps more indicative of the broader sexual and emotional turn beginning to permeate in migration research (Mai and King: 2009). Arguably this turn in the research field has the potential to review the model of the Polish family further, as it credits emotional relationships rather than kinship ties alone as holding significant value. It might be suggested then, that a short coming of this project not to have included families formed from such emotional ties, leaving my definition of Polish migrant families possibly too narrow (4.1.3). In terms of this chapter it may have been interesting to approach the livelihood negotiations of Polish migrants with reference to the use of 'other-mothers' (Schmalzbauer: 2004) for example, wherein migrant children are assigned (often but not exclusively) a female mentor with whom to travel and live. When gathering the sample for this study an uncle and nephew presented as willing participants: the potential informants were overlooked as having an unconventional family tie, but in hindsight this arrangement was perhaps suggestive of changing models of family migration more globally. Having a broader interpretation of migrant families may have enabled this study to think about how livelihood negotiations are then replicated across a more dynamic set of family circumstances, and whether strategy would then be a more appropriate terminology.

5.1.4 Family migration and livelihood strategies

Livelihood strategies are a popular intersection in migration research, often being used to explain how vulnerable and impoverished groups, such as the rural poor (Siddiqui: 2003) or women migrant workers (Sundari: 2005), overcome adversities. Polish migrants present an interesting alternative to these groups, having high levels of cultural capital and transnational mobility. The bridging of livelihood strategies with family migration also offers the opportunity to uncover the gendered differences in decision making. With reference to the work of Mahler and Pessar (2006) for instance, they found that migrant women were more likely than men to develop personal and household strategies consistent with permanent settlement abroad. Indeed in work conducted by Lopez Rodriguez (2010), Polish migrant mothers were found to

have very firm and ambitious educational aspirations for children which then had some correspondence with their long term settlement plans. Livelihood strategies are then, an interesting vantage point from which to approach Okólski's argument about Polish migrants so called 'incomplete migration' (2001) once again, in that they assume some degree of forecasting about the future.

With regard to the terminology used in this chapter, the word 'strategy' or the idea that migrants strategise their lives has been well versed in migration literature; Lauby and Stark (1988) for example, looked at migrant family strategies, Massey (1990) and Boyd (1989) concentrated on migrants household strategies and Waters (2005) looked at the strategies employed by migrant parents to acquire the best educational provision for their children. White (2009a) however, first raised concern about the appropriateness of the term 'strategy' in relation to Polish migration by suggesting that it was 'too grand a word to describe the haphazard processes' of migration (White: 2009, p.68). White depicts Polish migrant parents as 'buffeted by outside factors' (2009: p.70) but essentially commits to the term by differentiating between active and passive forms of strategy and appreciating the term's emphasis on agency in labour migration. Taking leave of White's doubt about the term 'strategy', I then felt that Polish migrant parents' experiences of both the planned and unplanned should lead me to refute the term 'livelihood strategy' in that it suggests a rigidity to plans. As argued previously, Polish migrant parents have a messiness about their everyday lives despite their careful pragmatism, and they make decisions both consciously and involuntarily. As such the term 'negotiation' is preferable in this study to 'strategy' as it lends itself to the idea that migrants might manoeuvre their decisions accordingly; whereas strategy implies something more definitive and unbending.

5.1.5 Family migration and state provision

In migration literature, discussions about migrant parents' access to and choices about provision are limited and what exists tends to be classically concentrated on illegal migrants in which case provision is typically under delivered and there is urgent need for policy review; Fresnoza-Flot's study of Filipino mothers in France (2009) for example. The legal status and entitlement to resources of the informants in this study is interesting then, especially given that early studies examining use of welfare provision suggest that Polish migrants experience specific access difficulties, so for example when accessing the tax credit system (Hudson et al.: 2010) and housing provision (Rolfe and Metcalf: 2009). In the previous chapter inequalities in healthcare provision were discussed and reference made to specific quantitative studies on Polish migrants' access of healthcare services such as research by Bray et al. (2010) and Domaszek et al. (2007) (4.1.5). As argued in chapter four, the need for more qualitative studies about migrants' access to provision is therefore paramount in order shed light on patterns of underuse of provision being raised by these scholars. Addressing Polish migrants' access to provision also gives an opportunity to head off some of the unwarranted media suggestions about Polish migrants intentions to live in the UK.

Meanwhile, migration literature concerning migrant parents' choices about their children's education has typically represented migrant parents as either pushy or self sacrificing. Parents are often portrayed as inevitably wanting to put children's educational attainment above their own happiness, for instance Pessar's (1994) study on Dominican migrants to Los Angeles and Waters (2006) study on Hong Kong Chinese in Canada. Decisions about education are typically framed in this literature as part of a wider transnational parenting strategy, such as the 'family astronauts and children parachutes' phenomena as discussed by Pe-Pau et al. (1996) and Chaing (2008). In this study, migrant parents objectives are governed by both personal and wider familial objectives making for a more bilateral negotiation.

Another key finding in this chapter is the great onus Polish migrant parents place on second language acquisition for both themselves and their children. Having conducted systematic searches using major research databases (such as COPAC and the Web of Knowledge) this appears to be an otherwise underexplored aspect of family migration literature. There has been some interest in the technicalities and difficulties of second language acquisition for children (Rumbaut: 1995, Valdes: 1998), but extremely little on the link between second language acquisition and identity, other than that on the Somalia refugees in Sheffield conducted by Bang Nielsen et al. (2008). Education and language learning as part of migrants household routines has been discussed by Ley and Waters(2004) and Ley and Kobashyi (2005), but again, little research in the way of migrants' aspirations and motivations of such learning has been presented, particularly with regard to Polish migrants.

5.2 Understanding and utilising provision and services

5.2.1 Accessing information about services for parents

Polish migrant parents often made explicit reference to the provision of 'Sure Start centres' or 'children's centres' in interviews, and frequently cited the lack of an equivalent provision in Poland. A number of informants mentioned the availability of support groups run for parents in local libraries. Access to and information about these support services was regarded as extremely good, though there was blanket reliance on local council websites for the sourcing of information about such provision: '*I know where to find information, yes, is council website!*' (Jarek). Three informants reported actively using the local listings website Netmums in addition to seeking information on local authority websites, and evidence from later interactions with informants suggests that supermarket notice boards and the free ads webpages such as Gumtree were also utilised. Only three informants mentioned the local Polish newspaper Polnews and Polish magazine 2B, but given my known attachment and

sourcing of informants through these links I suspect readership and use of these sites was an assumed given.

Although during interviews all informants felt that they had sufficient access to information about both national and local provision and services, following interviews I was frequently emailed or asked questions by informants about the working tax credit scheme, childcare voucher scheme and school application system. From exchanges with informants off the record it seemed that they actually relied on informal networks, friendships with other Poles generally, more regularly than suggested in interview, and that information was typically passed word-of-mouth resulting in a 'whispers' effect where considerable confusion over the specifics of entitlement and application to provision resulted. One informant's misunderstanding about school catchment area (5.3.4) was a direct result of such an arrangement. It is recommended then that there is better distribution of specific written documentation on income related entitlement, childcare provision and school application procedures aimed at Polish parents to avoid such confusion. Information about local service provision is adequate, but local councils should be advised to keep information pages well revised and current as they are well used by this particular migrant group.

5.2.2 The provision of services for parents

Interestingly the provision of certain services for parents, namely support groups and classes, were regarded by some informants as a frivolous use of their time and of state funding. Five of the young first-time mums in the sample, Iza, Mariola, Walentyna, Elwira and Krysia, agreed that the number of groups and classes offered to parents with young children in the UK was encouraging to see (an indication that the UK was '*baby friendly*' (Elwira), but that they were fundamentally a non-essential provision. With regard to free Sure Start swimming classes, baby massage and weaning groups for example, Mariola noted: '*I don't use all offered because I'm too busy and it's not really necessary*'. All five informants felt that using available time when their children were young to study or to work was better use of time than taking part in parent-child activities. Krysia for example said, '*I wasn't interested in playgroups, er, I*

wanted get my career back and so in September, well when I was pregnant, I started this accounting diploma at college'. This is interesting as it speaks of Polish parents plans for long term gratification, maintaining a strong work ethic and sense of career ambition even during the early stages of their children's lives (4.8.2). This philosophy contrasts with the 'intensive parenting' culture in the UK (and elsewhere) at present, whereby parents take a 'child-centred' approach based on the idea that it supports increased brain development in infants (Wall: 2010). In practice intensive parenting involves ensuring environments and time for parent-child 'bonding', supported in actions such as breastfeeding and attending parent-child groups (Lee: 2008). The sample was divided in this sense though, as elsewhere Polish migrant mothers, Hania and Elżbieta reported wanting to move away from expectations of parenting under socialism which placed emphasis on the need for both parents to work, feeling that it was easier in the UK to achieve their desire for a better work-life balance (6.3.2). Likewise Paulina, Ludmiła, Olga and Katarzyna reported being or wanting to be 'stay-at-home-mothers.'

Disapproval of support groups and subsequent non attendance at this provision by five of these first-time mothers speaks, I feel, of their disenfranchisement in such schemes rather than their actual distaste for such services. Those full time working mums (Iza) and lone parent mums (Mariola, Elwira and Krysia) in the sample, who were generally but not exclusively from lower socio economic means, commonly talked about having no time to attend parent child groups or feeling time pressures associated with working in the week. Iza stated: *'I should try to integrate more with English families, that's what I am planning to do. I think because like joining playgroups, that may be a chance to meet like others, but it is just time'*. Conversely the full time stay-at-home mums or part time working mums in the sample (Elżbieta, Lidia, Ludmiła and Olga), actively sought out parent-child groups to fill their time. It transpires then, that the services deemed unwarranted by the five young working mums, were not only inaccessible to them (held during working hours on specific days of the week), but not appealing, in that quiet and relaxing time rather than structured active time was sought after a busy working week. Iza, a locum pharmacist married to

a full time production line worker at Nissan, explained: *'But because I am a working mum, it is not easy, because obviously I've got to pick up [from nursery], I don't know; [sighs] I have to concentrate on the job'*. Iza felt very much compromised by her working hours, which were at the time were ad hoc and involved lengthy travel time across the North East region. In contrast Olga, a full time stay at home mum and former project coordinator married to a university lecturer, talked about attending a different child related group every day of the week; she named craft groups, baby movement classes and playgroups in particular. Later in the interview, Olga talked about using Facebook to maintain contact with group members once courses had finished, so expanding her social network from such interactions. Olga reported feeling well integrated into her immediate neighbourhood and was making considerable effort to further strengthen these relationships (6.4.8).

Disparities in migrant participation in groups has been highlighted by research on family based provision before; the charity *Children Now* for instance, conducted research into the use of Sure Start facilities (Stephenson: 2012) and concluded that those with the highest levels of human capital and social class mobility were indeed found to make better utilisation of the services than those groups most vulnerable and with the greatest need. However, research specifically addressing the use of family based initiatives by minority groups (such as that carried out by Craig: 2007 in the *National Evaluation of Sure Start and black and minority ethnic populations*) has overlooked any such socio economic disparity. This is worrying given the correlation between Polish parents' feelings about integration and their participation in local parent-child groups. Part-working mother Elzbieta for instance felt very much part of her village 'community' thanks to her interaction with other parents at groups:

'As soon as I moved in I started going to the community centre, to the toddler group, and I just kind of made acquaintances there and you know it was very nice, it was very welcoming, the people are very friendly and nice and helpful and they start inviting me to birthday parties.' (Elzbieta)

When asked if she ever felt like an outsider in her village Elzbieta was defiant: *'I've never felt any problems with that no'*. Iza however, reported feeling despondent and isolated from other parents, and had a very small social network mainly made up of Polish friends. There was a correlation then, between migrant parents who attended such groups feeling better integrated in their community or neighbourhood, than those who did not. As such this study recommends that welfare services offer greater numbers of support groups at weekends and in evenings, in order to respond to the schedules of working parents.

5.3 Understanding and utilising the education system

5.3.1 Starting formal education: the 'right' time

The structure of the school education system in the UK compared to that in Poland caused confusion for Polish migrant parents. Paulina noted in interview that she found herself frequently helping friends understand how the British school structure worked, and from my own experience of explaining the system to Polish friends, the less typical 'middle school system', used in different wards across the North East of England, added further confusion, even though this system more closely resembles the Polish schooling structure. The main concern for Polish parents about the school structure in the UK, was the age at which children are legally expected to start formal schooling: in the UK children are expected to start school in the academic year before they are five, in Poland children are typically expected to attend preschool (*przedszkole*) from the age of six (though an earlier discretionary age has been introduced); more structured schooling (*szkoła podstawowa*), the equivalent to British primary education, starts in Poland at the of age seven. For Walentyna the difference in this school start age was a concern, as her daughter, born in the summer months, would be closer to four when legally obliged to start school in the UK. Walentyna felt that this was too young and was considering moving back to Poland before her daughter (then a year old) would reach this legal requirement: *'In Poland she can have childhood longer than here'*. Walentyna

stressed on the importance of having an unstructured infancy echoing once more the liberal philosophy held by a number of the younger female migrants in this study (4.3.1, 4.4.1).

The start of formal schooling was also marked as a pivotal and decisive moment at which to reassess continued residency in the UK for Iza and Viktor too. For this couple the re-evaluation of life in the UK, according to Iza, would be primarily based on job prospects; more specifically they had decided that if husband Wiktor's job at car manufacturing company Nissan remained in a position under his skill set and qualification level (3.3.2) at the point when their daughter, Emilia, came of legal school age in the UK, then they intended to return to Poland. This rational and time managed life planning, lies in contrast to the almost accidental way Iza and Wiktor arrived in the North East of England (3.5.2), highlighting again how the lives of Polish migrant parents rolled between the planned and unplanned. For informants who had children prior to migration, the phenomenon of planning migration around education worked in reverse, in that they timed bringing children to the UK in line with events in the Polish curriculum. Jarek for example talked about waiting until son Tobiasz was expected to move to middle school (*lyceum*), before moving both son and wife Wanda to be with him in the UK. Besides being a natural transition point for Tobiasz, reaching this milestone, according to Jarek, meant that his son would have been educated to a proficient level in Poland. Jarek felt that this would then make it easier for Tobiasz to retain his grasp of Polish language. Using transitional points in education systems to landmark points of migration was therefore common practice across the sample.

5.3.2 Starting formal education: the 'right' place

The start of formal education was not only used to monitor the timing of potential return migration and initial immigration, but as a point at which to consider any onward migration. As Elwira explained: *'I think that most important time will be when she will reach school age and I will have to decide... I want her to do her education, then is it Poland or is it UK or is it Australia or any other country?'* For Elwira, the start of school did not

necessarily signify an end to migration, merely a need to decide on which country she imagined living on a longer term basis. As with Basia and Hania (Polish mothers with older children), Elwira felt that ample stability for her child could be achieved by staying in a specific country for several years at a time; moving on was justified as being beneficial for the child to experience different cultures. For Elwira, Basia and Hania, thoughts about onward migration were not solely purported to be about educational prospects; work opportunities and standard of living considerations for themselves were held as important. This contrasts Pessar's finding (1994) that Dominican migrant parents placed their children's educational attainment above their own happiness; these three single parent Polish migrant mothers carefully negotiated plans to the best possible outcomes for themselves and their children.

Not all informants accepted the view that periodic residency would provide their children with stability. Elżbieta, for example, planned to stay in one place for the duration of her children's schooling citing stability as her main concern, although this desire for stability had an underlying intention:

'You can, in principal, go anywhere; you're not physically rooted to a place I think...But the thing that, that glues me to this place is, I think, is school because when I look back at my school years when I was going to the primary school, I would never like to change my school friends for any others, and like move to another place. I think this will be a tragedy for me... So, well, yes, I'm kind of projecting the same feelings on [to] my children. I think it's important that we stay in this place that we are, they start here in the school here...so, we stay; we'll probably want to continue with the same people.' (Elżbieta)

For Elżbieta, commitment to a longer term residency in her children's school years was imperative in that she regarded the interactions she and her children would have at school as fundamental in the process of friendship building. In turn Elżbieta imagined that these friendships would inform her attachment to place, driving her desire for stability and commitment to that place of residency even further. This emphasis on friendship forming and participation in community life was part of Elżbieta's overall negotiation of integration. She

talked for example about attending playgroup regularly with the purpose of making new friends, and feeling pleased when her children were consequently invited to parties, a sign of being accepted into the local parenting circle she felt. Such active awareness of integration supports Berry's (1991) argument that migrants seek to maintain their original culture while also taking part in another, and thus are individually instrumental in creating integration opportunities for themselves. Although Elżbieta's vision was simplistic, she was adamant in interview that her experiences of breaking into the local parenting network had and would continue to be straightforward. When asked if she felt at all different being the only Polish migrant mother at playgroup, she seemed surprised: *'I've never felt any problems with that, no!'* As Ryan found in her 2007 study, having children did help negotiate local support networks and social opportunities for Polish migrants. In Elżbieta's case, forthcoming daily interactions at the school gate were framed as her next big social opportunity.

Elżbieta's vision of her assimilated life in Britain was however, extremely specific; she did not imagine herself in any social clique but more so in "the right place":

'We basically heard that you don't send children to school in South Shields...And we've heard that Durham is about "the right place". And also we just love Durham, and the surroundings, and it's just so close the Pennines and also close to the coast, because I like the beach in South Shields [pause]. I like to go there when you don't live there basically. So yer, so that's why the area. And we just like the village because, er...I knew before I moved there, I checked the village school and it's actually very good.' (Elżbieta)

Elżbieta's conditions for "the right place" were based on both physical geographic location, in this instance being on the edge of the countryside and coast (she also says elsewhere in the interview, that the family needed to remain within commuting distance of her husband's work) and furthermore, the educational welfare of her children. Partly Elżbieta looked at the educational prospects on offer, but partly she was motivated by a tacit snobbery to find a school in 'the right place', meaning she would have access to 'the right' social

network. Lopez Rodriguez (2010) believes that this self classification of belonging to a professional group amidst affluent Polish migrant mothers was reinforced by their 'disparate superior position', being white, Catholic, and having high levels of educational and cultural capital (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010: p.350). In the case of the more affluent Polish migrant parents in this study there is indeed a definite consciousness about the way they tried to mobilise social capital. The careful selection of children's schools, for example, was used by affluent Polish migrant parents as a way to discern and eventually position themselves within a social network of fellow professionals (5.3.2), as was differentiating between certain accents (5.4.4). For affluent Polish migrant parents 'the right place' then, was about navigating both a pragmatic geographic location (close to work, close to amenities, close to sought after landscapes) and the right social network (identified through accent and school).

5.3.4 Comparing educational prospects

All informants, regardless of the age of their children and social economic strata had involved themselves in some form of knowledge gathering about local education facilities. However, the more affluent parents such as Elżbieta and Paweł and Truda and Kazimierz had been much more thorough in their knowledge gathering, investing a lot of time to this process by visiting schools, comparing Ofsted reports, satisfying themselves with league tables and even considering the availability of further and higher education options for their preschool aged children which in the North East of England is commonly governed by primary school choice (the so called 'feeder school system'). The more affluent Polish migrant parents had researched their options in great detail; Elżbieta talked for instance about what local secondary schools specialised in certain subjects. Although informants from lower socio economic means had occasionally visited schools and looked at league tables too, they were generally more reliant on anecdotal and word-of-mouth information to confirm their school preferences. This use of informal social networks for information had caused confusion about school catchment areas, partly by

informants amalgamating knowledge about the selection processes implemented by church run schools with that of non denominational state school education. As such a number of informants whom I formed friendships with noted following interviews that they thought about which churches they attended in relation to school admission procedures. This demonstrates how Polish migrant parents across social strata were prepared to think and act resourcefully in order to secure the best educational prospects for their children.

The more detailed research conducted by the affluent Polish migrant parents was enabled partly due to having greater levels of cultural capital and also by having greater financial means to investigate all wider education options. In the case of Truda and Kazimierz, for instance, their resourceful knowledge gathering had led them to feel that their nearest state education provision did not satisfy their ambitions for their son, even though, as Truda stressed, the educational standards of the primary school in the former County Durham pit town where Truda worked as the community GP and the family lived, were good. Indeed at the time of interview Truda and Kazimierz had started to look into private education possibilities for their then preschool aged son. Lopez Rodriguez (2010) notes the same occurrence in her study too, wherein Polish migrant parents consistently sought the very highest levels of educational attainment for their children, seeking to afford private schooling wherever possible. Truda and Kazimierz, like a number of informants in the study, also stated preference for educating their children at secondary education level in Britain and conversely deemed higher education to be better in Poland. They were willing to migrate to and fro correspondingly:

'To be honest, it will depend on Bastian's future about the schools, like we want him having the best education here, if we can have a good school in here and so we'll stay here. But if he decides to go and have a higher education in Poland I don't care, don't mind, we can come back home.' (Truda)

On the surface, Truda and Kazimierz presented a narrative of self-sacrifice much like the migrant parents in Pessar (1994) and Waters (2005) studies, whereby children's educational attainment was placed as priority above parental

happiness. On closer inspection though, this is not the 'astronaut families' and 'satellite children' composition seen in East Asian migration either. Waters (2005) characterises that arrangement as involving an irrelevance of travel and distance when seeking educational opportunities: Truda's use of the word 'home' however, suggested that the couple had fairly prescribed educational expectations for their children. Like Elżbieta and Paweł, who sought to mobilise social capital, Truda and Kazimierz were able to consider mobilising cultural capital by essentially shunting backwards and forward from Britain to Poland in accordance with the best educational prospects for their children. Moreover the transnational mobility imagined by Truda and Kazimierz in order to secure the best educational prospects for their children, is an extension of a wider trend in the study, whereby the more affluent Polish migrant parents were able to service their lives in accordance with the best option available: Walentyna for instance, moved between Polish and British healthcare provision during her pregnancy in order to receive the best and most thorough service (4.3.2). The periodic residency in the UK anticipated by single parents Elwira, Basia and Hania (5.3.2) was about seeking to migrate for better rather than being able to afford to migrate in search for the best. Socio economic means did then have a considerable bearing on Polish migrant parents' anticipation of future residency.

Occasionally informants saw potential for higher education prospects in the UK, though sadly not in the North East of England specifically. Zygmunt, like many other informants in the sample, was largely condemnatory of British universities; he felt that they taught the 'wrong' subjects and had too vast a subject choice. His conservative view of higher education meant he upheld a certain prejudice against 'new' universities (crudely thought of in the UK as the universities established post-1992 which were often former polytechnics). This prejudice was interesting in itself, sounding reminiscent of the British tabloid press, and so saying something perhaps about the acculturation of Polish migrants' attitudes. Zygmunt assumed that his nearest universities, Sunderland and Middlesbrough, would, as is typical in Poland, be obvious choices for his children, and as they were so called new universities he was not convinced of their potential. A solution, he felt, would be to move the family to Scotland:

'You have to pay for the studies in the UK, so is better in Poland because is for free, and in Scotland is for free, and the Scottish Government is so aggressive to take the Polish students from, er, to migrate to Scotland, so aggressive, is looking just for the youngest talents'. (Zygmunt)

Zygmunt's impression of the Scottish higher education system references the Scottish Government's *Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme*, a policy framework which ran from February 2004 to June 2008 and encouraged international students to stay in Scotland following graduation from Scottish universities. *Fresh Talent* advertising was placed on the back of buses in Warsaw in the summer of 2005, but the campaign gained much more widespread fame in Poland by being well documented in the Polish press and having a considerable impact on what Moskal (2012) describes as the 'circulating capitals between Poland and Scotland'. Interestingly Zygmunt interpreted the scheme as seeking to headhunt Polish migrants exclusively; this speaks more widely I feel, of the continued legacy of the *Fresh Talent* scheme in the two years following the campaign. Polish migrants continued to imagine Scotland, as opposed to the UK in general, as an opportunity filled safe-haven of migration. Zygmunt's ambition to move his family to Scotland in line with educational prospects, were however, just one of his many onward migration plans. At other points in the interview he talked about moving to South Africa to enjoy better weather and Sweden to enjoy a better overall lifestyle. While Polish migrant parents were very keen to explore educational prospects for their children, they were generally just one facet of their otherwise idealised migration considerations, and as argued, these plans were often curbed by socio economic means.

5.3.5 The importance of a Catholic education

Educational comparisons were also made by informants over British and Polish secondary education. British secondary schools were commonly viewed by many informants as lacking discipline and rigour. Three informants talked about feeling that they could rectify this problem by sending their children to the local Catholic schools. Jarek, for example, wanted to send his child to a Catholic

school: *'because they keep a good level of discipline and teaching'*. Having moved to the North East alone, Jarek then set about finding a more permanent residence, eventually buying a flat purposefully opposite the Catholic secondary school that he intended for his son. Jarek's intent on a Catholic education was also about limiting culture shock for son Tobiasz as it would give him a standard of discipline he considered as *'being the same as at home'*. For Hania, Catholic education for her daughter was clearly her imagined choice prior to arrival in the UK, but after visiting schools in her new catchment area she reported finding very little difference between her nearest Catholic secondary school and non denominational alternative. Hania decided to send her daughter to the school in closest proximity which happened to be nondenominational. Although Catholic education was therefore generally the preferred choice of Polish migrant parents, often final decisions about schools mixed educational philosophy with pragmatism.

For Zygmunt, sending his children to a Catholic school was about reviving the educational philosophy of a bygone Poland: *'Children learn discipline, he has to learn his discipline, is a good point of the education system. And Catholic school, the children have to look the same; in Poland is not, used to be like that, [but is] not now.'* By planning to send his children to Catholic school in the UK, Zygmunt hoped his children would experience similar levels of discipline to those he felt existed in Poland under socialism.. In interview Zygmunt remembered Soviet era education (and it should be stressed that this was not necessarily Catholic education although he merges the two), as a very positive experience, reminiscing about a childhood spent enjoying activities such as map reading and outdoor pursuits. Kazimierz and Krysia shared a similar sense of nostalgia for childhoods under the Soviet regime (6.3.1). Those Polish migrant parents who held these romanticised and nostalgic views of a past Poland repeatedly referenced aspects on British culture they saw as replicating this time: Kazimierz celebrated British car manufacturing and what he saw as a nationalised Post Office system, while Krysia liked the British scouting movement, and Zygmunt liked the availability of Catholic education in the UK, which he regarded as being a more traditional and authoritative mode of

schooling (Soviet style schooling). This nostalgia for socialism, according to Velikonja (2009), 'does not relate exclusively and precisely to past times, regimes, values, relations, and so on as such, but it embodies a utopian hope that there must be a society that is better than the current one' (Velikonja: 2009, p.14). This fits into Polish migrant parents more general utopian idealisation of culture, negotiating between their British, Polish or otherwise, cultural preferences. This attempt by Polish migrant parents to cross reference their children's childhoods with their own is explored in greater detail in chapter six (6.3.4).

5.3.6 The transition into British school: migrant parents' perceptions

Seven families in the sample had children of school age when they arrived in the UK. Informants from these families talked about enrolling their children at school soon after their arrival in the North East; for some migrant parents this caused anxiety, but other parents were confident that children would simply adapt. Edyta, for instance, was concerned about how daughter, Nelka, then five, might be accommodated in British school in terms of her language ability. At Edyta's request the school initially agreed to place Nelka in a year group below her age, but soon insisted she should move to her appropriate year:

'It was difficult, I was worried ...so she went to year one for three days, and then they asked me, 'I can see that she's from that year, so she should, you know, be one year below?', because it's you know, confusing me 'a year?' so,... she just had to you know, adjust.' (Edyta)

While Edyta found the idea that Nelka should simply have to 'adjust' unfair, other informants found the idea that their children would have to adjust part of the thrill. Czesław and Jarek, for example, presented themselves as stoic pioneers in their own migration narratives (3.5.2), then narrated their children's quick adaption into British schools as similarly valiant. Jarek for example, talked about his son Tobiasz starting school two days after his arrival in the UK: he beamed proudly at his son while he spoke, saying he had few worries about his son's transition to British school, repeating confidently that he knew his son

'would just get on with it'. Of course this narration takes place with the benefit of hindsight, so presumably these informants may have been more fretful about their children's transition at the time of their arrival.

Although levels of concern about children's transition into British school differed, all Polish migrant parents with children of school age had prepared their children relatively little for this transition. Edyta, Czesław and Jarek for example, reported buying a token number of English-Polish books for their children prior to arrival, but none of the Polish born children in the study spoke any more than a few words of English upon entry in the UK. Informants who became parents in the UK were often more inventive in preparing their children for school, talking about buying language learning software (Kazimierz) and hiring additional English language tutors (Elżbieta) for example, though modes of engagement were perhaps more symptomatic of economic means rather than any real trend in levels of pro-activity. This lack of preparation, it is later suggested, relates to Polish migrant parents resistance to teaching their children languages outside of optimal learning environments (5.4.3).

When talking about his son's transition to school in the UK, Jarek recalled knowing that his son would be the only Polish pupil at school and as such he felt that son Tobiasz would inevitably be well supported and would receive *'special attention'*. The idea that schools are better resourced and equipped to help children if they are *'only one of a kind'* as Jarek puts it, is very revealing in that it might explain why Polish migrant parents avoided living in "ghettoised" communities. Eight of the families in this study lived away from inner city conurbations (villages, fairly rural mining towns or on out-of-town new build estates) where they claimed to be the 'only Polish family' in residence. Polish migrant parents tended to embrace this lone status, believing that it aided their integration into British life. Polish migrant parents in this study sought then, to avoid sending their children to schools where there were already a known number of Polish migrant children attending, under the pretext that schools had a limited amount of provision set aside to meet the needs of their children, believing that this educational provision would go further if they avoided

situations of saturation. This might explain then why some preference for Catholic education was occasionally replaced for more pragmatic school choices (5.3.4).

5.3.7 The transition into British school: migrant children's perceptions

During two of the interviews I conducted for this study, older children were present, and at the consent of their parents I was able to question them about their experiences of life in the North East. The children were Dominika, daughter of Czesław and Klara, aged eleven at the time of interview, and Nelka, daughter of Edyta and Łukasz, nine at the time of interview. As the children were still relatively young at the time of interview and interviewed alongside their parents, they tended to look for cues as what to say from their parents, which compromised the authenticity of their answers somewhat. Children's narratives did however, help to put interesting perspective on the migrant parent and migrant child dynamic and showed how certain attitudes toward migration were being passed down. So for example, having listened astutely to her father telling me about his reception into the local workforce, it was fairly unsurprising that Dominika talked about being the only Polish girl at school in the same manner of triumph. Dominika told me about a fieldtrip her class had taken to the local supermarket:

'When we got on the Polish part and they found the Polish biscuits, I said 'these are the Polish biscuits' and we bought three packets and everyone was trying them, and they were like 'hmmm, yes, these are lovely' [smiles excitedly].
(Dominika, age 11, daughter of Czesław and Klara)

Dominika's clear enjoyment of ethnic minority status goes against the findings of Devine's studies (2003, 2013) on migrant children in Belfast. When positioned as the ethnic 'other' these migrant children, from various countries, employed different degrees of ethnic self monitoring in order to minimise embodying aspects of cultural difference, so for example they chose to adjust their accent, dress and diet. Dominika, boasts about her cultural difference, telling me, for example, how friends enjoyed going to her house to try Polish

food and see how a 'real' Polish household was run. This exemplifies her father's own portrayal of his celebrity status in the workplace: Czesław describes himself as being referred to as 'King Czes' for example, and being a point of fascination for his work colleagues. Children's reflection on their transition into British school seemed then, to be governed then by their parents' portrayal of transition into life in the UK.

As already suggested though, this type of narrative portrayal takes place with the benefit of hindsight: Dominika's thoughts show her feeling anxious about her ethnic minority status in light of her forthcoming transition to secondary school:

'Erm, there's lots of new people and I think I'm the only Polish one there... Because, everyone is English up to year nine, and, I'm gonna be in year seven and everyone is English and I'm gonna be different being the Polish one: I'm the odd one out!' (Dominika)

Dominika's vulnerability here shows how Polish migrant children, like their parents passed through liminal phases where their feelings about identity and belonging changed accordingly. Although many informants in this study tried to present their migrations and subsequent life in the UK as straightforward, in practice they constantly re-evaluated and readdressed their prospects, opportunities and status at points of transition. For Polish migrant children, points of transition in the British education system, such as the transition from primary school to secondary school provided one such marker for identity reassessment.

The responses of the two migrant children interviewed were also markedly different. Unlike Dominika, Nelka's self consciousness at being the only Polish girl in her class corresponded to the attitudes and subsequent behaviour of children in Devine's (2003) study. Nelka talked about only feeling at ease when eventually joined by a fellow Polish classmate, Josef:

'It makes me feel, well, it makes me feel happy that erm, me and Josef are together because if there are only English people in the class and erm, and only one other person who's Polish, then I don't think I would get used to it.' (Nelka)

Edyta's concern that her daughter Nelka would struggle to 'adjust' in her transition to school in the UK, is echoed by Nelka here, in that she felt unable to 'get used to' school life when positioned as the only Polish migrant. Nelka's awareness of being the ethnic 'other' was such that at the time of interview she frequently adopted a faux American accent to seemingly counter her Polishness with an identity she deemed more desirable: '*Some people think a lot I sound American*' she boasted. Polish mother Edyta accorded this behaviour to Nelka's immersion in American film and cartoons which she had used as a way to help her daughter learn English. Edyta's very vocal dislike of the local 'geordie' accent (5.4.4, 5.4.3) might also offer explanation as to why her daughter consciously tried to modify her own accent. Evidence that Polish migrant children actively adjust their behaviour in order to 'fit in' is supported by extracts from the three interviews with Polish migrant children in D'Angelo and Ryan's chapter '*Sites of Socialisation - Polish parents and children in London schools*' (2011). Again the authors found that Polish migrant children had the ability to change self representations and were keen to understand how their Polishness might be accepted. Clearly then, a longitudinal piece of research looking at a more substantial number of Polish migrant children and their experiences of the British education system, particularly at moments of transition, would be very valuable, and indeed work from my own institution in this area is forthcoming (Gill, 2013). What can be drawn from this study, I feel, is the sense that Polish migrant children are caught up in a similar negotiation of identity and self positioning as their parents.

5.3.8 Polish Saturday school provision

Out of the seven families in the study with school aged children, four families had children who had attended local Polish Saturday schools for some duration, but only two families continued to send their children to Polish school regularly at the time of interview. Edyta, a parent who had sent her daughter to Polish Saturday school but then dropped out, talked about the inconvenience and monotony of having an additional educational commitment:

'The Saturday school - she doesn't go there anymore..., first of all, because er, it took time, it is a Saturday and you have to be there at ten thirty and we do have a car but I don't drive it and um, it's really time consuming to get there...' [continues later in the interview] ...*' I like to think there is a Polish school, er, but it's just for me after the whole week it's a bit tiring and time consuming to go there, like three hours without a car- you can't really do much, and then that's about three hours on my own. And then there's always something on, like somebody's birthday or she just wants to stay at home and play...and, you know it's just too, like, structured.'* (Edyta)

Edyta's explanation of why she had stopped taking daughter Nelka to Polish Saturday school was fairly typical of the reasons offered by the parents who did not send their children to Polish school or who had also stopped attending; weekends were occupied with various social commitments, parents sought more unstructured time to counterbalance the routine of the working week, the location of Polish schools was often poorly connected to transport links and there was a lack of onsite or nearby amenities to occupy parents when waiting for their children to finish class. Jagoda, an informant who had recently set up a Polish school in her local area, confirmed that parents of her new pupils had indeed complained of similar logistical problems. To counteract this, Jagoda was seeking to relocate the school to premises which would offer parents free Internet access and English language training. This need to offer parents incentives in order for them to send their children to Polish Saturday school suggests that the provision of Polish culture and language learning for children was not enough in itself to guarantee regular participation.

