

**PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF MIGRATION TO THE UK POST
2004 BY WOMEN FROM POLAND**

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Abstract

This thesis examines subjective experiences of Polish women migrants in the UK. Since the Accession 8 (A8) of the European Union in 2004 the United Kingdom has experienced one of the largest migration movements from the new member states. Post 2004 the UK has been a common destination for Polish migrants. Currently Polish women migrants in the UK outnumber their male counterparts. Substantial scholarship on the Polish A8 migration to the UK has been undertaken, nonetheless personal experiences of Polish women migrants are still in need of further research. The aim of this thesis is to fill this gap and offer new insights on everyday lived experiences of migration through the eyes of the migrant herself.

Combining autoethnography, life story interviews conducted with different generational cohorts of Polish women and fictional texts on mobility as well as secondary data, this thesis explores the complexities of everyday experience of migration in relation to migrants' social identities, gender, notions of home and belonging as well as legacies of the post-socialist past. Migrant stories in this thesis are linked with experiences and meanings of migration, but also migrants' feelings and imaginations, opinions, views, and memories.

The thesis purposes a multi-layered, polyvocal and complex reflection on subjective experiences of migration. Thus, offers an account of everyday migration experiences which is personal, local and political therefore aware of both discourse and larger socio-cultural and geopolitical panorama, whilst highlighting its dynamic, fluid and complex character.

Keywords: Polish women migrants, UK, Poland, autoethnography, lived experience, subjectivity, emotions, home, belonging, post-socialism

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed..... Date21/12/2021.....

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*I write only because
There is a voice within me
That will not be still*

Sylvia Plath

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Part I Introduction

‘How [stories] are told, who tells them, when they’re told, how many stories are told — are really dependent on power.’

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009)

1.1 Preface

This thesis explores subjective experiences of migrant women who moved from former Eastern Europe to the West, specifically Polish women who have come to live in the UK post 2004. For many years and before the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 mobility beyond national frontiers was restricted for Polish citizens. In 2004, after just fifteen years of ongoing transformation following the collapse of the communist regime, Poland joined the EU. This transformation had an impact on the lives and life choices of Polish citizens. For example, for the first time they could enjoy free travel within the EU with unhindered working opportunities. Since 2004, the UK experienced a large-scale migration flow from Poland and many Polish migrants are women. This study presents, by the narrative forms of autoethnography, life-story and fictional texts, voices of women migrants. The aim is to capture contemporary experiences of migration through the eyes of the migrant herself, and to investigate and analyse these narratives as a means to comprehend and illustrate the complexity of migration trajectories.

1.2 Research Background

The backdrop for this study is the significant influx of Polish migrants to the UK since 2004. Post-EU accession, the UK was the most popular destination for Polish migrants (CBOS, 2006; Trevena, 2009). Although Polish migration to the UK is not an entirely new phenomenon (see also chapter two section 2.3 for a more detailed discussion), there are certain distinct characteristics of the most recent migration wave that differentiate it from past Polish migration flows, size being one of the dominant differences (Burrell, 2009). In terms of numbers of Polish nationals residing

in the UK, in 2010 Polish nationals accounted to around 550,000 (ONS, 2010). That figure increased to 658,000 in 2011 and to 713,000 in 2012 (ONS, 2012). According to the most recent ONS report Poland is the most common country of birth for the overseas born population in the UK counting 696,000 (2021). Thus, the migration of Polish nationals to the UK post-2004 Enlargement has been said to be ‘one of the largest and most intensive migration flows in contemporary European history’ (Trevena, 2009: 9). Now the Polish community is recognised as one of the biggest and most dynamic migrant communities in the UK (Isański & Luczys, Introduction, 2011). It is the single largest foreign-born group resident in the UK (Trevena, 2009) with Polish after English being the most spoken language (ONS, 2011). The A8 migration has been studied widely, with a growing body of research on the large-scale migration of Polish citizens to Britain post-2004 accession (Datta, 2006; Gilpin, 2006; Janta, 2007; Anderson, Ruhs, Rogaly, & Spencer, 2006; Drinkwater, Eade, & Garapich, 2006; Slany, 2008; Burrell, 2008a; 2008b; 2010; 2011; 2016; Pemberton & Scullion, 2013; White, 2010; 2011a; 2011b; White & Ryan, 2008). However, personal and subjective experiences of Polish migrant women are still an area that warrants further discussion as is the case in this study.

1.3 Research Problem and Rationale

‘Well... my story...I guess on the surface it’s nothing special...I wouldn’t even know where to start...how to explain...! ... I suppose it’s easier because you lived through it too, you were where I have been, you have seen what I have seen...you have experienced it too. People can’t understand if they have not experienced it themselves. It’s complicated, there are so many layers to my migration story!’ (Wanda, 1963).

I have heard this or similar statements often when asking Polish migrant women about their migration trajectories. The statement refers to several issues within migration research. Firstly, it highlights that personal migration trajectories are complex and therefore difficult to recount, comprehend and capture, and secondly, it points to the need to address and convey subjective migration experiences from the migrants’ perspective. Personal worlds of migrants are

frequently hidden under the 'surface' of public and academic narratives about migration and seldomly brought to the fore. The question then arises how can we as scholars comprehend the lifeworld of migrants?¹ What can we know about migrant's emotions, subjectivity and migratory experiences? This research explores life-story narratives, autoethnographic reflections and fictional accounts to bring to light personal and subjective everyday experiences of migration by different generations of women from Poland, who now live in the UK. Although the experiences of Polish migrant women in the UK have been studied before, this research offers a unique lens by focusing on the women's subjective experiences as they see or understand it, instead of confirming dominant rationalistic narratives (Harding, 1987: 8; Temple, 1994; Letherby, 2003: 74).

The aim in this thesis is to overcome some of the shortcomings of quantitative research that concentrates on numbers and the scope of migration flows, whilst ignoring individual migrant experiences, their challenges and emotions. Instead, this study emphasises the personal and emotive dimension of migration: migrants' experiences, feelings, thoughts, their views and perceptions and understandings of migration. The emphasis is on subjective everyday lived experiences of migration with a focus on topics such as identity, gender, notions of home and belonging. By adaptation of a person-centred approach to the phenomenon of migration this study argues that micro-level research offers insights on the complexity of the migration experience as lived through by the migrant herself, in contrast to macro and meso level studies which predominantly examine economic aspects of migration, migrants' employment and social status. Personal narratives on the experience of migration not only uncover individual migrants' trajectories, their emotions and perceptions, but also for example questions of gender, or relationships with the receiving society. Hence, this study draws on other scholarship that argues that stories about people's lives and experiences are extremely revealing not only about the individual but also society at large (for example Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979; Breckner, 2007; Apitzsch & Inowlocki, 2000).

¹ Lifeworld is here understood as the experiences and physical surroundings which an individual encounters and which hence determine the way in which that individual perceives the world (Collins D. , 2021)

This study, with its person-centred approach, brings to the fore the voices of the migrants themselves by means of life-stories and autoethnography. Although narrative research in the field of Polish migration has been conducted before, the autoethnographic voice is still missing. This thesis addresses this omission in Polish migration research, as a similar study with an autoethnographic element has not been conducted to date. This study argues that autoethnography allows researchers to position themselves 'both [as] the active bearers of and critical witnesses of culture' (Ortiz-Vilarelle, 2021: 475). It strengthens the connection between the personal and the cultural across disciplines, which Ruth Behar frames as the vulnerable but powerful connection between 'passion and intellect, analysis and subjectivity, ethnography and autoethnography, art and life' (Behar, 1996: 174).

This research, although inspired by the recent post 2004 Polish migration to the UK, also considers Poland's socialist past (for more see also chapter 2 section 2.3.3) and addresses the ways in which the legacies of the past continue to manifest in narratives of experiences of migration. The thesis investigates the ways that narratives by women and authors from former communist backgrounds reflect on experiences of migrating from the East to the West, and living in the West. The uniqueness of this study is that it spans different generations of women and writers (who either experienced socialism first-hand and the transition years after the fall of the 'iron curtain' or were born into a free economy) and therefore demonstrates an intergenerational perspective on the topic.

A further distinctive characteristic of the post-2004 Polish migration wave to the UK, and in the wider EU context, is the fact that women migrants outnumber their male counterparts. Regarding Polish women migrants to the UK, there is no single, reliable, source of data (Trevena, 2009). However, recent ONS migration data demonstrates that the number of Polish female migrants in the UK is higher than male (2021). Although research in relation to Polish women and gender is emerging (Paraszkiewicz, 2008; Kindler & Napierała, 2010; Slany 2008; Krzaklewska, 2016; Duda-Mikulin, 2019; Ignatowicz, 2012) there is scope for further exploration, specifically in relation to the emotive aspects of migration and application of the generational lens. Traditionally there has been a male bias in migration research (Lutz 2010; Yeoh & Ramdas, 2014). Notably, women were not absent from migration studies, but their

representation was inadequate (Donato et al., 2006; Lutz, 2010). Previous research on Polish women migrants in the UK has mainly concentrated on women with families, or single young females. In contrast, this project extends the scope by examining different age cohorts of women, some of whom, not only due to their age but also social and marital status, do not meet former categorizations. This study explores women's experiences of migration also in relation to gender² and with regard to gendered embodiment.³ By doing so, this thesis seeks to continue the discussion of women and gender in migration research. Further, this research offers an opportunity to explore the complexities of gender not only by examining a wide set of protected characteristics (for example age, social status) but also the bodily worlds of Polish female migrants. Thus, the diversity of gendered experiences of migration presented in this study defies any generalisations and consequently, explores how for a number of Polish women migrants' gender is articulated and lived through and on the body in the process of migration.

1.4 Methodology

The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach, integrating information and data, tools, theories and concepts that span disciplines and therefore offers an understanding of migration experiences which is beyond the scholarship of a single subject area. The methodological approach applied in the study draws on Deleuze and Guattari's work on rhizomes (1988) and the crazy patchwork quilt (1988: 526). Hence, it interweaves three different types of narrative sources and proposes a unique and innovative perspective on generating new data on everyday migration experiences⁴. As a result, this thesis presents a polyvocal and complex account of migration trajectories which confronts one-dimensional and homogenous storylines. By exploring narratives of migration, this research recognises the significance of migrants' voices in migration research (Brettell, 1995). This thesis embraces the personal and realises the significance of relationships, interactions and

² For more on the theoretical context of migration and gender see chapter two section 2.2

³ For a detailed discussion on gendered embodiment and migration see chapter six

⁴ Narrative sources and methodology applied in this study is discussed further in chapter three sections 3.2 and 3.3

intersubjectivity of knowledge building with research participants. It draws on feminist research that advocates that 'only qualitative methods, specifically in-depth face-to-face interview, could really count in feminist terms and generate useful knowledge' (Maynard, 1994: 12). Furthermore, this study supports non-exploitative relationships between participant and the researcher, where the former is not viewed as a mere source of data. In this sense this research, as Maynard argues, is: 'a means of sharing information and, rather than being seen as a source of bias, the personal involvement of the interviewer is an important element in establishing trust and thus obtaining good quality information' (Maynard, 1994: 16).

It is also important to acknowledge my own position in the research (for a more detailed discussion on positionality and reflexivity of the researcher see also chapter 3.4). My interest in the women's experiences of migration developed through my own experiences as a migrant, as I have lived in several European countries, with my first migration experience to West-Germany dating back to my childhood. The experiences of moving across geo-political, cultural and emotional borders affected me profoundly. Equally, many other women that I met on my cross-border journeys were affected by their migration experiences. These have led me to question what it means to be a migrant and how migration is experienced. Given my personal migration background, I made the decision to include my voice in the study by means of autoethnography, as any other approach in my personal view would make false claims to authenticity. Through autoethnography, this study offers an opportunity to record experiences of migration and explore subjectivities in the migrants' own voice and on their own terms (Pratt, 1992). Thus, this research re-examines the authority of researchers who speak for their subject of investigation, since the researcher here is a migrant herself. The autoethnographic lens applied in this thesis offers an opportunity to challenge dominant migration research narratives and representations by including a personal perspective from within. As Lisa Ortiz-Vilarelle confirms '[a]utoethnography provides a space between the methods and forms of literature and those of ethnography for those who write as critical and experiential witnesses from within the cultural phenomena they study' (2021: 475). Therefore, this thesis enriches the field of Polish migration studies through an

autoethnographic approach which then extends the ‘traditional academic boundaries between the personal and the political’ (Kemp & Squires, 1997: 4).

1.5 Aims and Objectives

The overall aim for this research is to gain a deeper understanding of the complex subjectivities of lived experience of migration by women from Poland to the UK after the 2004 EU enlargement whilst bringing to light the supposedly small, quotidian and hidden narratives of the everyday.⁵ A further aim is to highlight the ways in which specifically women make sense of their migration and how the experiences impact on their migration trajectories: their decision making, feelings and imaginations, opinions, views, memories and experiences of being migrants in England. An in-depth exploration of the complexities of the subjective experiences of migration will be further analysed in following ways: firstly, concerning social identities, specifically gender, generations and ethnicity and how these subjectivities are lived out through embodied experience, relationships, commonalities and differences with others. Secondly, with regard to notions of home and belonging, how the understanding of belongingness is impacted, if at all, and negotiated within the context of migration. Lastly, relating to legacies of the socialist past, specifically how connotations of the East-West dichotomy resonate (if at all) within migration trajectories. Subsequently, this includes answering the following questions:

1. How do the women negotiate the emotional terrain of migration? What are the different emotional dimensions of migration? What are the strategies they employ to overcome difficulties?
2. How do the women negotiate, reject and/or incorporate discourses and practices of gendered and ethnic identities into their migration narratives? What are the gendered or ethnic positions of the women within the home and receiving society and how do they interlace with the everyday experiences of migration?
3. How do women make sense of belonging within the migration context and what are their perceptions and ideas of home? What are the

⁵ For a discussion on everyday narratives and lived experiences of migration see chapter two section 2.3.2.6

everyday processes and practices that evoke, mediate or question such notions?

4. How is the socialist past still present in the narratives? How are these legacies, if manifested, interwoven in the women's narratives?

1.6 Overview of the thesis

The thesis is divided in six parts. Part I is an introduction to the work. Part II presents the research context, its socio-historical background and literature on issues that are the focus of the research. It begins with broad considerations on migration and mobility (chapter 2 section 2.1) as well as gender and migration (chapter 2 section 2.2). Then a discussion on the specific context of Polish migration to the UK follows (chapter 2 section 2.3). Due to space limitations historical discussions are brief, however an outline and comparison of Polish migration to the UK since post Second World War until post 2004 accession is presented. Next, key themes relevant for this study in academic research on Polish migrants are explored (chapter 2 section 2.3.2). Finally, selected theoretical perspectives on Poland's post-socialist legacy and the implications for migration trajectories are examined (chapter 2 section 2.3.3).

Part III presents the research methodology, methods and research design. First the focus is on theoretical assumptions underpinning the research methodology (chapter 3 section 3.1). The research is located within the area of interpretivism and feminist philosophy. This is followed by an outline of the narrative approach adopted for the study (chapter 3 section 3.2), whilst also describing how the application of Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical concepts of rhizome (chapter 3. Section 3.2.1) and crazy patchwork quilt (chapter 3 section 3.2.2) function in this thesis. Next, the research methods (chapter 3 section 3.3) comprising autoethnography, life-story interviews and fictional sources are explored with specifics on their application in this thesis. Within the methods section, consideration is also given to the significance of memory in personal narratives (chapter 3 section 3.3.5). This part also considers reflexivity in the research process by focusing on the researcher's roles and her positionality with regard to the research participants (chapter 3 section 3.4). An examination of the emotional dimension of the research follows (chapter 3 section

3.5). Ethics in research is then outlined (chapter 3 section 3.6). This is followed by a description of the research process with a discussion on issues concerning collecting, analysing and explaining data (chapter 3 section 3.7), with special attention paid to translation in bilingual research (chapter 3 section 3.7.4).

Part IV includes the analysis and consists of three chapters. The chapters are linked by a central theme – the lived experience of migration. The lived experience of migration is then analysed through examples that the participants introduced in their narratives. The first analytical chapter explores the complexity of migration decision making, pre-arrival imaginations and experiences of arriving at destination. Furthermore, this chapter also examines the role of suitcases in migration journeys as emotive memory containers (chapter four section 4.5). Chapter five analyses the everyday lived experience of Polish women migrants in the UK, firstly in relation to language, identity and emotions (chapter five section 5.2). Secondly, there is a focus on how migrants navigate and negotiate belonging, sameness and difference within the receiving society (chapter 5 section 5.3.2). Thirdly, notions of home and belonging are examined in interactions with local and transnational networks such as the receiving society and other migrants (chapter 5 section 5.3.2) and in relation to home making practices and materiality (chapter five section 5.4.3). The aim is to highlight how these relationships and networks interplay with the women's notions of identity, home and belonging. The chapter concludes by suggesting that notions of belonging are complex and ambivalent (chapter five section 5.4.4). The third analytical chapter (chapter six) analyses gendered embodiment and migration. Although issues of gender and migration are interwoven throughout the earlier chapters, the focus in the final chapter furthers the discussion on gender and migration by examining how gender, age, femininity, sexuality, nationality and religion are lived out on and through the body in migration trajectories.

Part V concludes the thesis. It begins with a summary of the main findings. Next, the main contributions that this study makes to knowledge on Polish migration are presented, both methodological and empirical. There then follows a consideration of potential future directions and further areas of exploration. Finally, an overall conclusion summarising the study is offered.

Part II: Research Context

This section outlines socio-historical background and conceptual key features by evaluating critical and scholarly debates and begins with a broad discussion on theoretical and empirical research regarding migration and mobility. This thesis initially focuses on major theoretical perspectives relevant for this study, and then discusses gender and migration. Next, the specific context of Polish migration is examined focusing on a selection of key aspects, positioning this research alongside existing studies. The second part of the chapter considers the socio-historical context of Polish migration to the UK between the Second World War and 2004, followed by an exploration of key themes relevant for this study in academic research on Polish migrants. Finally, selected theoretical perspectives on Poland's post-socialist legacy and the implications for migration trajectories are analysed.

2.1 Migration and Mobility

The twenty-first century has been a century of the migrant (Mitroiu, 2018: 2). However, the concept of migration itself is problematic and deserves some discussion (Passerinni, Lyon, Capussotti, & Laliotou, 2010: 2). There is no one single generalised theory that could explain the process of international migration. Sociology, anthropology, political science, demography, economy, law, history and literary studies have all looked at migration from various perspectives, and have developed different arguments. These and other disciplines demonstrate the level of interest in migration, and, in combination, have enhanced understanding of it. However, this can result in duplication and miscommunication between researchers (Massey, 1994). Other academics have asserted that the theories of migration do not adequately explain contemporary patterns of international movements (Joly, 2004) as they are limited in scope, and only applicable to certain types of migration (Arango, 2004), or focused on either macro or micro structural issues (Portes, 1997). Furthermore, many are not theories, rather concepts, theoretical frameworks, approaches or typologies (Portes, 1997). Although many have debated the lack of one unifying theory (see Massey, 1993; 1994; Joly, 2004; Arango, 2004) few of them (Brettell & Hollifield, 2000) suggest 'talking across disciplines' and 'bridge building

among the disciplines,' as each of these may contribute to the full understanding of contemporary patterns of migration. Recent discussions among scholars highlight an interdisciplinary approach and, as Arango comments, '[m]igration is too diverse and multifaceted to be explained by a single theory' (2004: 15). This research contributes to the current debate on migration by applying a multidisciplinary approach and interweaving different perspectives, and draw on concepts, themes, and topics from multiple disciplines such as anthropology, history, sociology, and literature.

In the last three decades, due to the large population movements connected to the economic and political processes of late capitalism, the understanding of the concept of migration has developed to encompass different forms of mobility across shifting geographical, political, economic and emotional territories. This thesis acknowledges the cultural and emotional underpinnings of mobility whilst recognising a multitude of subjective motives beyond the quest for material improvement, economic betterment, or cultural enrichment. This thesis broadens the scope of migration research, questioning and critiquing the accepted understanding of migrants as dislocated, uprooted subjects – on the one hand victims of forces of integration, and on the other, entirely motivated by rational choices related to the betterment of living conditions or cultural enrichment. This study incorporates strands of the concept of transnationalism, although not exclusively, as a response to the increasingly popular forms of mobility which foster non-permanence and multi-local practices, identities, and spatiality.

This thesis recognises women's migration movements as not being typically to and from, but as having networks and identities expanding national borders. Considering how women move across Europe instantly questions the perception of migration as a linear process of departure and arrival (loss and integration), by which places of origin and destination are singular and fixed with assumed patterns of integration that follow in several stages. The pathways of migration reflected by the women in the life-story interviews and in the literary accounts challenge the traditional connection between migration and loss of subjectivity (as a result of dislocation and uprooting) by suggesting that women migrants develop new patterns of subjectivity intertwined with the relationships that develop in the context of the movement.

Unfortunately, the usual analytical framework of national identifications is not ideal for the purpose of identifying women's patterns of mobility (Keohane & Nye, 1971; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). In this thesis the transnational lens is applied, drawing on Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) who urged scholars to move beyond methodological nationalism, or the assumption that the nation-state is either a 'natural' or a 'logical' category behind the organization of contemporary social life. Mobility is understood here as entailing a great diversity with regard to content and form as a multitude of connections.⁶ Since the early 1990s, research on migration has stressed the importance of transnational networks of interaction in understanding of contemporary migration. Current intra-European movement is enabled, marked, motivated, and realized thanks to these transnational connections. Indeed social, professional, personal, and intimate relationships of the migrant are often associated with mobility. It is through these relationships that the physical movement of women is connected to affective mobility which defines their subjectivity. In this sense, migration in this study is understood as a contemporary form of mobility with a dynamic set of relationships between people, place, languages, cultures and identifications.

⁶ 'Depending on the specific constellation of factors, it can involve single or multiple cross-border activities [...] regular or prompted by specific situations [...], carried by individuals, immigrant families or ethnic groups through informal or institutional channels; and it can be confined to private lives of people on both sides of the border or involve the public sphere' (Morawska, 2007: 153).

2.2 Gender and Migration

Although women play a significant part in migration, they were previously ‘sociologically invisible, although numerically and socially present’ (Morokvasic, 1983: 13).⁷ The role of women in migration came to prominence when they entered the waged labour market. In the 1960s ‘scholarly interest in migration re-emerged alongside feminism’ (Donato, Gabaccia, Holdaway, Manalansan, & Pessar, 2006: 9),⁸ and female migrants began to enter migration scholarship from the mid-1970s. Before this point, research focused on the traditional gender roles and male breadwinner family models (Ackers, 1998)⁹ with previous representations of women migrants showing them to be ‘followers, dependants, unproductive persons, isolated, illiterate and ignorant’ (Morokvasic, 1983: 16). In more recent research, scholars suggest that ‘gender (i.e., perceived roles, responsibilities and obligations – or the lack thereof) may be the single most important factor influencing the decision to migrate’ for women (Engle, 2004: 6)

Contemporary scholarship acknowledges that migration is gendered (Pessar & Mahler, 2003; Kofman, 2004; Donato et al., 2006), whilst some academics argue that we are observing a ‘feminisation of migration’ (Castles & Miller, 2009).¹⁰

⁷ The international migrant is often portrayed as a single male: ‘disembodied and disembedded from contexts such as familial or household relationships or the wider society in which *he* lives’ (Kofman, 2000, p. 53; emphasis added; Anderson, 2000; Plomien & Perrons, 2013). Traditional mainstream migration theories, although apparently gender-neutral, have mainly focused on economic male migrants (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). Common representation of migrants is that of a single male, unburdened by any gendered responsibilities traditionally and stereotypically assigned to women (Anderson, , 2000; Temple, 2011a; 2011). Although many male migrants have families, he (as it is often asserted) is repeatedly represented as a migrant in his own right, a pioneer (Zlotnik, 2003; Engle, 2004), in contrast, female partners are often portrayed as a ‘tied mover’ or a ‘trailing wife’ (Bruegel, 1996; Cooke, 2001).

⁸ After the Second World War, male researchers were the main recipients of funding; feminist work in the 1970s and 1980s was notionally side-lined as purely women-centred, therefore attending to only half of the migrant population (Donato, Gabaccia, Holdaway, Manalansan, & Pessar, 2006).

⁹ Historically, migration research associated women with passiveness and invisibility, while being described as dependants of their migrant husbands, fathers, or brothers (Martin, 2007), whilst emphasising elements of family formation and reunification. In the late 1980s social scientists ‘turned toward gender analysis largely as an intellectual strategy for ending the marginalisation of the women-centred work’ (Donato, Gabaccia, Holdaway, Manalansan, & Pessar, 2006: 14). The dominant economic model male migrant needs to be scrutinised, as there is a rise of migrant women who in the migration context and beyond, act as breadwinners, caregivers, and free mobile agents.

¹⁰ Feminisation of migration describes the fact that migrating women increasingly outnumber migrating men (Piper, 2007). Since 1960, the numbers of female migrants are almost equal to males. In 2000, female migrants amount to nearly 51 percent of all migrants in the developed world and about 46 percent of all migrants in the developing countries (ILO, 2003). Piper (2007)

However, the UN (UN-INSTRAW, 2007) denotes this view as misleading, as it suggests a sudden substantive increase in the number of female migrants, whereas there has long been a significant proportion of women among migrants.¹¹ It has been increasingly noted that the number of women who relocate internationally as sole migrants is on the increase (Slany, 2008; Castles & Miller, 2009; Lutz, 2010).¹²

Despite a growing trend in the feminisation of migration, in many societies' obstacles and barriers to women's mobility still exist (Morokvasic, 2007). In other countries, however, women enjoy the freedom and empowerment that comes from migration. Scholarship has identified the emancipatory potential of migration and explored changing gender relations within the household (e.g., Levitt, 2001; Yeoh & Willis, 1999), along with social constructions of gender relations (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004; Pessar & Mahler, 2003). The dominant argument of these studies is that the status of migrant women improves due to their increased access to resources, employment, entitlements and legislation, but also broader social factors (e.g., Piper, 2007; see also Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991). For many women, migration implies the transition from unpaid work in the domestic sphere to paid work in the labour market within the host country (Phizacklea, 1983).¹³ For some, the opportunity to gain paid work is an opportunity to escape oppressive, patriarchal traditions in their country of origin (Morokvasic, 1983). Through the opportunity for meaningful employment, women often achieve increased self-respect and sufficient income to gain independence, along with the confidence to request a change in the

suggested that feminisation of migration is connected to at least four other phenomena: improved statistical visibility of women, increasing participation of women in most types of migration, inability of men to find full-time employment in the home countries and increased demand for feminised jobs.

¹¹ By 2000, women constituted 52.4 percent of migrants in Europe (Zlotnik, 2003). By 2013, the proportion of women migrants 'ranged from 52 percent in the global North to 43 percent in the global South' (UN, 2013: 1). Engle (2004) emphasises that women have always migrated. However, the contrast between women's migrations in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries lies in the motivation for their travels and the way they are recorded, from family reunification to moving as pioneer migrants.

¹² Approximately 48 percent of all migrants are women (UN, 2013) and within Europe, migrant women already outnumber their male counterparts (OECD-UNDESA, 2013). In the UK, it was suggested that "over the past thirty years, more females than males migrated to the UK" (Vertovec, 2007:1040), whilst others assert that this has in fact been evident since the 1970s (Zlotnik, 2003).

¹³ Previous research has portrayed migrant women, in contrast to men, in low-paid and low-skilled occupations (Castles & Millar, 2003). However, current studies on A8 migration question this view (Scullion & Morris, 2009; Kindler & Napierała, 2010). Furthermore, there is some indication that those Polish women who migrated to the UK post-2004 often have higher qualifications than their male counterparts (CBOS, 2006; Scullion, Morris & Steele, 2009).

gendered division of labour. Kosack (1976: 369) asserted that migration could be seen as a 'step towards emancipation'. In this sense, social and financial allowances may have a positive impact on women's perceptions of gender roles (White, 2011a). By exposing themselves through work to different patterns of gender relations, women might apply these different views to their home and country of origin.¹⁴ Consequently, they often wish to settle in the destination country for longer, since the return represents going back to traditional understandings of women's roles.

Furthermore, current research suggests that some women migrate due to interest in other cultures, to seek adventure, as part of their personal development, and that mobility can have a significant impact on women's positioning in society (Kindler & Napierała, 2010; Temple, 2011a; Dannecker, 2007; Morokvasic, 1983). Some studies on female Polish migrants identify the motivation for migration as a means to resist and escape the discrimination faced in their countries of origin (Coyle, 2007) or treating migration as a way of acquiring additional social capital by increasing their self-esteem and self-confidence (Triandafyllidou, 2006).¹⁵ Also, there is some assertion in current scholarship that the move to Western Europe can be seen as a strategy to avoid an undesirable gender ideology in Poland (Kindler & Napierała, 2010). Ultimately, significant differences in gender role expectations exist in the two countries under exploration. Although in both Poland and the UK the adult worker model is prevalent (Williams & Brennan, 2012), comparative gender roles in Poland are more rigid to those in the UK (Siara, 2009; Temple, 2011b; White, 2011a). Post transition in Poland, 'gender ideology' has received much attention from the Catholic Church, the Polish academic community, and society in general (Gdula, 2014; Graczyk, 2014; Kimmel, 2014; Szelewa, 2014). In Poland the Catholic Church has reinforced traditional gender role models, personified through such icons as Mother Poland (Mataka Polka), which, highlight desirable roles for Polish women

¹⁴ In contrast, for men, migration may involve a questioning of their gendered status and a threat to their gender identity. As women are perceived to gain from migration, men's low occupational status is seen as weakening traditional gender roles. Consequently, men appear to be more likely to consider returning home in order to regain their gender status. There is also evidence to suggest that migrant men often try to accentuate traditional gender norms as a means of re-establishing their identity (De Snyder & Dlaz Pcrez, 1996).

¹⁵ Other studies, such as Siara (2009), look at East European women's experiences of migration as a change in gender roles, analysing changing relationships and roles as they are discussed amongst East European migrants in internet chat rooms.

(Łobodzińska, 2000; CBOS, 2013). Apart from the opportunity to renegotiate traditional gender models, migration offers to some Polish women the opportunity to present themselves in a different light, and to make new choices in line with the norms observed in the host country (Slany, 2008). Ultimately, migration can be understood to be an opportunity for women, a chance to improve life by accumulating not only economic but also social and human capital – for example experience, knowledge, and contacts (Klagge, et al., 2007).

However, whilst having the potential for improvement and renegotiation of gender inequalities, migration can also be a negative experience for women. Although gendered migration could be viewed as emancipatory, some studies caution against too optimistic an understanding of its advantages for women (Pessar, 1999). For instance, migrating women may experience a return to traditional roles, or a ‘feminisation of women’s roles,’ taking on even more responsibilities post-migration (Ho, 2006). The number of women active in the labour market has risen, which puts additional strains on balancing work-home responsibilities (Daly & Rake, 2003; Płomień, 2009; White, 2011a).¹⁶ It has been recognised that further studies are needed on migrant women and their strategies for negotiating gender roles in respect of paid employment and unpaid informal familial care work (Pascall & Kwak, 2005; Ryan & Webster, 2008; Siara, 2009).¹⁷

Research examining transnational perspectives in analysing women’s mobility argues that for many women in Europe, migration became a lifestyle and a strategy for gaining social status at home (Morawska, 2001; Irek, 2011). Some academics conclude that women generally adapt better to the challenges of migration (Mahler S., 1999). Polish women are also present in explorations of transnational practices

¹⁶ Issues around work-life balance remain particularly problematic for women (cf. ‘double burden’, Machung, & Hochschild, 2012; Doucet, 2011; Sweet, 2014). Current adult working models both in Poland and the UK add to the pressure on women to take up paid work (Williams F., Migration and Care: Themes, Concepts and Challenges, 2010). Women’s increased participation in paid work does not automatically shift the burden of housework on to their male counterparts (Keryk, 2010; Fraser, 2013).

¹⁷ Global care chains symbolise a revival of paid domestic and care work mostly undertaken by women (Kilkey, Lutz, & Palenga-Möllenberg, 2010; Lutz H., 2011) inadvertently assisting Western women in avoiding gendered care and domestic responsibilities at home by hiring cheap foreign domestic help (Lutz H., 2011; Lutz & Palenga-Möllenberg, 2012). As such then, migration supports and sustains the ‘hegemony of the white male breadwinner model’, as women migrants ‘filled a gap in the labour market that indigenous women might otherwise have been expected to fill’ (Kofman, et al., 2000: 144).

(Burrell, 2008b), in which they are identified as 'transnational commuters', as they are often tied in transnational care-giving arrangements (Ryan, Sales, & Tilki, 2009).

In this thesis, migrant women's gender role perceptions and respective experience are explored with regard to everyday experiences of migration, a concept that is discussed in chapter three. The study attests to how gender is (re)negotiated in mobility experiences, whilst acknowledging differences in gender role expectations between Poland and the UK. Furthermore, embodied experiences of gender form part of the discussion, bringing to light the ways in which role expectations and gender identity within the Polish and British context is lived out, inscribed and reworked through mobility.

2.3 Polish Migration to the UK: the socio-historical context

2.3.1 Poles in Britain between the Second World War and 2004

'Poland has a history of shifting borders and of migration, both forced and voluntary' (White, 2011a: 31) and the history of Polish migration is as complex as that of the country itself. Migration from Poland has been defined by the changing nature of internal borders and political changes in Europe (Burrell, 2008a; Iglicka, 2001). It can be argued that the post-war migration was driven by survival, whilst communist and post-communist migration reflected political changes. In 1991, Poles were allowed to travel in Europe but entry to the UK was still restricted. Many Poles entered the UK on tourist visas and often sought employment on illegal labour markets. Eventually with the 2004 EU enlargement, the UK has experienced the most significant wave of migration from Poland yet. This section provides a brief overview of Polish migration patterns to the UK (whilst also drawing on the wider Polish migration context to Western Europe) post-war, during communism and post-communism, and at the point of EU accession in 2004. Although since the Brexit vote and the subsequent departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union there are significant changes observable in Polish migration patterns and relationships towards host culture and attitudes of the latter towards Polish migrants, the impact of Brexit on migration trajectories is not examined within this study. The decision to exclude the topic was twofold, firstly, the subject was only marginally mentioned in

the life-story interviews, and secondly, giving enough weight and depth to the issue is beyond the focus and scope of this study.

2.3.1.1 Migration to the UK post-Second World War

Following the events of the Second World War, and the Yalta Agreement in February 1945, the Polish borders moved to the west and mass displacement of Polish, German, Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian people occurred (White, 2011a). Parts of Eastern Poland had been controlled by the Soviet regime and some Poles who had left Poland during the war could not return home. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the UK experienced the first 'wave' of migration (Davies, 2001; Morawska, 2001) as it was at this time that many thousands of Poles settled in Britain. Polish soldiers and airmen in the UK, in particular RAF 303 Squadron are worth referencing here, as are female auxiliaries, all of whom fought for Britain at this time and settled here with their families. Even though the contribution of Polish nationals to the Battle of Britain in 1940 was crucial (Olsen & Cloud, 2003), the status of the Polish soldiers, airmen and auxiliaries in the UK was not clear, owing to tensions between the British and Polish governments post-1945. Initially, the UK government enacted a return policy of Polish nationals, but soon adjusted the approach when socialist Poland persecuted citizens who opposed the communist regime or had ties to the British armed forces (Davies, 2001). Still, the UK did not encourage the Polish servicemen and their families to settle, but instead encouraged onward migration to Commonwealth countries, such as Canada, South Africa and Australia. It was not until 1950 that those Polish nationals, who had remained in the so-called Polish hostels and refugee camps, were granted the right to remain in the UK and were naturalised as British citizens (see also Polish Resettlement Act 1947). Eventually, more than 200,000 Polish ex-servicemen and women, together with their children, settled in the UK with the largest concentration to be found in London, the seat of their last elected government in exile (Davies, 2001).

2.3.1.2 Migration during the communist period

Between 1950 and 1990, more than one million people left Poland (Morawska, 2001), even though out-migration from Poland during this period was not permitted with the majority of citizens not even owning a passport, which was only issued on special request and on reasonable grounds. (Morawska, 2001). Travelling abroad was never a straight-forward process under communism. It was difficult not only to leave Poland, but also to enter other countries. The mobility of Polish citizens was limited because of restrictions in passport and border crossing policies. Therefore, official reports of out-migration were minimal. Illegal escape to the West was desired by many, although not easily achieved (Düvell & Garapich, 2011). Sword (1996) noted that several thousand Poles came to the UK each year after 1958. During this time, the overall understanding that Poland was a country too dangerous to return to during the communist era, reinforced the status of Poles in the UK as exiles. The motivations for migration during the socialist era are varied but can be mainly understood as economic and political. In many cases the decision to leave Poland was seen as an escape route from communist repression. For some, migration was a way of rebelling against the system, a reaction to the deteriorating situation in Poland. For many it was a result of the growing frustration with the commodity shortages, or a necessity, for example in the case of asylum applicants in Britain (Iglicka, 2001; Burrell, 2006b; Sword, 1996). There are periods of time where Western Europe offered residency to many of those who were successful in crossing the border and determined to stay; this was the case during the martial law period (1981-1983), when Polish citizens were not expelled against their will. However, the mobility pattern of Poles during the socialist era was not only defined by straight-line permanent migration as, particularly in the 1980s, Western Europe was also a popular short-term labour destination for many (Iglicka, 2001). Temporary illegal labour migrants were able to import foreign currency which then could be exchanged against commodities in Poland. During the last years before the fall of the socialist system, the situation in Poland was experienced as a 'migratory psychosis,' where the economic and political crisis has led many to believe that the only path to an acceptable life was by migrating to the West (Koryś & Weinart, 2005).

2.3.1.3 Migration after the collapse of communism and pre-EU accession (1989-2004)

After the collapse of the communist regime and the fall of the Berlin Wall , the legal and institutional framework for migration changed significantly, and Polish nationals were able to leave the country (Iglicka,2001; Kępińska, 2004; Triandafyllidou,2006). By 1991, EU states opened the borders and visa-free entry was introduced for Polish citizens (Triandafyllidou, 2006). Although travelling as tourists was unobstructed, the final decision regarding entry depended on customs officials who decided whether the person travelling was a legal or illegal worker or a tourist. In the 1990s migration patterns were mainly short-term and circular, reflecting the trend of many Polish citizens seeking temporal and seasonal employment within official and unofficial employment markets (Cyrus, 2006).¹⁸ A clear increase in migration can be observed during the 1990s where the numbers rose to 40 percent in comparison to the former decade. Effectively, this translated to between fifteen and thirty-five thousand people migrating annually (Morawska, 2001).¹⁹ The reasons for migrating during this time were mainly economic (Morawska, 1999; Düvell, 2004). The majority of these migrants worked very hard in often poor conditions, the income that they earned was used to spend in Poland (Düvell, 2004; Morawska, 1999). During this period the numbers of female migrants rose. Data from the Polish National Census illustrates the increase in female mobility from 213,100 in 1988 to 423,100 in 2002 (Polish Central Statistical Office 2002), and according to this report, the number of Polish women among migrants was at 54 percent. Many women used the opportunity to move between Germany and Poland, developing and engaging with 'transnational migratory spaces' (Morokvasic, 1994). The lived mobility and transnational ties allowed these women to optimise advantages and minimise disadvantages related to their employment and family relations back in Poland (Morokvasic, Munst, & Metz-Gockel, 2008). Female migrants continued to move

¹⁸ Overall, employment during this period for Eastern Europeans was limited to seasonal, temporary and low-paid jobs in the manufacturing sector or service industries, also known as 3D jobs: demanding, dirty and dangerous (Triandafyllidou, 2006).

¹⁹ The rise in numbers can be seen as a reflection of the disappointment which set in at the beginning of the 1990s, when many realised that the transformation from socialism will take a lot longer than initially hoped for. Some scholars explain this development as the impatience of the post-communist society for a quick change for the better (Ziółkowski, 2000).

between their home country and the host country, rather than settle in the latter, to maximise theirs and their families' quality of life (Morokvasic, 1994). In this way, many of these women did not perceive themselves as migrants, as they did not see themselves as leaving the country (Morokvasic, 2003), and therefore often speak of journeys rather than migration.

The number of Polish migrants to the UK grew in the 1990s and early 2000s (Trevena, 2009). Many Polish citizens used the opportunity and provision granted by the Europe Agreement of 1991, which permitted members of 2004 EU candidate states to remain and work in the UK as businesspeople (Drinkwater, Eade, & Garapich, 2006). The true number of Polish migrants in the UK is difficult to estimate, as before 2004 many were employed illegally, and entered the country on either tourist or student visas (Düvell, 2004; Drinkwater, Eade, & Garapich, 2006). According to the Immigration Service Enforcement Directorate between 2001-2003, it was mainly Polish citizens who were most likely to be refused entry to the UK (Drinkwater, Eade, & Garapich, 2006). It is therefore asserted that there were a large number of Poles who were eager to enter the UK post 2004 EU enlargement (Pollard, Lattore, & Sriskandarajah, 2008).

2.3.1.4 Migration since 2004 EU Enlargement

The enlargement of the EU in 2004 resulted in a significant change in the migration pattern from Poland. In 2004 the UK alongside Ireland and Sweden opened their labour markets to the A8 nationals, although the decision was grounded in the need for workers rather than altruism. Initial predictions estimated that only small numbers of migrant workers would make their way to the UK, yet the actual numbers were largely beyond statistical predictions (Currie, 2008). Many A8 nationals instantly realised their newly granted rights to free movement and employment, which resulted in large numbers migrating to the UK. At this time the unemployment rate in Poland was as high as 20 percent, in comparison the unemployment rate in the UK, which was the lowest in Europe at less than five percent (Drinkwater, Eade, & Garapich, 2006). Post EU accession the UK was the most popular destination for Polish migrants (CBOS, 2006; Trevena, 2009). Thus, the migration of Polish nationals

to the UK post the 2004 EU Enlargement has been said to be ‘one of the largest and most intensive migration flows in contemporary European history’ (Trevena, 2009: 9). Estimates suggest that between one and two million Poles left Poland for the West after 2004, meaning that the Polish community is the most rapidly growing migrant community in the UK (Isański & Luczys, 2011).

2.3.2 Key themes in Polish migration research

This section focuses on some of the themes developed in academic research which has flourished in line with the post-2004 migration flow, in order to situate this study within the field. Firstly, there is a brief outline of major trends in the field since the Second World War followed by key themes developed in Polish migration research since 2004. I then discuss selected topics emerging in this study which are later discussed in the empirical chapters. I also explore the implications of historical legacies (communism) within the Polish context and their possible impact on migration trajectories which are then examined further in the analytical chapters.

2.3.2.1 Overview

Research on post-war Polish migration to the UK predominantly focused on the militarised context of Polish residency, portraying migrants mainly through the optic of displacement and victimisation (Hope, 1998; Stachura, 2004). Aside from some exceptions in Polish migration in this period was predominantly illustrated as a review of political and military history, omitting personal stories, everyday life, and emotions almost completely. However, some social and historical research on this generation managed to depict elements of everyday life, whilst capturing the multifaceted aspects of the migrants including women and families (Winslow, 1999; Nocon, 1996; Burrell, 2002). Notable here is the work of anthropologist Keith Sword which encompasses analysis of interviews and extensive written sources with first and second generations of post-war Polish migrants across the UK (1989; 1996; 1994). Sword’s work, amongst other themes, discusses the extensive networks of the Polish community in the UK and how these interplay in notions of belonging, identity,

and integration. After the fall of communism in Poland and during the transitional period, academics mainly touched on political issues in terms of an East-West dichotomy (Miles & Kay, 1994; Gorny & Ruspini, 2004) or economic factors dictated by seasonal and temporary labour trends (Düvell, 2004). In this sense, Polish mobility flow was mainly identified as short term and labelled 'incomplete migration' (Okólski, 2001). With regard to the former, and in addition to the concept of the liberal 'paradox' (Glick Schiller & Wimmer, 2003) which implied that European migrants had an economic advantage over other groups, Polish migrants were mainly portrayed as cheap labour, supposedly easily integrated into the host society (Drinkwater, Eade, & Garapich, 2006; Garapich, 2008). This development in Polish migration research mirrors overall trends in the field mainly concentrating on economic rationalist frameworks, intending to predict policy outcomes and labour trends.

Britain has experienced a significant influx of Polish migrants since the enlargement of the European Union in May 2004. There is a growing body of research on the large-scale migration of Polish citizens to Britain post 2004, which commonly analyses these migrants and is summarized by Burrell (2010: 298) under the themes: 'Staying, Returning, Working and Living'. Perspectives which can be identified would include motivation to migrate, impact of the migration on the British labour market and issues of integration. The spectrum of the studies ranges from quantitative surveys carried out by major centres of migration (i.e. CRONEM and COMPASS), and reports from local authorities which consider the category 'Eastern European' or 'A8/10 migrants' (Garapich & Parutis, 2009; Garapich, 2009; Glossop & Shaheen, 2009), to qualitative studies which have been predominantly undertaken with a focus on Polish migrants.²⁰ Early reports (Garapich, 2007; Ryan et al, 2007; Ede et al., 2007) found indications of trends for one-off, target earning migration, which Garapich coined via the typology of 'hamsters' and 'storks', but also 'searchers' who practiced 'intentional unpredictability' (Ede et al., 2007). This thesis continues the exploration of intentions/motivation and duration of stay and adds to the literature by considering also emotional implications (see chapter 4). Apart from intentions of duration of stay there is also exploration of Polish migrants' integration into the

²⁰ For a comprehensive literature review on Polish migration to the UK since 2004 see White (2016)

workforce (Ede et al., 2007; Trevena, 2014; Szewczyk, 2014; White 2011a). A further aspect examined in the field were networks and interactions (Fomina, 2009; White & Ryan, 2008; White, 2011a; Garapich, 2007, 2008; Pustalka, 2013; White & Goodwin, 2016). This thesis picks up on the theme of networks and social interactions and adds to the existing scholarship on the topic (see discussions in chapter 5.4). Specific focus is on transnational but also local networks with other Poles (see chapter 5.4.2.1 and 5.4.2.2) and the host society (see chapter 5.4.2.3). The dynamics of social interactions between Polish migrants in the UK was explored closely (Fomina, 2009; White, 2011a; Ryan & White, 2008; Bielawska, 2012; Garapich, 2008) and this study adds further findings to the theme (see chapter 5.4.2.1). Another topic which was discussed within Polish migration studies focuses on ethnic identity construction which is also a topic examined further here (see chapters 5.2 and 5.3). White (2016) noted that research on identity construction to date focused on the insider perspective and therefore treats ethnic self-identity construction as something personal and individualised (ibid, p. 14). In this study I am proposing to consider identity construction through multiple lenses (see chapter 5.4.4) and therefore continue scholarship on the topic. Despite the diversity of Polish migrants in the UK and their differentiating levels of social and educational capital and varying interactions with other Polish migrants and non-migrants in the UK, certain groups and themes were neglected in the literature to date (White, 2016). Particularly, perspectives of different age groups of women (within the same study) and specifically older women are still marginal, and this research adds to the literature by including these voices.

Since a complete discussion on this vast body of literature exceeds the scope of this study, the following section explores in detail the key themes emerging in this research. The gendered perspective on migration discussed in chapter ... is an overarching topic in this study and is interwoven throughout the empirical chapters whilst given additional focus in chapter 6. Similarly, the emotional dimension of migration is another central theme and is explored throughout the thesis. Also, of particular importance is the generational lens which is applied largely to the findings. The focus of this research is on everyday lived experiences of migration, therefore examples discussed are based on the exploration of 'ordinary' experiences related through the following themes (important in their own right but also interdependent):

integration; social interactions and networks; home, identity and belonging and language. Finally, the impact of historical legacies, particularly communism, on migration experiences is a further thread explored in the empirical analysis specifically considering four sub-topics: myths and imaginations of the West; self-perceptions in relation to the West; social interactions and patterns of trust; historical legacies (communism) and the situation of women in Poland.

2.3.2.2 Emotional Dimension of Migration

Emotions are an integral part of the migrant experience, are often mixed, and could include: hope and nostalgia, guilt and ambition or affection and disaffection. Resulting from the dominance of economic and political studies on migration, emotions or emotional aspects have been overlooked. This study adds to the growing body of research on the emotional dimension of migration by exploring women's feelings on their everyday migration journeys²¹ Although research on the social and personal circumstances of Polish migrants is starting to emerge, for example Fabiszak (2010) and Parutis (2013) and with the exception of the work of Svašek (2008) little empirical work was specifically carried out recording the feelings and emotions of Polish migrants. Even less has been written regarding the emotional identities of Polish migrant women. However, some studies into the emotional perspectives of migration looked at the importance of shared memory in the retention of national identity (Burrell, 2004), and the emotions and trauma associated with such recollection (see also Temple: 1999a; 1999b). Datta (2009) and Siara (2009) approached migration from the perspective of embodiment and investigated constructions of gender and sexuality in Polish migration. However, emotions such as happiness and contentment are scarcely present in Polish migration scholarship, yet they are crucial when understanding the multitude of dimensions of the migrant experience. This thesis interweaves research on migration with studies of emotion in an interdisciplinary optic, whilst drawing on sociological, anthropological, historical,

²¹ Literature on the concept of emotion in migration is not self-evident (cf. Svašek & Skrbis, 2007; Svašek, 2008; 2010; Skrbis, 2008) and scares but currently includes: Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015 and Ahmed, 2004.

psychological, and literary narratives. In this sense, this is a multi-layered reflection on female migrant's emotional experiences.

Against the backdrop of mobility, moving to at least one or more places implies changing perceptions of the self and relationships with others (in both proximity and distance), as well as communicating and being able to recognise feelings. In emotional terms, migration has an effect on the embodied (corporal) but also embedded (societal) experiences. Hence, migration not only affects the emotional experience of the female migrants themselves (as a direct impact), but also other migrants' biographies and histories. This could include their direct families, but also other relational interpersonal and social relationships, as well as the stories and memories which are being told and retold. In this sense, female migrants' emotions are not only filtered by their direct social environments but also mediated through memories as, 'imaginings and expectation.' (Svašek, 2008: 218). The influence of the past is important for any emotional experience, and the impact that political circumstances (such as socialism and post-socialism) can potentially have on the emotional experience of migration should not be underestimated. This thesis therefore elicits some of the emotional implications the experience of the socialist past may have had on the female migrants, whether in direct form or in form of memories or post memories²² (see Chapters 4.2; 4.4.2; 5.2.1; 5.3.6; 5.4.2.1). This study also highlights the emotional dimensions of relationships within everyday lived migration experiences, and the feelings that the women experience, negotiate and attach to local and transnational interactions (Chapter 4.3.3; 5.4.2).

This thesis demonstrates that emotions are anchored in cultural experience, where ways of feeling and manifesting emotions are learnt and reproduced through socialisation and are culturally articulated in a group or society, or that 'people embody cultural ideas in the form of emotions' (Leersnyder, Mesquita, & Kim, 2011: 451). There has been a growing understanding of emotions not as individualized, internal psychological states, but as fundamentally intersubjective, and thus social and cultural in character (Ahmed, 2004: 9; Svašek & Skrbiš, 2007: 371). As Hochschild (2008: 80) suggests, cultures set out possibilities for subjectivity, and in that way

²² for more on 'memory' see also chapter three section 3.5.5

guide the act of recognizing a feeling. Emotions are fundamentally communicative and therefore social, for example, a smile or look of anger are communicative acts and evoke responses in other subjects. Consequently, emotions, due to their communicative character, can induce a sense of alienation or empathy in others and can connect individuals with other individuals or social groups. As such, the study of emotions in the context of transnational migrations is of particular relevance where mobile actors are constantly adopting different cultural paradigms to experience, express and manage emotions. Consequently, migrants are not limited to enacting the cultural role of their origin, but instead need to be comprehended in their ability to act out multivocal and multi-layered cultural parts.²³ This thesis investigates how the different cultural paradigms, in Poland and in England, affect the ways in which the women show, articulate, cope, and live through different feelings in their everyday migration trajectories. This adds to the understanding of the emotional terrain of mobility.

It is not possible to generalise the emotional experiences of female migrants to some sort of 'emotional multiculturalism', just as emotional experiences could not be essentialised to dominant theories based on migrant integration and settlement which tend to recognise emotional experiences as the diminishing identification with the country of origin and consequently a growing identification with the host country. This thesis argues that if one does not engage with the somewhat 'messy' intricacy of emotions, the conclusions made may be based on an over-simplified dichotomy between home-grown emotional cultures and the integration into the conventional host culture. Instead, this study follows research that recognises transnationalism (Vertovec, 2001) and cosmopolitanism (Nowicka & Rovisco, 2009). In its multivocality of emotions the migration experience is then an open-ended process with different levels of hybridity between different emotional settings and actors, which calls for the recognition of the co-existence of various, also conflicting emotional states ²⁴. It

²³ As Boccagni & Baldassar suggest: '[t]he significance of their emotional experience rather lies in their potential to dis-embed, translocate and re-embed emotions, on the one hand; in the interaction between different ways of cultivating and managing emotions, as affected by different societal backgrounds (i.e. sending and receiving), on the other' (2015: 75).

²⁴ Smelser (1997: 5) spoke of a category of (emotional) ambivalence: a 'psychological postulate', which marks the co-occurrence of 'opposing affective orientations towards the same person, object or symbol' (ibid.)

is not uncommon that migrants reflect on the coexistence of feelings of hope when embarking on the journey and anxiety with what might meet them on arrival (Chapter 4). Equally 'ambivalent' is also a word which could be used to describe the emotions felt towards their country of origin (Chapter 5.4.4). It could be relief and guilt to begin with, changing to disillusion and disorientation. Furthermore, emotions and homeland attachments reproduced (to varying degrees) in rituals, symbols, and reminiscence of the past can effectively lead to a variety of emotional and mental states (Svašek & Skrbiš, 2007). This research highlights the multiplicity and ambivalence of feelings experienced by Polish women migrants and therefore acknowledges the vast array of (sometimes conflicting) emotions that can be experienced within mobility.

2.3.2.3 Generational Lens

Within the context of Polish migration, generational experiences of women have thus far been studied in relation to their specific cohorts and their migration trajectories at the time of their formative years, or within the historical context of the particular generation. For example, of particular importance for migration studies were the generations of women Polish women who migrated in the 1980s and 90s. Their mobility was not only a response to economic push and pull factors but also a way to evade limits due to gender in communist Poland and during the transition years, often circular and illegal (Urbańska 2015) framed as survivalist or escapist (Slany & Małek, 2005). In the last 25 years of migration trajectories of Polish women, specifically before the EU accession, Poland was documented as a resource of cheap labour for Western Europe. Polish migrant women, as well as men, were predominantly deskilled and employed in the 6D sector, experiencing social downward mobility (Kindler & Napierała, 2020). Significant in this context was the role of Polish women in the maintenance of care chains - globally by virtue of employment in the care sector in the Western labour market, but also domestically, where the impact of migration on their performance of primary gendered roles (daughter, wife, mother) appeared threatened (Urbańska, 2015). Post-EU accession gendered perspectives in Polish migration gained intersectionality, for example migrant status, class (including educational status), or marital status and family circumstances (Bargłowski; 2018; Pustułka, 2016). Hence migration research during this period focused on Polish women's roles as transnational mothers and agents of ethnic and cultural socialisation (Buler & Pustułka, 2017; Bargłowski; 2018;

Pustałka, 2016). More recently, researchers have also turned to educated women from Generation Y or Millennials (see Pustałka et al., 2019), born in the late 80s and 90s of the XX century, arguing that this 'generation of choice' engages in new forms of migration, whilst highlighting that mobility intersects with gender and social roles in the family and personal lives of millennials.

Discussing the ways in which the category of generation is formulated and examined in the field of migration studies, it can be noted that approaches to this category are predominantly informed by classical sociological accounts originally formulated by Mannheim (1952). Studies that investigate the concept of generations within migration predominantly focus on biological factors such as kinship descent and age, in which the notion of 'first, second and third generation' occupy a central place in debates on integration and assimilation (see for example Levitt, P. and Schiller, N.G. 2004; Wrzesień, 2009; Eckstein, 2002). Since 2004, studies that applied the generational experiences to migration moved beyond the 'first, second, third generation' optic and explored the experiences of young Polish migrants (men and women). The works by Burrell (2011), Szewczyk (2015) and Krzaklewska (2019) are notable, as they mainly documented the role of mobility within transition to adulthood and/or young adults. Their works shed light on migration trajectories of young Poles who moved to the UK during Poland's transition from communism (see Burrell 2011) and post 2004 EU accession (Szewczyk, 2015; Krzaklewska, 2019).²⁵

Generations have been largely used in social sciences to identify the nexus of an individual's age and the socio-historical context in which they were born and grew up. They are believed to share some meaningful experiences in the past and therefore hold similar attitudes and values (Mannheim, 1952; Edmunds & Turner, 2002). The influential work of Mannheim (1928) laid the corner stone for the understanding of generations as an age cohort of people born at the same time and space encountering the same set of historical, cultural

²⁵ Burrell (2011a) used the term generation of 'double transition' to investigate how the socio-historical and economic upheaval at the end of the communist period in Poland coincided with life-course transition to adulthood of Polish migrants in the UK highlighting that although the liberalising economy and open borders offered new opportunities these were also experienced as destabilising and required new strategies. Szewczyk (2015) who explored the post 2004 migration to the UK utilised 'Generation of Change' and 'European Generation of Opportunities and Migration' suggesting that exposure to and experience of socio-historical and economic changes in formative years contributed to migration motivations and marked mobility trajectories. Krzaklewska (2019) investigated the role of mobility within transition to adulthood of young Polish migrants, pointing out three meanings: mobility as a *time to gain adulthood*, mobility as *an experience of independence* and mobility as a *celebration of youth*.

and political circumstances. Similarly, Edmunds and Turner (2002: 7) defined generations through its relations to historical resources and circumstances and social formations as 'an age cohort that comes to have social significance by virtue of constituting itself as cultural identity'. Equally, Miller (2000:30) suggested that generational cohorts are established based on demographical and 'historical experiences that affect a group of people born at a particular time more directly than others'. However, it needs to be noted that such a horizontal, sociological concept of generations derived from Mannheim has been critiqued as too reductive conflating it with birth cohorts. Even Mannheim (1952) noted that within one generation there are many 'generational units', groups with distinct values and behaviours (Edmunds & Turner, 2005). Historians Jureit and Wildt stress that applying the concept of generation only serves to highlight central social, historical and political process as an operational value. Therefore, research into individual lifestyle choices or collective experiences which do not translate into an understanding of key events of the given era, should concentrate on 'peer groups' or 'cohorts' instead. The literary scholar Sigrid Weigel (2006), however suggests that the focus within the generational perspective on 'groups' and 'community' leads to a narrow and exclusionary understanding of generation. Instead, Weigel (2006) proposes expanding the generational concept to include both the diachronic (vertical) and synchronic (horizontal) dimensions, and argues that the concept of generations should not only encompass social but also the genealogical dimension. Weigel's genealogical dimension is specifically relevant when applying the generational perspective to memory work and intergenerational transmission that is how certain historical events resurface as retroactive 'shadows of the past' in second and third generations that follow. In genealogical discourse the emphasis shifts from generations as a collective category, the belonging to which is determined by historical and social factors, to generational aspects within the family. The genealogical perspective is key to understanding the theorisation about generations within the Polish context specifically applied to communism and transition to capitalism, as more often than social components, biological are used to define generations, oriented towards the nation, traditional family, and religion.²⁶

Recently, other understandings of the concept emerged where generations are not regarded as a social category that can be found in social life but as a social construct,

²⁶ Post Second World War approaches to conceptualising generations involved synchronic and horizontal dimensions. These focused on youth, beginnings, breaking with the tradition of accessors and an outlook towards the future. In contrast, late communist transition and pre-accession understandings of generation moved to emphasising diachronic and vertical aspects such as the role of origins, genealogy and preserving ties with ancestors. (Artwińska & Mrozik, 2021)

produced discursively or through relations (Bishoping & Gao, 2018; Foster, 2013). In the discursive and relational approach, the impact of external factors and changes in opportunity structures as a result of socio-historical and political changes are not neglected, instead the relational nature of generations is emphasised. Further research argued that even when individuals belong to different generational age cohorts their social identities are formed in relation to generational difference and interactions with other age groups (Hopkins & Pain, 2007). Thus, generational boundaries are not fixed but constantly negotiated and drawn across multiple lines which can lead to, on the one hand, strengthening of generational identities - on the other, intergenerational understanding. If we understand generation as a construct, based on subjective evaluation of experiences, we need to recognise the diversity of those experiences and the possibility of multiple generational identities. It should be remembered that although generation is an important category, generational divisions are also subjective and blurred. For the generations of migrant women in this study date of birth – some were born between 1963 and 1996 – was not as important, although it conditioned possible experiences, as the move to the UK and the experiences that followed.

The aforementioned research offered valuable perspectives on singular distinct generations of young Polish migrants, and in this study, I am proposing to continue the discussion by inclusion of four different generations. Generations can be a valuable perspective to explore large scale processes of social change such as migration and mobility. This research offers an exploration of how Polish women from different generations, who were socialised in different historical locations with different stakes in past, present and future, meet experiences of migration with varying responses. Some of the participants in this study show similarities with former research (Krzaklewska, 2019; Szewczyk, 2015), since they migrated to the UK shortly after 2004 accession as young adults. Other participants, although also young adults at the point of their move to the UK, migrated much later that is in 2016. Finally, two participants within the group that moved to the UK shortly post 2004 were not young adults but rather in their middle adulthood and therefore in generational terms belong to a different generation. In terms of a sociological approach to identifying the different generational groups, this study builds on earlier research in the field such as that undertaken by Burrell (2011), Krzaklewska (2019) and Szewczyk (2015) as well as Pustałka et.al. (2019) as well as drawing on Wrzesień's (2009), who offered the most thorough analysis of social generations in Poland.²⁷ In addition, this study is also considering the genealogical

²⁷ Wrzesień (2009) highlighted the fact that there is no unmediated correlation between western generational theories and the Polish socio – historical context.

dimension of generations specifically in relation to intergenerational transmission, or how the socialist past resurfaces in mobility trajectories.²⁸ Finally, it also explores how the generational lens applied to migration studies could bring to light the relational nature of generations formed through intergenerationally, difference, and interactions with other age groups.

The participants in this research were affected by different watershed moments in history and social, cultural, economic, and political developments which arguably defined their generation. The two oldest participants in this study (Wanda born in 1963 and Zyta born in 1966), were born in communist Poland and witnessed in their formative years (between c. 19 and 26 years of age cf. Wrzesien 2009) the fall of the iron curtain and collapse of socialism. According to Wrzesien these women belong to the 'End of Century Generation' born approximately between 1964 and 1982 and specifically to the generational group called 'Generation 1989' (born approx. between 1964-1970) and came of age during and shortly after the transformation. However, Wanda (1963) and Zyta (1966) both migrated to the UK shortly after the 2004 accession in middle adulthood, at the age of 44 in Wanda's case and 39 in Zyta's. Therefore, although the experiences of their formative years were anchored in 'Generation 1989', their migration coincided with a different historical turning point, the A8 accession and late adulthood. According to Wrzesień (2009) 'Generation 1989' was historically defined by the build up to and the fall of the iron curtain. The mobility paths of this generation could be defined as linear, often illegal, circular, and seasonal, mostly oriented towards economic gain (Pustalka et. al, 2019) but also typical for migration patterns of Polish women in the XX century: survivalist and escapist (Slany and Małek 2005). This study explores if and how experiences of their formative years as part of 'Generation 1989' either still resonate in their mobility trajectories in late adulthood, or how the role of migration in the biographies of women in middle adult hood is affected by subsequent socio-historical and cultural factors and transitions (into maturity) in their lives, or indeed if there are any intergenerational influences. Although middle aged and older migrant women remain an understudied group within Polish migration it is argued that mobility has the potential to

²⁸ Considering Poland's communist past and the ways in which the socialist past continues to manifest in narratives of experiences of migration, it is important to note that the sociological category of generation is often used as a time unit, serving to periodize history. In other words, generations are used to measure time from communism to the arrival of capitalism, with biological aspects manifesting in the death of one generation and the birth of a new generation dictating the way of thinking about historical transformation. As a result, literature on the subject centres on the concept of 'generation at the end' or 'the last generation' of socialism and the 'generation of transformation' (Artwińska & Mroziak, 2021).

restructure their lives while aging and could have a profound influence on gender and age-related power-dynamics (Lulle, 2019).

In comparison, the participants (including myself) born between c. 1977 and 1982 (Jagna born in 1977, Lena in 1978, the same as my birth year) also still belong to the 'End of Century generation', as Wrzesień argues the generational group of the 'End of the Century marauders/strugglers' or as Szewczyk suggested 'the Generation of Changes'. This group grew up post transformation and experienced, in their formative years, Poland's EU accession. The oldest members of this generation would have some memories of the socialist past, as social memory begins at around the age of six, in contrast to the other younger research participants Mira (born in 1985), Hania (born in 1990), Judyta (born in 1993) and Bogna (born 1996). The experience and memory of communism is an important element differentiating the women's generational experiences. This is important for this study, as it explores how the socialist past still feeds into the participants mobility narratives, if at all, and whether the 'ghosts of the past' are also present in narratives by generations who have no first-hand experiences. Although Mira's (1985) generational experience could be said to be distinct from the participants born between the end of 1970s and early 1980s in that she has no social memory of communism, migration in both the biographies of Jagna, Lena, myself and Mira coincided with formative years and, in terms of generational experiences, were shaped by the socio-political and economic transformation that took place in Poland at that time. Mobility is a generational experience for this group, also termed the 'Generation of change' and overlapping 'European Generation of Change and Migration' (Szewczyk, 2015), or the 'Generation of European Searchers' (Wrzesień, 2009), as it coincided with their entering adulthood in the time of Europe opening borders to A8 countries. The socio-political and economic transformation of that time, on the one hand created new opportunities for experiencing youth and benefiting from mobility within transition to adulthood (Krzaklewska, 2019). On the other hand, the profound societal changes of the time resulting in high unemployment rates and absence of graduate opportunities marked this generation with uncertainty and insecurity and a 'loss of predictable routs into adulthood and working life' (Burrell, 2011, p.4141). Migration trajectories of this generation were marked by two narratives; firstly, of opportunities, as a rite of passage to adulthood, independence and agency, as a way to gather resources (economic and human capital), and as a celebration or prolongation of youth Krzaklewska (2019). Secondly, they were delineated by anxiety and uncertainty of what the future would bring, marked by the scars of the transition from

communism, where the route of mobility to the West appeared as the only tangible path to the future (Burrell, 2011).

Apart from not remembering or experiencing communism first hand as part of their generational experience, the three youngest participants Hania (born in 1990), Judyta (born in 1993) and Bogna (born in 1996) could be said to belong to two different generations. According to their age cohort they could be described as members of Generation Y (Pustałka et al., 2019), but for this group the point in time when their migration experience took place is also important. Comparing their experience to the other participants who all migrated to the UK shortly after the 2004 accession, the two youngest participants migrated in 2016, over a decade after the UK opened its borders and Poland joined the EU, which arguably influenced migration and experiences for this generation. In contrast to the experiences of the earlier age cohorts, threatened by unemployment and lack of graduate perspectives (see Szewczyk, 2019), mobility for this age group was no longer a 'turning point' in their biographies. Rather, it was a 'normalised' part of their biographies, defined by educational experiences (Krzaklewska & Krupnik, 2006) and aimed at human capital gain leading to professional and career development rather than oriented towards economic resources (Grabowska, 2019). Their mobility trajectories could be described as 'lifestyle migration' (Benson & O'Reilley, 2009), motivated by a search for adventure, wanting to experience different cultures and agency, and dictated by self-realisation and self-actualisation.

Finally, it needs to be stressed that although all participants (including myself) in this research could be identified as representatives of a specific generation, this study is primarily concerned with the creation of a multifaceted narrative about personal experiences of migration, making it possible to demonstrate a broad range of human experiences. The participants were not specifically chosen for inclusion based on their connection to a certain generation, but rather based on the emotional impact the experiences brought up. This research sought to draw attention to the unique exceptional qualities of each individual story, and also sought to demonstrate their typicality which, in turn, helps to identify collective generational experiences in individual cases.

2.3.2.4 The everyday and lived experiences of migration

This study focuses on the everyday and lived experience of migration. However, it does not amalgamate the terms. Everyday life is understood here as complex, subjective, and often paradoxical, therefore also a problematic, contested terrain. Claiming that everyday life is self-evident and readily accessible asserts a

straightforward and universal definition. However, this study builds on the view that any version of the social world and therefore also the everyday, including individual subjectivity, is never absolute or the truth; rather it is a temporary reading of the world (Weedon, 1997: 78). Thus, the everyday here is understood as firstly, the concern of the world of ordinary experience (as opposed to society in the abstract). Secondly, it can be seen as diverse and partial perspectives, grounded in lived, embodied, and embedded (Braidotti, 2011) and differentially situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988), whilst also acknowledging feminist politics of location (Rich, 1987). In this sense, the everyday provides a context for the arguments in this thesis and therefore qualifies what can be defined as the experiences of migration.

Despite growing interest and the multidisciplinary nature of research on lived experience, there is not a single clear definition of the term.²⁹ However, researchers studying lived experience are increasingly addressing the everyday human experience, and therefore assert that it can be understood through the practices and experiences of people's everyday lives. As such, lived experience is understood here as involving sets of everyday practices that are inevitably personal, embodied, and social (Ho & Hatfield). This study also asserted, following on from Ilic (2020), that 'real life experiences form a critical part of our personal histories, and (...) are also inextricably intertwined as part of grander historical narratives' (2020: 1). Migration entails a change in perspective of what constituted the naturalised and effectively invisible every day. The mundane and familiar territory of the everyday is disrupted and made strange. Scholars have argued, drawing on Brecht, that questions of 'making strange' or 'estrangement', are crucial tools for everyday life studies (Highmore, 2002: 21) since such 'interruptive' strategies are offering plural and often contradictory accounts of the everyday.³⁰ This thesis argues that by using a range of narrative genres, questioning, and making strange, this study to some extent imports a level of Brechtianism and is set against the finality of many presentations of the real

²⁹ For a further discussion on the definition of lived experience see also Pink (2012) and Schütz (1967)

³⁰ Brecht suggests: 'before familiarity can turn into awareness the familiar must be stripped of its inconspicuousness; we must give up assuming that the object in question needs no explanation. However frequently recurrent, modest, vulgar it may be it will now be labelled as something unusual' (Brecht, 1964: 144). Jameson in his reflections on the Brecht's method notes: 'the theory of estrangement, which always takes off from the numbness and familiarity of everyday life, must always estrange us from the everyday' (Jameson, 2000: 14).

world. By interweaving different narratives, and applying the crazy quilt as a metaphor for the presentation of this research (see also chapter 3.2.2), where no single perspective or mode of presentation is ultimately prioritised, this study aims at conflict rather than resolution, and provides a way of presenting complex accounts of the social and everyday world (Highmore, 2002). Furthermore, not only is the interrupted perspective of the migrant as living through an 'unfamiliar' territory of the everyday relevant here, but also particularly the cross-cultural context of the study offers an opportunity to 'denaturalise' cultural assumptions of the host community expressed for example in common everyday phrases such as 'How are you?' or 'Where are you from?' as is discussed in Chapter 5.3.3.

In the field of migration lived experience has been interrogated in relation to experiences of arrival and assimilation, construction of identity, belonging and experiences in the labour market (Vertovec, 2001a; Al-Ali & Koser, 2002; Fortier, 2000), and also in relation to social and material themes including shopping and eating (Rabikowska, 2010b; Tolia-Kelly, 2004). Whilst much focus is on how migrants negotiate and construct their new sense of living, little attention is placed on the everyday experience of female Polish migrants' emotions, opinions, views, and perceptions (also in relation to gender).³¹ In contrast this study, by re-grounding in the everyday, speaks to a multiplicity of experiences, supposedly mundane, unremarkable, or hidden. It aids the understanding of the lived experience as women migrants live it, rather than as we conceptualize or theorize about it (van Manen, 1997). This research addresses some of the shortcomings of quantitative research in the field of Polish migration, which often overlooks individual experiences, and offers instead a nuanced and personal perspective of the nature and meanings of migration. This study challenges what appears on the surface in universal and stereotypical descriptions (academic, public, and official debates) and understanding of who a migrant is, what it means to be a migrant, and what migration entails (Eastmond, 2007). Instead, it attests to the realities of lived experience of migration, whereby the

³¹ Two recent PhD theses have covered the lived experience of migration, from different perspectives. They are: Ignatowicz, A. (2012): *Migration and mobility of new Polish migrants in England: narratives of lived experiences*, Aston University; and Kozłowska, O. (2010): *The lived experience of economic migration in the narratives of migrants from post-socialist Poland to Britain*, University of Wolverhampton.

focus is on the ordinary aspects of living in and across cultural, socio-political and emotional boundaries.

It is through attention to otherwise untold stories that this study reveals aspects of Polish migration as intertwined with geo-political, historical, and socio-cultural parameters, but also hidden narratives which normally take place within the intimate close encounter and are otherwise omitted. By focusing on individual and personal experiences this research offers a fragmentary and perhaps also somewhat disjointed account of the experience of migration, since no two lives are ever the same. However, there are some overlaps and commonalities in everyday experiences and attitudes, which will be recognisable to other (although not exclusively) female Polish migrants, and which in turn can shine a light on aspects of the everyday which have been omitted in other migration studies.

2.3.2.4.1 Integration

A vast body of research applies a sociological or anthropological approach, largely investigating the issue of migrant integration. Key themes in the study of integration include an analysis of the duration of stay and the associated stress on their exceptionally flexible patterns of mobility (Fabiszak, 2007; Pollard, Lattore, & Sriskandarajah, 2008; White & Ryan, 2008). Other key issues include migrants' opportunities of social mobility (Eade, Drinkwater, & Garapich, 2007), and research on access to welfare (Osipovic, 2010), which points to the implications that follow from migrants' ignorance of their rights as a result of the complexity of their legal status. Further to this, homelessness amongst A8 migrants in London is discussed (Mcnaughton, 2008), along with integration of East European children in British schools (Ryan, Sales, & Tilki, 2009), and the housing conditions in the UK upon arrival (Spencer, Ruhs, Anderson, & Rogaly, 2007). Further accounts portray migrants' developing 'cosmopolitanism', the way they navigate their identity in contact with other ethnic minorities and their developing relationships with the wider society and contribution to community cohesion (Datta A. , 2009; Markova & Black, 2007; Ryan L. , 2010; Spencer, Ruhs, Anderson, & Rogaly, 2007). This study adds to earlier studies on the topic by adding further evidence (chapter 5).

Several researchers have focused on the role of networks and social interactions between Polish migrants. Scholars (White & Ryan, 2011; White, 2014; 2011a), stressed both the importance of social networks in examining migration from Poland, whilst also highlighting the historical importance of 'trust patterns' and networks within the Polish society (for a further discussion see also chapter 2.3.3.4). It was noted that in UK locations with an existing Polish population, members of the post-2004 migration 'wave' failed to integrate with the post-war diaspora networks and showed little participation in émigré social networks (White, 2016). Arguably, the two groups differed in their ties to present day Poland, their opinions about Poland, patriotism and ethnic identity (Bielawska, 2012; Fomina, 2009; Garapich, 2008a). Some less positive accounts, such as Garapich (2007), illustrate the tensions observed between 'old' Polish migrant communities and new migrants. Ryan et al. (2008) and Fomina (2009) also emphasised the fragmentation within the Polish migrant community, which is marked by class boundaries, minimal contact between social groups and distrust. This fragmentation has been seen as a result of different acculturation strategies displayed by Polish migrants. In her study on Poles in Bradford, Fomina (2009: 1) identified three 'parallel worlds' amongst Polish migrants: post-war generation, 'less resourceful' Poles who have strong ties to the Polish community, and Poles with good English skills who feel Polish but distance themselves socially from other Polish migrants (Bobek & Salamonska, 2008). In fact, it was observed that although social and informal support offered by family and friends was significant in helping Poles to come to the UK after 2004, and that ties with family and friends were also maintained post migration (a finding which is also confirmed in this research see chapter 5.4.2.1), overall there was a tendency to keep a distance from other Polish migrants (White, 2016). Indeed, it was said that 'the prevailing opinions was that Poles abroad were selfish and unhelpful towards one another' (White 2016, p. 14). This study builds on and extends the literature discussing the ties and relationships of the participants with the wider Polish community, whilst also highlighting the ambivalent nature and trust patterns of these interactions (chapter 5.3.1. and 5.4.2.1). It investigates the emotional impact of these social relations on the women's everyday experiences of migration (Chapter 5.2.1. and 5.3.2.1). Furthermore, it is discussed to what extent the theme of trust, anchored

in legacies of the past, is still interwoven in their narrations (Chapter 5.3.1. and 5.4.2.1).

A significant body of scholarship on integration has also addressed issues of discrimination experienced to a lesser or greater degree by mainly Polish migrants, and also other Eastern Europeans (Dawney, 2008; Kempny, 2011; Rzepnikowska, 2019). Other scholars also highlighted prejudices amongst Polish migrants towards other ethnic groups (Nowicka M., 2017; Nowicka & Krzyżowski, 2016; Rzepnikowska, 2017). However, only limited research has been carried out on questions of perceptions and of prejudices and discrimination as reflected by Polish women migrants (Rzepnikowska, 2017). Some scholarship suggests that shared 'whiteness' between Eastern Europeans and the UK receiving society has not exempted the former from racial discrimination (Fox, Moroşanu, & Szilassy, 2012). While the above-mentioned literature goes some way to broadening the understanding of prejudice and discrimination experienced by Polish and other East European migrants, this thesis enriches this research by revealing some of the reflections by female Polish migrants on issues of discrimination and prejudices, in particular through the lens of 'whiteness', as experienced in their everyday experiences of migration (Chapter 5.3.3 and 5.3..4).

2.3.2.4.2 Identity, home and belonging

Research into issues of social identity has become one of the most active areas in Polish migration studies. Burrell's early work on the retention of Polish national identity through shared memory (2004) and her exploration of the resonance between personal narratives and historical worlds in Polish migration (2006a; 2006b; 2008a; 2008b), has led the way in the field of Polish migrant identity. Following this, other academics have also considered issues such as the routine of Polish mothers using symbolic interactionism to navigate readings of aspiration and class (Rabikowska, 2010a) and Ryan (2010) analysed Polish migrants' observations on Polishness, Catholicism, landscape, food, and behaviour, using social identity theory to argue that these constructions were gender and age dependent. Kempny (2010) examined identity construction in the Polish migrant community of Belfast, and

introduced the Slavic identity as a group identity as a factor strengthening migrant belonging. White (2011a) and Garapich (2008b) looked at the retention of Polish identity in Polish migrant families through social networks exclusive to Polish community, while gendered perspectives on identity were offered by White and Ryan (2008), Lopez Rodriguez (2010), White (2011a) and Duda - Mikulin (2015; 2020). This thesis explores how gender is articulated in the process of migration by Polish women. In doing so, it highlights the ways in which mobility processes contribute to understanding the lived experiences of gender.

Social identities of Polish migrants have also been approached from an economic perspective, meaning that economic activities are embedded in the social relations of migrant communities (Granovetter, 1985), and further research found this to be the case regarding the rise of Polish migrant ethnic enclaves (Hughes, Lassalle, & Helinska-Hughes, 2011). Temple (2011) notes that among the more recent Polish migrants in the UK, close friendships with the native British population or other more settled migrant communities are uncommon. Therefore, it appears that migrants are eager to cultivate Polish customs, sometimes more strongly than they did before moving to the UK, especially when they have children, and that, 'their Polishness does not define their whole life but appears when circumstances demand it' (Bielewska, 2011: 103). Nonetheless there is a tendency to mistrust their co-ethnics (Irek, 2011). A large number of Polish nationals are Roman Catholics - many attend Polish church services regularly and believe in family values (Czekanowski, 1961; Łobodzińska, 1996; Temple, 2011). Even 'young people locate family on the top of the hierarchy in terms of values' (Mikołajczyk-Lerman, 2011: 115). There is an argument among some scholars that Poland, in contrast to the UK, is considerably more traditional, conservative, slow-paced, safe, and that 'family values are lost in England' (Cieślik, 2012: 18). Traditional family values anchored in the Roman Catholic tradition are indicative factors of the belonging identification for Polish migrants. This thesis further examines how these 'traditional' family values translate into the reflections of women migrants, and to what extent the experiences of migration have influenced their gender roles and ideas of identity, home and belonging. (Chapter 4; 5; 6)

Antonsich (2010) and Anthias (2006) have attempted to define the term 'belonging' which is best understood by identifying two aspects that can be seen as integral to the phrase 'I belong here'. These are: 'Belonging as a personal, intimate, feeling of being "at home" in a place (place-belongingness), and belonging as a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (politics of belonging)' (Antonsich, 2010: 646).³² Migration research conventionally considered 'belonging' through the lens of the 'politics of belonging', and therefore national and ethnic identity. As a result, the 'where are you from?' question usually provided a straightforward and stable answer, making ethnic and national identifications rather powerful, quite dichotomous, and ultimately well understood (Jasinska-Kania & Marody, 2002; Glick Schiller, Bash, & Szanton Blanc, 1994). Currently, however, national and ethnic identities are to a degree exchanged for different, more specific or more general identification, such as pan-European, global, transnational, cosmopolitan or Western – substituting the former ethnic descriptors (see Castells 2003, Temple 2011a, 2011b). Consequently, scholars suggest that transmigrants speak of diverse and fluid identities of their own making, and while some may readily identify themselves with more than one society, they generally maintain different identities, remaining linked to more than one nation at the same time (Glick Schiller, Bash, & Szanton Blanc, 1994). Therefore, research should move beyond the ethnic lens of 'methodological nationalism'.³³ (see Glick Schiller et al. 1994, 2006, Glick Schiller 2009). It could also pursue studies that acknowledge 'methodological cosmopolitanism' (Beck, 2006; Sznaider & Beck, 2006), for which multi-sited (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2006) or cosmopolitan ethnographies are suggested as a way to overcome the leaning towards one-

³² Belonging can be understood as the interplay between 'place-belongingness', experienced as the subjective emotions, the development of a 'sense of rootedness' to a place (Antonsich, 2010: 646), and the 'politics of belonging', which is linked to ideas of social definitions of belonging which are articulated by states or in the discourses of the dominant, mainstream society. In terms of the latter research on the 'politics of belonging' has emphasised the relationship between citizenship and belonging in the case of marginalised groups, or the contested terrains of national belonging and the tensions between majority and minority perspectives, (e.g. Hamaz & Vasta, 2009; Ehrkamp, 2005; Anthias, 2002; Hamaz and Vasta 2009) Place-belongingness' on the other hand, has centred on analysing the experiences of migrants and ethnic minorities in terms of their home-making practices and the processes by which they develop notions of 'home' in their countries of settlement.

³³ Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2003) suggest for scholarship to move beyond methodological nationalism, or the assumption that the nation-state is either a 'natural' or a 'logical' category behind the organization of contemporary social life

dimensional studies on migration (as a from-to movement), instead encompassing all sites of transnational migrants' activities. This thesis moves away from traditional ethnic conceptions of identities and builds on the multidimensional understanding of transnational migrant identities (Chapter 5.4.4).

In current research, there is growing analysis of the need to create a home and a sense of belonging, in addition to the concept of the 'politics of belonging'. Rabikowska and Burrell (2009) are especially concerned with the role material culture such as East European shops and access to East European products, plays in creating 'normality'. In studies on place-belongingness, the option to produce a feeling of being 'at home' was linked to opportunities to (re)create cultural practices and traditions, with material practices such as food playing a particularly critical role in this process (Rabikowska, 2010b). Other academics, when considering notions of belonging and home, focus on family life, whilst stressing its importance when coping with the realities of migration (Ryan, Sales, & Tilki, 2009). They further examine family strategies and family motivations behind migration, which seem to be for the most part anchored in the increasing of life-opportunities of the younger generation (White, 2010). As a result of transnational approaches to migration, which often perceived Polish mobility as temporary (Okólski, 2001), such ideas of mobility, transience, home, and belonging were considered mutually exclusive. Therefore, research in this arena has predominantly understood belonging and home in terms of attachments to people, and has centred on caring processes and family dynamism of home (Ryan, 2007). The transnational ties of Polish women, with respect to caring responsibilities as Ryan (2009b) noted, have double-burdened them with gendered caring responsibilities, since they not only need to provide care and support to parents who remained in the home country, but also offer care to children in the host country. This study furthers the understanding of belonging in women's everyday experiences of migration in connection to material culture such as food practices (also in relation to gender) and suitcases as vehicles of memories (Chapter 4.5 and Chapter 5.4.3.2). There is also a focus on family life, and how kinship ties are negotiated within migration trajectories and interplay in notions of home and belonging (Chapter 5.4.2.2; 5.4.3.2).

2.3.2.4.3 *Language*

In experiences of migration language, not only as a medium for communication but also as an important aspect of culture and identity, plays a significant role. The ability to express yourself in a given language can be an asset in terms of human capital and a commodity, opening up possibilities for the future and aiding interactions with others. Conversely, the inability to articulate oneself through language can have an adverse effect on mobility trajectories in terms of employment prospects but also self-perceptions. Within the field of Polish migration studies, aspects of language were discussed in terms of integration and functionality, considering for example the need to learn English in order to integrate socially and to be able to improve work opportunities (Spencer, Ruhs, Anderson, & Rogaly, 2007; Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008), or the implications of insufficient English language skills in different occupational groups, such as Polish priests (Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Hay, & Krotofil, 2011), entrepreneurs (Lassalle, Hughes, & Helinska-Hughes, 2011), cleaners (White, 2011b), and care workers (Judd, 2011), and the impact this has on job performance. This research rather than stressing the adverse consequences of insufficient language proficiency on employment, focuses instead on experiences of identity and adversity experiences based on intersections of language and nationality, as well as the inability to express the 'self' and the emotional repercussions of such experiences (Chapter 5.2).

Former studies on Polish migrants discussed the importance of native language as a medium of communication within different local and transnational relationships, but also highlighted its significance for notions of cultural heritage and in identity negotiations. Sword (1996 a) and Patterson (1987) raised the importance of the Polish language to being Polish, and identity negotiations are demonstrated in young peoples' approach to language learning and their communication practices (Machowska-Kosciak, 2016; Moskal & Sime, 2015). Temple (2011a) considered the role of language in identity and integration whilst also considering aspects of presentation and performance in different languages (Temple, 2010; Temple & Koterba, 2009). This study builds on former research, examining the ways in which language and identity are intertwined with migration. It investigates the implications

of languages and differentiating cultural scripts (Chapter 5.2.1), and also emotional scripts in Polish and English, and the consequences these have on the ability to express one's emotions. Furthermore, it also considers whether mobility has the potential to create alternative 'in-between' language spaces where identity is renegotiated (Chapter 5.2.3).

2.3.3 Migration in light of historical legacies – communism and transformation

Migration in the historical context of communism and the then following transformation has been investigated before³⁴. This study, continues and adds to former research by drawing attention to the ways in which socialist legacies persist into contemporary migration experiences. Although it is set against former studies, it proposes an intergenerational and gendered perspective by linking narratives of different age cohorts of Polish women migrants. It investigates how different generations link the memories, discourse and implications of the socialist past into their migration trajectories whilst also highlighting some current problems within Polish society and its possible roots. As outlined in chapter 2.3.2.3 depending on their date of birth participants in this research were socialised in different historical locations and depending on their generational cohort either have direct experiences of communism and the transition period, or were born into a democracy. This study, for one, considers direct effects of communist past and the transition period on behaviours and attitudes legacies recounted in personal experiences, for other, explores transgenerational effects of communism and its aftermath on individuals. Thus, it helps to link the past and the present generations and the discourses that were passed on. In examining how, if at all, these 'shadows' of the socialist past still echo in the women's reflections about the experience of migration, this research focuses on selected aspect, as an in-depth discussion of the legacies of the communist past and the transition period goes beyond the scope of this study. These focus here is on: perceptions and imaginations of the West, self-perceptions in relation to the West, the repercussions of the transition from socialism on gender

³⁴ see for example: by Iglicka (2001) using an ethnographic approach; Düvell (2004) a sociological approach; Burrell (2007) or Galasiński & Galasińska (2007) a narrative approach

roles and expectations for Polish women, and patterns of trust. The following provides a brief outline of the selected key aspects and acts as a point of reference for the analytical chapter.

2.3.3.1 Imaginations, Myths and Reality of the West

Between 1944 and 1989, Polish society (alongside other socialist satellite states) was governed as a one-party communist state.³⁵ Living as an Eastern European went hand in hand with experiencing restricted freedom, limited civil rights, growing economic crises afflicting everyday life, and inequalities between privileged and ordinary people (Batt, 1991). Those living under communism knew that 'their individual and family needs were satisfied on a substantially lower level than in advanced countries' and that 'corresponding conditions for the progress of civilisation and culture were not created' (Machonin, 1997: 17). Consequently, this situation led to many citizens feeling unhappy at being forced into a *status quo* and reinforcing an openness towards the West. The attraction of the West permeated imagination and the material worlds of late socialist Poland, Yurchak argued that 'the entity of the Imaginary West emerged as an internal 'elsewhere' of late Soviet culture and imagination' (2006: 162).³⁶ Many Polish citizens aspired to and imagined a life such as that lived in the West, believing they deserved the same standard of life as they understood themselves as belonging to the same cultural community (Giza-Poleszczuk, 2004).³⁷ Some put the aspiration into practice by migrating to the West (if they had the opportunity and were lucky enough to be allowed to leave the country), whilst others who were still in Poland used Western goods (if they had the contacts and money to get them). For this study, the notion of the 'imaginary West'

³⁵ In the Eastern Bloc, the Soviet Union was presented as a country of progress, prosperity, and freedom, the Western nations in contrast were portrayed as 'unjust, exploitative, and imperialist' (Klicperová-Baker, 1999: 2). Western Imperialist Democracy and capitalism were officially rejected and forbidden to propagate; communism grew on anti-Westernism and on a moral rejection of Western values. Communist ideology intended to fight those who supported 'the industrialist-imperialist West' and to protect humankind from 'the evils of the capitalist order' (Wesson, 1978: 31)

³⁶ The 'Imaginary West' is understood here as 'discourses, statements, products, objects, visual images, musical expressions, and linguistic constructions that were linked to the West by theme or by virtue of their origin or reference' (Yurchak, 2006: 161).

³⁷ Poland is often portrayed as a country that is western, due to its conversion to Christianity in 966, its early modern cultural connections with western Europe and its careful demarcation from Russia, despite occupations (see Davies 1982; Halecki 1952).

as related to migration trajectories will be analysed and discussed, illustrating to what extent such imaginations reverberate or are renegotiated within the everyday lived experiences of mobility (Chapter 4). Furthermore, this study examines the prevalence of the Myth of the West as a mechanism of the positive imagination and how mobility experiences question or reinforce such preconceptions (Chapter 4.4.2).

2.3.3.2 Caught in between – Exploring Poland's relation to the West

Poland's relationship to the 'West' is complex.³⁸ On one hand, due to the geopolitical implications and seclusion from the West exacerbated by the Iron Curtain and the aftermath of the Second World War, Poland (and Eastern Europe broadly) has occupied the role of the 'Other.'³⁹ This resulted in feelings of inferiority towards the West. On the other hand, this transformation from socialism in Polish society brought to the surface a spiritual struggle, as well as a struggle within themselves, with their own social habits, and myths about post-communism and other societies. (Balockaite, 2003). People were neither here nor there, an ambiguous state of being.⁴⁰ Psychologists used the term a 'wall in a head' (Nagorsky, 1991) and sociologists – 'wall in culture' (Sztompka, 2000a). In effect, Sztompka (2004) asserts that Poles displaced complexes towards Westerners, rooted in Poles' peculiar and crippled identity, which he terms the *Eastern European Syndrome* and *Homo Sovieticus*. Accordingly, Eastern European syndrome has deep historical roots and is marked by insecurity and unclear self-definition (Sztompka, 2004: 10). It is characterised by inferiority complexes towards the West (because of the freedoms and economic affluence that Westerners enjoyed) and is compensated for by a superiority complex towards other Eastern European societies (2004). *Homo Sovieticus*, in comparison, is explained as the later Eastern European syndrome that

³⁸ For an interesting discussion on the creation of the West and various imaginations from both 'within' and 'without' see Bonnett (2004: 1-2). For useful critiques of East and West see also Lewis and Wigen (1997).

³⁹ For a broader understanding on the dichotomy self-other as applied to the formation of the Western identity vis-à-vis Eastern Europe see Neumann (1993). Or debates about Poland's changing geo-political status, cartographical representation and central European identity see Hagen (2003) Konrad (1985), Schoepflin and Wood (1989) and Ziegler (2002).

⁴⁰ Bauman described the stage as 'a combined outcome of the dissolution of past meanings and the nebulousness of promised new ones. (...) It is a condition without clear timespan, obvious exit and authoritative guides' (1994, p. 17).

appeared as being in opposition to Western mental and cultural characteristics. Although such understanding is anchored in an idealised image of the West it nonetheless led to the self-perception of Polish people as ‘incomplete Europeans’ (Sztompka, 2004: 11). A further theoretical framework to explore self-perceptions in Polish society is offered in terms of the post-dependence, distinctive of societies which, like Poland, have long existed in an unresolved state of geopolitical, cultural, and imagological liminality; east of the West and west of the East (Janion, 2003).⁴¹ Kołodziejczyk (2018) suggested that post-dependence occurs where a country or an area is almost but never quite European or Western, which may create a desire to exist in the West’s consciousness but also to re-assert itself in opposition to it (ibid.: 9-10). Although it could be argued that feelings of inferiority and the positioning of Eastern Europe as the ‘Other’ changed during and post transition from socialism, Kurczewska (2004) observed that at the point when Poland joined the EU in 2004 a number of inferiority complexes towards Western Europeans (but also superiority complexes towards Eastern societies,) grew and remained.

This study acknowledges that perceptions and attitudes of Poles towards themselves and others (East or West) are tainted and influenced by the socio-cultural and geopolitical context and examines how self-perceptions and attitudes are negotiated by means of inferiority and superiority complexes (Chapter 5.2.5) as well as ‘othering’ (Chapter 5.2.3 and 5.2.4) in the narrations of everyday experiences of migration.

⁴¹ Such approaches derive from a productive, critical dialogue with i.e., postcolonial theory, and intend to reframe post-communist Poland’s (as well as a broader sense East-Central Europe’s) position in the globalized world. Also see: the website of the Post-dependence Studies Centre (Post Dependence Studies , 2020) and the special issue of *Teksty Drugie*, entitled *Postcolonial or Postdependence Studies?* (2014)

2.3.3.3 No women, no kraj⁴² - The impact of post socialism on the situation of women in Poland

The situation of women in Poland is best understood as the amalgamation of historical and political developments. For the purpose of this project, it is useful to concentrate on developments during and post communism, as a result of which Poland experienced an intensification in nationalism and religious fundamentalism (Grabowska, 2012). This, in effect, imposed highly restrictive abortion laws, offered limited access to sexual and reproductive health information and care, provided inadequate services and support in the face of violence, and perpetuated traditional and prescribed gender roles. In fact, some scholars argue that 'Poland in some respects, represents the strongest case for a return to the male winner model, with its Roman Catholicism, legislation restricting abortion, high unemployment amongst women' (Kalinowska-Nawrotek, 2006: 66). Although during the communist era women were assumed to be equal in terms of employment policies with men and entitled to a set of family allowances, such as paid maternity leave and childcare, they were still expected to adhere to female family roles and to fulfil family responsibilities, which were not shared by their partners (Łobodzińska, 2000).⁴³ The communist regime therefore left a legacy of deep distrust of efforts to achieve gender equality. Paradoxically during the transition from socialism to a democracy, Poland was built on traditional, Roman Catholic and nationalistic role models, rather than international and European law. Socialist-era policies post 1989, especially in relation to workforce participation and abortion laws, were deemed as imposed by Soviet rule. Equally, feminism and women rights movements were associated with socialism, and therefore deemed as anti-Polish and anti-national. In addition, the Catholic Church has acted as a vehicle for cultural and political activities opposing the socialist state. Consequently, Catholicism was connected to national identity and

⁴² No woman, no kraj in translation means no women, no country ('kraj' means country in Polish, pronounced: cry). This pun on the Bob Marley song, has been widely adopted by the Polish women during the Black Protests in Poland. The slogan draws attention to the fact that women's perspectives are omitted from political, public, and cultural debates whilst highlighting that acknowledging their 'struggle' is paramount for the future of the country, which is not possible without them.

⁴³ Respectively, (even nowadays) within the dominating traditional and nationalist gender model, familial and domestic duties are still assumed to be 'women's work'.

nationalism, in opposition to former socialist state dictated ideas.⁴⁴ The Catholic Church has led the way in matters of family and sexuality, and has contributed to the 'essentialising of gender roles' (Keinz, 2009: 40).⁴⁵ Researchers and activists have noted that the 'new democracy' gained post-1989 was experienced by women as a loss of freedom (Keinz, 2009). Strict anti-abortion laws are one such example of the loss of freedom enforced by post-communist distrust, whilst demarcating Poland's nationalist ideology against the liberal 'West'.⁴⁶ At the same time, traditional, nationalistic gender myths and images of women, such as Matka Polka⁴⁷, the heroic Polish Mother, were revived and reinforced by the Catholic Church during and post transition period, with the aim of emphasising desirable roles for Polish women (Łobodzińska, 2000), and are arguably still central in Polish society. Ideas of femininity are deeply ingrained by Catholic doctrine in Poland (Gerber, 2010). Polish women were not mothers and wives only – confined to the kitchen and household – but also guardians of Polish traditions, national identity, and religion. Titkow argued that the patterns and social beliefs and behaviour shaped by Matka Polka ideology function until these days:

⁴⁴ Catholic values and ideas have been extensively used by state representatives as a moral backbone when building the 'new' Poland. For a discussion on the role of the Catholic Church in the Solidarność movement during socialism and post 1989 in Poland see Beyer (2013)

⁴⁵ In this sense the return to traditional gender roles, anchored in Catholicism. Recently, there has been a growing critique of 'gender ideology' primarily on behalf of the Catholic Church, which is presumed to damage Catholic values and be against the family (Dunin, 2014; Sierakowski, 2014).

⁴⁶ During socialism abortion was legal, therefore the re-criminalisation and implementation of the abortion law in 1993 served to disassociate the new government from communist ideology (Zielinska, 2000). The abortion debate in Poland acts as a mechanism to demark itself from the liberal 'West' by highlighting differences between 'Western' and 'Eastern' anti-abortion ideologies with regard to their conceptualisation of the foetus (Saleci as quoted in Keinz, 2009), whereby the 'Western' discourses consider abortion as a deprivation of an individual's life, whereas 'Eastern' discourses link the "murder" of the foetus to the death of the nation (ibid.p.41).

⁴⁷ The Virgin Mary became an important figure which joins gender, faith and nation as one national symbol that lies at the heart of the discourse about Polish identity and the ideal model of the Polish woman: Matka Polka (Mother Poland) (Gerber, 2010: 33). Matka Polka should follow the values epitomised by the Virgin Mary, the Queen of Poland (the Virgin Mary was crowned Queen of Poland in 1656 by King Jan Kazimierz). The concept of Matka Polka provides a common understanding of gender in Polish culture and history. During the national fight for independence in the 19th century, Polish women were viewed and illustrated as strong and independent, able to sacrifice her own life for family, nation, and homeland; her first and main duty was to raise offspring in the spirit of patriotism. This image has been initially welcomed by noble Polish women of that time as it reinforced their position, influence, and alluded to patriarchy (Graff, 2003), and laid the cornerstone for the dominant and yet again revived myth of 'Matka Polka' (the Mother Poland), which runs deep and remains rooted in the consciousness of the Polish society.

'The difficult time of the lost independence created the social genotype of the woman, which functions in the sphere of social attitudes and behaviour to the present day, as a person who is able to meet the toughest requirements of social reality' (Titkow A. , 2007, p. 52)

Recent scholars have portrayed the 'Matka Polka' as the soul of the home, a domestic goddess, the perfect mother and domestic worker (CBOS, 2013: 1).

The transformation from communism impacted on the situation of women in Poland in relation to gender roles and expectations. Given the situation of women in Poland, this study explores how gender roles and expectations impacted on women's migration trajectories and whether they are present, replicated, or renegotiated within the mobility context (Chapter 4; 5; 6). There is growing research in Polish migration studies in relation to gender ideologies specifically discussing the role of Matka Polka (Duda-Mikulin, 2013; 2015; Aziz, 2015; Botterill, 2014) and this study continues the discussion of this gendered stereotype and explores how the latter is narrated in migration experiences (Chapter: 4; 5; 6). However, it also contrasts, although acknowledging the importance of such gender stereotypes within the Polish socio-cultural context, and extends the discussion by employing perspectives which go beyond gender role expectations in relation to motherhood and family settings (where the Mother Poland ideology is normally situated) (Chapter 4; 5;6). It instead encompasses everyday mobility experiences by women of varying demographics (age/marital status/family status), whilst highlighting the impact of gender stereotypes in relation to aspects of women's lives such as age, the body and religion (Chapter 6).