Polish migrant parents also complained about the structure of Polish Saturday schools, a problem recognised by Polish Saturday school teachers Jagoda and Basia. The children who attended schools were of a wide range of ages and abilities, some having been born in the UK, others having had several years of schooling in Poland before arriving in the UK. Jarek, for example, noted how his son had been bored and frustrated in Polish Saturday school; his competency in Polish being relatively good compared with his compatriots due to his parents

decision to school him in Poland for a number of years prior to the family's reunification. The cost of sending children to Polish school was also presented as an issue; Edyta, for example, had to budget for after school club provision for Nelka around her working hours, and setting aside additional time and money for Polish Saturday school had proven difficult. In the same way that Polish migrant parents rarely provided arguments for the cultural merit of attending Catholic schools, the cultural inflections of Polish Saturday school also seemed forgotten, overridden by the vast logistical inconvenience of attending. Muted thoughts on the educational or social value of such provision by informants would perhaps again benefit from further research, now that some years on, the teething difficulties of these then newly opened institutions may have dampened.

5.4 The promotion of language learning

5.4.1 The promotion of Polish language learning

All Polish migrant parents with school aged children in this study felt they could and should personally provide their children with a certain level of Polish education at home. For many parents this reaffirmed their opinions of Polish Saturday school in that they felt the Polish tuition they could provide their children was sufficient enough. Parental input mainly involved helping with Polish language learning but some informants also believed that a taught understanding of Polish history and culture was important for their children. Czesław, for example, had bought his children a series of books about Polish legend and myth which he asked them to show me during the interview. Some informants wanted their children to follow a specific curriculum of learning. Edyta, for example, had instructed a sister who remained resident in Poland, to send her specific grammar text books in order that she could follow a structured Polish language series with daughter, Nelka. Other informants talked about frequently sourcing and buying Polish DVDs and computer software from online retailers. Ludmiła for example spoke off record about using the Internet to obtain a specific Polish cartoon she enjoyed as a child, in order that she might share something of her childhood with her son. As such I feel that the

accessibility and availability of specific artefacts from home, made possible by the Internet, in order to promote the learning of language or familiarity with cultural identity, has been considerably overlooked by scholars working in this field. So for example, migrantStudies by Hiller and Franz (2004) and Parham (2004) for instance, look at the promotion of interconnectedness and cultural identity by the Internet solely in terms of communication devices such as email and web forum. In this study the Internet was being used as a way to promote cultural commodification, particularly in relation to educational resources for children; once again more specific analysis of this trend might be encouraged.

With reference to the everyday routine of Polish migrant families, three families in the study reported setting aside specific daily time slots for the learning of Polish language while others taught their children Polish on a more ad hoc basis. Dedicating such time to helping their children to learn was regarded collectively as part of good parenting practice, and so this practice extended to helping children with other subjects outside of Polish language too. Hania for example felt that helping her daughter with her homework made her '*a focussed parent*'. Indeed this attitude was particularly prevalent among those with preschool children: I noted through interactions with Polish friends, how parents in this category would encourage regular sit down sessions with their children in order to help bolster their literacy and numeracy skills prior to starting school. The ethos among Polish migrant parents was about assisting children with academic ability across the curriculum, the learning of Polish culture and language was generally regarded by parents as a good additional extra for their child's future curriculum vitae. Once again reference to preserving Polish identity through uptake of Polish language seemed to take a backseat then, to the need for a second language as future career collateral. Polish migrant parents keen desire to help their children with academic attainment did, however, cause them considerable frustration too. As Basia explained, trying to impart her knowledge on to daughter Lucyna often proved time consuming and frustrating for both parties, with frequent translational mishaps and misunderstandings. Polish migrant parents were therefore extremely resilient and motivated when assisting their children with academic attainment,

motivated by the belief that academic attainment would secure future job prosperity.

Polish migrant parents were keen for their children to learn Polish for three main reasons: so they could communicate with grandparents, in case of any potential return to Poland, and because bilingualism, as just cited, was regarded as helping children both academically and in terms of securing future job prospects. Jagoda was one of just three informants to align the learning of Polish with cultural identity: *'As well it's nice because I'm coming from Poland, my roots are Polish, so I think it's nice when she's like as well feels part of Poland'*. Jagoda's foremost reason to encourage Polish language learning was however, so that daughter Greta could converse with grandparents. Ludmiła also referred to learning Polish as part of her personal heritage although again, this was not soely about protecting a sense of Polish identity. Ludmiła felt that she needed to give her son an early grounding in Polish to help him establish his own links with Poland because she worried that *'mum's sentiment'* alone as she put it, would not provide son Feliks with enough motivation to learn Polish independently. Ludmiła, like a number of other informants (5.4.4., 6.5.1) worried that her own childhood would be too removed from that of her son's, the fear being that this would eventually put distance between them. For Ludmiła then, the quest to teach her son Polish language was not so much about preserving Polish identity per se, but about preserving commonality.

There was also an attitude from some informants that all Polish émigrés should speak Polish, and that those who had not encouraged their children to take both languages had simply been lazy or had missed an opportunity. Zygmunt, for example, talked about how the children of his Polish cousins in Canada spoke very little Polish and had *'bad accents'*, his tone being one of disdain. This returns to the idea that good parents were regarded by Polish migrant parents as those parents who seized opportunities for their children and actively helped their children achieve academically. Indeed Sales et al.'s (2008) study on Polish migrants concluded that good 'mothers' were seen as those actively involved in the role of schooling. It is unclear as to whether this gendered specification of

'mothers' here was a result of a gender bias in the sample, but it should be stressed that in this study Polish fathers did indeed report taking a practical role in the regular tutoring of children too. Kazimierz and Zygmunt, for example, saw themselves as highly influential educators of their children, both showing me off-record digital learning games they used with their children and talking about methods they used to help their children learn. In this study both Polish mothers and fathers involved themselves in the schooling of children, and sought to promote Polish language learning for a range of reasons.

5.4.2 Promoting English language learning: the right time

As previously noted (4.7.5) all informants with preschool aged children were anxious that their children were not communicating enough either in Polish or English, and that their children were experiencing language delay. This fear often resulted in Polish migrant parents seeking advice from fellow Polish parents as to when they felt it appropriate to start a child at nursery. Krysia for example, had decided that she must start her child at nursery before he started speaking, having heard reports from other Polish parents about a child who reportedly vomited and had stomach pains from not understanding enough English at nursery. For Olga this anxiety about optimising language learning and so finding 'the right time' to start nursery led her to return to work early:

'I'd like him to learn English a bit sooner than that, I think, I think this one of the reasons I'm looking for jobs again, he can, start learning English now, I think it would be really really frustrating for him if he starts at later stage, I think it puts more pressure then to go back to work, think you know, I would like to go back, erm, but my heart is saying no.' (Olga)

Concern about exposing young children to a second language at the 'right' point in their language development was so fundamental to Olga that she felt pressured to relinquish full time care of her son Jaś earlier than she had hoped. For Iza, tapping into the supposed optimum age for language learning was also important, but she based this thought on her own experiences of learning English. Iza wanted to ensure that her daughter avoided not only the cost of

private language tuition that she had endured as an adult learner, but also the emotional, intellectual and physical challenges she felt she had faced by learning English in adulthood. Polish migrant parents with preschool age children in this study had a very good understanding about language development. This knowledge had been typically imparted through discussion with friends or possibly through material they had read (three informants with young children had some experience of translation work). As such Polish migrant parents with young children seemed very concerned that they should optimise their children's language learning potential. As the examples of Olga and Krysia show, sometimes this concern was so manifest that it motivated informants' choices about child care provision, making them feel obliged to encourage their children into environments which exposed them to English earlier than anticipated. Polish migrant parents' therefore revised their plans and intentions as and when circumstance prevailed.

5.4.3 Promoting English language learning: the right environment

Helping to ensure that children got the 'right' pronunciation of words and grasp of grammar when speaking a second language was also given as a resounding reason why Polish migrant parents felt their children needed to be exposed to English at a young age. Parents felt that speaking to their own children in English meant they would pass on mistakes and the wrong accent:

'I talk to her Polish only...I don't speak er to her with, in English at all because I don't want to make a damage on her...Er, I want to send her to the school, I prefer English people talk to her...No, I want she learn this language properly and correctly from the beginning...I don't want to really, hurt her with my English.' (Mariola)

Mariola's emphasis on her daughter learning '*language properly and correctly*' was shared across the sample. In almost every interview informants mentioned wanting their children to avoid the errors in English that they, as adult language learners, made. Like many informants Mariola used the technique of segregating her daughter's exposure to different languages in order to aid her

language acquisition and avoid passing on error, Mariola explained how this worked:

'Her father talks to her in Italian only, me in Polish only...But she can hear English language around her everyday as well, so three languages. Someone told me that I need separate, we need separate languages, because er, she will get confused, er, if we start mix languages...So, I, I, want, she identify me only with Polish, her father Italian and the others in English. That will be easier for her to pick up the languages.' (Mariola)

Polish migrant parents thus made very deliberate decisions about how best to promote language learning, both of Polish, English and any subsequent language acquisition.

Hania also adopted this segregation technique to encourage her daughter Mila, to be trilingual (Finnish, Polish and English). Again, like many informants, Hania believed that exposing her daughter to English in Poland was regarded as self-defeating as this would have put her in a *'forced environment'* for language learning. This might also explain why school aged children in the sample were given little English language preparation before entering school in the UK, in that learning English in Poland was seen as detrimental. Hania was realistic about the level of language fluency that Mila might achieve by learning languages in this segregated manner: *'She can speak Polish but I think she might have problems to read Polish because it's like completely different.'* Again this astuteness in understanding the technicalities of language development was seen across the interviews, implying that Polish migrant parents thought carefully about how best to help their children in their language acquisition, both in terms of timing of language learning and the environment in which learning should take place.

This pattern of language segregation was not always practised by informants' for the purposes of language acquisition alone. In contrast to the other informants exclusive use of Polish at home, Elżbieta and Walentyna both reported speaking occasional English in the private realm. For Walentyna

speaking in English at home was about utilising an opportunity: *'I came here to learn just English so we decided, even we spoke with my husband in English sometimes.'* For Elżbieta, permeating her life with English language, both in a professional context (she taught and researched English language) and in a domestic setting, was, she felt, simply an indication that she had reached a certain level of language competency in that she now entered in and out of English and Polish fairly unconsciously. The true extent to which informants spoke in English at home might be approached with caution though in that both informants rather tellingly associated language competency and accent with class standing (5.4.4), thus I feel, hoping to represent themselves as particularly learned in interview by emphasising their language fluency.

Most interestingly I feel, were the number of informants who reported a self controlled and conscience decision to restrict themselves from speaking in Polish in public, even though, as Truda noted it felt *'a bit artificial to speak English'*. Kazimierz and Truda's act of self censorship was once again reported as helping to define language environments for the benefit of their son's language learning. But Kazimierz also reported latterly making sure he and his son only conversed in English while stood in shop queues for example, in order to demonstrate good manners and respect in an all-English environment. Such ethnic self monitoring was also adopted by Waldemar, who tried to speak only in English in public. Waldemar's decision was a result however, or feeling consciously different in public: *'for example, when he doesn't understand' [points to his son] 'and I start to speak Polish, they look at me like the stranger'*. While the female migrant domestic workers in Huang and Yeoh's (1998) study on Singapore inverted public norms of dress, style, speech and behaviour using their position as 'the other' as a form of empowered counter culture, some Polish migrants in this study were found to be representing themselves as conformists, actively limiting their 'otherness' in public space. It might be argued then that Polish migrant parents in this study were in constant negotiation with themselves about the appropriateness of using a given language in a given environment, be this to enhance language acquisition, as a form of self representation or as a way to deflect 'otherness'.

5.4.4 Promoting English language learning: the right accent

Informants' contemplation of the 'right place' for language acquisition often included their thoughts about exposure to the 'right accent'. These discussions were typically preceded by informants' observations on my own accent (this being a South Central and Thames Valley English hybrid). Informants typically referred to my accent as clear and easy to understand: they then frequently offered a more negative appraisal of the various North East regional accents. Informants often incorrectly presumed that I would share this opinion, and as such this promoted an interesting and sometimes disturbing frankness on the subject. Walentyna for example talked about acquiring the 'right' English accent: *We, we want to move to the South...Why? Well because of the English...Because of English language, it is different accent there*. Following interview Walentyna elaborated further, talking about her plan to move to Oxford before her then one year old daughter would pick up the colloquially termed 'geordie' accent. Walentyna regarded Oxford as a place of intellectual superiority, and by contrast used the fairly offensive term of 'dresiarze' (a negative depiction of Polish working class culture) to describe Newcastle. Walentyna felt that the regional accents of both places associated people with the same social standing ('geordie' being a 'working class accent' and an Oxford accent being a 'middle class accent'). This finding relates to Stenning's work (2005) on the reconceptualisation of working class communities which looked at how following (post) socialism the notion of 'working class' was redefined in the everyday such as housing, dress, and in speech.

Other Polish migrant informants were less directly prejudiced in their opinions of the local accent but this snobbery still pervaded. So, for example, informants tended to link their dislike for North East regional accents with having comprehension difficulties. Edyta for instance, hoped that daughter Nelka would not adopt the local dialect: *It's funny sometimes for me, when I listen to that, it's sometimes I think it's in,- it makes me feel uncomfortable and I don't understand...And that's always what happens when you don't understand, you're like, I don't like it.* For Edyta, her dislike of the local accent was

something she felt she could 'manage'. Her daughter appeared to 'act' this management out by adopting a self styled American accent. This notion that accent was a wider signifier of social class and identity is not exclusive to Polish migrant parents I hasten to stress, as it is in fact an attitude I come across on a regular basis amongst the middle class set in the suburb of Newcastle where I live. Perhaps then, these Polish migrant parents are only emulating a disparaging social class snobbery that does sadly exist in the UK at large too.

It should also be added that not all Polish migrant parents shared this negative appraisal of local accents. Krysia for example, was keen to send her son to nursery in order for him to learn English and obtain the 'proper' (referring to local) accent: *I don't want to, er, teach him English myself because I haven't got the right accent, now he's got the best opportunity to get the proper one here.* Krysia actively embraced many local inflections such as 'like' and 'aye' in her own spoken English. When I drew her attention to this she was extremely pleased about gaining what she regarded as an authentic English accent. For Hania, initial difficulties she experienced with understanding the local accent had now subsided and her growing familiarity with the dialect was giving her confidence:

'Well that was quite surprising for me the beginning because I completely didn't understand Geordie and I was surprised what the language is, in here I think they speak English but ok I get used to this and I think it's nice, I like it, I, I get used to this, I understand people now, I can't speak Geordie but I do understand what they are saying to me.' (Hania)

Hania's positive appraisal of learning to appreciate the local accent stands her in stark contrast to the negative summary given by Walentyna. Later in interview Hania even claimed that '*understanding geordie*' put her at a unique advantage as she felt she could now inevitably understand all manner of other English accents. Hania even believed that her grasp of 'geordie' was indication that her standard of English was extremely good as 'geordie' was regarded by Hania as a 'difficult' accent to understand. Paulina, moreover, felt that understanding the local accent indicated a closer degree of integration. She reported feeling

immensely proud of her son Godek when he boldly conversed with his playgroup leaders, reaching what Paulina portrayed as a better comprehension of English than her own. Czesław and Klara also exhibited pride in their daughter Dominika when, at points in the interview, she helped translate questions. When I made passing observation on Dominika's Sunderland accent, Czesław and Klara beamed with pride, as did Dominika. Acquiring the 'right' English accent was then, once again understood by Polish migrant parents as a way to navigate identities.

5.4.5 English language learning amongst Polish parents

As with opinions on whether local accents should be adopted or not, Polish migrant parents were similarly divided as to whether a good comprehension of English language was a necessary facet for them to have a fulfilling life in the UK. Jarek had a fair level of English while his wife Wanda, who had lived in Britain for three years, spoke very little; this brought Jarek to the conclusion that there was no real need to learn English:

'You don't need to speak English, you get on without,... because er, if you have a health problem, we can get an interpreter from NHS you know, so, also, nearly all banks have Polish staff, has a in erm, consumer department, you know, so is easy, for us.' (Jarek)

In interview with Miron however, he was adamant that Polish migrants should learn English as a matter of course:

'What I can't understand is some people who have been in this country for,- it doesn't matter if they are Polish or not, er, they come to this country, with sort of very, erm, demanding er, nature, and they do not learn English which is,- you have to! You have to be able to communicate!' (Miron)

For Miron learning English was a political and principled act, the sign of a migrant who had a willing work ethic, for Jarek, a minority voice in the sample, learning English was not necessary as there were plenty of provisions in place to allow him to speak Polish. For other informants a good level of English was

felt to be a personal benefit. Bogdan, for example, believed a good grasp of English had given him a better quality of life in the UK: *'You know, with us, it's very beneficial to learn a foreign language, and when you move abroad it's actually much easier living in a country when you know the language, this was my motivation.'* Again more typically though, informants thought that a good comprehension of English was the only way to secure future job prospects in the UK. Mariola for example, insisted: *'yer, definitely, I need improve my English, I have to work very hard to, to get a higher level, you know communication, and then after that maybe I will think differently about my future here.'* A good grasp of English language was foreseen by many as being instrumental in their career prospects and so future decision to stay in the UK. Informants generally felt then, that although learning English was not a necessity to having a fulfilling life in the UK, it was necessary for securing a certain level of success.

Learning English was also presented as a triumph over adversity, with informants frequently comparing the basic level of English they had on arrival to their good grasp of the language at the time of the interview. Teodor recalled: *'When I get here I get my English from watching NBS basketball, on the TV, so I just knew the sports lines!'* He then continued to explain how brother-in-law Lech had helped him fake a competent level of English for a job interview at the beginning of his residency in the UK. Lech remembered questions asked in his interview for a care assistant position in a nursing home and coached Teodor to recite specific answers in English. In Teodor's early days at work in the care home, Lech made sure the pair were always teamed together in order to provide on the spot translation to his brother-in-law. Teodor then taught himself English by using an electronic dictionary to mimic pronunciation and build up vocabulary each night. This demonstrates then not only how resourceful some informants had been in securing work on arrival, and how reliant some had been on familial support initially (3.2.4), but also thereafter how diligent Polish migrants in the most had been in learning English. Lech too talked about his experiences of English language learning, and in particular his frustration at being in a class with several other Polish migrants, which he saw as detrimental

to his learning (again this refers to the idea of forced language environments (5.4.3)0 and resistance to Poles saturating specific resources (5.3.6). Polish migrant parents presented language learning then as a personal battle fraught with adversity and hardship, out of which they emerged as victors.

This narrative of adversity was used by informants to highlight how understandably proud of their achievements in learning English they were, and also how they subsequently deemed linguistic competency a measure of work ethic. The tendency to associate linguistic accomplishment with work ethic led some informants to then peg countless examples of Polish migrant language accomplishments against what they stereotyped as a British inability or aversion to language learning. Iza for example, had decided: *'English people, they don't want to start, er, learn other languages because obviously everybody speaks English but I think it's great advantage for them.'* Informants enjoyed suggesting that command over language was a cultural trait and as such portrayed Polish migrants as having an innate talent over their British contemporaries. The idea that those who did not learn languages were in some way philistines or lazy was also met in reverse; informants regarded those Polish parents who did not seize the opportunity to impart the Polish language onto their children with equal contempt (5.5.1). Attitudes to the learning of languages were then, not solely governed by ideas about job prospects and wanting to find commonality with children, they were also about inherent expectations about cultural prowess and social class.

5.5 The composition of the Polish migrant family: grandparents

5.5.1 Grandparents as care providers

Traditions of care provision by grandparents in Poland were commonly maintained by Polish migrant parents. In thirteen of the 21 families interviewed, grandparents provided care giving duties to children either regularly or over a set visitation period of between 2-6 months. Three families in this study had grandparents who were living with them at the time of interview; three families had had grandparents live with them for a defined period of time prior to the

interview. A further four families received regular visits from grandparents (every 2 months or less): in the case of two of these families, this was a result of having English grandparents living in easy travelling proximity, but in the case of the remaining two this was made feasible by having a Polish grandmother relocate nearby. Moreover an additional two families sent their children to stay with grandparents in Poland primarily in order to cover childcare during school holidays. This regular provision of care given by grandparents, albeit often in concentrated timeframes, in fact exceeds the norm in Poland of around 40% of Polish grandparents providing daily care for their grandchildren aged ten years or younger (Garcia-Morian and Kuehn: 2011). This suggests the tradition of using grandparents as care providers in Poland overcame geographic distance, with the parents of Polish migrants being willing to reposition themselves in order to continue providing this care.

Those informants new to parenthood were found to have typically called on their parents to assist them following the birth of babies. As with the informants in White and Ryan's (2008) study, this scenario frequently turned into an extended visit in order to then help with childcare and household management, commonly in this study, at the point when maternity leave was due to end. This situation echoes the 'returnee granny' scenario in Plaza's (2000) study of African Caribbean grandmothers resident in Britain, whereby grandparents were frequent flyers, coming and going when invited. Two of the new mothers in this study also recalled spending a duration of time (1-2 months) living back in Poland following the birth of children in order that their mothers might assist them in recovery. Care giving arrangements did generally flow down the 'daughter-mother-grandmother' axis recognised as the traditional care giving model in Poland by Stenning et al. (2010), but this arrangement was by no means exclusive in this study. Iza, for example, scheduled alternating visits from each of the four grandparents of daughter Emilia, so that she could maximise childcare provision for Emilia following her return to work. Iza, Ludmiła, Teodor and Lech all recalled receiving visits from lone grandfathers who offered varying degrees of assistance with childcare. One of the informants

in this study, some months after interview, sadly experienced a miscarriage, and called on her father to assist her with childcare while she recovered. Such examples of practical care being provided by Polish migrant grandfathers goes some way in inverting traditional expectations of gendered care provision [4.7.5].

The steadfast continuation of grandparents as care providers in this study might automatically assume that Buchowski's (1996) vision of the Polish family as absorbed by amoral familism (5.1.2) is an accurate depiction of the Polish migrant family too. This is not however the case. As will be discussed shortly, in a number of families visitation from grandparents was less frequent, mainly due to economic circumstance, and in those families which did have regular contact, a number of tensions between Polish migrant parents and their parents were very evident, in which case conditions to visitation had been negotiated. The physical interjection of grandparents at least, was certainly curtailed, and although Polish migrant parents still had very regular contact with their extended families through modern telecommunications, the nature of these exchanges, occasionally seeking advice, but more often updating news and offering incidental chat, suggests that the influence of extended family on Polish migrant families was not as overarching as Buchowski's model of Polish family life.

5.5.2 Grandparents as visitors

In the families where visitation was less frequent, minimum face-to-face contact with their extended families was said to take place 2-3 times a year, centred mainly on religious occasions such as Christmas and Easter but according to British school holiday regulations (such as half term holidays). Those informants who had less regular visitation from grandparents tended to complain about this and wished to increase visits. A number of factors were reported as preventing grandparents from visiting more regularly, these included: old age (Ludmiła, Walentyna), ill health (Waldemar, Zygmunt), grandparents fear of flying (Czesław, Paulina), a lack of money (Zygmunt, Walentyna, Ludmiła), still having

to support children at home (Walentyna, Ludmiła), regular commitment to caring for grandchildren in Poland (Truda) and having to divide visits between seeing family abroad elsewhere (Kazimierz). Informants also recognised a number of factors which prevented them from visiting Poland more frequently, these included: the practicalities of travelling with children (Zygmunt), the increasing cost of travelling to Poland (Jarek), and the logistics of visiting family and friends when in Poland (Ludmiła, Olga). As a result many informants envisaged having to cut down on the number of visits they made. Zygmunt, for example, talked about having to restrict his visits to twice a year:

'Two babies is too difficult now, so probably once every two years now... Because we've been half a year ago in Poland and it's so expensive now; three weeks in Poland is the same like three weeks all inclusive in Caribbean Island!' (Zygmunt)

In the families where grandparents embarked on extended visits to the UK a number of tensions typically arose. As previously noted the cohort of 'young liberal' informants clashed with their mothers over expectations on discipline and routine (4.6.3, 4.6.4). As such informants often portrayed their mothers as unyielding and difficult: *'She's convinced of how other people should live...and this is the only right way'* (Olga). The marital dynamics in extended family relationships were also portrayed as being tested during visits:

'Tensions between Kazimierz and my mother: my mother, you know the story, "mother in law"! Three generations under the same roof- those sort of conflicts. And so is better- we love each other but for two weeks, and then everybody is better off in their own houses.' (Truda)

In anticipation of these tensions informants devised certain coping strategies, these included: limiting the duration of visits, the number of visits per year, and setting out particular rules per grandparent. Tensions were such that a number of informants had started to regard their migration as being a good long-term antidote for ensuring a harmonious relationship with extended family.

'I think living as far from the grandparents as you can is the best thing you can do...I'm very happy that they live very far away, very happy about they can come and visit and that's nice, but they don't interfere...My mum usually comes for two three weeks; it's fine, my mum is very easy going but Paweł's parents have a limit of a week... it's when they come, usually three days are alright, but from then on it gets a bit hellish!' (Elżbieta)

Polish migrant parents therefore commonly voiced preference for short and yet frequent extended family visits by their parents in order to curb tensions. This careful and democratic negotiation of extended family visitation by Polish migrant couples suggests that Ornacka and Szczepaniak-Wiecha's (2005) model of the modified nuclear Polish family is perhaps a more accurate portrayal of the workings of the Polish migrant family too.

5.5.3 Grandparents as temporary residents

Informants whose parents had stayed for extended durations (typically 2-3 months) often perceived their parents as somewhat vulnerable when resident in the UK. Kazimierz for example, believed his parents felt marginalised when resident in the UK: *'They feel at ease probably in Poland, maybe because they don't speak English and they feel a little bit isolated here.'* Informants commonly identified that their parents lacked a sound grasp of English language and that this had then restricted their activities during visits leaving them bored or frustrated. Some informants then worried that their parents missed their own routines, habits and regular activities when resident in the UK, such as visiting particular cafes (Olga), enjoying the theatre and opera (Mariola), and meeting up with friends; as Truda explained: *'I wouldn't say that she was imprisoned here, but she, she didn't, she wasn't meeting up with her friends'*. The idea that their parents lacked freedom, independence and confidence during their stay in the UK also helped informants differentiate between themselves and their parents. Polish migrant parents typically portrayed themselves as adventurous and willing to adapt, while regarding their parents as conservative and set in their ways. Informants' depictions of such generation gap are explored further in chapter six (6.2.5).

For Truda, her mother's clear frustration, boredom and anxiety when resident in the UK, led her to question her mother's motivations for coming to help. Truda was concerned that her mother had felt obliged to help her having previously assisted her brother in Poland with childcare provision. According to Kurczewski and Oklej (2007) this sense of obligation to provide care for grandchildren is indeed a cultural expectation in Poland; in interviews they conducted with Polish grandparents Kurczewski and Oklej (2007: p.7) found that 'providing a practical duty of care in the absence of parents' was considered by Polish grandparents as their main grandparenting duty. Kurczewski and Oklej credit this mindset to not only an established tradition of care giving by grandparents in Poland, but the continued reinforcement of this tradition in Polish law. Thoughts about the transferral of this obligation to a transnational context bothered informants who subsequently portrayed their parents as compromised during extended visits. This culture of obligation also helps to contextualise the narrative of gaining freedom from mothers (3.2.2, 4.6.4) evident across interviews.

Informants did not always regard a lack of command over English as the lone factor in what they perceived to be the debilitated lifestyles of their parents when resident in the UK. Truda did, for example, concede that certain personality types were more able than others at overcoming this adversity. Like many informants Truda had been party to both paternal and maternal grandparent visits, and so freely made comparisons:

'My mother she used to learn English but she doesn't speak English, she understands a few words but she doesn't speak English and she can understand a little, but, she's afraid of talking to people and that's why she is nervous, she doesn't want to open. But Kazimierz's mum is completely different nature, she doesn't speak English at all but she will go to, and she will go to the shop and the butcher and will show, 'I want this type of meat' -and she will show the fingers' [actions pointing]. (Truda)

Truda talked later in the interview about her mother-in-law's interactions at the local Sure Start clinic where she had taken lone command of weighing her grandson and engaging with health visitors. This scenario helps illustrate

perhaps the nature of the day-to-day encounters Polish migrant grandparents were assigned as temporary care providers. Indeed informants commonly measured the success of grandparents' visits on their ability to manage these everyday interactions, drawing cross-family comparisons very willingly.

5.5.4 Grandparents as permanent residents

The two informants who had moved a parent / grandparent into permanent residence in the UK, talked about being able to watch them flourish in a new environment. The interactions of these extended family members were framed more in line with 'triumph over adversity' migration narratives. Elwira, for example, talked about how her elderly grandmother had volunteered to assist her with life as a soon-to-be lone parent:

'Because she retired and she's got nothing to do in Poland then she just said ok I want to be useful and I can come. She doesn't know any English, and erm but er she's very open and she travelled for many years. Well I just put some like 'hello', 'goodbye', 'thank you'- short like phrases in English and Polish [on card], so when someone is knocking she can say 'hello', 'goodbye'. (Elwira)

As the extract shows, Elwira and her grandmother brokered ways to help with everyday interactions, writing out simple phrases in English to help her be understood. At various points during the interview Elwira referred to how well her grandmother had coped with the day-to-day running of the household, and the very different character of life she now led in the UK. The octogenarian grandmother shared a small two bedroom flat on a multicultural social housing estate in inner city Newcastle with Elwira, a very different landscape to the large family home she had run in Wrocław. Unsurprisingly then, senior family members who moved into residence in the UK were admired by their offspring, and applauded for their adaptability.

Informants' worries about obligation also seemed to lessen when grandparents' residency was regarded as indefinite. Basia for instance, believed that having her mother move nearby had improved the dynamic between grandparent and grandchild as it had removed any sense of this obligation to care for

granddaughter Mila, making interactions between the two more incidental rather than regimented:

'I think now it's not so tense because there's nothing that you have to do, but [only] what you want to do, and they, you know, just do shopping, chatting, things like that. So, you know, they have their own time together now. It is quite easier than it was in Poland.' (Basia)

Rather than portraying their relatives as restricted and vulnerable when resident in the UK, these informants framed the migration of their parent / grandparent as liberating, seeing that migration had given these relatives a renewed sense of purpose and personal fulfilment. Basia depicted her mother Krystal as being independent, confident and happy; Krystal's life was now seen to be full and opportunity laden since she had become resident in the UK: *'Her life, er, completely different than from, to be retired in Poland; she start working, she's going to do some voluntary work, and she's completely different person than she was in Poland. Much more happier.'* Basia firmly believed that opportunities for elderly people were much more plentiful in the UK: *'it is lots of things retired people can do, go to their college or some courses or something different'*, and that in turn this allowed older people to take roles in later life outside of being grandparents. Informants who moved relatives to the UK permanently were therefore more able and likely to reflect on the transition of their parents to life in the UK in terms of long term opportunities rather than short term adversities.

5.5.5 Virtual grandparents

In Poland grandparents tend to have very regular contact with grandchildren: so for example questionnaires conducted by Kurczewski and Oklej (2007) suggest that 69% of people over 65 years of age and living separately from grandchildren in Poland had weekly contact with grandchildren. Although the numbers of three generational households has decreased in Poland in recent years an estimated 7.5% of families still lived in this manner in 2002 (Kurczewski and Oklej: 2007, p.5). Such regular intergenerational contact remained an important way of life for Polish migrants in this study. Five families

spoke to at least one parent on either the maternal or paternal side of the family on a daily basis, though weekly or twice weekly exchanges by informants with their parents were more typical. Siblings, especially sisters and sister-in-laws were also cited as having phone conversation daily; sometimes these conversations were held three-way (mothers-daughters). Informants typically spoke to parents on landline phones, noting cheap phone deals or international call cards that they had sourced. The medium of Skype was used by at least three families. Grandparents were noted as preferring this method of exchange due to their ability to see grandchildren, but informants occasionally found this habitual contact frustrating. Lidia for example moaned: *'My mum sees him every day on Skype! It's annoying sometimes.'* Informants reported using a number of communication technologies in tandem, so for example, most supplemented daily to weekly telephone calls with emails and exchanges on Facebook.

Those informants who had had extended family members living with them for durations of time, often recalled how this had increased levels of contact made to family in Poland. Elwira for example, observed how her grandma talked to her parents in Poland on a daily basis: *'they call back to each other every day so they know everything about their lives'*. She also noted the type of exchange taking place; grandma for example, liked her children to let her listen to the Polish television news down the phone. The regularity and ease at which informants were able to interact with family, not to mention the frequency of these exchanges, and the visual nature of these exchanges (support by platforms such as Facebook and Skype) seemed to play out as if informants were situated in a transnational living-room. This sense of borderlessness experienced by informants was beautifully documented by Basia when she described how her sister and mothers shared a virtual Sunday tea:

'It's just my mum and my two sisters are in Poland, so we just keep in contact, usually by phone, we just have like weekends on the phone [Laughs]: it's a problem! Sunday tea together?- so it is phone!' (Basia)

Wilding (2006) describes a similar normalisation of distance by families in his study 'virtual intimacies'. Such intimacies are shared between Polish family

members in this study, as they seek advice for everyday problems. Basia for instance talked about how her sisters phone with incidental questions: *'mum how to do bread? Mum, how to do ...? [laughs]. So it was like hotline, -so can you text just and tell mum to give us a ring? We don't know how to bake it! [laughs].'* Ludmiła talked about feeling close to her mother by asking her parenting advice: *'but I feel very close to them and I value their advice, and I actually talk to my mum a lot about Feliks, her ideas, how she would cope with some things.'* It was also apparent that such virtual intimacies were shared not just along parent-child axis in Polish migrant families but between siblings too. Ludmiła for example, talked about how her brother was keen to be involved in his nephew's everyday life, so he wrote a weekly blog detailing his nephew's activities and development, based on information Ludmiła relayed over the phone. For some informants the regularity and availability of such exchanges was even reported to have replaced the need for physical contact with extended family altogether. As Hania reported, *'Internet and Skype and telephones, they do it for you. So in the end I realised we don't need the physical contact, it's just enough to like talk to each other.'* The high number of Polish migrant parents who had regular visits from extended family, and moreover, who sought these visits more frequently, indicates though, that physical contact was more typically valued above virtual exchanges and was not regarded by the majority of informants as a fair substitute for physical contact.

5.6 The composition of the Polish migrant family: lone parents

5.6.1 Polish migrant lone parents and working lifestyle

Statistics taken from the OECD Family Database (OECD: 2012) estimate that 12.6% of households in Poland in 2002 constituted of lone parent families of which 87.9% were lone mother households. This percentage was comparable with other Central and Eastern European countries, namely Slovenia and the Czech Republic, which also had an approximate proportion of 12% lone parent households in the mid 2000s (OECD:2012). In the UK the percentage of lone parent households was significantly lower; comparing a dataset a year previously OECD statistics estimate that 9.8% of households in the UK

constituted lone parent families in 2001 (OECD:2012). According to this data, although there were found to be proportionally less lone parent households in Britain, Polish migrant lone parents in this study (of which there were six examples) reported feeling more at ease with being lone parents in the UK compared to in Poland, feeling the UK offered them better status and opportunities legally, socially and in the workplace.

In chapter four it was noted that a range of informants felt that there was greater availability and affordability of childcare provision in the UK (4.7.5) and that this was supported by flexible working hour initiatives (4.7.4). Polish migrant lone parents were particularly vocal on this subject perceiving the UK to offer them a better work-life balance, having greater options for combining work with parenting. Hania, for example, felt being a working lone parent was easier in the UK: *'I think it's very easy to, to combine work and being a mother [here], because there are many like opportunities, for flexitime, part-time which is not available in Warsaw or in Poland.'* Government policies were seen by migrant lone parents as ensuring that employers in the UK were sympathetic and inclusive of their position, whereas employers in Poland were portrayed as being wary and reluctant to take lone parents on:

'[Employers in Poland] usually, you know, they don't want you to be a lone mother, because they always anticipate all the sick leaves, all the- whatever it happens you have to always go and take care of the child,- [but] is not in here this stigma.' (Hania)

This evidence corresponds to attitudes held by Polish lone parents in research conducted by the European Transfer of Innovation Project *'Supermom Kick-off 2010'* whereby the main barriers lone parents faced in Poland were: the expense of childcare (and so reluctance to then put children in to childcare), rigid timeframes of work, and a belief that employers discriminated against lone parents due their potential to take absences from work to care for children (*Supermom Kick-off 2010: p.30*). Basia's account of how employment culture in Poland discriminated against lone parents, led her to assume that a 'glass ceiling' existed in her home country that might prevent her from reaching her

potential. As noted previously (4.6.4), the six lone parent informants in this study were particularly entrepreneurial and ambitious in both in their professional and private lives, which again supports this going concern for employment equality.