2.3.3.4 Patterns of Trust

Historical experience of communism has shaped patterns of trust in Poland.⁴⁸ During communism, the state was omnipresent in all aspects of life. At the same time, it was increasingly weak, ineffective, and unable to deliver on the promises it had made and although the state attempted to create the notion that it would satisfy its citizen's needs, it was unable to fulfil these expectations. In this way, the state discredited itself in the minds of the public. Due to the malfunctioning of the state, the public began to fear and distrust it. Under communism, Poles had high levels of expectation as to what the state should offer and provide. However, since neither the market nor the state was able to supply them with the expected goods and services, people used informal networks such as family, friends, and acquaintances to acquire what they needed, compensating for inadequacies in what was officially provided (Wedel 1986, pp. 94–117). Consequently, these networks of family and friends were highly trusted, in contrast to state institutions and officials (Bukowski 1996, pp. 84–85). Trust was restricted to personal relationships that were horizontal within families and between friends, and to vertical, clientelist relations, which Sztompka (1999) referred to as the 'bloc culture'.

Polish society entered the transition from communism with a tradition of an ineffective and noncredible state. The transition process added little, if anything, to building up trust in the state and creating public confidence. Although there was an initial excitement about Solidarity winning elections in 1989, this was soon followed by the 'reality check' of rising prices, unemployment, and decrease in social security. It is therefore not surprising that the public made the reformist government accountable. Consequently, the wider public discredited the state, and it reinforced the traditional, face-to-face patterns of trust and networks. Thus, social networks have continued to play an important role in many people's lives (Podgórecki 1994, p. 132; Sztompka 1999, p. 189).

Since the end of the communist regime, informal networks of friends and family have continued to be important in Poland. For example, in January 2008, 72

⁴⁸ Political and social trust as well as the notion of mistrust between Poles and, more generally, the debate on cohesiveness of Polish society has a long tradition (for an overview of historical linkages see: Kojder 2007).

percent of Poles believed that 'you should be very careful in relations with other people', while only 26 percent agreed that 'generally you can trust most people' (Giczi & Sik 2009). However, many Poles trusted acquaintances (88 percent), colleagues (85 percent) and neighbours (76 percent) (Wciórka 2008, p. i). In comparison, trust patterns among Polish people seemed to increase towards strangers. In 2004, only 17 percent had felt that 'generally you can trust most people' (Wciórka 2008, p. i). In a comparative study of 18 EU countries conducted in 2014 Poland was ranked at number fourteen in terms of social capital and trust (Hvižďáková & Urbancíková, 2014). It could be argued that overall, Communism reinforced belief that one should not trust strangers, because they do not wish one well (Wciórka 2008; Giczi & Sik 2009; White 2011a, p. 80), which appears to still echo within the Polish society well after the transformation.

In migration research patterns of trust were discussed as a specific characteristic of Poles. Researchers documented that in terms of networks, in the receiving country competition, rather than collaboration, was a prominent feature of Polish migrant communities at the beginning of the transition period. For instance, 'unrestrained competition' among Polish workers in London before EU accession was discussed by Jordan (2002, pp. 11-15); a move from cooperation to competition and a return to trust patterns anchored in family networks among undocumented Polish workers in an oversaturated market in Brussels (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2005). Some argued that the situation changed as a result of EU accession and legal employment and suggested that there was a 'high level of mutual cooperation' (Eade et al. 2006, p. 15), regardless the rhetoric about 'how fellow Poles were competitive and not to be trusted' (White & Ryan, 2008, p.1470). Still, Polish migration researchers, even several years after the A8 accession, continued to document that trust was a reoccurring theme specifically in relation to networks. White & Ryan (2008) highlighted that many of their respondents also mentioned envy, distrust, and jealousy amongst Polish migrants, whilst also stressing the question of whether such comments were based on actual experiences and behaviour, or rather a rhetoric of mistrust. White (2011a) noted that Poles used informal networks to migrate due to the lack of trust in formal institutions and organisations. However, trust, or the lack

thereof, was also noted to effect return migration. Firstly, it impacted on reintegration post return, due to the perception that Polish strangers are hostile and rude, and secondly, in relation to networks and securing employment, 'especially given that a returnee's social networks are probably weaker than when he or she originally departed from Poland' (White, 2014, p.40).

This study builds on former research and adds to the discussion by exploring the ways that historical legacies and patterns of trust are narrated in migration experiences and to what extent trust, or the lack thereof, might be linked to networks with other Polish migrants in the host country (see Chapter 5.4.2.), as well as encounters with Polish strangers in the sending country (see Chapter 5.3.1). In addition, it will be discussed the ways in which such patterns might shape current trust attitudes, not only towards fellow Poles in the sending and receiving society, but also the host community (see Chapter 5.3.1).

Part III: Research Approach and Methodology

This chapter addresses the practices and complexities of the research approach and methodology adopted for this study. The initial section situates this thesis within the theoretical and methodological framework. It discusses assumptions of feminist approaches and outlines why this way of undertaking research is the most appropriate for this study. What follows is an exploration of the narrative approach taken to study women's lived experiences of migration – first the adaptation of a narrative practice influenced by rhizome thinking, and second the application of patchwork quilting as metaphor for the presentation of the data. A discussion of choice of combined narrative sources (autoethnographic, life-story and fictional narratives as a methodological strategy) follows this, as well as examining the importance of memory of personal narratives. The section then also reveals the transformative potential the research journey had on myself. Following this, the chapter then deals with ethical considerations in research and reflects on the role of the researcher in the construction of knowledge. Furthermore, it offers some reflexive thoughts on the researcher's positionality as well as relationships within the research encounter and addresses some challenges that I have encountered during the study. In addition, the emotional dimension of carrying out the present research and the implication of emotions on methodological choices in this study are explored. Finally, there is a discussion on how the methodological framework was put in place.

3.1 Qualitative research through a feminist frame

This study adopts a feminist approach, and also adheres to an interpretivist epistemology, therefore assuming that all research is 'guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 13). This research has approached the subject from the point of view that knowledge is subjective, based on the interpretation of interactions and the social meaning that people assign to their interactions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Consequently, this study assumes that individuals are mutually formed through complex interactions between the self and others, the conscious and unconscious, the socially situated self and society (Charter, 1998). In this sense, subjectivity or the

subject, as feminist philosophy stresses, is no longer to be understood as a unified rational consciousness. It is rather a fragmentary self, standing in relation to others (Moody-Adams, 1998). It is discursively produced, and it is a process (Weedon, 1998). Drawing on poststructuralist ideas, this thesis argues that identities and subjectivities are reciprocally constructed and performed by and through language (Baxter, 2016). Meaning is produced within language rather than reflected by language. Foucault (1984) reminds us that language as a discursive system which does not represent human experience in a transparent and neutral way, but always exists within historically specific discourse, and often competing, offering alternative versions of reality and serving different and conflicting power interests.⁴⁹ Therefore, truth is not universal or absolute, but instead a 'fluid interplay of multiple but competing theoretical positions, where one form of knowledge is free to enrich, complement, supplement, challenge, contest or overturn any other' (Baxter, 2008: 36).

Feminist embodiment and performativity theories, as Butler (1990) stressed, and post-feminist figuration as introduced by Braidotti (1994) also indicate that the subject has no stable core but instead is multiple, multivocal, discontinuous, and fragmented. Neither is the subject, nor the self, inherently given or fixed. For example, Cole in her introduction to *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* (Buchnan & Colebrook, 2000), discussed Deleuze's idea of 'becoming-women' as an experimental and alternative affirmation of subjectivity or the subject, not as an already given identity, but as a flow of 'molecular movement, as the mobile, active, and ceaseless challenge of becoming' (2000: 1). By focusing on subjective everyday lived experiences of migration and adopting a feminist lens, this research examines gender and, specifically, women. However, the intention is not to generalise 'woman' into a gendered or sexual category.⁵⁰ Instead, it is understood that gender identity is

⁴⁹ Foucault resists a modernist conceptualisation of discourse in terms of dualities or opposites, preferring more fluid dynamic, strategic interpretation: 'We must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies... Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders the fragile and makes it possible to thwart it' (Foucault, 1984: 100)

⁵⁰ To be clear gender is understood as socio-cultural characteristics of feminine/masculine, sex refers to sexual/biological differences. I fully acknowledge the biological difference between male and female at birth, as a biological nominator for two different types of biological species. However, I also understand human beings are individuals who develop, reflect, construct,

affected and limited by biological factors, socio-cultural perceptions, conditioning, and expectations. Considered here is Judith Butler's concept of *gender performativity* (1990: 25), whereby gender is constructed by one's own repetitive performance of gender.⁵¹ This research has also been influenced by thinkers such as Haraway (1992) and Braidotti (1994) who propose a feminism of creative figurations that offers alternative subjectivities, with new frameworks, perspectives, and modes of thought, beyond the rigid structures of heteronormativity.⁵²

This research challenges androcentric foundations of the scientific method by questioning objective, neutral, abstract, and universal claims (which in fact are biased in favour of dominant classes), and instead proposes to focus on women's lived experiences, feelings, and the subjective. Consequently, this study is committed to knowledge creation grounded in the everyday experience of Polish women migrants, rather than reinforcing the myth of scientific knowledge being the result of objective,

and reconstruct their gender identity, influenced by socio culturally established and reinforced gender heterogeneity, with masculine/feminine as the most distant poles, and a multitude of facets in-between

⁵¹ According to Butler all bodies from the onset of their social existence are gendered, equally there is no "natural body" prior to the socio-cultural denotation. Therefore, one can conclude that gender is not something one "is" but something one 'does', an act, or a series thereof, rather than a being. Butler argued that 'the act that one does, the act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that's been going on before one arrived on the scene' (Butler, 1990). In this sense performativity of gender is inscribed in pre-existing dominant conventions of gender. We repeat those acts by mimicking stylized heteronormative structures. Performativity of gender is embodied in our actions, behaviours and gestures.

⁵² Figurations are used in feminist theory for imagining forms of subjectivity and humanity that are neither literal nor fixed in repeating old master narratives, nor the Enlightenment figures of coherent and masterful subjectivity (Haraway D. , 1992). Braidotti defined a figuration as a "politically informed account of an alternative subjectivity" (1994) as flights of imagination which the subject is moving towards in an intellectual, emotional, and bodily sense. Braidotti's interpretation of figuration is based on Deleuze's bodily and affectively grounded process of becoming. Deleuze describes subjects as entanglements of mind, emotion and body, always in the process of emergence and change in 'becoming' (1994). Figurations then stand in opposition to traditional feminism which has been reactive and categorical, and following the political activities resulting in a saturation and immobility of the movement and limiting perspective of second wave feminism viewing women as victims and men as abusers. Still, figurations cannot be apprehended independently from the subject's position within the framework of socio-cultural and political power relations. However, at the same time figurations can create scope for resistance against these frameworks, which is where the visionary potential intersects. Braidotti's model, does not perceive the subject purely as a victim, instead the subject can think, imagine, act and resist, change their situation, and has agency. Figurations are embodied theories, weaving together fantasy and abstraction, creativity, desire and lived experience. Feminist figurations are embedded in the material matrix but are constantly transforming, in movement, tattooed with manifestations of power relationships, still: "[they] materially embody stages of metamorphosis of a subject position towards all that the phallogocentric system does *not* want it to become" (Braidotti R. , 2002: 13) . A feminist figuration can reflect emotional, intellectual and material effects of power relations; they can facilitate and experience 'how those sometimes abstract and discursive institutions *feel*' (Lundberg, 2015: 63). Most importantly, as Lundberg notes, they have the aptitude to simultaneously voice the lucidity of socio-cultural and political forms of exploitation and oppression but also to voice new forms of subjectivity and self-definition.

value-free, detached processes of experimentation. In so doing, I follow other feminist scholars who celebrate the personal and the importance of relationships, interaction, and intersubjective knowledge building. As Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007: 147-148) stated, within feminist research, 'tapping into lived experiences is key' and that 'without empathic, interpersonal relationships, researchers will be unable to gain insight into the meaning people give to their lives.' Therefore, this thesis embraces the fact that an individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product, but as one who actively helps to constitute the discourses of which they are a part, because:

'who one is [must always be] an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices and within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and other people's lives' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 46).

Identities, or 'selves', are then situated in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in 'jointly produced story-lines' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 47).

3.2 Narrative Inquiry: Adopting a Rhizomatic Perspective and Creating a Patchwork Quilt

How women make sense of migration is central to this study - for example, how it is imagined, experienced, and remembered. One way to make sense of an experience is by constructing narratives (stories) and communicating these to others (Chase, 2003). Narrative plays a vital role in understanding and remembering our experiences. Storytelling can help us understand our identity and relationship to the places we inhabit, be these geographic or psychological. The personal stories serve as ways to create understanding of different lives and voices. Narrative methods have a long tradition within a range of academic fields, reflecting different theoretical paradigms and research interests (Eastmond, 2007). In the field of migration, narratives have been important to researchers in exploring lived experiences and to illuminate diverse aspects of migrant life. Life-story interviews and narrative inquiry have been applied in Polish mobility studies (Slany & Małek, 2005; Małek, 2010; Burrell, 2006b; Ryan, 2010; Rzepnikowska, 2019), and this research fits into this body

of literature, but extends the field by interweaving life-story narratives with literary accounts and autoethnographic reflections. However, the study does not conflate the different types of narratives, and recognises the distinctions between fictional texts and life-story narratives and autobiographical or ethnographic reflections. This is developed further in the subsequent sections. Therefore, this research required a method that would allow a wide range of migrant experiences to be explored through the stories they told in both oral and written form. Narratives in all three forms have been considered, creating a more dynamic means of data collection (in contrast to quantitative approaches), and have allowed the experiences of female Polish migrants in England to be viewed as individual subjects, acting and reflecting on their migration and mobility (Eastmond, 2007).

Since this study is positioned in the personal, subjective, intersubjective, and collaborative sphere, the approach chosen for the narrative practice needs to attest to the multiplicity of voices, subject positions, and storylines. Ultimately, there is more than one story to tell and there is more than one voice to speak and hear. The narratives shared in this study are not a homogenous collection of streamlined storylines, but rather consist of multiple untamed story elements, and are connecting stories of gender, relationships, politics, economics and personhood. They speak of belonging, disassociation, vulnerability to the other, to the discourse context, constant self/other surveillance, the construction of difference as 'other', of taking up of ambivalent and dualistic positions in discourses, and moving beyond. This thesis therefore firstly adopts a narrative practice inspired by the rhizome thinking introduced by Deleuze and Guattari, and then applies patchwork quilting as metaphor for the presentation of the data. In the following section, the relevance of both concepts and their application in this study is discussed.

3.2.1 Rhizomatic Perspective

Feminist scholarship focuses on the importance of understanding the unique nature of women's storytelling and narratives as an expression of an individual's sense of self, and their subjectivity as identity informed and shaped by experience, perception, language, and culture (Abrams, 2010). Ultimately, the self is then not

something that is an inherently given, nor has a stable centre, but rather something that is continually (re)constructed in and through the stories that someone tells about him/herself (Bruner, 2002; Ricoeur, 1988; Ricoeur, 1992). The philosophical position adopted for this study challenges the assumption that there is a deep truth that can be discovered. However, rather than navigating the realism verses relativism binary, this research shares the view that ‘the self both is and is not a fiction, is unified and transcendent and fragmented and always in the process of being constituted, can be spoken of in realist ways and it cannot, and its voice can be claimed as authentic and there is no guarantee of authenticity’ (Davies & Gannon, 2006: 384). Consequently, drawing on a growing number of academics in previous decades reflecting on the limitations and contradictions of narrative research, this study applies the concept of rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988) for describing and investigating narratives as socio-cultural embedded performances in which subjectivity and intersubjectivity is continuously and polyphonously constructed and reconstructed.⁵³

Deleuze and Guattari described a rhizome as an underground root system, an open decentralized network, which branches out to all sides, unpredictably and horizontally, according to principles of multiple entryways, multiplicity, connection, a-signifying ruptures, and cartography.⁵⁴ The ‘rhizomatic’ thought image with its

⁵³ Traditional narratives tend to emphasize and streamline all elements into one complete meta narrative, post-modern narratives although creating space for alternative story forms is not without shortcomings as one could “get lost in a chaos of untamed story elements and would no longer be able to understand each other” (Sermijn & Loots, 2015, p. 3). For application of the rhizome concept in narrative research see for example Sermijn, J et al. (2008); Tambouku (2010); Winslade (2009); O’Grady (2018) and Loots et al. (2017)

⁵⁴ In their approach they experiment with the Deleuzoguattarian concept of rhizome emphasizing that the application is not to be understood as a given, since “(concepts) are not given, they are created; to be created” (Deleuze, 1994: 11). Deleuze (1966; 1968) argued for distancing from the tradition of rational thinking in philosophy and approaching the world in terms of categorization and hierarchical ordering. He suggested that philosophy overestimated similarity and identity at the expense of distinguishing difference and singularity. Hence, according to Deleuze truth cannot be said to be the product of a prior disposition or schema, neither can reality be represented in abstract and static identities, which neglects differentiation, segmentation, intensities and interconnectedness outside representation. Deleuze focuses instead on the process and power that do the forming, then on the final forms themselves, which are considered as illusions of solidity and stability. A focus on differences highlights thinking that is not directed at recognizing the abstract schemata and models, but which unfolds difference into more difference, opening on to a virtual field of possibilities to be actualized along divergent lines of becoming (Pearson, 1997). The move to considering thought as a transcendent representation of what ‘is’ into an immanent and creative process led to the development of thinking as rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari, 1976). In contrast to the tree with its hierarchical and binary root structure rhizome lacks clear structure and spreads to all sides. It is dynamic and open, a decentralized network,

principles is applied to this study for several reasons. First, according to the principle of multiple entryways, the self (and its reflections on one's experiences) can be accessed via multiple entryways and each entryway will develop a different construction of personal reflections. It also suggests that connections can be made beyond, or in spite of class, gender, age and so on. Equally, the multiple entryways translate into a multiplicity which is not abridged into a unit, and there is no clear dominant structure, order or hierarchy. As such, there is also no single truth about the self⁵⁵, or experiences to be told or discovered by the researcher, as dependent on the entryway there are a multitude of temporal truths and stories. Consequently, 'speaking' cannot be understood as a vocalisation of what the subject is thinking and the experiences it relates, but as an ongoing process of becoming.⁵⁶

Secondly, the principle of multiplicity enforces the multitude of 'truths' within the rhizomatic narrative as there are many stories and experiences which can be picked up on or connected to, dependent the entryway which has been taken. This leads to different storylines, viewpoints and perspectives, none of which can be reduced to one unity or dominant narrative. The multitude of stories and reflections which evolve in the process are also depended on the co-construction and interaction which takes place between the participant and the researcher, as well as the wider discursive context.⁵⁷ In this sense, the temporal and local appropriation of one reflection or storyline excludes other threads.⁵⁸ For example, they depended on the

and can therefore take very diverse forms: from splitting and spreading in all directions on the surface to the form of bulbs and tubers. Significantly it has multiple entryways, it can be entered from various directions and different points. Every element of the rhizome can be connected with any other point in the rhizome (the principle of connection). If at whatever point a rhizome is ruptured or destroyed, it will always grow further, begin again, either where it was before or on new lines or connections (the principle of a signifying rupture) (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988; see also Sermijn et al., 2008; Loots et al. (2017).

⁵⁵ Following Deleuze & Guattari's rejection of the idea of a fixed, conscious subject at the core of thought and speaking, Buchanan and Colebrook state that instead they are thinking and speaking of "trans-individual possibilities of becoming" (2000: 9).

⁵⁶ As Davies et al (2004, p. 365) point out based on Barthes' idea about *giving birth to ourselves* in writing, we also give birth to ourselves in speaking, we are therefore embodied in the story, or our reflections about an experience, written/read and told in multiple ways

⁵⁷ Sermijn et al (see Devliger, Loots, Sermijn, 2008 ; Sermijn, Loots, 2015) in their experimental application of rhizomatic self narrative practice point out that there exist an uncertainty between the multiple/ever shifting 'I' and the 'I' embedded in the traditional discourse which seeks fixity. They draw attention to the fact that: "rhizome thinking views this unity and fixity as an illusion, as each telling is always local and temporal" (Devliger, Loots, & Sermijn, 2008: 10).

⁵⁸ This exclusion evoked by the aspect of locality and temporality therefore creates the illusion that the single unity (storyline/reflection on experiences) takes over which in Deleuzoguattarian terms could be seen as a 'ridification' and 'aborified',

context in which the experiences are being reflected, the relationship between the participant and the researcher, the participant's and the researcher's relation to wider discourse and perspectives and dominant narratives about migration. True to the rhizome concept, these are merely a momentary manifestation, because a multitude of other reflections and storylines could exist simultaneously, they are just not spun or entangled at this point and time. Even if one particular narrative or experience seems to be dominant, there are still many others that can be followed, as Deleuze and Guattari highlight 'there is always something that flows or flees, that escapes' (1988: 238). It is in awareness and recognition of the elements that do not fit and escape, the 'meta-narrative', that the rhizomatic narrative finds resonance. The alternative reflections create space for new connections and lead to deeper insights and richer expressions on everyday experiences of migration.

This study applies rhizomatic thinking, for the understanding of women's narratives on the everyday experience of mobility. It embraces multiplicity, openness and connectivity and therefore offers an alternative practice to traditional representations of women's voices. As such, it follows feminist scholarship which emphasizes shared modes of telling where personal stories are interwoven or connected to and created with others (see Abraham, 2010; Moody-Adams, 1998; Weedon 1998). The rhizome narrative does not celebrate one particular story line, or a hierarchical style. Instead, it is open to a many possible strands which can be spun in various directions and interwoven with many different threads. Using the rhizome concept for the exploration of narratives of everyday experiences of migration, I listened for heterogeneous, connecting, rupturing storylines that were at times coherent but more often, contradictory (Deleuze & Guattari, 1976; Sermijn, Devlieger, & Loots, 2008). In this sense this study engages in a narrative inquiry that attempts to capture the multitude of 'polyphony of the different voices' (Sermijn & Loots, 2015: 115) and fosters collaboration between researcher and participants. The multifariously (re) constructed rhizomatic narratives on the everyday experiences of

it becomes a 'molar line', 'lines of rigid on which everything seems calculable and foreseen' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 215-216)e.g. dominant meta narratives about migrant women.

migration are then crafted into a multivocal account by application of the ‘patchwork quilt’ metaphor as the following section elaborates.

3.2.2 Crazy Patchwork Quilt- Crafting a multivocal account

This study seeks to respect personal experiences, and to be sensitive to the nuances of each individual narrative. Following the rhizomatic thinking discussed in the previous section, this research demonstrates an awareness of each piece being a local and temporary unity, and this thesis recognises and celebrates this flexibility and openness. In this sense, it adopts the ‘crazy patchwork quilt’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 526) as a methodological concept which translates into the crafting of a multivocal account of mobility experiences.⁵⁹ Pieced together from individual reflections and experiences, local whilst embedded in a larger geopolitical panorama, but equally based on my personal and autobiographical reflections. Following the rhizomatic thought image, the study argues that narratives surrounding everyday experiences of migration cannot be fully appreciated through schematic and dominant ‘meta-narratives’ on the subject, nor can the narrative be represented on a mono dimensional level. Therefore, the ‘the crazy patchwork quilt’ metaphor is utilised to move away from a narrowing linear understanding of mobility and to open up to new alternative connections. Mending, improving, and (re) arranging or bricolage is essential to quilting work.⁶⁰ The quilter uses diverse materials and by listening to and representing multifocal reflections can give rise to a creative kaleidoscopic assemblage, without narrowing the experiences to dominant one-

⁵⁹ Deleuze & Guattari (1988) differentiate between embroidered and patchwork quilts. Embroidered quilts have a centre motif and they develop in a continuous pattern throughout the work. In contrast there is no centre in patchwork quilts they are pieced together from multiple pieces of varying size, shape and colour and can develop in various directions. Similarly, the crazy patchwork quilt and the embroidered quilt are associated with Deleuze & Guattari’s ideas about the soft and striated as a conceptual pair between nomadic forces and sedentary captures. In that sense the “crazy patchwork quilt” as a metaphor corresponds to the idea of the rhizome where else the embroidered quilt mimics the arborescent metaphor of the tree. The “crazy patchwork quilt” shows the rhizomatic nature in the sense that it never starts from scratch but instead creates new relationships out of material gathered from diverse sources, ceaselessly mixing and matching (i.e. materials from the old world: memories, ideas, emotions form the old world or pre-migration; with textiles produced locally: experiences, emotions and relationships post migration, or the relationship between the researcher and the participant or text).

⁶⁰ In the context of qualitative research Denzin and Lincoln (2000) mention that bricolage can be understood as putting together many elements to form a well-constructed, quilt-like whole.

dimensional narratives about women migrants' experiences of mobility. In adopting the 'crazy patchwork quilt', this study follows other feminist scholars who have embraced quilting (Flannery, 2001; Warren, 1988) with the aim to contest ahistorical and abstract theory building and, as Warren suggests, to oppose 'all isms of domination', instead offering an account that is 'structurally pluralistic' (1988: 187-188). In this sense the researcher, as quilter, does not discover absolute facts, nor does she randomly assemble data, but instead with purpose and within context, creates situated research out of disparate sources such as participant data, literary accounts, theory, and self-reflexivity. The process of assembling the patchwork quilt is, however, not random but guided by themes emerging from interview data as well as fictional accounts.

Qualitative research has applied the quilting metaphor to study multiple contexts (Saukko, 2000; Devliger, Loots, & Sermijn, 2008; Koelsch, 2012; Learn, 1996). For the aspect of 'presentation', or the piecing together of the different stories, this study builds on the work of Saukko (2000) and Koelsch (2012), who in their work have applied the quilting metaphor.⁶¹ By applying the quilt metaphor to this research project, several parallels develop between the study and the physical object. For example, a physical quilt is composed of individual patches stitched together. Similar, to the physical quilt, each participant's reflections represent such a patch. The patches in the crazy quilt represent various fabrics and shapes, similar to the personal experiences, which is understood here as rich and real in themselves. They represent a multitude of meanings. They can stand on their own, and also be connected to various sources outside the individual patches or personal experiences, including memories, sources outside of the individual subjectivity such as discourse, historical and sociocultural or economic information. The threads connecting the patches in the physical quilt tie the quilt together. The 'patches as reflections' are equally held together by the authorial voice and themes on women's experience of migration

⁶¹ In Saukko's work the quilt was applied to answer the following question "(h)ow researchers can be true and respect the inner experiences of people and at the same time critically assess the cultural discourses that form the very stuff from which our experiences are made?" and therefore as a way of connecting individual stories to larger cultural discourse. For Koelsche as an application of a living text, a radical evocative research methodology, where the quilt is both method and product. In this sense the intent for the final outcome of this research is "evocation rather than representation" (Koelsch, 2012: 828) as Otto explains "the crazy quilt is the pattern with the least amount of discipline and the greatest measure of emotion" (1994:4).

from wider academic literature and popular culture. The backing and batting of the physical quilt, fundamental to the structure is the least visible element of the quilt. The source for the batting and backing for this research project originates equally in discourse, 'seen by those who know that they are there' (Koelsch, 2012: 828), which form, shape, and give structure to the patchwork quilt.

This study attests how women have experienced migration and how, as critical subjects, they are affected by, and have come to reassess, socio-cultural and political discourse in light of their experiences at different points in their lives. Therefore, the individual reflections are presented as a third person narrative, entwined with direct quotes from interviews, literary, scholarly and popular threads on the experience of migration as well as my personal experience. The reason for choosing the third person narrative is twofold. First, the fact that I am re-telling the reflections from an outside perspective is made explicit. Secondly, by interweaving these women's voices and reflections into my own narrative I am entwining them into my own personal experience as well as the theoretical discourse, highlighting how the voice of the author and the participants are always connected with one another and the social voices that speak through them (Saukko, 2000: 303). In addition, to differentiate between the voices (including autoethnographic vignettes and fictional texts), the excerpts are each presented in different colours (see also appendix B).

Nonetheless, each individual reflection or experience are parts of a broader discourse. Therefore, the personal reflections are connected to each other by setting them side by side and linking them to literary accounts and discussions about migration and movement to trace a multi-layered and multivocal landscape. This can also help to reveal problems, possibilities, and blind spots in each perspective. The purpose of this bricolage is to capture the complexity and multifaceted nature of the experience of migration, which neither mainstream scholarship nor the affected individual can comprehend in their full complexity. This study complements, contradicts and cross probes by integrating a multivocality of perspectives and integrates plural narrative voices. Consequently, the singularity of individual perspectives is contested, and instead the complexity of human experience with that

what lies 'underneath' is foregrounded. In effect, this research creates a collective 'we' amid celebrating the 'I'.

This study pieces together individual reflections around reoccurring themes in interviews and literature on the experience of movement and migration. This decision does not aim to reduce personal reflections and experiences to selected leitmotifs and therefore reinforce 'molar lines' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988). Instead, it acknowledges that subjectivity is always interwoven with discourse that defines us as women, migrants, Eastern Europeans, therefore it is best to bring these discourses to light and address them. Finally, the reason for interweaving the 'authorial stitches' (Saukko, 2000: 304) into the quilt is an invitation to the reader to enter a dialogue based on my own personal and partial perspective. Just as I wish to share the women's reflections about themselves and their experience of migration, I wish to share my own reflections with the reader in order to hold up a mirror to myself and the times which we live in.

3.3 Narrative Sources

This section outlines the approaches used to gain insight into everyday lived experiences of migration. It begins by introducing the rationale for combining narrative methods, exploring the three different narrative types applied for the research, specifically autoethnography and life-story interviews, whilst also interpreting fictional texts. The discussion demonstrates differences between individual sources of narratives in terms of genre and highlights how the combination of methods elicits rich data/experiences.

3.3.1 Combined narrative sources

As argued in the earlier chapter (see also 'Crazy Patchwork Quilt' chapter 3.2.2) the methodological concept adopted in this study aims to craft a multivocal account of migration experiences. Analogously, this study explores how methodological boundaries can be extended to address questions of complexity and multivocality of migration experiences that cannot be explored with traditional methods and proposes combined methods (different types of narrative) to generate

multidimensional material on how migration is lived, experienced and understood. While combining the different narrative methods in this study, I acknowledge that 'while narratives are personal, they are thoroughly shaped by socio-cultural conventions' (Smith & Sparkes, 2008: 17). This study emphasises using the experiences of the self to learn about the social, as 'storied resource perspectives have the potential to encompass people as able to develop personal stories that are idiosyncratic in their detail and unique to the circumstances of a particular life, but these cannot be extricated from the social' (Smith & Sparkes, 2008: 20). Personal experiences as data act as entry points to 'gain insight into' the 'broader set of social phenomena' (Anderson, 2006a: 387). In effect, the encounter of personal narrative (both autoethnographic and life-story based) with textual artefacts, opened up deeper passages into migration experiences and surfaced subtle themes, for example microaggression depicted by the means of a smile or the lack thereof - see chapter.... It was through exploring the interactions between my lived experiences, life-story interviews, and fictional texts, that I developed a deeper understanding of how personal migration experiences are shaped by socio-cultural practices.

The integration of different narrative sources produces a complex and dynamic account of migration experiences – depicting migration experiences from multiple perspectives and extending the understanding of lived, emotional and embodied practices. Combining the different narratives demonstrates that such an approach can extend understanding on the complexity of migration experiences, everyday practices, and the effect of external socio-cultural factors on 'everyday' life. Integrating the different types of narrative in this study produced a rich and complex account of personal experiences of migration, however I am not claiming that this comprehensive picture captures the reality of lived lives. The different narratives are complex and interwoven. Autoethnography, life-story interviews and fictional accounts intersect and combine to form multifarious, often contradictory, conscious and unconscious ways of experiencing migration. Casting a picture that is dynamic, continuous, emergent and constantly adapting. In piecing together, these different narrative 'patches' and analysing these interconnected and complex data sources I suggest foregrounding the emotional messiness, uncertainties and fluidity which constitute migration experience. As Kerry Daly reminds us 'life experience is messy,

we may do well, in our portrayals of that experience, to hold onto some of that messiness in our writings' (Daly, 2007: 259-260). Mixing the narratives effectively illustrates how facets of lived experience and understanding combine in different ways at different times, producing momentary meanings.⁶²

In the approach chosen, I advocate that the integration of different methods both brings to light and unsettles definable trends in migration research. The multivocality and complexity of experiences foregrounded in the mixed narrative approach do not neatly fit into generalisable experiences which edit, abstract, and reduce 'real lives' to sanitised measurements of experience; as this process obscures the vitality of living and lived lives (Mason, 2008). Instead, I propose that a combination of narrative methods is effective for the examination of the intricate and multifarious migration trajectories, highlighting the different layers of meaning and understanding by tracing individual, emotive, cultural and social patterning that shape and are shaped by everyday experiences.

3.3.2 Autoethnographic reflections – Bringing in the 'I'

My own personal experience of migration, and therefore my story, stands in relation to other's experiences and stories and is integral to this study. My research site is also my home, and access to the reflections on the experience of migration is both enabled and limited by my migrant status. Neither can I exit the field nor maintain an objective distance from it, as positivist research claims is necessary (Atkinson, 1997; Delamont, 2009). Drawing on other academics, I understand that this piece of research would never be neutral, impersonal, or objective (Bochner, 2002; Denzin, Norman K.; Lincoln, Yvonna, 2000), although some researchers would argue that this is still possible (Atkinson, 1997; Delamont, 2009). Therefore, I have opted for an approach that acknowledges and accommodates my subjectivity, emotionality, and the influence on the research (Ellis & Bochner, 2000: 737), rather than avoiding these aspects or assuming they did not exist. Namely, I cannot ignore my own experience of migration in order to conduct neutral, unbiased research on

⁶² See also Rhizome and multiple entry ways in Chapter 3.2.1.

others' experiences. In my approach choice, I have moved towards auto-ethnography, a research method that weaves a connection between 'the autobiographical and the personal [...] the cultural, social, and political' (Ellis, 2004: 19). In doing so, I am adding to the body of literature on migration experiences by female Polish migrants in the UK and bridging a gap, as a similar study to my knowledge has not been conducted this far.

Its various forms and creative representations make autoethnography challenging to define precisely (Adams & Holman Jones, 2008; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). However, it is best explained as an approach to research and writing that aims to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno) (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005).⁶³ As Reed-Danahay (1997) notes, auto-ethnography has multiple meanings. It involves both the method and product of researching and writing about personal lived experiences, and their relationships to culture (Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011).⁶⁴ Boylorn and Orbe (2014) note that autoethnography demonstrates the multiple ways in which identities are understood by exploring intersectionality – the interaction of race and ethnicity, gender and sex, socioeconomic status, sexuality, nationality and so on.

Autoethnography is both a process and product as it involves both the method and product of researching and writing about personal lived experiences and their relationships to culture (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Ellis, 2004) and therefore has multiple meanings (Reed-Danahay, 1997). It calls for focussed introspection and a readiness to open up to vulnerability, interwoven with moments of realization and crisis and often linked to the mundane. However, the journey can

⁶³ Ethnography, in comparison, is the thick description of a foreign/unfamiliar culture, its values and beliefs, artefacts and texts by in depth observation but also participation, usually forming relationships with members of this group to access their knowledge (Voloder, 2013). Consequently, autoethnography is then the study of the researcher's own experience of being part of that culture (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011)

⁶⁴ Denzin (1997, p. 227) noted that auto-ethnography involves the "turning of the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze on ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self-experiences occur." Auto-ethnography navigates and encompasses the inward and outward gaze, whilst remaining a critical lens with the aim to understand who we are in the context of our socio-cultural communities. As Chang (2008: 46) suggests one expects "the stories of auto-ethnographers to be reflected upon, analysed and interpreted within a broader sociocultural context".

be rewarding and illuminate both personal and communal experiences (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). As Ellis et al. (2011) noted autoethnography has the potential to create a multivocal and unique window into a culture and its narrative style can make the research more accessible to a wider audience than traditional manuscripts. This research is written 'self-consciously, value centred rather than pretending to be value free' (Ellis et al., 2011, §3, citing Bochner, 1994), I am not attempting to hide my intention to 'bear witness' (Adams & Jones, 2011), rather than a preoccupation with accuracy, I intend to produce an analytically accessible text, that 'changes us and the world we live in for the better' (Holman-Jones, 2005: 764). In that sense I employ critical autoethnography which widens the boundaries of traditional research by reassessing personal stories as political acts (Adams & Jones, 2011) and, following Boylorn and Orbe (2014), 'understand[s] the lived experience of real people in context, to examine social conditions and uncover oppressive power arrangements, and to fuse theory and action to challenge processes of domination' (p.20).

In conducting this research, I draw on selected personal recollections of particular experiences of mobility mainly reconstructed from memory, but also other anecdotes relevant to this piece of research, for example reflections on the research process (see also 3.7.1) I further use research literature to analyse my personal reflections and consider ways in which others may experience similar epiphanies. Effectively, I use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience. Finally, this thesis examines cultural experience evidenced by field notes, interviews, and literary artefacts and is followed by, where applicable, a description of these patterns. This has been achieved by using storytelling (for example personal memories, and reflexive thoughts on the interviews), showing and telling (such as using excerpts of the literary accounts or interviews), and alterations of authorial voice (personal reflections are recalled in the first-person narrative, but participants stories in a third person narrative voice). The purpose is to not only to make the personal experience meaningful and culturally engaging, but also to produce a study that has the potential to reach a wider audience and therefore expand the scope of traditional research (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). It also voices experiences of a group of

women (including myself), who before being written into this research, may not have felt they had one (Jago, 2002).

Nonetheless, I am aware that autoethnography is often criticised for being not academic or scientific enough. It can be said to use biased data, and not meet academic standards (Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). In choosing autoethnography as an approach for this research I am, however, primarily interested in who will read it, and how it will affect them. Therefore, the aim has been, to supplement existing research in this area. My intention is not to resolve any issues but to make possible 'the ability for participants and readers to observe and, consequently, better testify on behalf of an event, problem, or experience' (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011: 27). Questions of reliability, generalisability, and validity of autoethnography are often contested by traditional social science. However, within this particular context 'the meaning and utility of these terms are altered' (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011: 32). Within autoethnography, questions of reliability are related to the narrator's credibility, and validity means that a piece appears truthful, and has the ability to speak to a wide audience (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Ellis, 2004). Consequently, in this research, I, as the researcher, will be describing actual experiences (validity). These will be both personal experiences and also those of others, even if these might be distorted by memory, the interview context, or analysis. I present a story that is believable and lifelike and in so doing I am communicating with others, different to myself (validity). This thesis then speaks to others, as I present an unfamiliar experience to them. Readers can reflect on those experiences, and compare them with their similar - or very different - lives (generalizability).

A further source of critique with this approach is articulated around the intense focus on the scholar, suggesting that, 'the researcher's self is more absorbing than other social actors' (Atkinson, 2006: 402-403) and that therefore the work has the potential to appear self-absorbed. However, I wish to construct a self-narrative 'that places the self within a social context,' reaching beyond the narrative of the individual self (Reed-Danahay, 1997: 9). Therefore, this study follows Anderson (2006) who implied that autoethnography can reach beyond the descriptive or emotive self-narrative, allowing for developing abstraction theorising out of the

autoethnographic account.⁶⁵ The autoethnographic approach that I am adopting is less focused on writing myself into the text but on using my experiences and interpretations to understand the experiences of others and their intersections with wider cultural processes (Voloder, 2008). This understanding of autoethnography positions the researcher as a member of the researched group; being visible in the text and weaving accounts of self and others for the purpose of abstraction and theory (Anderson, 2006). Effectively, the autoethnographic approach applied to this research moves beyond a personal account, and instead points to my involvement with the social world examined here, involvement that reaches beyond the scope of this research.

3.3.3 Interview sources – A collaborative encounter over the ‘kitchen table’

The second source of narratives interwoven in this study are interviews (which will hereafter be referred to as life-story narratives) with Polish women who now live in England. Within public and historical migration narratives, woman’s everyday experience of mobility are still marginalised.⁶⁶ Feminist researchers highlight that women’s voices often fall outside dominant narratives because they tend to occupy private physical spaces, addresses a different audience, and deals with distinctive subject matter.⁶⁷ This study employs feminist research which focuses on

⁶⁵ ‘Autoethnographers should illustrate analytic insights through recounting their own experiences and thoughts as well as those of others. Furthermore, they should openly discuss changes in their beliefs and relationships over the course of fieldwork, thus vividly revealing themselves as people grappling with issues relevant to membership and participation in fluid rather than static social worlds.’ (Reinharz, 1992: 384)

⁶⁶ Feminist research has long stressed that women’s voices have been marginalised by dominant male narratives (Brikalan-Gedik, 2016; Warner, 1995); as well as critiqued patriarchal power relationships within academia (Reinharz, 1992; Letherby, 2003; Lykke, 2010).

⁶⁷ Feminist researchers have long uncovered that women tell stories to other women and children in what is considered private spheres i.e. kitchens or bedrooms, rather than publicly (Brikalan-Gedik, 2016; Warner M. , 1995). Research in the linguistics and communications studies implies that men and women implement different narrative styles in everyday conversation, as Abrahams noted (2010: 119) researchers suggest that ‘women’s storytelling is a means of *sociability* whereas men’s is a means of *self-aggrandizing*’ Research now widely recognizes that male and female storytellers adopt different strategies and narrative styles. Women’s narrative styles and strategies are being understood as collaborative, shared modes of telling, in opposition to male narratives which are identified as hierarchical, focused on the remarkable (Abrams, 2010: 119). Consequently, and in comparison, to men’s stories which are viewed as ‘tellable’ to a wider public audience, there is a certain level of devaluation of

the subjective experience of women, and in doing so, fosters a compensatory (re)discovery of female heritage and experiences, whilst challenging the heteronormative and lack of attention that academics have given the female voice and the private (domestic) sphere (Warren, 1988). This research gives voice to women's narratives on migration by creating a feminist frame which facilitates female-to-female communication (Abrams, 2010: 120) granted in the private encounter, an intimate space, where over coffee or at the kitchen table, a story about the personal experience, the everyday, is shared. This study embraces the intimate, personal, and collaborative aspects of women's storytelling⁶⁸, while bringing to light the supposedly small, quotidian and hidden narratives of everyday experiences of migration.

The life story method offers an important opportunity to take migrant women's everyday experiences into account and can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of gender and migration. As such, this study is a contribution to a shift in the methodological and theoretical underpinnings of research that values the subjective and personal everyday experiences of migrant women. Although there are disciplinary differences in the life-story method, it can be assumed that it can bring to the fore individual (auto)biographies, which initially might be understood as personal trajectories, strategies and forms of identification. At the same time, they offer a way to understand interrelations between time, space and the social structures in which they are located (Rustin, 2002: 11). Although narrative researchers differ in the extent to which they embrace, exclude, and relate to the larger social context in which narratives are embedded (Riessman, 1993), I position

women's stories which, historically and contemporarily still are viewed as private stories, they are understood as "secrets to keep rather than stories to tell" (Langellier & Peterson, 1992) within the realm of the private.

⁶⁸ Langier and Peterson (1992) note that contrary to male storytelling, where the audience's function is reduced to an astounded admiration of the hero's performance, women's storytelling is interwoven into a web of social and emotional connections within the audience, which act more so as participants rather than purely recipients of the story. Acting as participants implies that the group of women, share a story be actively adding to it. They add their own reflections and experiences as well as by posing questions about the personal narrative they enrich the story with their own elements. Within the process of storytelling women are eager to connect with the others' experiences. They weave their own stories into the personal narrative therefore create a shared fabric, depicting women's lives. By so doing the ability to take care of personal experiences and share stories within a group enables women to connect and transmit these stories before they cease to exist.

this study within a feminist narrative analysis frame.⁶⁹ Therefore, this study makes a conscious effort to consider how race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, and other contexts of diversity and inequality surface in the research participants' multi-layered daily life experiences, their telling of their stories, and the multiple contexts within which these stories may be represented and interpreted. Ultimately, this thesis not only puts individuals with their subjective intersectionality and their lives and experiences to the forefront, but also considers the socio-cultural and historical context in which they are situated.⁷⁰

By situating this study within in a feminist framework, it embraces intersubjectivity and mutual cocreation of the of data in the interview situation. In the context of personal narratives, at least two (if not more) lives intersect: the narrator and the audience. In this sense, feminist scholarship speaks of intersubjectivity (Cossellett, et al., 2000). At the core lies the relationship developed between the researcher and the participant, the narrator, and the audience, but also the relationship between personal and public narratives. The narration of life is not isolated from other people and structures; these are part of the process and the narrative. I as the researcher am no longer listening from a distance to stories and then re-representing these stories (as the traditional view would proclaim), but am part of the narrative, I am participating in it. My positioning is rooted in the shared figurations and the experience of movement. I am also interwoven in the conversations. As Langellier and Peterson (1992) note, within women's narratives is a social element, therefore the research centres around participation and collaboration. Thus, this study adopts Olesen's (1994) notion that the women who participate in research are actually doing research in their daily lives, as they construct the meanings of the experiences that later become the data that I as the researcher interpret. This approach is also based on the premise that storytelling is a

⁶⁹ see for example Personal Narratives Group (1989)

⁷⁰ The idea that individual lives and lived experience has a major contribution to make to the understanding of the social world is not a particularly new one. In the interwar period the now classic study by W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, conducted in the 1920s, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (republished in 1958), established an interest in life experience data, in this case what can be described as autobiographical accounts of polish peasants' migration experiences as revealed in letters, including a detailed life history of one of these. For Thomas and Znaniecki both the individual and the social were crucial elements in any study of social life, in this case understanding migration and social/cultural change (Harrison, 2008).

mutual process (Bruner, 1986; Langellier & Peterson, 1992). I therefore understand that the quality and substance of the data produced in the interview encounter is dependent on the interpersonal quality of that interaction, cocreation, and mutuality is then contingent on the efforts taken to identify and reduce the power inequalities among researchers and participants.

This study argues that the women's stories shared within the research setting are representations of the participants' experiences. In this sense, they are interpretations of experiences, reinterpreted in each (re)telling, (re)hearing, and (re)reading. As highlighted earlier, in my approach I embrace a poststructuralist and feminist understanding to language and truth. Therefore, the meaning can never be fixed as knowable or 'true,' instead it is always open to contestation and redefinition. In this research, I do not uphold the notion of a story as an 'accurate' or 'true' account of what 'really happened'. Instead, I understand that in each cocreated research conversation, the participants can only share what is 'real' and 'true' for them at that very moment. This can be shaped by many factors, such as her mental and physical state, how she reacts to the me as the researcher, what she thinks the researcher wants to know, or any number of other environmental or contextual factors. The research conversations are framed in a context, for example persons, place, time, interactions, and are permeated with meanings. Therefore, the stories are socially constructed multilayer fabrics interwoven from unique threads of personal, relational, socio-cultural, and historical realities, perceptions and experiences (Bruner, 1993; Riessman, 1989; Richardson, 1990).

By welcoming collaboration between researcher and participant, this study re-appropriates the familiar (domestic) space, often deemed as unimportant⁷¹, to create an encounter where the otherwise unnoticed personal and everyday is expressed and brought to light. In having these intimate two-way conversations 'over the kitchen table', this study further questions common heteronormative

⁷¹ Applied the context of Polish women, it should be noticed that in the past, not unlike other parts of the former Eastern Bloc (Ilic, 2020), women's voices were often only acknowledged as contribution to the official socialist discourse, therefore everyday lived experiences were peripheral. It could be argued that post-transition and within the current Polish socio-political climate with its rise of nationalistic ideals and the return to traditional gender roles, womens' lived everyday experiences are still sidelined and often confined to the private and domestic space.

assumptions within the Polish cultural context, where interpersonal relations in the private space (the kitchen) are tinted by notions of 'kitchen matriarchy'.⁷² These are often occupied by the stereotypical figure of Mother Pole 'insanely annoying, terrorizing with food' (Raczyńska, 2012: 31), 'who serves the interest of patriarchy: in her person she exemplifies religion, social conscience, and nationalism' (Rich, 1995: 88). Instead, by turning to the interpersonal conversations in the intimate space, this study re-negotiates the relational aspect between women of different generations and therefore reclaims their voices and bonds. As Kazimiera Szczuka noted in the Polish context these are 'essential to restore the missing pillar from our culture, the relationship between mother and daughter, respect for a woman's words' (Szczuka, 2001: 25).

3.3.4 Fictional Sources – Inspirational literary accounts

Apart from utilising autoethnography and life-story interviews, this study also investigates fictional narratives of migration by women with the aim to tell stories that are not told elsewhere (Burge, 2020). The combination of these three types of sources highlights the interaction of personal with creative narratives and historical contexts, whilst drawing on a diversity of often divergent and interdisciplinary, theoretical approaches. This provides a nuanced and complex understanding of the phenomenon of migration. However, this study recognises that fictional narratives differ from life-story narratives and autoethnographic reflections, in terms of genre and language application. Broadly speaking, fictional narratives refer to plot, settings, and characters created from imagination, even if some of the aspects take inspiration from the real world. Nevertheless, they are products of the writer's creative output, whereas life story narratives and autobiographical reflections refer to real life

⁷² Slawomira Walczewska (1999), wrote that within the Polish society the kitchen space and feeding are the only places and activities where women can feel safe and perform a form of female authority, however the actual female power is often illusory and wishful rather than realistic. The 'gastronomic mother' is limited to organising, cooking and serving food for the rest of the family. Anna Titkow speaks of 'managerial matriarchy' (2007: 68-70) and 'super woman' (2007: 72) gender roles 'specific for communist and post-communist countries of Eastern Europe in which woman, overworked, tiered, burdened with purchases, feels at the same time that she is an irreplaceable manager of family life. She fulfils obligations and duties which could be a job for several people' (1995: 31-32)

experiences, even if filtered through personal perceptions and constructed temporarily within the research encounter. Thus, fictional texts can have a moving effect and hold a great potential to recount by mobility beyond migration trajectories. Anne Rigney argues that ‘creative writing and other narrative forms are unique in their ability to foster connections between communities and mobilize audiences, thanks to their imaginative and affective properties’ (Bond, 2018: 7).⁷³

A fictional narrative on migration, not unlike the other two types of narratives examined in this study, does however not reveal ‘truths’ about the experience of migration, but instead is ‘individual, subjective, diverse: it reflects but also may exaggerate or even invert the social experience that drives it’ (King, Connell, & White, 1995: 15). Fictional texts on the experience of migration can be helpful for thinking beyond the idea of authenticity and objective ‘truth,’ and bring to light subjective and nuanced perspectives. Further, while interview narratives utilise spoken language, fiction narratives use literary techniques and stylized use of written language to narrate events and render human consciousness. These techniques could include, for example, rich or evocative sensory detail, different tempos, juxtaposition, delay, suspense, the use of different points of view, and subjective interiority. Ultimately, the language in fictional narratives can be highly imaginative, whilst the language within an interview encounter might lack the same level of imagination, although parameters are participant dependent.