5.6.2 Social and legal comparisons

Polish migrant lone parents were keen to draw parallels between their social and legal standing in the UK compared with Poland. Hania's fear that a 'stigma' around lone parenting existed in Poland was echoed by a number of informants. Societal attitudes in the UK were for instance, regarded as more tolerant and even accepting of various family formations:

'I think that the woman and mothers here are more independent from the men than in Poland. Actually you know that, erm culture view in Poland that is, is this, 'mother, father and kids' so it's quite difficult to be lone parent.' (Basia)

Basia believed that this conventional perception of the family unit in Poland 'mother, father and kids' essentially left Polish women dependent on men. As already shown in chapter four, Polish migrant lone parents were especially embroiled in narratives of assertion about independence (4.6.1) and the negotiation of their responsibilities in the early years of motherhood (4.6.4). The arrangement 'mother, father and kids' is however, the persistently reinforced family formation in Poland thanks largely to the inherent relationship between the state and Catholic church (sanctifying marriage between men and women) and perhaps leaves little hope for any imminent societal change. This leads Polish lone parents to perceive that their lives in the UK have greater freedom, there being a 'better respect' (Hania) for lone parents socially. Polish migrant lone parents felt then, that by moving to the UK they had navigated themselves better social standing.

British constitutional and legal frameworks were regarded by Polish migrant parents as acting to safeguard lone mothers. Basia, for example, recognised, *'here you know family law it is different, to give the mother rights of who looks after their children.'* Moreover some informants saw that Polish law worked to

the opposite effect, being actively detrimental to mothers. Krysia for instance, talked about being warned by her parents not to give her baby his father's surname as she would then need to seek consent from the baby's father to take the child out of Poland. Krysia recalled her parents' warning: *'what if that won't work out for you?' [referring to her relationship with baby's father] 'What then for every single passport you'll ever- you'll always need to have his permission!'* Krysia was once again concerned that this situation would place her in a position of dependency. Polish migrant lone parents, of which all informants in this study were of course women, were then particularly pleased to live in a country which they felt did not situate them at a legal disadvantage.

5.6.3 Polish migrant lone parents and welfare provision

Polish migrant lone parents were also concerned with the lack of state provision in Poland that existed to protect lone parents from poverty and social exclusion. To contextualise this, the two informants who had experience of lone parenting in Poland would have left the country soon after the Polish Child Support Fund (roughly equivalent to the British child benefit system) was liquidated in May 2004. This led to a series of protests from Polish lone parents who found themselves in relative destitution (as described by Hryciuk: 2005). In 2005, nearly 48% of children from lone parent families in Poland were at risk of poverty (*Supermom Kick-off 2010*: 2010, p.13). Falling into poverty was then, a real risk for these informants if they had stayed in Poland. As such Basia rather unsurprisingly highlighted the specific economic worries that she thought faced lone parents in Poland, including difficulties in the collection of child maintenance and fears about financial hardship: *'[In Poland] there's lots of women that doesn't [like] getting proper money from the husbands and they don't have any benefits system likes here, so it is quite difficult to maintain yourself and look after kids.'* For Basia having the safety net of state provision in the UK prevented such fears: *'Here it's much easier because you feel more secure with the benefits system. You don't need to worry how you will manage paying the bills.'* It should be stressed though, that none of the Polish migrant lone parents in this sample had been motivated to come to the UK as a direct

result of this provision. Hania for example insisted that she had not known about social security provision prior to her migration: *'No, not at all, that was a surprise to me'*. Polish migrant lone parents were also keen to stress their ambitions and drive to succeed in the UK. None of the six lone parents interviewed in this study relied solely on state provision to maintain their families, and two parents had in fact set up successful enterprises in the North East, one of which employed several local people.

5.6.4 Polish migrant lone parent household organisation

Another specific challenge faced by migrant lone parents was how they negotiated the time their children spent with fathers either back in Poland (one informant), living abroad (two informants), or living elsewhere in the North East of England (three informants). Hania, who had split from her partner in Poland, stated for instance, that her daughter continued to see her father to the same extent now she lived in the UK: *'I think distance is the same. It's like nothing changed. You know in family relationships nothing has changed.'* Interactions with fathers (dependent on the nature of the relationship with the mother, the living proximity and circumstances of the relationship obviously), thus played an important part in the transnational pathways of migrant children. Those informants who had regular contact with their children's fathers in the vicinity of the North East of England also presented as interesting cases, in that one, Mariola, effectively organised child care provision with her former partner much like the work sequencing migrant parent couples discussed shortly (5.7.2). This suggests then that although differences in the needs of Polish migrant lone parents were visible, sometimes their negotiation of livelihood drew similarities with the practices of Polish migrant parent couples.

In terms of the household division of labour, lone parent families differed in that children were expected to contribute to the workload more frequently than those children in two parent households. Hania for example, perceived her daughter to be instrumental in the running of the home: *she's initiating many times like 'look, it's so untidy, we should...' - after ten minutes I come into the room and I'm like, wow, she's done it!* Polish migrant lone parents showed propensity to

obscure the gendered divisions of labour then, blurring traditional gendered connotations of motherhood and fatherhood by taking on both provider and protector roles within their families (4.6.4). Experiences of first arrival in the UK also differed greatly for lone parents; they missed support networks for example, and consequently placed greater emphasis on establishing new networks quickly. As Basia explained: *'you really miss when you realise you are by your own with her, and don't know neighbours; you don't have family support so you have to do all these things by yourself and [you know], you'll be just right.'* Polish migrant lone parents then, tended to report more frequent and reciprocal exchanges with friends and neighbours and usually, but not exclusively, had a heightened interest in aspects of integration (6.4.8). Although their agenda on integration was noticeably different to Polish migrant couples, they generally sought greater involvement in formal networks, three of the Polish migrant lone parents in the study were also those noted as being particularly disenfranchised by support group services and family welfare provision (5.2.2). This suggests that the needs and ambitions of Polish migrant parents were not always realised by the service provision available.

5.7 The negotiation of labour in Polish migrant households

5.7.1 Working lifestyles

Although as previously noted (3.3.1) Polish migrant parents secured work across a range of employment sectors, working lifestyles tended to be fairly similar, with the vast majority of informants in the study carrying out shift work: seven families had at least one parent employed as shift workers at the time of interview, these included; a bus driver, engineer, pharmacist, doctor, factory production line workers, cleaners and care home assistants. A further two informants had taken shift work prior to the job they were doing at the time of interview, and in addition to this, two informants fell into shift work following interviews. Those parents not involved in shift work were generally the migrant lone parents who tended to take part time work, typically administrative positions with regular office hours in order work around school or child care arrangements. There were also three informants in the study employed by

agencies undertaking impromptu translational work with irregular hours. Across the sample Polish migrant parent couples tended to share the same or similar structure of work, typically both parents were shift-workers, both were professionals with regular hours or both partners would be employed on temporary contracts for example. This meant that work was often portrayed by informants as necessitating a particular lifestyle.

The lifestyle fashioned by informants who had regular shift work on rolling contracts tended to have very organised days and scheduled time to spend with their children or time allocated to socialise:

'You know everyday I'm wake up, usually quarter past five, go to work, you know, two-fifty-sixes, two- twenties, finish. Fifty-sixes - Newcastle, twenties – Durham [referring to the number buses he drives]. That's my day. Back home, play with Dominika, go the swimming, watch TV, sometimes go to friends.'
(Czesław)

As the extract from the interview with Czesław highlights, shift working fathers tended to start work early, often in the early hours of the morning and finished work early in the afternoon, which coincided with children arriving home from school (Czesław, Lech, Teodor, Jarek). The Polish migrant mothers in these households were more likely to work a split shift, the second half of which was conducted in the evening (Wanda and Klara) or having taken afternoon shifts (Katrzyzna and Barbara). This commonly necessitated a form of work sequencing, as discussed in greater detail shortly. For those informants who had more inconsistent work on temporary contracts, so for example, Ludmiła and Krysia (who were employed by agencies to carry out ad hoc translation tasks) and Lidia (a freelance artist working on piecemeal assignments) more chaotic lifestyles seemed to be necessitated:

'We are very disorganised house, we don't have strict routines... no two days that are the same, when you've got odd jobs here and there... you can't really plan the whole week... something that either there is work or not.' (Lidia)

Saying this, the informants who worked irregular hours were also those who sought migration for self fulfilment (3.2.2), having a very romanticised vision of what they wanted to do and how they wanted to live life, generally in opposition to their own strict upbringings (6.3.2). Informants therefore seemed to experience varying degrees of agency over their working lifestyles negotiating the best possible outcomes from their circumstance. Those assigned irregular hours avoided the monotony of routine which corresponded with their liberal parenting ethos. Those involved in shift work took advantage of opportunities for work sequencing, and Polish migrant lone parents felt that they had achieved a better work-life balance simply by living in the UK (5.6.1).

5.7.2 Work sequencing

Polish migrant parents fashioned shift work to their advantage by engaging in patterns of work sequencing, wherein they arranged their working timetables in order to avoid the need for additional childcare provision. Many informants therefore regarded shift work as accommodating their needs as it minimised the need to rely on networks of friends for childcare or expensive institutional childcare services, such as after school clubs. Work sequencing also allowed couples to keep childcare within the family, even in the absence of extended family networks which Polish families were more traditionally reliant upon (5.5.1). Jarek for example, found that work sequencing suited both himself and his wife as they both had regular contact with son Tobiasz:

'It's very suitable for her because I'm working on the rota, right, and somebody have to, er, give a care for Tobiasz, to transfer him to school and er collect him from school, so er, Wanda work a few hours in the morning, when Tobiasz er, at school and a few hours in the evening when I am home.' (Jarek)

Returning then to the idea muted in chapter three that some informants had found the process of employment de-skilling advantageous (3.3.2), shift work too was generally well received by informants as it allowed for such work sequencing. Barbara, for example, was shown to find her new employment, albeit lower paid and lower status than the job she had in Poland, both more

convenient and more conducive to family life as it allowed her to swap childcare shifts with her shift working husband, Teodor.

Various degrees of work sequencing were implemented by Polish migrant parents, some using the practice occasionally and some more regularly. Wiktor and Iza for instance, had to rely on nursery provision to top-up their childcare as a result of husband Wiktor's rotational shift pattern. Iza reported off-record some difficulty in finding willing nurseries to agree to such arrangement. Czesław and Klara however, maximised sequencing by working at the same bus depot and sharing transport. When Czesław finished work Klara would be waiting in the car to start her shift. As Czesław reported, sometimes this involved not even switching off the car engine: '*she gets out, I get in, when she goes to bed, my day is start*'. For many couples work sequencing had resulted in very little or no time spent as a whole family, or as a couple independent of their children. George's (2000) study on the lives of Kerala migrants living in Central City, America, found a similar scenario wherein 'couples lived like strangers for years- hardly seeing each other as they handed over the childcare baton to each other between their work shifts' (George: 2000, p.158). One couple in my study though, had even found a solution to this lack of time spent together: Jarek and Wanda sent their son Tobiasz to Poland for summer holidays, primarily to cover child care provision in the absence of school, but also in order to enjoy an annual child-free holiday in France together.

The keen uptake of work sequencing by Polish migrant couples in the study also means that Polish migrant fathers were found to be typically sharing the everyday care of their children. With the exception of two Polish migrant fathers interviewed, the remaining seven declared being in sole charge of their children for parts of the week. But as Ryan (2007) found in her study of Irish and Polish nurses (some of whom used work sequencing to avoid the need for additional childcare), the division of labour in such households was not as equal as it first seemed. So for instance in Ryan's study migrant mothers were found to be devoting considerable time prior to the start of the week to preparing meals and organising the house in order to limit what was needed to be done during the

father's childcare shift. I found it difficult to ascertain exactly who did what in my Polish migrant households, as migrant fathers tended to be the lead interviewee in all of my work sequencing couples, and moreover, when migrant mothers in work sequencing couples were present they spoke English to a much lesser degree, and my Polish was too limited to properly engage with them. In interviews with Czesław and Klara, and Jarek and Wanda, I did note however, that migrant mothers contested some of the allegations their husbands were making. Czesław, for example, insisted that the couple divided chores in his household '50/50', though when daughter Dominika translated this comment, Klara rolled her eyes.

Work sequencing did not always run seamlessly in these households either. Teodor for example, talked about working 12 hour night shifts arriving home at 8am as his wife started work. Teodor then had three hours sleep while his daughter attended preschool. He picked her up from pre-school, and afternoons were usually spent at home dozing while his daughter played. As Teodor explained: *'Well sometimes, I know that is no good for my daughter, [but she] will play, I lying in the bed and she is playing too.'* The extent to which children were always well supervised was also queried in Czesław's household, whereby older daughter, Dominika, eleven, would occasionally be temporarily responsible for her five year old brother after school, while the work sequencing exchange at the bus depot took place. Jarek also cited a similar arrangement, wherein his then thirteen year old son had for some years been left unsupervised in the park (on the premise that it gave him opportunity to *'make new friends'*) while the couple's shifts swapped over. Although in the UK law does not set a minimum age at which children can be left (NSPCA: 2010), there are cultural expectations about the age of maturity, and this differs somewhat to expectations in Poland. Czesław very innocently described his children for example, as *'nearly adults'*. In this respect juridical guidelines on the minimum age a child might be left would be recommended, merely as a preventative to these ambiguities.

Work sequencing was regarded by informants as a practical and standard solution to working family life. As Teodor observed, *'My wife works and I work, so if you won't work together, I must work nights, and I look after her, Sophia, my daughter during the day, and that's why.'* This corresponds with informants' opinion that what seemed like an arduous daily routine in the UK, did not differ from what they were already doing in Poland. As Czesław rationalised: *'[it's] the same like here, because the people go to work for- they work finish, back home, that's everywhere the same.'* Teodor, in fact, disagreed outright that his life would be better in Poland: *'If we be in Poland and in same kind of job, we'll never afford to live in a house, have a car ...so that's better, that things look like that.'* In a study conducted by Ryan et al. (2009b), Polish migrant parents in London agreed that the UK essentially offered them a better standard of living for similar practices of work. Polish migrant parents were therefore prepared to endure hardships in the UK, such as arduous shift patterns, as it was simply a preferable level of adversity than that which they had endured or expected to endure in Poland. This study agrees.

The sequencing of childcare was not exclusive to shift working parents, and variations of this behaviour were indeed practised by those parents employed in other modes of work or as a means of allowing one parent to gain further qualifications. Zygmunt and Dorota, for example, ran several online businesses from home. The couple swapped children care duties accordingly:

'Actually, because Zygmunt is at home most of the time it's actually much easier,... so mostly it's mornings, so I take them, both of them to the, for example, playgroups, or go for a walk, and then you know, [I say] you have child now.' (Dorota)

Having the children at home while they worked meant the couple had sought inventive ways to optimise monitoring their online interests while parenting. At the time of the interview they had recently invested in i phones so they could monitor their websites and carry out childcare duties simultaneously. For Elżbieta and Paweł, a university academic and dentist, work sequencing occurred at weekends as the couple took turns to do additional work in the

home office, swapping childcare provision intermittently. Meanwhile Miron, a care assistant, and his wife Wera, an administrator, took it in turns to undertake evening courses in order to obtain new skills and qualifications. While one partner studied and attended classes, the other took on additional childcare, cooking and housework duties to lessen the burden on the one studying. When the course or qualification was completed the additional duties would swap. This carefully choreographed division of childcare demonstrates how Polish migrant couples supported each other's professional development, variations of work sequencing being used to optimise opportunities for both. As such Polish migrant parents were very adept at balancing childcare and work; the desire by Polish migrant lone parents to find compatibility between working and parenting (5.6.4) was perhaps then, characteristic of the sample more broadly.

5.7.3 Household division of labour: migration as a catalyst for change

Migration was presented by informants as having acted as a catalyst for changes to the division of labour in their household. For many informants moving to the UK had seen them live independently from their parents for the first time. Even couples who had already had children before moving to the UK, Czesław and Klara, and Miron and Wera for instance, had previously lived in multigenerational households prior to migration, so this was effectively the first time they had lived autonomously too. Six male informants in this study had travelled alone at the outset of migration in order to find jobs and set up homes before moving their partners and children. These informants commonly reported feeling proud or surprised by what they had achieved independently. Lech recalled setting up his new home with excitement: *'When I found the house I just start doing everything, but I never do that before, so that's new experience for me.'* Two female informants, Iza and Truda, had also travelled separately from their spouses, both securing jobs and temporary residence in the UK before their husbands came to join them and again had to act independently at the outset of migration. For many of the informants in this study then, migration had allowed them periods of time living on their own, sometimes for the first time.

It should also be noted that for a number of couples migration took place soon after getting married or having recently established their relationships. As such the personality traits and abilities of partners were still yet to be discovered; migration then coincided with this exploration:

'Before we came in England I thought he's got two left hands, you know what I mean? But then I realised he can do lots of things like, erm, like, man can do like obviously like painting - when we bought this house I was really very surprised that he can do lots of things, erm, so, yer; he can help with cooking, with obviously, only, what else, erm, cleaning cars... I think because we moved away from our family that, er, kind of necessity to helping each other with stuff - so I don't know, different things every day.' (Iza)

Iza recalled that moving abroad had allowed her to see husband Wiktor in a renewed light. She regarded him as more capable and proficient in the wake of migration, believing that moving away from their families had necessitated a greater reliance on each other. This need for togetherness in the wake of leaving the wider family home, might also account then for Polish migrant couples' very supportive relationships as they sought to replicate former intra-familial unity.

For those informants who travelled as a couple, migration had often involved making decisions together about renting or buying their own houses, again, independent from their parents for the first time. Taking ownership over their lifestyle was extremely empowering for Paulina and Waldemar, who talked about enjoying making decisions about how to run their household. This corresponds to narrative themes discussed in chapter four, wherein informants actively sought autonomy from the previous generation and more widely negotiated levels of independence and responsibility as new parents. They also framed themselves as 'coming of age' which often involved assessing the changing dynamics in their extended families (4.6.2). For some informants setting up home together simply allowed them to find their own standards of cleanliness and interior taste. Olga for instance talked about the importance of having a garden, and bringing flowers into the house, while husband Bogdan

was portrayed as enjoying taking command of certain tasks and liking things a certain way: *'I think he could vac for hours!'* The couple reported how they worked through lists of home improvements together; adjustments to this list made by Olga's mother on her frequent visits were regarded as interfering, clearly impinging on the couples' newfound self-sufficiency.

A number of informants also talked about men having diminished responsibility for housework when living in Poland. Teodor for example, said: *'When I lived in Poland, my mother wouldn't let me do anything, she never let me cleaning, washing dishes.'* This portrayal of overbearing Polish mothers has been well highlighted (3.2.2, 4.6.1): indeed leaving the apron strings of Polish mothers was presented by informants as the main reason for the realignment of divisions of labour in their households. Paulina, for example, talked about migration in terms of a 'coming of age'; in particular she felt that husband Waldemar, depicted by Paulina as mollycoddled and spoilt by his mother (4.6.3), had been given opportunity through migration to freely participate in housework. Migration was therefore presented by some as enabling them better gender equality in the home.

5.7.4 Household division of labour: gendered distinctions

This stereotypical portrayal of the Polish mother as a domestic dictator also supports the idea that informants found the traditional and ideological model of motherhood in Poland, the so-called 'Matka Polska' (Jaworski and Pietrow Ennher: 1992, Żarnowska: 2004), a reserve of a past generation. When I asked Lech and Teodor, for instance, whether they perceived their wives as the traditional 'Matka Polska', Lech joked: *'just call them 'our mother''*. Interestingly it is this literal and allegorical move away from the 'Matka Polska' that has clearly allowed informants the opportunity to reinvent expectations of the stay-at-home mother. Some informants stressed for instance, that their desire to be stay-at-home mothers did not automatically preclude them to be '*gosposia*' (the keeper of the household). Lech, for example, understood that if his business enterprise was successful his wife Katarzyna would like to stay at home with her children full time; she had specified however that her duties would only include

caring for the children: *'If I can get enough money she will be happy to look after baby only'*. As already noted (4.7.3) Ludmiła and Olga also sought to stay at home with their children full time. Ludmiła conversely attributed her desire to be a stay at home mother to a backlash against her mother's strict Soviet manifesto which wanted women to find independence through work alone. Ryan et al. (2009a) likewise, found a number of young Polish mothers in their study who welcomed the opportunity to be stay-at-home mothers when resident in the UK. Regardless of whether it is a backlash to Soviet ideals or the mythologized Matka Polska, evidence thus suggests that the stay-at-home Polish migrant mother is a growing phenomenon. According to Ryan et al (2009: p.68) the existence of the stay at home Polish migrant mother proves then that migration enabled families to make lifestyle choices not possible in Poland. In this study Ludmiła and Olga's decisions not to return to work (4.7.3) in favour of becoming stay-at-home mothers supports this suggestion.

Informants generally talked about sharing housework and cooking in accordance with work schedules. Edyta and Łukasz for instance, based the rotation of cooking on getting home early and having days off: *'We share, we try to share, but when I'm early at home I cook...And, er when I when my husband has day off he cooks...And that's the deal.'* In the case of stay-at-home mothers, the division of household duties was often improvised:

'We don't have an agreement, just, if there are some things to do, one of us does it, erm, and there are days when Bogdan comes in from work to lovely and clean house, and dinner is ready, er, and there are days when [he] just comes in and I'm like, 'I need half an hour!' (Olga).

It should also be noted though, that both practising stay-at-home mothers in the sample belonged to the young liberal migrant cohort (4.6.4); their depiction of such spontaneous decision making fits then with their perception of themselves as spirited and carefree. However, at a later point in the interview Olga talked about meal planning: *'I would normally spend two hours on a Sunday and cook for a whole week, so we would normally have, there was no way I could cook on a normal day... cook more on a weekend so we have a ready lunch during the*

week, suggesting then, that divisions of labour were not always as undisputed or straightforward as informants initially offered.

Indeed as already noted (5.7.2), Polish migrant fathers were often very keen to describe arrangements where they shared household duties equally. The questioning of couples together revealed occasional support for what was being said (Zygmunt and Dorota) but likewise unearthed situations where such equality was unfounded (Czesław and Klara, 5.7.2). After initially presenting themselves as sharing tasks some migrant fathers then listed their prescribed duties:

'It's different, we share with my wife, everything. I can't do ironing so she do ironing and she clean the whole house but I, I do washing, cleaning, washing the dishes, er, Hoovering, everything else I do as well...and when I'm back from work I look after the baby because she is doing some stuff for herself.' (Lech)

From this it was clear that some disparity between what informants imagined they did, and what they actually did, existed. Moreover there were also suggestions that childcare also involved more gendered distinctions than at first assumed. Polish migrant fathers for instance, were eager to present themselves being 'hands on', in as much as they talked about spending lots of time with their children. However, the types of activities they then cited being involved in were quite telling, namely trips to the park and shopping (Kazimierz and Zygmunt), swimming and cinema (Czesław) and playing football (Waldemar and Jarek). There was then, an underlining lean toward Polish migrant fathers taking command of the high energy and physical activities with children, while Polish migrant mothers were, it might be presumed, taking on the more mundane everyday tasks of clothing and feeding the children. This assumption is supported by Kazimierz who clarified: *'I always, I always er, give him a bath, yer, Sylvia always feeds him, erm, what else? I am playing with him let's say more, how can I say, I am running with him more, you know.'* Saying this, Polish migrant fathers' enthusiasm to depict themselves as actively involved in the education of their children (5.3.4), in household duties and in childcare provision is perhaps indicative that at least attitudes toward household labour are

receptive to equality in Polish migrant households, even though in practice gendered divisions remain manifest.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter analysed migrant parents' negotiation of livelihood practices. The chapter found Polish migrant parents making decisions about livelihood with a view to achieving the best possible outcomes for themselves and their children. In this chapter Anne White's initial questioning about the usefulness of the term 'livelihood strategy' in the context of Polish migration (2009a) was developed further. From this idea the argument that Polish migrant parents held 'livelihood negotiations' rather than definitive 'livelihood strategies' was put forward, based on informants' tendencies to make flexible plans and their willingness to accommodate opportunities as they arose. This is not to say that Polish migrant parents acted without intention or deliberation, on the contrary, they were found to be extremely tactical, setting themselves certain timeframes from which to reevaluate their opportunities, using intervals in their children's education to landmark points of possible onward migration, return migration and more permanent residency in the UK. Polish migrant parents were in essence tactical and opportunistic rather than necessarily strategic in their decision making.

Interestingly Polish migrant parents sought opportunities for themselves and their children alike, meaning that they did not fit the self-sacrificing portrayal of migrant parents seen previously in migration literature. As such their livelihood decisions were often multifaceted and utilitarian in nature, and drawn together by their sometimes nostalgic and romanticised cultural preferences. Polish migrant parents were however, continuously prepared to set aside this idealism in favour of pragmatics. Their preferences for children to have a Catholic education for example, were overruled by simple logistics such as proximity, or based on the need to maintain educational continuity in order to aid children with transition to British school, rather than being based on a purely idealistic reach for cultural identity. This pragmatism was repeated in relation to Polish

Saturday school, with parents considering the logistics and wider incentives of attending schools over their basic championing of cultural identity. Polish migrant parents were therefore pragmatic decision makers foremost, and although they were not necessarily 'willing' to compromise on idealism, this was often the compromise made.

Polish migrant parents did however, share particular values about parenting which often informed their behaviour. A good parent for example, was regarded as one who helped their child achieve academically. As such Polish migrant parents continuously sought the best educational prospects for their children, responding to events and opportunities both perfunctorily, so for example hastily returning to work when realising children had reached the optimal age for learning a second language, and more deliberately, so for example making sure children's exposure to language was controlled in order to aid their language acquisition. This shows that Polish migrant parents were driven to securing both short term and long term gratification gains for their children, and were receptive and adept at acting on opportunities. Polish migrant parents often used their immediate networks to help understand their options about school choices and language environments, and commonly shared an astute understanding about language development and acquisition.

Once again, informants to the study presented as willingly transitory, prepared to travel to and from Poland, or to different countries, or different areas of the UK in order to accommodate opportunities. Opportunities requiring willing mobility and relating to bettering educational prospects included seeking to obtain the best schooling or university and moving to tap into further language opportunities, cultural experiences, and preferred accents. The willing mobility of Polish migrant parents was not, it should be stressed again, exclusively motivated by seeking educational attainment, nor was this mobility confined to the immediate migrant family; grandparents for example, were placed permanently or temporarily in situ to provide childcare cover and post natal support, and children were shuffled to and from Poland at certain times of the year, in order to be supervised by extended family during school holidays.

This willing and responsive transience was however, curtailed by Polish migrant parents socio economic means. The more affluent informants could afford greater transnational mobility for example, looking to service their cultural preferences by dipping in and out of Polish and British provisions and being more able to position themselves at vantage points for gaining social and cultural capital. Polish migrant parents from lower socio economic means, had difficulties in accessing service provisions, and opted away from so called 'modern day' parenting practice which emphasised network building and group participation, alluding to their lessened opportunities for social integration. Polish migrant lone parents presented as an interesting aspect of the sample, as despite featuring heavily in the lower socio economic strata of the study, they regarded their move to the UK as having elevated their legal and social standing, and offering them a better overall lifestyle. This idea that life in the UK was simply a preferable level of adversity to that endured in Poland was repeated by informants who engaged in arduous work sequencing patterns. Albeit grateful for the existing service provision in the UK, these more marginalised Polish migrant parents would benefit, it was recommended, from service provision more adequately tailored to their hours of work and their lifestyle ambitions.

This chapter also recognised that migration provided a catalyst for the realignment and renegotiation of household duties, in turn leading to redress gender roles in Polish migrant parenting couples. Migration was presented as enabling better gender equality in the home, having allowed for lifestyle choices not possible in Poland. Male informants for example, were presented as having the opportunity to break away from the expectations of their diminished household responsibilities in Poland, while female informants were presented as actively reworking notions of the stay at home mother. Such lifestyle choices conflated traditional models of the Polish family, such as 'benign patriarchy' (Jaworski and Pietrow-Ennker: 1992), wherein Polish women were expected to preside over the household as a draconian governess, and 'amoral familism' (Buchowski: 1996), wherein family units in Poland (which included extended family members) managed decisions and problems internally. These models of

Polish household management were set aside by migration in favour of more democratic, contained and egalitarian forms of household management. In practice household duties were not always divided so equally between partners, although Polish migrant fathers were at least theoretically keen to portray themselves as actively involved in household management, the educational welfare and care provision of their children. It might be suggested then, that post migratory receptiveness to gender role realignment is perhaps indicative of changing societal attitudes in Poland.

The theme of gaining independence from extended family was once again prevalent, with frequent visits and everyday 'virtual living-room' exchanges between Polish migrant parents and their relatives still resident in Poland, being used to reaffirm cross-generational differences. Once again informants drew rather stereotypical appraisals of their mothers and mother in laws, depicting them as dogmatic and inflexible to change. Informants preferred to portray themselves as liberal and open minded, celebrating adaptability and using the characteristic to demarcate successful migration. Informants offered applause to children who adapted quickly to their new schools, to Polish grandparents who engaged in everyday interactions during temporary residency or visitation, and to fellow migrants who had acquired fluency in English language or better still, mastery of a certain accent. Crucially it seems, adaptability was regarded by Polish migrant parents as an attainable frame of mind, and as such it might be argued that being flexible, opportunistic and willing to negotiate was in itself an achievable and even strategic mode of livelihood.

This chapter also showed that Polish migrant parents were fretful about being represented as a collective, and so avoided living in localities where a known number of Polish families were already resident, hoping to avoid saturating immediate resources and reduce their ethnic visibility. This ethnic self monitoring is illustrated further by informants censoring of spoken Polish in public places, and constant reassessment of the appropriateness of language and accent in a given environment. Polish migrant parents again had different levels of agency according to their socio economic stratification. Polish migrant

parents were found to be instrumental in creating integration opportunities for themselves; the more affluent Polish migrants though were selective about which social sets they navigated, and had certain expectations about cultural prowess and social mobility.

Chapter Six: Negotiating identity

Introduction

This chapter looks at Polish migrant parents' constructions of identity, exposing a disjuncture between identities parents perceive for themselves and those they perceive of their children. Through use of social identity theory informants' construction of these identities are explored, showing how stereotypes are used to simplify observations of sameness and otherness. Taking a postmodern perception of reality where multiple identities are possible, the generational, national, ethnic, aspirational, transnational, translocal and gendered identities of Polish migrant parents are found to overlap, compete and collate. These identities are imagined against a backdrop of familial relationships, wherein parents are an important source of cultural reproduction. What transpires is a fascinating scenario whereby Polish migrant parents seek to weigh down their children's sense of Polish identity, while simultaneously looking to legitimise their own migration to the UK. This results in a tussle between idealism and pragmatism, where the aspirations and realities of migration and parenthood collide. Gendered differences between the way Polish mothers and fathers read identities and build social networks are also present. Migration biographies are found to be ever evolving, shaped by past, present and the anticipation of future conditions and events. The emotional geographies of migration are also seen as critical to the outcomes of these biographies; emotions being used by informants to understand the conflict between 'belonging and being' and to revise attachments to people and place, and so being a crucial factor in decisions to prolong migration.

6.1 Literature Review : Negotiating identity

6.1.1 The construction of migrant identity

Scholars interested in migrants' constructions of identity have typically used Nagel's (1994) relational view of ethnic identity as a starting point, wherein

'ethnic boundaries, identities and cultures' are seen as 'negotiated, defined and produced through social interactions inside and outside ethnic communities' (Nagel: 1994, p.152). Herb and Kaplan's seminal work (1999) on the formation of national identity has also been influential; their relational perspective of national identity being 'based on a nation with which occupants identify' (Herb and Kaplan: 1999, p.37) is the preferred definition of national identity in this study. These relational definitions of ethnicity and nation have spawned scholarship on migrant group identity (see for example Castles & Millar: 2003), studies which address how migrant groups relate to other migrant groups, and how competing national and transnational identities sit within migration. Interest in migrant group identity seemed to increase in response to criticism levied at assimilation theory (see Glazer: 1993, and Alba and Nee: 1997) which oversimplified cultural complexities and read migrants as passive actors.

In terms of Polish migration specifically, in-group rivalries and differences between generational groups have been analysed by Temple (1999), Grzymała-Kazłowska (2005) and Garapich (2007). Using Eriksen's (1993) reading of ethnic group identity as oppositional, Ryan (2010a) looked at Polish migrants' social interchange in the host society. The construction of binary oppositions by Polish migrants was also apparent in the work of Drinkwater et al. (2006), wherein readings of meritocracy, tolerance and bureaucracy helped define class and ethnic identities. Rodriguez-Lopez (2010) returned to the formation of these class identities in her study of Polish migrant mothers, seeing neoliberal notions such as meritocracy and opportunity as the preserve of middle class Polish mothers. These oppositional cultural preferences in Polish migration have never, as yet, been studied from a regional context, anticipating, for example, that regional stereotypes might have some bearing on how Polish migrants construct their national, ethnic and local identities.

6.1.2 The construction of national and transnational identities

In terms of national identity Spohn and Triandafyllidou (2004) found that the immigrant 'other' proved beneficial to the political incitement of national identity, in that it defined those 'inside' and 'outside' realms of national cohesion.

Kofman (2005) presented an interesting working example of this, arguing that migrants in Europe were increasingly pressurised into engaging in 'new social contracts' (2005: p.464) with their host countries. Although Garapich (2008) looked at Polish migrants in the context of civil society, his work concentrated on their involvement in Polish organisations, leaving room for further exposition of Polish migrants' relationship with host society institutions, law and order and governance at large. Kofman (2005) felt British political rhetoric on citizenship was especially demanding of its migrants: arguably this makes the UK an excellent case study from which to analyse competing national identities in migration. Similarly, migrants conflation between their Polish and European identities has yet to be addressed, as research currently concentrates on the attitudes toward EU integration and subsequent collective identities of those Poles who remain in Poland (Maier and Risse: 2003, Szczerbiak: 2007, Moes: 2008). The attitudes of Polish migrants, those at the coalface of mobility, toward convergent and competing national and transnational identities, are thus currently overlooked.

Research into transnationalism meanwhile, constantly frames migrants as living in 'imagined worlds' (Anderson: 1991). This has led to scholars offering increasingly postmodern readings of migration where the possibility of multiple migrant identities has been embraced. Such studies include those on hybrid identities (Modood: 1994), hyphenated identities (Caglar: 1997) and collective identities (Faist: 2000). In Eastern European studies, work on hybrid identity has concentrated on Russian youth, particularly those coming out of post socialist transition (Pilkington: 1998 and Shevchenko: 2002). Studies by Stenning (2005) and Stenning and Hörschelmann (2008) have shown how the ongoing nature of post socialist transition has left socialist and post socialist identities intrinsic to life in contemporary Poland. The relevance of these continuing historical and generational identities in Polish migration has then been discussed by Burrell in her studies on nostalgia, memory, childhood (2006, 2011a, 2011b). Burrell's work also finds that hegemonic identities, such as the dichotomy between 'East and West', also continue to pervade migrant histories. Recent work by Krings et al. (2013) meet Burrell's work at this juncture exploring Polish mobility and

generational identities (particularly in the context of Europe). Polish migration research has thus recently entered an intersection addressing transnational and generational identities, making this interesting and appropriate time to look at the renegotiation of familial relationships and desired identities in response.

6.1.3 Family migration and identity

While Garapich's analogy of the 'odyssean refugee' (2007) offers a very multilayered view of Polish migrant identity, explaining how national ties of unity are crossed by horizontal ties in ethnicity and generation, the vision should arguably be layered even further, as he misses out crucial ties of family and kinship. According to Foner (1997) research on the migrant family offers a site where migration is no longer reducible to rational economic calculations, families being a dynamic interplay between culture and agency. Gendered perspectives on transnational family have however, too often removed migrant father's place within this dynamic by way of objecting to the lone economic migrant stereotype. Behnke and Taylor's (2005) work on fathers cultural networks and Strier and Roer Strier's (2010) study on migrant fathers identity formation, anticipates that by instating fathers in research on migrant families, gendered differences in social identities will be exposed. Research on transnational families has also said relatively little about the changing dynamic between parents and children until now. For this reason Usita (2001)'s work on Japanese migrant mother and daughter relationships in Hawaii breaks new ground. Work on mother-daughter relationships championed at my own institution (see the work of Lawler: 2000) has helped raise the more general profile of this field. In Polish migration research, Bloch's (1976) study on parent-child dynamics is now much dated, leaving way for modern redress of Polish migrant family dynamics. Studies which put childhood geographies (championed by Holloway and Valentine: 2000) in the context of migration (Mummert: 2009, Tyrrell et al: 2012), currently lack inclusion of a specifically Eastern European study. Gedalof (2009) meanwhile, argues that research on identity and families too, readily places women in the reproductive sphere in mothering. I feel this study has an obligation then, to balance exploration of

childbirth and nurturing (chapters four and five), with discussion on how parents also function as a site for cultural reproduction.

6.1.4 Identity construction in Polish migration research

Burrell's early research on the retention of Polish national identity through shared memory (2004) and her analysis of the oscillation between personal narratives and historical worlds in Polish migration (2006ab, 2008bc), has led the research field on Polish migrant identity. Since this time, and thanks largely to a successful symposium of researchers in April 2007 on the theme of social identities, and subsequent special edition of the social identities journal in May 2010, social identities have arguably become one of the most active areas of Polish migration research. The work of two scholars from this movement in particular, helped inspire the theoretical framework of this chapter: Rabikowska (2010a), who looked at the routine of Polish mothers using symbolic interactionism to navigate readings of aspiration and class, and Ryan (2010a) who looked at Polish migrants observations on Polishness, Catholicism, landscape, food and behaviour, using social identity theory to argue that these constructions were gender and age dependent. It is also worth noting that the social identities of Polish migrants have been approached from an economic perspective too, whereby the idea that economic activities are embedded in the social relations of migrant communities (Granovetter: 1985) was found by Hughes et al. (2011) to be true of the rise of Polish migrant ethnic enclaves. This work shaped my thinking on the ambitions behind 'migrant communities' (6.6.2).

The construction of Polish migrant identity in a regional context has been previously covered too. Kempny (2010) looked at identity construction in the Polish migrant community of Belfast, and White (2011a) looked at, amongst other outcomes, the retention of Polish identity in Polish migrant families in the South West of England. Kempny's most notable contribution to this field, I feel, is her inclusion of Slavic identity, a group identity she felt incited a strong sense of migrant belonging. I regrettably overlooked this categorisation in my own work, an oversight I would hope to redress if this study were carried out again.

White (2011a) meanwhile, conducted a very thorough ethnographic study of Polish migrant families, but like Garapich (2008), focussed on her informants attempts to retain identity through social networks exclusive to the 'Polish community'. This study offers new perspective on Polish migrant social identities in two ways then. Firstly by offering a gendered perspective on identity formation that includes the perspective of Polish migrant fathers: White and Ryan (2008), Lopez Rodriguez (2010) and White (2011) resoundingly concentrate on the perspective of Polish migrant mothers in isolation; and secondly, by stressing the importance of emotions in the process of identity formation. Although research on the social and personal circumstances of Polish migrants is starting to emerge in this field, for example Fabiszak (2010) and Parutis (2013), with the exception of the work of Svašek (2009) little empirical work has as yet been specifically carried out recording the feelings and emotions of Polish migrants

6.1.5 The 'stay or return' dichotomy: home and place

One of the initial aims of this project was to investigate Okólski's (2001) claims that Polish migrants were temporary migrants. The dichotomy between 'stay and return' in Polish migration literature (see for example 'hamster and stork' analogies offered by Drinkwater et al.: 2006) also drew fairly pessimistic conclusions as to the potential permanence of Polish migrants. Using Anwar's (1979) concept of 'the myth of return' and cultural theorists such as Hall (1987) and Chambers (1994) this chapter shows how migration narratives help to perpetuate this notion of temporariness. Polish migration scholarship has concentrated too readily on attachments to people rather than place, and as a result themes of 'home' and 'place', which are also present in migration narratives, have been ignored. This might also be the case, as argued in chapter five (5.1.2), because ideas about 'home' and 'belonging' are commonly regarded as mutually exclusive from 'mobility' and 'transience'.

This dearth in Polish migration literature is interesting as Tuan's (1976) work on the collective 'spirit and personality' of place, which he felt constructed individual's level of acquaintance about a place, led lead to pioneering and

influential work by Brah (1996) on how migrants 'feel at home' in migration literature at large. Subsequent to this, Silvey and Lawson (1999) then looked at how space and place imparted on migrant identities and their constructions of home and households, and Pascual-de-Sans (2004) looked at how visceral experiences of place-making had explicit presence in the formation of migrants' life histories. With the exception of McDowell (2005), who looked at the social construction of identity and place for Latvian displaced workers, migrants' attachments to place have been rarely discussed in an Eastern European migration context. Research on European migrants concepts of 'home' meanwhile, have mainly centred on the caring processes and family dynamism of home (Zontini: 2004, and Ryan: 2007). Saying this Datta's (2008) study on Polish builder's construction of 'home(s)' charts new grounds by showing how home embodied gendered and class identities, as does Parutis' work on Polish and Lithuanian migrants' conceptualisation of 'home'. Both scholars leave scope however, for more longitudinal work in the field, particularly addressing how 'home' might be reconceptualised by migrants over time. Using Tuan's argument (1976) that migrant belonging is achieved thorough the presence of emotions and intimacies in spatial scales then, this chapter sees home and place as integral to Polish migrants attachments, and consequential in decisions to prolong migration further.

6.1.6 Emotional geographies of migration

Davidson and Milligan (2004) see emotional geographies as having developed out of geographical research on the body, such as that by Bell et al. (2001), Rose (2005), and Longhurst (2008) and studies on the experiences of home, community and city, such as those by Valentine (2001) and studies on aging, such as that by Twigg (2004). Emotional geographies and migration are increasingly connecting, thanks, according to Skrbiš (2008), to studies about transnational family which have located emotions and mobility under themes such as; the emotions of reunion and separation (Baldassar: 2001); migrants' emotions about home, nation and the Diaspora (Yuval Davis: 1997 and Silvey:

2000); and migrants emotions of longing and loss (McKay: 2007 and Huang and Yeoh: 2007 and Baldassar: 2008).

In the study of Polish migration, Burrell (2004) looked at the importance of shared memory in the retention of national identity, and the emotions and trauma associated with such recollection (see also Temple: 1999bc). Approaching the field from the angle of embodiment, as did Butler (1999) in her seminal study on emotional identities and community belonging, are studies by Datta (2009a) and Siara (2009) which considered constructions of gender and sexuality in Polish migration. In terms of Polish migrant family research White and Ryan (2008) looked at the subjective dimensions of livelihood. While their study saw variables such as life stage and family situation as important the emotional dynamics of these factors were omitted. With the exception of the work of Svašek (2009), which understood Polish migrants 'spheres of belonging' (p.132) to be linked with the emotional processes of their migrations, study on the emotions of Polish migration is largely absent from the field. Importantly emotions such as happiness and contentment have been resoundingly disregarded in Polish migration research, and yet they are crucial in decisions to prolong residency. Using Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004)'s notion that migrants can have both a sense of belonging and a state of being, the following chapter therefore aims to show how emotional geographies inform migration decisions. The mutual exclusivity of 'home' and 'mobility' and the dichotomy of 'stay and return' are clearly undermined by personal and emotional complexities.

6.2 Migrant identities

6.2.1 Migration as an expression of Polishness

Polish migrant parents generally believed that the desire and ability to migrate was an innate part of being Polish. Male informants tended to base this rationale on historical evidence, particularly the idea that Poland had once been an imperial colonial power and so Polish people were seemingly instinctive

explorers (Zygmunt, Czesław). This corresponds with informants' depiction of themselves as pioneers (3.5.2). Female informants however, tended to present the argument that Poles were natural migrants on racial grounds, Poles being better able to cope with migration than other nationalities. The three female informants in the study who had come to live in the UK with their British partners, for example, all talked about being the more suitable member of their relationship to migrate:

'Moving Paul to live in Poland would be major thing, I'm easily adapted because of my natural inclination and because of my age I suppose. He's spent all of his life in England, it's his Britishness coming through...he would be totally lost in Poland: for him to live long-term in Poland is [a] non starter.' (Ludmiła)

Interestingly, Ludmiła's partner, Paul, was the British born son of Polish war veterans. Ludmiła believed that Paul had learned 'British ways' and as such rendered him less adaptable to change. Lidia and Jagoda shared this idea, feeling that their British partners would have also struggled to cope, not necessarily with life in Poland, but more so with life as a migrant. Polish migrant parents' perception that Poles had an inborn ability to migrate helps explain why Polish migrant parents did not make specific arrangements to prepare their children for migration to the UK (5.3.5). Zygmunt, for example, was confident that his children could live anywhere: *'Doesn't matter for them, [Poles] all the time migrating'*. Ludmiła's stress on age being a factor in the ability to migrate was also telling, as she, like the majority of Polish migrant parents, equated youth with adaptability. Polish children were assumed then, to be particularly able to adapt being both young (easily adaptable), and Polish (inherently able). As such it might be noted that Polish migrant parents' celebration of migrant children and grandparents' adaptability (5.3.6, 5.5.4), was not so much about applauding adaption to a British way of life, but instead about applauding adaption to a migrant way of life, something regarded as quintessentially Polish.

6.2.2 Polish migrant communities

Informants also enjoyed presenting Poles as more able to migrate than other nationalities on the strength of their supposedly tight knit communities abroad. Several informants talked about how successive historical waves of emigration from Poland had necessitated 'the Polonia' (a Polish 'community' overseas). These references made little of the Polish Diaspora as a bastion of Polish culture (as discussed by Jacobsen: 2002), but instead emphasised the usefulness and practical purpose that this Diaspora served. The size, celebrity and perceived success of Polish émigré settlements abroad were given by Polish migrant parents as ready evidence that their children might be better equipped to migrate than children from other countries. Zygmunt, for example, believed that his children could live anywhere, but that they would be likely to choose known Polish migrant pathways: *'It's strong community in USA, you know, I think it's half a million Poles in Chicago, half a million is I think the third biggest Polish city of Polish population. [There's a] strong community in Germany, Australia, Canada too.'* Basia also imagined her daughter choosing to live in countries with an established 'Polish community', as she felt this 'community' would help cushion her daughter from difficulties: *'It could be USA, Australia, because she will be - she knows that she can cope [there] over hardship'*. Informants' perception that shared national identity was useful and served a practical purpose demonstrates how cultural identification itself became a site for Polish migrant parent pragmatism.

The true strength of Polish solidarity abroad has been widely contested by Polish migration scholars. Garapich (2007) for example, sees a schism between the old established Polish communities abroad and the post accession newcomers, seeing little interaction between the two groups. In this study informants held strong beliefs about the reliability of 'the Polonia' as an initial support network. Zygmunt trusted in this belief so much so, that he had come to the UK with just £20 in his pocket and the purposeful intention of heading straight to Newcastle's Polish Club to seek overnight lodging and advice. Once at this club Zygmunt was indeed helped by members who secured him a job as

a kitchen porter and kindly lent him money. In contrast to Garapich's findings then, the Polonia was not solely a site of mythologized ethnic unity, but it did in fact, for Zygmunt, bare real currency, proving a dependable initial network.

Saying this, early encounters with the 'Polish community' were generally less deliberate than that of Zygmunt. Basia, for example, had been taken to the Polish club by a British work colleague. This suggests that ethnic unity was presumed and indeed promoted by agencies beyond Polish migrants themselves. Similarly Jarek had started attending the Polish church in Sunderland following a recommendation from a friend. Loyalties to these early support networks remained firm among informants, even when it involved travelling significant distances. Jarek continued to worship in Sunderland although he had long lived in Gateshead. But once again these interactions were generally not without acknowledgement of what continued interaction might provide. Czesław for instance, noted: *'At the church, the people at the Polish Church help you find things'*. Ethnic identification was therefore extremely measured: it could also be at times a contradictory process. Jarek, for instance, suggested elsewhere that disassociation from fellow Polish migrants was beneficial in terms of schooling (5.3.6). Jagoda was sceptical about Polish migrants who effectively ghettoised themselves: *'Polish people they just stuck only to Polish people and they have only Polish friends and they don't socialise with British people or something, they are like[ly] to be excluded, like a bubble'*, but at the time of interview she was in fact setting up her own Polish Saturday school; her pragmatic and enterprising nature clearly clashing with her philosophical ideals. Polish migrant parents thus manoeuvred their stance on ethnic unity according to pragmatic gains.

The occasional more romantic references to 'the Polonia' were also telling. Zygmunt, for instance, offered the idea that his three year old son would attend the *'Military University in USA, West Point- made by Polish'* in the future. This reference had historical overtures; Polish national hero and émigré, Tadeusz Kościuszko, was famed for drawing up fortification plans for this American military base. Zygmunt's comment exemplifies how the Polonia was historicised

particularly by male informants (namely Czesław, Miron and Zygmunt). Nagel (1994) recognised this reconstruction of historical culture as an important strategy used by migrants in order to build a sense of cultural identity. It should also be noted though, that Zygmunt was the owner of the local online Polish newspaper, and as such had a personal and professional interest in the promotion of collective ethnic identity, as did six other informants in this study who were all employees or volunteers involved in 'the Polish community' (Jagoda and Basia were Polish Saturday school leaders, Elwira volunteered on a Polish migrant newspaper, and Krysia, Ludmiła and Hania were employed as ad hoc Polish translators). Hughes et al. (2011) saw the capacity to exploit social capital within the migrant community as intrinsic to the way Polish migrants built ethnic enclaves. For a good number of Polish migrant parents in this study then, cultural identification was also tied to livelihood.

6.2.3 Polish migrant ancestry

References to migrant identity were also used as a way to authenticate migration narratives. A number of informants proclaimed their similarity for example, to émigré grandparents or parents. Zygmunt for example, compared himself to his émigré mother, presenting her as a rebellious and ambitious woman, who dared to seek a career as a bookkeeper away her family's simple small holding in the Polish mountains:

'...and my granddad said, 'no no!', so my mum one day left, you know, and [she] come here because was great opportunity [for her]. So it's the same like in Newcastle [for me], [going] against the rest of the Britain, because lots of the Brits think [it's] the bad part of the Britain; cheap, high unemployment, drugs, things like that. But they are missing [out] - if you know Newcastle. But lots of people think like that.' (Zygmunt)

Zygmunt's interjection of a story about his émigré mother with that of his own migration helped his migration to the UK sound nobler and more marked out against the anticipated 'economic' narratives of his migrant contemporaries. Zygmunt's portrayal of Newcastle as a supposedly down-at-heel and drug-

ridden city achieved the same purpose, corresponding to earlier narration of moving to Newcastle as an act of defiance, as rooting for the underdog city, thus depicting himself as a greater risk taker than his fellow migrants (3.5.2). Hania claimed her decision to migrate was part of a hereditary inclination too, likening herself to her American born grandmother, the daughter of Polish émigrés. By adding ancestral migration references to personal migration narratives, Polish migrant parents were able to legitimise, and even dramatise, their migration journeys. Moreover, the number of informants citing parents or grandparents as previous migrants, supports the argument that migration was a way of life in Poland (3.2.3). This also shows that migration narratives were familiar to informants; the option of migration had been set out to them from an early age.

6.2.4 The Polish exile and émigré generation

Polish migrant parents drew on parallels with themselves and more celebrated waves of Polish migration, particularly wartime émigrés. In Garapich's (2007) study of post war Polish migrants, reference to the Polish exile community was likewise commonplace, and based, he thought, on there being a 'ready residue of symbolism, traits, concepts and historical references to define the immigrants place in an alien environment' (Garapich, 2007: p.9). In this study Polish migrant parents were keen to use such parallels to authenticate their own migration narratives. Hania, for instance, mused: *'I think we have like er, a culture of people being spread all around the world ...being just successful like, not giving up and not being victims, not being like, you know, 'damaged' emotionally'*. The portrayal of stoic survivors overcoming emotional hardship might be more commonly reserved for Polish exile (see the work of Jolluck: 2002), but was interestingly borrowed by Hania here, with reference to Polish migrants en masse. This awareness about the kudos placed on certain types of migration has been seen in the Polish diaspora before. Looking particularly at the Polish émigré communities in New York and Chicago, Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann (2004) noted how the displaced and exiled Polish community were cast as survivors and celebrated in narratives of resistance. The narratives of the so-called 'emigration for bread' economic migrants of the 1920s thus appeared less

credible in contrast, and as such, according to Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, left the Polish diaspora evermore politicised and divided. By replicating the language of exile, and presenting notions of 'strength over adversity' within their migration narratives, Polish migrant parents were able to ally themselves with a generation of Polish migrants held in high esteem by both the Polish migrant community and by wider society.

The performative boundaries between various generational waves of Polish migrants recognised by Garapich (2007) are arguably less distinct than he assumed. Informants were, for example, found paying active homage to wartime émigrés. Miron talked at length about the importance of commemorating Polish exiles, involving himself in reverence of this community by conducting historical fieldwork in his spare time. This memorialisation of émigré culture according to Fortier (2000), acts as a 'display of presence' in order to achieve greater migrant belonging. Teodor's account of his post accession migration sounded almost like a pastiche of wartime Polish migrant narratives:

'When I talk to English people, when they ask me why I came to England, I always telling them because of World War II, because after World War you will become democratic country and can come here to live, but because we've been took on the east side, we've been took over by the communism, we've just didn't have money to live properly, so I came here for work.' (Teodor)

By presenting the hardships in Poland today as accountable to the events of World War II, Teodor legitimised his migration and his sense of belonging. Interestingly, informants were conscious of their attempts to re-territorialise émigré culture (Fortier: 2000). Miron, for example, was aware that alignment to the wartime generation of Polish migrants might be beneficial; when asked for example, why he was interested in Polish-British wartime history he replied: *'well, we did get a lot of stuff like, "you're coming here and take our jobs," er, so...I thought it would be a good idea.'* Once again Polish migrant parents used ethnic identity pragmatically, in this case aligning themselves to the Polish exile

generation as a means of counteracting their own negative reception and claiming a sense of migrant belonging.

6.2.5 Generational identities

Garapich's argument cannot be refuted completely however, as while some cross generational interaction was evident in this study, so too were examples of generational dislocation within the North East's 'Polish community'. Basia, for instance, talked about branching out from institutions such as the Polish church and Polish club where she had sought initial networks, in deliberate search of befriending post accession migrants in isolation:

'When I came there it wasn't so many Polish, it was just the old generation quite, because they recognised themselves as British. [It was] quite difficult to find connections with them to be honest, so I found them, Polish people, by friends from work or they came into the shop buying things.' (Basia)

As this interview excerpt shows, Basia's desire to find solace with post accession Polish migrants specifically, was based on her uneasiness about the extent to which she felt previous Polish migrant generations had assimilated into British society. As with Ludmiła's disparagement about her partner adopting British ways (6.2.1), Basia too, found previous generations of Polish migrant now unrecognisable as 'Polish'. This fear about losing the authenticity of culture presents an inverted example of enculturation in that the younger generation were those keen to maintain the credibility and sincerity of the Polish culture. In-group rivalries and generational dislocation between Polish migrants, as described by Grzymała-Kazłowska (2005) and Garapich (2007) respectively, were therefore in evidence in this project, though they were grounded perhaps in more pragmatic concerns than those offered previously.

This anxiety about losing the validity of culture was intrinsic to informants concerns as parents. As discussed shortly, informants feared that their children's weakened identification with Poland might result in a weakened relationship with them (6.3.4); 'becoming too British' was therefore regarded as a travesty. Elwira for example, worried that her daughter's exposure to British

culture would compromise her sense of Polishness: *'There is a danger for her to be one hundred percent British... And I wouldn't like that... I would like her to know her roots and her roots are Polish.'* It might be argued then, that generational dislocation was an attempt to keep children's sense of Polish identity authentic and untainted from generations deemed too assimilated into British society. Equally though, generational dislocation may also have been about stage of life, with informants such Iza and Paulina stressing that they were keen to meet 'Polish families' as opposed to 'the Polish community' at large. Associations based on ethnic unity were once again measured and pragmatic. For some informants this controlled social networking included restricting themselves to meeting people with whom they shared a comparable life stage and a recent account of national identity.

It should also be noted that generational identities cut across ethnic and national ties. Miron and Waldemar for example, talked about their natural sense of parity with people from Britain's immediate post war generation:

'I did make friends here, but to be honest Rachel, I've found more common ground with people from the, er, the generation of my mum in England, than from my generation...I don't know, for example, it's probably that for my generation the life was much easier in England [than Poland]. Er, people from the generation of my parents, just like that generation, we can relate to certain things.' (Miron)

Miron believed that Britain's immediate post war population were more able to relate to the emotional hardship he felt characterised life in Poland (6.3.1). Waldemar by contrast, noted that as an employee in a food processing factory, he had built the most '*natural*' friendships with members of the '*older generation*' in the workforce, particularly those '*who had worked in the shipyards*'. Waldemar recalled how these former Tyneside shipyard workers enjoyed listening to his own recollections of the famed Polish shipyards, the location of Poland's worker uprisings. Recognition of political accord with Polish migrants was evidently widespread in industrial settings, as mainly through use of the brand '*Solidarność*', Polish migrants have been reported as being successfully

recruited to trade unions in the UK (Fitzgerald: 2007). Cross generational identification was therefore complex, with male Polish migrants more likely to make associations based on shared histories, politics and possibly class affiliations too, whereas female informants were more likely to seek associations based on comparable national and life stage identity.

6.3 Socialist and post socialist identities

6.3.1 Leaving hardship

In a study conducted by Datta et al. (2008), Polish migrants were found to perceive migration as a way of escaping the hardships of social, economic and political restructuring in Poland. In this study informants understood Poland in a similar way, as a country still in recovery from a Soviet past. However, informants tended to acknowledge that the main era of Poland's 'dark past' had now been left behind:

'It's still, I mean, Poland is trying, is still trying to recover from fifty years of Communism. It's not a dark spot on the map any more, and it's far better than it has been, you know, ten years ago, but still a little bit more difficult place to live than Britain'. (Miron)

Crucially Miron portrayed life in Poland as 'difficult', but hardship was not in this case monumental. Younger informants such as Paulina even felt that Poland was fairly progressive, and open to change: *'It is changing, people are changing as well.'* It might be suggested then, that hardship will form less of an onus for Polish migrant identity in the near future, as Poland moves further away from its Soviet past and period of Shock Therapy (the technique used to restructure Poland following the fall of communism). In the meantime though, the majority of informants were less convinced of Poland's immediate progression, seeing change as having been slow to be established by citing a number of practical parenting concerns such as a lack of childcare provision (4.7.5) and unsubstantial support for lone parents (5.6.3).

The notion of hardship had been somewhat reconceptualised by informants; they stressed for example, that it was now the memories of (post) socialism and the emotional fall-out of these memories that were detrimental, rather than the social, political and economic woes of transition itself. Migration was regarded as a way to leave the uncertainties of transition behind, as was the ambition of young Polish migrants in Burrell's (2011b) study. Similarly, informants in Burrell's study were reported as having narrated the 'scars of post socialist change' even though they 'were essentially from a privileged body of young people' (Burrell: 2011b, p.418). Polish migrant parents, like Burrell's young migrant Poles, seemed deeply afflicted by their experiences of family struggle growing up. More specifically though, Polish migrant parents presented migration as way to guard their children from experiencing similar childhoods to those they had faced. Miron, for instance, talked about his migration and decision to remain in the UK presently, as a way to protect his son from the emotional strain of adversity that he felt he had endured as a child. Miron described his childhood as living in a '*dark atmosphere at home*' as his parents '*were struggling with money*'. Miron believed that such domestic hardship remained rife in contemporary Poland, and caused Polish people to have a generally pessimistic attitude to life. Miron felt this attitude might compromise the well-being of his children, presenting life in Britain as being attitudinally more positive and opportunity laden:

'[Aron] has a better childhood and he has probably more optimistic childhood in here, simply because people are all more optimistic and more positive in England than in Poland. [Aron] will have much more opportunities than I had, erm, and er, you know our home is quite positive... I do believe that Aron's childhood is much more brighter, than, than [mine].' (Miron)

Miron's quest to exonerate his son from the emotional woes of post Soviet recovery helps refute the typical portrayal of Polish migration as a purely economically driven process. Like the majority of informants in this study (6.4), Miron placed Poland and the UK in binary opposition, seeing the UK as an optimistic place to live, Poland as pessimistic place to be. Rather than simply

escaping material hardship then, post accession migration for Polish migrant parents, was about elevating their children from what they saw as a negative societal mood, and about leaving behind their own memories of transition. Such a finding demonstrates how fundamental emotions were in Polish migrant parents' initial and sustained decisions about migration.

6.3.2 Challenging parenting styles

Informants were also keen to use migration, and continued residence in the UK, as a way to guard their children from experiencing the austere parenting practices they felt persisted in Poland today. Two informants were especially scathing about the way they had been raised, citing the Soviet work ethic as having been detrimental to family relationships. Elżbieta, for example, felt that her parents had not spent enough time with her as a child as the philosophy and failings of the Soviet regime meant her parents and grandparents had had to work: *'I remember my parents working, my grandma working even. It was out of necessity'*. Elżbieta acknowledged that her response to this was to attempt to be an ever-present part of her children's growing-up. Elżbieta and her husband Paweł actively negotiated achieving career ambition with optimising time spent with their children. To do this they engaged in work sequencing at weekends and employed an in-house nanny during the week to make working from home possible (5.7.2). While the main purpose of the nanny was given as helping the children to learn English, Elżbieta also reported feeling delighted at being able to hear her children playing in the next room when she worked at her computer. Elżbieta felt that the persistent difficulties parents experienced in achieving a work-life balance in Poland were owed to a continuation of Soviet attitudes. Hania agreed, citing her desire to achieve a better work-life balance as her main reason for migration and believing that this drive to maximise time with her daughter was a response to her own childhood experience too:

'I mean the way my parents bringing us up and the way I do it and the way my grandparents did it for my parents, its completely different ...they had completely different approaches to work, they had completely different expectations, they had completely different everything.' (Hania)

While older Polish migrant parents were convinced that the ills of their socialist childhoods might then, be repeated on their own children if they remained in, or returned to Poland, younger members of the sample, despite recognising the same patterns of parenting in their childhood: (*'our parents never had that much time for us, as we do for Godek now....My mum, she's never had that time for me'* (Paulina),) did not regard their parenting practice as an ideological backlash to Soviet practices. Paulina for example, believed that she was a fortunate product of a modern generation, whereby technology and access to commodities had freed up the domestic workload of parenting. Paulina's husband Waldemar agreed: *'I bet if all of us would go back twenty years ago, twenty five years ago we couldn't survive, you imagine washing the nappies!* Interestingly then, younger Polish migrant parents held less identification with Soviet pasts placing themselves instead more readily aligned to neoliberal discourse. This goes to highlight again the pluralistic nature of post accession Polish migration.

6.3.3 Escaping austerity

This dislocation from Soviet identity might also account for why the young female liberal cohort in this study (4.6.4) were the most zealous in offering characterisation of their parents as austere, conservative and still indoctrinated by Soviet era outlook. As previously noted, a number of informants presented their mothers or mother-in-laws as being especially dogmatic and authoritarian (4.6.1). This portrayal was often accompanied by the idea that their parents were more nationalistic and conservative in thinking. Mariola, for example, believed that her mother perceived herself *'100% Polish,'* Mariola continued: *'even more so...she has very conservative thinking about erm identity, about nationality.'* Like many from this cohort, Mariola believed her migration had forced her parents to reevaluate their attitudes: *'She [Mother] didn't want me to go anywhere from Poland, er, she's still not very happy and er, I think she accept it because she has to accept it; she has to accept many things that she didn't accept before.'* Paulina likewise reported her mother's disapproval of her migration: *'I'm sure my mum wasn't happy I was leaving the house and the*

country, but at the end of the day she have to accept it, so that's what I have to do.' Migration was therefore presented as an act of rebellion (3.2.1 and 4.6.1), as a way to both escape and confront the austerity of a generation.

Some informants were even triumphant about the extent to which they had challenged their parents' views. Olga revelled in the idea that she was indulging herself in parenting practice that she knew her mother would disapprove of, namely breastfeeding, bed sharing and her liberal attitude to discipline. When talking about her mother's disdain for the way she was parenting, Olga looked at her son rather gleefully and declared: *'he's breastfed, and he's bed sharing!'* Migration was then, held up as a liberator, allowing Polish migrant parents to not only challenge the parenting practices of the previous generation (6.3.2), but to embrace modern philosophies free from vilification. Although male informants were much less vocal on this subject, evidence suggests that they too felt more able to practice the parenting styles that they wished when resident in the UK (5.7.3). Kazimierz, for example, talked about feeling able to involve himself in various aspects of his son's care: *'Bastian is in England and that's enough. Now I'm spending time, and I'm reading the books, and I'm reading the stories, for example, [with him].'* Polish migrant parents thus presented their continued residence in the UK as a means of maintaining certain approaches to and styles of parenting.

It should be noted that female informants also frequently identified their mothers as inspiration for their migration in a more positive context too. In particular Polish migrant women tended to celebrate their mothers as strong willed, independent, assertive and critical, if also authoritarian. Elżbieta, for example, talked about coming into conflict with her mother-in-law but also appreciating that her husband's mother had nonetheless become a professional and successful woman in the face of adversity. A number of informants pinned their desires for independence on their mothers. Ludmiła for instance, recalled how her mother had motivated her: *'My mum was always, she was always reporting 'a woman needs to be independent, even in a relationship, she needs to be financially independent...you can't just rely on the man or you'll be stuck at*

home. *'So I grew up with that need to work.'* Likewise, Hania reflected fondly on her mother's drive for self sufficiency: *'She brought us up in a way like being self dependant always, and to manage everything... we did cooking, cleaning, everything like... we didn't feel like there was something we were unable to do.'* In this sense the Soviet generation was celebrated as producing independent and ambitious women who instilled desire for self-fulfilment in their daughters. Interestingly the aspirations of many of the female informants in this study, echoes those of the Russian women interviewed by Du Plessix Gray (1989) shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, namely having a desire for greater self fulfilment (3.2.2), and seeking a possible return to more traditional domestic roles (a significant number of this cohort were, or aspired to be, stay-at-home mothers (5.7.4) albeit a reclaimed and reworked notion of this traditional domestic role). While not claiming that Soviet experiences were in any way homogenous, it is still interesting to note the similarity in which these women from former Soviet countries reproached and then renegotiated their Soviet pasts.

6.3.4 Dislocated childhoods

Polish migrant parents resoundingly felt that their childhoods differed from that of their children. Several informants noted that their childhoods had involved plentiful outdoor pursuits, whereas their own children lead more sedate and indoors lifestyles. The pursuit of outdoor activities featured heavily in descriptions of what Polish migrant families liked to do at weekends. Although pastimes popular in Poland such as hill walking, fishing, camping, climbing and kayaking were all duly noted by informants, Polish migrant parents did not report engaging in these pursuits as a conscious attempt to promote Polish culture. This is interesting, as it demonstrates how the reproduction of Polish culture was not always a deliberated act, and is passed down unconsciously as suggested by such scholars as Bourdieu and Passeron (1990). It should be noted that this thesis tends to overstate the more conscience acts of cultural reproduction by Polish migrant parents as the interest here lies in the active

negotiation of identity. Future research addressing the reproduction of Polish culture by Polish migrants more widely is therefore encouraged.

As stated in 6.3.1, Polish migrant parents attempted to shield their children from experiencing the same unhappier aspects of their own childhood (such as emotional hardship and a lack of direct parental involvement and time). In contrast they hoped to share their fonder experiences of childhood, such as outdoor pursuits. For a number of informants the North East of England was seen as particularly conducive to pursuing an active outdoors lifestyle, with nearby coastline and countryside seen as especially reminiscent of Polish landscapes (Kryśia, Miron and Elżbieta). This supports the idea of the 'transrural' whereby rural space forms part of a mobile social imagination for multiethnic and transnational users (Askins: 2009). More specifically Strier and Roer Strier (2010) note that the feeling of having a common cultural script with the host country, is particularly important for migrant fathers who they identify as more likely to struggle with the challenges of migration otherwise. While it might have been anticipated then, that Polish migrant parents' imagined familiarity with the North East of England helped them feel less dislocated from their own childhood, in fact they often referred to the differing visceral experience of the landscape and seasons more broadly. Miron was fairly despondent that he was not able to share these sensory experiences with his children: *'I miss Poland, I do, I do miss places, people, er, the smells, the smell of forest, the smell of winter, of you know, different things. Oh no, South Shields doesn't feel like Poland.'* It was often the more sensual and cerebral experiences of Poland that Polish migrant parents feared their children might be estranged from.

In some cases, Polish migrant parents felt that a void existed between their childhoods and that of their children. This void troubled Ludmiła, who told me following the interview about her worry that an 'absence of her childhood in her son's' would lead him to identify with her less as an adult. Ludmiła hoped to rectify this absence by making references to her childhood readily available about the house. In particular, Ludmiła talked about going to great lengths to source a specific Polish cartoon for her son Feliks, so she could 'share

something of her childhood with him'. One of Ludmiła's anxieties, and her reason for focusing on sourcing a cartoon, was the fear that her son would not pick up the intricacies of Polish humour, leaving mother and son unable to fully understand each other in the future. Following the interview with Kazimierz, he talked of experiencing a similar frustration, and as such had made it his personal project to set about translating jokes from popular Polish films so British people might understand Polish humour better. In a study conducted by Rumbaut and Portes (2001) on second generation migrants in America, children's growing proficiency with English and their seemingly growing linguistic acculturation left parents with a similar frustration about the outcome of being 'lost in translation' (Rumbaut and Portes: 2001, p.118). In her autobiography of the same title, Eva Hoffmann (1989) famously described this same fear of estrangement caused by loss of language. For Polish migrant parents the sharing of humour and the intricacies of language were seen as crucial in ensuring complete cultural appreciation. Polish migrant parents were again acting pragmatically by investing in this act of long time gratification, as helping their children achieve a sufficient level of knowledge about Polish culture was seen as helping to foster a better parent-child relationship for the future.

Polish migrant parents also recognised that having a different childhood from that of their children was not a result of migration alone. A number of informants talked about how advances in technology had exaggerated the disjuncture they felt between themselves and their children. Kazimierz, for example, talked about watching his three year old son using an 'app' and navigating his way around websites. Kazimierz found this difference in technical exposure and skill compared to his childhood, bewildering, though pleasing; he equated command over technology with intelligence. Paulina similarly felt that having access to more commodities gave today's children superior intelligence:

'Because we've loads of choice like here, lots of toys and books are very expensive in Poland for example. Erm, so they've [children] got probably better

imagination, because they can use better their [she points to her head]. They start thinking very early.' (Paulina)

Although the price and availability of certain products were seen by Paulina as better in the UK, she felt that the advance of capitalism more broadly was definitive of her generation. Paulina reported a conversation she had had with her sister in Poland about how their parents had raised them: *'I says look, [they] never had Pampers, never had er, like ovens, like in now. We got very very easy life.'* Paulina's comment should not be misconstrued as a reference to transition more directly: as the youngest member of the sample Paulina felt, unlike the other informants, that she had been party to a more affluent, capitalist and liberal Poland in the latter stages of youth. In this example then, it was technological modernisation explicitly that Polish migrant parents felt had also helped put distance between generations.

6.3.5 Aspiring to 'The West'

The majority of informants however, felt that their childhoods and young adult lives had been defined by socialist conformity and 'lack', and yet their children comparatively lived a life of capitalist abundance. There was a tension in the sample though, as only some informants in the sample read the commodity rich lives of their children as a sign of affluence, an indication that they had achieved something of the aspirational lifestyle of 'The West'. Teodor, for example, talked about his lack of toys as a child, remarking, *'For example you maybe had five six toys and that's it. Well here, now, I climb over toys, well, every day, picking up different toys she has!'* For Teodor the plentifulness of material things equated to prosperity. Brother-in-law and childhood friend Lech however, who took part in the same interview, chided Teodor for this idea, shaking his head and rebuking Teodor's suggestion that a commodity rich life was somehow better: *'When I came here I just had a laptop and a few clothes, so that was everything I have, and now I've got lots of things, and, I don't know what to do with them!'* In retaliation Teodor pointed out that Lech's father had been a factory engineer who had been able to lavish Lech with *'Western Europe[an] sportswear and trainers'* as a child. This spat between informants was useful in

that it encapsulated something of the ‘fascination of western things’ in Soviet childhoods (as discussed by Burrell: 2011a). It also showed that despite living under a regime of supposed consumer conformity Polish migrant parents did in fact have differing experiences of material childhoods and consequently held differing migratory aspirations and values as adults.