This thesis argues that fiction can offer a critical perspective to raise consciousness, unsettle stereotypes and build empathy. Fiction helps researchers and readers to access and express human experiences and conditions which may otherwise be out of reach. Qualitative research aims to portray lives and generate understanding, as does the novel. Researchers have argued (White, 1995: 10) that creative literature can directly address and critique dominant representations and narratives about migrants, which allies with the objectives of this study. The popular

⁷³ ‘Recent research has shown how novels, thanks to the surplus aesthetic pleasure offered by art along with the possibility of becoming immersed in singular stories, have had a key role to play in shaping public perceptions of a larger geopolitical world in Europe and beyond and in the emergence of the discourse of human rights. This suggests that the arts, precisely because of their unscripted character and imaginative appeal, can more easily break away from inherited models and identity-ruts than other genres, and hence provide an experimental space bringing into play new actors and unfamiliar voices that fall outside dominant discourses’ (Rigney, 2014: 353).

media mostly represent migrants through one-dimensional stereotypes. In contrast, fiction examines those stereotypes by demasking simplistic portrayals of migrants and migration and 'cut[s] through simplistic political and media discourses around migration, and instead reveal[s] the complex and often horrendous realities behind the stereotypes' (Beyer, 2020: 379). Furthermore, works of fiction have the added bonus of simultaneously fostering understanding on an individual level, by giving insight into the characters' internal processes, and also on a sociological one, since fiction can simulate social experience (Mar & Oatley, 2008) and deliver knowledge (Green, 2010). In addition, the relationships between fiction and society are bi-directional, meaning that novels are influenced by societal trends, and that society can be influenced by works of art and cultural themes. One example of this is the understanding of the complex dynamics of culture and language upon the process of migrant identity which was influenced by the real-life example of migration portrayed in Eva Hoffman's (1990) *Lost in Translation—A Life in a New Language* (Lutz, 2011).

Creative literary narratives have the potential to carry great 'emotional capital' and let the reader into the minds of characters through 'internal monologue' (Abbott, 2008: 46-49). de Freitas, (2003) for example, suggested that getting at the 'inner life' of characters, and developing 'empathetic engagement' in readers, is a fundamental attribute of fiction. The significance of getting into the minds of characters, their feelings, motivations, and beliefs, cannot be understated. Historian Inga Clendinnen suggested that fiction has taught her most of what she knows by giving her access to characters' inner thoughts (Franklin, 2011: 15). Furthermore, reading fiction can generate pleasure and familiarity, gaining access to a different dimension of readers' consciousness, which promotes reflexive engagement (Leavy, 2011) and creates 'me too' moments (Pelias, 2004).

Although the body of creative literature on the experience of migration by women writers of Polish and other Eastern European descent is vast and expanding, the aim here is not to provide a detailed critical analysis of all these works, as this is beyond the scope of this study.⁷⁴ Instead, it focuses on fictional texts as a source of

⁷⁴ For a summary of literary works by Polish women in the UK post 2004 see for example: Kronenberg, (2018). For an analysis of Polish women's writing on the experience of migration pre and post transformation see also: Chowanec, (2015).

inspiration and utilises them to identify themes which in some way speak to or against the other forms of narrative explored in this study.⁷⁵ To identify the themes, I followed a narrative inquiry approach and selected themes dependent on their resonance, and how they connected to life-story interviews and autoethnographic vignettes. The works of fiction depicting migration experiences were chosen to reflect geographical and generational diversity. The texts describe different aspects of migration, but must be understood as literary reflections on some characteristics of this experience, and of the societal discourse surrounding it. Equally, the selected texts present a small sample of contemporary fictional writing on mobility experiences and are by no means exhaustive, or representative of all migration experiences. However, these are literary accounts of migration experiences, not personal narratives, or systematic descriptions. Nonetheless, fiction can be seen as a mirror of society, and the reading of texts such as those presented here might convey some aspects of migrant experience and societal responses, and foster empathy (Mar & Oatley, 2008). Therefore, I suggest that by reading fictional texts such as those presented in this study, researchers can further their empathic and transcultural understanding of migration experiences.

3.3.5 Memory

At the core of the reflections on experiences of mobility, either shared in interviews, autoethnographic reflections, or woven into the literary works, lies memory. When examining the narratives in this study, it must be recognised that memory is not a direct or simple recall of past events. Instead, it is the act of remembering, of calling forth images, experiences, and emotions from the past and weaving them into a story. The narrative is then to some extent shaped by our socio-cultural context and mediated through the present. Therefore, memories are always created in a wider frame. Memory is about the way we 'convert the fragmentary remains of experiences into [...] narratives that endure over time and constitute the stories of our lives' Schacter (1996: 71).

⁷⁵ For further information on the literary sources chosen for this study see also 3.7.3 and Appendix D

However, it should not be assumed that memory is a warehouse filled with ready-made stories. As Portelli noted: ‘memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings’ (1991: 52). In other words, memories are not only about the past, they are also about the present, they are not absolute but limited, dependent and relational. Neither is memory always reliable in terms of objectivity, although it might seem like ‘the truth’ for the person remembering. As Annette suggests, memory ‘is neither pure experience, nor pure event. Memory is an account, always discursive, always already textual’ (2007: 264). Therefore, memory is contingent and relational and never solely about the individual but also about the community, or collective.⁷⁶ In this sense, when considering the different types of narratives in this study I am aware that the memories recalled in the testimonies are not just personal but are pieced together in relation to the memories of family and friends as well as public narratives.⁷⁷ The reflections on the experience of migration can actualise master narratives, for example economic motivations for migration by positioning the narrator either within or outside of it.

Although memory is part of a wider socio-cultural and public context, it is also interwoven into our identity. Memory is key to our identity; the memory of the past is fundamental to our ability to construct a sense of self.⁷⁸ Research into autobiographical memory has illustrated that although there are concerns on grounds of accuracy of what one person actually remembers, there is evidence that for instance, habitual and repetitive experiences such as everyday life activities were

⁷⁶ As Abrams notes: ‘[M]emory – both individual and collective – exists in a symbiotic relationship with the public memorialisation of the past, so we must always be aware that memory expressed in an interview exists within a field of memory work that is going on at many levels in our society. In other words, one person’s memory operates within a wider context that includes memory produced and maintained by family, community, and public representations. Individual memory is then not seen as straight forward psychological phenomenon but as a socially shared experience’ (2010: 79)

⁷⁷ It is important to note that memories of personal experiences do not exist without connection to public memories which act as reference points within the personal narrative. As Trevor Lumnis suggested, most life-story interviews are a combination of personal and public memory (Abrams, 2010: 88).

⁷⁸ For example, people who have lost their memories, amnesiacs, often report that they feel as if they have lost their lives. Abrams noted that ‘without personal memory we are unable to satisfactorily construct a viable sense of self [...] Memory is then our roadmap: it tells us where we had been and aids us finding where we want to go’ (2010: 82). In this sense memory acts as the ‘glue’ the connecting element between past and present, memory is what allows people to “interpret their lives and redesign the conditions of possibility that account for what they once were, what they have since become and what they still hope to be and our relation to’ (Stoler & Strassler, 2006: 288).

more likely to be remembered and often recalled in elaborate detail (Abrams L. , 2010). This argument is particularly relevant to this study, as one of the foci is on the everyday trajectories of mobility. Equally, it has been argued that, if the mundane task was connected to an emotion, or if the event arouses emotions in the present, then it is more likely to be remembered.⁷⁹

Feminist scholars emphasise that there are significant differences in how men and women speak of and recall memories.⁸⁰ It is suggested that narratives by women create a dialogic and inclusive interpretive community. As one of the main aims of this research project focuses on creating a space for alternative, in opposition to scientific and public master narratives, reflections on the experience of migration, the dialogic nature of the story telling then fosters an inclusion for the addressable other. Without this 'other,' the stories cannot be told, meaning that, 'the absence of an empathetic listener, or more radically, the absence of an addressable other, an other who can hear the anguish of one's memories and thus affirm and recognise their realness, annihilates the story' (Laub, 1992: 67).

In terms of the gender and intergenerational memory transmission, a further concept offered by researchers who adopt a feminist optic is relevant for this study. Sophia Turkiewicz (2018: 129) based on Naomi Ruth Lowinsky's book *The Motherline* introduces the 'stories of the motherline as a wisdom that we have forgotten that we know: the ancient love of women'. In this sense, the 'stories of the motherline, [from grandmother to mother to daughter] provide us with a generational context, within which women reconnect with their roots, recuperate memory and comprehend their experiences' (ibid.: 128). This concept is useful in understanding how memories are passed on from generation to generation. It is equally relevant when there is a void

⁷⁹ However, Abrams (2010: 88) noted, it is far more difficult to relate the emotion that one felt at the time of the event. She then goes on to elaborate that it is possible to recall the cause of the emotion i.e., grief, distress, or pleasure but not the emotion itself.

⁸⁰ It has been noted that women use more often reported speech in retelling their memories. This then suggest that women are perhaps better at reporting dialogue than men, regardless of the fact whether they actually remember the dialogic situation better than men. It has therefore been suggested that women use reported speech in retelling their memories since they 'conceive of communication as a co-operative activity, and men view communication as a competitive activity' (Abrams L. , 2010: 91). Deborah Tannen notes, interview situations with women differ in the sense that the 'dialogue makes story into drama and listeners into interpreting audience to the drama' (Abrams, 2010: 91). For a wide range of feminist approaches to the analysis of women's life narratives see The Personal Narrative Group (1989)

of memories, a gap due to the missing dialogue which can be caused by different factors. Reconnecting with the stories told by the mother to daughter, mending and spinning the thread of memories, has the potential of reconstructing a richer narrative and new understandings of the subjectivity.

‘We can remember only thanks to the fact that somebody has remembered before us’ as Luisa Passerini observed (2009: 2), and memories are not just personal, but products of generational, social, cultural, and political settings. In the wider context, some memories are of things to which we personally were not witnesses, but which nevertheless interweave into our own personal narrative and subjectivities, since we were exposed to these stories and narratives around us. Marianna Hirsch (1997) has described such memories as ‘postmemory’ and uses the Holocaust as her main example.⁸¹ Postmemory is of relevance for this project since the experience of communism will have affected some of the participants directly, depending on their age cohort, but others will only remember socialism or the transformational years post-1989 from stories, images, and actions in the collective and public sphere. I am particularly interested in how women, whether in the form of their life-stories or in women’s writing, remember socialism if they have not lived through it. Of further interest is also the question: if the women have postmemories of socialism, how have these postmemories affected their understanding of self, home, and belonging? Furthermore, have these postmemories impacted their migration decision?

Finally, when considering memory in the context of migration, one inevitably encounters the rhetoric of loss and longing, although it has been noted that recent Polish mobility is not marked by displacement in the same sense as the experiences of those who have migrated during the socialist era or post-Second World War. Recent Polish migration depicts the migrant, in most cases, as an economic migrant, or a free traveller, often entwined in transnational networks and connected with the aid of technology and easy access to transport. However, nostalgia as the longing for

⁸¹ Although Hirsch (2012) has applied the postmemory paradigm mainly to the traumatic experiences of Holocaust and the relationship that the “generation after” bears to the personal, collective and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experiences they only remember by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up’ (ibid., p.5); Mitroiu however argues that postmemory is also at work when reflecting on the experiences of socialism as a totalitarian regime (2018).

the past becomes important in understanding political and cultural developments in Poland post transformation, since the 'dream' of democracy has been cemented in memories of an idealised past, traditional role models and nationalistic myths. Following in on Boym's understanding, restorative nostalgia in post-transformation Eastern European mobility allows the migrant to lead a 'nomadic' and transcultural existence, with multiple identities and home.⁸² In contrast, restorative nostalgia becomes the enabler of 'nationalistic discourses [...] of the reconstruction of an idealized home and chauvinistic identity' (Sufaru, 2018: 113). By the same token, restorative nostalgia post-transformation in Poland has led to the development of political parties grounded in nationalism, dominated by the spirit of Catholicism, and the re-establishing of traditional role models, which consequently as the reading of the literary texts and the interview data illustrate, has led to some of the women's migration decisions.

To summarise, the focus of this research is on the multi-layered nature of memory. I understand that memory although subjective, personal, and changeable, and is at the same time always reconstructed in narratives, and, 'always representation, always construction' (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003: 2) between the agents of memory. In memory and its representations, not one moment remains the same if we compare two memories of it. Different stories will be told depending on the circumstances. As such, while I am interested how the past effects the understanding of the self in the present, I also acknowledge that these expressions are fragmented and temporary interpretations. It then follows that above all this study predominantly aims to bear witness to stories told by the women of the everyday experience of migration.⁸³ By listening, reading, and therefore attending to

⁸² Svetlana Boym, in her oft quoted work *The future of Nostalgia* (2001) asserts that 'nostalgia is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy' (ibid. p.8). Boym differentiates between two types of nostalgia: reflective and restorative. Reflective nostalgia is signified by the longing for a home, but the reflective nostalgic knows that 'homecoming does not signify recovery of identity' (Boym, 2001: 50). The reflective nostalgic does not seek to return home instead focuses on the impossibility of returning home. Restorative nostalgia, in contrast, is marked by the real return home, the only authentic place, the place of origin 'the return to the original stasis, to the prelapsarian moment' (Boym, 2001: 49). The past for the restorative nostalgic is frozen in time 'a perfect snapshot (...) [without] any signs of decay' (ibid. 49).

⁸³ The act of witnessing happens on two levels, on the level of engaging with the active listener, in this case me who listens to the narratives and reads the texts, but also on a personal level when the interview participants and/or authors reflect and speak

the women's stories about the experience of migration, I am revealing their stories, whilst enabling them to piece together a narrative of the experience of migration.

3.4 Positionality, self-reflexivity, and the insider – outsider perspective

Drawing on the philosophical approach adopted for this study, I acknowledge the notion that it is a fiction that knowledge (including scientific research) could ever be objective or value free, or, as the feminist philosopher Donna Haraway (1988: 581) suggested, 'a God trick'. Accordingly, one can never take a view from 'nowhere' because knowledge is always produced by a specific person from a particular location (ibid.). Therefore, as a researcher, the best one can do is engage with reflexivity, that is assessed critically and responsibly on how our specific location (social, cultural, geographical) feeds into our research questions, influences what we are able to see and what we overlook, and thereby determines the knowledge that we produce. In the context of knowledge production, reflexivity refers to the researcher as being part of what is being studied and elucidates that the 'facts' out there and the researcher who is observing, interpreting, and explaining they are entangled. Therefore, researchers influence their research object and vice-versa. Above all, reflexivity is often used to refer to a style of qualitative research in which the researcher is enwrapped in an ongoing and intense scrutiny of 'what I know' and 'how I know it' (Hertz, 1997). By making my reflexive thought process available for scrutiny I am making myself accountable for how I produce knowledge, at the same time as I am allowing for alternative or even opposing perspectives to be woven into the narrative and potentially counter these (Davies, 2018). I understand reflexivity therefore as a tool to uncover assumptions, not limited to my own, but also preconceptions dictating conventional understandings and narratives of migration experiences.

or write about their personal past, they also become witness to past events by bringing their personal memories into the public arena. Here again the role of the 'addressable other' the active listener is crucial. Simona Mitouroiu in the introduction to the collective volume *Women's Narratives and the Postmemory of Displacement in Central and Eastern Europe* (2018) reflected on the 'complex and fascinating relationship between testimony of the past and the act of active listening to past narratives' (ibid, p.7), the active listener is seen as a key figure in witnessing and determining the remembrance of the past.

In reflecting on my own positionality, I find that I position myself and am positioned in various contexts, characterised by an intersection of circumstances. I am a migrant, a woman, and a researcher, who lives in the field or to put it differently, the field is my home. Maher and Tetreault (1994) conceptualized positionality as the relational place or value one has that influences and is influenced by varying contexts, such as social, political, familial, historical, educational, and economical, that is 'not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed' (1994: 164). In this sense, in this study I practice reflexivity on my status as a migrant, and therefore an insider – ways in which my experience may be similar to those of other women who moved from Poland to the UK - and also as an outsider owing to categories such as language, education, profession and marriage to an English citizen, to name a few. In kind I am 'troubling the persistent dichotomies of insider versus outsider, distance versus familiarity, objective observer versus participant, and individual versus culture' (Reed-Danahay, 1997: 145; Hauber-Özer, 2019). In this way I am following a steadily expanding number of researchers from several disciplines who inform my thinking (Nowicka & Ryan, 2015; Voloder, 2008; Bhattacharya, 2017; Miled, 2019; Hauber-Özer, 2019) who critically reflect on the implications of insider research for the study of migration issues of representation, ethics, and positionality.⁸⁴

Similarly, to the apparently common denominator of ethnicity/nationality, gender is often understood as a shared commonality. However, unlike ethnic and linguistic belonging, which are openly articulated as a category by researchers and participants, gender tends to be naturalised and neglected as a feature that impacts the research design and conduct (Nowicka & Ryan, 2015). Although feminist studies

⁸⁴ Within migration research scholars (Bhattacharya, 2017; Nowicka & Ryan, 2015; Voloder, 2008; Ryan, 2015; Glick Schiller, Çağlar, & Guldbrandsen, 2006; Hauber-Özer, 2019) questioned the almost default correlation of insiderness and ethnicity/nationality. As the authors observed one effectively becomes either marked as an insider by means of ethnic or national inclusion or an 'outsider' by the lack of these shared denominators. Today, an increasing number of studies on migration are carried out by migrant researchers reflecting the growing transnationality of academia and the increase in students who study abroad. In addition, migrant researchers have often easy access to migrant groups by virtue of language. Nowicka and Ryan (2015) signposted to the debate on methodological challenges connected to ethno-national categorisation in migration studies and the therefore presumed lack of objectivity, as a result of which the researchers constantly needed to renegotiate their status vis-à-vis their research participants.

have enriched and shaped the rethinking of canonical approaches to migration studies (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005; Mahler & Pessar, 2006), and whilst practicing reflexivity have therefore contributed to the understanding of how gendered identities impact a research situation (Riessman, 1987; Scheyvens & Leslie, 2000; Visweswaran, 1992), there still seem to be very few studies focusing on the intersectionality of ethnicity and gender (Nowicka & Ryan, 2015). Even fewer that consider, 'insiderness' (see Chereni, 2014; Ryan, 2015). In this research project I close this gap and add to the body of knowledge by showing how gender and gender-relations transform in migration at least partially. My understanding is that my and the participants' personal paths and experiences of migration made an impact on how we perceive and live out our own gendered identities.

Drawing on feminist reflexive approaches, I challenge the usefulness of the insider/outsider dichotomy in migration research. Instead, I argue that the assumption of a clear fixed collectivity based on ethnicity/nationality as well as gender, underestimates the multi-layered identities of researchers and participants. In this sense, I question any sense of 'insider' or 'outsider' as a fixed, unitary identity. I am of the view that each research encounter encompasses multiple positionalities including gender, age, class, religion, nationality, migratory experience, language, parental status etc. Ryan (2015) asserted the dynamism and multifaceted dimensions of each research relationship: 'a researcher can experience various degrees of insiderness and outsidership given how she/he is socially situated to (and by) participants during the research process, which affects various stages and aspects of the study' (2000: 447). In this study I concentrate on fluidities of identities and how notion of gender and ethnicity are re-constructed through the experience of migration but also co-constructed within the interview situation. In the analysis I reveal how the interview encounter can provide insight into the dynamic process of re-construction and co-construction of identities. Instead of focusing on the insider/outsider aspects, I understand the interview process similarly to Ryan (2015) in terms of dynamic rhythms of multi-positionalities,⁸⁵ but in line with the design of

⁸⁵ Within the interview situation identities are not stable but may be re-shaped, re - formed and pieced together led by the verbal and non-verbal cues of both participants. Ryan (2015), used the metaphor of dance 'to capture the intricate rhythms of a shifting positionalities through the interview encounter [...] *[T]his can be a power dance which navigates the differential status*

this research project I draw on the rhizome metaphor (based on Deleuze and Guattari see also chapter three section 3.2).

By practicing reflexivity, I acknowledge instability and contingency of empathy, rapport, and understanding, whilst appreciating and negotiating layers of power differentials. I equally appreciate that the interwoven cultural codes and gendered identities present in the interview encounter may on the one hand pose a challenge in creating rapport with the participants, but on the other hand it might be challenging to protect myself from emotional engagement.

Researchers have discussed the positive and negative aspects of insider positionality (Ergun, 2010; Gardner, 2004; Kusow, 2003) drawbacks and benefits. However, it is suggested here that there is no one simple and universal approach in dealing with the insider/outsider role. Each researcher is faced with navigating their own way of dealing with their cognitive and emotional selves. As a consequence, at times during the interviews or when relating theoretical concepts or the life-story narratives, I let myself fade from the picture, my presence and autoethnographic elements disappear between the lines, so that the focus is either on the participants or the academic discussion at hand. Sometimes, however, I weave my presence into the study by using autoethnographic vignettes, first person voice, my own thoughts, feelings, and assumptions.

Mobility is a place close to my heart, it is my home, this is where I live and breathe and have been part of since the age of ten. Therefore, on one level I benefited immensely from my insider status: it gave me access, insights and experiences that profoundly shaped my research. Being an insider meant that participants usually felt comfortable inviting me into their home. During the visits the Polish hospitality would come to the fore, with tea or coffee served with savoury or sweet snacks. If not invited into the women's homes, then I was invited into the women's creative working spaces, where I was also offered refreshments, but above

of the interviewee and researchers. One may take the lead and attempt to guide the other partner through the sequence. This may result in a smooth and synchronised harmony. However, it may equally result in a series of awkward and faltering steps in which each partner is unsure how to position him- or herself and each other. The interviewer is trying to place the interviewee but at the same time the interviewee is also trying to position the researcher. The ways in which interviewees anticipate, position and adjust to the researcher may facilitate or hinder data collection by fostering harmony and trust or creating awkwardness and unease.'

all the spaces were proudly presented as the backdrop to their identity. Their hospitality and invitation into their private spaces indicated that they treated me as a guest not a stranger.

However, I also experienced challenges working within my own community, cultural setting, and within my own home. Throughout the research the participants hinted at my own personal experience as a 'local', they considered me as someone who has lived in and through similar circumstances and were attempting to weave their experiences with mine, through phrases such as 'you know what it is like' or 'you've been there, seen it'. There were instances of skimming over things which we take for granted (Turnbull, 2000). The insider or local status certainly aided in establishing a good rapport, and some of the women shared that it was easy to talk to me because I would understand their experiences. However, I have not always felt comfortable with the assumed position of the insider or local. In some instances, despite the hinted shared experiences, I found that my views or understanding was different. For example, one of the research participants assumed that our shared cultural heritage made us both religious. I, however, do not view myself as religious and have strong opinions on the impact of the Catholic Church in Poland, on the lives of women in particular. Therefore, navigating the interview was challenging, as I felt there was a thin line between offending someone else's beliefs whilst maintaining integrity.

Furthermore, I am not only an 'insider' in the 'field' but am also sharing close relationships with some of the participants. Here, I find Taylor's (2011) definition helpful, as she uses the term 'intimate insiders' to describe pre-existing friendships – 'close, distant, casual or otherwise' with research participants (ibid., p.8). She further suggests that 'intimate insider research' differs from 'insider research' alone, since the 'researcher is working at the deepest level in their own "backyard"' (Taylor, 2011: 9).⁸⁶ The question then is how to negotiate these close relationships in both the personal and research context. Feminist scholars have long highlighted the challenges and benefits of empathetic relationships between the researcher and the

⁸⁶ Taylor (2011) identifies "backyard" as a space where the researcher has regular contact with the community. The researcher's personal relationships are embedded in the field, the researcher has been and remain a key social actor in the field, and the researcher is privy to undocumented historical knowledge of the people and cultural phenomena being studied (ibid., p.9).

participants, personal investment in the process and a level of emotional attachments to participants and the 'field'.

Although my intent always is to write accurately about my friends, it is always partial and accurate to a certain extent, as notion of their selfhood became interwoven with my own interests and related to the research objectives. Ultimately, if you know someone, particularly if you know them closely, this will impact how you relate to and perceive that person. In turn, this relationship with the person and the 'field' then effects the interpretive outcome of the research. Therefore, questions of data distortion and insider blindness are a necessary consideration (see chapter three section 3.4). To mitigate this, I have taken a number of steps. Firstly, I always provided full disclosure of my aims and the intent of the research. Secondly, I have shared the research with the participants and sought their validation of my interpretations, which offered a notion of control to the participants whilst also fostering trust between us. Thirdly, at times I have chosen to intellectually, emotionally, and physically, remove myself from the 'field' to create distance and giving myself time to restore my perspective and bring clarity into the research. Finally, I have consciously practiced self-critique and reflexivity, through a process of introspection and self-objectivation, to create distance from the familiar and the field. Looking at myself as part of the phenomenon allowed me to feel grounded and therefore to observe and analyse the familiar.

Due to the close relationships with some of the participants it was not always easy to distinguish if what was said was 'on' or 'off' the record, and in some instances, it took some time and intuition to figure this out. In some cases, it was a very clear cut, on other occasions I have consulted the participants and have sought their opinion. I also offered the participants an opportunity to review my written work in which they have been cited prior to submission, whilst being open to their comments and suggestions for changes. However, some of the participants were not very responsive beyond the acknowledgment of the email. A further measure that I have implemented to secure the anonymity and privacy of the participants, whilst difficult, was to never speak about the content of the interview, being very careful about which information I shared, and with whom.

3.5 Emotional dimension of research

As highlighted in the preceding section, this study acknowledges that due to an intersection of circumstances and locations (social, cultural, and geographical) I am to some extent entangled in the subject at hand, which has consequences for the research process and final product. However, there is another dimension to this study which was significant, consisting of emotions and feelings. The impact of emotions in the life-story interviews but also my personal 'emotional baggage' profoundly influenced how this research shaped up, was carried out and fed into the key themes and findings of this project.

3.5.1 Emotions in the field

Participants in the life-story interviews displayed a complexity of emotions when speaking about their migration experiences. From my biographically attuned position I embraced the feelings shared in the interviews and in some instances recognised the emotional spaces the participants were in as I have experienced them myself. In other cases, the life-story narratives were quite different to my personal experiences. Nonetheless, by being open to and acknowledging the emotions involved for the women, I was able to gain crucial insight into their personal feelings. Although my insider position presented me with predicable advantages, being in the 'field' as an 'intimate insider' meant that I had to navigate pre-existing relationships, and in some cases emotionally draining research, that my former academic training had not prepared me for. The research that I was involved with in the past was mainly textual, and books do not fall apart, but humans can. When entering this 'familiar' space I was not aware of the emotional challenges it would bring with it.

Some of the interviews ended up being very emotionally charged encounters, not only for the interviewee but also for myself. In a number of cases the women were distressed, sharing experiences of violence and trauma which I neither asked about or which, on a surface level, would not appear to be directly connected to experiences of mobility and which took me by surprise. Ryan (2008) following on from Mouton and Pholandt-McCormick (1999) uses the term "boundary crossing" to

describe similar experiences in her interviews with Irish women migrants. Mount and Pholandt-McCormick (1999) use this term to describe situations when interviewees change the direction of the narrative onto an unexpected and often troubling path. These moments arise when an interviewee brings up issues which s/he was not asked about. However, there is a need to talk about the experiences, although it is upsetting for the participant and the interviewer. Such issues have come up on a few occasions and whilst the participant's distress was growing, I felt powerless and unable to control the situation or change the narrative direction. Mount and Pholandt-McCormick (1999) suggest that such 'boundary crossings' are departures from the prepared script, often unintended by the interviewee. In fact, there is a high possibility that they hardly talk about this subject and in the interview setting the issue is 'suddenly blurted out almost like "slip of the tongue" taking themselves by surprise as much as the interviewer' (Ryan, 2008; 310). In these situations, the conventional rules for displaying emotions were disregarded, leaving both the participants and me shaken.

Although in some cases the traumatic experiences took place in early childhood, it seemed that they followed the participants through their entire life without finding means to be expressed. Much scholarship in trauma studies was published to date on psychological trauma, its representations in language and its relation to memory and culture.⁸⁷ However, to give a comprehensive account of the complexities of trauma theory would extend beyond the scope of the present study. Scholars have also highlighted the empowering potential of life-story narratives particularly in relation to traumatic experiences (Asztalos Morell, 2016; Mitroui, 2018). However, it should not be assumed that the setting of the life-story interviews could facilitate closure for the women who have experienced trauma and shared these experiences, as this can only be facilitated through therapeutic treatment. Although the life-story interviews are not set out to be therapeutic, some researchers

⁸⁷ Influential works in trauma studies include for example: Caruth, K. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore: Johnson Hopkins University Press; Felman, S. & Laub, D. (1992) *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*. New York: Routledge; Henke, S. (1998) *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing*. New York: St. Martin's Press; Balaev, M. (2014) *Contemporary Approaches to Trauma Theory*. London: Pelgrave; Cave, M. & Sloan, S. (2014) *Listening on the Edge: Oral History in the aftermath of crisis*. New York: Oxford University Press.

argue that it can 'provide healing opportunities for trauma survivors whose stories benefit the larger society. Oral history as a methodology is well suited to assist in individual and social healing because the storytelling process is a natural vehicle for the creation of new meanings and identities.' (Campisi, 2014: 89). Above all, my role as an active listener in the interview encounter was important. Feminist researchers have long argued that active listening involves more than just hearing, but rather is an engaged practice that combines taking in and actively processing information (DeVault & Gross, 2012). In other words, active listening is a practice where the information affects, puzzles, troubles and takes the interviewer into unexpected paths – 'away from the abstract...bloodless, professionalized questions' (Gordon, 1997). Thus, I believe that my role in participating in these traumatic narratives was an act of bearing witness, of attending these stories within and actively allowing for the women to share their memories. However, after extended considerations I have decided not to include the stories of physical and sexual abuse and violence in the thesis, I have treated them as 'off' the record, as stories which needed to be told and heard, but not discussed publicly. I am of the view that sharing these stories would break the trust between myself and the participants and compromise their anonymity.

While feminist scholarship advocates breaking down of boundaries between the researcher and participant and the researched (for detailed discussion see chapter 3 section 3.3.3), I would argue that at times and in certain situations in the field or in the writing up and reflection process it is more beneficial to establish physical and emotional boundaries in order to protect oneself and others from emotional and physical hardship. As part of my self-care practice, I engaged in physical activity, or binged bad TV to numb my mind from all that I had seen, heard and read, to create an emotional boundary between myself and the research with all its components. But above all it was through the practice of reflexivity, introspection and self-objectivation that I was to create distance between myself and the project.

To deal with the impact of the often emotionally charged interviews, I utilised my field diary to scrutinise my personal challenges and emotions not only related to the research process, such as dealing with the traumatic experiences shared in the interviews, but also the ways in which the encounters have influenced interpretations

and triggered memories of my own personal experiences. For example, after circa 5 interviews I made the following field diary entry which is reflective of the traumatic experiences shared in the life-stories, my reaction to them, and also demonstrates a more systematic and critical engagement with the issues: *'Again there were tears...! I am surprised how most participants in such a small sample have such a strong emotional response and retell traumatic experiences. I am not sure how to respond to the emotional hardship. The tissues came in handy...but really there is little else that I can do... but listen!'*. The entry illustrates my struggle and frustration with the emotionality of the trauma experienced by the women and then shared in the life-story. It is evident that I was feeling ill-equipped to offer support beyond active listening and being an 'empathetic witness' to the story shared, although I was also deeply affected. Above all, it was important for me as the researcher to establish an authentic relationship with the participants 'not merely as a researcher but as a fellow human being, subject to the same intemperance, frustrations, weaknesses, joys and sorrows' (Rowles, 1978:173).

A further example of where the field diary impacted the interpretation and triggered personal memories is the following excerpt from an entry post interview with Lena, where she voices her frustration with the observed smiling culture in the UK: *Absolutely, I feel her frustration, I know what she means. The smile often seems superficial...I wish I had a way to explain how this works for us, how we see it and where this comes from. I don't believe that we are just miserable there must be more to it. It must be socio-historical...? She is not the first one pointing this out...See Drakulic!* Evidently the note triggered not only personal experiences and feelings of frustration but has also influenced further analysis and interpretation of the data reflected in Chapter 5.3.1.

3.5.2 Emotional/biographical luggage as impulse for autoethnography

Although there is a trend to examine the emotional terrain of migration in the recent years (see for example Baldassar, 2008; 2001; 2015; Baldassar, et al. 2007; Baldassar & Boccagni, 2015; Skrbiš, 2008; Svašek, 2008; 2010; Svašek & Skrbiš, 2007) as well as the number of 'native' researchers increasing, the discussions of the

researcher's personal emotional migration experiences is still rare. Mostly emotions are discussed in relation to the participants. Widdowfield (2000:200) notes that 'it is almost as if we have become so concerned about how far or indeed whether we can speak for, and articulate the experiences and emotions of 'others' that we have forgotten or dismissed the ability to speak for ourselves'. The emotions that came through in the life-story interviews made me realise that also for me there was an emotional dimension to the migration experience. Furthermore, in my case, emotions were also the driver to carry out this project. As well as being driven by my interest and the epistemological significance of the themes, this research was also led by the search for answers to ontological questions which affect me deeply on a personal and emotional level. The biographical/emotional 'baggage' with which I came to this project, filled with memories, feelings, and emotions, accumulated during my personal migration experiences had a profound impact on this research. I cannot claim historical, personal, or simply human distance from the subject matter of this study. Experiences of socialist Poland, the migration to Germany, the Fall of the Berlin Wall, Poland's accession to the EU and the move to England have all had a direct impact on my life. My interest in the issues affecting the participants' experiences of mobility stem very much from my own biographical experience. Therefore, the exploration of the self was particularly resonant for this study as I was personally affected by the research questions. Ultimately, this study is not about my own experiences but rather grew out of them. In this sense I have used myself for comparison with other participants to explore how, why, and if, we share similar experiences and reflections on mobility. As such, through autoethnographic descriptions of my own experiences I have drawn understanding of mobility and the research process. However, I have not placed my own experiences of mobility at the centre of this study, but instead like Voloder (2008) suggested, used myself as a tool.

Whilst conducting this PhD research was an intellectual practice, it also was an emotional journey for me. The primary concern of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of the complex subjectivities of lived migration experiences with a particular focus on emotions. However, it was not possible for me to 'extract' my personal emotional experiences of migration from the analysis. I was awash with

emotions and memories both good and bad. I realised that including my own emotional experiences of migration in this project offered a more appropriate and accountable research foundation than just engaging in interviews with others. I had to ask myself why the lives of others were more appropriate to explore than my own. Was I indeed, by exploring the experiences of others and keeping a safe distance, finding a way to hide from my own experiences and emotions? I decided that the most respectful and conscientious way for me to conduct this research was to make explicit how my own life and emotions were interrelated with migration experiences, and therefore chose autoethnography. While much consideration in this research has gone into articulating the emotional experiences of the research participants', I was also concerned to uncover my personal emotional landscape of migration experiences. The choice of autoethnography in this thesis allowed me to articulate and critically reflect on my own emotional experiences of migration. The research enabled me to gain some level of analytical understanding of the social forces involved in my own migration experiences, to recover my past and understand my life. My own emotional experiences of migration have provided an emotional energy which has driven me to complete an autoethnography on my past.

Discussing the emotional landscape of migration experiences in parts fulfilled a cathartic role. By expressing and communicating feelings to others, either verbally to participants in the interviews or in writing of the thesis, dealing with the feelings experienced within migration was no longer an isolated experience and, as such, was easier to confront. The process of writing up has also stirred up intimate feelings within myself, which I did not deal with on a day-to-day basis, although they clearly related to day-to-day issues such as language or food making practices. For example, I felt grief-stricken by the lack of the possibility to refer to my children in English without the use of Polish diminutives, therefore not being able to convey the emotional implications which come with the language. This resulted in feelings of sadness and alienation. In another example, when reflecting on the practices of *Wigilia*, the deep feelings of grief for those who are no longer with us such as my great grandmother were overwhelmingly strong. Finally, when writing up the autoethnographic vignette entitled 'my body my choice' I was dealing with deep sadness and despair particularly emphasised through the child's eye perspective. In

this instance the use of the field diary was significant in understanding my personal challenges and emotions. The autoethnographic vignette introducing chapter 6, 'My body, my choice!', was written in form of an early draft immediately after the protest. At first it acted merely as an emotional outlet, a way to articulate my emotions experienced. After further reflection on the written note, I realised that the feelings that flowed through me immediately post the event were also a testimony to the fact that due to migration, myself and other women (also participants in this study who were present at the event) have removed ourselves and our daughters from an environment that impacted our personal freedom.

I relied on autoethnography as an evocative method to explore personal knowledge of cultural practices and experience to offer support to my vulnerable self while evoking emotions. Through sharing of personal memories of lived experience in this thesis (my own, but also those shared by the participants), I also hoped that someone (the reader) will be immersed and engaged in the stories and relive their experiences or learn about the complexity of migration experiences through the narratives. It was important to me to convey the emotional aspects of the life stories as equally as my own emotions, with the view to allow the readers to experience them too. Thus, autoethnography was chosen as a method for researching complex emotional experiences as an honest and wholehearted approach to understanding subjective phenomena from the inside, while giving due recognition to the social and cultural context around them. Finally, by being attuned to, and aware of, the feelings surfacing in the interviews, personal reflections or within the research process, I not only offer an understanding of the emotional complexity of migration experiences but am also documenting an important part of the process of situating knowledge.

By conducting this research, I was given the opportunity to look at some core issues in my life, through other people's stories. When speaking to the interviewees about their experiences of mobility, I also scrutinised myself. I believe that at times the research has allowed me to reconstruct and question my own identity. The multivocal narratives have enabled me to write my own experience from different perspectives. The different narratives in this study, whilst representing subjective angles on migration experiences, opened my view to a multitude of viewpoints. By allowing for multiple voices to interweave with my own subjective view, this study

moved away from singularity and embraces multiplicity of vision instead. As a result, the research has offered me the opportunity to embark on a psychological journey which, in itself, is fascinating. Although some argue that writing stage of the research takes them out of the field, I am of the view that the writing process has transformed me and given me a 'self'.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This research is conducted in compliance with the Oral History Association and has been approved by the University of Gloucestershire Research Ethics Committee prior to conducting the field work. In addition, 'relational ethics' (Ellis , 2004) are important in this study also in in light of the autoethnographic approach, which connects personal experience and in consequence implicates close intimate others into their work (Etherington, 2007). Further, ethical considerations related to friendship (Tillmann-Healy, 2003) are imperative as the data in this study is inclusive of interviews with two of my very close friends, with whom I clearly maintain and value a personal connection. To be mindful of relational ethics I shared my work with participants, allowing them to reflect and share their feelings, which gave them an opportunity to respond to how they were represented in the text. In doing so, it was important to me that participants felt as if they were part of this research and that their voice is reflected in a way that they agree with. Furthermore, the aim was to emphasize that I do not regard my friends, or any other participant for that matter, as an impersonal subject that serves as a data source. I protected the privacy and safety of participants by altering identifying characteristics such as names and circumstances as required and guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality. Although these protective devices can have an effect on the integrity of the research, I also agree with other scholars who stress that the essence and meaningfulness of the research story is more important than the precise recounting of detail (Ellis, 2007). Therefore, the most important aspect is that I and the participants are able to go on living our relationships in a world in which the research is embedded after completion. The research design and data collection process were based on principles of informed consent and confidentiality (Olsen, 2012). The overall aim of

the study was explained and shared with the participants prior to the interview. The participants were also given the opportunity to withdraw at any point. They were informed that the findings will be published in this thesis, in academic journals, and presented at academic conferences. I also ensured my own safety by informing at least one other person of the interview location and carrying a mobile phone with me.

3.7 Data collection and analysis

3.7.1 Autoethnographic data sources

The autoethnographic narrative in this study relied on the following data sources: my memories of the experiences of migration as a child and then also at the age of 29; field/research diary entries that I composed during the research period and the events that occur as I write my dissertation, including the ongoing socio-political events such as the 'black protest' or the Brexit vote. In addition, the field/research diary along with data on the experiences themselves, was utilised for reflexive thought about how I wrestled with experiences. These thoughts occurred because of both living the experiences and writing the story. Reflexive thought and inner dialogue stand in for personal meaning making and interpretation throughout the story. As such, I was recalling, journaling, and reviewing my actions. The memories, along with self-observational and self-reflective data, captured past and present perspectives of my lived experience. In this autoethnography I did not reduce my story into a series of themes or codes that disassemble and disaggregate the larger story. Instead, this study focused on merging my story with other narratives on the experience of migration and theories relevant to them, 'to consider the ways theory supports, elaborates, and/or contradicts personal experience' (Adams et al., 2015: 94). Thus, I connected the personal to the theoretical perspective, made connections, observations, interpretations, and analyses of the situations in my lived experiences. The autoethnography in this research is both realistic and expressionistic. It involved realistic elements such as piecing together the story chronologically. Therefore, this autoethnography is not separate from the content, nor can the written content be

separated from the context in which the experience occurred. In this study, realistic writing involved layering or juxtaposing personal narrative with supplemental explanations (Adams et al., 2015; Ronai, 1995). It involved both story and analysis (Adams et al., 2015). At the same time, the autoethnography in this research is also expressionistic as it included internal meaning making that was determined through emotions, reflection, and introspection (Adams et al., 2015). Therefore, my study not only showed the interpretation of my analysis through emotionally rich detail and expressive dialogue, but it told my story with detailed descriptions to facilitate an understanding of both migration as a complex personal and emotional experience (Adams & Ellis, 2012). In terms of an analysis strategy, I followed the assumption that framing autoethnography with theory 'can guide the process of data organization, analysis, and interpretation, and the structure of writing' (Chang, 2008: 137). The analysis was followed by interpretation by reconnecting coded data (this strategy also applied to the life-story and fictional narrative), so that the theoretical frameworks provided by the wider migration discourse elaborated on the meanings and implications of my personal narrative (or the other two forms included in this thesis). Although I used wider migration research as a guide to organise my experiences, however, throughout the thesis I did not let elements of theory on migration steer what I chose to include. For example, informed by the literature review on migration, key events such as departures and arrivals were important moments within migration trajectories and therefore fed into the chapter structure of the thesis. At the same time, despite theory, I also made literary decisions regarding which experiences to include based on my personal judgment of whether I could write them, and still be emotionally safe, and whether they were pertinent to the overall storyline.

Although some of the autoethnographic elements of the thesis related to present experiences, others were relying on memories of the past. It is important to note the role and quality of memory in the autoethnographic writing process. Denzin (2014) stated that 'memory is fallible' (p. 70).⁸⁸ Additionally, when people recall particular stories, they may share different stories of the same experience (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Reliability, then, refers to the author's 'credibility as a

⁸⁸ For further on thoughts on memory within the context of personal narrative see also chapter 3.3.5

writer-performer-observer; that is, [whether] an event [has] been correctly remembered and described' (Denzin, 2014: 70). It is also true that 'memory is not always a friend of autoethnography' as it 'selects, shapes, limits and distorts the past' (Chang, 2008: 72). Unfortunately, memory rarely works in a way that allows us to recall explicit details in temporal order. Instead, individual recall of past experiences is interpreted from the present condition in which we are positioned (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Recalling details of experiences, however, can be done through emotional recall, in which the author 'imagine[s] being back in the scene emotionally and physically' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000: 752). The emotional recall in this thesis was rooted in imagining myself to the specific events in my migration journey, often helped by conversations with family and friends who were there at the time but also by artefacts such as photographs. Writing about the events in the past in an evocative style and rich detail (e.g., the weather, the smells described), not only had a 'therapeutic' effect and helped me to process the experience, alongside extending an invitation to experience migration from within, but most certainly was also aiding memory recall.

3.7.2 Life-story interviews

3.7.2.1 *Recruitment criteria*

In general, I was looking for Polish-born women over the age of 18 who have migrated post the 2004 accession and who were willing to share their personal life-stories and migration experiences. All women in this study were Polish-born and have moved to the UK post 2004.

3.7.2.3 *Selection of participants*

Even though I could be viewed as an 'insider' in the field, recruiting women from three different age cohorts willing to share their life-stories proved difficult. In sourcing participants, I relied upon an extensive network of friends and acquaintances. In fact, two of the participants who shared their stories are close friends of mine, a number of participants were known to me through other social settings and a few were recruited based on the 'snowball' strategy (Parker, Scott, &

Geddes, 2019), that is, women who had already shared their life-story provided access to further participants. This approach has also allowed a deliberate selection of participants who served as representatives with distinctive qualities, for example the openness to engage in intimate research, as well as the gathering of a range of the different perspectives of the persons interviewed, including those who share 'alternative stories' (Richardson, 1990). By this deliberate selection of participants, the study set out to capture voices from a cross-section of Polish women migrants by including individuals from different age groups (varying between 20 to 50+), professions and marital statuses. This aspect is important, as this study widens the field by including voices of women from 40+ and 50+ age groups, which is widely underrepresented in the field of Polish mobility. Furthermore, by purposefully including participants from different professional and marital backgrounds with a broad duration of stay, this research extends the migration field which often focuses on young professional Poles in the UK which fails to represent the perspectives of, for example, unemployed women, women in manual employment, or single mothers.

Acting from an established set of social relationships and friendships allowed me to gain access and establish trust; however, the sudden impact of the pandemic onto the research process and the field work should not be underestimated. During the lockdown I could not speak to the women face to face or in a safe environment, since we were not able to meet. Therefore, both parties were often confined and enmeshed within the emotional and social relationships of their respective living spaces. Aspects of intimacy, trust and a 'safe space' are vital for life-story scenarios. However, I was no longer able to guarantee these factors due to the pandemic and was at the same time working to submission deadlines, which meant I had to make difficult decisions regarding data collection. Although I was hoping to conduct a further interview with a participant in the 50+ age group, due to the restrictions and her underlying health condition we were not able to do so. Effectively I had to decide not to include her voice in the project as we both felt that the parameters of the pandemic were too restrictive and would not do her story justice.

Similarly, the 2016 Brexit referendum and then UK's withdrawal from the European Union impacted onto the research as some of the women who had initially agreed to participate in the study had consequently returned to Poland before I was

able to conduct the interviews. Analogously to the difficulties encountered during the lockdown, I did not think that the parameters of online meetings allowed for the intimacy and safety as guaranteed in face-to-face scenarios. Accordingly, these life-stories did not become part of the present research.

3.7.2.4 Timeline and place

My interviews were conducted between November 2019 and September 2020. In total, I conducted 11 interviews with 8 women living in Gloucestershire, UK. The choice of interview places was determined by the respondents' choice. Most interviews took place in the participants' homes apart from and on one occasion in other personal spaces such as a creative workshop.

3.7.2.5 Interview process

Largely unstructured free flowing face-to-face life-story interviews were conducted, which lasted between 1.5 and 3hrs (for a sample interview transcript see Appendix D). The interviews were conducted in Polish and in most cases took place in the participants' homes, and on one occasion in other personal spaces such as a creative workshop. The life-story interviews normally began by explaining the study and the meaning of informed consent, followed by signing the aforementioned form (for relevant pre-interview information and forms see Appendix B and C). At this point, I as the researcher expressed my gratitude for their participation and emphasized the importance of the story told. Thereafter, the interview recording started. At the beginning of recording the participants were asked to reiterate consent. I did not impose a structure on the stories, still most women told their stories through key life events such as leaving Poland, arrival in England, employment, and relationships with the local and receiving society. By allowing a 'free flowing' interview, this study allowed the participants to influence the content of the narrative shared within the interview. Thus, drawing on the rhizomatic perspective, participants were granted agency to share the 'story' which they thought reflected their experiences of migration. The storylines which developed are understood as temporary and multiple and co-constructed between me, and the participants. During the interview some questions were asked to deepen issues that

surfaced in the individual narratives. At the same time to promote dialogue between interviewer and respondent, the interviewees were allowed to take the conversation in different direction at their decision. The result was a data set that is rich and complex. To reveal the complexity and multivocality of the storylines, the narratives, or 'patches,' were then interwoven with each other, as well as fictional narratives, authorial stiches and the wider discourse on migration by application of the crazy patchwork quilt metaphor.

The interviews were conducted in Polish, the 'insider language' (Unluer, 2015:5). Despite the fact that 'linguistic communities are differentiated' (Botterill, 2015) marked by generational, regional and class differences, the shared language was, ultimately, using a similar linguistic system based on shared cultural values and a similar system of meaning (Unluer, 2015:5). The fact that the interviewer's language was Polish is also important as some of the participants felt that their ability to speak English does not compare with Polish (for further considerations on language see also chapter 3.7.4 and chapter 5.2).

3.7.2.6 Transcription and Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and analysed using software NVivo QRS 8. The initial software transcription was then edited to include verbatim cues. Although the interview transcriptions provided an effective base for the analysis, the researcher often returned to the initial interview recording with the aim to capture the full extent of the communication encounter, this includes non-verbal cues or emotions, as well as recalling the exact context of the narrative. The transcription, was followed by an initial thematic analysis, utilizing the NVivo software. Thereafter, each life-story was thoroughly read and listened to several times whilst thematic coding was employed. Amongst the themes the following were identified: motivations for mobility; friends and familial networks; language; experiences of alterity; notions of home and belonging; experiences of socialist past; emotional experiences of migration and gender roles. The themes from the life-story interviews were then explored further and contextualized within the wider academic literature on migration as well as literary works by women on mobility, and developed into the empirical chapters of this study.

3.7.3 Fictional narratives

The works of fiction depicting migration experiences in this study were chosen to reflect geographical and generational diversity. The scale of literary work produced by women on the experience of migration is vast and expanding. Six novels, one memoir and one short story were selected, covering different cultural backgrounds and migration trajectories and historical contexts. The works include: Olga Tokarczuk, *Flights* (2019) and *Numbers* (2008); A.M Bakalar, *Madame Mephisto* (2012); Magada Zarska, *Suspended* (2007); Łucja Fice, *Destiny* (2012); Eva S., *I came here to take your job* (2020); Manuela Gretkowska, *My zdies'emigranty* (2001); and Justyna Nowak, *An Emigration Tale* (2010).⁸⁹ The choice of fictional texts was guided by themes touched upon in this study, how they connected to the personal stories, as well as the wider socio-political and cultural landscape. Two fictional narratives were chosen to reflect migration experiences during socialism, Tokarczuk's *Numbers* (2008) and Gretkowska's *My zdies'emigranty* (2001). Most, however, speak of the post 2004 migration. The books relating to earlier migration experiences are still relevant for this study, as they demonstrate that themes pertinent during the earlier periods are still resonant in the later migration waves. Some of the later texts by writers such as Tokarczuk were translated into English or written in English, as in the case of Bakalar and Eva S. Others, however, were published in Polish. Olga Tokarczuk's novel *Flights* (2019), although not directly relating migration experiences but instead presenting a travelling female protagonist, was relevant as it spoke to themes interwoven in this research relating to the body and aging as well as femininity, nationality and religion (see chapters 6.3). Her short story *Numbers* (2008), in contrast, speaks of migration experiences during socialism and reflected some of the aspects of cultural differences as discussed in chapter 5.2.2. A.M Bakalar's novel *Madame Mephisto* (2012) refers to the post 2004 migration to the UK and finds resonance in the themes in chapter 6.4 showing the complexity of mother-daughter relationships and the stereotypical Polish Mother. Bakalar's novel is also touched upon in chapter 4.4 where it to some degree illuminates the socio-political situation and internal perceptions of young people in Poland on the brink of EU accession.

⁸⁹ For further details on the fictional works chosen for this study see also Appendix D

Experts from Magda Zarska novel *Suspended* (2007) depict migration experiences from Poland to Canada, in chapter 5.2.2, and parts of the text illuminate the internal monologue and the feelings experienced by the protagonist when faced with the challenge of a job interview in a foreign language. Further sections of Zarska's novel are referenced in Chapter 4.4 'the ghost of the socialist past', which shows Polish society preventing young people's employment. Łucja Fice's *Destiny* (2012) and Justyna Nowak's *An Emigration Tale* (2010), both depict the post 2004 migration wave to the UK, and also present the exclusion and alienation affecting Polish women over the age of 40 in the job market as well as from social engagements as reflected on in chapter 6.3.1 Eva S.'s memoir *I came here to take your job* (2020) resonated specifically with my personal story due to the experiences of squatting but themes from the book were also incorporated in chapter 5.3.1 depicting microaggression and cultural differences. The theme picked up in chapter 5.3.1 from Manuela Gretkowska's novel *My zdies'emigranty* (2001) is particularly relevant as it illustrates that some of the cultural differences observed today were also experienced by earlier migrants.

3.7.4 (Self-in-) Translation

In this study, I occupied the position of a Polish migrant researcher and translator researching my own ethnic migrant community in Polish, while being affiliated to an English institution and expected to disseminate the research findings in English. While I recognise my specific positionality (see also chapter three section 3.4) as a female, white, non-religious, middle-class academic of complex migration history (including living in several European societies), I also recognise the complex implications of language and translation in this research. Considerations relating to translation and mediation are of importance for the study for several reasons. Firstly, some of the data collected for this study was in a language different from the language of its subsequent report. All interviews were conducted in Polish, which is also the authored language of some of the fictional works, the thesis however is presented in English. Secondly, the life story narratives told through the spoken word were mediated into an academic text. Lastly, due to my polyglot background the final

written report also required a level of self-translation, from whichever language interweaved with my thoughts at the time of writing, into academic English.

In light of the migrant researchers of the same national/linguistic background scholars highlighted the significant considerations related to translation.⁹⁰ In contrast to traditional assumptions (which defined translation as merely a linguistic shift from one text to another with the least possible interference, in order to achieve the ‘only perfect translation’ and to remain faithful to the author’s intention or to the source text), translation is now understood as a process of mediation. Scholars and writers stressed that there is no single correct translation of a text, instead meaning is constructed through a discourse between texts (Barrett, 1992; Derrida, 1978; Foucault, 1989; Simon, 1996; Spivak G. , 1992). Translation is now comprehended as an act of intercultural or cross-cultural communication rather than just as interlingual communication (Katan, 2009; Pym, 2004; Snell-Hornby, Jettmarová, & Kaindl, 1997). The translation process is a hybrid cultural production (Smith, 1996) and ‘involves translating lives rather than simply words’ (Temple & Koterba, 2009: 2). Smith (1996) argued that a hybrid space is created in-between two cultures (two languages) by distrusting a researcher’s home and foreign language. Translation is then not only about cultural understanding but also cultural practice, cultural creation and exchange rather than a mere delivery of reality (Simon, 1996).

Translation is linked to issues of power relations and ethics since the nature of translation is the representation of others and the potential for construction of new meaning (Claramonte, 2009; Twyman, Morrison, & Sporton, 1999; Wolf & Fukari, 2007). In this study I recognise that knowledge is filtered through individual biographies, lived experiences and the positionality of the researcher and the participants. I am not making any claims to ‘universal truths’ but am instead aware that I am seeing ‘the world from specific locations, embodied and particular, and

⁹⁰ The validity of the research and its dissemination on the one hand (Birbili, 2000; Temple, 1997; Temple, 2008; Temple & Young, 2004; Wong & Poon, 2010) on the other questioned the assumption that researchers with such ‘shared’ background are able to elicit ‘better’ responses from their participants and provide more authentic reading of the research data (Nowicka, 2014). In addition, there are some strong voices in the context of dual-language studies which problematise the translation of research data for dissemination and the common practice of conducting research using interpreters (Squires, 2009; Temple, 1997; Temple, Edwards & Alexander, 2006).

never innocent' (Rose, 1997: 308). I support Valentine's (2002) claim that the assumption that people perceived as insiders (also linguistic) can interpret informants' stories more correctly is a dangerous form of essentialism as it reproduces binary categorizations which disregard the intersections – complexity and diversity of experiences and views – within, as well as between, various groups. I agree with Temple (2008: 362), who calls for what Venuti (1998) described as an ethics of translation – an awareness of a translator of having 'responsibilities to research participants regarding the way [s/he] represents them in writing.' In the same way, Simon's (1996) argues that translators are continuously involved in making choices about how to represent people. To address the call for responsibility, I have shared the written academic text in English with the research participants not only to ensure transparency but also seek their feedback on translation issues.

Conveying the women's spoken words, which are lively and used in everyday lives, into academic text and analysing life stories under theoretical frameworks, required careful consideration. The process of delivering a participant's life and words involved a dual transformation, that of authorization and translation. The position of the researcher as translator could be viewed as a medium between research participants and the wider audience and the academic community. Translation in this study is then an interpersonal activity focused on the interpretation and representation of meanings, that takes place in the communicative space between the participants, the researcher, and the readers. In the process of mediation, the researcher can at times identify with the participants or potential readers, still the position of a researcher, which is socially and culturally situated, is significant in shaping the research. The positionality of a researcher who conducts an autoethnographic study on migrants from her own ethnic background is defined by complexity and multiplicity.

Equally, the representation of the women's reflections on experiences of migration are not only about the individual participants, but are also situated in the wider academic context, which is governed and dominated by western norms and

the English language.⁹¹ As such, the use of a specific term and defining a research subject is decided not only by a writer's decision but also by the position of the writer in a broader sense, and it seems to be hard to be free from the viewpoint from the majority. Providing background information is essential for a reader to fully understand the research topic in its historical and cultural context, just as it is necessary to analyse social phenomena by situating such phenomena in its social context. It is also paramount to account for the existing literature, primarily from Western-Europe and America, which is often used to build a theoretical framework and analyse a case (here experiences of Polish migrant women) and can impose on the research subject an angle which portrays women either as victims or surprisingly active agents of migration. This study draws on scholars, who challenged both their home culture and the western constructions of migrant women (Ong, 1995) and offers an alternative to exploitative practices.

Finally, translation in this study is also reflective of my subjectivity as someone who is in constant movement between cultures, split by entanglement in different languages and with places, in ongoing movement between national / linguistic identities. I question the ideas that subjectivity is essentially monolingual, arguing that translation is a process of negotiation: between texts, languages, cultures, and identities (see also chapter five section 5.2.3). Of particular interest is Braidotti's theory of the nomadic, non-unitary subject who identifies with more than one culture, language, or home (Braidotti, 2011a; Braidotti, 2011b). Braidotti draws upon her own experience as a migrant and a multi-lingual philosopher to argue that 'the polyglot is a linguistic nomad' (2011b: 29). It is this linguistic nomadism that I associate with my own experiences of self-translation, viewing translation as not simply carrying words back and forth across texts but is interwoven in my personal experiences of living between and across languages and cultures. When writing or translating I am reminded of my own translocation – physical, psychological, historical, linguistic, cultural – required by my multiple identification with the home of my birth, the home of my ancestors, the home of my children: Silesia, Poland,

⁹¹ For example, because the study was carried out in a British University the women were referred to in the research as an ethnic minority group, among other many groups in the UK.

Germany, and the UK. This shifting and 'shuttling' entails a linguistic nomadism, an ongoing process of moving backwards and forwards between the different languages (and dialects) in which my voice is never entirely at home, rooted or identified with one single language. Homi K. Bhabha calls this a 'Third Space of enunciation,' 'the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space' in which it is possible to enunciate the splitting and doubling of identities that connect across more than one text, history, nation, or language (1994: 56, italics in the original). This Bhabha describes as an 'intervention' that 'properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenising, unifying force, authenticated by the originary past' (Bhabha, 1994: 54).

Part IV – Analysis and Discussion

This part of the thesis presents the analysis and discussion of the lived experience of migration as presented in the different narratives interwoven in this study. In the subsequent chapters, the everyday social relations, material and emotional aspects that make up migrant's experiences of migration are discussed. The following chapters offer different thematic focuses, and brings to the fore specific aspects of the ways in which we might understand everyday and lived experiences of migration through the migration stories. Each presents the lived experience of Polish women migrants yet offers a different entry point into the analysis. This thesis argued in chapter two that the lived experience of migration is a complex phenomenon, and for different migrants it may encompass different features. The discussion commences in chapter four with the germination of the idea to migrate and the initial experiences of arrival and initial impressions, the migrating process and the emotional implications. In chapter five there is an examination of aspects of the everyday reality of being a migrant, such as language and the impact that being able to speak English and/or Polish had on the women's migration experiences. This chapter also analyses social relations locally and across borders with the host population and other minority groups, and reflects on identity and questions of belonging. Finally, the discussion turns in chapter six to gender and migration, investigating how and if gender role perceptions and expectations are renegotiated in migration trajectories. The themes selected for analysis and discussion encompass a number of subsidiary themes, and include emotions, differentiating cultural scripts, ethnicity, microaggression and discrimination, relations between Polish migrants, material aspects and home making practices, gender and embodied experiences of migration. These themes are explored when they were raised by the participants, and even though they are listed under separate headings, each theme is often also implicit in the others. By applying the crazy patchwork quilt metaphor (see chapter three) to the presentation of the findings, this thesis then recognises the intricacies and variations constituting the lived experience of migration and highlights those as they are experienced and expressed in the course of the individual migrant's stories.

Chapter 4 Border Crossings – Departures and Arrivals

4.1 Introduction

The first empirical chapter explores the experience of departing from Poland and arriving in the receiving society. The findings are presented according to themes that emerged from the life-story interviews alongside autoethnographic reflections. The section begins with an autoethnographic vignette on the departure point from Poland as a child during socialism and migrating to West Berlin. I chose to share this childhood experience to then juxtapose it with the later move to the UK, discussed in section 4.4 Arrivals, as they demonstrate how they differ due to historical circumstances, age difference and life experience. When considering my departure from socialist Poland in 1989, I also outline the concept of the 'Imaginary West' (Yurchak, 2006)⁹²https://ukc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&wopisrc=https://connectglosac-my.sharepoint.com/personal/s2108608_glos_ac_uk/_vti_bin/wopi.ashx/files/e0bc61c5eb2b40758b5b3252a024c84d&wdenableroaming=1&mssc=1&wdodb=1&hid=D85274A0-F0E5-5000-8EC2-587E75075DAF&wdorigin=ItemsView&wdhostclicktime=1667302995568&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v1&newsession=1&corrid=cce21c5e-70dc-4e85-a3a7-47294a7e60c7&usid=cce21c5e-70dc-4e85-a3a7-47294a7e60c7&sftc=1&cac=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectonreason=Unified_SingleFlush&rct=Medium&ctp=LeastProtected which influenced my childhood imagination and was equally vivid in other women's minds as examples from the life-story interviews and literature by migrant women illustrate. Both experiences indicate the emotional impact the journey had on me (as both a child and an adult) although it is notable that the childhood experience appears to be more 'emotionally charged', the reasons for which are explored. The autoethnographic

⁹² For Yurchak (2006: 161), the Imaginary West refers to a space that was neither a Soviet nor a genuine western space; a new 'imaginary dimension' – 'a kind of space that was both internal and external to the Soviet reality' – which was developed to incorporate these western images, discourses and objects. Still, the high popularity of this imaginative space aligns with the fact that it did not have to be purely imagined. As Burrell (2010: 144) notes: '(m)any of the connections with the west were materialised through access to real products and objects that could be held, smelt, eaten, collected.'

vignettes of crossing borders and arriving at a destination also emphasize that mobility is rarely a linear journey, as in my example I have moved from Poland to Germany in 1989 with my parents, have then moved back to Poland in my early twenties and migrated to the UK in 2007.

The next section in this chapter considers migration motivations by providing multiple explanations for mobility decisions. It uncovers the complexity of the individual woman's stories and acknowledges the emotional factors within the decision-making process. Kathy Burrell (2006) acknowledges the importance of emotions to human mobility, although without necessarily theorising them, as she notes: 'the decisions taken to migrate involved a range of influences and emotions,' and that 'alongside the physical action of moving countries there is also a metaphorical and emotional journey to be travelled' (ibid., pp. 25-26). The decision to migrate is often based on complex emotional processes, for example hope (for a better life), fear (of failure) and courage (to take a chance in a situation of relative uncertainty), rather than informed by pure rationality. The section foregrounds selected women's voices reflecting on their motivations when leaving Poland, and how they experienced arriving in the UK. It discusses the implications of family separation and kinship ties on migration decisions. Further, it highlights the nonlinearity of my mobility experience in reflections on transnational family ties, which reverberate in the migration decisions of the participants.

The subsequent part discusses first encounters and impressions on arrival in the host society. It begins with autoethnographic reflections on my arrival in the UK as an adult and provides a counter point to the border crossing experience as a child, both in terms of material enchantment but also emotional engagement. I continue the discussion on historical legacies and illustrate how such notions might be deconstructed given the stark reality of skip diving and squatting on arrival in the UK later in life. The life-story example that follows also speaks to legacies of the past, as such imaginations and myths of the West and how these were experienced and reinterpreted on arrival in the UK.

Finally, the chapter concludes with selected reflections on what the women have decided to bring to the UK as their luggage, uncovering how the contents, or

the lack thereof, are representative of emotions and memories that the women wanted to hold on to.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the multifaceted nature of migration motivations, decision making process and emotions experienced within mobility. The different narratives extend and subvert common mobility narratives by adding additional layers of experiences, trajectories and emotions. I show how historical circumstances in which ideas about the West were formed reverberate in the narratives, but also demonstrate the interactive nature of these notions and their susceptibility to the specifics of their surroundings. I also discuss how vessels such as suitcases are important memory and emotional carriers in mobility scenarios acting as linking elements connecting past and future, here and there.

4.2 Border crossings and imaginations: 1989 and 2007

Sabina (1978): It was the end of January 1989, my grandmother's 50th birthday and after all the guests have left the socialist area small concrete panel housing estate flat. It was just my parents, grandparents and my great-grandmother, when my mother, grandmother and great-grandmother strangely started to disintegrate in floods of tears. I felt confused as how, what appeared to be a birthday party, has taken this very sombre twist. I remember wondering if we should have gone for the pink roses instead of the 50 white ones that we bought, maybe the white colour was after all more appropriate for weddings christenings and funerals.

In the course of the next moments what started to unravel in front of me was the end of the 'world as I knew it'. I was only ten years old and have been informed over the tears and distress of the situation that we, that is my mother, father and I were to leave Poland and try to escape to West that night. I felt stunned, unsure what to do or say. I felt anxious but also excited, after all we were going to the West, the better, nicer world. The world which would be full of colours and smell of Haribo and Lenor.

The concept of the 'Imaginary West' (Yurchak, 2006) was clearly strongly anchored in my perception even at this young age, in my mind's eye the West was a

place which in contrast to the 'grey' socialist Poland was colourful and smelled of fabric conditioner and fruit gummies, smells and tastes that I would have known from the gifts brought back by relatives from trips to Germany or sent over by relatives residing in the West. Kathy Burrell (2010) stresses the high status of Western things in the lives of children in late socialist Poland, by using Bennett's (2001) theory of enchantment. As such, in the context of late socialist Poland, 'things associated with the western world held a very specific power and value, and in different ways were able to enchant people, and in particular children' (Burrell, 2010:144). As my imagination of the West as a colourful and 'Lenor -smelling Hariboland' indicates, the magic of Western goods was also ingrained in my own dreams of another life outside the Eastern bloc. Therefore, the material goods in form of western sweets or colourful toys had an 'evocative power', making the West seem temptingly close and vexingly distant at the same time (Burrell, 2010).

My perception of the Imaginary West was also shared by other women within this research project. For example, Lena, who shares the same generational cohort with me, commented:

'There was a girl in my class (back in Poland when Lena was little) and she had family abroad. The things that she had...! I could only dream of! Sometimes she'd bring some (sweets) to school. I still remember the smell of the (Haribo) Gummy bears. All the kids were begging her: please can I have some...please! (...) We went to the Pewex shop⁹³ and I saw a Barbie doll. I begged my parents for it and cried. I really wanted that doll. Eventually, my parents bought it (the doll) for me. I opened the box but it wasn't a Barbie, it was a cheap knockoff and I couldn't get over it...all I wanted was this Barbie doll! But they couldn't get it for me...'

In Lena's narrative, a similar motive associated with the smell, taste and colour (the pink Barbie doll in contrast to the grey Polish toys) of western goods prevails. The power, or to use Burrell's (2010) expression 'enchantment' with western goods, as well as the desire for western objects and the disappointment when they

⁹³ Like the GDR's Intershops (Heldmann, 2002; Zatlin, 2007), Pewex shops were established as an opportunity for the regime to bring western currency into the country, selling mainly imported goods to comparatively rich visitors.

do not materialise is striking. Burrell (2010) points to the fact that these western goods could be also understood as ‘bridges to a distant and idealised version of life’ and therefore ‘these provenirs (*in contrast to souvenirs which link to the past*) could also simultaneously act as *avenirs*, tapping into aspirations about what life in the future could look like’(ibid. p. 145, italics mine). It is useful to consider how these ‘imaginations’ of the West might have impacted on mobility. Again, using Lena’s life-story example, it could be argued that for her there was a connection between the early ‘enchantment’ with western goods and mobility as she reflects: *‘Until you see it for yourself, until you experience the flavours the taste (of western goods). Until you go abroad, you don’t really understand what it is that you didn’t have ... That there is another world, waiting! You just don’t know what you could have.’* Lena’s narrative suggests that there is a link between her engagement with Western goods and her mobility journey. She has experienced a different ‘flavour’ and then later in life, due to her experience of working in the US as an au pair, a different culture, which have had an impact on her mobility decision. Equally, Burrell (2010) in her study suggests that the enchantment with materials from the Imaginary West might have had an impact, as a form of imaginative mobility, on the physical mobility of her interviewees. In generational terms, based on Lena’s and my own experiences, it could be argued that the ‘enchantment’ with Western goods is specific to the ‘End of century Marauders/Strugglers’ (Wrzesień, 2009) or ‘European Generation of Change and Migration’ (Szewczyk, 2015). It has not been noted in the interviews with the younger generational groups, however enchantment, or idealized perceptions about the West were reported by the following generation (see Wanda chapter 4.4.2). It could therefore be argued that growing up and coming of age short before and during the time of transformation impacted on the generation’s imaginations about the West as well as a level of ‘enchantment’ with Western goods, which in turn confirms Burrell’s (2010) suggestion about imaginative mobility.

I return to Lena’s migration decision later in this chapter for now the focus is the continuation of the autoethnographic vignette.

Sabina (1978): It soon dawned on me that I would not be able to see my grandparents and great-grand mother for an unknown period of time and a choking pain started to weigh and manifest in my chest which left me unable

to cry or even speak. I stayed very quiet for the rest of the night and went into operating modus which shut out any inconvenient feelings and behaviours eager to cope and not to add to the distress.

Clearly, the forbearing and experience of family separation as a result of my parents' migration decision and the subsequent family life across borders has caused an emotional response within me. Other researchers have stressed that the impact of migration on children in particular in light of separation and transnational family ties can cause emotional, social, educational and/or psychological difficulties (Coe, Reynolds, Boehm, Hess, & Rae-Espinoza, 2011; White, 2010). Although research into children and family migration as well as the phenomenon of living life across borders has been given increased attention in recent years (Tyrrell, White, Ní Laoire, & Carpena-Mendez, 2012; Ní Laoire, Bushin, Carpena-Mendez, & White, 2009; White, 2011a), these considerations, though valuable as a direction for future research, are outside of the scope of this study. Transnational family ties, the emotional toll and negotiations of family separation are discussed later in this chapter.⁹⁴ Before this, the focus is on my own personal migration journey and sharing thoughts on family migration decision-making, a theme which reoccurs in the women's life stories.

Sabina (1978): My parents and grandparents had been preparing for this departure for a long time, they would have kept the intent to leave secret, hidden from the ears and eyes of malevolent neighbours, employers and also a talkative eight-year-old who could have given their plans away. My parents had been planning to leave Poland for years, their passport and visa applications declined on the basis that the intended visit to a relative in West-Germany would have resulted in a migration attempt. The authorities would allow for only one parent to travel with a child to ensure that that they would not want to leave the other half behind and split up the family with very little chance for the partner who stayed behind to ever leave the country. In the end it was West

⁹⁴ Although I share the experience of negotiating distant relationships with the participants (particularly in relation to maintaining contact with family left behind and the difficulties in an aera where communication technologies were a lot less available and developed), this study focuses on the post EU Accession experiences only.

Berlin that became the possible destination, as back then visitors from other Eastern European countries could enter West Berlin via East Berlin, that is if the border officials made no objections. For the passage to run as smooth as possible one had to make it look like a tourism trip, so that the East German border guards would not raise any suspicions. For this to work we had to limit our luggage to very basic belongings and could not carry a huge amount of money on us either, not that it would have been an easy task to accumulate foreign currency resources in the first place.

Before 1989 it was very difficult to travel outside Poland and the Eastern Bloc. Although it was possible to travel to the West, it certainly was not straight forward. For a long-time people in Poland were not allowed to keep their passports at home which, as Burrell (2008) notes, was for many people a constant reminder of the power of the socialist regime over personal movement (ibid., p. 358). The above excerpt implies, along the implications of the restrictions of travelling during socialism, that as a child I was not part of the family migration decision making process. It was not until the very evening of the departure that I was actually informed by my parents about their plans. The fact that I was not included in the migration decision could be assigned to intergenerational relationships and parenting styles. However, the notion of insecurity in my parents' decision making should not be underestimated. Understandably, there was an element of precarity implied in the migration decision, as travelling to the West as a family during socialism would raise suspicions of potential migration attempts. A child knowing of the attempt could have made an uncaredful comment which could jeopardize the endeavour. On the other hand, as my example demonstrates, similarly to other studies (Moskal & Tyrell, 2016), children are often not included in family migration-decisions and therefore have little agency (D'Angelo, 2011). As a result, children sometimes find it hard to understand the choices of their parents and also of not knowing what to expect on arrival (Moskal & Tyrell, 2016). Although I did not have any agency in the family migration decision-making, from my parents' point of view, they had 'my best interests at heart' and rationalised the decision as synonymous with opening up advantageous educational and employment opportunities for me, which is not dissimilar to recent studies (Moskal & Tyrell, 2016; Moskal, 2014a; Moskal, 2014b; Sime, Fox, & Pietka, 2010). In

contrast to my first migration experience and lack of agency in the decision-making process, later mobility decisions implied agency, not only in my case, but also for the participants of this research, as is examined later in this chapter. In the next paragraph however, I share how as a child I experienced the actual crossing of the border and what repercussion this encounter has had.

Sabina (1978): Back in our own small flat, which was part of a socialist era housing estate and built of pre-stressed concrete, after extensive good byes and tears, I realised that my parents had carefully orchestrated the departure. Bags were packed, ready to go, my father popped out briefly to sell our VHS player and exchange all my parent's savings into Deutsch Mark. I fell asleep on the sofa in the living room, which had the same furniture unit against one of the walls as my grandparents, many of my friends and other families in the housing estate owned. It was here that I had dreamt of a world where living rooms would be colourful and big, unlike ours.

I was woken by my mother and asked to get in the car. Outside the snow was falling in thick big clumps covering the world in a white blanket. We drove slowly through the snow flurry, gradually negotiating our way in the little Fiat 126p, my father was worried whether the car was in a good enough state to make the trip at all. I must have fallen asleep again, my face pressed into my little pillow which was the only thing that I was allowed to take with me, when my mother woke me and said that we were now approaching the border. It was very early morning, and the border crossing was deserted. As soon as we approached the checkpoint manned by border guards equipped with guns, matching uszankas⁹⁵ and German Shephard dogs, two more officials approached the car. It was the first time that I have heard German spoken apart from my grandparents' house and VHS movies (which were dubbed over in Polish). "Papiere!", said the women in what sounded to me like an aggressive shouted order, similar to what I have seen in Polish films where SS soldiers were represented. My mother handed over the papers and stuttered a few words as to the purpose of the trip, whilst the guards with the Shephard dogs started to

⁹⁵ Russian trapper hat.

search our car. I remember the feeling of paralysing fear being exposed to these strangers opening our car and luggage, removing every little item and scrutinising it, checking under the car and every item in our luggage. I was not sure what we could have possibly hidden in my mother's underwear that required meticulous examining. It was incomprehensible to me why we were treated as preparators, as wrongdoers, seemingly a threat. After all, we only wanted a better life. I wondered if the place that we were heading to might not want us there if this is how we were treated on arrival. It was only much later that I understood that these were the East-Germany officials whose job it was to weed out any potential renegades from the socialist bloc. Nevertheless, the sheer fear that I experienced during this border crossing has stayed with me for many years and I have felt uneasy ever since when facing a border official.

The above vignette demonstrates the particular experience of 'border crossings' within the historical context of socialism. It illustrates an encounter with border authorities/ professionals, which was emotional, and in effect (as a child) made me doubt if the move to the West, was as good a step as I imagined. It could be argued that the experience of border crossing at that time caused a level of 'disenchantment' in comparison to the imaginative preconception (also related to Western goods see earlier in this chapter). Here, the repercussions of the migration decision on my emotional state as a child are showing. The border crossing experience, with the border guards being the first contact with the West, evoked and instilled a certain emotional response in me: fear and confusion. Svašek (2010) building on Hoschild's (1983) work, proposes that in the context of migration related professions (here border guards) emotional reactions are 'shaped by culturally and professionally specific emotion rules' (Svašek, 2010: 872). Effectively, border guards investigate people who want to enter the country to determine and demask 'potential cheats' before they posit a threat to legal citizens. As described in the above autoethnographic reflection, such an 'investigation' took also place when my parents and I were trying to enter West Berlin. Svašek (2010) suggests a discourse of 'threat' underlying the encounter between the migrant and the official, where the migrants as 'objects of inquisitive gazes, body scans, and possibly invasive searches (...) may experience fear, anger or simply feelings of annoyance' (ibid. p. 872). Also,

Cunningham (2004: 335) suggests that border crossings can be 'pivotal moments of subjugation,' frustrating and humiliating experiences, where migrants are exposed variable rigorous passport checks on arrival. As already stated, I certainly felt the penetrating gazes accompanied by aggressive voices as well as thorough searches. On another level, this encounter is also perhaps foreshadowing an experience which could be broadly described as 'orientalisation', which I will discuss further in chapter five section 5.3, the feeling that coming from the Eastern Bloc has somehow made us the subaltern other to 'Westerners'.

In the next autoethnographic vignette I reflect on coming to the UK in 2007, which to some extent stands in contrast to the migration experience in 1989. Overall, border crossing experience as a 10-year-old is vivid and focused on sensory impressions (i.e. weather descriptions, detailed descriptions of familiar spaces and items). In addition, the experience is emotional it relates, at first feelings of excitement (the trip to the West is an adventure), expectations (the 'enchantment' with the West through visual and olfactory imaginations) but also loss (family separation) and disappointment (fear and confusion at border crossing). It could be said that thanks to the emotionality and sensory vividness experienced at as a child the memory of leaving and border crossing of that time is still is very present in, my memory. In comparison, although it happened much later in my life the memory of leaving and entering the UK is a lot less clear. In fact, I used a photograph and consulted friends for memory recall. What is more, due to the political and historical circumstances different factors interplayed in my decision making at the time. In 2007 I was allowed to travel, live and work abroad and to some extent experienced in migration journeys. As a result of living in Poland during the aftermath of the transition period, which resulted in high unemployment, graduate oversaturation and return to traditional gender roles, I sought out new mobility routes, not as a path to better life and working conditions but as an alternative experience to what the Polish reality has offered at that point. Here is how I remember the trip to the UK in 2007:

Sabina (1978): I was sat in a bus filled with fellow countrymen and women heading for London. The borders were opened for three years and the wave of Polish migrants, whether looking for a new life or seasonal work, was at its

peak. The bus was packed, it was the middle of summer and the blend of human odours mixed with pickles, boiled eggs and alcohol consumed by my fellow travellers, made me nauseous.

The journey is long and does not seem to end, until finally we reached Calais and we can enjoy some air and space during the channel crossing. But clearly the waves only added to the queasy feeling in my stomach. There is a photograph of me from the ferry crossing, hair waving in the wind, a tired and squinting face, hopeful, perplexed and exhausted. Hopeful that the decision to come to the UK was the right one to take, perplexed because I was not sure if I wanted to be a 'migrant' again, exhausted because of the long trip perhaps...

Soon enough, I saw the 'white cliffs of Dover' appearing and squished back into the bus for the remainder of the trip. I remember looking out of the window and admiring how green everything around seemed. 'It's the island micro-climate' said the middle-aged man who sat next to me, 'wait till it starts raining' he grinned sarcastically.

The memory of this trip to the UK in 2007 differs from the memory of the border crossing in 1989, in that it conveys little emotions. It is not dissimilar to other narratives which are presented later in the section, for example Mira (1985), Judyta (1993) and Hania (1990), almost stripped of emotion. The only hint in the above vignette at an emotional response would be the 'queasy feeling' experienced during the journey, which above being a response to the physical conditions of the trip could also be indicative of feelings of uneasiness and anxiety. The photograph also appears to depict a level of nervousness and doubt. In generational terms, Burrell (2011a) points out that, specifically, experiences of the generation who came of age post transformation and Poland's EU accession (where the emotional fallout of transition from communism run parallel to key biographical changes) were on the one hand marked by the opportunities offered by the open borders, while at the same time also tinged by anxieties and uncertainty. Burrell (2011a) asserts that for the generation born in the late 70s and early 80s mobility offered future chances. In the above vignette the decision to move to the UK appears to be taken for granted, a 'normalised' solution to the living conditions in Poland and also a decision that many others, regardless of either gender or age, have taken (as illustrated by the different

passengers on the fully packed bus). However, and despite the future prospect offered by mobility, as reflected also in the vignette above there is a level of anxiety and insecurity prompting migration (see also Burrell, 2011a). Like many others of my generation, the post socialist reality and newly claimed freedom proved to be more difficult to navigate and to live by than we had ever expected. The political, cultural and economic situation I found myself in was increasingly suffocating, with the rise of the Kaczynski brothers and the return to traditional values combined with the rebirth of the Catholic faith, as well as the fact that no matter how many hours a week I worked there was never enough to make ends meet. In addition, the labour market offered few possibilities even for graduates. Krzaklewska (2019), looking into generational experiences of Polish migrants born in the early 80s, made a similar observation and noted that migration became a major pathway for this group. Based on my example, it could be argued that this was not only the case for those born in the early 80s but also for those born in the late 70s. This points to the fact that generational experiences are not sealed, but that certain experiences are transgenerational and that the impact of the transition from communism was felt by several generations. Of course, going on major statistics, the push and pull factors for Polish migrants during this period would have been classified as economic, but looking closer it is evident that there was so much more to it than that.

Also, in migration literature, authors very poignantly comment on the political situation in Poland and how it might have impacted migration decisions. For example, Magda the protagonist in M.A. Bakalar's novel *Madame Mephisto* (2012) makes the following comment when reflecting on the socio-political attitudes of the Kaczynski brothers:

'Do you remember what I said about the twin brothers? Well, it was like the movie they starred in when they were thirteen. What was the title? Ah yes, The Two Who Stole the Moon, about two cruel and lazy boys who one day have an idea to steal the moon, which— in the story— is made of gold, so that they will not have to work anymore. You see, those twin brothers later became two cruel politicians who, like the boys in the movie, had a vision of the glory of this country. Yes, you are right, unlike the boys in the movie, the brothers did have jobs— president and prime minister— but their paranoid ultra-

nationalism and obsessive religiousness has turned our country into a place I can no longer call my home.' (ibid. p.4).

As this passage demonstrates, M.A. Bakalar comments openly on Poland's socio-political situation between 2005-2010 and explicitly the joint leadership of the Kaczynski brothers. Lech Kaczynski served as the president of Poland from 2005 until his death in 2010, whilst Jarosław served as the prime minister of Poland from 2006 until 2007. The vision of Poland shared by the brothers was in its ideology celebrating nationalistic ideals amalgamated with adherence to mandates of the Catholic Church. In addition, at this point Poland was suffering high rates of unemployment, which was one of the economic push factors for the significant migration wave out of Poland (to the UK and also other countries within the EU and beyond). As already stated, the difficult economic situation could be understood as one of the main migration push factors. However, and as demonstrated in Bakalar's (2012) novel and expressed in the criticism towards the leadership of the Kaczynski brothers, apart from the economically challenging situation, the socio-cultural and political situation has also had an impact on migration decision-making.

To describe the impact of the socio-political situation in Poland it needs to be added that during the transition period from socialism to a free-market economy, and Poland's joining of the EU, young people (in particular of my generation) were initially very optimistic, to use Maga's (Bakalar, Madame Mephisto, 2012) words: *'After Poland joined the EU we, the young people, had such hopes, hopes for our own country. That things would get better from now on! There's nothing better than being young and naïve (...)'* (ibid. p. 3). Burrell (2011a) made a similar observation in her study of this generation where most 'accounts demonstrated a degree of buoyancy in this initial optimism' (ibid., p.415). However, it then very soon became obvious that the new found 'freedom', was a lot more difficult to navigate than initially assumed.

Another writer, Magda Zarska in her novel *Suspended (Zawieszeni)* (2007) also comments on the situation in Poland when her protagonist Ewa reflects on the difficulties she encounters when trying to secure employment and is failing to do so:

'And she has got the job, because she knows someone, because her husband, or her uncle this and that, or once with someone, but I wanted to get there with my own efforts, by myself and thanks to myself. I thought that my work

speaks for itself, that thanks to my work, my hard work...I thought that now since we live in capitalism, in a democracy, the chances were equal, fair. Rubbish. A big pile of Polish rubbish.' (ibid. p. 64, translation mine).

Zarska's protagonist is finding it difficult to accept that in Poland post transition and EU Accession she is still not able to secure employment based on her qualifications and skills, as seemingly old socialist patterns prevail, here specifically cronyism and/or clientelism (relying on informal connections and reciprocal favours). In post-socialist Poland old behavioural patterns were still much engrained within socio-economic reality. Morawska (1999) observed that paradoxically, 'many of the old arrangements fitted very well the global capitalist conditions' (ibid. p. 374) and that 'popular mindsets and coping strategies formed under the previous regime' (ibid. p. 359) were often applied successfully during the transition to capitalism. For example, informal or illicit strategies of cronyism and/or clientelism, such as described in quote from *Suspended (Zawieszeni)* (Zarska, 2007), would have led to successful employment opportunities for some and the lack thereof in reverse limited the opportunities for others, such as Zarska's protagonist. The fact that these informal or illicit strategies from the past were still entwined in the Polish society years after the fall of the iron curtain has frustrated Ewa (Zarska, 2007), as for her it was important that she is given credit for her qualification and skills. I have used the example of Zarska's novel to help further understand the frustrations that I was faced with when trying to secure employment in Poland and where I have often met similar strategies in place. Consequently, despite the fact that unemployment figures were very high in 2007 in Poland, there were also other obstacles (such as the old regime arrangements) which might have impacted on career development and progression. Szewczyk (2015) exploring the generational experiences of young Polish migrants born in the late 1970s and early 1980s suggests that young graduates faced with corruption and nepotism and the fact that success in the Polish labour market heavily depended on personal contacts with unfair work practices often chose migration as an antidote. It could be said that my personal experience and motivation reinforces Szewczyk's (2019) findings.

The memory of the trip, in contrast to the journey in 1989, has almost an element of a 'holiday' trip. The people on the bus are acting as if they were going on

a coach trip somewhere, they are jovial, chatting eating packed lunches and drinking alcohol. There are no traces of the fear and concern as indicated in the memory of the 1989 border crossing apart from an underlying sense of disappointment in the fact that despite the socio-political developments of Poland's joining the EU, the reality that I was faced with was far from ideal. Reflecting on my memory of this border crossing with hindsight, there was also an element of 'needing to move on', of trying to find an alternative path, experience a different reality. I remember that I rationalised the move as an opportunity to gain cultural capital in terms of language skills and career advancement. When analysing the above-mentioned motivations for migration through the generational lens then it could be argued that they are closer to those identified in the following two generations i.e., European generation of change (Szewczyk 2015), generation of European Searchers (Wrzesień, 2009) and generation Y (Pustałka et al, 2019). For example, the motivations for migration appear to be also indicative of *life-style migration* (Benson & O'Reilley, 2009) which has been noted as a trait of generation Y (see Pustałka et al., 2019). Here again it is evident that generational experiences are not sealed off from other generations, on the contrary the example illustrates that the migration motivation of the generation born in the late 70ties to some degree foreshadows motivations of later generations. In this sense my experience is comparable with, and audible in, the voices of the women who have shared their mobility trajectories with me. In comparison, on other occasions my personal motivation, and the migration decision as related by other women migrants within this research, differ significantly. It is through unveiling the different story lines and motivations that this study intends to present a multivocal account on the subject at hand.

4.3 Entry points

As the preceding autoethnographic vignette illustrates, the experience of migration can be understood as an ongoing and evolving process, with a multitude of entry and departure points. Similarly, the live-story interviews take account of different entry and departure points which in some cases were ill-defined and open ended, without a clear destination. Mobility experiences could therefore be

identified as non-linear. The following section examines selected excerpts of the life-story interviews to illuminate how participants have reflected on their decision to come to the UK. The women's narratives often featured periods of travel and work abroad prior to arriving in the UK. As such, the migration process then does not refer to one single event in their lives but a series of past, present and future negotiations. Consequently, the evolving experience of mobility led the women to offer multiple explanations, rather than a single deterministic reason for their migration to the UK. Broadly, but not exclusively, some of their explanations included: migration in pursuit of opportunities, to further career development, as a way to experience something new and different, in order to improve English, due to curiosity, thrill seeking, and aspirations, by chance, due to life course changes and for familial reasons. In addition, decisions to migrate frequently overlapped, supported and contradicted one another. Therefore, even if initially a specific reason to migrate was offered, the life-story narratives then often revealed other factors.

The life-story narratives of the participants do not categorize them as 'economic migrants', in as much as their decision to migrate was not merely dictated by improving their life and working conditions (Castles & Miller, 1998), instead the decision was for personal, cultural, social and emotional reasons. However, it is significant to observe that some of the women constructed their own autobiographical migration narratives as a matter-of-fact, pragmatic and often swift decision, on the surface devoid of emotions. Ryan's study of Irish nurses in the UK (2008, p. 303), suggested that for certain ethnic groups migration is considered to be normal and connected to perceptions that it would lead to a better life, and therefore certain migrant groups were socialised to be stoical about their migration decision. Similarly, in this study, some participants expressed an almost taken for granted, and on the surface unemotional approach to leaving Poland. However, the emotional impact of migration, specifically on families, also amply discussed by White (2011a), was evident in the two latter examples in this section, Zyta (1966) and Wanda (1963) have a very clear emotional element to them which is connected to experiences of family separation. In contrast the migration decisions as illustrated by Zyta (1966) and Wanda (1963) have a very clear emotional element to them which is connected to experiences of family separation. Finally, Lena's (1978) experience points to the

‘existential’ element of migration (Madison, 2006), which exemplifies emotional factors as well as touches on the concept of belonging (see also chapter five section 5.4.4 for further discussion).

4.3.1 Migration as “a way out”: Mira (1985) and Hania (1990)

For Mira (1985) the move to the UK could be understood as a ‘way out’ and the answer to her difficult economic as well as life situation in Poland. Mira shared the following thoughts whilst we are sat in her studio. She is an illustration artist and is currently completing her MA degree:

‘Before I came to the UK I was homeless, couch surfing at my friend’s house. Old story really... I have met a guy who was in the UK and he invited me to come back with him. It was a one-way ticket (she laughs and sings the 1978 Eruption song).⁹⁶ I didn’t think twice about coming to the UK, there was no future for me in Poland and the ticket was like the lucky dip!’

Although the decision to migrate is not an ‘easy step’ and is often preceded by planning and careful preparation and complex processes of decision making (Jordan & Duvell, 2003), it appears that Mira rationalises the option to take up the offer of the one-way ticket as an obvious choice. In her narrative the decision to come to the UK seems to some extent impulsive, as she explains she only met the man who offered her the ticket briefly before. The decision to take up the offer is impulsive, and the trigger is followed by an immediate reaction (*‘he invited me to come back with him ...I didn’t think twice’*). It could therefore be argued that in Mira’s migration decision is an instant and obvious choice in response to the problems experienced in Poland (*‘I was homeless ... there was no future for me in Poland’*). It is a straight choice between life in Poland and life in the UK, even if a risk is involved.

⁹⁶ The 1978 Eruption song was covered by a Russian band by the name Pojuschie Gitary (Singing Guitars) popular in the wider Soviet Block. The song’s popularity was the also reinforced by Bony M who covered the song and toured Poland in 1979. Although in the original the song refers to a broken relationship, the underlying meaning within the context of Socialism, stood in for the longing for a different life abroad. Even if the one-way-ticket offered an ‘escape route’, at the same time it also entailed a sacrifice i.e., leaving family behind, not being able to visit home, living and working in difficult precarious conditions etc, hence the destination is the ‘blues’.

Again, in addition to the prospect of improving her living conditions, it could be argued that there is a sense of adventure interwoven in Mira's narrative audible in her singing of the Eruption song and her laughter. It could therefore be argued that although the offer of the one-way ticket seemed like the obvious way out of Poland for her, it also was an opportunity to embark on an adventure to gain new experiences and skills. In fact, it was not only the housing situation that was problematic for Mira. Over the course of the interview, she also reflects on her four unsuccessful attempts to pass the entry exams for an arts degree course in Poland, which as she reflects left a 'deep mark' on her. Since her arrival in the UK Mira has not only completed a MA degree, but also managed to establish herself as a freelance artist, which as she comments *'would have never been possible in Poland'*.

In the same way, Hania (1990) found herself in a difficult life situation in Poland, and the opportunity to come to the UK offered an alternative to an unbearable work situation: *'I really had nothing to lose'* says Hania when reflecting on her decision to come to the UK, *'but I never meant to stay longer than 6 months, and now look at me'*, she holds up her arms to encompass the surrounding of her house. Hania is a homeowner, and I am sat in the perfectly tidy and unpretentious front room of her new build house that she has just given me a full tour of. There are little bowls with nuts and fruit on the coffee table. I cannot help but wonder how Hania, who initially only planned to stay in the UK for a limited amount of time, has come to even partially set roots in the UK.

'I needed a change of environment, the work situation I was in before coming to the UK had taken its toll on my mental and physical health. The stress levels that I had to put up with became unmanageable after a while and I was diagnosed with a heart-attack threatening condition. I needed to step out...!'

, explains Hania and I am beginning to wonder why the work situation has got to this point, and whether employees in the Polish cooperate environment were in any way protected against high levels of stress. From what I can hear from Hania's story to the contrary, it seems that the expectations on her performance were very high. Hania admits that she was not prepared for, or supported in, dealing with the high levels of stress that came with the managerial role.

'Well, you know what the situation in Poland was like back then', there is an over ten-year age gap between us, but Hania (1990) implies that we have both experienced the same living conditions. On many levels I must admit that we have both shared the same experiences in terms of life-work balance in Poland when she adds:

'I have worked during Uni, you know in pubs and bars at night, quickly finishing projects in the mornings... sleepless nights. I didn't have a student loan and my parents were not able to support me, so I had to work. It was hard going...'

Again, this sounds familiar and is reflective of the experience of other participants of this research, such as Judyta. Hania is not the only woman that reflects on the living conditions in Poland but in her case the stress related to the working environment that she was impacted on her decision to come to the UK. Her decision to come to the UK was indirectly motivated by economic factors with the improvement of mental and physical health being the leading factor. Similarly, to Mira (1985) Hania has chosen to move to the UK as 'a way out' of a difficult economic and living situation.

Hania's narrative also foregrounds the aspect of impulsive decision-making that emerged in Mira's account above. In her case, the decision to migrate resulted from a conversation with a friend who made the suggestion that moving to the UK might be the solution to her problems, rather than her own: *'I was talking to a friend of mine and she said that I should try going abroad for a bit, when I think about it, she was the one who actually mentioned that I had nothing to lose'*, reflects Hania (1990) in hindsight. Hania's decision making could be attributed to coincidence which brings about the impression of immediacy and obviousness. The conversation between Hania and her friend implied the possibility of coming to the UK, mentioned almost in passing but as an obvious decision, rather than a well-planned search for opportunities. Hania's decision to move to the UK is the acceptance of an obvious choice, reinforced by her friend's statement.

With regards to generations, other researchers (Szewczyk, 2015; Galasińska & Kozłowska, 2009) noted that spontaneous decision making in taking up migration opportunities was common amongst the post-2004 migration group, specifically, according to Szewczyk (2015) the generation born in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Szewczyk (2015) suggests that this generational group, through exposure to

significant socio-political changes, developed agency and adaptation to change. As a result, they were quick to make spontaneous migration decisions. In comparison with this study, it could be argued that Mira (1985) fits into earlier generational descriptions. Hania (1990) on the other hand could be understood as a member of a later generation (Millennials/Generation Y). Thus, it could be asserted that swift decision making about migration also prevailed in the generation to follow, despite the fact that this generation was no longer directly affected by the immediate consequences caused by the collapse of communism and transition to capitalist market. Again, as with the earlier example, it appears that generational belonging is not only determined by birth cohort alone. Instead, it could be said that certain attitudes developed in response to specific historical events emanate beyond the point in time in which they were directly experienced. It could further be argued that these two generations interacted and that the attitudes of the late 1970s early 1980s generation informed and interinfluenced the approaches to migration decision making in the generations that followed. Overall, this example illustrates that generational belonging is complex and that generational division are subjective and can be blurred.

4.3.2 Migration as a life-style choice: Judyta (1993)

We are sitting in Judyta's flat, which she shares with a long-standing friend who has followed her to the UK. It is the dawn of the Covid-19 crisis and Judyta is clearly not happy with the way the UK government is dealing with the crisis this far: *'Keep calm and drink tea!... How can they be so ignorant! This is the typical English attitude'*, she comments on the government's response to the crisis. I sense that apart from her dissatisfaction with their initial response to the Covid-19 crisis, there is more about the UK government and perhaps with the UK in general that does not sit well with her.

'I never wanted to come to the UK in the first place... After graduating, myself and a friend we applied for an exchange programme in the US but weren't successful. I was a little stuck and it was then that it occurred to me that I have an auntie in the UK and

I thought, why not go and visit her for the holidays, it might be fun. But I never meant to stay!'

I am surprised that Judyta is so very adamant about the fact that she 'never meant to stay', and I wonder if she feels any regrets about coming to the UK.

'Back then I simply needed a break, a new experience perhaps. I wasn't sure where to go next, if I wanted to carry on with the MA or not...' she adds. *'I had to study and work throughout my BA degree. It was exhausting but that's Polish reality for you...!'*, her frustration resonates with me. I remembered how tiring it sometimes was to make it all work, the many hours that I have spent giving private tuition to students, the long summers that I spent in manual jobs abroad just so that I could make it through the year. *'I have been going abroad during the summer months for the last four years, so that I could save up enough to support myself during the academic year. This is not my first migration experience, oh no...!'* she says, stressing the fact that many of her peers have lived through their education experience in Poland in a very similar vain. Judyta, like myself and many other young women whilst studying (although this is not to imply that women of different backgrounds and age cohorts have not applied a similar strategy) in Poland, had taken on manual jobs elsewhere in western Europe with the aim to earn enough to support herself through the years of HE education. *'This was the only way that I could afford to live away from home and study'* Judyta comments, which demonstrates that the economic situation for young people in Poland has been difficult. Since a student loan or a bursary system similar to the one in the UK was not accessible to most, the only way for her to be able to afford to study was by taking up seasonal jobs abroad which in return paid for the living in Poland. Listening to Judyta talk about the need to work abroad to support herself has made it clear to me how this fact has simply been yet another aspect of everyday life in Poland that we put up with.