There were also similarities in the ways Polish migrant parents remembered their material experiences of childhood and their subsequent aspirations about ‘home’. Informants’ memories of childhood typically focussed on the tribulations of accessing commodities. Bogdan and Olga, for example, reminisced at length about their recollections of waiting in shops to receive basic goods: ‘*two hours to get one packet of coffee!*’ exclaimed Olga theatrically. This meant that narratives of ‘lack’ were often placed in contrast with what informants regarded as their relative prosperity in the present, helping to legitimise their migrations further. For a number of informants this sense of prosperity was defined by home ownership, and evidenced during interviews with tours of homes. Home ownership was thus a main ambition of Polish migrant parents though little relevance was placed on where this home might be. Czesław for example, showed me photos of a plot of land he owned in Poland, ripe for development. Czesław described the kudos gained in Poland from securing property in this manner. At the point of the interview Czesław had little intention to live in that future house and loosely suggested it was an investment for his children or possible place to retire. Likewise Jarek saw his new build flat in Gateshead as an investment property to bequeath his son. For Polish migrant parents home ownership was rewarding both financially and in terms of social status; it was once again a pragmatic and long term gratification gain.

Interestingly Polish migrant parents’ understanding of ‘home’ might also be seen as an embodiment of the ‘enchantment’ of Polish socialist childhoods (Burrell: 2011a) in that ‘home’ was largely read as having a right to self expression and individualism. As Olga remarked, ‘*I would define ‘home’ as ‘house’*’; Olga went on to explain that she owned her house so was able to change it, while all the other houses in the neighbourhood were not hers and

looked the same. Olga saw 'home' as being a place to personalise and claim ownership over. Like Olga, Lidia too talked about 'home' being a place to 'express herself'. Similarly there was an eagerness among informants to describe the origin of objects and furnishings in the home in order to convey a sense of cosmopolitanism. While sitting in Olga's living-room, for instance, she pointed out items of furniture: *'Germany, England, this is Poland, this is Ikea - so from all over the world!* A number of informants talked about making their homes comfortable by having references to Poland at hand. This sense of 'homeliness' was seen as symptomatic of Polish migrants construction of home by Blunt et al. (2007) and Rabikowska (2010b), though in the context of this study it reads more as desire for personalisation. Lidia for example, likened making her home 'homely' through placement of her personal affects (namely her art work). In this study Polish migrant parents conceptualisation of home seemed very political, manifest in counter Soviet principles such as ownership, individualism and cosmopolitanism then. Informants did not talk about home as a space for emotions nor about attachments, which contrasts with how they thought about the urban environment, particularly in terms of re-visiting 'hometowns' (6.4.1). A return to this study focussing on more detailed inquiry into the emotions of 'home' and perhaps by comparison 'mobility', might be a direction from which to further the main arguments of this study.

Mobility also deserves further attention I feel, in that Polish migrant parents reported numerous encounters with 'the West' in their formative years which they presented as influential in subsequent identification with the UK. Krysia, for example, had travelled across Europe with the scouting movement; Paulina had worked as a nanny in various European countries after leaving school age 16; Teodor mentioned (following interview) being posted abroad as part of his conscription in the Polish army (which was possibly the experience of other male informants in the study too); and Olga spent her formative years attending a boarding school on the Polish German border. Basia and Ludmiła meanwhile, recalled having accompanied their mothers on excursions across Europe, utilising the same post 1989 east-west 'migratory space' as discussed by Coyle (2007). Ludmiła in particular held fond memories of travelling around Austria,

likening her trip outside Poland to stepping into *'the inside of a colour TV: the lights and colours were bombarding me in the city, and in comparison my home place was just, very 'black and white TV'*. This colour coded visualisation of the material world was apparent in informants' accounts in Burrell's study too, indicative she felt, of the wider cultural dichotomy at the time (Burrell: 2011a, p.148). It seems clear Ludmiła's analogy that informants' fairly transient and mobile episodes in late childhood and early adulthood, informed their experiences, expectations and ideologies about life away from Poland, in advance of their subsequent migrations to the UK. Once again further inquiry into the emotions of these experiences would be useful.

6.4 Cultural preferences

6.4.1 The renegotiation of place: return visits

The frequent return visits to Poland made by Polish migrant parents (5.5.1) helped them recognise comparative disparities in lifestyle not only in terms of tangible social provisions (maternity entitlement (4.7.1), flexible working initiatives (4.7.4) and childcare provision (4.7.5), but in terms of everyday environment and resourcing too. Those informants who returned to Poland as new parents presented lifestyle comparisons as especially different, the most frequent complaint being that the urban grain in Poland was ill-equipped for parents. Following her visit to Poland Elwira concluded that there were *'no changing facilities in shops or ...like when you've got like er stops or lights or like disabled friendly or pushchair friendly, erm, crossings'*. Once again this disparity was blamed on Poland's social and economic transition (6.3.1), this being a *'very long and very slow process'*, while the UK was described in contrast as having *'many years of development over Poland'*. Complaints about Poland's transport system and road infrastructure were also prevalent, and Polish housing stock, characterised by high rise tower blocks accessible only by stairs, were thought by one informant to be incompatible with having young children. The same informant, Ludmiła, had been astonished by the difficulty in access she experienced when taking her then ten month old son to visit his extended family in Krakow. She described having to ask passer-bys to help lift

her buggy into public buildings, and how manoeuvring a buggy around pavements which '*did not have drop kerbs and were littered with glass*' had been a '*shock*'. This led Ludmila to sullenly conclude that everyday life for parents in Poland was '*a major expedition*'. It seemed that following return visits to Poland then, place-based utility often joined the list of dissatisfactions informants had about life in Poland (3.2.3).

The renegotiation of once familiar places experienced by those informants who returned to Poland as new parents led them to reassess their attachment to place. Ludmila for example, talked at length about the exasperating tribulations of getting round her home city with a baby now in tow: '*I love Krakow, I've always loved it, it's a vibrant city, but going with a baby...nightmare*'. In Pascual-de-Sans (2004)'s work on place making and migration histories, migrants' visceral experiences of place are said to inform their understanding of home. For Ludmiła, visiting Krakow coupled with her newly acquired social situation as a parent, induced feelings of fear and frustration as she found that the once familiar physical surroundings were now difficult to navigate and visceral experiences of the city felt new. Ludmiła then projected this experience of dislocation on to her imagining of future life in Poland: '*I am quite ashamed to be honest, to have to admit that I will be quite scared to be a parent in Poland now*'. While Ludmiła's misgivings about her return to Poland in the wake of this experience, appear to echo Hall's famously negative appraisal of cultural identity: 'migration is a one way trip, there is no 'home' to go back to' (Hall: 1987, p.44); the bridge between staying in the UK and returning to Poland was in reality seen by Polish migrant parents as tentative but feasible.

Anxieties about having a waning familiarity with Poland were, for instance, seen as frustrating and yet reconcilable, and were commonly provoked by observations made on return visits. Teodor, for example, realised that he had forgotten which side of the road to cycle on: '*so it's like little things like that, that really get under your skin because it's different*.' Having a lack of time to keep up with the goings-on in Poland, not only with friends and family but in terms of news and current affairs too, created a feeling of disjuncture specific perhaps to

the context of being parents, as informants felt that it was challenge to maintain the everyday running of their households aside from anything else. Elwira, for example, talked about feeling saddened when friends asked her what was happening in Poland: *'I said I don't know because I didn't have time to search on the Internet and you know, check the news'*. Moreover, informants found the perceived modernisation of Poland in their absence to be disconcerting as well. Paulina, for example, noted: *'I've never lived in Poland for six years, it is changing loads, when we go back there it don't feel like same places we've left'*. Although the feelings of dissociation with Poland agitated informants, most felt these feelings would quickly subside and be reconciled with time, if a permanent return to Poland were made. Only one informant conceded that spending a certain length of time in the UK might impede her sense of Polish identity irreversibly:

'I know what happens to people who live here for twenty years it's more difficult, I think, to identify yourself then [as Polish]. Because I came here when I was what, twenty eight, so at the age of sixty I don't know what I'll say, and I don't know how I'll feel.' (Elżbieta)

For this informant however, waning familiarity with Poland appeared to be part of a wider attempt at social distancing, aimed at achieving specific integration in a select social standing (5.3.2). For the majority of informants though, identification with place was thought to be more malleable, allowing them to be responsive to unfolding circumstances.

6.4.2 The renegotiation of identity: return visits

Another common comparison drawn from return visits was the portrayal of Poland as having limited consumer choice, and the UK, by contrast, was perceived as choice rich. Elżbieta, for example, was shocked at seeing her cousin feed her niece using processed baby food, and subsequently struck up a conversation about the availability of organic food in Poland:

'I said to her, 'well when Tomasz was born I just went and bought organic food...Er, do you not buy this?' And she said, 'what is that?' 'Um it's like organic, you know? There is an equivalent to organic in Poland? It's a, ecologically pro food'...And she made it clear to me that there are no specialist sections in supermarkets in like Tesco in Poland with organic food, it's not like here!'

Elżbieta's reporting of this event corresponded with her general portrayal of the UK as more advanced and forward thinking. In a similar vein, Walentyna recalled being aghast at not being able to source her favourite brand of nappies in Poland, depicting consumerism in Poland as comparatively inadequate. While choice rich lives in the UK were used by informants as further validation that they had achieved something of the aspirational lifestyle of 'The West' (6.3.5), it also perhaps highlights something of the cultural aloofness informants created for themselves and indeed felt, as returnees. It seems that for some Polish migrant parents, return visits to Poland were opportunities to showcase their new lives in the UK as more sophisticated. This attempt to present life in the UK as more bourgeois and learned, runs in interesting contrast, to Bricknell and Datta's findings (2009), wherein Polish migrant builders presented Polishness and Poland as the more refined. Identities therefore continued to be embroiled in aspirations, in that they were as much about *how* informants *wanted to be seen* and by whom, as they were about *how they felt*.

6.4.3 Lifestyle in the UK

Polish migrant parents unanimously perceived the UK to be more affordable than Poland. Direct material gains were occasionally noted, *'I mean we've got money for her and that's why I like England!'* (Walentyna), but informants more typically concentrated on what sort of lifestyle their migration to the UK had literally 'afforded' them. For Paulina living in the UK had meant she could afford to rent a house and pursue certain lifestyle luxuries:

'I couldn't afford renting a house by myself with Waldemar in Poland, even though we would have a job, but here, only Waldemar worked last year, I've

never worked, and we could still afford to pay for our own rent. Everything for a good life; so, that's very easy. And another thing- we can go to cinema or go to theatre or restaurant [here]; that's really easy. Wouldn't be able to afford that in Poland.' (Paulina)

In Paulina's case not having to return to work following her maternity leave, and being able to live independently from her parents were seen as lifestyle ambitions which had been easier to realise in the UK. Paulina was typical of most informants in that she presented life in Poland as hard and difficult, and life in the UK as easy and more comfortable. The level of comfort or ambition afforded was however, constantly reassessed by Polish migrant parents, as was the feasibility of achieving the same lifestyle in Poland or occasionally elsewhere. Teodor, for example, reported to keeping abreast of currency exchanges. When he judged it increasingly less worthwhile to send remittances back to Poland, he and wife Barbara had agreed to reunify the family in the UK sooner than otherwise anticipated. Even in the wake of the economic downturn then, the UK remained the country perceived as more affordable and thus more able to sustain certain lifestyles.

The feasibility of achieving and maintaining certain lifestyles was not only measured on economics, but based on informants' assessments of social and cultural conditions in the host society too. Elżbieta for example recognised that it was both more affordable and more common to be a stay at home mother in the UK: *'To be honest with you I think there are more stay at home mums here than there are in Poland...you can't one person support the family in Poland right, it's just impossible...whereas here, loads of mums actually stay with children for the first two or three years.'* Cultural acceptance was an important indicator of lifestyle viability for lone parents too, as was the perception that the UK was politically, culturally and legally more supportive of alternative family formations (5.6.2). The UK was also felt to be more tolerant of cohabitation: Ludmiła, one of two informants who were in cohabiting relationships, believed: *'it's different in the UK and it doesn't matter if you're married or not, they respect it...[In Poland] you've got much less protection if you're not married and*

so do the children'. Informants typically read the UK as more conducive and supportive of a variety of identities. Coyle (2007) hesitates to reference the search for social legitimacy as a direct 'push factor' for Polish migrant women, but she too recognised the themes of 'resistance and escape' in migration narratives which suggested that informants were at least aware that living abroad helped realise alternative lifestyles away from the rigours of Poland's conservative discourse (Coyle: 2007, p.42). In this study Polish migrant parents were similarly ambiguous about whether their migration was initiated by the need for greater social legitimacy from the outset (5.6.3), though subsequent portrayal of the UK as socially tolerant suggests that this factor was influential in decisions to stay for longer, particularly amongst those whose parental status deviated from the married heterosexual majority.

6.4.4 Bureaucracy in Poland

Another comparison between the UK and Poland frequently made by informants was the perception that there was a relative lack of bureaucracy in the UK. Once again informants remarked on how this made everyday life 'easier', Elżbieta, for example, felt: *'It's just much easier here...in terms of, I don't know, bureaucracy! I think there is no bureaucracy here, compared to what you have back in Poland, things are just easier to, to organise [here]*'. Elżbieta and husband Paweł were particularly surprised by the ease in approval for self employment in the UK. Elżbieta believed that the one phone-call to '*HM Revenue and Customs*' to register her husband as a self employed dentist, would have taken *'a process like a ten day long process going to different offices, like writing; filling in many forms'* in Poland. This corresponds with Garapich's (2008) suggestion that Poles who sought self employment made comparative gains by living to UK, particularly in the wake of adjustments to UK employment law shortly before EU enlargement. What is perhaps overstressed by Garapich though, is the ease at which Polish migrants engage in life in the UK due to a burgeoning 'migration industry and evolution of UK immigration' which he believes accounts for their 'emancipation, incorporation and new identity formation' (Garapich: 2008, p.740). Polish migrant parents in this study

were in fact celebratory of civil society and bureaucracy in the UK in general, outside of specific provisions for migrants. Truda and Kazimierz, for example, talked at length about the virtues of 'The Post Office', which they found on a practical level, made completing routine tasks such as road tax and sending parcels straightforward (completion of such tasks in Poland was thought to be time consuming, confusing and elaborate); and on an ideological level they perceived the Post Office as the transparent and welcoming interface of British bureaucracy. Kazimierz viewed the Post Office as a 'very British institution' and partook in regular visits with his son in order to show him what he deemed an essentially "British way of life". Although humorous because of its innate stereotypes, Kazimierz's sincerity about the ease at which he felt able to engage in life in the UK was telling. Polish migrant parents recognised the everyday interactions made in institutions outside of the migration industry as those which were truly indicative of life in Britain.

Conversely bureaucracy in Poland was portrayed by Polish migrant parents as maintaining Soviet levels of corruption. Polish authorities were thought to be making life purposefully hard and difficult for citizens, trying to catch people out and being constantly suspicious and mistrusting. Bogdan, for example, talked about trying to open bank accounts in Poland: *'You have to work out how much you own, how much [you] could pay, and they don't help you to do it, they just wait for you to make a mistake in a sense, and everything is like... it's working against you!'* This corresponded to Bogdan's complaints that work practices were nepotistic (3.2.1). Polish institutions and systems of authority were generally perceived as unfair and crime-ridden, and there was some criticism about the Polish government in power. Krysia for example, felt betrayed by Polish politicians who she felt had been too quick to accuse Polish migrants of abandoning their country. Krysia protested that Polish migrants had a legitimate cause for migrating: *'the reason why the most of us decided, you know, to go and live in other countries, to go abroad, is because we didn't feel happy in our motherland.'* By this effect, informants hoped to portray migration as taking political action against what they saw as the continued ill-management of their country.

Interestingly though, it was this very disdain for the organisational running of Poland and indeed experience of having lived in such bureaucracy that other informants felt epitomised what it meant to be Polish. Miron, for example, stated: *'To be honest, I wouldn't hold myself British, I just like this [country]; I'm Polish. [But] I like this country and the people in this country; I like the rules'*. Kazimierz felt likewise: *'I like England very much, yer, and I, I like my fatherland- I love my fatherland, but I don't like my country, if you know not what I mean? The difference [is] between the organisation.'* Elżbieta meanwhile felt that having grown up negotiating the elaborate administration systems in Poland made the rules and regulations second nature. Like Elżbieta, a number of informants agreed then, that those moving into Poland were expected to struggle to learn the country's bureaucratic ways, whereas Poles were skilled at negotiating administrative tasks, so were expected to find life abroad relatively easy. This once again fits with the idea that Poles made very able and adept migrants (6.2.1). For Polish migrant parents then, the idiosyncrasy of Polish bureaucracy helped justify both migration and continued residency in the UK, and yet also helped define something of their national identity.

The UK was largely viewed as institutionally fairer, more efficient, democratic and even affable. To highlight this Miron referred to the stereotype of the friendly English policeman: *'I like the rules, the rules are clear... the law, I mean for example I do find Polish policemen different from English, I mean English bobby is a friend'*. While the public interface in Poland was characterised as unwelcoming and austere, those at the coalface of bureaucracy and law in the UK were overwhelmingly considered to be friendly and helpful:

'[In Poland] you feel like if you go, if you go anywhere to sort anything out, you just feel, not welcome and unwanted, and oh, stop bothering me, go home; and here you go and people will try to be friendly and they will try to help you.'
(Olga)

The helpfulness of staff and the perceived 'relaxed' attitude to bureaucracy in the UK was equated by informants with having trust of its citizens. Elżbieta and Paweł for example, had come to the UK equipped with reference letters and

several forms of identification in order to secure jobs. Elżbieta reported being surprised that she only needed referees' telephone numbers and no supporting documentation in order to secure work, taking that as a sign that her prospects in the UK were good as she was considered as trustworthy. Kazimierz marvelled at how trusting institutions were at all levels of British society:

'When I'm here I feel very natural because everyone- despite the fact I am a foreigner...other people's behaviour is that they trust me, at work, at school, at pubs, office, and it's a default yes, whereas in Poland, you know, always suspected. You have to provide the ten papers with the ten stamps, you have to prove what you, prove that what you are saying is true, whereas here, each day I am enjoying England. When I am driving to the, to work... I don't need to have my papers... the government institutions trust you.' (Kazimierz)

The perception of institutional trust and compassion, together with their perception of the UK as socially tolerant, lead Polish migrant parents to believe that the UK was both supportive of and conducive to migration.

6.4.5 'Tolerance' in the UK

Saying this, Polish migrant parents' personal feelings toward multiculturalism, and indeed further migration, were complicated. On a practical level, Walentyna and Elwira felt that Britain's multicultural landscape had been hard to navigate socially. They both expressed a sense of disappointment that they had found greater exposure to what they deemed as 'international mums' rather than 'local mums' at support groups, which they felt compromised their understanding of what was authentically 'geordie' (local). Hania on the other hand, believed that having a collection of international friends was desirable, as it provided evidence that she was 'well-cultured'. Exposure to other cultures was felt to be especially beneficial to children (5.4.3). The UK interestingly, was seen as place from which various cultures (aside from 'British' culture) might be explored further. Basia, for example, talked about having opportunities to expose her daughter to 'Indian' culture as one of the benefits of raising her daughter in the UK: *'because you know, it is so she knows so much more about Indian culture,*

[more] than she could even learn in Poland.' The UK not only offered a safe and convenient place from which to explore a variety of cultures further, but it was also crucially regarded by Polish migrant parents as a country which enabled them to practice Polish traditions and impart something of Polish culture on to children too:

'I want her to grow up in another culture [British], because I know I can keep with her the Polish culture and Polish language and Polish traditions, but [I] want her to be like familiar with that there are many cultures, many ethnicities too.' (Hania)

The UK was therefore presented as offering migrant children a good variety and the right balance of cultural exposition.

Alongside this presentation of the UK as a multicultural safe-haven sat informants' anxieties about the possibility of changing levels of tolerance toward different cultures in the UK in the future. Multiculturalism, according to Ludmiła, had the potential to be an explosive melting pot:

'I sometimes am a bit concerned that they [children] won't be accepted. I have this sort of fear at the back of mind, I come across a sort of intolerance, erm, that as years will go by the British nation will be more and more fed up with Eastern Europeans, and, and er, it will turn more sort of obvious, in, in life. It is my worry to be honest, that it might affect Feliks; that he will be viewed as odd one out, he'll be called you know 'Polish' in a negative way,... if people want to find a reason to bully someone they will.' (Ludmiła)

Ludmiła's fear of cultural intolerance and worry about her son's future reception in the UK was undoubtedly influenced by her husband's experiences, where, as the son of Polish war veterans, his childhood had been marred by prejudices which had left his parents considering anglicising the family name. Polish migrant parents' anxieties about the changing or 'true' tolerances of people in the UK were all too often sadly entrenched in their personal experiences of prejudice and racism. Three informants in the sample reported having experienced direct acts of racism since moving to the North East of England.

These acts took various forms (name calling, having anti-Semitic graffiti painted by their house, and being the persistent targets of burglaries). A further six informants reported to knowing about acts of racism through hearsay or having a 'feeling' that intolerance was present:

'I used to live in [name of area of Newcastle]. I wasn't happy with English people... who quite often used to show that they didn't tolerate foreign peoples...I didn't experience that myself, [nor] my close friends, no, but I know others, well Polish, Czechs, Slovaks who experienced even violence.'
(Krycia)

As pragmatists Polish migrant parents sought ways to avoid situations where they felt susceptible to intolerance. Krycia made an effort to move from the area of the city she found threatening. Elżbieta experienced verbal abuse on a bus after speaking in Polish with her visiting aunt: *'I heard them saying, they were looking and laughing at us, and they were saying, um, 'I can smell shoe Polish, I can smell shoe Polish!'* Elżbieta reported feeling more self conscious following the attack: *'And, yes, there is something about speaking Polish in public, I feel kind of put on the spot when I do it, I'll do it and I'll never refrain from doing it, but I kind of, you feel that people notice.'* Although Elżbieta did not engage directly in ethnic self monitoring by speaking exclusively in English (unlike Waldemar, 5.4.3), she reported to having a heightened awareness about her public persona thereafter. Iza by contrast, reported learning how to 'behave' in order to "get by": *'We know the area better than the five years ago which is obvious and we know how people behave, and we know how we should get on with things'*. Although Polish migrant parents often insisted that they were not prepared to 'blend in': *'No I don't feel British at all, and I don't want to; there is no reason to change your identity really... I don't want to just blend in'* (Ludmiła), in reality the fear and anxiety which commonly affected their everyday lives was attributing to a heightened ethnic self awareness, with a number of informants, including their children, engaging in practices of ethnic self monitoring (5.3.6).

Surprisingly then, literature on Eastern European migrants has reported low incidents of racism and xenophobia previously (Hardy and Clark: 2005) basing this on the grounds that they are less immediately identifiable as being 'foreign' than non white migrants. McDowell (2009) even found that migrants themselves did not expect to suffer discrimination based on being 'white'. It is imperative that the racial experiences of Eastern European migrants are reviewed, as this study not only finds relatively high accounts of racism against Polish minorities, but the sad outcome that Polish migrants are willing to redress their own behaviour to deflect racism, dismiss these acts as 'everyday' and regard these experiences as 'tolerable' and the UK as 'tolerant'.

6.4.6 Polarised Poland

Although realities of intolerance were therefore very apparent to informants, they still idealised the UK as a cultural liberal utopia. Kazimierz for example, believed: *'I think [the UK has] a bit much more open mind so it's like a wide mind, wider opportunities, wider mind [here], that says we are open to diversity, cultural diversity'*. By contrast Poland was seen as a polarised society where it was difficult to improve social standing. This conclusion was also drawn by informants in the study by Drinkwater et al. (2006). Interestingly though, rather than concentrating on the perceived meritocracy of life in the UK like the Polish migrant mothers in Lopez Rodriguez's study (2010), Polish migrant parents in this study were keener to talk about the problems of nepotism which they felt prevented social mobility in Poland. As Lech stated: *'If you know certain people in Poland you can get very high...But here, if you go to like proper education here, and skills, you can get high without knowing [people]'*. In a similar complaint Olga felt that Polish systems of bureaucracy were unfair as they needed high levels of education in order to manipulate them: *'In Poland if you want to do something, you've got to be well educated about [it]...What you need to do - er, you [have to] know all the procedures, facts and forms and everything else'*. Even when virtues in the British system were mentioned (Teodor felt, for example, that because of better work prospects after graduation in the UK and shorter 'training time' for skilled jobs, it was possible to have a good career in

the UK at a younger age than in Poland), the inequalities in Poland were the main focus. Polish migrant parents in this study did not so much celebrate British meritocracy, but more so objected to the prospect of their children battling an unfair and rigid social hierarchy in Poland. Once again migration was conceived of as a demonstration against the organisational running of Poland.

Migration from Poland's stringent polarised society was seen as particularly liberating for minority groups. Basia regarded her mother's migration to the UK as literally liberating her from the domestic captivity she endured in Poland as a widow: *'When she became widow it was, the upsetting thing [was] that she had to stick to the kids, she had to stick to the home, she couldn't go alone somewhere, it is not allowed. [No] widow woman is going for a drink, or to the pubs or things like that.'* For Basia, societal expectation and norms in Poland were portrayed as restrictive, having forced her mother to live in relative isolation. Once installed in the UK however, Basia believed her mother experienced a new found freedom and confidence

'So for me, for us, it was like a shock, like when my mum were here first time drinks, you know. She is much more comfy, you know, to work around [here]. She's going to the mountains on holidays just because, you know, she wants to. Yeah, so I spoke with my sisters: 'you know what our mum is wearing?' 'Jeans!' 'What?!' [Laughter] She says, 'take picture and send me!'

Poland was therefore depicted as having anachronistic attitudes and policies toward its minority groups. Work by Binnie and Klesse (2012) on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender political activism in Poland highlights a similar idea. Although the experiences of lone migrant parents in this study certainly suggests that life in the UK allowed members of minority groups to feel greater freedom of expression, social interactions and societal visibility than they had in Poland, this study was unable to draw any firm conclusions on whether this desire for greater social tolerance by minority groups was a true motivation of migration or whether it was solely an idea championed by informants in the benefit of hindsight. Coyle (2007) came to a similar conclusion about the ambiguity of political motivation for migration in her work. As such this study

advocates that further research on the experiences of minority group Polish migrants should be considered, in order to clarify the extent to which political factors might be present in Polish migration.

This study does suggest however, that Polish migrant parents were acutely aware that their duties of care were constantly evolving, and as such levels of social tolerance were increasingly instrumental in hypothesising their futures. Ludmiła, for example, talked about her future intentions to move her brother, who suffered from a degenerative disease, to the UK. She felt her brother could expect to be taken on more daytrips and included in more social groups when resident in care facilities in the UK, as the state philosophy in the UK ensured inclusiveness for all members of society:

'The thing I like about England is...life is organised to include every social group, there is every group sort of considered in isolation. There is provision and facilities for seniors, those in charge, the single, for students; it's all considered and placed so everybody can go and be part of every aspect of life, and that's missing in Poland.' (Ludmiła)

Polish migrant parents were at a stage of life then, where they were increasingly being called on to support dependents other than their children. Paulina and Waldemar for example were also debating how they might manage the future care of Waldemar's widowed mother. In other studies of Polish migrant families (such as White and Ryan: 2008) illness and bereavement of relatives back in Poland, which leads to new situations of dependency or care, have been anticipated as a factors of return. Informants' portrayal of a polarised and socially exclusive life in Poland, compared with the socially inclusive and tolerant life in the UK, suggests that they are more likely to move dependents to the UK and envisage the scenario as a reason to stay.

6.4.7 British Friendliness

Experiences of British service culture appeared to be the main arbitrator to informants' belief that British people were friendly. Hania talked about her trips to the high street: *'[British people] enjoy time when they go to the street to shop*

and see the shop windows. They can talk to you not knowing who you are, and they just nicely talk to you; they are open and kind.' As with a number of informants, Hania saw British people as more ready and willing to converse with strangers, making them more open and tolerant; this contrasts with informants' experiences of racism. The pace of life in the UK was also thought to be slower than in Poland, mainly based on the observation that cashiers in shops took longer with each customer by packing bags and chatting, and that British people were willing to form orderly queues. Return visits to Poland only seemed to exaggerate this disparity, with informants reporting new distaste for Polish norms such as 'pushing in'. Lech reported, for example: *'In Poland she [cashier] is just pushing you and prepare big pile, and that keeps annoying people; people push in. When I am back to Poland I am getting upset when, when something happens like this now'*. Shopping norms in the UK were quick to impress Polish migrant parents, possibly because, as was the suggestion of Kazimierz and Truda, orderliness was simply easier with children at the side. Travelling by public transport also promoted these disparities. Paulina, for example, compared her experiences of waiting for buses in Poland and the UK, concluding that the British norm to make chitchat about the weather seemed friendlier than the Polish norm to sit quietly. 'Friendliness' was then, interpreted by Polish migrant parents as being of practical benefit, in that they felt they could expect greater tolerance, patience and assistance in everyday life, particularly appealing prospects for busy parents.

In parallel to the wider presentation of Poland as being emotionally scarred by transition, and its people remaining austere and downcast (6.3.1, 6.3.3) were the numerous accounts of 'smiling Brits'. Walentyna, for example, contrasted smiling Brits and bad tempered Poles: *'[British] people are more friendly: they are smile even if they don't want to, but they are smiling... Polish people, they don't have good mood!'* While Jarek offered the metaphor of smiling Brits compared to sad Poles: *'[British are] very kind people, smiling; Polish people are all the time sad'*. Burrell sees the presentation of Westerners as happier and more confident people as manifest in historical tradition (Burrell: p.152, 2011a). Readings of friendliness were connected though, with a significant minority of

informants seeing friendliness as confusing and ungenue. Lech reported preferring the Polish forthrightness, especially when it came to discussions about politics; opinions he felt, should be offered face to face. Lech also felt wary about the *'manner to please'* which he felt contradicted the other British characteristic of being secretive about problems. This led Lech to feel especially vulnerable in the workplace, as he feared his employers' ready smiles disguised problems: *'In our job, no one tell you what you've done wrong, but I want to know'*. Lidia however, reported an urgent need to improve her English in order to manage the vagueness of British friendliness: *'Actually I feel like Polish people are more genuine in a way, I don't know, I don't want to be like [that].'* Polish migrant parents used stereotypes to simplify and understand cultural disparities then, but still felt concerned that they were not grasping the minutiae of culture. It seems that Polish migrant parents experiences of vulnerability helped inform their anxieties about the need to impart the intricacies of culture on to children (6.3.4). Once again they acted to guard children from experiencing similar distress to themselves.

It is interesting that Polish migrant parents characterisations of 'the British as friendly' run in contrast to Ryan's (2010a) study on Polish migrants in London, wherein Poles reported finding their 'English' counterparts 'unfriendly' and 'closed'. Ryan's explanations for this include the idea that her informants tended to exist in social locations not conducive to meeting British people, workplaces had certain expectations about friendliness, and the fluency in English spoken by informants might also have prohibited their interactions with British people. Furthermore, Ryan's informants were recognised as having greater exposure to other migrant groups in London (such as Irish and Australian migrants) which they then compared more favourably to the British. Explanation for my counter finding might include interviewer bias (interviews were kept friendly particularly when children were present), but perhaps more discernibly, the proposition that 'friendliness' was a region specific characterisation.

In this study informants' characterised the North East of England as consistently friendly and helpful: Elwira, referred to Newcastle as a *'very friendly city for*

parents’, and Kazimierz, described people in the North East as ‘*very very helpful*’ for example. Moreover, informants who had experienced life elsewhere in the UK consistently regarded the North East as the friendlier place to reside. Magda felt that people in London were: ‘*very reserved, not as friendly as Geordies.*’ Krysia’s report of life in London was wholly negative, her views about life in the North East by contrast were positive: ‘*Here you are walking down the street, people are smiling, and say ‘are y’alreet pet?’* Polish migrant parents clearly drew on regional stereotypes in order to construct their reading of place identity (6.5.8). What might be an interesting next venture then, is addressing how these regional stereotypes might relate more extensively to the emotional geographies of Polish migration.

6.4.8 Polish Neighbourliness

Polish migrant parents’ perception that people in the North East of England were warm and friendly conflicted with their presentation of the British as making reserved and closed neighbours. Informants clearly measured neighbourliness against Polish cultural norms and expectations; Czesław, for example, knew all the first names of his neighbours and attended parties at their houses, but felt uncomfortable at not knowing his neighbours’ surnames (addressing people by their surname is regarded as polite in Poland). Informants were often staggered and occasionally disappointed by their lack of interaction with neighbours in the UK. For Jagoda keeping a social distance between neighbours had been a surprise: ‘*It’s actually quite amazing because I’m not bothered with my neighbours really. I know them, we know each other, we take in each other’s parcels. So we say ‘hello’, but er, that’s it.*’ For Elwira a lack of interaction with her neighbours was tantamount to being poorly integrated in her community: ‘*I know my neighbour opposite but I don’t know any other people so I’m not like very embedded in the community.*’ Informants’ expectations about neighbourliness supports Stenning’s (2010) work on everyday neighbouring in Poland, which illustrates how attitudes to neighbourliness in Poland remained ingrained in Soviet neighbouring patterns. Soviet neighbouring conventions had promoted close knit relationships with

neighbours (compatible with localised work and centralised housing schemes) (Stenning: 2010) and these networks of neighbourly support were still seen and practical and desirable by a number of informants (Paulina and Krysia for example).

The social distance generally kept by neighbours in the UK came as a particular surprise to Polish migrant lone parents, who talked about feeling isolated on discovery that typical neighbourly support networks in Poland were not necessarily as reliable or readily found in the UK. Basia felt vulnerable without this support network: *'[because in Poland] you feel safe because you know your kid, it is supervised you know; if I am not here she will be supervised by other mothers'*. She also believed that without neighbourly support, parents and children were doomed to lead more restrictive lives. According to Basia the supervision of children from afar (neighbours supervising children in the street from their windows), enabled children in Poland to roam wider, while Polish parents, she felt, enjoyed more flexibility too: *'[as] they had neighbours, or someone from family who looks [out] for you, who can pop in when you have to go to hairdressers or something, or this shopping for grocery.'* Evidence in chapter five suggests that Polish migrant parents assumed that there were certain levels of neighbourly responsibility for children in the UK, as was conventional in Poland, hence why children were left 'unsupervised' (5.7.2). Feeling vulnerable and seeing her British neighbours as offering little support, Basia however, set about moving deliberately closer to Polish friends in order to find help with childcare arrangements:

'So feel[s] like in Poland; if there is something Mila [needs], go to the 'Aunty'. Because I forgot to buy salt, [laughs] so it is, you know, 'I'm sending you kid because I am going town'; so it's just like national family.' (Basia)

A second lone parent, Krysia, also reported wanting to move closer to friends as a way to achieving better support with childcare. For Polish migrant lone parents then, national ties were more likely to be sought if neighbouring support networks were deemed weak. This suggests that in the study sample itself there were differentials in what pragmatic pathways were chosen by Polish migrant

parents, with the desire to spread resourcing and achieve greater ethnic invisibility by living apart from other Polish migrants (5.3.6), coming into conflict with Polish migrant lone parents increased desire to live together in order to shoulder childcare.

Saying this, Polish migrant lone parents were more likely to live in social housing based in the more ethnically and generationally diverse localities of the sample. Although time-of-life differences and language barriers were noted by informants as impeding the building of relationships with neighbours, it should be stressed that Polish migrant lone parents did not dismiss attempting to build support networks in these immediate localities foremost. Mariola, for instance, talked about trying to create reciprocal relationships with her British and Czech neighbours: *'I'm trying to, to be a little, you know [more] open with them. They're helpful, and I hope erm, I'm helpful as well'*. As with the rest of the sample, considerable investment was made by Polish migrant lone parents to broker relationships in immediate localities before national unity was sought.

Indeed Polish migrant parents across the sample were prepared to be very active in their negotiation of neighbourly relationships. Olga for example recognised that living on a traditional Tyneside terrace with communal access via a back lane (where children played out) might be particularly effective for building friendships with her neighbours. Her son had just started playing in the lane at the time of interview, and Olga reported her newfound enjoyment of *'walking up and down the back lane meeting parents.'* The literary and filmic characterisation of the North East of England certainly helps espouse this vision of neighbourliness, which meets with informants wider typecasting of the North East as friendly (6.4.3). The majority of informants lived on new build estates however, where levels of interaction with neighbours seemed dependent on the age of children. The parents of younger children (Truda and Kazimierz, Iza and Viktor) had fairly distant relationships with neighbours, whereas those with older aged children (capable of playing out) reported socialising with neighbours (Czesław and Klara, and Jagoda). There were of course other variables which affected neighbourly relations here, namely increased opportunities to interact

with neighbours through children's schools (Jagoda) and if work colleagues also lived in the locality (Czesław). The ethnic fabric of neighbourhood was occasionally seen by informants as the cause of underlying neighbourly tensions. Teodor and Lech, for example, felt ethnic disparity from their Asian neighbours and reported a hostile relationship. Entering into parenthood in itself was reported as having increased levels of interaction with neighbours (Ludmiła, Olga, and Iza):

'I wasn't really sort of part of community, village community, having a baby changes things dramatically, you suddenly know everybody and everybody talks to you and you suddenly sink into the community; and you know, we go to playgroups and we know all the parents who come to the playgroup, and suddenly you do know everybody.' (Ludmiła)

Polish migrant parents, it might be argued then, had greater opportunity than Polish migrants at large, to negotiate neighbourly relationships. This finding supports the call to update Bloch's (1976) study on Polish migrant families in New Jersey (6.1.4). In Bloch's study Polish migrant mothers were presented as disenfranchised and reclusive as a lack of shared language and culture seemingly left them 'no point of contact with their children's world or their activities and interests' (Bloch: 1976, p.8). Polish migrant parents in this study were active in negotiating neighbourly relationships; their 'children's worlds' being key to this negotiation.

Interestingly the ability to assume some of the traditions of Polish neighbouring, namely the supervision of children playing out, was found to be very influential in helping Polish migrant parents realise neighbourly relations and consequently form their attachments to place. Good relationships with neighbours were offered by Lidia and Paulina as reasons why they hoped to stay in the UK for longer. Lidia, whose neighbours were drawn from a mixed multi ethnic community, had formed good friendships with her neighbours, reported swapping clothes, going on day trips and relying on each other for childcare. Paulina believed that her informal supervision of a stretch of communal landscape next to her house had caused the beginnings of good relations with

her neighbours. Paulina enjoyed having this role of responsibility, and had soon volunteered to be part of the morning “school train” (an adult who walks a number of children in procession to school), even though her own son was not yet of school age. The friendships that Paulina and Waldemar had in their immediate neighbourhood were startlingly evident, with the interview being interrupted several times by calling British neighbours. Paulina enjoyed her close reciprocal relationship with neighbours feeling that those relationships substituted the role for her family back in Poland: ‘[they] *treat me just like a little sister... They are giving us loads of advice for example, ‘start this’. That’s what I never got from my mum.*’ The importance of neighbourliness in informing Polish migrant parents’ sense of place attachment and belonging should not then, be underestimated.

6.4.9 British Culture

The British welfare state was the subject of much curiosity for Polish migrant parents. As discussed in chapter four, there was applause and appreciation of what the welfare state provided for new parents. However, state provision at large sat uncomfortably with some, as although ‘*security without really worrying*’ (Ludmiła) was widely acknowledged as personally beneficial, it was also felt to have a detrimental effect on society, giving people less of an incentive to work. Four female informants were particularly vocal on this subject (Elżbieta, Krysia, Ludmiła and Jagoda), all feeling that ‘*the nanny state*’ promoted ‘*laziness*’ amongst Poles. According to Krysia the ‘*Polish mentality*’ was felt to be particularly at risk to ideas of free-loading from the state, and life in the UK was therefore thought to encourage Polish migrants to have bad habits. Krysia had decided, ‘*they [Polish migrants] learnt a lot in this country, basically you don’t pay for any help, so they can’t be bothered.*’ In fact Polish migrant parents themselves were the subject of much scrutiny from informants, with Jagoda for instance saying that they were ‘*spoiled a bit by Britain. I think in Poland they wouldn’t expect that.*’ This disdain for welfare provision among informants was perhaps not unsurprising. Attwood (1990) identified a general antithesis on socialism and any such state provisions it yielded coming out of the Soviet era.

Moreover, Datta et al. (2008) noted how certain emergent theories, particularly neo liberalism, travelled with migrants, in other words Polish migrants maintained existing values to those they held in Poland when resident in the UK. This contempt for the British welfare system was perhaps not surprising then.

The consequences of living under a universal welfare state also caused certain anxieties for informants. Elżbieta for example worried about: *'the waste of potential in young people [in the UK]. There are so many young very strong people not working and not even thinking about going to work!'* Ludmiła believed that the promotion of laziness might also be present in British educational standards too: *'there is no real urge for education in the UK.'* 'Hardship' in Poland she felt was at least good motivation for success: *'Poland is not a secure country [but] you have to work for your food.'* These informants held particularly negative views on British youth culture, which they demonised as being embroiled in drugs, drink and teenage pregnancy. Ludmiła's rather romantic expectations about life in the UK (3.2.4), which she admits to having gleaned from *'the literature of Bronte's times'*, now echoed British right-wing media rhetoric: the UK, Ludmiła believed, was dogged by *'binge drinking and career teenage mums.'* Although Ludmiła's expectations of the UK had not lived up to the 'realities' this had seemed to have little bearing on her decisions to 'stay or return', as she reported (following interview) to feeling 'happy enough' with her life in the present. Ludmiła's use of emotions to legitimise her continued residence in the UK was, as is argued shortly, typical of how informants decided their intentions (6.5.5).

Walentyna, however, was actively looking to move away from the North East of England, though not necessarily the UK altogether. Walentyna's particularly ardent view of Britain's drinking culture as detrimental to family life was especially interesting here, in that it supported her off-record characterisation of the North East as 'a drunken scruffy old man'. The perceived social ills of a place were then, used to legitimise onward migration. These same social ills were seen by other informants as social liberators. The perceived drinking

culture in the UK was seen by Hania for example as a sociable pastime which was especially liberating for women. Hania felt that the '*British culture to leave home for the pub in the evenings*' as opposed to the Polish norm '*to drink at home*', enabled parents a social life free from domesticity. This exemplifies quite how varied the voices of Polish migrant parents could be, and illustrates moreover, how once resident in the UK informants justified and authenticated their continued migrations on differing grounds.

6.5 Negotiating Identity

6.5.1 Mobility and Aspirational identities

From the sample collected for this study it was evident that modern 'Polish' migration includes a growing number of families in which children have dual heritage. Where this was the case, informants were extremely embracing of their children's various ethnic or national identities, though stressed that they were only accountable for nurturing the '*Polish half*' (Elwira). For some informants reaching for a multitude of identities with which to describe their children was in line with the idea that exposure to many cultures was beneficial if not a sign of sophistication (5.4.2). Hania, for example, felt her daughter was Polish through herself, Finnish through her father, British due to living in the UK, and then added, '*and because, well, we are staying a lot of our life all over the world, so I would say she's international.*' While this plethora of identities speaks of Hania's transnational mobility and her daughter's dual heritage, it also reflects aspiration to imagine herself and child as 'well-cultured'. Krysia's romantic accounts of being mistaken as Scottish due to her '*accent*' and '*red hair*' and her fondness for the nickname 'ginger' due to her self-perceived "Celtic-ness", demonstrates how Polish migrant parents, particularly women, fantasised about their identity. In another example, Edyta and her daughter Nelka talked about their love of American film and television; mother Edyta embraced her daughter's faux American accent (5.4.4): '*I wouldn't say she's Geordie or Polish she's sometimes like you can hear her, you can hear her American*'. In this sense exploration of Polish migrant identities encapsulate desired identities of informants as well as their realities.

The mobility of Polish migrant parents in childhood and young adulthood should also not be overlooked, as it had bearing on how informants related concepts such as 'home' and 'local'. Not only did informants talk about periods of absence from Poland prior to their migration (6.3.5), but most had lived in various parts of Poland too, moving house due to changes in their parents' jobs as children or moving to live nearer to various educational institutions in adolescence. Miron, for example, referred to a map of Poland:

'I know a few people from that place but there are no links [points to place on map]. I arrived at here [pointing to another place on map] age of fifteen, and I started to live there [pointing to yet another place on the map]. I finished my college, and then I moved on [points to final destination on the map]'. (Miron)

Informants' also reported that return visits to Poland helped them revise their attachments to 'hometowns', as their own parents had often made subsequent moves away. Olga for example, reported: *'I don't have any strong feelings about it, the home town. I will actually probably never see the town again because my family moved to a bigger location, like two hours drive away, so even if I go to see them now it's not...they are in the new place for me.'* Likewise friends, who most informants felt were the linchpin to the concept of 'home', were reported to have moved to different locations in Poland or disbanded abroad. Zygmunt and Jarek, for example, complained that their hometowns had been left unrecognisable as people they knew had migrated to the UK and Ireland (3.2.4). For Lech the absence of friends in his hometown had compromised his feeling of familiarity to place: *'Actually I don't feel like I'm originally from that place, all my friends are now all over in the world.'*

Based on these findings it seems that increased mobility in the wake of neo-liberalism lead informants to reconceptualise their sense of local both during and prior to their migrations. Informants referred to the Internet as a way of retain friendships and relationships with family remotely for example. Hania talked about her use of social forums, Skype and email: *'so physically I feel like I am here but actually I am all over the world.'* Hania's analogy can be likened to having presence in a 'global village' (McLuhan: 1962). This suggests that

information technologies and increased mobilities had helped Polish migrant parents redefine their sense of the local against new spatial and temporal frames, replacing the local with the 'trans-local' therein. As such, future studies on Polish migration would do well heed the advice laid out by Schiller et al. (1995), in that transnational anthropologies seem increasingly useful and important in recording migrants ever-increasing multiple linkages to host country, homeland and beyond.

6.5.2 National identities

Emergent transnational identities sat alongside Polish migrant parents' patriotic and keen sense of national identity. Informants unanimously described themselves as 'Polish'. The vast majority of the sample believed that this national identity was unequivocal having been ascribed by birth: '*I am Polish because obviously, that's my, that's where I was born*' (Lidia), or through the burial and death of forefathers: '*The place where I am, is the grave of my father*' (Czesław); this latter reading seems indicative of Catholic teaching. Only two informants, Elżbieta and Lech, felt that the degree to which adults identified with a nation might fluctuate and change over the course of time. Lech, for instance, believed: '*We feel Polish because we spent most of the time our lives in Poland*'. However, with the exception of Elżbieta, all informants objected to the proposal that they might therefore regard themselves as British in the future, generally seeing this as a betrayal of their nationality. Mariola, for example, contested: '*Still inside my heart I am Polish and I am - I will never become someone else... I know I am Polish, I will never try to, to transform myself to British because I don't think it's right... I am proud of my, er, my identity.*' Most informants were adverse to the idea of taking British citizenship even, seeing this as synonymous with a need to change or transform themselves. Polish migrant parents understood the 'new social contracts' which Kofman (2005, p.464) sees as increasingly laid down by European states in order to ensure that migrants have an undivided loyalty and affiliation to national culture and polity, as asking them to compromise something of themselves. The exception to this rule, Elżbieta, reported to applying for a British passport at the time of

interview. Interestingly she regarded British citizenship as little more than legal documentation, but was also the informant most ambivalent about retaining her sense of Polishness. This seems in line with Elżbieta's desire to assimilate with a certain social standing (5.4.2), and speaks again perhaps, of aspirations and confluences between identities.

Polish migrant parents felt that children's national identities were more malleable and less certain than those of adults. This corresponded with their presentation of children as having greater adaptability and ability to migrate (6.2.1). Most informants felt that their children were currently, by parental default, Polish (or of dual heritage), and imagined that they would 'choose' their own national affiliation in the future. Krysia, for example, felt, '*At the moment he is Polish, through me, but there will be a time in his life when he's going to decide where he feels he belongs*'. Czesław also felt that his children would choose their own national identity in the future: '*It's their choice not mine*'. Polish migrant parents' idea that children had agency over national identities contradicts the notion they cast for themselves, in that national identity was an ascribed status. Underlying this liberal notion of children's 'choice' however, was Polish migrant parents' belief that children's identities could be actively nurtured. Informants felt that parents were individually responsible for nurturing their own national identities within their children (6.5.1). Polish migrant parents accepted then, that their children would likely have collective identities, and although they suggested that children were free to sort and prioritise these identities themselves, they acted instrumentally to nurture the 'Polish half.'

Polish migrant parents felt that the identities of their children would somehow be established on approach to adulthood. Informants read certain events in the lives of their children as signposts of them cementing their affiliations. The realisation that a child had developed an English accent was seen as one indication that they had embraced an identity, though as will be discussed shortly, parents preferred to recognise this as regional accent and regional identity over national identity (6.5.8). Aga, for example, talked about how she reviewed her son's identity following return visits to Poland: '*because when we*

go to Poland I see him like Geordie person, like not really Polish kid.' Return visits to Poland once again presented as a catalyst for reflection. Basia recalled her visit to Poland: *'She was, you know, talking in this 'English Geordie'. I didn't hear that, you know, hear how she's talking...so I was shocked.'* Children's reactions to Poland on return visits and their linguistic choices were also taken as significant of their emerging national affiliations. Basia, for example, recognised that her daughter was bored when in Poland: *'So she is thinking about the UK as about her home. So she's not talking to me, 'are we going to home?' meaning Poland, but she says, 'are we going to Poland?' meaning for holidays.'* Children's chosen allegiances to sports teams were also seen as indicative of their affiliations:

'You know the last summer it was funny because it was the world swimming championship, I was doing something in the kitchen and she was shouting mum mum we won, gold medal, we were world championships so I was saying what we do? And so it is, 'He is British?' 'yeh, we won!', what...? It is strange, or difficult, but it is, you know, will [help] you open your mind that everything is changed and you want [them] to feel only Polish, and yet you [are] between two nations. So it is good to give her a Polish identity [and] a British identity as well, because she cannot live apart from British society, she is living here, so she has to take part. So even, you know, if it is [that] "we won"- it [now] means Britain!'
(Basia)

While this extract highlights beautifully how Basia felt struck by her daughter's allegiances, how she, like many informants, reported feeling caught 'between two nations' particularly on reflection of their children's identities, it also shows that in reality Polish migrant parents did not accept that national identity was solely their child's choice. While Basia accepted that her daughter could not 'live apart from British society' she was not prepared to denounce her daughter's Polish identity as absent, even in the event of a sporting triumph.

6.5.3 Retaining Polish identity

Idealistically Polish migrant parents were prepared to accept that their children's national affiliations were volatile and susceptible to change as they grew older, but in practice they were keen to see their children's sense of Polishness retained. The preservation of Polish identity in children was felt to be important in ensuring good intergenerational understanding (6.3.4). It was also felt to be key in ensuring children could be successfully returned or moved to Poland if circumstances prevailed. This need to retain Polish identity in order that 'children could slot back in' to life in Poland was also recognised by Sales et al. (2009) in their study of Polish migrant families in London. Insight into the practice of this strategy was offered by Edyta, who thought that it was important for her daughter to attend Polish church so she could learn prayers in Polish, a part of every day school life in Poland. This exemplifies how Polish migrant parents were prepared to invest in long term negotiations in order to keep their opportunities open, and position themselves ready for unfurling events.

Edyta's strategy also highlights how the promotion of Catholicism was thought integral to the retention of Polish identity. Elżbieta argued that Catholicism structured culture and tradition in Poland and so she thought it important to impart on her children: *'it's part of the tradition there, you know; it's part of the culture and tradition and I wouldn't like them not to know about that'*. Moreover, Edyta implied that keeping children apace with the significant milestones in the Catholic Church was also felt to keep children on par with experiences typical of Polish childhood. All older children in this study had taken, or were preparing to take their first Holy Communion at the time of interviews; some had holidayed in Poland as part of this occasion. The promotion of Catholicism in children's lives was not solely a symbolic way to retain Polish identity but a pragmatic way to ensure children could live easily in Poland again.

Polish migrant parents found using formal and institutional mediums of Polish culture, such as the Polish church, Polish club and Polish Saturday school, inconvenient. Logistical and practical difficulties were given as preventing informants' from attending Polish church, as had been the reason for not

attending Polish Saturday school (5.4.7). Iza, for example, found that her daughter's napping and feeding routine was incompatible with Polish Church services. Paulina meanwhile reported that in principle she was keen to attend family focussed events at the Polish club, but in practice these events conflicted with her other non-Polish interests. Polish migrant parents found that the day-to-day demands of parenting and competing identities and interests therefore compromised their participation in formal modes of Polish cultural reproduction.

Polish migrant parents generally preferred relying on informal methods to promote their children's interest in Polish culture. Elzbieta felt that visiting grandparents were an excellent medium from which to maintain her children's religious instruction. Elzbieta found grandparents congenial to this role, bringing children Polish bibles and dedicating themselves to teaching psalms. Informal modes of promoting Polish culture were not immune from being compromised by practicalities however. Edyta for example, wanted her child to be able to access a range of Polish cultural stimuli, but reported that her income was limited leaving her resources and options for exposing her daughter to Polish culture restricted. Polish satellite channels for instance were not an affordable option: *'We've got English television, because Polish well, we have to pay extra.'* Czesław and Waldemar reported to having two television sets in their homes in order to allow children to occupy themselves. Although parents preferred that their children chose Polish programmes, children's preferences won out in the interests of maintaining harmony in the household. Polish migrant mothers furthermore, reported feeling obliged to cook Polish specific cuisine as these dishes were thought to be essential in the passing down of Polish tradition. Hania stated: *'I do need to make effort to preserve the traditions and learn the traditional dishes, I want to do that, of course, I need to do that'*. In practice the pressures of the working week and need to cook quick and easy recipes with children in tow, meant that time consuming Polish cuisines were often abandoned in favour of convenience cooking. As Lidia surmised, Polish foods were: *'like a bit time consuming, you know; I like quick things now.'* Polish migrant parents long-term ambitions and idealistic desire to retain their

children's sense of Polish identity thus lay in conflict with their short term and pragmatic needs as parents.

This negates White and Ryan's idea that Polish migrant parents had free choice over the level of Polishness they wished to maintain in their everyday lives (White and Ryan: 2008, p.1498), as practicalities, such as adherence to budgets, a need for convenience, following routine and keeping children happy, compromised their intentions. Paulina's reports of being interested in non-Polish events (she cites family fun days in local parks as an example) shows that informants increasing interactions and new networks in the host society also served to compromise more formal organised methods of Polish cultural practices, as scheduled events literally clashed and competed. The idea that Polish migrant parents were then continuously prepared to set aside idealism in favour of pragmatics as argued in chapter five, was perhaps too generous in its account of Polish migrant parents' command this negotiation.

6.5.4 European identity

When asked if they felt 'European' Polish migrant parents frequently referred to their legal rights, talking about how they enjoyed increased access and greater convenience to travel and migrate as a result of being citizens of an EU member state. Walentyna explained: *'We live in Europe so we don't need to have English passport... I like it because we can go when [and] wherever we want, and we don't need any visa.'* Europe was typically thought of as a territory which gave its residents greater migratory choice and freedoms. Miron believed for example: *'Europe is our place, and I do find emigration, or immigration [just] a matter of choice...if you like it you stay here, if you don't you go away.'* Europe was therefore regarded as an entity which supported migration and legitimised transience. Interestingly informants did not mention restrictions imposed on their entitlements to live and work in certain countries. Instead informants held romantic notions about onward migration to desirable destinations such as Spain and France, imaging Europe as a place of unfettered migratory freedom. Jarek, for instance, surmised: *'because er, no borders in Europe, so can move to everywhere, can move here, can move to*

Poland, to other countries, to France if you want. Countries within Europe were generally considered as offering ample enough choice for migrants: Elżbieta and Walentyna for instance, dismissed onward migration to the USA and Australia as unnecessary, migration within the EU was felt to provide enough choice of destinations. In Szczerbiak's (2007) study into attitudes towards European integration in Poland, there is no report of Europe being presented as such a migratory idyll. The characterisation of Europe as an accessible migratory space seems intrinsic then, to Poles in the throes of migration.

Although Polish migrant parents were happy to embrace European identity as a legal status, they were more divided over what European identity constituted politically. Europe was, for instance, seen as a harbinger of neo-liberalism, epitomising the collapse of the Iron Curtain. Lech, for example, was excited about this historical turn: *'I never expected in my life that I would be able to travel, go wherever I want.'* Most informants saw entry into the EU as ushering in further transition and helping to secure Polish prosperity. As such many felt, like Mariola, that Polish identity could sit alongside European identity comfortably: *'I am Polish, but this, doesn't [mean] that we can't identify ourselves as European people, but still you've got your rules and I've got my rules.'* This belief that national and European identities did not have to be mutually exclusive echoes the opinions of Polish informants surveyed by Moes (2008). In lesser measures however, informants in this study found European identity to be intransigent.

'[Poles] just think of [being] European because you don't need to be very responsible for, you know, leaving a country. ...you should show your support, your country, and development in your country, and when you will leave, you just, like I said, you insult, you betray your country in some way.' (Edyta)

Edyta blames the freedoms of mobility enabled by EU membership as giving leave to reckless and unaccountable behaviour. She sees migrating from the country, rather ironically, is considered a threat to national sovereignty. Teodor meanwhile, felt uncomfortable with the national allegiances forged by membership of the EU, reporting his disdain for reciprocal relations with

Germany: *'There's still lots of Polish people who work in Germany, but, I would never go there, ...I can never ever work there, actually I could live there maybe but I will never ever work for German people!'* Although in the minority, these informants' fears about allegiances and sovereignty suggest that Polish migrant parents were not always prepared to see European and national identity as compatible. Informants were therefore fairly divided in their political views on European identity.

In much the same way that informants laid claim to migrant identity (6.2.3), they claimed European heritage too through citing ancestral links. Walentyna and Basia evidenced their European ancestry based on their grandparent's hometowns, now situated outside of Poland (Lithuania, Germany and the Ukraine respectively) and yet remaining inside Europe. Basia, for example, stated: *'I think we're part of Europeans because my family is so mixed in Europe'*. Jarek meanwhile, was eager to suggest that his hometown had always had a more European flavour than other Polish cities, as it had happily accommodated both Catholic and Christian Orthodox cathedrals. Such claims to ancestral and historical Europeaness fit with the portrayal of Poland as rightfully 'returning to Europe' (Maier and Risse: 2003, p.20). Europeaness also seemed to be a much desired and fashionable concept for informants: Ludmiła, Lidia and Walentyna all perceived 'European culture' as voguish and educated for example. Equally claims to European identity had evolved due to informants sustained mobility in Europe. Paulina, for example, had travelled and worked as an au paid across Europe in her late teens and stated: *'Yer I feel European then, because I've travelled a lot and I've never been long in Poland so I was always either in Holland, Austria, England or Poland.'* Once again then, desired identities sat abreast of informants realities. Claims to European identity were therefore an enmeshment of legal, political, cultural, historical and aspirational identities.

6.5.5 Neither here nor there

Polish migrant parents presented as being neither committed to staying in the UK permanently nor certain about their intentions to return to Poland. Lech

summed up this reconciliation describing his life in Darlington as, *'The longest vacation ever!'* Informants cited return visits to Poland as having initiated feelings of being 'neither here nor there', helping them to recognise that they no longer visualised themselves living in Poland nor leaving the UK permanently. Kazimierz, for example, reported: *'Even when I am in Poland I am saying that I am going back to the UK'*. This feeling of tussling between coming and going was also conveyed by Czesław: *'Really now [when I] go to Poland, [I] stayed there like one week then miss here, come here and stay a week, miss there.'* The dichotomy between staying and returning was in reality fuzzy; informants' frequent stories about being on the brink of decisions illustrated this entanglement of emotions and also worked as a dramatic device in informants' narratives. In cultural studies this deposition is understood as perpetuating an *'impossible homecoming'* whereby migrants live in a state of migrancy, 'in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain' (Chambers: 1994, p.5). The lack of closure in migration narratives suggests that migrants' are left in a permanent and disconcerting state of role conflict which has the propensity to be detrimental to migrants' well-being. Polish migrant parents however, used this state of migrancy to their advantage, as a way to ensure agency over decisions. Willingness to be flexible and adapt to circumstances, as argued in chapter five, was after all, part of their overriding migration "strategy".

Informants commonly reported experiencing the feeling of being 'neither here nor there' at times when the planned and unplanned collided. The unplanned often took the form of emotions; informants reported feeling surprised by emotions such as confusion, loss, frustration and self consciousness evoked on return visits to Poland. Paulina and Waldemar presented as fascinating examples of this emotional geography of migration. They had made the decision to return to Poland permanently and as such went about commemorating the time they had spent in the North East of England. Interestingly the couple centred this process of remembrance on the North East of England alone seeing life in the North East as the point of their migration at which they had felt happiest. The couple talked about having carefully selected

a souvenir framed photograph of Newcastle's Quayside and taken trips to obtain photographs at specific North East landmarks. No efforts were made to commemorate the time that they had spent living in Cumbria as this was considered a period of migration that they had hoped to forget. This process of attaching and evaluating emotions against geographies then continued on return to Poland:

'When we were in Poland we think, aaah it's good to go back home, it's good to be back here, but when we [came back] here, we think oh, it's good to be back from Poland. [Poland] is no more a home for us because we've got Godek here; our own life [is here]: like every time we go to Poland, like every year, [it] feels like er, something is gone, something is missing, like er, it's not our life anymore over there.' (Paulina)

The couple's return visit to Poland prompted feelings of estrangement, and allowed Paulina time to contemplate her transition into parenthood and her strengthening support network in the UK. Return visits to Poland provided opportunities for migrants to recognise their weakening attachments to place and their weakening support networks in Poland, as well as frustrations over place-based utilities and consumer choice (6.2.1, 6.2.3). This constant state of being 'neither here nor there' exasperated by return visit evaluations, was therefore useful in that it let informants check whether they were 'happy in the now'. Paulina and Waldemar for example, decided to stay in the UK following their return visit to Poland. They reported feeling content with their life in the UK at the time of interview, but were happy to review their feelings about residency as events unfolded. One scenario they predicted that might change their emotions was if Waldemar's mother's ailing health worsened. Waldemar's mother had recently been widowed, and now Waldemar and Paulina were concerned about whom might provide care for her in her old age. Paulina and Waldemar felt that if this event occurred, emotions of guilt and feelings of obligation would see them return to Poland. Feeling happy and satisfied with life in the present was for many informants then, good indication that they should keep their residency as it was, but equally informants were aware that these

landscapes of emotion could change quickly and as such they were prepared to keep their options open (6.5.7). Identifying themselves as 'nomadic' (Ludmiła, Lidia), 'constantly mobile' (Walentyna) or even 'transnational' (as did Waldemar and Paulina) offered Polish migrant parents a means of self empowerment then, as by welcoming this transient identity ensured they would keep abreast of their emotions.

6.5.6 Transnational and International identities

Some informants felt that their children, and less commonly they, were symbolic of a new generation of migrants. Bogdan and Olga for example, claimed that their son, as a frequent flyer, was a product of a new transnational generation. Olga boasted: *'I mean he could live anywhere in the world!'* Lidia, Hania and Czesław used variations of the term 'international citizens' with which to define their children. Hania imagined for example: *'When they grow up there will be a one country or maybe, or I think it will be a worldwide, you know, population.'* Other informants were frustrated that the world was not currently 'transnational' enough in that 'new connectivities, new space-time, flexibility and the embedding of new mobilities' (King: 2002, p.94), were not always as convenient, connected, easy and flexible as informants liked. Walentyna for example, was this study's only example of a 'pendular migrant' (White and Ryan: 2008). She reported returning to Poland every month, scheduling dental appointments, haircuts and medical appointments between return visits. Sustaining this level of transience relied on her finding the quickest and cheapest transportation connections, and as such the North East of England was no longer proving a practical and viable residence for her:

'The problem with [living] in North of England is that, it is we can't er, fly to Poland every weekend or you know every few weeks...Huge problem, it's huge problem, ...so that's why we want to move to the South because there are lots of airports.' (Walentyna)

Walentyna was affluent at the time of interview and the mother of a young baby. The majority of informants however, reported finding increasing constraints to

their mobility and that of their extended families. Visits to and from Poland were largely being curtailed by tighter household finances, the convergence in Polish and British currency exchange, and increased flight prices in the wake of the economic downturn (5.5.1). Regional connections to airports in Poland also arose as an issue, Walentyna for example, was keen to move to the South of the UK to ensure herself the most time and cost efficient connections. As parents, these informants also experienced time pressures, obligations to the school term for example, and simply having to balance the everyday routines of parenting (6.5.3). With increasing practical restrictions placed on their mobilities then, it would be interesting to see whether transnational and international identities remain part of these Polish migrant parents accounts of identity in the future.

6.5.7 Hybrid and collective identities

Informants occasionally saw themselves as having adopted British characteristics. Although this willing hybridisation conflicts with Polish migrant parents general misgivings about compromising their Polishness (6.5.2), it reflects more broadly perhaps their aspirational identities (6.5.1). Miron, for example, imagined: *'part of Britishness is in me, simply because I am a more positive person than I used to be.'* Notably then, informants were keen to entertain having adopted the more romantic or positive stereotypes of Britishness. Olga, for instance, mused: *'I think my soul is British because I'm a really sensitive person and...I feel quite comfortable here, I think my soul is British.'* Other informants were less willing to entertain adoption of any British characteristics. Bogdan felt that he could not relate to being British: *'I don't know, I don't play cricket and that stuff'*. Polish migrant parents therefore drew their social identities from stereotypes which were both crude and creative, conceiving of both their similarities and differences to the host society.

Polish migrant parents used emotional geographies to navigate and distinguish between 'a state of belonging and being' (Levitt and Glick Schiller: 2004). Krysia, for example, perceived herself as a Polish person happier living in the UK than Poland: *'I will never change the fact that I am Polish, you know Poland*

it's my motherland, but I feel more happy over here.' Kazimierz shared this notion, but went on to define his sense of belonging as a 'heritage', corresponding to Polish migrant parents' wider reading of ascribed identity (6.5.1):

'If you ask me, do I feel natural in England, I would say yes, much more than in Poland, yes. If you ask me, for example, thinking the same, do I feel English, so I would say rather no, because it's something about the part of you; [you] have to be part of [the] heritage.' (Kazimierz)

Firstly this suggests that Polish migrant parents relied on their emotional measure of a place to guide their sense of being. Although their state of migrancy appeared frenetic, Polish migrant parents constantly monitored and checked their emotions as well as their social and economic opportunities looking to see if they remained happy in the present (6.5.4). The emotional outcomes of life in the UK for Polish migrant parents thus had real value in decisions to stay or return, and as such should not be overlooked in future Polish migration research. Secondly this shows that informants increasingly imagined themselves as having multiple identities, most commonly a state of belonging (Poland) and state of being (The UK).

Occasionally though these states of belonging and being were imagined as a collective. Informants made corporeal references to the soul, heart, and head for example, to demonstrate how their sense of self was divided. Czesław for instance remarked: *'I have got two homes, two souls, and two countries'*. Another common analogy offered was that of being 'caught between two nations' (6.5.2). Typically though, informants felt that when divided their presiding identity (and state of belonging) would be Polish. As Maciek explained, *'we are trapped into two backgrounds, but my heart has been, and will always be, Polish'*. This corresponds to informants' strong sense of patriotism and national identity (6.5.2). What was also noticeable about collective identities was that beyond the willing adoption of fairly piecemeal and favourable stereotypes of Britishness, Polish migrant parents found it easier to imagine accommodating local rather than national identities. Toward the end of

my interview with Waldemar for example, he stood up from the sofa, lifted his T shirt and declared: *'You know one day I will have this tattoo, here, my heart, is here. This side 'Wrocław FC', and this side 'Newcastle United.'* Waldemar's twin loyalties to Newcastle United (where he volunteered as a grounds man and was a prominent member of the supporter's club) and Wrocław FC (his childhood and hometown team) and subsequent desire to emblemise this over his heart, shows that Polish migrant parents were able to imagine accommodating multiple identities permanently. The divided allegiance to local football teams is also significant, in that it epitomises how Polish migrant parents were willing to accept translocal as opposed to transnational identities.

6.5.8 Local identities

Polish migrant parents were also wholly more comfortable with the idea of their children embracing regional identities while living in the UK, rather than them embracing a new sense of national identity. Iza felt that she was prepared to see her daughter as *'half and half: obviously I would, I would see her not [as] fully Geordie because we are foreigners, so obviously she will be like Polish Geordie.'* In Meinhof and Galasiński's (2010) study on attitudes toward identity in Poland, Poles in the town of Gubi subsumed their sense of local identity as they thought it undercut the more important notion of national identity. In this study the reverse appears to have taken place, with Polish migrant parents willing to see their children build a sense of local identity, as the saliency of local identities took away the threat of children identifying as British. Informants' fears about their children becoming 'too British' (6.2.5) also supports this argument.

When pressed about the adoption of regional identities Polish migrant parents were jovial about what this might entail. Paulina for instance, talked about buying her son a Newcastle United football strip: *'I asked Waldemar, what should we print behind er, on the top? [on the back of the T Shirt?], and Waldemar says, 'Geordie for life!' [Waldemar corrects] 'Forever, yes, because he will be 'Geordie forever'; he was born here.'* Polish migrant parents found local identity easy to trivialise with the buying of tokenistic memorabilia for children (Waldemar also cites the purchase of a 'geordie' car sticker for

example), and willingness to joke that children conformed to self-deprecating local stereotypes. Big babies were frequently referred to as 'tough' or 'strong' 'Geordies' for example, and Polish mothers with pre-teens (Basia and Hania) likened the suitability of their daughters clothes to 'proper geordies'. Local identities were more expendable then, being considered much less significant and overarching than national identities.

While happier for their children to take local identities Polish migrant parents were more divided on whether they themselves could embrace a sense of local identity. Informants' notion that it was harder for adults to accept new identities compared with children (6.5.2) seemed to extend to the local context too. Informants reported problems in the attainment of local identity which were identical to those that they offered for the preclusion of national identities, namely not having the correct associations. Elwira for example, felt not having '*geordie friends*' was an indication that she lacked local identity. Lacking a shared heritage was also taken as significant; Waldemar for example thought that relatively he had '*just arrived*' to the area and that local identity could only be achieved when a family had been in '*the region for generations*'. One informant, Teodor, felt that a sense of local identity could only be achieved if a shared sense of national identity was realised first. This attitude echoes the view of respondents in Meinhof and Galasiński's study (2010) and perhaps accounts for the fractious relationship this informant reported to have with his multiethnic neighbours (6.4.8). Essentially though Polish migrant parents defined their sense of national and local identity against a measure of 'sameness', be this identity by association, shared heritage and common national identity.

It was male informants in particular though, who tended to feel that being and remaining an outsider was an inevitable consequence of migration. Bogdan for example, felt that he could never be British because '*people will still treat [me] as a stranger.*' Similarly Teodor dismissed the idea of ever being accepted as a local: '*I don't know, I feel like Polish...We always going to be different [here].*' Lopez Rodriguez (2010) argued that Polish mothers constantly held a state of

'inferior positioning' and were acutely conscious of being outsiders (Lopez Rodriguez: 2010, p.341). In this study Polish fathers had the greater awareness of their otherness. Interestingly reports of intolerance by male informants were more likely to involve feeling a negative presence. As Teodor concluded, *'it's not like face to face but you can feel it'*. This shows how informants reading of identity replayed in their realities and experiences.