Clearly, even if there were no direct economic motivations for me and other women to leave Poland, in the long run the implications of the Polish reality and the continued lack of financial means have been slowly grinding at us. It is therefore not surprising that Judyta says that she *'needed a break from it all'*. Her life-story narrative suggests that the decision to come and live in the UK was driven by the need for a 'holiday' from Polish reality, and the curiosity of experiencing a different life. It

is apparent that Judyta was disillusioned at the state of the labour market and economy in Poland and that this fact had an impact on her decision to come to the UK. However, it also exposes other socio-cultural motivations. Judyta's decision to come to the UK was driven by the need for adventure, a change of scenery a different experience. Judyta also adds that she was keen on developing her language skills, which would then benefit her when returning to Poland. Other researchers comment on the accumulation and transferability of cultural capital such as language skills and/or work experience as one of the goals for young migrant graduates. Judyta's narrative focuses on the notion of cultural self-improvement, and mobility (in the UK, but also former experiences in Norway) offers a route for self-development through the experience of travelling and living in a foreign country. Thus, the UK is for Judyta not necessarily a final destination but a gateway or steppingstone into a more cosmopolitan life style (see also chapter five section 5.4.4.1). It could be argued that Judyta on one hand rationalises her decision to come to the UK in terms of social and educational mobility as a way to broaden her horizons and have a more international experience. The mobility motivation in Judyta's case arises from dual drivers - the *need* to migrate in order to improve living conditions and future outlooks, and as a *choice* to travel for personal development and to adopt a more cosmopolitan lifestyle. The latter has been described by Dzieglewski (2015) as a type of migration motivated by the search for an alternative lifestyle 'affording new post-materialist values, patterns of behavioural norms' (ibid.p.177). On the other hand, Eade et al (2007) suggest that within the frame of reference of the post 2004 migration to the UK, a large number of young Polish migrants have chosen mobility as a *search* for new skills and experiences, as well as economic migration. Eade et al (2007) therefore refer to these types of young Polish migrants as 'searchers'. By comparison, Judyta's mobility experience is marked by curiosity about travel and the world in general, as part of her motivation to move to the UK was also marked by the *search* for new skills and an alternative life style. Researchers (see also White, 2010) suggest that many young Polish migrants assert their independence and agency through the process of migration, a topic which is also examined further in relation to gender roles in chapter six.

Concerning generations, Judyta's motivation for mobility seems typical of the Millennials/Generation Y where the main reasons for moving abroad are in search of educational opportunities or a lifestyle (see also Pustalka et al., 2019). It is however interesting to observe that although Judyta expresses a keen interest in experiencing different lifestyle and to enhance her social and educational capital these motifs are to some degree still anchored in economic hardship, as her descriptions of working and studying evidences. As such although the motivation for migration for Millennials might have changed in comparison to earlier generations it should nonetheless be noted that many were still experiencing economic hardship which could be traced back to the transition from communism to the capitalist market.

4.3.3 Family ties: Zyta (1966) and Wanda (1963)

Despite that fact that migration has often been understood on an individual level (often also classified as male and single), contemporary and historical migration trends evidence that individuals are embedded in families and therefore family ties shape the process of mobility (Bartram, Poros, & Monforte, 2014). Consequently, mobility trajectories often encompass, and are facilitated by, relationships within families. In the past, family migration trends were analysed through the economic motivation and/or labour migration lens and often centred on family reunion and chain migration⁹⁷. Nonetheless, the phenomenon of family migration is growing in significance in academic writing and policy making, still as Kofman et al (2011) suggest it remains marginal in migration studies. For the purpose of this section, the aspect of the emotional implications of family separation is most relevant. By including

⁹⁷ As such, family migration was depicted as primarily the reunification with the 'pioneering male' who was followed by the dependent female (with children where applicable), who seldomly, if at all, participated in the labour market (Kofman, Kraler, Kohli, & Schmoll, 2011). For example, early illustrations of the labour migration such as *Seventh Man* (1975) by Berger and Mohr have endorsed the role of women as manifested in the home. Although, women have been identified as the dominant group in family migration, their involvement in the labour market has been viewed as marginal and 'at best supplementing the male breadwinner's model' (Kofman, Kraler, Kohli, & Schmoll, 2011: 17). Only in the 1980 feminist scholars began to focus on gender relations and the role of women migrants as well as bring light to the presence of women in labour market (Morokvasic, Birds of passage are also women, 1984). Researchers have stressed that the phenomenon of chain migration (Price, 1963 quoted in Castles & Miller, 2003) plays an instrumental part in encouraging mobility, in particular for women. Chain migration appears when the decision-making process is influenced by a spouse, a partner or other family members, or friends with the benefit of being able to tap into already existing social networks in the host country (cf. Boyd, 1989; Bartram, Poros & Monforte, 2014). Castles and Miller (2009) emphasize that migration is often more of an extended social process rather than a single act. Hence, sometimes migrants who arrive and make a living in the destination country are then encouraging family and friends to join them.

aspects of emotionality in family migration, this research provides further evidence on the topic, in particular related to the emotional impact of migration on marriages and absent adult children and how these effected migration decisions.

Mobility experiences, as represented by the research participants as well as my own, are often entwined in complex webs of relationships across generations and locations. Therefore, in addition to concepts of family reunion and chain migration, the transnational perspective becomes particularly relevant for this thesis. The concept of transnationalism in migration research not only, as Vertovec (2001) notes, 'accentuates the attachments migrants maintain to families, communities, traditions and causes outside the boundaries of the nation-state to which they moved' (ibid p.574) but also questions the assumed linearity of migration as a one-way journey (Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). Moreover, transnationalism 'forces us to reconsider our understanding of households and families based on the idea of co-residency and physical unity and takes into account the possibility of spatial separation' (Zontini, 2004: 1114). As such, the assumption that the migrant family is a geographically bounded unit is complicated, and 'families represent a social group geographically dispersed. They create kinship networks which exist across space and are the conduits for information and assistance which in turn influence migration decisions' (Boyd, 1989a: 643).

In this part of the thesis, the aspect of transnational family ties implicated in spatial separation and the effect of the split family on migration trajectories and decisions are of particular interest. Furthermore, the section exposes emotional implications of transnationalism as related in selected narratives. The life-stories by Wanda (1963) and Zyta (1966) both illuminate how transnational family ties affected the women's migration decision, in particular in their role as the members of the family who stayed behind. Other researchers such as Falicov (2007) have stressed that when considering transnational families, the entire family system needs to be considered as well as family dynamics on both sides of the border. Likewise, Goulbourne et al (2010) emphasized that in order to gain a full picture of transnational families, one should not only consider the migrants within the family but also those left behind. In the same way that migrants experience changes in interpersonal ties due to their physical move, family members who stay behind also

experience changes in interpersonal relationships (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). To fully appreciate transnational kinship, it is paramount to demonstrate the ways in which family relationships are played out from both the perspectives of the migrants, and those who remain behind (Goulbourne, Reynolds, Solomos, & Zontini, 2010). As Fuller (2017) notes, despite the growing body of research on transnational migration, the investigation of transnational families beyond the young nuclear family is still relatively undeveloped, apart from White's (2011a) study which discusses the both the emotional impact of migration on marriages (ibid., p. 126 f) as well as the impact of absent adult children (ibid., p.125f) specifically in relation to care responsibilities. Both narratives, by Zyta and Wanda, illuminate the perspective of family members who initially stay in the country of origin whilst, in Zyta's case her spouse migrates and in Wanda's example her adult children move to the UK. Thus, this research offers an extended understanding of transnational kinship relations by including these two voices. Furthermore, the implications of transnational family relationships and the emotional toll on family members who remain in the country of origin is discussed. Although family members who remain in the country of origin may not feel stranded in their communities, the division of the migrant family can bring about significant stressors that affect their daily lives, on both sides of the border. This study draws on Svašek (2010), who firstly suggests that although 'emotions are incorporated into existing research on transnational families, the field of transnational family research does not possess a coherent theory of emotions', and secondly questions 'whether or not such a theory is needed' (ibid. p.867). This research examines emotions in transnational families on two selected examples as inherent of their experience. In particular, key emotions such as longing and missing family members as well as the impact of separation.

The selected life-story narratives illustrate how transnational family ties affected these women's migration decisions, whilst pointing to the emotional implications and contrasting common assumptions about family migration as motivated by economic factors. Instead, the emotional hardship expressed by the participants provides a key to the women's migration decisions. The migration trajectories of both women could be understood through the prism of chain and family migration, as in both cases it was the women's close family members who have

come to the UK first. Meanwhile, both women reflected in their life-story interviews on the emotional cost of transnational migration, from the perspective of the ones who were left behind. Svašek (2008) suggests that the emotional cost of transnational migration and separation has been relatively neglected (apart from White, 2011a) and under-researched and the following section intends to partially bridge this gap. Zyta and Wanda had since joined their families in the UK, but both spoke of the distress and longing that accompanied long periods of separation from their family prior to their own migrations.

Zyta (1966) welcomes me in her sewing atelier, from where she runs her own business. She is obviously very proud of her achievement and is very welcoming. From the very onset of the life-story interview Zyta states that what I was about to hear is a 'love story'. In fact, the first half an hour of the interview was a testimony to the strong emotional connection between her and her partner. Her story then crystalizes as a painful narrative describing a partnership stretched across borders. In the end, Zyta decided to come to the UK to join her partner who came first, as the emotional cost of transnationalism was becoming unbearable for her. At first, she was not in favour of the idea to migrate and has had no other prior migration experiences and did not want to leave Poland. She shared: *'I never thought that I would ever live anywhere else but in Poland.'* Throughout the interview there were several points which underlined Zyta's connection to Poland and its history. Zyta born in 1966 is in generational terms part of the Generation '89, which Wrzesień (2009) described as a group that came of age in the build up to and during the events of 1989, as a group that shaped contemporary Poland, not only in terms of youth culture of that time. It could be said that Zyta was part of a generation that directly experienced the processes that led to the collapse of communising. In fact, Zyta also witnessed key historical and political events taking place in Gdańsk in 1980 since her early teens. Zyta's brother was employed at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk and friends with Lech Wałęsa, who indeed was a frequent guest in Zyta's home. She reflected:

'I was fifteen when communism collapsed in Poland... It was a difficult time. My brother was part of the Solidarność movement at the shipyard and he was detained for his activity. (...) Walesa was often a guest in our house, sat at our kitchen table. (...) I helped distributing flyers (for Solidarność) and got in trouble

with ZOMO, they wanted to expel me from school... We were fighting for our freedom, fighting so fiercely back then'

In light of Zyta's XX cent experiences it could be argued that her ties with Poland were strong and although as observed by others (Pustalka, 2019) Polish women of that generation were frequently engaging in circular and seasonal migration Zyta did not. It could be assumed that her approach to migration was to a certain extent influenced by the fact that she felt a strong connection to Poland and its future. This is in contrast to Wanda (1963) who has worked abroad during her formative years as will be discussed further in this chapter.

This is how Zyta relates her decision to come to the UK:

'When I came to the UK I was 38 years old. I had a good job in Poland and have earned good money. My husband has earned well too, up to a point, but then the redundancies started, and he was unemployed for over 6 months. I could see that he was suffering, so I then suggested to him to go and make some money in the UK. I arranged it all for him, as I knew somebody at work who was sourcing employment in the UK. I suggested that he goes over for a couple of years so that we could at least save up enough money to buy a flat in Poland. He then left in May 2004 as soon as the 'gates' were opened.'

Zyta's (1966) narrative depicts that at first, she did not plan to move to the UK herself. As her life-story also reveals, Zyta had no earlier experiences of living or working abroad, and migration was not an option which she considered in the past. Nevertheless, her narration illustrates that she took an active part in setting up and planning her partner's migration journey. It is also apparent that at first there were clear economic factors involved in the decision making. Her partner was meant to work in the UK and send back remittances so that they could purchase a flat back in Poland. Although Zyta presents the initial migration decision by rationalising economic factors which outweigh the psychological and emotional costs of familial separation, her story soon reveals that the emotional toll of family separation had a significant impact on her.

Initially Zyta planned to stay in Poland whilst her husband was working in the UK, however, they maintained frequent telephone contact, or at least as far as communication technology in early 2004 allowed. Zyta comments: *'He called*

frequently, it was different times back then, we didn't have the internet, so he needed to call my neighbour...he also sent a few packages...'. It should not be forgotten that information technologies such as the internet and Skype are only recent developments, a factor I reflected on in the opening vignette to this chapter and which is also discussed when considering Wanda's mobility experience.

Very soon the transnational family ties became increasingly difficult for her to negotiate: *'But I never expected that this was going to be so difficult for me, I mean the separation. I just didn't feel right without him. I felt that I was missing something, always waiting for him, I had lost a sense of inner peace'*. The key emotion that Zyta expresses is the sense of longing, a feeling that is often referred to as a type of heartache and missing expressed in her desire to be with her husband. The longing to be embraced is pointing to the hope and aspiration felt by Zyta. As Baldassar (2008) notes, although within transnational families a significant proportion of emotional investment is channelled into maintaining transnational contact, the final goal remains the experience of co-presence. In consequence Baldassar (2008: 252) suggests that for transnational families 'the way to manage the heartache of longing and missing is through sensual contact and co-presence' and that the 'expression of longing and missing or absence and loss thus appear to be manifestations of the emotional need for reunion and return to co-presence'(ibid).

Therefore, Zyta soon felt that the transnational situation was unsustainable and following her first visit to the UK, she made a proactive effort to reunite the family. Zyta shares: *'I came for a visit in August, because I could no longer stand the separation. And as soon as I came and joined him here [in the UK] things were a lot better straight away. As soon as I came for the visit, I knew that I would not go to back to Poland and stay there on my own. I just couldn't bear being without him any longer. When I was going back to the airport [to fly to Poland] I already made arrangements: handed in my notice at work in Poland and booked my return flight to the UK. There was no way that I would have stayed there without him'*. This excerpt from the interview illustrates that Zyta was suffering due to the separation from her husband, and thus, effectively she chose to come to the UK to be with him. Zyta's narrative calls attention to the reality and constraints of physical distance and the barriers to mobility. To elevate the emotional toll of separation Zyta decides to join her husband

in the UK. As Svašek (2008) proposes, following phenomenologist ideas of 'being-in-the-world' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), the experience of physical co-presence, through the ability to 'hold and touch (...) to exchange looks, share drinks and hear their (*other members of the transnational family*) voices' (Svašek, 2008: 219; italics mine) in family reunion fundamentally effects the emotional dynamics of transnational families.

It could be said that Zyta's migration, as her partner's follower, is indicative of chain migration and/or family migration. Ryan (2010) notes that there was a rising trend for family reunification since Poland's EU accession, in particular involving conjugal units: husbands and wives with and without children. However, other research (Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2009) reinforces the view that wives simply follow and are dependent on their husband, but this is not the case for Zyta. Initially, when unpicking the different threads in Zyta's life-story interview, one could arrive at the conclusion that the reasons for her move to the UK were economic, combined with elements of chain and family migration, apparently mirroring the labour migration male breadwinner model. However, Zyta's migration motivations and strategies are much more complex. Firstly, Zyta followed her partner and moved to the UK, although he did not encourage her to come. Secondly, she took an active part in the migration decisions for herself and her husband. She instantly decided to leave Poland on her return trip back to the airport following the visit in the UK, '*I suggested that he goes and works in the UK for a while...I arranged it all for him*'. Hence, in Zyta's case, female passivity cannot be assumed. Moreover, Zyta runs her own business in the UK (which is not her first business here, she also owned a local Polish shop) and states that she likes to be her 'own boss'. Certainly, her financial independence and entrepreneurship undermines stereotypical perceptions of migrant women, as inactive and dependent trailing followers. Indeed, Zyta reveals agentic behaviour that goes beyond normative ascriptions of gender stereotypes. Additionally, Zyta's entrepreneurship fits into capitalist ideology where Britain features as the 'nation of shopkeepers', with the corner shop standing for humble but sturdy trade. Owning a shop, in contrast to working in a factory with slow or no career progression, offered an opportunity for Zyta to escape low paid and exploitative working conditions.

Zyta's case also demonstrates that her emotional state (separation, feelings of loneliness and missing her partner) played a crucial role in her migration decision. It transpired throughout the interview with Zyta that her mobility experience was dictated by her 'heart', to counteract separation and loneliness and the need to reunite her family. Research has shown that separation from loved ones can lead to stress and depression (Aroian & Norris, 2003; Espin, 1987; Espin, 1999), and even if family members who stay behind are not faced with the same challenges of having to adapt to a new culture as the migrants, they can still experience negative emotions. At the same time, close intimate relationships for example with adult children and spouses can be 'a successful buffer against mental distress' (Sliver, 2011, p. 198). The separation induced by transnational family ties can therefore void existing support networks, not only for the migrants but also for the family who stays behind. Although other studies have acknowledged that migration is stressful for migrants (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2002; Vega, et al., 1987; Espin, 1987), little attention has been paid to the stresses of migration on family remaining in the country of origin (apart from White, 2011a; Sliver, 2011; Baldassar, 2008) and this study intends to partially bridge this gap. Moreover, associations between family migration and the impact on emotional well-being, particularly for women, should not be underestimated and overshadowed by positive economic gains of migration. As other researchers have outlined (Vega, et al., 1987; Espin, 1987; Espin, 1999; Sliver, 2011; White, 2011a), for wives and parents, the emotional impact of migration can lead to a decrease in quality of life despite the increase of income. Consequently, rational choice models of migration that emphasize economic factors might not reveal all aspects of migration decisions. Although migrants and their families might initially exclude emotional factors in their decision-making strategies, it is only with time that the emotional cost of migration begins to surface, as demonstrated in Zyta's case illustrates. Thus, the case further supports earlier findings as indicated by White (2011a) where migration strategies are framed as a response to effects of separation.

In comparison, Wanda (1963) also stated that she moved to the UK to reunite with her children, who moved a year earlier. Her case exemplifies yet another perspective or voice which is rarely included in transnational migration research, namely that of the mother left behind with migrant adult children. White (2011a)

discussed that 'older people often suffer because their children have migrated abroad' (ibid., p.125) and stressed the implication of migration on transnational care responsibilities between adult children and their parents. The case discussed in this study also shows the emotional impact on parents of adult migrants and adds to the discussion by demonstrating that family separation in such cases can also provide impetus for migration strategies for the older parent left behind. Wanda (1963) reflects on her decision making to come to the UK as follows:

'I was practically left on my own in Poland. My daughter has broken off her studies in Poland and moved to the UK [...] Then after a very short time my son went too. We stayed in touch but times were different back then my daughter had to send messages from a telephone box and I would ring her at a set time. My son was calling more often... It was my son mainly who has been continuously persuading me to come to the UK. At first, I ignored the possibility of moving to the UK. But then I didn't see them for a year.'

Wanda points to the fact that back in 2007 it was difficult for her to keep in touch with her children and unaided by communication technologies such as the internet which have only developed, although rapidly, very recently. It is important to observe that Wanda highlights the fact that it was her son who stayed more in touch than her daughter. Similarly, Baldassar (2008) observes that new technologies are impacting transnational communication, with young men (or sons) increasingly taking an active role (Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding, 2007), in 'kin-work' (di Leonardo, 1987) which in the past was considered the responsibility of mothers and daughters.

Nevertheless, although Wanda maintained long-distance contact with her adult children, the co-presence facilitated through the children's return visit home had a specific quality which cannot be replicated 'from a distance' (Baldassar L. R., 2001). The multi-sensorial quality of co-presence, not dissimilar to Zyta when she visits her husband in the UK, with 'the ability to see, hear, smell and touch each other, and to interact emotionally within the same time/space allows for a unique form of intimacy which is irreplaceable by communication at a distance' (Svašek, 2008: 219). This can be seen in Wanda's recollections of her children's return visit: '

Then after a year they [her children] came home for Christmas and as soon as they came into the house my son said that if I was hoping that my daughter

was coming back to Poland, then I was wrong! He said that they have decided to stay in the UK for good. [...] In the end, it was my son who kept nagging me to come to the UK. He said that I shouldn't wait and pack my things and come to join them. I wasn't sure though...'

Skrbis (2008), explains that return visits are often caught within the 'expectation/obligation dynamic' and accompanied by the 'drama and/or joy' of homecoming (ibid. p. 239). It could therefore be asserted that Wanda (1963) and her adult children are caught in the 'emotional overflow' between the drama (the children not wanting to return to Poland), the joy (of seeing each other again) and the expectation (that the children might return to Poland), which is very quickly deconstructed by the son. Svašek (2010) notes the emotional interactions which are played out in transnational kin relationships often influence each other's feelings. In Wanda's narrative the emotional dynamics between her and her adult children most certainly impacted her feelings, as she described in the interview, if she did not choose to follow her adult children to the UK, she would have to endure the spatial separation and live on her own. This is how Wanda recollects her decision to join her adult children in the UK:

'Then in April [following on the Christmas visit] I joined my children in the UK. I had a one-way ticket, a couple of suitcases, everything else was packed up in storage, the dog stayed with my brother. [...] I worked abroad before so I knew the drill...but this time it was different...it was the fact that my children made it clear that they had no intention of returning to Poland any time soon, so I had no choice really but to pack my things and join them.'

Wanda's narrative reveals that her decision to come to the UK was influenced by her children who had migrated before. Again, in light of the concept of chain migration and family migration it could be assumed that Wanda followed her children to the UK, and that her children in the role of migration 'pioneers' paved the way and developed social networks, and which then facilitated their mother's move to the UK. However, neither the phenomenon of chain migration or family reunification fully capture the emotional aspect of Wanda's experience, nor her children's for that matter.

Additionally, it can be inferred that by staying in Poland Wanda (1963), would have been left to live a lonely life without her children and now also grandchildren. Again, theories of chain migration and/or family reunification do not account for additional factors as the emotional impact that Wanda's children had on her decision to take the final step and follow them into the UK. Furthermore, Wanda's mobility experience emphasizes the importance of family networks in the UK by highlighting not only intragenerational links (her daughter moved first then her son joined) but also transgenerational ties between adult children, parents, and grandparents. Although parents of adult migrant children may not be impacted by familial separation in the same way as spouses or young children as a result of transnational family relations, the emotional impact is still apparent in Wanda's life-story as she expressed negative feelings and notions of loneliness:

'I was on my own, my husband passed away many years before. Then my mother also died just before my children moved to the UK... and really, I didn't have any close family left, apart from my dog and my estranged brother...'

When listening to Wanda's life-story, the emotional impact of the separation from her children is apparent. The above quoted excerpt shows that without her children, Wanda was feeling alone in Poland. The feeling of loneliness is emphasized by the statement that she was 'left on her own', with no other family members apart from an estranged brother and her dog as a companion (Wanda has brought the dog over to the UK at a later stage). Other researchers (Sliver, 2011; Fuller, 2017; Baldassar, 2008) highlight that while both parents of migrant adult children register sadness and longing, migrant mothers experienced a great deal of stress and sadness.

When reflecting on both Wanda's and Zyta's migration motivations through the generational lens, it appears that their initial motivations and decision-making process differs from generational experiences discussed in the preceding and following chapter. It seems that the main motivation to migrate for both were transnational kinship ties, or the separation from family members. Neither of the middle-aged women made a spontaneous decision about moving to the UK, as was the case with the younger generations. They also differ in that they did not state lifestyle choices, or professional and human capital, or even more existential notions as in the forthcoming chapter, as reasons to move to the UK. Instead, they identified

kinship ties and the need to reunite with their family as their main reasons. However, this is not to say that they did not embrace 'new beginnings' in their life through mobility (Lulle, 2019) despite the fact that she moved to the UK as middle-aged women. Age in their case (see also Wanda's case discussed in detail in Chapter 6), does not prevent them to play an agentic part in special mobility.

4.3.4 Existential migration: Lena (1978)

Mobility, for Lena's generation, was described by other researchers (Krzaklewska, 2019) as a generational experience. In her study, participants have also often reported that going abroad was a 'rite of passage' (Krzaklewska, 2019 p.48) and an important process of maturation. Furthermore, in this study, participants from the 'Generation of change' described the moment of going abroad as the moment when they felt like adults for the first time. For Jagna (1979) the fact that she was able to live on her own away from her parents was decisive in her migration decision, as it was for Lena (1978), who indicated that at the point when she migrated and moved away from her parents was a step towards her maturity and independence. However, Lena also pointed to other motivations for her migration which go beyond the seeking independence. She reflected that her initial experience of working as an au pair in the US initiated a feeling in Lena which has started her of onto a journey of mobility:

'After I returned from the US, it felt like I awakened something deep within me, like I was carrying a bug within, that started spreading. I wanted to carry on travelling and living abroad (...)'I kept looking at job offers on cruise ships for example, with Mexico or Buenos Aires being my preferred route. I applied for various jobs and received a couple of positive responses.' Lena clearly took active steps to plan her next journey; her decision to migrate was not driven by chance but by determination. She simply no longer wanted to live in Poland, she adds:

'I was keen to live somewhere else. [...] I just knew that I no longer belonged in Poland, I no longer felt comfortable in Poland. Really anywhere would be better than Poland. I am not sure what my main drive was, but I know that I felt a craving for something different, a different life I guess...'

She balls her hands into fists, I wonder if out of anger or frustration. Later in the interviews Lena recounts her difficult childhood experiences and her general frustration with common attitudes and ways of thinking in Poland which she identifies as reasons why she no longer wanted to live there.

Madison (2006) suggests that some migrants are 'motivated at a different level of need' in contrast to economic betterment, which he describes as 'existential migration' marked by self-actualisation, fulfilling one's potential and assessing one's

own identity (ibid. p.240). According to Madison (Madison, 2006) some individuals 'rather than migrating in search of employment, career advancement, or overall improved economic conditions, (...) seek greater possibilities for self-actualising, exploring foreign cultures in order to assess their own identity, and ultimately grappling with issues of home and belonging in the world generally' (ibid.p.238). It appears that Lena's narrative touches on aspects of existential migration, her urge to move can be explained, drawing on Madison, by the fact 'that we are not-at-home not because we have been exiled from home, but rather because we have been exiled by home from ourselves' (2006: 247). Her narrative demonstrates that Lena no longer felt at home in Poland and that after the time spent as an au pair in the US, she felt uncomfortable within the notionally 'familiar' settings in Poland. Lena explains that in the US, she was able to experience a different life, also in relation to interfamilial relationships, observed between her employers and their children, which presented a stark contrast to her own experiences. For Lena, living in the US opened a different perspective she was adamant that she did not want to replicate the life exemplified by her parents. Lena argues, that once she had tried living abroad, she had 'caught a bug' which effectively prevented her from staying in Poland. At various points during the interviews Lena was insisting that she could not have stayed, she had to go, which is not dissimilar to what Madison (2006) has uncovered in his study where participants felt the need to leave 'though not as a result of external compulsion or obsession with foreign riches' (ibid. p.240).

Also, Lena's narrative, similarly to Judyta, reveals that the decision to move to the UK was not her first choice. She states:

'And if I was single back then I would have gone further, but I was in a relationship and I couldn't possibly expect my fiancé to stand for this. He had been patiently waiting whilst I was in the US for a year already. [...] In the end we decided to come to the UK, as my fiancé back then said if we go to the UK, we won't need a visa, the flights are a lot cheaper, and we can fly home for a weekend if we need to.'

Lena's decision-making process to come to the UK is influenced by her fiancée. Although Lena would have liked to go further (Mexico, Buenos Aires), she settles on the UK, since the proximity potentially allowed her to stay in a close

relationship with family back in Poland. Gałasinska and Kozłowska (2009) suggested that for Lena's generation the legal and political changes impacted the attitudes to taking up chances on mobility as the 'popping-down-the-road discourse' (ibid., p.181). Thus, the choice of moving the UK preferred over more distant locations due to proximity, increasing ease of travel and legal parameters. Nonetheless, the decision to come to the UK, although influenced by her fiancée and not her first choice, but it was a way for her to leave Poland a place where she no longer felt at home .

4.4 Arrivals

The following section discusses the experience of arriving in the UK and the first encounters and impressions. The section opens with an autoethnographic vignette, then moves to selected voices from the participant's life-stories. In addition to offering a reflective recollection of the arrival situation in the UK, the autoethnographic segments also foreshadow the final section of this chapter by revealing the contents of my own luggage, a theme investigated at the end of this chapter.

4.4.1 Welcome to the United Kingdom of Immigrants (autoethnographic vignette)

Sabina (1978): We arrived in London Victoria later that day. As soon as we got off the bus it became apparent that this was just one of many busses that have left Poland on that day. The bus station was crowded with Polish people, arriving and waiting to return to Poland. Some made camp around and in the bus station, sitting and sleeping on their belongings and unfolded cardboard boxes, plastic carrier bags surrounding them. I was met by a friend, who explained that these 'guys' were all either still hoping to find work or a ticket home to Poland, the 'lost causes', he said.

We navigated our way to the tube, I tried to keep up with my friend who sailed seamlessly through what to me looked like an onslaught of people. My friend was worried that I could not keep up and offered to carry my backpack.

'Jesus what did you pack in that thing!' he scolded. 'Not much, it's mainly food...and a few pieces of clothing', I replied. It was true I didn't bring much with me but I have packed a lot of food, potatoes, canned veggie pates and dried soy, a few pieces of underwear, one or two t-shirts, and a vintage backless yellow dress. That and £50 pounds was all that I had on me. The floods of people swept me along, it was overwhelming, crowded, and moved with a speed I could not compete with after the 28hrs trip on the crowded bus. It felt like riding a wave which continued to move in a, for me, unknown rhythm. So were the sounds, I was surrounded by a cacophony of multiple languages, accents, sounds and bodies which were so very close that I could feel their breath and heartbeats but somehow there was an invisible unspoken line, a divide never to be crossed, between the other passengers. I spent the tube ride wondering how all these people could keep in position and be quiet, and how on earth they managed to find a spot to stare at without meeting someone else's eyes.

It didn't take long before we arrived at our final stop, from where we walked. It was a warm summer evening and the streets looked a lot less busy than in central London, besides my friend seemed to be taking me through the back way, which I soon discovered was guided by his local knowledge of food waste skips, in which he would find 'real gems' as he assured me. This was his way of familiarising me with the local attractions by means of sourcing free food whilst at the same time critiquing the content of my luggage. 'Really, you don't need to worry, there is an abundance here! They throw it in the skip but it is still good! Look!' he waved a bag of lettuce in my face which he just fished out from the skip at the back of the local supermarket. He spent the rest of the way explaining to me how things worked in the UK, telling me that 'the English are a throw away culture! Really, they don't fix things, they just dump them and buy new ones. Which is great for us, because we can get just everything for free!'.

Finally, we arrived at a tower block where my friend grinned and said 'home sweet home!' in English and led the way of access via one of the open windows on the lower ground floor. Some of the windows on the ground floor of the building were boarded up with metal but I could see lights in the flats

higher up. 'We only got in here a couple of weeks ago', my friend announced proudly, 'but it is all secured and here look', he pointed, 'that's the squatters act! They (the police) can't get us now!'. At first the darkness blinded me. I couldn't quite work out the surroundings. We walked up a set of stairs to a higher level where the space opened up to a communal corridor. Music blasted from the adjacent flats, people from different nationalities, I could work out that some spoke Polish but there were also other Eastern European languages, Spanish and Portuguese. People were chatting, drinking, juggling and even having a BBQ. 'Welcome to the United Kingdom of Immigrants' my friend announced proudly.

The above autoethnographic vignette unfolds several aspects. Firstly, it speaks of the high numbers of Polish migrants to the UK. Secondly, it signals that my assumptions about what it would be like in London differed from facts found on arrival. Thirdly, it offers alternative housing and food sourcing strategies. Finally, it recounts my perceptions of the 'alternative' reality of a London squat. Although I was aware that a high number of Poles migrated to the UK, I did not appreciate that for many the journey was not necessarily the success that they were hoping for. It saddened me to see these men (they were mainly male) waiting around the bus station, hoping that they would somehow pick up some work or somehow manage to arrange a (free) place on a bus to return to Poland. The fact that these people were in a hopeless situation was emphasised by my friend who commented that these were 'lost causes'. Admittedly, the Polish media have reported on negative experiences or unsuccessful migration stories, but not to the extent of those which I witnessed on arrival. I am also unaware of any research to date that included such perspectives, which therefore hints at a future scholarship direction, which however falls outside the scope of this study.

Despite the fact that I lived in Germany for over 15 years before moving back to Poland (including Berlin, Leipzig and Cologne) and therefore was experienced in living in a well-established capitalist system, the first encounter with the dense and multicultural population in London took me by surprise. My reflection also speaks to the fact that although there was such a high number of people present everywhere, I perceived an invisible divide between the passengers on the tube, as if there were

unspoken, but well-known rules that delineated social and cultural behaviour, a theme that is examined further in chapter five section 5.2. In addition, this paragraph also demonstrates that the contents of my backpack reflected my misconception what the first days in the UK would be like, I assumed that I needed to pack the bag full of food in case I did not find employment soon enough. This preconception, potentially primed by experiences of material deprivation in Poland, was very quickly dismantled by my friend who efficiently demonstrated how easy it was (literally) to 'find' food in the UK. However, the contents of my suitcase also point to other aspects which are discussed in detail below.

The alternative strategies for food sourcing (food skips) as well as housing (squatting) in the UK, as introduced by my friend on arrival, present a stark contrast to my experience of living in Poland. Above all, these strategies could also be understood as countercultural (Lowe, 1986), as an 'extreme way of life' (Prujit, 2013: 18).⁹⁸ In the public domain, squatting is often stereotyped and represented as a criminal offence, but the social diversity of squatters and the circumstances around this practice are often omitted (Martínez López, 2019). The squatting scene that I joined on my arrival to the UK in 2007 was varied. Motivations for choosing this way of life varied for individuals, some were forced into this way of living by homelessness, others saw squatting as an alternative housing strategy, whilst for some it acted as a form of political expression (Prujit, 2013). For others squatting was a temporary solution to short-term lack of resource. In my case, following the 'initiation' from my friend and the connections that I made within the squatting community, there was an element of subverting the system by finding alternative ways of living and housing and also of rejecting capitalist values by living an 'alternative to capitalism within a capitalist system' (Lehtonen & Pyyhtinen, 2021, p. 2).

Analysing the autoethnographic vignette through the generational lens the actual reality of the consumer society in a developed country stands in stark contrast to positive preconceptions about the 'West' also in light of the afore mentioned 'enchantment' with western goods (see discussion in chapter 4.2). The consumer

⁹⁸ For a comprehensive summary of the squatting culture in Europe see also *Squatting in Europe: Radical Spaces, Urban Struggles* 2013 by the Squatting Europe Kollektive, Minor Compositions, New York

culture of late capitalism evokes a notion of choice, abundance, and freedom: to change our mind, look, or home décor at any moment. Consequently, creating a 'throwaway society' primarily associated with consumer items like clothing and gadgets and food waste, where production outpaced consumer needs and sustainability. Thus, such behaviour is not only harmful and unsustainable but also deconstructs any 'enchantment' with western material objects. Although such objects might have provoked emotional, imaginative and tangible power in the past, and specifically in the imagination of children of late communism (see Burrell, 2010), the charm is ultimately lost when food and other material objects are sourced from skips or picked up 'by the side of the road' and the wasteful behaviour of a consumer society considered. Hence, although in a child's imagination as reflected in the earlier autoethnographic vignette (Chapter 4.2) western objects could be said to 'encapsulate the imaginings of another place and the yearnings for another time yet to come' (Burrell, 2010, p. 145), the 'Lenor-smelling-Hariboland', by contrast witnessing the consequences of the 'throwaway society' in late capitalism alters the perspective on the imaginative and evocative character of material things.

In their study on dumpster diving as an alternative and critical practice, Lethonen & Pyyhtinen (2021) observe that for some people, the very activity is an expression of critical space within unecological forms of life within capitalism, but also a way to subvert and critique the wastefulness of contemporary capitalism (Nguyen, Chen, & Mukherjee, 2014). Effectively, the practice of 'food skip diving' as introduced by my friend, also illustrates a way of 'cultivating an ecologically sustainable and morally coherent lifestyle' (Lehtonen & Pyyhtinen, 2021: 2), despite the fact that at first it seemed highly irregular. Thus, although the living arrangements (inclusive of squatting and scavenging as a means of survival) could be described as marginal, or even dirty and degrading, there was a sense of pride when my friend filled me in on his tips for food scavenging and welcomed me to the well occupied multicultural large squat. His welcoming remark: 'Welcome to the United Kingdom of Immigrants' speaks to the fact that firstly, it is a 'kingdom' with an abundance of material goods and shelter and secondly, it is a society with wasteful and unecological consumer behaviour that in turn opens up alternative and critical practices for consumption such as skip diving and waste scavenging. Furthermore, it alludes to the

communal aspect of squatting as an expression of multicultural living within the UK. Although, migrants joining the squatting and skipping community are placing themselves on the margins of the society, they blend in well in the ethnically mixed neighbourhood (see also Rzepnikowska 2018). However, although there was a large number of Polish migrants living within the squatting scene in London, there is little scholarship on the subject.

4.4.2 I couldn't believe how dirty it was – Wanda (1963)

In her life-story interview, Wanda shared her first impressions and experiences when arriving in the UK. She followed her adult children who bought her a one-way-ticket, a move which was influenced by the difficulties of managing transnational family ties. Both her children came to collect her from the bus station on arrival. This is how Wanda depicts her first encounter with the UK:

'When I got out of the bus, and my children walked me through the town, I was devastated. I couldn't help to think: what on earth am I doing here?! This is supposed to be a developed, first world country! Instead, it is mucky and filthy. I couldn't believe how dirty it was. Rubbish on the streets... [...] I was simply shocked and thought: what am I doing here? Was this the right decision I made? I've been around the world and have worked in many countries, Germany or Denmark, but I've never seen such filth anywhere. I visited Kaliningrad in Russia, and there it looked as if they had run out of paint half way through the job... but I wasn't going to compare England to Russia!'

Wanda reveals that what she found on arrival in the UK was not what she had expected to find. Rzepnikowska in her study (2018) makes a similar observation noting that some migrants imagined before arrival Britain in positive terms and were on arrival surprised with the socio-economic depravation in some areas. She had a different mental image of England, a place that is not 'filthy' but instead a mirror image of the 'developed' West as imagined and experienced elsewhere ('Germany, Denmark'). However, the place that she encounters on arrival is, to use her own words, 'mucky and filthy'. Consequently, Wanda feels disappointed, or even 'devastated' at first, and second guesses her decision ('What am I doing here?'). She

feels underwhelmed and, 'shocked', by what she sees on her arrival. Reality does not meet her expectations, which is reinforced by her comment that she would anticipate to finding such 'filth' in a place like Kaliningrad in Russia but not in the West. Here the mechanism of the positive imagination of the West is a point of reference for Wanda, who sees Western countries as a place of improved living standards (indicated by the fact that in her imagination and experience they should be clean and well looked after), in comparison to poor living standards as witnessed and expected of countries within the (former) Soviet Union.

From the generational point of view, Wanda's positive preconceptions about the West are aligned with the general idealised version on the West common during her formative years (see also chapter 2.3.3.1). Wanda's pre-arrival perception of the West can be associated with Barthes' (1957) myth theory.⁹⁹ According to this theory, the phrase 'the West' (signifier) referring to countries outside of Eastern Europe and a signified (concept: countries with a different system) and a sign (a meaning, the words 'the West' which is the associative total of concept and an image) precede the myth building. It is then with the occurrence of the myth that, the sign from the first system ('the West') becomes a signifier in a second order semiological system. Therefore, the sign from the first system loses its meaning in the sense that it becomes raw material of mythical speech. Thus, the signified (formerly countries with a different system) becomes the concept of 'land of happiness/cleanliness/order/normality' and a new sign, although still 'the West'. The myth of the West could also be interpreted as 'a sign of falsely evident, (...) of the victory of a (simple and seductive) stereotype over a (complex and daunting) reality' (Adair, 1986: 13). Therefore, the imagination of the West as a better world acts as a convenient simplification of reality. In writing about Russia and also building on Barthes' theory, Svetlana Boym (1994) suggests that myths are 'cultural common places recurrent narratives that are perceived as natural in a given culture but in fact were naturalized and their historical, political, or literary origins forgotten or

⁹⁹ According to Barthes the origin of the myth lies in taking over a semantical chain already existing in a society, the myth then functions as a mode of signification, a form. The conditions of use of the myth are immersed in a society. Barthes notes (1957: 119) 'what is invested in the concept is less reality than certain knowledge of reality; in passing from the meaning to the form, the image loses some knowledge: the better to receive the knowledge in the concept'.

disguised' and also 'are sites of shared cultural memory, of communal identification and affection' (ibid. p.4-5). Boym emphasises the shared aspect of myths within a society and it could be asserted that similarly the myth of the West existed within the wider Polish society and surfaced in Wanda's narrative. In her statement it is evident that, in preconception, she held a positive picture of the West. However, on her arrival, the myth of the West is confronted with the actual experience of being in Britain, the latter however does not mirror the former, which results in a shock (*I was shocked*) and disappointment (*Was this the right decision I made?*). Wanda, despite her initial disappointment has stayed in the UK, it could therefore be maintained that although her initial reaction challenges the myth of the West, it still remains residual in her perceptions. However, Wanda's criticism of Britain on arrival challenges elements of the reality in the UK but not the myth itself as a false image of the world. The positive image and/or myth of the West is still present as a mental image in her imagination. Even this many years after the fall of the iron curtain the myth is deeply internalised. As demonstrated through the example of Wanda, the initial experience of moving to the UK can be emotionally taxing and challenging. Her mental image or imagination of the what the UK is, are a form of 'emotional luggage' (here in form of the myth of the West and therefore inherent expectations) which could be said to be generational, as the impact the attraction with and imagination of the West was particularly strong during communism and in the years of transition (Wrzesień, 2009; Burrell 2010).

Other participants in this study have also mentioned that on arrival to the UK their views of self, Poland and the UK have been challenged and therefore their experience of moving to England was an emotional journey. Mira (1985) for example comments: *'It was all a bit of a shock at first. This was a completely new world! ...It felt strange. I didn't feel welcome, felt embarrassed because I couldn't speak the language very well at first... It was difficult'*. Mira's narrative depicts a negative emotional response on arrival. Furthermore, Mira's initial reflection suggests that migration also involves a change in behaviour and perceptions, a topic discussed further in chapter five.

4.5 Luggage and suitcases as vessels for memories and emotions

Suitcases, or luggage, can be understood as metaphors for migration whilst at the same time they are material objects which can act as vessels carrying complex layers of meaning. Without doubt, the suitcase evokes a potent connotation in migration studies, often associated with loss, trauma, displacement, memory and rescue.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the suitcases in migration can also symbolise projections and expectations of the new life promised, of what is yet to come. Over the years, the contents of the suitcases that I have carried over the borders during my many mobility passages have varied from photographs, documents, letters, to foods. Equally, some of the participants of this research have reflected on the contents of their suitcase when they embarked on the migration journey. By investigating what the different women have packed, or not, into their suitcase when coming to the UK, this section offers an understanding of 'luggage' as vessels carrying multidimensional connotations such as emotions and memories.

My own luggage mainly contained food and very limited basic clothing and one 'particular' yellow dress. The reason why I carried such a large amount of food (including 5kg of potatoes, a loaf of bread etc.) was on one level determined by the fact that I wanted to secure a source of nutrition, but on the other hand, the food was also intended as a 'gift' that I wanted to share with my friend and the wider group of people. The food also played a role as a means of holding on to a sense of normality and home. Thus, the food that travelled with me across borders fulfilled the following senses: sense of self (food and belonging), the sense of home (cooking and food practices), the sense of community (commensality with co-ethnics). Foods carried

¹⁰⁰ For example, Mertus et al.'s *Suitcase* (1997) provide a powerful collection of voices by refugees from former Yugoslavia. Shaun Tan's graphic novel *The Arrival* (2006) which is designed in form of a suitcase, represents a 'migration story told as a series of wordless images that might seem to come from a long forgotten time(...) with nothing more than a suitcase and a handful of currency, the immigrant must find a place to live, food to eat and some kind of gainful employment' (Tan, 2006). Dubravka Ugresic (2007) comments that within her migration and exile experience, the suitcase is the only permanent aspect of her life, a mobile home in her transient life: the 'only true companions, witnesses to my wanderings. The suitcases travel, go across borders, move in and move out with me' (2007: 17). Tolia-Kelly (2006) analyses the suitcase as a form of memory container, as performed by a South Asian woman who stores her things from home in a hidden suitcase in the cupboard. It then follows, that suitcases in migrant narratives not only represent loss but also act as vessels for memory storage and therefore provide connections to family history (Lofgren, 1999; Schloer, 2014).

across borders from the country of origin have often been part of the suitcase itinerary for many Polish migrants (Burell, 2008). Equally, research on food and belonging (Rabikowska & Burell, 2009; Buettner, 2008; Ferrero, 2002) points to the role of food in reconstituting identities. Food with its smell, texture and taste can evoke memories and feelings of happiness induced by eating something from home while living in a foreign country, a lesson which I have learned during my former mobility experiences particularly as a child in Germany. Therefore, the act of bringing the food in my luggage was also set out to provide an opportunity to connect; on the one hand with the 'roots' (for myself and others), and on the other hand to create new links, although still rooted in collective foodscapes,¹⁰¹ with the people that I have shared the food with. The aspect of commensality, broadly defined as 'eating with others' or literally as eating at the same table (Fischler, 2011), and therefore also the sharing food with others, in the context of migration is seen as an essential part of feeling a sense of community as Bailey (2017) notes. In trans-national contexts, these 'others' could be family, co-ethnics, friends, and colleagues. Similarly, Fischler (2011) regards sharing of food as instrumental in establishing identities and building kinship ties, although in my context these kinship bonds were mainly fictive, for example friends in contrast to family. It could be argued that food offers a mechanism to connect to the migrant identity with the aim of maintaining and furthering links with the 'home' land (Bajic-Hajdukovic, 2013; Law, 2001; Raman, 2011). The themes of commensality, food sharing and belonging reoccurs in the life-story narratives and is examined in more detail in chapter five section 5.3.2.

Referring back to the Polish context, the fact that as a woman I chose to bring a large selection of Polish foods with me in form of 'gift' to the community points also to gender role related implications. Slawomira Walczewska (1999) wrote that within the Polish society the kitchen space and feeding are the only places and activities

¹⁰¹ The word *foodscape* refers to the landscape of food. According to Yasmeen (2001: 95), it is 'the spatial manifestation of food distribution and eating habits'. The concept originated in the field of geography and is widely used in urban studies and public health to refer to urban food environments. Sociologists have extended the concept to include the institutional arrangements, cultural spaces, and discourses that mediate our relationship with our food. Ferrero (2002: 196) defines foodscapes as an analysis that deals with transnational food practices and their dynamics. Such foodscapes allow migrants to reconstitute their identity by importing, preparing, selling, sharing and consuming food from the 'home' land.

where women can feel safe and perform a form of control within a patriarchal society, hence they are so important to them, a phenomenon also referred to as 'kitchen matriarchy'. Thus, by 'gifting' the foods I anticipated being able to establish a protected role within the migrant community. Carrier (2006, p. 376) suggests that 'in gift systems the object given uniquely carries the identity of the giver, the recipient and their relationship, which can be summarized as the spirit of the gift'. As such, the food in form of a gift to the community also carried my gendered identity as the giver, provider and carer. The theme of 'kitchen matriarchy' is discussed further in chapter five section 5.4.3.3.

In terms of gender roles, it is worth noting the only other piece of clothing that I carried in my luggage, the vintage yellow backless dress. The dress, its cut, form, shape and colour would not be identified as a sensible, or traditional piece of clothing. On the contrary, the fact that the dress was in a very bright colour and backless, for one required that the wearer goes braless, for the other through the colour alone attracted attention. The dress therefore undermined any traditional gender role perceptions and certainly in my view back then was an expression of freedom. The freedom to be able to wear what I liked, without the discomfort of the judgmental gazes of the Polish society (for more on the judgmental gaze and bodily perceptions in relation to gender identity see also chapter six). Thus, the contents of my suitcase have, on one level reinforced gender role expectations, whilst on the other challenged these perceptions.

Jagna's (1977) suitcase contained very different items to mine, this is what she reveals about the contents:

'I had this vintage suitcase full of things which were really important to me. For example, in there I've packed two books of poems one by Szymborska and the other by Jasnorzewska-Pawlikowska, you know things like that. I also packed two little figurines...when I think about it now, it seems ludicrous. You know these are "treasures" which I don't let them (her children) touch. I sometimes get the suitcase out and we look at all the things in there together. Of course, with time the contents have grown, things have been added. You know an important card, a ticket to a gig, some dried flowers that someone has given me sometime...Well, it is a suitcase full of memories. It is nice to be

able to look inside sometimes to touch and smell these things. There is a little bag in there that used to be fashionable in my days. (Her older daughter) really likes the bag but 'm telling her that I'm sorry, that I'm not ready to let it go...I wanted to take these things with me to keep my connection. It's easier to feel settled in a new place when you have these connections. (...) Somehow it makes me feel grounded. Don't know... if there was a fire, I wouldn't probably remember to take the suitcase out with me... But maybe I would, maybe everything else would burn down but I would grab the suitcase...!'

As Jagna's life story illustrates the vintage suitcase which she packed full of personal belongings, objects with an emotional connotation (*treasures*) and although it might appear as not to be a rational choice (*it could seem ludicrous*) of objects to bring onto the migration journey, are important to her. Thus, the suitcase acts as a form of memory storage as well as a point of belonging and identity reference. Its contents (the books, the figurines etc.) are objects which carry an emotional value for her, a symbol of memorial for Jagna and also her children. As time passes Jagna adds other items to the suitcase, again objects which act as emotive memory pointers. It is then the act of returning to the suitcase, opening and looking at the objects together with her children that makes the suitcase a container of family-related memories, it helps to recall memories, places and people, as means of dealing with past and future, experiences and expectations. The suitcase that Jagna carried across borders is also a medium that creates relationships between places, the 'here' (the UK) and 'there' (Poland). At the same time, it could be argued that it is 'set in a continuous in-between-ness' (Schloer, 2014: 78), whilst it simultaneously 'holds the things of life together and creates a kind of order among them' (ibid.). Jagna clearly states that by bringing the suitcase with its contents, she wanted to stay connected with her past and place of origin. Thus, in her narration the suitcase offered her the possibility of carrying parts of her old 'home' into a new place where it helped to create a new home. Jagna's suitcase, inclusive of its contents, served as a vessel carrying her memories, a witness through the act of adding other elements to the memory storage since arrival in England - companion, a travel partner closely entwined with her identity.