Likewise male informants were the more likely to talk about actively manipulating their associations in order to limit their otherness. Ryszard, for example, talked about identifying which resident in his street to befriend in order to be accepted by other residents. He also believed that his support of Newcastle United had helped him secure work: *'because for example I got good connection with jobs bosses - they are Newcastle supporters'*. Miron talked about being deliberately active in his community, citing voting in elections, volunteering in his local Citizen's Advice Bureau, reading the local newspaper and regularly giving blood as ways in which he had achieved a sense of *'local solidarity'*. Neighbourliness and building local networks seemed more important to female informants whereas (6.4.8).

Informants' desired identities were manifest in their construction of local identities too. Derogatory local stereotypes were, for example, used as a means of social distancing. Truda for example, made a racial distinction about local dress: *'These kids are going out in T-shirts...semi-naked! They wear just T-shirts and they say that it's like 'Northern Bred', you know. They are completely different.'* Drawing on stereotypes as a way to demonstrate social distancing was more commonly used to allude to class distinctions though, with female informants frequently caricaturing the region as masculine, aggressive and working class. Olga offered, for instance: *'I think Geordie for me, I see yer, a chunky man, bald, with loads of tattoos, in the T-shirt, and shorts, maybe slippers, this is also with the beard.'* Edyta talked about *'avoiding'* *'Geordie style'* in relation to performative identities such as anti social behaviour, consuming alcohol and style of dress. It should also be stressed that these negative portrayals sat alongside more positive characterisations of the region too, so for

example, informants thought that people in the North East of England were exceptionally friendly, honest and easy going (6.4.7). As with the hybridisation of national identities, informants were willing to imagine themselves as having adopted the more positive accounts of local identity. Miron for example, said: '*I do feel a Geordie emotionally...when I describe the people as 'down to earth', in that sense, I'm a Geordie.*' Local identities were then deconstructed and reconstituted by informants for aspirational purposes.

Polish migrant parents also talked about how their home regions in Poland bore great similarity to the North East of England. White (2011d) came across this same phenomenon in her study on Polish migrant mothers in the South West of England, going on to understand this trend as an unabated form of translocalism. For Polish migrant parents in this study, home and host regions were felt to be comparable in terms of having distinct regional dialects (Basia, Czesław), having comparable reliance on the tourism industry (Mariola), having similar geographic landscapes (Mariola) and similar industrial and political heritages (Basia, Zygmunt). Basia, for example, believed that she had a natural empathy with the North East of England as she was from Silesia, a region similarly blighted by the closure of coal mines: '*so my mum was laughing that I didn't change much in my life!*' Informants reported to having some pre-existing knowledge and even admiration for the North East's industrial legacy prior to their arrival in the UK. Informants often jumbled national identities against local identities too: Zygmunt for example, felt that the North East of England had a Polish mentality as it had '*a personality against the government.*' The associations made by Polish migrant parents were not as White (2011d) perceives, translocal alone then, but more so an enmeshment of transnational and translocal readings.

Conclusion

Polish migrant parents used stereotypes to look for 'sameness' and 'otherness' from which to draw their social identities. It should be stressed that the findings

of this study relate to informants subjective reductions about Poland and the UK and are not reported here as 'the truth'. As such informants' decisions to migrate and their continued residency in the UK were based on their perception of the economic, social, political and emotional conditions in both Poland and the UK. Poland was regarded as polarised, with systems of nepotism and bureaucracy maintaining a rigid social hierarchy, though having shared heritage, particularly having had experience of life under these conditions, was felt by informants to be what epitomised 'being Polish'. The UK was deemed institutionally fairer, and socially more tolerant than Poland, though informants' idealised construction of their new lives in the UK was contradicted by their real world experiences of racism and prejudice, and subsequent engagement in acts of ethnic self monitoring. The imagination was used by Polish migrant parents then, to obscure some of the harder realities of migration.

Informants strove to legitimise and authenticate their migration narratives in order to promote their positive reception in the host society. As a result scholarship on Polish migration needs to be careful about claims that accession migrants experience generational dislocation and are disenfranchised from the 'Polish community' abroad. Informants had vested interest in the promotion of 'The Polonia' as it provided a source of livelihood for many in terms of ethnic enterprise. Informants were found to navigate performative boundaries between generational waves of Polish migrant to align themselves with the celebrated generation of Polish wartime and exile migrants in order to make their own migrations appear more credible, and necessitate a sense of migrant belonging. Informants claims to historical and ancestral migration were used to legitimise migration biographies further; the act of migration itself being held up as quintessentially Polish. On the other hand examples of Polish migrant parents consciously distancing themselves from their compatriots in the host society and during return visits to Poland were also in evidence. The more affluent female informants for example, practised social distancing in response to their wider aspirational agendas of social class mobility, hoping to engineer themselves in to certain social groups. Male informants reported finding political, cultural, and class based affiliation with the immediate post-war

generation in the host society. The ethnic and national ties of Polish migrant parents were complicated then, crossed by an entanglement of generational, cultural, political and class identities, and conditional upon ideals and more commonly, pragmatic need.

Polish migrant parents also legitimised their migration and continued residency in the UK on the grounds of paternalism. Informants talked of wanting to guard their children from experiencing the emotional fall out of (post) socialism, and the austere parenting practices they felt persisted in Poland. While Polish migrant parents hoped to shield their children from the unhappier aspects of their own childhoods, they were also keen to share their fonder and often more cerebral experiences, such as the pursuit of outdoor activities and sensual appreciation of the natural world. Polish migrant parents recognised a dislocation between their childhoods and those of their children: this dislocation was felt to be generational rather than chiefly a result of migration, owed to having different material experiences of childhood, and being distanced moreover, by technological modernisation. Informants were anxious that this dislocation might deepen, their children being unable to understand the intricacies of Polish culture in the future, anticipating that this dislocation would then weaken familial bonds. This desire to protect their children from being 'lost in translation' also appeared rooted in informants' own experiences of migration, their reports for example of feeling vulnerable in the workplace, in matters of trust and friendship building. Rather than being selfless and sacrificial then, the paternal motivations and decisions of Polish migrant parents were modelled on their own vulnerabilities, apprehensions, anxieties, fears and needs.

Polish migrant parents were idealistic about their children's construction of identity, seeing their children as free agents able to choose from multiple identities. In practice informants acted instrumentally in order to nurture their children's Polish identity, justifying this interference on the grounds of parental duty and responsibility. As well as feeling obliged to nurture their children's Polish identity, informants were motivated by their anxieties and fears about cultural dislocation, and their more aspirational ambitions for their children, such

as wanting to see them deemed 'well-cultured'. These ideals were further balanced against the pragmatics of identity: the practice of Catholicism for example, being seen as integral to Polish identity, the nurturing of Polish identity and Catholic education being in turn a way to ensure children could be returned or moved to Poland without fear that they might struggle to adapt. The contestation between pragmatism and idealism was therefore at the heart of Polish migrant identity formation.

The extent of Polish migrant parents' agency over identity formation was also questioned in this chapter. Formal and institutional mediums of Polish culture were regarded by informants as incompatible with the demands of parenting, timetabled events clashing with sleeping and feeding routines of young children and other family events. This led informants to rely on informal methods of cultural promotion, such as domestic exposure to Polish media, cuisine and literature. There were obstacles to the promotion of culture in the domestic environment too, namely limited budgets, time pressures and children's flagging interests. Polish migrant parents long-term ambitions to retain and nurture Polish identity in their children, thus lay in conflict with their short term and pragmatic everyday needs. With their choices about the reproduction of Polish culture constrained, Polish migrant parents were not the active and free-willed agents of cultural reproduction they wished to be.

It should also be remembered that the reproduction of culture was also not always a conscious act, with sites of cultural reproduction, such as the home, often being an enmeshment of values and practices. According to informants, the filling of homes with objects from Poland was about making the home familiar and 'homely' rather than deliberately making it demonstrative of 'home/land'. Moreover, informants used their home as a means to challenge the standardisation and conformity in their own material childhoods, enthusing over home as a site of individualism, cosmopolitanism and ownership. The reproduction of culture was not straightforward then, home often being the location of an embroilment of ideals, and being host to ever emergent transnational family dynamics (as seen in chapter five), dual heritage families,

and divergent and emerging identities between parents and children. Polish migrant parents were not able to reproduce Polish culture in isolation then, as their lives were increasingly messy, a mixture conflicting family ideals and cultures. Polish migrant mothers seemed particularly anxious about losing the validity of Polish culture amongst this messiness, some informants reporting to seeking out purposeful relationships with other Polish migrants of a comparable age and life stage in order to retain an authentic account of 'Polishness.'

Polish migrant parents were keen to portray political and social transition in Poland as being too slow, citing anachronistic attitudes and policies towards minority groups, as a key reason as why not to return to Poland. Informants also took account of their lives in the present, with perceptions of 'friendliness', 'helpfulness' and 'orderliness' seen as making everyday social interactions as parents easier in the UK, while comparisons to social provisions such as maternity entitlement, flexible working initiatives, and childcare provision (chapter four) also helped maintain the conclusion that the UK was the more conducive to parenting. Informants also anticipated that their duties of care might change in the near future, given the health status and aging of extended family members. The bereavement of one parent was anticipated as leaving charge of siblings or a remaining parent too. Migrant biographies therefore took account of present and evolving situations, seeing levels of social support, tolerance and inclusion as important in their futures.

Informants legitimised their migration and prolonged stay in the UK as a stand against slow political and social transition in Poland. The hardship caused by this transition was increasingly reconceptualised, understood as emotional hardship. In response to this older Polish migrant mothers and Polish migrant fathers, tended to see their migration as an 'escape' from the memories of life under (post) socialism, while younger female migrants, aligned themselves more readily to the discourse of neoliberalism, and saw their migration as an act of rebellion, a way to challenge this (post) socialist generation. These younger informants were zealous in their characterisation of their parents as austere, conservative and still indoctrinated by Soviet era outlook. 'Escape' and

'rebellion' were both conceived of as acts of political subterfuge, in that informants saw their migrations as casting a vote against the remaining residue of socialism that they felt continued to infiltrate Poland.

Mobility was a dominant feature of informants' life histories, with the majority of informants having lived in various locations in Poland and having travelled and lived outside of Poland during adolescence or early adulthood. Accounts of ancestral and historical migration only hastened the argument that mobility had been a way of life for informants prior to their arrival in the UK. In this sense Okólski's (2001) suggestion that Polish migrants are by nature 'temporary' seems reasonable. Some informants even felt that their children, and less commonly they themselves, were symptomatic of a transnational generation, being ever mobile and having freedoms and access unknown to previous generations. In reality however, informants reported growing restrictions to their mobilities, with financial and parental constraints limiting their ability to travel to Poland and elsewhere. They also questioned how transnational identities and European identity in particular, might sit alongside national identities, and there was a certain discomfort and confusion as to whether legal, political, cultural, historical accounts of these identities might prevail. While some informants felt that collective and hybrid identities were possible, all informants felt national identity should be weighed down more generously. Although mobile, Polish migrant parents were patriotic, and perceived shared heritage and the 'symptomatic' desire to migrate in itself, as demonstrative of Polish national identity. Transnational and post accession mobility was in that sense conceptualised by Polish migrant parents as stability, it was shared history and endemic of 'being Polish'.

Those return visits to Poland which had been possible had been used by Polish migrant parents as a means to assess how conducive the urban environment and consumption habits of Poland were for practices of parenting. Return visits also proved a catalyst for reflection on identity, with parents observing children's reactions to Poland, especially their linguistic choices about each country. Return visits also prompted more emotional assessments of life. For informants

who had entered parenthood subsequent to leaving Poland, return visits promoted contemplation of this transition, with feelings of estrangement and alienation leading them to revise their attachments to place. Attachments to people and weakening support networks in Poland were also recognised, as friends and family themselves migrated or moved from home towns, and migration itself had altered familial interactions, household dynamics and duties of care (chapter five). Informants envisaged that these attachments could be easily rebuilt if a return to Poland was made permanent, but strengthening attachments in the UK, particularly with neighbours, complicated the ease at which return was imagined. Emotions and attachments made the bridge between staying in the UK and returning to Poland a more turbulent path.

Polish migrant parents were willing to accept translocal identities for their children, as they were seen as more expendable and less of a threat to Polish national identity than identities of transnationalism. Polish migrant parents promoted their children's affiliation with local identities, often encouraging their support of local football teams and their adoption of regional accents. Once again gendered divisions in the sample existed, this time in terms of how able informants felt at adopting local identities for themselves, and how they subsequently negotiated these ties. Male informants were more inclined to see themselves remaining as 'outsiders', and were more likely to talk about actively manipulating their associations in order to limit 'otherness', looking to make the 'right' affiliations with neighbours and by joining football supporters groups for example. Female informants talked about promoting their 'sameness' particularly in terms of promoting neighbourliness and building support networks through 'their children's worlds'. The anomaly in the sample appeared to be Polish migrant lone parents, who were more likely to seek ethnic and national ties of support. This finding was explained by Polish migrant parents more traditional reliance on neighbourly networks of support, particularly in terms of shouldering childcare; featuring in this study as the less affluent informants who often lived in socially diverse neighbourhoods where they reported finding it hard to broker neighbouring relationships based on language barriers and life stage differences, hence turning to Polish ethnic and national ties of support.

Saying this, Polish migrant parents were very active in their negotiation of neighbourly and community relations, basing their expectations and actions on Polish models of community and neighbouring. While Polish male informants hesitated as to whether this interaction amounted to local identification, Polish migrant mothers felt that their emerging friendships with neighbours cemented their attachments to place. It was also noted that networks of support and need in the lives of Polish migrant parents were ever changing as they passed through different liminal phases of parenting. Children's independence to 'play out' for example, encouraged new and different interactions. Despite these transitions, Polish migrant fathers maintained that they were 'outsiders' in their ethnic otherness, while Polish migrant mothers were more likely to imagine themselves as 'insiders' based on parental 'sameness'.

Polish migrant parents presented as being neither committed to staying in the UK permanently nor certain about their intentions to return to Poland. Willingness to be flexible and adapt to circumstances, was, as argued in chapter five, part of their overriding migration strategy. Living in a state of migrancy 'being neither here nor there' was an attempt to ensure agency over decisions, with informants constantly reassessing their emotions to check if they were 'happy in the now'. Feeling happy and satisfied with life in the present was for many informants the good indication that they should keep their residency as it was; evolving circumstances would change their emotional landscape giving good indication of when it might be easier and more appropriate to leave. Informants were left perceiving a state of belonging (Poland) and state of being (the UK). Occasionally these states of belonging and being were imagined as a collective, though identities in the collective carried different weights and values. The mutual exclusivity often given to 'home' and 'mobility', 'stay and return' and 'being and belonging' in migration studies is however, undermined by this notion of migrants navigating decisions emotionally. Talking about the temporariness of Polish migration becomes futile in this sense; Polish migrant parents effectively present as an oxymoron, as in the here and now they are simply "content with being temporary".

Chapter Seven: Thesis Conclusion

7.1 Thesis Conclusion

This study addressed the transitional phases of migration and parenthood. The research examined how Polish migrant parents' aspirations and expectations about life in the UK, and more specifically, about life the North East of England, relied on a series of ideals and expectations and met with conflicting realities. The study challenged traditional models of the Polish family by referring to a diverse set of Polish migrant family formations such as lone parent families, dual heritage families and families enduring periods of separation and reunification. The study considered Polish migrant parents decision making practices, particularly in terms of the migration process, so for example looking at how initial employment and migration destination were realised. Decision making was also thought about in the context of livelihood, addressing educational prospects, language acquisition and social networks. Polish migrant parents were found to construct a complex set of identities in order to legitimise their migration and consider their future options. The study also gave platform to the emotional geographies of migration, showing how Polish migrant parents navigated a landscape of emotions, and in so doing, undermined the 'stay or return' migration dichotomy as overly simplistic.

This study asked about the decision making practices of Polish migrant parents. The study found economic conditions, such as the lower cost of living in the UK, were important in the decision making process, as they opened up the possibility of realising certain lifestyles. These economic decisions were informed by a wider context, so for example a common lifestyle sought by informants was one which allowed them to live independently from their parents. This desire for independence was both personal, with many informants having been unable to afford to move out of multigenerational households before, and political, being manifest of an emergent neoliberal hegemony in Poland which saw the values of familial generations conflict, particularly in terms of work, household organisation, and childrearing practices. As such, Polish migrants' decisions to migrate involved a catalogue of social, cultural,

economic and personal motivations which overlapped, contested and supported one another.

Those informants who had children at the time of migration presented their decisions to migrate as paternalistic, as acting to guard their children from hardship, particularly against the emotional hardship of (post) socialism. Equally though, cultural reasons, such as migration being perceived as a normalised process for family and working life in Poland, and personal reasons, such as a desire for self-fulfilment, find Polish family migration removed from the frame of simplistic self-sacrifice. Decisions involving 'the family' and 'the self' were complicated and interwoven, negotiated across a landscape of emotions. This was also the case for informants who did not have children at the time of migration, as decisions to migrate often took in present time circumstances and hypothetical future scenarios, such as starting a family and the needs of extended family members. It should also be stressed that decisions to migrate were not always methodical or deliberated, with impulsive reasons for migration, such as curiosity and thrill, also fundamental, and chance playing a part in securing migration opportunities too.

Decisions about livelihood and the everyday were also multilayered and interwoven, being a mixture of both planned and unplanned events. Informants considered the migration process to be evolving and as such they constantly revised, re-evaluated and negotiated their plans. As such informants were able to reconceptualise and expand on their initial decisions to migrate, reconstructing and legitimising migration narratives. The decision making practices of Polish migrant parents were characterised as tussling between pragmatism and idealism, with the pragmatic needs of informants being the more likely to win through. Despite their pragmatism, the lives of Polish migrants tended to unfurl in the 'greyness' between the planned and unplanned.

This project also addressed the extent to which Polish migrant parents had agency in livelihood and identity constructions. Polish migrants tried to be active players in negotiating the outcomes of life. Informants generally had high levels of cultural and educational capital with which to manoeuvre, but events beyond

their immediate control compromised agency. Life course had an interesting affect on agency, with those Polish migrants in the study who had entered parenthood for the first time after arrival in the UK, having relatively high levels of cultural capital and yet underlying vulnerabilities and insecurities specific to their dual transition into migration and parenthood. The extent to which Polish migrant parents held agency was also based on social class. The more affluent members of the sample for instance, had greater means to service their lives transnationally, enabling them to resource their lives according to their cultural preferences. In the workplace these informants tended to be the highly skilled professionals who had greater say over migration destination. Affluent informants also talked about practising social distancing in response to their wider aspirational agendas, hoping to engineer themselves in to certain social groups. This contrasts with the minority group of Polish migrant lone parents for example, who often had less access to provision and were less able to negotiate social groups, relying on ethnic and national ties for support.

Polish migrant parents attempted to gain agency over identity formation on behalf of themselves and their children. Polish migrant parents were idealistic about their children's construction of identity, seeing their children as free agents being able to choose from multiple identities. In practice however, informants acted instrumentally to nurture their children's Polish identity, justifying this interference on the both idealistic and pragmatic grounds. Polish migrant parents ambitions to retain and nurture Polish identity in their children, often came into conflict with their short term demands of the everyday. With their choices about the reproduction of Polish culture constrained then, Polish migrant parents were not the active and free-willed agents of cultural reproduction they wished to be. Equally the reproduction of culture happened across various sites and at various levels of consciousness (so for example in home, in free time activities and at school) leaving children exposed to an enmeshment of values and practices, compromising parental agency further.

This study also asked whether Polish migrant parents' social identities gave indication about their decisions to stay in the UK or return to Poland. Polish

migrant parents constructed social identities as a way to negotiate the realities of their migrations. So for example, informants perceived Poland as polarised, with systems of nepotism and bureaucracy maintaining a rigid social hierarchy, yet their experience of migration had opened them to the hard realities of work and employment prospects in the UK. Similarly informants' idealisation of a socially tolerant UK contradicted their real life experiences of racism and prejudice. Polish migrant parents used the imagination to overcome the emotional realities of their work and family life too, especially during periods of separation. Informants reflected on their migration with the benefit of hindsight, reconstructing migration narratives mindful of social identities. Those from minority groups, such as Polish migrant lone parents, were especially vitriolic about the perceived slow political and social transition in Poland, reconstructing their migration as a vote against the remaining residue of socialism that they felt infiltrated Poland. Informants took account of everyday social interactions and made comparisons to social provisions in order to maintain that the UK was the more conducive to parenting, justifying their prolonged stay. Return visits to Poland promoted further comparison, particularly in terms of urban environment and consumption habits and emotional assessments of changing attachments to people and place. Attachments were imagined to be easily rebuilt, but strengthening attachments in the UK, particularly with neighbours, complicated the ease at which return was imagined. Emotions made the bridge between staying in the UK and returning to Poland more turbulent. At the same time living in this state of 'migrancy' helped informants legitimise their continued residence in the UK, as they fantasised about what new opportunities and unfurling events were on the next horizon.

This project aimed to offer insight into the gendered, ethnic and spatial dynamics of Polish family migration. Gender differences were apparent in the way informants (re)constructed their migration narratives. In these narratives women cast themselves as lacking agency, being cast along in migration by chance and fortitude, but in reality Polish migrant women were often the only or casting voice in decisions to migrate, presenting as lead migrants, as lone parents, as women seeking self fulfilment, and as assertive wives. Migration

also provided a catalyst for the gendered realignment and renegotiation of household roles, so for example, male informants talked about having the opportunity to break away from the expectations of their diminished household responsibilities in Poland, and female informants were found reclaiming and reworking notions of the 'stay at home mother'. Gendered divisions also existed in terms of how able informants felt about adopting local identities and how they negotiated local ties. Male informants were more inclined to perceive themselves as 'outsiders', but worked to limit their 'otherness' by engaging in ethnic self monitoring and by making specific social affiliations. Female informants worked to promote their 'sameness', building support networks through 'their children's worlds' and engaging in acts of neighbourliness. Although Polish migrant fathers dismissed the idea of adopting a local identity for themselves, they embraced the notion of their children taking on a local identity, as local identities were seen as more expendable than national identities. Polish migrant mothers meanwhile, felt that their emerging friendships with neighbours cemented their attachments to place.

Informants' constructions of ethnic and national identities were also entrenched in spatial dynamics concentrating on the visibility, volume and social distance of other Polish migrants. National and ethnic identification was complex as it promoted both networks of support and rivalry. Informants were worried about saturating immediate resources such as educational establishments and the job market, so sought to reduce their ethnic visibility by engaging in acts of ethnic self monitoring and social distancing. At the same time Polish migrant mothers reported the building of relationships with other Polish migrant families in order to retain an authentic account of 'Polishness'. Polish migrant parents sought to retain and promote Polish identity in their children, but found their children's childhoods dislocated from their own. Polish migrant parents valued shared heritage epitomising experiences of 'hardship' in Poland and of migration itself as being quintessentially 'Polish'. The need to necessitate a sense of migrant belonging was also pragmatic in that it helped serve ethnic enterprise.

This study set out to question whether Polish family migration could be described as 'temporary'. Migrants talked about mobility as a feature of their past, present and anticipated future lives. Families themselves were sometimes the arbitrators of mobility, with grandparents often placed temporarily in situ to provide childcare cover and children being shuffled to and from Poland to stay with extended family during school holidays. Informants felt that being receptive and adaptable to migration and was both an attainable frame of mind and inherent in being Polish, and so they intentionally worked to be flexible, opportunistic and willing to negotiate. Mobility was also seen as ancestral and historical, and a way of life for many informants, with some informants even defining their migration as symptomatic of the transnational era. Moreover Polish migrant parents presented as being neither committed to staying in the UK permanently, nor certain about their intentions to return to Poland. Their sense of mobility in isolation might agree with the state of 'incomplete migration' set out by Okólski (2001). However, Polish migrant parents navigated their migration using a landscape of emotions. They constantly reassessed their emotions to check if they were 'happy in the now' using this feeling to justify continued residency. Talking about the temporariness of Polish migration becomes futile then, as Polish migrant parents are effectively "content with being temporary", suggesting that their temporariness will last as long as "happiness" prevails

7.2 Key Contributions

This study makes an original contribution to migration literature by challenging the tradition that sees 'family migration' and 'temporary migration' treated as mutually exclusive. The study questions the very fabric of what is meant by 'temporary' migration, seeing it as fairly futile concept to try to apply to the lives of Polish migrant parents. So for example, decision making was found to be multifaceted and complex, with different roles and aspects of life (such as the self, work and family) competing and transcending one another. As such the 'stay' or 'return' dichotomy, which essentially seeks to assess migrants'

'temporariness' (a dichotomy which permeates through much of the post accession research on Polish migration) is refuted in this study, as Polish migrants' plans and intended directions in life change, collide and collapse under the weight of new circumstances and unplanned or unfurling events. The course of migrant life, it was argued, was not inevitable: even from the outset migrations were often driven by uncertain factors such as love, thrill, curiosity and chance. This move away from representing migrant family life as certain and static follows in the footsteps of McDowell (2003a), but arguably breaks new ground in the field of Polish migration research. .

This study rejects the neoliberal concept of the 'migrant worker' which has traditionally dominated the research field. Instead this study reads migration in the form of family units whereby decision making is shared and negotiations are made by members of families rather than by individuals acting alone. This study was careful however, to break with the trappings of previous research on family migration, in that depictions of migrant parents who left their children or spouses 'back home' for periods of time, were not framed as deserters of the family. Moreover, 'self' and 'family' were shown to coexist rather than being deemed as independent, as is the convention in the existing literature. The accounts of Polish migrant parents grappling with their emotions during periods of separation and reunification offered in this study, also made a timely contribution to the wider 'emotional turn' currently emerging in migration research (Mai and King: 2009) which seeks to understand more about the personal and emotional worlds of migrants.

The study also offers a sound contribution to the body of contemporary micro-structural studies on Polish migrant families (White and Ryan: 2008, Ryan et al. 2009 and White 2011a), by assuming questions about agency not previously researched. In particular this study breaks new ground in research on Polish migrant families in that it illustrates something of the compromises and conflicts involved in the reproduction of cultural identity. This study also makes a valid contribution to the field of gendered migration studies, in offering a gendered perspective on identity formation that includes the perspective of Polish migrant

fathers. By offering a relational account of gender this study was able to capture data on a minority group otherwise silenced by existing scholarship as previous research in this field has resoundingly concentrated on the perspective of Polish migrant mothers alone. This serious dearth in Polish migration literature currently helps propagate a 'male migrant worker / female migrant mother' dichotomy found in migration research at large, the only notable studies to the contrary being those by Charsley (2005) and Waters (2010).

This study, situated in the North East of England, offered an original geographic context from which to view Polish migration. The region has only been studied once previously in the context of Polish migration, with this study by Stenning and Dawley (2009) concentrating on the economic conditions of migration to the region. In particular the cultural preferences of Polish migrants have, until this point, never been studied from a regional context. This study offers some original insight therefore, into how regional stereotypes might have some bearing on Polish migrants' constructions their national, ethnic and local identities.

This thesis also makes a valuable contribution to wider epistemological debates in research methodology, namely the use of befriending, the use of a second language for the purposes of research, and the use of duality in research, in this case the position of a researcher - parent. By allowing the research methodology to evolve organically, the resulting data offers original insight, I feel, into Polish migrants intimacies and emotions, a juncture all too often left out of the study of geography. Arguably the 'human' face of human geography research has also been too readily neglected from research reportage in the past. Having taken inspiration from the research method and writing styles of researchers such as England (1994) and Pilkington (1997), this study used reflexivity as a guiding principle during both fieldwork and written work in an attempt make this research as transparent and accountable as possible.

Finally, by moving away from the analytical models of economic rationalism, transnationalism/localism and social network theory that have traditionally been used to examine Polish migration, and taking 'transition' as the conceptual

anchor, this study was able to explore the 'betwixt and between' (Turner: 1987) of Polish migrant parents' lives. Embracing transition as a concept, allowed the study to highlight the fluidity of family life, with its changing intergenerational relationships and altering family dynamics discerned by time and place. This study also sought to capture something of the 'messiness' of life, with its unplanned and planned events; a depiction of life that migration scholarship has shied away from in the past, possibly because this 'greyness' has no comfortable fit with traditional analytical frames.

Although nuanced studies of Polish migration concede that Polish migrants can and do make concurrent commitments to living in the UK and Poland, so for example, the work of Moskal (2012), they understand those commitments as based on social, cultural, and economic evaluations alone. With the exception of the work of Svašek (2009) the emotional processes of Polish migration been largely ignored previously. The original contribution made by this study therefore, is to bridge this departure, in that Polish migrant parents in this study were found to be navigating their commitments and identities across a landscape of emotions.

7.3 Further directions

By asking informants about their expectations of migration some years after first arrival, 'expectations' in this study have been reconstructed by informants with the benefit of hindsight. It would be helpful then, to interview migrants at point of entry about their expectations, in order to illustrate the extent to which minority groups are motivated to migrate out of social and political motivation, as was suggested by Polish migrant lone parents in this study. Researching Polish migrants at point of entry might also help clarify the extent to which migrants' anticipate their future needs in migration decisions, as there was some contestation in this study between informants seeing their entry into parenthood as coincidental to migration, and migrants claiming they saw the UK as conducive to parenting from the outset of migration.

In this study Polish migrants saw their entry into parenthood as self-defining and felt discernibly changed from their previous pre-migratory selves. What may be interesting for further research is conducting a comparative study looking at migrants' attachments to place prior to their entry into parenthood and after becoming parents, in order to assess how the emotional landscape of migration changes in response to this transition. A study which address the concept of 'parenthood' more fully, so for example, not excluding child free couples (Letherby: 2006) and 'other-mothers' (Schmalzbauer: 2004) as was decided in this study, might be useful in gauging how Polish family migration correlates to changing models of family migration more globally. Moreover, more work looking to further the notion of Polish migrants navigating a landscape of emotions, put forward in this study, would be interesting. In particular this study calls for more detailed inquiry into Polish migrants' emotions of 'home' compared with 'mobility' in order to further negate the simplicity of the 'stay or return' dichotomy.

If this project was revisited then further engagement with currently untranslated literature which theorises the Polish family might also be undertaken, in order to strengthen understanding on changing models of family life. Likewise having a comparative element in the study which compares migrant households with Polish households in Poland would contribute to updating a gap in the research field last addressed by Bloch (1976). Equally restricting the sample to those who had previous experience of parenting in Poland exclusively may enable more explicit comparisons between parenting lifestyle and livelihoods in Poland and the UK.

The dynamic between migrant parents and their children, particularly their experiences of dislocation from childhood would be my main area of expansion for this project, as such little research has been drawn in this field before (Usita: 2001). Studies which put childhood geographies in the context of migration (Mummert: 2009, Tyrrell et al: 2012) currently lack the inclusion of a specifically Eastern European study, and a broader piece of research on Polish migrant children's experiences of the British education system would be particularly

valuable in its potential for drawing policy recommendations. A longitudinal study on Polish migrant parents' experiences of life course might also help highlight if certain stages of parenting are harder to emotionally navigate; comparisons might then be drawn to Polish migrant parents fears about their children's cultural dislocation and their real life outcomes. Further research on Polish migrant parents' experiences of childbirth in the UK might also help address gaps in literature on identity, nationhood, migration and birth (Yuval-Davies: 1997 and Lentin: 2004), and offer greater insight into existing research on migrants health inequalities (Domansk et al.: 2007), and bring further inquiry to the exciting juncture between transition into parenthood and migration.

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Scotland

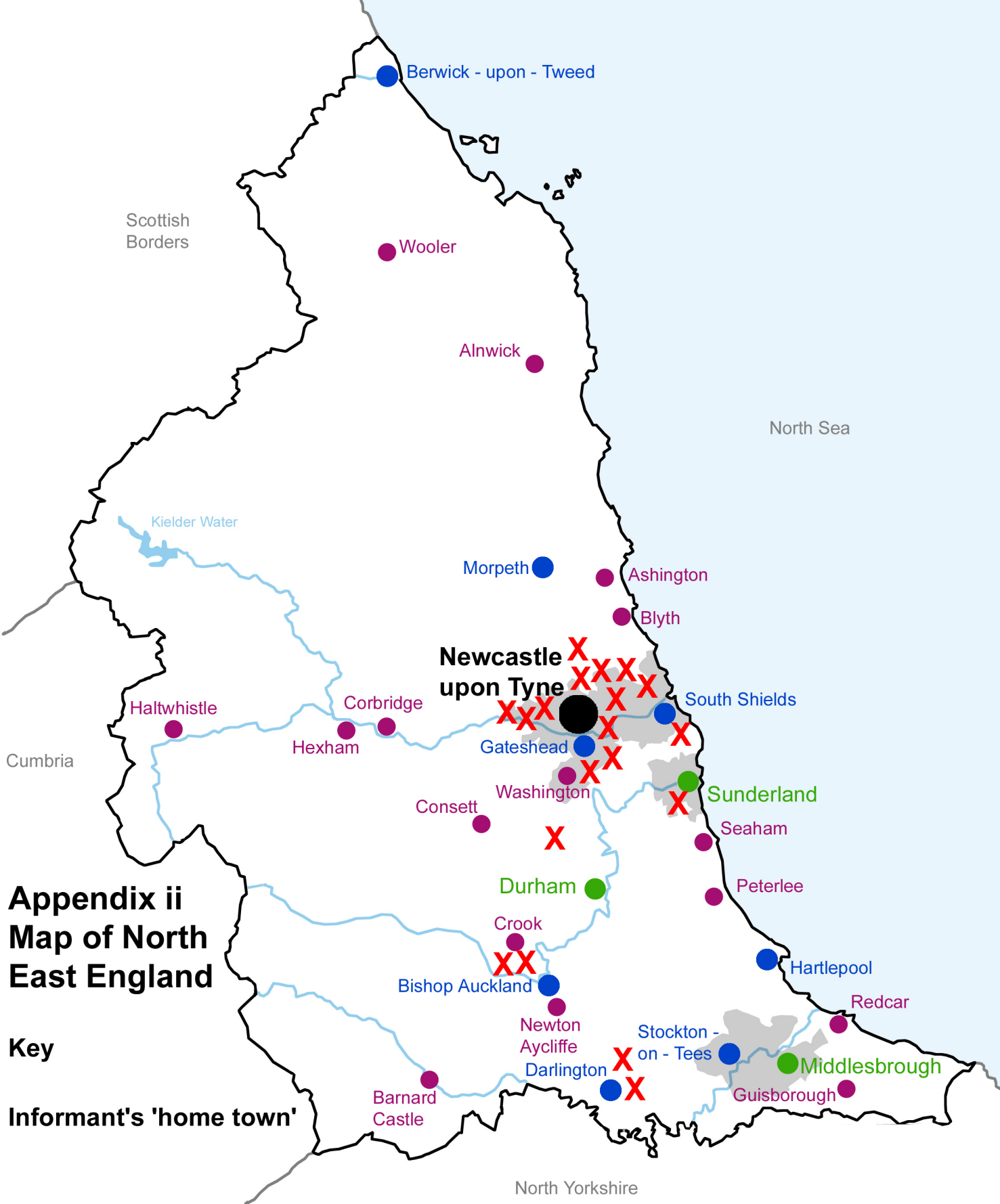
Newcastle upon Tyne

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Wales

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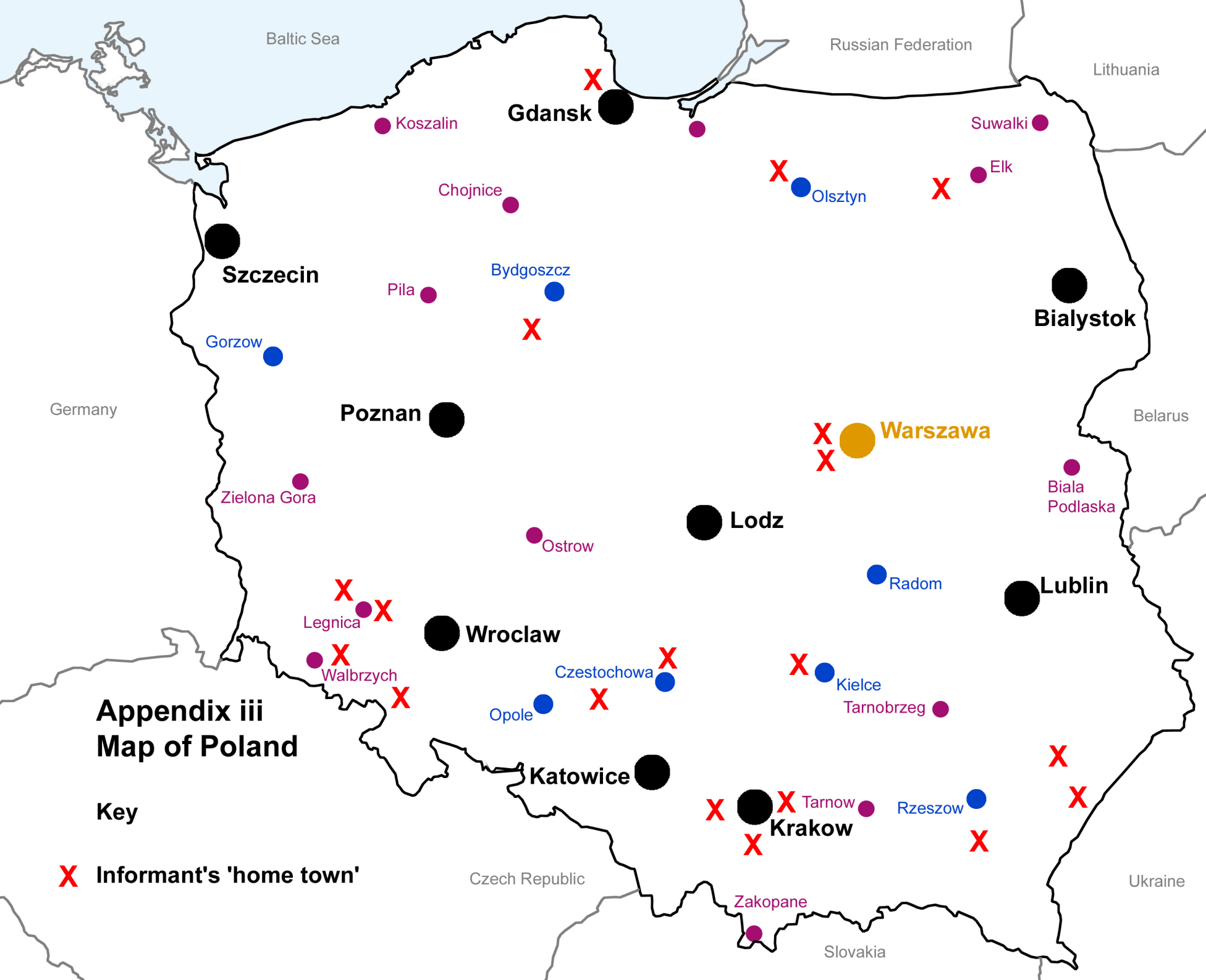
Appendix i
Map of the UK



**Appendix ii
Map of North
East England**

Key

X Informant's 'home town'



Cześć polscy rodzice w Newcastle!

Nazywam się Rachel Clements i jestem doktorantką geografii na Uniwersytecie Newcastle. Jestem także młodą matką z małym dzieckiem.

Szukam Polaków mieszkających w Newcastle, którzy sami są rodzicami i którzy zechcieliby wziąć udział w moim badaniu.

Chciałabym przeprowadzić wywiad z polskimi rodzicami, którzy byliby skłonni opowiedzieć o tym jak wygląda ich życie na emigracji.

Jestem także zainteresowana tym jak postrzegana jest przez Polaków na emigracji sprawa tożsamości, na przykład, jak polscy rodzice w Newcastle identyfikują się z miastem, z regionem, z Wielką Brytanią albo z Polską.

Oprócz tego chciałabym poznać wasze doświadczenia z życia w Newcastle oraz dowiedzieć się, jakich ułatwień moglibyście potrzebować, aby wasze życie było lepsze w tym mieście.

Mam nadzieję, że moje badania będą używane do celów praktycznych i posłużą do ukształtowania kierunku lokalnej polityki i zabezpieczeń dla polskich rodziców w tym regionie.

Jeśli jesteście polskimi rodzicami w Newcastle, chciałabym otrzymać od Was wiadomość!

Zapraszam do udziału w moim badaniu. Aby dowiedzieć się więcej o moim projekcie, proszę odwiedzić mój blog:

<http://www.polishfamiliesnewcastle.blogspot.com>

lub skontaktować się ze mną drogą mailową:

rachel.clements@newcastle.ac.uk

Dziękuję bardzo!



Before the interview I would like to tell you little about my research, and then ask you if you would still like to take part in an interview.

My name is Rachel Clements and I am a postgraduate research student in the Geography department at Newcastle University, I am currently studying for a PhD on Polish migration in Newcastle. I am funded by the Economic and Social research council (through CRCEES) and I will hopefully complete this project in March 2013.

My research looks at Polish migrant parenthood in the city of Newcastle (and surrounding areas). I'm mainly looking at the areas of community, household organisation and migrant networks.

Today in this interview I would like to ask you about how you define and practice your parenting responsibilities, with reference to your employment, household management and childcare provision.

I would also like to ask you some questions about identity, and who you feel you are, and about how you feel about the place in which you live.

Finally I am going to ask you about the facilities you use in your area, and give you an opportunity to tell me about what you feel you would like or need to make life as a Polish parent in the North East easier.

I hope that my research will be used for practical purposes, to shape policy and provision for Polish parents living in the North East.

I will treat your interview with strict confidentiality and will not disclose any of your personal details.

When I write up details of this interview for my research I will refer to you in pseudonym (a fake name). This will give you anonymity (protect your identity) when the research is published and discussed.

During the interview I will record our conversation, and then transcribe the interview (type our conversation up). I will provide you with a written copy of this interview.

The interview will probably last over an hour, but please feel free to end the interview at any time, no reason is needed and no further questions will be asked.

Please feel free to make corrections, ask questions, and hopefully enjoy this interview!

Please sign here to say you have understood this and would like to take part:

..... **Date:**

Pre-Interview Question Card

Before the interview begins, could you please fill out some details below:

Name:

Age:

Current Location/ or Address:

Occupation:

single / cohabiting / married / civil partnership / separated / divorced

Occupation of spouse / partner (if relevant):

Number of children:

Ages of children:

Are all your children living in the UK with you?

For how long have you been residing in Newcastle?

For how long have you been resident in the UK?

What was your previous place of residence prior to Newcastle?

Where are you from in Poland?

(village/ town/ voivodship)

Please could you show me where you are from on this map:

[This is a copy of my interview questions in English. I've produced a prompt sheet relating to these questions in Polish too, to help participants understand meaning.]

The interview is split into three sections, with about six main questions. Please feel free to ask a question at anytime.

1. Family/ Household Organisation

a) Could you tell me about your family, when you had your children, where and when you met your partner,...

...whether you have any contact with your wider family, your parents, siblings (for example)?

Follow on:

Who comprises the household? Just parents and children, or grandparents siblings etc. too?

How often would you say you return to Poland? How often would you say you see your parents/brother etc. now?

b) Could you tell me a little about your household, who cooks, who cleans, who looks after the kids? (for example) Why do you structure your household in this way?

Follow on:

What about at weekends?

[What about your parents/siblings (if resident in the UK)?]

If [illicit from the above response, eg. money] were/was no problem / issue, would you run your household in the same way?

c) Does your status as a mother/father feel different in Britain compared to Poland? Why is this? Might need to explain 'status' or find an alternative – even do you think being a father/mother is for you in Poland/UK?

d) Do you see your short term/ long term future in Britain? Why? (Future in Newcastle?)

Follow on:

What about your children? What hopes and ambitions do you have for their futures?

e) Do you want to / try to keep your home/household Polish? If so, why?

Follow on:

Do you speak Polish at home? Cook Polish food? Have Polish furniture? A Polish car? Watch Polish TV or listen to Polish radio? (Why is this / why do you think you feel this way?)

What does it mean to you for your home to be Polish?

What about your children (do they speak Polish, have Polish toys, watch Polish TV etc)? And how do you feel about this?

Do you have any questions, further comments, anything to add before we move on?

2. Access/Geography

a) Do you attend any playgroups, school events, societies or socials? Can you tell me a little about these? Are they local, or do you go elsewhere to attend?

Follow on:

How did you find out about them? From friends, Sure Start, GP, schools, where?

b) Is it mainly Polish parents you socialise with, British, other nationalities? (Why is this?)

Follow on:

Do you know your neighbours? People in your neighbourhood?

c) Are there specific areas of the city you go to use certain facilities eg. childcare, work, leisure?

Follow on:

How do you get around the city? Car, public transport, foot, lifts from friends, other? Why? How is this?

d) Can you tell me a bit about the services available to you in Newcastle (as a parent, as a Polish migrant, for your children)?

Follow on:

What services/facilities would you like to see provided/ or feel you need?

e) Do you feel you know the city well? Do you feel at home here?

Follow on:

Are there any areas of the city you don't feel comfortable going to? Why is this?

Are there certain areas of the city you feel especially safe / comfortable in? Why?

Do you have any questions, further comments, anything to add before we move on?

3. Identity

(if not already disclosed above)

a) Can you tell me a little about why you decided to move to Newcastle?

Follow on:

How do you feel about living here now? What do you like and dislike? How does it compare to other places you've lived (in the UK, if relevant)?

(if not already disclosed above)

b) Can you tell me a little about what it's like to be a parent in Newcastle? (compared to back in either hometown or previous place of residence)?

c) Do you see your children as Polish/ British / (neither / both / something else)?

Follow on:

Do you see yourself as Polish / British (neither / both/ something else)?

What about as Europeans? Do you see yourself as European in any way?

Or 'Geordie's'? What do you think it means to be a Geordie?

Are your children 'Geordies'?

How do you think your children might view themselves? (for very young children, when they're older)?

d) What are the advantages / disadvantages of being a migrant with children?

e) If you didn't have children, do you think you'd still be living in Britain? Would you be living in Newcastle?

Do you have any questions, further comments, anything to add?

Thank you so much for taking part in this interview. If you would like to discuss anything later, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Equally if you know of anyone else who may be interested in taking part in an interview please pass on my details.

Checklist:

Check participant has a copy of consent form

Give participant contact details card

Give participant thank you card

Give participant small token

Ask if they would like to take a poster or more contact cards

Thank participant.

Keywords in Polish

1. Family / Household Organisation

trzy części
około sześciu głównych kwestii

a) Czy Pani/Pan powiedziec mi o swojej rodzinie, kiedy miała swoje dzieci, gdzie i kiedy spotkał swojego partnera, ...
kontakt z rodzeństwem?
dziadkowie?
Jak często do Polska? Jak często Pani chce widać rodzice/ brat etc.

b) Proszę Pani/Pan powiedziec mi trochę o domu, który gotuje, czyści, opiekować dzieci? Manażera gospodarstwa domowego? Co w weekendy? z rodzicami / rodzeństwem, jeśli mieszka w Wielkiej Brytanii?

c) Jak Pani się jako matka czuje w Wielkiej Brytanii w porównaniu z Polska? Dlaczego tak jest?

d) przyszłości w Wielkiej Brytanii? Dlaczego? Co z dziećmi? Jakie nadzieje i ambicje Pani ma na ich przyszłość?

e) Czy Pan/Pani chce starać się utrzymać dom / Polskie gospodarstwa domowego? Jeśli tak, to dlaczego?

języka polskiego w domu? Kuchania polskiej? polskich mebli? Polski samochód? Oglądaj polskiej telewizji lub słuchania polskiego radia? Dlaczego to jest? Jak Pani/Pan myśli, dlaczego czujesz się w ten sposób?

Co z dziećmi? języku polskim etc?

Czy Pani/Pan ma pytania?

2. Access/ Geography

a) Czy uczestniczyłaś zabaw, imprez szkolnych, stowarzyszeń lub towarzyskie?

b) Czy jest to przede wszystkim polskich rodziców na spotkania z, Wielkiej Brytanii, innych narodowości? (Dlaczego tak jest?)
Czy Pani/Pan zna sąsiadów?

c) - miasta, udać się do korzystania z pewnych udogodnień, takich jak. opieka nad dziećmi, pracy, rozrywki?
Jak jeździć po mieście? Samochodów, pieszo, wyciągi z przyjaciółmi, inne? Dlaczego?

d) o usługi dostępne w Newcastle (jako rodzic, jako polski migrujących, dla dzieci)? chcieliby Pani/Pan zobaczyć pod warunkiem lub czuje potrzebę?

e) znam miasto dobrze? jakieś części miasta nie będzie czuć się komfortowo? Dlaczego? części miasta czuć szczególnie bezpieczne / wygodne?

Czy Pani/Pan ma pytania?

3. Identity

a) dlaczego postanowił przejeżdżić się do Newcastle?

Jak się czujesz na temat życia tutaj, teraz? podoba i nie lubi?

b) być rodzicem w Newcastle?

c) Czy Pani/Pan widzi Swoje dzieci jako polskie-brytyjskie? Co jako Europejczycy? Czy Pani/Pan widzi Siebie jako Europejskiej? Co być Geordie?

d) Jakie być migrujących z dziećmi? Z dzieckim, czy chcesz żyć w Newcastle?

Name	Basia
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Dobrodzien
Home Town / City (In UK)	Newcastle upon Tyne (North west suburbs)
Marital Status	Single parent
Children	1 daughter (age 13)
Employment (in UK)	Saturday school teacher
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Accountant for insurance companies

Name	Czeslaw	Klara
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Przemysl	
Home Town / City (In UK)	Sunderland	
Marital Status	Married	
Children	1 daughter (age 11), 1 son (age 6)	
Employment (in UK)	Bus driver	Cleaner
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Bus driver	Cleaner

Name	Elwira
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Legnica
Home Town / City (In UK)	Newcastle upon Tyne (North side of City Centre)
Marital Status	Single parent
Children	1 daughter (age 6 months)
Employment (in UK)	Post-graduate student
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Post-graduate student

Name	Walentyna
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Krkonoše and subsequently Jelina Gora
Home Town / City (In UK)	Newcastle upon Tyne (North west suburbs)
Marital Status	Married
Children	1 daughter (age 1 year)
Employment (in UK)	Stay at home parent / homemaker
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Secondary school teacher

Name	Edyta
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Legnica
Home Town / City (In UK)	Newcastle upon Tyne (Eastern suburbs)
Marital Status	Married
Children	1 daughter (age 10 years)
Employment (in UK)	Teaching assistant
Previous Employment (In Poland)	English teacher

Name	Krysia
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Bydgoszcz
Home Town / City (In UK)	Newcastle upon Tyne (North west suburbs)
Marital Status	Single parent
Children	1 son (age 2 years)
Employment (in UK)	Self-employed translator
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Clerical assistant

Name	Mariola
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Mazury
Home Town / City (In UK)	Newcastle upon Tyne (Eastern suburbs)
Marital Status	Single parent
Children	1 daughter (age 1 year)
Employment (in UK)	Sales person for engineering company
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Fashion designer

Name	Elzbieta
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Oswiecim
Home Town / City (In UK)	Near Chester-le-Street, County Durham
Marital Status	Married
Children	1 son (age 4 years) and 1 daughter (age 2 years)
Employment (in UK)	University seminar tutor / Post-grad student
Previous Employment (In Poland)	English teacher

Name	Hania
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Warsaw
Home Town / City (In UK)	Newcastle upon Tyne (Western suburbs)
Marital Status	Single parent
Children	1 daughter (age 7 years)
Employment (in UK)	Clerical Assistant
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Civil Servant and business entrepreneur

Name	Miron
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Wieliczka
Home Town / City (In UK)	South Shields, South Tyneside
Marital Status	Married
Children	1 daughter (age 7 years) and 1 son (age 3 years)
Employment (in UK)	Aide to local businessman
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Post-graduate student

Name	Iza
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Kielce
Home Town / City (In UK)	North Tyneside
Marital Status	Married
Children	1 daughter (age 1 year)
Employment (in UK)	Pharmacist
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Pharmacist

Name	Ludmiła
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Krakow
Home Town / City (In UK)	Near Washington, County Durham
Marital Status	Co-habiting with partner
Children	1 son (age 18 months)
Employment (in UK)	Translator
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Secondary school teacher

Name	Lidia
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Lezajsk
Home Town / City (In UK)	Newcastle upon Tyne (Western suburbs)
Marital Status	Married
Children	1 son (age 18 months)
Employment (in UK)	Artist
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Artist

Name	Zygmunt	Dorota
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Jasna Gora	
Home Town / City (In UK)	Newcastle upon Tyne (Western suburbs)	
Marital Status	Married	
Children	1 son (age 4 years), 1 daughter (age 2 years), Pregnant with 3rd child	
Employment (in UK)	Online business entrepreneurs	
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Banker	Post-graduate student

Name	Olga	Bogdan
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Jellenia Gora	Rutki-Kossaki
Home Town / City (In UK)	North Tyneside	
Marital Status	Married	
Children	1 son (age 18 months)	
Employment (in UK)	Stay at home parent / homemaker	University lecturer
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Project manager	University lecturer

Name	Jagoda
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Warsaw
Home Town / City (In UK)	Willington, County Durham
Marital Status	Single parent
Children	1 daughter (age 10 years)
Employment (in UK)	Secondary school teacher
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Secondary school teacher

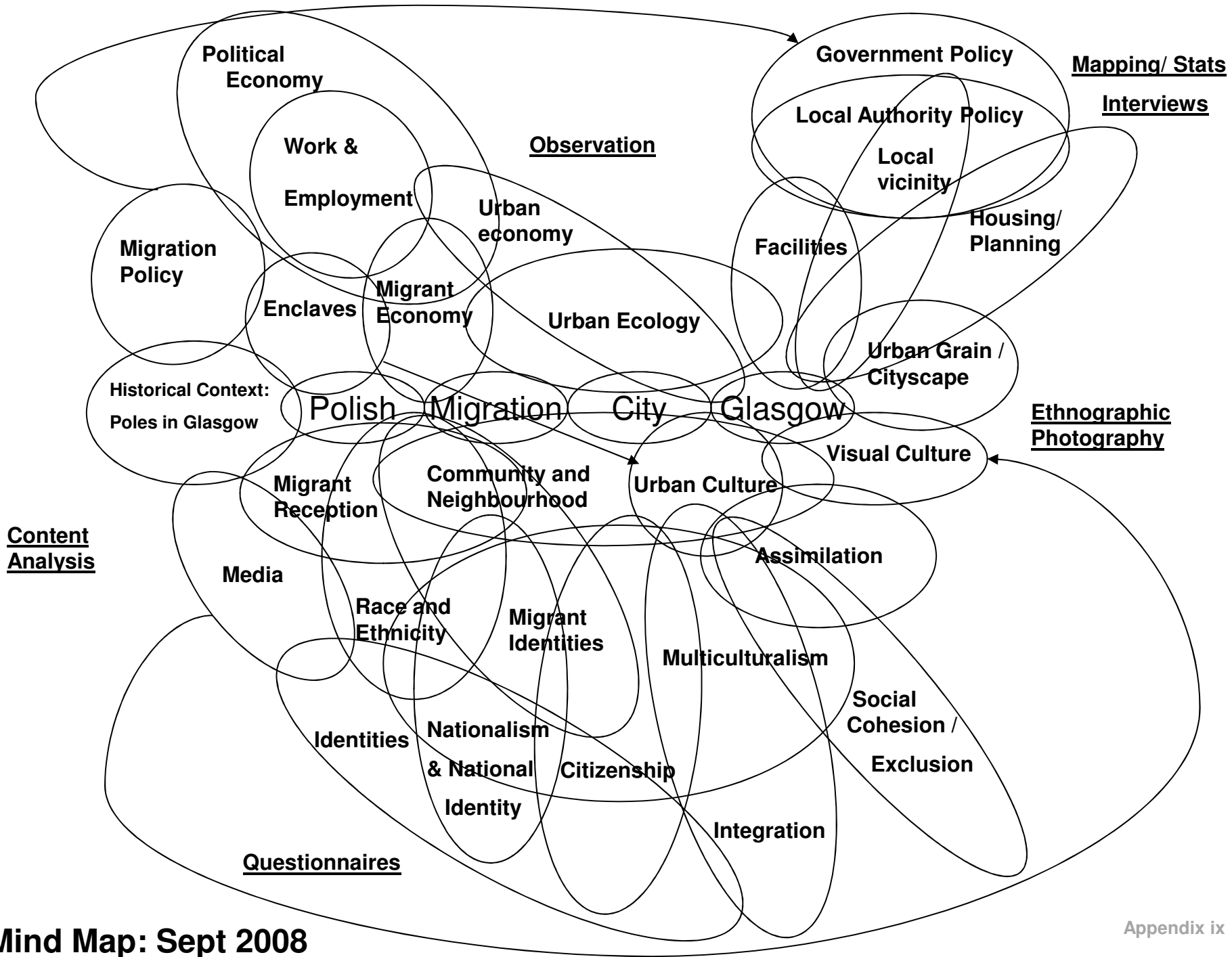
Name	Kazimierz	Truda
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Gdansk	Poznan
Home Town / City (In UK)	Willington, County Durham	
Marital Status	Married	
Children	1 son (age 18 months), Pregnant with 2nd child	
Employment (in UK)	Software Engineer	Doctor (Gynaecologist)
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Software Engineer	Doctor (General Practitioner)

Name	Jarek	Wanda
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Krosno	
Home Town / City (In UK)	Gateshead	
Marital Status	Married	
Children	1 son (age 11 years)	
Employment (in UK)	Bus technician	Cleaner
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Bus technician	Unemployed

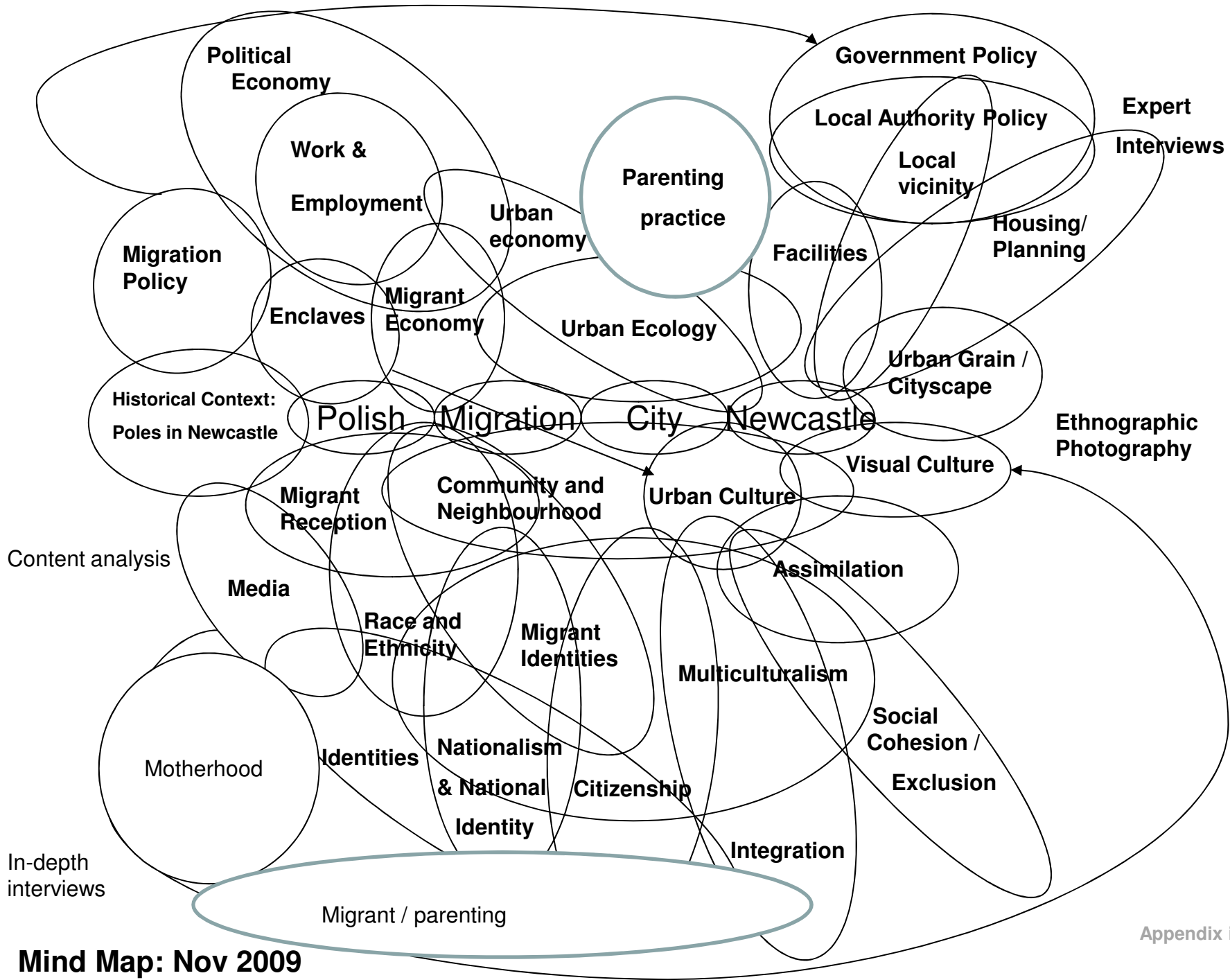
Name	Paulina	Waldemar
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Minkovice	Wroclaw
Home Town / City (In UK)	North Tyneside	
Marital Status	Married	
Children	1 son (age 2 years)	
Employment (in UK)	Stay at home parent / homemaker	Worker in food processing factory
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Au-pair	Unknown

Name	Teodor	Barbara
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Olsztyn	
Home Town / City (In UK)	Darlington, County Durham	
Marital Status	Married	
Children	1 daughter (age 5 years), newborn baby son	
Employment (in UK)	Residential care home assistant	Maternity leave (teaching assistant position)
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Banker	Banker

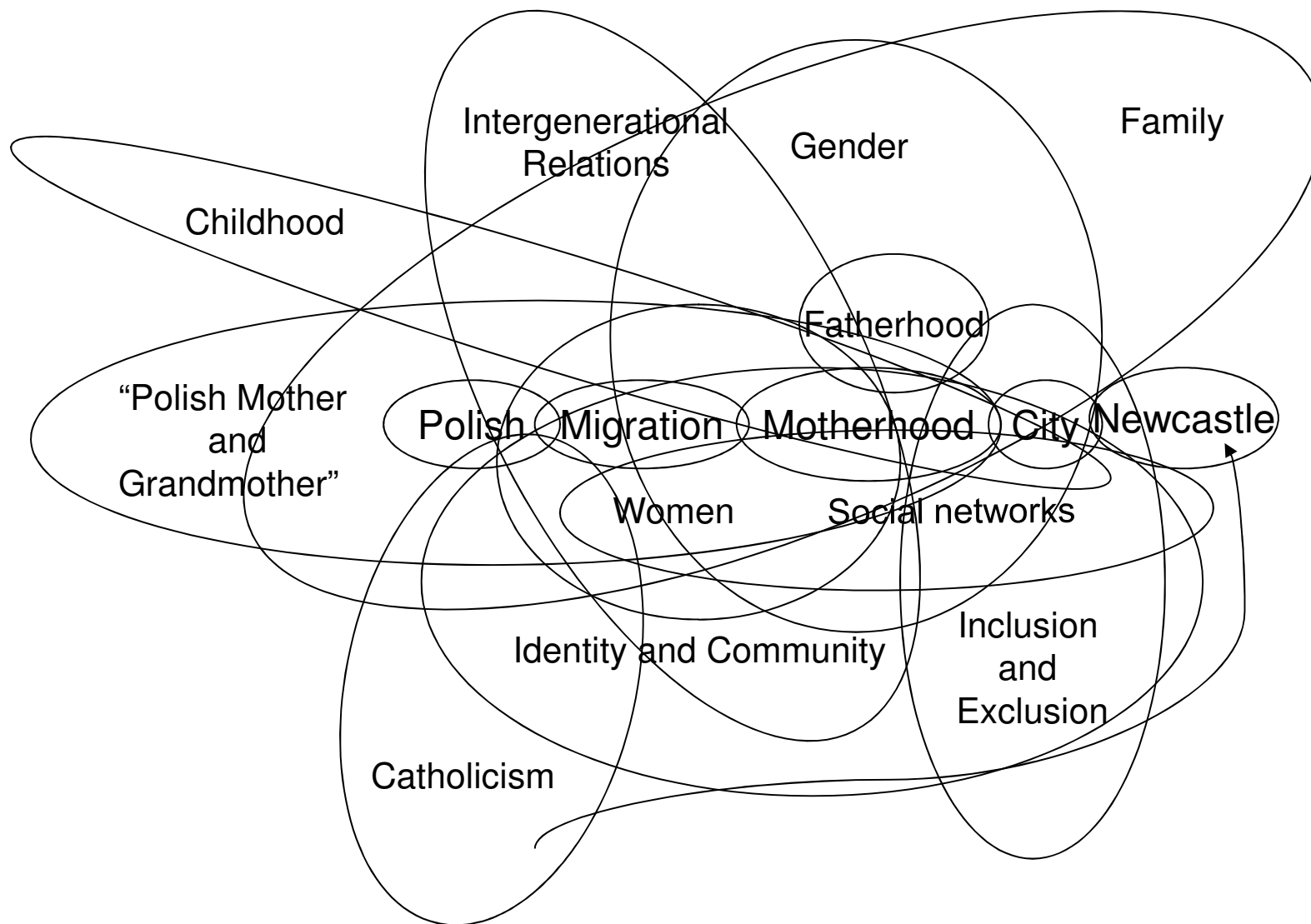
Name	Lech	Katarzyna
Home Town / City (In Poland)	Olsztyn	
Home Town / City (In UK)	Darlington, County Durham	
Marital Status	Married	
Children	1 daughter (age 2 years), Pregnant with 2nd child	
Employment (in UK)	Residential care home assistant	Nursery nurse
Previous Employment (In Poland)	Physiotherapist	Post-graduate student



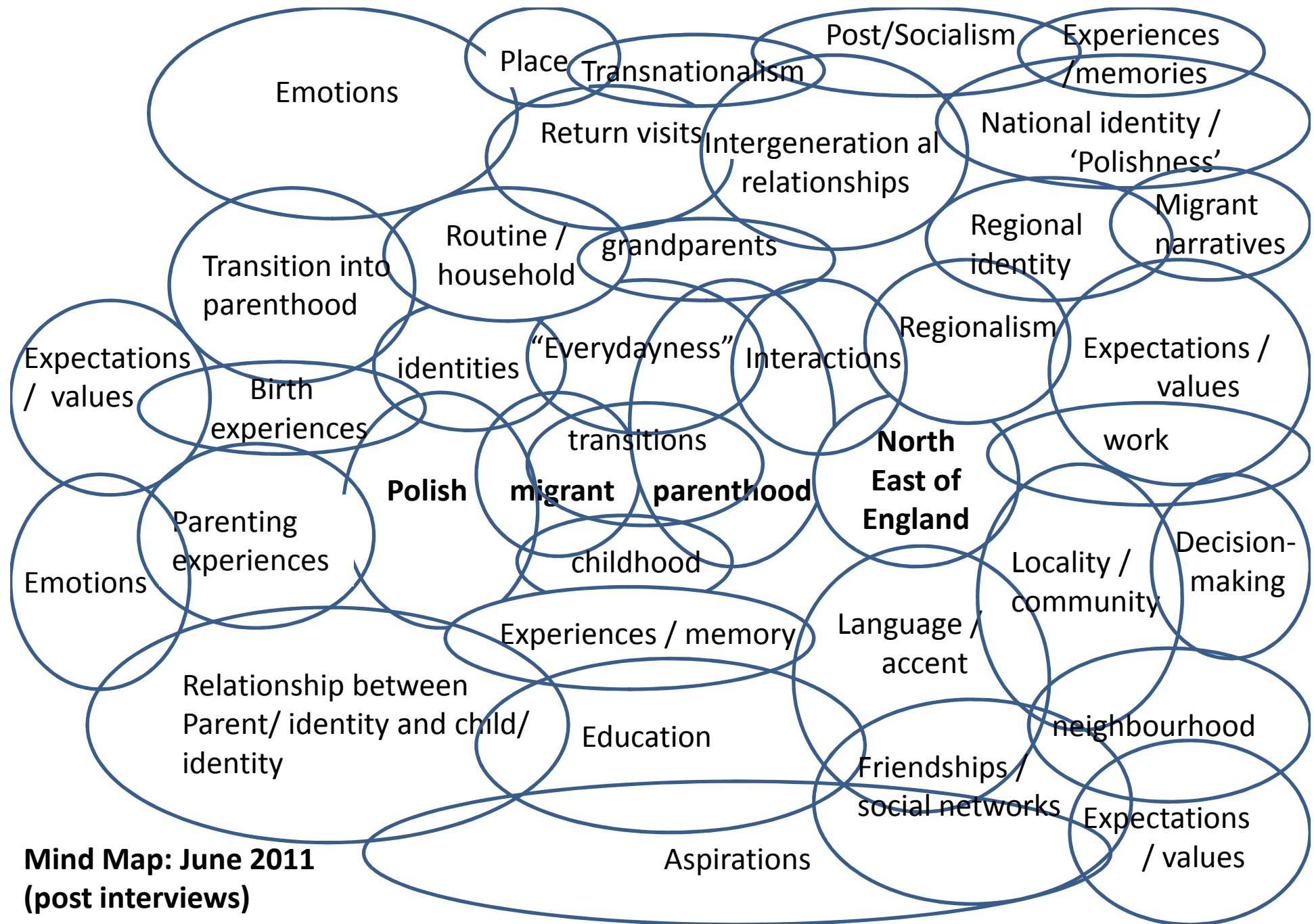
Mind Map: Sept 2008



Mind Map: Nov 2009



**Mind Map: April 2010
(Start of interviewing)**



**Mind Map: June 2011
(post interviews)**

Policy recommendations

(3.3.4) This study suggests Polish migrants experienced high levels of vulnerability in the workforce. To safeguard the welfare of Polish migrants, a review of the 'fixed term' employment contracts which offer migrants board and lodging as part of their wage, should be made. Informants in this study reported feeling 'locked in' to contracts with payment penalties for early departure.

(4.3.2) In terms of maternity provision, Polish migrant women in this study reported feeling confused and anxious about administrative delays between booking appointments, scans and consultations. Women reported relying heavily on community midwives for reassurance about the viability of their pregnancy. Polish migrant women worried that British healthcare system would not and did not 'support' them during early pregnancy in particular. This was linked to cultural expectations about maternity care. This study recommends that greater explanation is given to Polish migrant women about maternity provision and the philosophy of prenatal support in the UK, via specific resources and distribution of these resources.

(4.4.2) Polish migrant women reported having 'trust' issues with translators attending them during consultation and birth. It is recommended that arrangements are made for women to meet translators pre-appointment or prior to delivery (where possible). The provision of translators for pregnant and labouring women should consider the cultural expectations of migrant women; for Polish migrants there are expectations about the gender of those attending them during birth. Privacy during birth is also valued highly.

(4.5.2) Polish migrant women reported being in dispute with health visitors over issues such as smoking cessation advice. Where possible health practitioners should be issued with guidelines on migrants' cultural health expectations. Looking for opportunities to make healthcare provision as culturally attuned and culturally sensitive to the needs of migrants is recommended.

(5.2.1) Polish migrant parents were found to be heavily reliant on SureStart and library-run services for child and parenting welfare and advice. Informants also reported blanket reliance on local councils for information on local events, activities and information. It is recommended that local councils keep information websites well updated.

(5.2.2) Polish migrant women, particularly those from lower socio economic means and / or who were lone parents reported that provision of children and parent support groups were scheduled at inconvenient times, clashing with daytime work commitments. There was a correlation found between parents who attended such groups (playgroup, baby massage, swimming classes for example) feeling

better integrated in their community or neighbourhood, than those who did not. It is evident then that more effort is needed to encourage marginalised and vulnerable migrant groups to attend such groups. In order to do this, this study recommends that welfare services offer a greater number of support groups at weekends and in evenings, as well as the existing weekday sessions, bearing in mind the typical shift work patterns undertaken by the majority of working parents in this study.

(5.7.2) It is recommended that clearer judicial guidelines are put in place concerning the age at which children can be left unsupervised in the UK. Polish migrant parents had specific cultural readings of what 'supervision' entailed and felt able to leave children alone at a much younger age than the norm in the UK.