Likewise, Wanda's (1963) narrative alludes to her suitcase as a form of companion: *'I have packed my life's possessions into two suitcases. (...) You know things like clothes and sanitary towels...'* Although Wanda suggests that she has packed all of her 'life's possessions' into the two suitcases, when revealing what were the actual contents of the suitcase it appears that these were everyday objects such as clothes and hygienic products. So, although the contents do not point to any objects which would imply evocative or memory carrying objects, the fact that Wanda sums up the suitcase as containing her 'life's possessions' could be interpreted as closely tied up with her identity. Burrell (2008: 363) suggests 'suitcases as travel partners' and that 'the materiality of the suitcase can provide comfort and protection for the traveller'. In that sense, despite the fact that the contents of Wanda's (1962) suitcase mainly include everyday objects, the suitcase itself as a signifier for her 'life's possessions' could be understood as a protective travel companion, providing a sense of safety in light of the life changing mobility journey.

In comparison to the narratives of suitcases, which reflect the contents and the function of the suitcase, Bogna's (1996) narrative reflect on the memory symbols left behind when migrating to the UK. Bogna signals that she did not need to bring much with her as her parents were already in the UK, instead mentions a suitcase which she left behind and is keen to retrieve:

'I have a suitcase back in my aunt's house in Poland which is full of photographs, music recordings and stuff... I am really keen to get this back at some point. It has a particular record in there, music by a family friend, which I would like to use at my first fashion show for the models to run to.'

In contrast to the former examples, Bogna illustrates that, within the course of migration, elements (in form of personal photographs, documents and music) which carry an emotional value are left behind. As such, the suitcase which is left behind is indicative of loss. Bogna is missing parts of her memory and story as inscribed in the objects (photographs and music). Bogna's relation to the contents of the suitcase left behind could to some extent be compared to Jagna's (1977) suitcase as both hold family memories. The difference however is that Jagna by keeps her suitcase and memories with her, adds to and cherishes it (to the point that she wonders if it would be the only thing that she would take with her in the event of fire). In contrast, Bogna,

by leaving her suitcase behind, experiences the emotional cost of migration as she no longer has direct access to objects which have emotional value for her.

4.6 Conclusions

The analysis of the two different border crossing events, the migration to Germany in 1989 and the migration to England in 2007, interwoven with voices of participants' and interlaced with fictional works, reveal that at those times the given socio-political context in Poland influenced migration decision-making and experiences. In 1989 I imagined the West as the 'Lenor-smelling Haribo-land', therefore as a colourful place with pleasant smells and flavours in contrast to the grey reality of socialist Poland. The life-story narrative of Lena (1978) reinforced such imaginations, which opened the question if such childhood ideas of the West influenced migration decisions in later life. The actual border crossing and interactions with the guards stood in stark contrast to the expectations and caused feelings of alienation and disappointment. The emotional aspect of family separation during socialism was examined, exposing the impact of split transnational kin ties during this era. In contrast the autoethnographic excerpt on the migration journey in 2007 reveals little emotion but exposes multifaceted reasons for the migration decision. Although at this point in time Poland was in the post-socialist transition period for over fifteen years the impact of the socialist system and the Fall of the Iron Curtain still resonated strongly in the Polish society. The rise of conservative ideologies, lived out in politics and reinforced by the Catholic Church, dominated the Polish society. Old socialist systems such as cronyism were still common everyday practice, preventing young and talented individuals from realising their potential. The narratives illustrated that the decision to move to England was complex and influenced by a variety of factors, which were not simply economical drivers.

Further, the investigation of personal narrative suggests that migration for some women presented an opportunity to gain independence both economically and more importantly from parental control, as well as a chance for adventure, self-fulfilment and an alternative lifestyle. In some cases, the migration was perceived as an existential choice, determined by self-actualisation, fulfilling one's own potential

and as means to discover one own's identity (see also Lena section 4.3.4). The life-stories of Zyta (1966) and Wanda (1963) reveal the adverse effects of transnational family separation on their emotional well-being. Despite the regular communications with their family members 'across the border' neither Zyta nor Wanda felt these were satisfactory arrangements. Indeed, both sought strategies to end the separation and reunite their families. It could therefore be argued that the positive economic impacts of family member migration should not be prioritized over adverse psychological impacts and the emotional toll implied in transnational family ties. Therefore, as both cases demonstrate, transnationalism was only sustainable for a limited amount of time, proved difficult in the long run, and eventually resulted in both women emigrating to the UK.

The generational aspect in this chapter has highlighted some commonalities in experiences in specific groups, i.e. the 'imaginary West' (for the groups who came of age during socialism or at the time of transition), in terms of the enchantment and disenchantment with material goods and also preconceptions about the West in contrast to the Eastern bloc. Some of the participants in their narratives reconfirmed notions which were identified as generation specific by former research. Others, in contrast, illustrated that certain decision-making behaviours and motivations were transgenerational and therefore highlighted that generations are not sealed entities but relational to others.

Finally, an examination of the importance, as well as the lack of, suitcases and their contents in migration trajectories exposed that luggage sometimes function as, firstly a witness and a travel companion, and secondly as vessels of memory and emotional connection. The significance of food as a produce brought over from Poland and commensality was revealed and forms a point of reference for further discussions in chapter five section 5.4.3.

Chapter 5 Living a Transient Life – Everyday Experiences of Mobility

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second of the three empirical chapters and explores women's everyday lived experiences of migration in relation to language, relationships with the host society and other Polish migrants, notions of microaggression and belonging, and notions of home and belonging. The first section discusses the role of language in everyday migration experience. It moves, however, away from instrumental perceptions of language and instead focuses on the role of language and emotions, language and identity formation, and language as an adversity marker.

The next subsection explores everyday encounters and relationships with the host society. I show how different cultural scripts impact on relationships with the receiving society and explain how some of the implications are related to historical legacies. I then expand on experiences of othering and microaggression. I discuss, in general terms, literature on Critical Whiteness, the 'other' and microaggression, and symbolic violence whilst also implying a possible link to self-othering the communist past.

The final subsection in this empirical chapter turns to relationships and networks with other Polish migrants in the receiving society and transnational, before considering home-making practices and notions of home and belonging as well as ambiguous perceptions about belonging. I show that relationships and networks, of all kinds, play a significant role in the mobility experience. I expand further on the relationships within Polish migrant networks, whilst also highlighting how historical legacies such as patterns of trust developed during communism are still depicted in the narratives. In this subchapter I also explore the importance of transnational networks and explain how the realities of such networks are experienced and what impact they have. I then describe how home-making practices are interwoven with the practices of recreating and performing of cultural rituals and traditions and how they impact on a sense of belonging as means of intergenerational and cultural

rooting, but also as fostering kinship ties. I show how the performance of food practices reinforces specific gendered roles such as the Polish Mother and how they impact on the women's migration experiences. Finally, I discuss how ambivalent and polymorphous notions of belonging were depicted. I suggest that such notions could be interpreted through the lens of 'nomadic subjectivity'.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the complexity of everyday migration experiences with its multidimensionality lived out through language, relationships and practices. I reveal how supposedly menial everyday encounters, networks and habits, impact on the emotional states of migrants as well as their notions of identity and belonging. I also show how inseparable historical circumstances, gendered Identities and cultural scripts are, how these impact on migration trajectories.

5.2 The Power of Language and the Language of Power

In his work on language, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1991) has illustrated the extent to which language is a tool of distinction in the performance of power. Thus, the link between language and positioning in society is closely intertwined in ongoing political debates on integration in many European countries. The ability to speak the host language is viewed as a key element in the integration of migrants into the host country (Brown, 2008; Spencer, et.al, 2007).¹⁰² However, as Alexander et al. note, there is a tension between the desire for a homogenous culture with 'common values (...) the common currency of the English language' (UK Border Agency, 2013) and the diversity of communities in Britain (Alexander, Edwards, & Temple, 2007). Johansson & Sliwa (2016) argue that policy makers neglect factors

¹⁰² English language proficiency has shaped integration and community cohesion policies in the UK. Many researchers (for example Alexander et al., 2007) have pointed to its importance in government policies on citizenship, nationhood and belonging. The connection between citizenship integration and English language are documented in the Crick Report (2003) and present the 'blueprint for citizenship education' and the citizenship ceremony (Alexander, Edwards, & Temple, 2007: 784). Such governmental policies are based on the assumption that migrants needed to learn the English language and understand the 'British' way of life. Equally, the importance of language as a marker of successful 'integration' is inherent in the 'knowledge of language and life' requirements for obtaining citizenship. This involves passing a 'life in the UK' test, and succeeding in gaining a particular level of English speaking and listening proficiency (UK Border Agency, 2013).

which impact the intersectionality of language and define migrants in terms of deficiencies rather than diversity. Likewise, Milani hints that the policies which link language proficiency in one language to knowledge of that culture are problematic and argues that language is embedded in the '(re)production or contestation of power asymmetries and domination' (2008: 32).¹⁰³

English language proficiency is viewed as the core measure of an individual's entitlement to national inclusion, and Temple (2010) observes that the role of language within integration is more complex than suggested by current government policies. Her research demonstrates that other factors are also significant in the decision about language use, for example recognition of the role of language in identity formation, the context of migration flows, views about other language speakers and experiences of racism (Temple, 2010). Other scholars (Simone & St Pierre, 2000; Woolf, 2007) also challenged the idea of a close link between language and identity as based on the legacy from the age of nation building, an ideology which was useful for the establishment of national homogeneity where one national language signified one national identity.¹⁰⁴

In light of the above summarised discussion, the different voices presented in this research cannot be singularly understood as acts of 'innocent' life-story narratives. However, they are politicized since questions of positionality, belonging and identity are undercurrent in the storylines. The life-story interviews raised different themes related to language, and my own personal autoethnographic experiences add to the discussion on the topic. The following section is dedicated to uncovering what role/s languages played in the women's experiences of migration. The section begins with autoethnographic reflections on language which centre on multilingualism and hybridity as well as language and emotions. The section which

¹⁰³ Similarly, Milani (2008) observes that language testing in citizenship is 'based on given norms of Britishness (...), it intrinsically forecloses the possibility of re-shaping these norms, and thereby precludes the recognition and acceptance of each person's individual traits which is the basis of a truly multicultural society' (p. 46). He suggests that such tests can 'contribute to, rather than challenge, the reproduction of social differentiation, thereby legitimising the exclusion of certain groups from both the civic and symbolic domains of (...) a nation state (p. 28).

¹⁰⁴ Likewise, the philosopher, migrant and polyglot Seyla Benhabib notes: 'the idea of one culture, one language, one people comes to us from the 19th century. But languages carry within themselves the history of fragmentation of ruptures and breaks. We have to give up the philosophy of presence. Meaning is always dissemination' (cited in Davis & Lutz, 2002).

follows draws on data from the life-story interviews and focuses on language as an identity/adversity marker. Instrumental perceptions of language, though mentioned in the interviews, are not discussed at length within this thesis since there is already a vast body of literature discussing this within migration research. However, it needs to be noted that for many of the women in this study, the ability to speak and understand English was aspired to and valued as a commodity, opening up possibilities for the future and overcoming initial adversity. Despite the fact that other research stressed that some migrants were comfortable with the level of English that was 'enough to get by' (Rutter et al, 2008; Temple, 2010), all of the women in this research project were very aware that the inability to speak English at a certain level was a barrier. Therefore, many attended English classes or sought out social and work situations to develop their language skills. Overall, the majority of the women who participated in this research project engaged in some form of English language classes since moving to the UK. This is in contrast to earlier studies (Temple, 2010) where the intersection of gender and language was found to restrict other Polish women from attending English language classes. Equally, the significance of networks and interactions in developing language skills was emphasised by a number of the participants which is similar to other researchers (Janta, Lugosi, Brown, & Ladkin, 2012; Lugosi & Bray, 2008). Overall, the need and will to know English was stressed by most participants, not only as a 'means to an end', but above all as a way to understand what was going on around them and to feel connected and in control of their lives and livelihoods (see also White, 2011a).

5.2.1 Multilingualism, hybridity and language(s) of emotions

The focus of this section is emotional language, hybridity and multilingualism within migration. I supplemented the research findings of this subchapter with autoethnographic reflections on language and emotions, as the topic was rarely mentioned in the interviews. It needs to be stressed that, given the research design of this thesis and the method used, questions that would have prompted the women to move away from their own life story narrative were (when possible) avoided. This meant that focused questions relating to language and emotions were not posed,

unless they surfaced intrinsically in the life story narrative. This approach represents a potential future direction for research into this topic, as only a small selection of studies of Polish migrants currently focus on language and emotions.

Sabina (1978): I describe myself as a multilingual. I speak Polish, Silesian, German and English. From my early childhood on I lived in an environment with multiple languages within one family: Silesian, German and Polish were used interchangeably.¹⁰⁵ This mixture of languages was determined by geo-political factors, as well as the early migration to Germany. Given that language expectations in different social scenarios varied,¹⁰⁶ I very early on learned to switch languages and codes depending on the social environment. In addition, language was not only tied to cultural/social codes, but differences in languages were also indicative of social class.¹⁰⁷ At home there were always three different languages spoken.¹⁰⁸ Living with three languages meant that I could seamlessly navigate between them often interweaving them all in one sentence, hence creating a hybrid, in-between language.

Gloria Anzaldua (1987) commented on this type of ‘hybrid’ language whilst passionately arguing for the recognition of Chicano/a difference from Mexican Spanish and US English in the following way: ‘We speak a patois, a forked tongue, a

¹⁰⁵ Part of my family originates from Silesia, a region which historically spanned across the territory of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic, and has a unique language, Silesian, which is classified as a separate language distinct from Polish and German. Its vocabulary is significantly influenced by Central German due to the existence of numerous Silesian German Speakers in the region prior to the Second World War. In contrast, the other half of my family comes from central Poland, speaking only Polish.

¹⁰⁶ During my childhood in Socialist Poland, the Silesian language, belonging to a minority language group similar to Kaszubski or Łżycki, was discouraged by the authorities with the aim of equal socialistic values, which also enveloped language. Hence, at schools and other ‘formal’ setting the usage of Polish was obligatory.

¹⁰⁷ For example, it could be argued that a large proportion of the inhabitants of Silesia were employed up till the 1990s in the coal mining industry, therefore belonged to a working-class background. It then follows that the Silesian language was associated with the working class, in contrast to Polish which was associated with the intelligentsia. Similarly, a large proportion of the population was of German heritage, however the use of German in public was unwelcomed due to the (post)traumatic experiences of the Second World War. Therefore, the usage of German was strictly limited to familiar settings.

¹⁰⁸ Who I was having a conversation and it was about would determine the language choice. For example, when speaking to my great grandmother I would use a mix of Silesian and German, but when speaking to my father it would be Polish. Equally, depending on the situation that the conversation would take place in, I would interchangeably use Polish when referring to official situations such as school, and when interacting with family and friends and expressing joy or grief it was Silesian and behind closed doors, German.

variant of two languages' (1987: 55). Similarly, the mix of languages spoken in the environment that I grew up in could be described as 'forked', an intertwined combination of languages, neither one nor the other and often responding to the requirements of varying cultural and social standards. Other research has shown that multilingual families use multiple linguistic repertoires and often flow the seamlessly between languages, signs and modes of interaction (see also Garcia & Li, 2014; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015). Kozimska & Hua (2021) illustrated the complexity, 'between flexibility and boundaries' (ibid., p.447) of multilingual families highlighting the changing dynamics of linguistic practices.

From an early age I became aware how to navigate between different languages. However, on arrival to the UK (not unsimilar to the first migration experience to Germany in 1989, although more intensified which I argue is age specific) I faced not only different vocabulary to express feelings but also diverse emotional and cultural scripts.¹⁰⁹

Lutz (1988) reminds us that different languages are linked to different ways of thinking and feeling. Furthermore, they are linked with different ways of relating to people, different attitudes and different ways of expressing feelings. Equally, different languages are connected to different cultural scripts (Goddard, 1997; Wierzbicka, 1994). Indeed, Wierzbicka (2004)¹¹⁰ argues that 'the vocabulary of emotions is undoubtedly different from language to language. This means that the set concept by means of which the speaker of any given language makes sense of their own and other people's feelings is specific to a particular language' (ibid. p.94). It follows then, that 'Polish speakers have a different set of conceptual categories for classifying – and interpreting – their own and other people's feelings from the speakers of English'.¹¹¹

To illustrate this difference, at the beginning of my stay in the UK I was often struck by the frequent use of the word 'happy', for example when I was asked

¹⁰⁹ The aspect of differentiating cultural scripts and their impact on the mobility experience is also discussed in more detail in chapter 5.2.

¹¹⁰ Her first language is Polish, while English is the language of Canada, her adoptive country

¹¹¹ For further understanding of different conceptual categories in individual languages see also Wierzbicka's (2003) comparison of the English term 'grief' and the Polish 'nieszczęście'.

by one of my employers if I was happy to work with another co-worker. Within the Polish context the word happy, or szczęśliwa, implies a deep feeling of contentment, an unfathomable concept.¹¹² I therefore could not comprehend why the fact that I was teamed up with a particular co-worker, who I barely knew, should evoke such profound feelings in me, and secondly, why the manager asked a personal question which within a Polish cultural script would not be appropriate in a professional context, since work scenarios are often regarded as transactional.

The use of the word 'happy' in English has an idiomatic character, indicating a temporary comfort or content, which is coherent with a cultural setting where speakers withhold feelings, about what really matters, to themselves (Besemeres, 2004).¹¹³ Wierzbicka (2004) highlights that there are cultural scripts within the Anglo culture which foster emotional self-control and rationality. She illustrates that there are not only differences in terms of grammar and lexicon describing emotions but also distinctions in the 'emotional scripts' controlling emotional talk.¹¹⁴

Often, when entangled in an argument with native English speakers, whether this was in a close interpersonal setting or other social situation, I was taken aback by the fact that the English native speakers were less emotionally expressive, appearing to me to be insular, or even withdrawn. This type of

¹¹² Polish writer Stanisław Barańczak, who emigrated to the US states: 'Take the word "happy", perhaps one of the frequently used words in Basic American... the Polish word "happy" (and I believe this also holds for other Slavic languages) has a much more restricted meaning; it is generally reserved for rare states of profound bliss, or total satisfaction with serious things such as love, family, the meaning of life...Accordingly, it is not used as often as "happy" is in American common parlance. The question one hears at ... parties – "Is everybody happy?" – if translated literally into Polish, would seem to come from a metaphysical treatise or an apolitical utopia rather than from social chitchat" (1990: 12). Barańczak offers an implicit indication of how social interactions as well as the inner life of a person, depending on the language and therefore interpretations of feelings, can differ in various linguistic environments.

¹¹³ cf. Wierzbicka, 1999, p. 248 on the historical evolution of happy in English.

¹¹⁴ For example, the phrase 'cool' or 'to keep it cool' in English is indicative of a controlled emotional response, however in Polish 'cool' does not correspond to a cultural script and therefore 'chłodna' when used to describe emotions is pejorative and signifies a detachment from interpersonal connections and a lack of warmth (Wierzbicka, 2004). A closer look at the two phrases used respectively in English and in Polish for expressing feelings offers a further clue how the languages convey different 'emotional scripts'. In English, 'emotion talk' to express one's feelings is often referred to as 'being/getting emotional'. Comparatively, in Polish one of the words used is 'rozczulać się' (from *uczucia* feelings). The Polonophone phrase implies a feeling of tenderness, with a hint of pain. The Anglophone phrase hints to the fact that the expression itself is anchored in the psychological category 'emotion'.

'measured' emotional response has often led to feelings of disconnection and misunderstandings, also on a personal level.

Within the Polish cultural script, one speaks directly about their feelings. As the idiom goes, *'stawiać kawę na ławę'* (roughly translated, to put the coffee on the table, meaning to be direct). This is in contrast to the controlled *'beating around the bush'*. Within the Polonophone cultural script there is nothing wrong with a heated argument, whereas in contrast, the Anglophone cultural script welcomes a controlled exchange. Besemeres (2004), analysing Eva Hoffman's work, reflects on how the two languages are associated with different emotional scripts. In exploring Hoffman's reflections on the expressions, 'anxious' in modern English and *'boję się'* in Polish, Besemeres points to the fact that the Anglophone phrase is anchored in popular psychology, which implies that in order to be in charge of one's own life, emotions such as anxiety needed to be controlled. On the other hand, the Polish phrase *'boję się'* does not have its basis in modern psychology and is therefore part of a culture where feelings are 'perceived as natural and the most authentic part of a person' (Besemeres, 2004: 145).

In addition, the Polish cultural context to show and therefore speak about one's feelings is indicative of interpersonal connections and warmth. Take for example the Polish concept of *'serdeczność'* from *serce* – heart, standing for warmth. When expressing gratitude, a Polish speaker would say *'dziękuję serdecznie'* (roughly from the bottom of the heart), in comparison to 'thank you very much indeed' or 'ta very much!'. *There were many occasions when I felt that I wanted to express my deep gratitude to someone and was at a loss for words, unless I have directly translated the phrase, to some bewilderment of the English speaker.*

The Polish cultural script and language is inundated with feelings, for example the use of diminutives (cf. also poignantly illustrated by Wierzbicka, 2004 and Besemeres, 2004). In Polish, when referring to a close friend, family member, or a child in particular, we would use diminutives. When using their name, for example, Sabina becomes *Sabinka*. When talking to or about a child I would use such expressions as *'koteczku'* (roughly 'catty' from cat), or *'kwiatuszku'* (roughly little flower). Equally, when talking about the child, I would talk about her *'paluszki'* (little fingers) and *'oczka'* (little eyes). These phrases reflect affection for the children and

their tininess. Besemers notes that within the Polish language the warmth and care expressed when using such diminutives also includes 'a hint of fear or pain in the love one feels' (2004: 148), also inscribed in the tearful word for tenderness 'czułość'.

However, such diminutives are not common in English, which added to the inability to express my feelings, in particular in relation to speaking about my and/or with my children. In Polish, when speaking about or to my children, I would often use phrases such as 'córciu ty moja' (roughly my beloved little daughter) or 'synku kochany' (roughly my dear little son). Both 'córciu' and 'synku' are diminutive forms of address used in the vocative case. These phrases are indicative of the close bond and tenderness.

In Polish it is almost essential to use such diminutives, at least in a familial setting, when talking about or to small children, as the non-use in comparison would sound cold, detached and unemotional.

Although there are expressions in English that make reference to children with affection such as 'sweetheart' or 'darling', these are also expressions which are frequently used in an unfamiliar setting and also towards strangers. In fact, such seemingly endearing expressions are sometimes also used for the very purpose to insult (see also chapter five section 5.2.1). Therefore, when trying to reflect this tenderness and close bond in the Anglophone language I am often at a loss for words. This is not that I am not familiar with the vocabulary used when talking about or to small children, the reason is that they simply do not convey the same feelings, whereas the Polish words are impregnated with an emotional intensity.

Studies on multilingualism and emotions have advocated that it is important to understand the experience of living with other people through different languages, as opposed to merely understanding the experience of speaking multiple languages (Wierzbicka, 2004). Therefore, the experience of referring to my children by the use of Polish diminutives reflects the love and emotional connection that I feel for them, in contrast to the English phrases which do not have the same emotional bearing for me, or cannot be expressed in the Anglophone context. Researchers highlighted that certain language use is only possible within a particular cultural context. By analogy, certain experiences can only occur within a context of a specific language

(Panayiotou, 2004).¹¹⁵ Certain words such as love, anger or guilt and shame mean different things in different contexts and are therefore culturally untransferable (Panayiotou, 2004). Wierzbicka (2004) stresses that the metaphorical expressions of 'codeswitching' and 'codemixing' in the context of multilingualism can be ambiguous.¹¹⁶

Sabina (1978): Although the use of diminutives in Polish seems untransferable into the Anglophone context, I often find myself creating a hybrid language, or a form of Ponglish, whereby I am adding the Polish form of the diminutive to English words, for example my daughter's legs turn to 'leggies', milk becomes 'milkies' and so on.

Therefore, my language use is changing as a result of the mobility experience with the mix of English and Polish words to form an in-between language, a 'hybridisation or process of extension of the translating language' (Werbner, 2001: 135).

Sabina 19780: Thus, I am perhaps drawing on a mechanism which I was familiar with from an early age, when combining and mixing of Polish, German and Silesian, now also applied to English. Although I acknowledge that certain emotional states are not translatable into English, instead I seem to be carving out in-between spaces, where words, feelings and concepts are being traversed. Analogously, I am not only creating a mixed language (Ponglish), but am also re-working cultural scripts by transferring elements from one script (Polophone) into the other (Anglophone).

Homi Bhabha's (1996) work on cultures in-between, hybridity and the 'third space' suggests that, 'the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation' (Rutherford, 1990: 211). He further advocates that the in-

¹¹⁵ For example, Lutz's (1988) suggestion that Infaluk's *fago* can only be experienced in that language and culture, or similarly Wierzbicka's (1989) reflections on the German *Angst*.

¹¹⁶ Wierzbicka continues, 'A language is not a code for encoding pre-existent meanings. Rather it is a conceptual, experiential and emotional world. Shifting from one language to another is not like shifting from one code to another to express a meaning expressible equally well in both these codes. Often, the very reason why a bilingual speaker shifts from one language to the another is that the meaning that they want to express 'belongs' to the other language' (2004: 102).

between 'third space' is characterised by cultural and linguistic heterogeneity, which allows migrants to develop a 'double vision' that brings together experiences of the past with experiences of the present. These then aid to develop new kind of creativity and so can allow space for re-creation of self (Bhabha, 1990). To sum up, it could be argued that language and emotion and the different cultural scripts experienced in the process of mobility might on the surface seem incommensurable. However, the experience of mobility also opens up a 'third space' in which a cultures and languages interweave, and in doing so create a new in-between perspective.

5.2.2 Language as an identity/adversity marker – us and them

Instrumental perceptions about language, as Johansson & Sliwa (2016) suggest, often overlook other intersecting elements of learning and living in another language for example the role of language in self and other identification and also in exclusion, inequality and racism.¹¹⁷ According to Pavlenko (2007), learning and using the language of the host country does not solely aid instrumental communication but often involves an act of self-translation. At the same time, linguistically performed identities are also interwoven with other characteristics such as gender and class (Temple, 2010), which in turn effect integration.

For instance, Mira (1985) in her life-story narrative, illustrates how her linguistically performed identity, by speaking Polish with other co-workers in England was, on the one hand an identity marker for Polish speakers, whilst at the same time perceived as an adversity marker for native English speakers. She reported a situation where the working environment has required of her and other Polish colleagues to limit their use of their mother tongue:

'The manager told us that we were not to speak Polish at work. And I thought, she can't stop me from using Polish. I wasn't talking to her...! So, in the end we were asked to stop speaking Polish with each other because people felt irritated by it. This was really a bruising remark, which was dropped repeatedly. It was

¹¹⁷ They caution against an understanding of language as a flexible skill which facilitates the successful integration of migrants, and suggest that the assumption that migrants can improve their situation by learning a language does not provide a direct correlation with advancing their social status, as this is affected by other intersecting processes. Thus, Johansson & Sliwa (2016) argue that language as an implicitly 'free-standing' skill is interwoven within an intersection of multiple differentiations.

the groundkeeper who felt annoyed with us and he initiated this. I guess maybe he wanted to talk to us but, perhaps we have somehow pushed him away by speaking Polish. There were three of us girls together, and we had a laugh and a banter during the 30min break every day. If someone approached us and started talking to us in English, of course we responded in our broken English. But it was a lot easier to speak Polish. It would have been strange to speak English between us (Polish women) instead of Polish. You can't ban someone from speaking their own language. So, the situation was quite uncomfortable. He (the ground keeper) left the room, banging doors behind him when he heard us speaking in Polish. I am not sure how it was flagged up with the managerial team...in the end we were called into the office and told that we were banned from using Polish at work. It was quite hurtful really to be told not to speak Polish. But we did anyway.'

For Mira, speaking Polish with her colleagues is an important part of her identity. Here language is used to differentiate between us and others, both by Mira who by using Polish differentiates between 'her language' and English, but also the English co-workers who position the women who speak Polish as 'others'. Many researchers demonstrated how the language we use is a part of who we are (Bourdieu, 1991; Pavlenko, 2007; Pavlenko, 2006). Language is used to construct as well as describe identities and differences between 'us' and 'others' (Hall, 1997; 2000). Huang and Yeoh's (2009) in their research on female domestic workers, demonstrate that inverting public norms of dress, style, speech and behaviour using their position as 'the other' can act as a form of empowerment and counter culture. Similarly, it could be argued that Mira's and her Polish colleagues' attitude towards using Polish within an English work environment was a way to express themselves through their language in opposition to using the 'broken English'.

Olga Tokarczuk, in the short story entitled *Numbers* (2008) reflects on language encounters between multinational hospitality sector workers during a tea break. Initially the conversation between the co-workers, led by Pedro from Castile, centres around the fact that once all of them, no matter their country of origin have spoken the same language and marks an attempt to lessen the language deafferentation:

'for those of us who understand the lecture, it slowly becomes clear that all of us here, as we are sat on the stairs, drinking coffee and eating toast with butter, all of us have once spoken the same language. Well, maybe not all of us. I do not dare asking about my language, and also Myrra from Nigeria, pretends not to understand. And when Pedro spreads out the dark cumulous prehistoric cloud, we all want to fit under it' (2008:75, translation mine).

However, at the point when the narrator in Tokarczuk's *Numbers* is joined by another Polish worker in the hotel the importance of communicating in the mother tongue becomes very visible and overwrites the attempts of dismantling differences in languages:

'Margret is mine; she speaks the same language, so her flushed with fatigue face appears joyful to me. I pour her some tea and butter a toast for her. 'Cześć'— she rustles, and this signals the end of the conversation in all the other possible languages. And then all the other pink and white maids are murmuring in their own way; the words like building blocks rattle down the stairs, into the kitchen, washroom and laundry cupboard' (ibid, p.75, translation mine).

The narrator illustrates how delighted she is to see her fellow country woman and how keenly she engages in speaking Polish, whilst any attempts to bridge language gaps and overcome language barriers move to the background.

Still, it should not be assumed that the Polish migrant community could be understood as homogenous. Naturally there are for example class and gender differences, which manifest in language judgements to differentiate internally. White (2011a) noted that differences between Polish migrants from diverse backgrounds and class dimensions led some of her participants to regard fellow nationals 'with a critical eye' and 'lead to the desire to distance oneself' (White, 2011a: 171).

Bourdieu (1991: 54) notes that:

there exists, in the area of pronunciation, diction and even grammar, a whole set of differences significantly associated with social differences which are pertinent from the sociologist's standpoint because they belong to a system of linguistic oppositions which is a re-translation of a system of social differences. A structural sociology of language (...) must take as its object the

relationship between the structured systems of sociologically pertinent linguistic differences and the equally structured systems of social differences.

To illustrate these differences Lena's (1978) life-story provided an example where her English spouse pointed out other Polish people in the supermarket and encouraged her to make contact: ' (Lena's partner) *said "look there is other Polish people here. Do you want to go and say hello?" And I didn't. But do you know why? Because I could hear the language that they were using, full of expletives! Not my type of people.'*

In contrast to Mira, who connected with her co-workers through language and Tokarczuk's narrator who keenly engages in speaking her mother tongue, Lena's reflection illustrates that there are internal differences based on the kind of Polish spoken. Lena discriminates between herself, and other Poles based on the kind of language they used, and makes judgements about other Polish speakers. It could be said that similarly to White's findings (2011a) Lena's case also implies class division between Polish migrants based on education and therefore language use. Lena (who has a university degree) and her language use, indicative of her belonging to the middle class, chose to discriminate between herself and fellow nationals on the basis that their language usage could be attributed to them belonging to the working class.

Temple (2010), in her research on language in the lives of Polish people, made a similar observation and noted that participants in her research were seen to have different 'Polish' values and that these differences were manifested in language and expressed in judgements about language usage. The kind of Polish spoken can therefore be used to differentiate ways of being Polish and make judgements about people and to indicate assumed differences and values. Thus, the mechanism of 'othering' based on language not only occurs within interaction between the migrant and the receiving society but can also be observed within the group of Polish migrants itself.

Previous research on Polish migrants in the UK pointed to the differentiation within the category 'Polish migrant' which dominates the popular discourse (Temple, 2010) to offer a more nuanced view on this discursively constructed monolithic category. Garapich (2007), in his study of 'othering' within the Polish migrant community, suggests that language use can be seen as one way of maintaining differentiation and hierarchy. The research participants in his study have

demonstrated that language is a marker of adversity, for example post-war Polish migrants have referred to the ‘dirty, rude and barbaric language of newcomers’ (Garapich, 2007: 13).¹¹⁸

5.2.3 Self translation, tongue-tie(s/d) and stereotyping

Some women in this study presented themselves as conformists, actively limiting their ‘otherness/adversity’ in public space. Lena (1978) reported a self-controlled and conscious decision to restrict herself from speaking in Polish in public:

‘We are being told that is very important to speak to your children in your mother tongue. But then you go to the park, you talk to your child and you can see the heads turning. What do you do? I stopped talking in Polish to my child...people are staring at you, because it is something different and this is why it draws attention.’

Lena explains that she chose to limit the usage of Polish language in public spaces, despite the negative affect on her children’s exposure and ability to learn their mother tongue. Her attitude exemplifies a constant negotiation with herself 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’. Lena then goes on to explaining why she chose to limit her use of Polish language: *‘I think that I was so very keen to belong here and to create a new life for myself here in the UK. And most of all also reinventing myself. I have cut so many ties, habits...’*. Her statement illustrates that learning a new language involves more than simply changing the words that we use to communicate with others. Researchers have persuasively illustrated that language and identity are intertwined (Bourdieu, 1991; Pavlenko, 2006; 2007; Spivak, 1992). Learning a new language involves re-assessing who we are and how we live and interact with others.

Other researchers exposed that Polish migrants’ identities are performed by way of language use (Temple 2010; Temple & Koterba 2009), where speaking Polish is tied to values, traditions and culture (Temple, 2008). Pavlenko (2007) has pointed

¹¹⁸ Further reflections on the differences perceived within the Polish migrant community are also revealed in section 5.4.

out that linguistic proficiency is instrumental to the development of a sense of belonging for non-native speakers and acts as a precondition for social inclusion. However, in her review of existing research on being bilingual Pavlenko (2007) cautions against any assumption that language is linked to identity in any straightforward way (see also Baker, 2005; Temple & Koterba, 2009). Pavlenko (2007) refers to a process of 'self-translation' across languages, which can even be traumatic as it is not a simple transfer of meanings between languages:

'the languages speakers choose to learn, speak, or abandon are intrinsically linked to their social, political, gender, and national identities and imagined futures. (...) cross-linguistic differences in affective repertoires, perceived language emotionality, and emotions linked to particular languages are oftentimes central in speakers' decisions about which languages they would rather live, write, undergo therapy, argue, or whisper sweet nothings' (Pavlenko, 2007: 234).

The intricate pathway into a new linguistic identity and 'self-translation' is perhaps most starkly exemplified by Eva Hoffman, who in her influential book *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* (1989) describes her experiences as an emigre who loses and remakes her identity in a new land and translates her sense of self into a new culture and a different language. Lutz (2011) notes that 'Hoffman's focus on the loss of identity can be characterized as a very pessimistic view of the transformation processes in migration, because it does not explore the ways in which language learning can also evoke feelings of joy and fascination' (ibid, p. 348). Clearly, as demonstrated in Lena's example above, who embraced 'reinventing' herself in the process of migration and therefore also cutting her Polish language ties, it is not inherent that language in migration by default induces an identity crisis.

On the other hand, some women in this research have reported that the inability to express themselves in English in the same way as they were able to in Polish, had a negative effect on their self-perception. The two youngest generations would have learned English at school in Poland, which is in contrast to the two older generations either under communism and well into the 1990s learned Russian or English was introduced only very late, but as other research noted 'learning English

in Poland was one thing, but having to use it when they arrived in England was quite another' (White, 2011a: 151). For example, Hania (1990) commented:

'I hated the fact that I didn't understand much at the beginning. And that I was not able to express myself. I am a really bubbly person, so it was very difficult not to be able to be myself at the beginning. I had to master the (English) language, otherwise I'd have gone mad!'

Hania did not feel herself at first within the English language, she was not able to live her personality to the fullest as she was not able to articulate herself. In addition, the inability to express herself also caused feelings of despair, she felt that she needed to be able to articulate herself in English or she would go 'mad'. Similarly, Mira (1985) and Judyta (1993) report difficulties encountered in expressing themselves in English. Mira reflects on an instance where during an important entry exam at an art collage she was not able to articulate herself: *'I was so tongue-tied, and couldn't get a single word out'*, as a result of her inability to express herself and talk about her art at the interview she was not able to secure the place of study and was rejected. Judyta comments on a job interview and how the idea of having to perform it in English language caused anxiety and distress: *'I was so anxious...ended up with stomach aches in the days leading up to the interview...I was worried that I'd not be able to express myself'*. Both cases show how anxiety related to language can impact the women's experiences of mobility. Also, literature reveals how language or the ability to express oneself in the host language can have a significant impact on migration experiences. Magda Zraska in *Suspended* (2007) depicts her narrator in a job interview situation as follows:

'Suddenly I feel my tongue in my mouth. Solid like a stone, it hits the roof of my mouth, it trembles, it hisses and the words come out deformed, twisted by an evil accent, rustling, dry, Polish. I am turning red, at first just somewhere inside, but then I feel how it spills on the outside, is visible, shameless and bright. I will always be an immigrant' (ibid, p. 162, translation mine).

Zraska's narrator experiences her native 'tongue' as an obstacle, her accent an indication of her strangeness, foreignness and inferiority.

Indeed, some women in this study experienced feelings of inferiority due to their language skills, or the lack thereof. For example, Judyta (1993) shared that at

the beginning she felt inferior due to her language proficiency, a feeling that she felt was not necessarily induced by the host culture but might be intrinsically rooted within the Polish society¹¹⁹. Mira (1985), on the other hand referred to experiencing racial stereotyping based on language and nationality as she recalled a conversation with an elderly English customer at work who commented on a cake by describing it as 'very moreish' and then asked if Mira (1985) knew this word in English. The encounter has left Mira (1985) feeling offended as she reflects in the life-story interview:

'I know many words in English! I have been learning English for 25 years...! I wish I had said that, but I was at loss for words... Also, this woman was referring to me as if I was the 'face of the Polish Community. I refuse to be seen as a representative of the whole Polish community (in the UK)!'

Mira's above quote shows that native speakers make judgements and assumptions about Polish migrants. On the one hand, the customer assumed that Mira's English language lexicon does not encompass certain words, on the other hand, the customer perceived Mira as *pars pro toto* speaking for all of the migrant Polish community and was therefore reinforcing homogenised generalisations and stereotypes. Also, Hania (1990) comments on being subjugated to racial prejudices based on her language proficiency:

It doesn't really matter that 've been here such a long time and that I am good at my job, it is to a very high standard. But still, my manager never fails to point out the merest grammatical or spelling mistake in an email that I 've written...Just because someone is speaking a language beautifully it doesn't mean that they are superior'.

The disappointment with the fact that the minor mistakes that she makes in the English language are being regularly highlighted by her manager, despite the fact that her overall work performance is high, are indicative of the negative effect of the stereotyping experienced by Hania.

Further, Hania also implies that pointing out language mistakes, or criticising language proficiency as the below example illustrates, add to the implicit superiority

¹¹⁹ Aspects of the inferior feelings within the Polish migration context are also discussed in section 5.2.3; 5.2.4; 5.2.5 and 5.2.6

of the native English speaker. Hania recalls that, at the beginning of her stay in the UK the harassment she was subjected to due to her inability to express herself in the English language, was a prominent feature in work-based scenarios:

‘There was this guy from Newcastle, and he used to shout at me things like, ‘you Polish...! you don’t understand!’ but after some time I just had enough and retorted that it wasn’t because I didn’t understand English but that it was his thick accent that made it difficult to understand’.

The quote illustrates that Hania (1990) has experienced that native language speakers not only criticise her language proficiency, but also indirectly allude to an implicit hierarchy defined by language, whereby native English speakers in contrast to native Polish speakers are superior. Thus, in Hania’s example, the native English speaker justifies his positioning by demonstrating his privileged position by vehemently discriminating against her based on her language and nationality. Hania however chose to deflect the stereotyping by speaking up for herself, whilst at the same time responding with a similar mechanism. Similarly, Zyta (1966), suggests that she was exploited in her first jobs in the UK due to the lack of language proficiency. This experience, however, led Zyta to improve her language skills to be able to, as she put it, ‘fight back’. In this sense, the ability to speak a language not only fulfils a mechanical purpose but also equates with empowerment.

5.3 Encounters, connections and (dis)entanglements

This subchapter considers mobility experiences that relate to themes which could be described as encounters, connections and disentanglements along the migration journey. The section will first focus on different cultural scripts and how these have impacted or were reflected in the life story interviews, and then examine experiences of othering and microaggression. It will then reflect on how bonds (familial and otherwise) and networks interplay in the experiences of migration. Finally, the focus turns to negotiations of belonging, and how encounters with host and home culture within the mobility experience impact on ideas of belonging and home.

5.3.1 We simply were not taught to smile – experiences of variations in cultural scripts

As already pointed out differences in cultural scripts can have a profound impact on migration experiences.

Sabina (1978): For instance, at the beginning of my stay in the UK I was struck by the fact that English people were, at least on the surface, significantly more cheerful and polite than I was used to from Poland (or even Germany). One such source of cultural disparity was incorporated in the phrase “How are you?”. At first, I was struck how apparent strangers would ask such intimate questions about my inner thoughts and feelings.

Within the Polish cultural script, (as discussed on the example of the difference between the use of the English word ‘happy’ and the Polish ‘szczęście’ see chapter 5.2.2) such phrases are not often used unless they enquire about how one *actually* is (emotional state and frame of mind), whereas in the English culture and language this is an idiomatic phrase, meant as a greeting, without necessarily expecting a deep-felt, thought through answer. This initial misconception was also illustrated in the life story interview by Lena (1978), who reflected on her first encounters as follows:

‘When I went to the supermarket (in the UK) and the girl on the till smiled at me and asked me how I was, I almost told her my whole life story (she laughs). That’s not the same in Poland. Ok...it is getting better but still’.

Lena’s quote illustrates an initial cultural misconception at play which led her to think that the English speaker was indeed interested in how she was on that day. She also stresses that the courtesy still is not common in Poland: *‘People just don’t smile in Poland (...) There is a certain bitterness’*. She then exemplifies how she recently witnessed the lack of politeness, friendliness and empathy back home in an official customer care encounter:

‘There was a young woman in the queue ahead of me. She needed a copy of a death certificate. By looking at this young woman you could see that she was upset and in a delicate state - I can still see her with my mind’s eye (...) The clerk asked who the deceased was for the young woman. She replied that it was her mother. You could see that it was all still very fresh, the pain was written all over her. But clerk showed no empathy and said, “But you already had a certificate” (...) Such cold

heart! It hurt me to witness this situation. The lack of compassion! If you are working in a customer facing role you should be able to show some empathy for people who are grieving. The way you communicate with people should be different. This is 2019! People like this should not be working in these roles...And the clerk was a young woman.'

Lena emphasised that there is a cultural difference in how customer care is enacted in England (and the US) and in Poland. Although, these encounters could be deemphasised as impersonal and superficial it should be noted that in Lena's perception the lack of courtesy had an impact on her everyday experiences of life in Poland. Lena's narrative implicitly suggests that negative attitudes and experiences in customer care were common during socialism but still present in contemporary Poland. However, the transition to capitalism happened many years ago (*it is 2019...she was a young woman*), consequently such mindsets were outdated and should not be tolerated. Such perceptions of encounters with strangers, formal institutions, and organisations in Poland, could be traced back to trust patterns, or the lack thereof, shaped by the legacy of the communist period (see also chapter 2.3.3.4). Accordingly, within Polish society, mistrust towards formal organisations, institutions and strangers developed during communism and is arguably still low. Thus, encounters with strangers, especially if employed by formal institutions such as the Municipal Office in Lena's example, were often marked by mistrust, hostility, and rudeness. Such notions of mistrust and hostility experienced in encounters with strangers in Poland were also noted by other Polish migration researchers (see White, 2014), often impacting on return decision making.

In generational terms, it could be argued that for Lena, first hand experiences of communism and the years leading up to the transition, and the above stated patterns of trust and hostility towards strangers, were ingrained in her experiences and also reinforced by her parents, thus passed on between generations: *'I guess it's how we were brought up...We were somehow unconsciously taking in our parents reactions [names an example of parents comments] "oh, so and so has got a new car! How on earth can he effort this? Does he earn this much...?" somehow we didn't take part in the conversations, but we still heard them'*. This example illustrates how the mistrust towards strangers was part of everyday encounters and how it was passed on in an

informal way, through observing and repeating certain modes of behaviour. It could be said that the social system tends to reproduce itself at an elementary, individual level (Kochanowicz, 2004). The notion of mistrust towards strangers in contemporary relation to other Polish migrants is discussed further in in chapter 5.3.1.

Lena's life story then goes on to juxtapose the mistrust towards strangers with the trust in informal networks as she comments that her parents, who ran a small business during communism, resourced their informal networks to gain access to material goods which the state could not provide: *'So it [the goods] were pulled out from under the table [spod lady]. My parents had good connections with the butcher...only because they run a shop on the opposite site of the road...so if they [butcher] wanted some oranges or something...this was during communism...it was good to have acquaintances! You gave him oranges he would also put a piece of meat to the side [under the table] for you, for a [special occasion] party or something. Or Christmas...there was always the piece of meat waiting. I remember this much!'* This example points not only to the high levels of trust in informal networks, present during communism, but also to what Szympka (1999) referred to as the 'bloc culture', vertical relations of trust and clientelism. On account of Lena's narrative, it could be argued that such trust patterns prevailed during the communist period, and are a source of cultural differences between East and West.

The writer Slavenka Drakulić very poignantly illustrates these cultural differences between the East and West¹²⁰ in her essay *A Smile in Sofia* (1996)¹²¹ when discussing her encounters in different public-service industries. Drakulić (1996) notes that the transition from communism to capitalism was noticeable in post-socialist countries on the surface, on a deeper level however, the changeover was absent¹²² Drakulić

¹²⁰ During Socialism, travellers from the Eastern Bloc have often observed these mundane yet profound first impressions, such as the fact Westerners 'routinely smiled at strangers' Ilić, M. (2020) *Go West*. In: *Soviet Women - Everyday Lives*, Oxon: Routledge.

¹²¹ Drakulić comments on the lack of smiles in the former Eastern Bloc as follows: *'But, as I have said, a smile is a rare thing in Sofia. You can wander from shop to hotel, restaurant or cafe – private or not, it doesn't really matter - with as much of a chance of being smiled at as striking gold. Even the street vendors have not yet discovered the trick of charming passersby into buying a pencil, a chocolate or an orange. They look at you if your sole aim in life is to steal their orange'* (1996: 49).

¹²² *'Sofia is a good place to observe the clash of the capitalist and the communist worlds because the superficial changes are so visibleCapitalism might be here, but there is no understanding of its principles (...) in this kind of façade-capitalism, the logic(...)is: 'Don't you for a moment think that you are better than us just because you have money! You may have money but we have our pride (Drakulić, 1996, pp. 49-50)*

(1996) explains the dissonance of attitudes in post-socialist cultures as tinted by experiences of the socio-political past as she explains:

'not so long ago a smile could provoke distrust. Why is this person smiling? Does it mean that he or she is happy - how is this possible, with all this misery around us? A show of happiness was a reason to suspect a person – at best it was considered indecent. If under communism everyone was happy by definition, then it was logical that no one smiled, that it was not a tool of any trade' (1996:51).

This attitude of distrust originating in the communist legacy can also be triggered by something as simple as a smile as can also be observed in Bakalar's (2012) narrator's mother, who in response to Magda's remark about the many smiles in England notes: *"They are hiding something"* she said. *"Nobody smiles unless they want something from you"* (ibid., p.9). Again, Magda's (main protagonist) mother as is stressed at different points in the novel (see also Chapter 6.4) takes on the role of passing on and reproducing certain traditional roles, in this case rooted in the communist legacy. Low trust in a positive attitude, which a smile could be an example of, among fellow Polish migrants was also noted by other migration researchers, for example in White & Ryan's (2008) study suggesting that 'happiness' triggered suspicion and mistrust (ibid., p. 53).

The perceived differences in courtesy between Polish and English cultures were also commented on by other research participants. For instance, Mira (1985) recalls how at the beginning of her stay in England, whilst working in the hospitality industry, her British work mates commented that *'there was something wrong with her face'* implying that her expression, and the lack of a smile, did not adhere to the English cultural script. Mira reveals that at the time she felt that the comment was hurtful and caused her to feel alienated.

Sabina (1978): Similarly, to Mira's experience of being criticized for the lack of a friendly disposition I have also experienced employers who felt that I needed to 'cheer up' in order to deliver a better service. I remember that I felt rather startled by this comment, as in my opinion I was working hard and doing a good job. In contrast to some of my English counterparts, who I felt have 'wasted'

*time on small talk and charming customers, which in return only added to my workload as I needed to pick up on the jobs which they did not complete.*¹²³

Following on Drakulič's (1996) reflections on the concept of servitude in post-socialist environments whereby the connotation is that of '*slavery, humiliation; something unpleasant and definitely negative*' (ibid. p. 480). It could be argued that putting on a 'smiling face' when serving others, would be considered as an act against notions of self-respect. On the other hand, the example also alludes to experienced differences in work ethics between the two cultures.

Furthermore, sometimes the experiences of the English 'smiling culture' and inherent politeness can be experienced as superficial and fake. Judyta (1993) comments:

'At first when I arrived in the UK I was charmed! "God, it's so chilled here!", I thought. It is so nice here; everybody is so relaxed and open. It's a big jump from the Polish reality.... Even though I've been studying and living in a big place in Poland, and people were relatively open minded, still there was this sad, grim and unfriendly attitude everywhere. So, in comparison, you come to England and everybody is friendly, lovely and polite...!'

Judyta suggested that on her arrival to England she perceived the differences between the Polish culture as a welcomed alternative. However, she then goes on to explain that after having lived here in the UK for several years her perception of the courtesy in England has changed:

'but then after some time when you move passed that initial stage, one starts to realise why they are all so polite...and now the English culture is quiet tiring for me, even though I have learned a lot from it'.

Although, initially Judyta found the politeness and friendliness positive and was able to benefit from these encounters, as the initial impression has worn off she felt fatigued by the superficial politeness and friendliness. Eva S., in her memoir *I came*

¹²³For an informative discussion on work attitudes amongst European migrants who took pride in their hard-working attitude in contrast to their British workmates see: Weber-Newth, I and Steinert, J.D. (2006) *German Migrants in Post-war Britain. An Enemy Embrace*. London: Routledge when applied to the post-war context, and for post accession Datta, A. and Brickell, K. (2009) '*We have a little more finesse, as a nation*': *Constructing the Polish Worker in London's Building Sites*. *Antipode*. 41(3), pp.439-464.

here to take your job (S., 2020), also relates the differences between the initial perceptions of politeness and how it changed over time, when she learned to understand the English culture. Here is how the author reflects on her initial perceptions: *'So when anybody called me 'darling' or 'love' during my first months in England, my little sad heart and utterly foolish head sparked up and fell a bit in love with them too'* (ibid., loc. 356). However, as time goes by, she discovers that:

'people can call you 'darling' and 'love' while actually thinking you're a piece of crap. As a matter of fact, they most definitely think you're a piece of crap when they condescendingly call you 'darling'. That unfortunately took me longer to learn' (S., 2020: 354).

Eva S. identifies that although the English cultural script is seemingly brimming with kindness and good manners, beyond the surface there is a further level on which endearing expressions such as 'love' or 'darling' become patronising and undermining. In fact, the author seems to be implying that these expressions are being used for the very purpose to insult, however in a hidden, subversive way. Eva S. goes on to comment this type of undermining behaviour by making the following observation: *'Their actions were harsh and indifferent, although they sugar-coated it with fake politeness "How are you? So nice to meet you! I am so sorry. Miss you! Sorry, sorry, sorry!" Sorry should be every Englishman's second name, because they use it constantly yet rarely with any real meaning'* (S., 2020: 337). Similarly, to Judyta, who noted that after living in the UK for some time she found the host culture 'careless and indifferent' despite the superficial politeness and friendliness, the author of *I came here to take your job* offers a comparable reflection. The aspect of the 'sugar-coated fake politeness' was also exposed by Hania (1990), who commented on her perceptions of the smiling culture in England as 'too sweet' and 'over the top' suggesting that she found it irritating and ingenuine.

The different cultural scripts and therefore attitudes impacted on the Polish migrant women's experiences with the host culture in other ways. Judyta (1993), for instance, made experiences at work and other social scenarios where negative comments were passed on her different attitude:

'People said that I was so rude. Also, at work, at first, they thought that I was mean. I wasn't being mean. That's my facial expression! I know that the English

culture is different, and they do things differently, talk to each other differently, it's all 'polite everywhere' (uses English for emphasis) ...But I am different. If I disagree with something then I just say it out loud. And I think many English people, also my English friends, had to come to terms with this'.

Judyta describes that in encounters with the English host culture was perceived as 'rude' or 'mean'. In contrast to her English counterparts who as she explained were always polite, she is forthright and speaks her mind (which is not dissimilar to the observations made in Chapter 5.3.5) and is therefore deemed as not adhering to the common cultural script. It is important to observe that Judyta is not troubled by the perceived differences in cultural scripts and varying attitudes. Instead, she asserted that it was not her who needed to change her ways but the English culture who had to accept and recognise differences.

In contrast, Hania (1990) commented that the differences in attitudes in particular related to cultural scripts such as politeness impacted negatively on her mobility experience. She notes:

'At the beginning people found me rather rude, and still sometimes do! At first it could be put down to language. (...) I didn't make any English friends at first, although I've tried, because everybody thought that I was simply rude. Then slowly, slowly I realised that this was the (English) style. You just have to be all la-dee-da. And that this (behaviour) isn't really genuine but this is the way one has to communicate here'.

Hania's comment shows that due to the different cultural scripts she was perceived in a negative light and unable to build social networks with the host culture at first. Clearly, Hania's coping strategy is different to Judyta's (1993) who diverted the expectations and perceptions of her attitudes away from herself. Hania in contrast adopted the behavioural pattern of the host country in order to make connections.

5.3.2 Navigating Belonging, Sameness and Difference

This section reflects on how the research participants negotiate belonging, sameness and difference in their migrant position within the receiving society. The focus of this section is on challenging encounters with the host society, where the women felt excluded or 'othered'. Before moving to the analysis, the section draws on (by no means extensively) literature within Critical Whiteness Studies as well as introduces the theory of Other, microaggression and symbolic violence to give a background to a discussion on in/exclusion and 'othering' as experienced and performed by Polish women migrants in this study. The section discusses selected examples starting with an autoethnographic vignette reflecting on the ambiguity of whiteness and the effects of such categorisation, thereafter examples from the life-story interviews follow depicting instances where the participants were on the receiving end of othering and in/exclusion. Finally, the impact of historical legacies on strategies of self-exclusion by negative self-othering and stigmatising is explored.

5.3.2.1 'Whiteness'

It could be argued that the politics of integration and migrant incorporation in Britain rests on 'politics of visibility,' rooted in British models of 'multiculturalism' based on the framework of race relations and hierarchies of belonging and defined by visual indicators which have become detrimental in discussions about national identity and integration (Joppke, 1999; Fortier, 1999; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Nagel & Staeheli, 2008). 'Politics of visibility,' then, defines a spectrum of marked and unmarked identities in which certain attributes and embodiments (or the lack thereof) are, in some sense, viewed as unchangeable racial and cultural differences and which define the migrants' ability to integrate and 'become part of British society' (Nagel & Staeheli, 2008: 84). Thus, phenotypically 'white' migrants are located across 'multiple locations of privilege and subordination' (Gallagher, 1994: 213). Accordingly, being phenotypically 'white' does not necessarily equate with embodying whiteness (Keating, 1995). In this sense, 'whiteness' is not only

understood as a racial category, operating on a reductive and essentialising binary of black/white. Instead, it is paramount to understand 'whiteness' as a situated, complex social identity, with internal boundaries drawn between those who are at the centre and those who occupy marginal positions. Thus, 'whiteness' is not only about race and colour, although it does have an unquestionable racial connotation, but also a social category 'fashioned through and against other versions of whiteness' (Nayak, 2002: 243).

Recent developments in Critical Whiteness Studies identified 'whiteness' as a category which encompasses ethnicity as well as class belonging.¹²⁴ Thus, researchers have stressed the importance to question 'whiteness' as a homogenous category in contrast to an essentialised category of 'blackness', but instead to recognise and identify ways in which phenotypically 'white' people have made experiences of being marginalised and racialised based on nationality, class, or gender and sexuality in opposition to those who have experienced direct benefits and privileges from 'white skin' (Wray, Rasmussen, Klinenberg, & Nexica, 2001). Consequently, phenotypical whiteness does not protect Polish migrants from being perceived as 'cultural outsiders' in Britain. Whilst most respondents did not report having experienced overt discrimination, several of the women have reflected on experiences of implicit discrimination, prejudices and micro-aggression as examined further in the subsequent analysis. However, it also needs to be noted that 'whiteness' is only one

¹²⁴Historically, Whiteness Studies in the US and UK have documented ethnic and class exclusion from 'whiteness.' For example, in the US historical accounts of nineteenth and early twentieth century American emigration have questioned the naturalness of 'whiteness', where certain European immigrant groups (Irish, Southern and Eastern European) were socially and economically excluded from Anglo-American elite circles (cf. Allen, 1994; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991). In Britain, the 'racialisation' of Travellers, Jewish and Irish people in the process of constructing national identities (McDowell, , 2009), can be noted. Analyses of nineteenth and twentieth-century Britain demonstrate the depiction of the Irish as 'Other,' often presented as problematic because of squalor, fighting, alcoholism and welfare-abuse (Hickman, M. and Walter, B. , 1995; Ryan, 2001). Hickman and Walter (1995) emphasise the stereotypical construction of Irish women and their racialised exclusion from British society based on a presumed lack of intelligence and support for violence. Franks (2000), captures the experiences of white Muslim women wearing the hijab in Britain, examining the intersection of racism and religious discrimination. By extension 'whiteness,' mediated by class in the US, has brought to the fore hierarchies within the 'white' spectrum manifested in 'white trash' and 'wiggers – white niggers' (Wray, Not quite white: white trash and the boundaries of whiteness, 2006). Comparatively, in the UK, the figure of the 'chav' was identified and stigmatised (Hayward & Yar. , 2006). Skeggs (1997) highlighted the experience of white working-class women being 'othered' and pathologized, whereas Tyler (2008) stressed the marginalisation and fetishization of the 'chavvy mum'. In terms of recent Eastern European migrants in the UK, the framework of 'whiteness' was investigated by Fox et al. (2012) in relation to Hungarians and Romanians in Britain, and in the recent PhD thesis by Halej (2014).

facet of a complex intersectionality of multiple characteristics such as gender or class or age. Therefore, experiences of microaggressions and implicit discriminations explored in this thesis are also entwined with other identity markers, progressively illustrating the intersectionality across a range of different contexts.

5.3.2.2 *The Other*

This study adopts a post-modern perception of reality where multiple identities are possible, meaning that the gendered, generational, national, ethnic and transnational identities of the research participants are intertwined, overlap and compete. Furthermore, identity can be assumed as not a closed construct but, as Hall (1996) notes, is relational and requires the 'constitutive outside'. Consequently, positioning oneself towards members of a social group, whether this is the receiving society, other Polish migrants, or home country, entails negotiating identity to determine membership (or belonging) with a group that one accepts, whilst at the same time distancing oneself from the group one rejects. Therefore, 'Othering', for example relating oneself or one's community to others, or distinguishing oneself from others, plays an important role in the construction of identities. Identity then forms by defining the Other, and all forms of group identity are based on characteristics attributed to the Other (Barth, 1969). Assigning and defining the position of the Other, according to Meinhof and Gałasinski (2005) is enacted by discursive means,¹²⁵ negative labelling or constructions in terms of alienation and oppression, by which the speakers construct their own identities.

In the life-story interviews, the women reflected on instances where they either experienced 'othering' enacted by the receiving society, as well as mentioned examples where other minority groups were marked as the negative 'Other' in relation to Poles, but also mentioned instances where the negative 'Other' was reinforced by self-stigmatisation as the below examples demonstrate.

¹²⁵Meinhof and Gałasinski (2005) see discourse analysis as a qualitative interpretation of spoken text that requires the thorough understanding of the speaker's socio-political context. Thus, they propose not to use predetermined categories of linguistic devices, but to 'frame the construction of cultural identity through the metaphor of 'belonging' (p. 15).

5.3.2.3 *Microaggression and Symbolic Violence*

Microaggression¹²⁶ is here understood as a behaviour or action — whether accidentally or purposefully — that subtly undermines someone's identity by playing into the stereotypes or historic biases about social groups. Nonetheless, it needs to be highlighted that microaggressions differ from racism *per se*, instead they side-step 'colour' and do not normally derive from hegemonic historical frameworks such as the White Supremacy, or old racism (Shoshana, 2016) and have therefore limited structural consequences. However, by means of recurrent and often lighthearted implementation of microaggression a cleft opens up that 'tacitly shape[s] ethnic consciousness' (Abutbul-Selinger, 2018, p. 3) which, combined with their apparent invisibility (see 'Whiteness' above), inhibits migrant minorities and prevents them from full belonging to the receiving society.

Relevant to understanding microaggression is the concept of implicit bias (Maddox & Perry, 2017). Equally illuminating is Bourdieu's (1992; 1999) construct of symbolic violence¹²⁷, as it emphasises the ambiguity inherent in the former. Bourdieu (1992) argues that 'symbolic violence takes place through an act of awareness and unawareness which lies beneath the controls of consciousness and volition, in the darkness of the workings of habitus' (ibid. p.146). Similarly, Lilienfeld (2017) upholds that due to its subtlety, identifying and reacting to microaggression can be challenging for receivers: 'they risk becoming resentful, may inadvertently encourage further microaggression from the same person. In contrast if they say something, the deliverer may deny having engaged in prejudices and accuse them of being hypersensitive or paranoid' (ibid. p. 141-2).

Consequently, microaggression often occurs as forms of 'shadowy, everyday manifestations' (Huc-Hepher, 2021, p. 18), hidden in small acts of the ordinary experiences and are often trivialised, which leads to their annulment despite the harm felt. This subchapter sheds light on these types of sub-surface power dynamics

¹²⁶ For a growing body on micro-aggression literature see also Abutbul-Selinger, 2018; Johnson, A. & Joseph-Salisbury, R. , 2018; Lilienfeld, 2017; Shoshana, 2016.

¹²⁷ In understanding symbolic violence and xenophobic microaggression I found the article '*Sometimes there's racism towards the French here': Xenophobic Microaggression in Pre-2016 London as Articulation of Symbolic Violence* by Huc-Hepher, S. extremely informative.

as expressed in the life-story narratives of the participants, particularly in relation to everyday experiences, as this is where the tacit microaggression is played out, whilst revealing the negative emotions¹²⁸ these 'acts' have caused in the participants. Examining occurrences of microaggression in migration is crucial to this thesis, as these types of experiences are often hidden in the mundane, and therefore rarely discussed in dominant research in the field. In contrast this study uncovers the hidden layers of everyday migration experience revealing that microaggressions are covert in the small and quotidian aspects of the everyday.

5.3.3 'White other'

Sabina (1978): Whenever I am asked to fill in an application form of some sort in England, either as part of a job interview or more recently the NHS led Covid-19 response, inevitably I also have to answer questions as to my racial/ethnic belonging. However, most of the time the questions do not allow the category 'Polish' and/or 'German' as an answer, but instead I am limited to a selection of racial descriptions, according to which I should identify as 'white other'. Although on the surface, reasons for this type of interrogation are understandable,¹²⁹ on another level the questions inevitably point to my difference. Despite my yearlong stay in England, I still feel perturbed by the fact that I classify as 'white other' in contrast to 'white British'. This inadvertently implies that there are differences within 'whiteness' itself, which go beyond ethnicity, otherwise the answers Polish/German would suffice. So, although as a Polish migrant in England I am phenotypically 'white', and therefore my 'otherness' is not visible, to some extent I am still different. Consequently, I am

¹²⁸ Whilst research has documented that the psychological impact of microaggression has an adverse effect on the recipients' mental health (Lilienfeld, 2017), cognitive-science research has also recorded that the same brain areas are activated when experiencing social rejection and physical pain (Kross, Berman, Mischel, Smith, & Wager, 2011) However, analysing such impact would go beyond the scope of this research project. Nevertheless, the impact of microaggression on mental health should not be understated.

¹²⁹ According to Gov UK such questions serve the purpose to firstly, gather data on protective characteristics such as race/ethnicity and gender; and secondly, the aim is to ensure that minority groups are not discriminated against. I should stress here also that similar questions would not be asked either in the Polish or German employment context.

left with a feeling of void, my ethnicity absent and partial, 'white' but 'other' still.

The above vignette describes the inner conflict at ticking the 'white other' box when filling in the 'race/ethnicity' box on forms. The problem with the 'white other' category is that it mixes up colour and ethnicity and all other groups who are a minority. Above all it indicates that there seem to be 'different shades of white', that is those who are 'white British' and those who are not, identified as 'other'. Although the example refers to a seemingly trivial every-day experience, - not, however, a 'stand-alone' instance as the other voices of the women who have participated in this study will illustrate further - it nonetheless points to the mechanisms of 'othering' and in/exclusion that can cause feelings of alienation and non-belonging. By the same token it also implies that Polish migrants, despite their whiteness, are not always immune against microaggression and discrimination. Indeed, the ambiguous position of white European migrants without phenotypical or biological difference was stressed by other researchers: for instance Ryan (2007) highlighted the marginalised position on white Irish nurses in the UK; Anderson (2013:45) noted that post-2004 Eastern European migrants were perceived through the optic of 'degenerate whiteness', Rzepnikowska (2019) stressed xenophobic and racist attitudes towards Polish migrants before and post the Brexit vote; and even historical research such as by Sword (1996) brought discrimination against post WWII Polish migrants to the fore. Although White & Goodwin (2019) highlighted that Polish migrants in contemporary Britain are no longer invisible, it then needs to be asked if their visible markers or ambiguous 'other whiteness' remains a marker of in/exclusion.

5.3.4 Second Class Citizens

Some of the women in this study demonstrated self-stigmatisation and constructed themselves as the negative 'Other' in contrast to the receiving society. The mechanism of 'othering' has often worked in conjunction with experiences of marginalisation, despite being phenotypically white, as well as subtle microaggressions.

When asked about relations between the Polish migrants and the receiving society, Jagna (1977) remarks: *'What's the strap line: 'The Pole, stinks and rustles!'*¹³⁰ Her comment implies that the perceptions of the Polish migrant community in the UK, and generally in the West, are negative. Polish migrants are viewed as living on the margin of society, like homeless people, out of plastic bags (hence reference to rustling) and therefore marked with a lack of body hygiene (stink). The article (see above footnote) that Jagna used to summarise the attitudes towards Polish migrants openly perpetuates negative attitudes, not only in Polish but also foreign media. Similar negative media coverage was also noted in the UK in the build up to the Brexit vote where press and other media perpetuated anti Eastern Europeans attitudes. However, it needs to be noted that while a lot of attention has been paid to the rise of xenophobic incidents in the build up to and following on the EU referendum such incidents were also experienced before, as Rzepnikowska (2019) but also White (2011a) documents, and the narratives in this study confirm.

Nonetheless, the example implies that the mechanism of 'othering' and self-stigmatisation contributes to the status of the migrant as a stranger, not fitting into the receiving society on one level; on another level given that the article was published in the Polish media, it also represents negative constructions of migrants by the home country and therefore marking those who migrate as 'estranged' from Polish society.

A further example of self-stigmatisation and othering surfaced in the life-story interview with Zyta (1966), who shared that in her opinion she is not being viewed as equal by the receiving society, which confirms White (2011a) findings where respondents 'had the preconception that foreigners would always be treated as second-hand citizens' (ibid., p. 147). Zyta comments: *'People see me as a second-hand¹³¹ citizen (...) as a Polish woman I have to work twice as hard'*. Her statement

¹³⁰ Jagna (1977) refers here to the article 'Polak śmierdzi i szeleści. Nie jest w Holandii mile widziany' published in *Polityka*, a popular Polish magazine, which reflects on common stereotypes and negative perceptions of Polish migrants in the West. <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/kraj/1525505,1,polak-smierdzi-i-szelesci-nie-jest-w-holandii-mile-widziany.read> [accessed 10.01.2020]

¹³¹ Zyta uses the phrase 'second-hand citizen' in English and although I am aware that the more accurate phrase is 'second-class citizen,' I decided to keep her original words here. The reference here to 'goods,' an object of consumption, like second-hand clothes, is significant. The term implies that as a second-hand citizen she is used, or damaged goods. Zyta suggests that she is a

suggests that as a Polish migrant woman in the UK, she feels that she is viewed as a second-class citizen, in addition she also hints at the fact that in comparison to English counterparts she needs to put a lot more effort into running her business. Reflecting on Zyta's statement through the lens of Critical Whiteness studies, it could be argued that seemingly there are differences in 'whiteness' and that therefore a division exists between first and second-class citizens, the latter being less privileged in comparison to the 'white British' counterparts.

Also, Mira (1985) alludes to the fact that for British born middle-class women in comparison to Polish migrant women have an advantage in securing high-level professional employment, and that, as a Polish woman, she needs to put a lot more effort in securing and succeeding in professional scenarios. She notes:

'I have written so many CVs, and I can't be sure, I don't want to think that this is true. But people see my name and they know that I am not from here. Ok, I can't be sure but I think that it might play a role. (...) A middle-class, white, blond (English) girl has got a lot more options in life. She is in her own country, she knows more people, they help her (...)'

Her statement implies that she experienced prejudices against Polish migrants in the UK, and that her first and last name indicating her origin, can be enough to find herself in a marginalised position, that of the negative 'Other'. Also, Rzepnikowska (2018) suggested that 'Polish names, different letters and pronunciation constitute visible and audible markers of difference' (ibid., pp.4-5). Although, her statement suggests that she cannot be sure (I don't want to think that this is true) that she is being discriminated against when her surname potentially gives away her nationality. Nevertheless, she suspects that this might be the case. Here, it could be argued that she is experiencing tacit microaggression. It needs to be noted that problems with the pronunciation of Polish names were also mentioned in earlier migration research,

commodity in from of migrant labour force, brought in to fill a gap in the economy, to take on jobs which are necessary i.e., care work, housework or factory work but otherwise less desired employment opportunities. Zyta's comparison to a piece of used second-hand garment (which is cheaper, worn and endowed with her past), points to the fact that within neo-liberal capitalism human workforce is deployed similarly to consumer goods. The 'second hand' citizen sells her work as an asset, she is cheaper and hardworking, nonetheless remains only second best in comparison to the receiving society. The phrase then illuminates that within the context of the East-West migration and Polish labour migration to the UK, the Polish migrant occupies the position of the less valuable citizen.

for instance Sword (1996: 165-166) reported that his participants were often ridiculed by the receiving society on account of their names which often 'led to many changing their names – or anglicizing – their names in an attempt to "pass" within the British community'. Thus, since discrimination because of different (Polish) pronunciations was experienced also by Polish refugees after WWII it could be argued that such marginalising approaches were deep-seated.

What is more, she also feels that she needs to put more effort in her work in comparison to 'white middle class' English women. Skeggs (1997), makes a comparable observation when analysing experiences of 'whiteness' in working-class women in England, whereby she notes that subsequently these women struggle with othering and develop the 'desire to prove and to achieve' (ibid. p. 1). It could be argued that the notion, personified in the figure of the 'middle-class, white, blond women' by Mira and Zyta's need to 'work twice as hard' is on the one hand, an illustration of ethical othering whilst also, particularly as illuminated in Zyta's example, an effort to verify abilities and skills.

Furthermore, the 'othering' that takes place between the Polish migrant women and the 'white middleclass, blond' member of the receiving society could also be understood through the frame of Rich's 'politics of location' (1987).¹³² The key to Rich's politics is the recognition that as marginal as white women appear to white men, other women are, in turn, marginalised by white women. Gayatri Spivak (1994) notes that white women's emancipation and financial autonomy are often gained at the expense of the colonial other, in particular the colonial women. I would equally

¹³² Adrienne Rich in the 1980s has most influentially criticised the effects of western feminism and examined the limits of the hegemonic use of the word 'women' in relation to race, elite and academic feminist practices. Rich in 'the Politics of location' (1987) has developed a method and strategy, which has later been theorised by feminists to account for consciousness rising. She therefore calls for white women to take responsibility for these marginalisations and to acknowledge their part in this process in order to change unequal dynamics. Rich argues that there is a need for white women to be '[r]ecognizing our location, having to name the ground we're coming from, the conditions we have taken for granted' (Rich, 1987: 225). Location in this sense is not a self-chosen or self-created subject position, it is a collectively shared and constructed spatio-temporal occurrence. It is familiar and therefore escapes examination. Implementing the method of 'politics of location' is a way of making sense of diversity among women, underlined by the practice of accountability for one's embodied and embedded location, of uncovering the power location which one inhabits as a position of one's identity (Braidotti, 2007) The practice of accountability is a rational and collective activity of unpicking power differences and questions the power relationships through a form of self-criticism implemented through critical self- narrative, and as such it is relational and outside directed.

claim, that the emancipation of Western European women has been sustained and gained thanks to the support of the female Eastern European Migrant 'other'. Feminist critique pointed out that the exploitative relation of female labour migration, in particularly in the care and domestic sector, assisted Western women in avoiding gender matters at home by employing cheap foreign domestic help (Lutz & Palenga, 2010; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Kofman, Phizaklea, Raghuram, & Sales, 2000; Lutz, 2011). Equally, it could be argued that Eastern European female migrants 'filled a gap in the labour market that indigenous women might otherwise have been expected to fill' (Kofman, et al., 2000: 144). In this sense, the process of 'othering' from the 'white middle class' women are impregnated with a further layer, pointing to inequalities between them and the Polish migrant women. It should be added that all of the women who have participated in this research have at some point, or are still employed in the care and/or domestic sector. Although the relation between employment and mobility is not discussed at length within the parameters of this study, it is illuminating to note the difference in location, to use Riche's concept, between white Polish migrant women and white women within the receiving society.

5.3.5 Where are you from?

Reflecting on everyday experiences, several women in this study mentioned their difficulties with answering the so commonly in England asked question 'Where are you from?' Although this question within the Anglophone cultural script often acts as a 'conversation opener' and significantly varies to Polish cultural scripts (see also Chapter 5.2.1. and 5.3.1 for discussions on variations in cultural scripts), on the other hand it also interrogates ethnic origin, and can have the effect of in/exclusion and be a source of micro-aggression and reaffirm unconscious bias. In the context of migration, while the question 'Where are you from?' may not be borne out of malicious intent, it can have negative consequences or impact and therefore this 'curiosity' about someone's perceived race, ethnicity, and nationality can be quite damaging.

Manuela Gretkowska in her novel *My zdies'emigranty* (2001), reflective of her migration experience during socialism, already notes the difficulties encountered with 'conversation openers' as such: *'It is always the same boring set of nosy questions. It's best to have a piece of cardboard with all the answers ready.'* (ibid., p.37). Gretkowska portrays how these types of questions are not only uncommon in the Polish cultural script but also, how wearing these questions are for her as a Polish migrant woman. In the same way many of the women in this study have reflected on the 'where are you from?' question stressing their fatigue and frustration.

Mira (1985) for instance notes:

'I've often been in the situation, when someone asked me where I was from, and when I said that I was from Poland, this was the end of the conversation. (...) This was quiet upsetting. A really upsetting situation and this happened many times. It is sad. I know this (the question) is just an icebreaker... but still (...) I don't like the question, because it always ends with a judgement, or is the end of a conversation. This is sad. Or maybe we are misinterpreting this, but.... I have heard the question 3 million times and I assume that in 2.8 million cases a silence followed the answer! There was no further conversation...'

What emerges strongly from Mira's narrative are the negative emotions that she experiences in relation to the seemingly innocuous question. This is a question which gets asked — and having lived here for such a long time I also learned to ask - very often. It may be a question asked out of curiosity, but it has the potential to trigger something very personal: our sense of belonging. Mira's narrative illustrates how the question on another level can quickly turn into a negative experience by reducing her identity to a social or ethnic group, which then elicits feelings of alienation and sadness. The feelings of 'sadness' that Mira relates in this context, could be viewed as an instance where microaggression has a negative effect on the recipient. In addition, the undercurrent problem with the questions seems to be that for Mira who already feels 'different' in a given space (the UK), being asked where she is from carries implicit assumptions about race, ethnicity, nationality, etc. Hence, it often, translates into a negative statement implying non-belonging. Bourdieu notes that these type of experiences (or here questions) 'awaken a particular kind of lucidness; the fact of being constantly reminded of one's foreignness causes one to

perceive things that others may not see or feel' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 181). Furthermore, the question also implicitly validates national/ethnic belonging and depending on the answer, either enables or curtails further conversation, which Mira exemplifies by suggesting that in many cases when she revealed her origin the conversation ended. Consequently, the question discriminates between different groups, these who belong to the mainstream community, and the 'Other,' which does not. Mira also alluded to the fact that once she said that she was from Poland, the answer either curtailed the interchange or evoked ethnic/national stereotypes and patronizing comments on part of the interlocuter. She shared for example: *'I wish people would see me for who I am, rather than through sweeping generalisations like "Oh yes, Polish people are hardworking people. Polish cleaners are the best", I wish they wouldn't compartmentalise me like this!'* Her statement illustrates that by means of generalisations about Polish migrants in England (hard working, good cleaners), Mira feels reduced to a one-dimensional stereotype, which effectively also promotes feelings of alienation.

The detrimental effect of being perceived by the receiving society through the lens of one-dimensional stereotypes about Polish migrants was also reported by Hania (1990):

'So when I'd say that I was from Poland, people usually said, "Yes you are such hard working people. My cleaner is from Poland too". Every other person told me about their cleaning lady who was also from Poland. And I thought to myself, why do they (receiving society) only see us as cleaners, or the proverbial Polish plumber? When we can be so much more! Sometimes I just stood there listened to this and thought: By God, I am an engineer with a higher degree, probably even higher than the person I was talking to, and all that they thought I was good for, was cleaning? This (experience) was painful inside...'

Hania's reflections attest to the fact that generalisations and stereotypes about Polish migrants were at play within encounters with the receiving society, which reveal implicit bias and microaggression. Hania spoke of pain and frustration, negative emotions caused by such comments and therefore the harmful effect of microaggression. Moreover, the apparent assumptions relating to employment options of Polish migrants (cleaners and plumbers) were limiting and therefore not

allowing Hania to realise her full potential. As such Hania's comment could be viewed as a form of self-stigmatisation, educated through common stereotypes about Polish migrants, which not only left her feeling alienated but also denigrated to a particular role.

As Mira's and Hania's above quoted experiences demonstrate, the question 'where are you from?' can force individuals into neat categories of nationality without acknowledging nuances of that identity. Despite the post-modernist idea that multiple identities coexist in one person, and therefore one can identify as belonging to different geographies and cultures at the same time, the question is reductive as it implies identifying with singular markers that one was born with (i.e., one was born in Poland therefore one is Polish). To avoid this type of singular marker identification some of the women in this study have depicted deflecting the one-dimensional answer to the question. Hania (1990) for example commented: *'I feel like answering, that I am from here (the town in England she lives in). I lived here for 8 years, I work here, pay taxes, pay my mortgage, I am part of the community...so I am from here'*. Similarly, Mira (1985) suggests: *'The question is exhausting. Recently, I've started saying that I have a British passport. But this doesn't make the conversation any longer...Once someone also said "No, you can't be from here!" Yes, I am, I said! I am from (the place she lives in England) because I've been living here for the past 13 years, so this is my home and this is where I am from.'* Both women have reflected that being on the receiving end of the repeated question was wearing. Additionally, both preferred to answer the question stating that they were from England, upholding that they both took an active part in the receiving society for many years, rather than revealing their Polish origin. So, despite both women feeling that they were part of the receiving society, their complex identities are reduced to a limited understanding of a social/identity group (Polish migrants) they belong to by means of ethnic origin.

Lena (1978) also explained that her answer to the 'where are you from question?' often led to the reductive responses and silences from the receiving society, which is why she suggested that if she identified with a different nationality/ethnicity the outcome might have been different. Lena shares the following:

'When I am asked where I was from, I always wait to see where the conversation will go. If this is going to be the end of the relationship. I thought to myself that next time I'll say that I'm Italian or Greek and see if the conversation then continues'

Lena implies a certain level of fatigue with the questions. In addition, Lena plays with the idea to conceal her Polish identity presumably with the aim to avoid the negative stereotyping. Lena adopts an approach in which she waits to see if there are further questions to follow the initial 'where are you from?', to see if the interlocutor is really interested in her as a person, or if the revealing of her origin causes the conversation to end. Lena's comment supports the argument that as a Polish migrant woman in England she experienced microaggression and represents the 'negative Other', not unlike the other women's experiences analysed in this section. It could be argued that the negative 'othering' and self-stigmatisation is related to their migrant status, by which denotes them as strangers in comparison to the receiving society.

5.3.6 Eastern European Other – historical 'baggage' and negotiating feelings of inferiority

Given the geopolitical implications and its seclusion of Eastern Europe from the West, it could be argued that Eastern Europe (and therefore Poland) has played the role the 'Other'¹³³ before becoming Westernized. The perception of Eastern Europe as the Other in the West, exacerbated by the Iron Curtain and the aftermath of the Second World War has also been observed and noted by writers of Eastern European descent. Eva Hoffman (1994) makes the following comment in reflecting on the East's position as the Other vis-à-vis the West:

'Our psyches seem to be constructed that we need and desire an imagined 'other' – either glimmering, carved idealized other, or an other that is dark, savage and threatening. Eastern Europe has served our needs in this respect very well. For many centuries, it had been, to some extent cut off, separated, and – for all the

¹³³ For a broader understanding on the dichotomy self-other as applied to the formation of the Western identity vis-à-vis Eastern Europe see Neumann (1998).

insignificant geographic distances – strangely unknown. And for centuries, it had served as a stand-in for the exotic, the other (Hoffman, 1994: x)

Against this backdrop of the construction of the ‘Other’ one could argue that feelings of inferiority¹³⁴ developed in Eastern Europeans and a post-dependence mindset (see also chapter five section 2.3.4.2). This section interrogates how and if these feelings of inferiority towards the West still resonate in the woman’s life-narratives.

While it could be said that some of the examples of othering and exclusion and as related by the research participants could also be analysed through the prism of feelings of inferiority towards the community in England (for example Zyta’s self-perception as a second class citizen, or Jagna’s reference to the negative perceptions of the Polish migrant in the West who accordingly ‘rustles and stinks’ see above sections) I have chosen to focus on a further example where more explicit reference to such perceptions was made. The following example is also relevant in terms of generational experiences as it is presented by Judyta who could be described as belonging to Generation Y, which has not experienced Communism or the following transformation first hand and came of age in a democratic free market economy. It could be assumed that at the point in time of her formative years and this study the perceptions of Eastern Europe as the ‘Other’ was less significant than in the years before. However, Judyta (1993) made the following remark:

‘It’s not that anyone treats me like this ...but there is that Polish thinking in my head...like... that Polish people are somehow worst, not good enough...I don’t

¹³⁴ Gyorgy Kondrad, ‘To cave explorers from the West,’ 1988 (as quoted in Slavenka Drakulic (2015) *How women survived post-communism (and didn’t laugh)*. Transit Online, Eurozine.) describes the Eastern European inferiority stigma very poignantly:

‘We are the needy relatives, we are the aborigines, we are the ones left behind – the backward, the stunted, the misshapen, the down-and-out, the moochers, parasites, con-men, suckers. Sentimental, old fashioned, childish, uninformed, troubled, melodramatic, devious, unpredictable, negligent. The ones who don’t answer letters, the ones who miss the great opportunity, the hard drinkers, the babblers, the porch-sitters, the deadline-missers, the promise-breakers, the braggarts, the immature, the monstrous, the undisciplined, the easily offended, the ones who insult each other to death but cannot break off relations. We are the maladjusted, the complainers intoxicated by failure. We are irritating, excessive, depressing, somehow unlucky. People are accustomed to slight us. We are cheap labour; merchandise may be had from us at a lower price; people bring us their old newspapers as a gift. Letters from us come sloppily typed, unnecessarily detailed. People smile at us, pityingly, as long as we do not suddenly become unpleasant. As long as we do not say anything strange, sharp; as long as we do not stare at our nails and bare our teeth; as long as we do not become wild and cynical.’

really know where this comes from, maybe because this is how we were always talked about outside of the borders of Poland...’.

Judyta speaks to the fact that there is an almost ‘intangible’ idea or feeling which instils in her the perception that in some sense she is inferior in comparison to the receiving society in England. Although, she is not fully aware where it originates from, like Jagna (see above section 5.3.2), she makes reference to the belief that Poles are perceived as inferior or represent as the ‘Other’ by the West.

Moreover, Judyta (1993) also states that these feelings of inferiority were reinforced throughout her experience of the educational system in Poland. She comments:

‘In Poland we were taught that we need to show that we are good enough... good enough for Europe. They used to tell us (at school): ‘Remember, if you manage to go abroad and study abroad then this is best!’. And it always seemed so out of reach to me...’.

Her statement reveals that the mechanism of looking up to the West, here portrayed by the example of studying in the West, was amplified by the narrative that she grew up with. Not only was studying in the West seen as the pinnacle of education, in addition Judyta implies that she was made to feel she had to put effort to demonstrate that a Pole she met European standards (and perhaps therefore belonged to Europe not to the East). It needs to be noted that the generational cohort that Jagna belonged to and went through formal education in Poland, would have been strongly impacted by the fact that Poland joined the EU in 2004. Kruczkowska (2004) observes that Poland’s confrontation between the imagined European community and its demanding realities not only resulted in inferiority complexes towards the West but also anxieties. Consequently, the educational experience that Jagna related could be viewed as an expression of these anxieties as suggested by Kruczkowska (2004), feelings of having to prove oneself as ‘European’. Still, at the point in time when Judyta (1993) underwent formal education in Poland, studying abroad seemed as an unreachable goal, which would have only added to the feelings of being of lower status and having experienced a lower quality education. Although, it has been claimed that migrants from Generation Y, in comparison to earlier group, use mobility to gain educational experiences (Pustałka et al., 2019) Jagna’s example

illustrates that there is a complexity of factors impacting the motivation to educational mobility with 'echoes of the past' still reverberating i.e., the impact of the former generations on self-perceptions vis-à-vis Western education and perhaps also the need to demonstrate one's belongingness to the 'imagined European community'.

However, it is interesting to observe that after having lived in England Judyta has changed her perception towards the apparent high standards of education in the West, she comments:

'I think that the Polish educational system and Universities are at a much higher standard than here. Sorry, but this is what I think. After finishing a degree in Poland, I've a lot more skills than some people here. Now I know that it would be easy to study here. But back then, five years ago I didn't think that it was possible'.

It could be said that Judyta's mobility experience has allowed her to dismantle some of the inferiority complexes related to the standard of her education, by living in England she came to understand that the skills that she has gained through formal education in Poland were not inferior. Instead, she now perceives them as superior to those offered by formal education in England. This view that the Polish educational system was not of lesser quality was also reinforced by Bogna (1996), who has partaken in formal education in both countries, who suggested: *'Obviously, the educational standards here (in England) are not as high as in Poland'*. Similar perceptions were also affirmed in White's (2011a) study where respondents also stressed that the academic standards in Poland were higher than in Britain, and some were overall critical of British schools.

5.4 Networks, Home and Belonging

The following section discusses selected themes on home and belonging as presented and negotiated by the research participants in their life-story narratives. First, the autoethnographic vignette offers some reflections on the complexity and ambivalence of notions of belonging and home. Next, the focus turns to relationships

and networks built between other migrants, the receiving society as well as transnationally, and how these networks impact on women's perceptions of home and belonging. Secondly, narratives of 'home practices', or how women create a home and cultivate a sense of belonging, are examined. Thirdly, alternative theoretical figurations for contemporary belonging and subjectivity are explored.

5.4.1 So...How often do you go home...?

Sabina (1978): On a lengthy train journey, returning from visiting my sister-in-law back to the place where I currently live in England, the women who sat opposite me, true to my biased perception of the receiving society, mitigated the proximity by engaging in small talk (another trait which would not happen in the same manner in Poland, one would simply stare out of the window for the duration of the trip). We went through all the quotidian interrogations like 'where I was from' etc. Finally, yet another perturbing question: 'So, how often do you go home?', asked the woman. In my head I answer: 'I am on my way home now...!'. But I don't want to be rude and say instead: 'Do you mean when did I last visit Poland?' This anecdotal encounter hints at the fact that home and belonging within the migration experience is perhaps not as straight forward as my interlocutor hoped.

'Home' as a place 'left behind' tied to geographical and national borders does not mirror my understanding. Instead, 'home' is somewhere entwined, in the who, where and when. It is the conversation with the past, the awareness of the now and an imagination of the future. 'Home' in my understanding is not something static, external. It is a concept, which I carry within me, which I redefine and adjust; it is something fluid in movement, between different points of reference, whether these are emotional, cultural, social, territorial or political. I always felt that home is where I create it, a state that can be evoked. I create home by spinning a web of interconnections with places, people, languages or even traditions. My life story is interwoven with others, recreated in the exchange in a given moment.

Still, within the Polish community, whether in Poland, or within the group of Polish migrants in Germany and also UK, I am always perceived as an outsider. Neither have I ever really identified myself with the Polish, or other, 'migrant' community in the UK. My idea/concept of self is deeply impacted by the experience of movement, multiple cultures and languages. The experience of movement allowed me, or sometimes demanded of me, to redefine myself, to invent new, alternative ways of being and modes of thought. Through mobility I discovered a certain fluidity that constitutes my being. The movement, crossing of cultural and emotional boundaries, the constant change of perspectives and adaptation have transformed me.

This somewhat non - mainstream, marginal positioning of myself, I believe, is empowering in the sense that it allows for an alternative perspective. It allows for a multitude of encounters and otherwise perhaps unlikely interactions. I deeply feel that there is something in my multi-lingual and multicultural state that offers an entrance point for theoretical consideration.

As the preceding autoethnographic introduction indicates, questions related to belonging and home within mobility scenarios are complex and could be discussed adopting manifold perspectives. The vignette firstly alludes to a sense of dislocation surrounding an understanding and desire for home but also problematizes romanticized notions of home in the 'old' country. In the conversation with the British fellow traveller on the train, which suggests an uprooting produced by dislocation from the 'old' country to the 'new', also illuminates the fallacy inherent in utopian imaginations of home and reveals the concept itself as fleeting and unstable. The fellow traveller identifies my dislocation by asking when I would go home, to 'where' I really belong, with the subtext that this is not here. Thus, the question carries the message that wherever I am it cannot be my home, and that I must return or be returned to a space where people look like me, speak my language and eat the same food. Still, the 'old country' as I lived and remember it, is no longer the same old country; nor, given my different paths, am I the same as the people who remain there, or even the same person that I was when I left. Thus, the vignette not only questions romanticised notions of home but also reveals that home and belongingness emerges as dynamic, relational and enacted contextually in

interactions with others. Sometimes belonging, specifically in relation to ethnicity and cultural insiderness, is complicated and suggests that ethnic heritage does not reliably produce homogenised experiences which one can bond and create friendships. Instead, the autoethnographic narrative above is written from a place of liminality, hybridity, and complexity. Yet it embraces all these complex and ambivalent notions of home and belonging.

5.4.2 Relationships

Networks, whether pre and on arrival, or post migration in the destination country as well as transnational play a significant role in the mobility experience. Different types of networks and relationships pre and post migration can on one hand impact migration decisions (for example Wanda and Zyta in chapter 4.3.3) or provide resources for the move (see Mira in chapter 4.3.1), post migration they can offer informational and instrumental or emotional support, as well as companionship and socializing (Ryan et al., 2009; Ryan et al, 2008). Other researchers stressed the importance of networks in understanding patterns of migration, settlement and links with home (Castles & Miller, 2003; Boyd, 1989; White & Ryan, 2011; White, 2014; 2011a; Ryan, 2009) and relationships with populations in sending and receiving countries (Gurak & Caces, 1992).¹³⁵ This subchapter continues the discussion on the importance of networks in examining Polish migration whilst focusing on the question how different networks impacted on the participants sense of home and belonging. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of the networks, as these changed over time, is highlighted and is in line with other findings (see also Ryan et al., 2009). Firstly, the focus is on relationships within the Polish migrant community and how networks within the 'Polish community' interplayed in the participants mobility experience and to what extent (if at all) being part of this community impacted on the women's perceptions of home and belonging. The discussion on networks within

¹³⁵ Greater understanding of social networks in migration can be found in the chapter by Ryan et al. (2009) 'Recent Polish Migrants in London: Accessing and Participating in social Networks across Borders' In: *Polish Migration to the UK in the 'new' European union: after 2004*. Ultimately, migration research and sociological analyses of networks as a subject goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

the Polish community also highlights how trust patterns (as discussed in chapter 2.3.3.4) impacted on the relationships. Next, attention is drawn to transnational networks and how interactions (in person and virtual) impact on the women's attachment and feelings of separation. In addition, the impact of transnational networks is discussed on potential return migration decision making, either facilitated through informal networks or kin caring responsibilities. Lastly, the attention turns to local relationships with the receiving society and illustrates how these shaped the women's sense of belonging.

5.4.2.1 The big Polish family? Relationships with other Polish migrants

In the world of increased mobility, people often feel a heightened need to belong to a community (Bauman, 2001).¹³⁶ The community can provide a strong emotional sense of support and identity (Bess, Fisher, Sonn, & Bishop, 2002). However, different members of a community can experience belonging differently, and attachment to a collective can offer a context to assert individual identity (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The Polish community can provide a connection to the country of origin and therefore offer support in combating feelings of non-belonging and emotional longing, or home sickness. One mechanism to mitigate the feeling of 'homesickness' is the women's engagement with the Polish community, and further examples are also evident in engagement with material culture. Both women from the Generation '89 in this study were on arrival initially heavily depended on their family networks but after a short while they both made and are maintaining strong bonds with the local Polish community in England. Both were also strongly involved with different local Polish clubs where they each took a leading role and an active part in collective

¹³⁶ As Bauman states, '(C)ommunity is a warm place, a cosy and comfortable place. It is like a roof under which we shelter in heavy rain, like a fireplace at which we warm our hands on a frosty day. Out there in the streets, all sorts of dangers lie in ambush; we have to be alert when we go out, watch whom we are talking to and who talks to us, be on the look-out every minute. In here, in the community, we can relax – we are safe, there are no dangers looming in dark corners (...). In a community, we all understand each other. We may quarrel – but these are friendly quarrels, it is just that we are all trying to make our togetherness even better and more enjoyable than it has been so far, and while guided by the same wish to improve our life together, we may disagree how to do it best. But we never wish each other bad luck, and we may be sure that all the others wish us good' (Bauman, 2001, pp. 1-2).

practices of Polishness, for example festivities such as Christmas or Andrzejki and Polish national celebrations and governmental initiatives.

The involvement with the Polish community (or Polonia)¹³⁷ for these two women could be understood as a significant emotional frame of reference for their belonging and as a way to mitigate feelings of emotional longing or 'homesickness.' Zyta (1966) reflects on her connection to and involvement with the Polish community as follows: *'I know lots of Polish people, wherever I go there is always someone I know. I like to get involved with the community and help others. (...) Thanks to my involvement with the Polish club I've made long standing friendships.'* Zyta's statement suggests that the connections with the Polish community in the UK offered her some sense of social and emotional support and therefore impacted on her sense of belonging. In addition, she also emphasises that she enjoys supporting others, in particular women, in the Polish community, with the aim to ease their mobility experience and feel a form of connection. Zyta suggests that the majority of the women she is supporting are of a similar age and have often followed their children who came to the UK first. As other researchers have suggested, familial networks can sometimes provide limited support post migration, which is why casual acquaintances can be very supportive in reaching out beyond the immediate network and offer general support (Williams, 2006). A form of such support was illustrated by Zyta, who organises 'knit and natter' meetings for other Polish women as well as mixed language classes with Polish women and English speakers.

The involvement with the Polish community and club, above offering a point of information, connection and belonging, also served the purpose to deconstruct prejudices about Polish migrants as well as 'educating the ignorant' (Fleming, Lamont, & Welburn, 2012) receiving society about Polish culture and history. For

¹³⁷ Garapich (2016) discusses the notion of Polonia, which he traces back to Polish communities of rural and working-class people who settled in the US at the turn of the nineteenth century. He noted that it 'was developed to not only help people find their natural home and a sense of belonging abroad but also maintain a culturally meaningful grip on social identities' (ibid, pp.275,278). In this sense, Polonia surfaced as 'a sort of second Poland, a recreation of home,' enabling migrants 'to return to the body of the nation without physically moving' (Garapich, 2016: 278). In his work on the contemporary understanding of Polonia, Garapich differentiates between a popular usage of the term to signify Polish communities abroad, and in particular one referring to Polonia as a reproduction of Poland abroad through formal institutions with their internal structures and hierarchies.

example, Wanda (1963) organised events where not only the post-accession Polish community reached out to the host society, but also events that celebrated historical ties between England and Poland and the involvement of Polish pilots during the Second World War. She noted that her intention was to assert the importance of Polish history vis-à-vis English history but also to negotiate stigmatisation and promote a higher position of Poles in England's ethnic landscape. She comments:

'I was very passionate about wanting to show that we've got a great culture, that we're fun. We've invited English people to the events (run by the Polish club), so that they'd see that we are nice and normal people. I felt ashamed whenever I read or heard about a potential crime committed by a Pole. Jesus, I was so ashamed. So, I wanted to show that we are really good people. That we are hard-working and not different at all, so that we come closer.'

Svašek (2009) stressed the discursive dimension of emotion within migration and as such the discourse of 'fear of strangers' who can potentially harm the self (applied to the Polish migration contexts the 'strangers' are the migrants, whereas the self is the receiving society). This type of discourse is mainly mediated through the media and can enforce negative perceptions of Polish migrants. Consequently, Wanda's involvement with the Polish club presented a way to produce effective counter-narratives and undermine negative stereotyping. By 'renegotiating' and deconstructing a stigmatised opinion about Poles, Wanda also reasserted her sense of self and was aiming to overcome the distance between herself and the receiving society and therefore also re-establish a sense of belonging.

However, the experiences with the Polish community were not always described as positive and fostering connection or a sense of belonging, which confirms former discussion on Polish networks and social interactions between Poles (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2005 ; Fomina, 2009; White, 2016; 2011a; White & Ryan, 2008; Garapich, 2007; 2008a). Zyta (1966) despite her significant involvement with the Polish Club, also stressed that after a while the relationships with other Poles within the migrant community were challenging. She comments:

'So, I was the chairwoman of the Polish society and people would ring me anytime during the day and night and ask for help. And then they would pass comments like: " Oh, you must be making a lot of money in this job!" I don't

mind helping people, but this was getting too stressful. After two years I gave the post up. I was ill, depressed had anxiety attacks. I was afraid of people, when the phone rang, or someone was at the door I wouldn't answer. I was too afraid that there was yet another person who wanted something. The expectations were too much.'

Zyta's experience illuminated that the relationships within the networks are complex and shifting. Her statement, apart from indicating that the Polish community turned from being supportive to a source of mental distress, throws also light on another negative aspect of the relationship: jealousy. This finding confirms what also Ryan et al. (2009) observed when conducting research with Polish migrants in London, 'Poles may deliberately compete and undermine each other' and joining the Polish community is viewed as 'unhelpful and dangerous' (ibid., p.161).¹³⁸ Furthermore, Eade et al. (2007) observed that recent Polish migrants are inclined to view the 'wider' Polish community with guardedness and mistrust.¹³⁹

Other women in this study also related negative experiences with fellow Polish migrants. Lena (1978), due to her experiences of living and working in the US and the connections she has made there with other migrants, expected a positive connection with the Polish community on arrival in the UK. Lena reflects on the experience as follows: *'I came back from the US and had this vision to make the world a better place. To unite the Polish community, to stick together'*. Instead, the lived experience of working with a high number of Polish migrants in the UK has changed her views:

'At the beginning I helped them. One day I realised they made me their secretary and I stopped. (...) Next day, I was called a ... (prostitute) I won't spell it out. I was sleeping with the bosses; this is how I worked my way up to my position. Since then, I stopped helping them (the Polish workforce).'

¹³⁸ A similar finding was also suggested by Brown (2011) who compared post-Second World War Polish migrants' relationship with the Polish community to those of the post accession economic migrants. Again, the research findings demonstrated that in contrast to the former group the latter showed no signs of forming a community with other Polish migrants. Amongst other factors, Brown identified the lack of solidarity, or even tolerance predominantly based on concerns of economic competition (ibid.).

¹³⁹ Likewise, researchers of other migrant groups have pointed to the fact that the wider community can also be regarded in negative terms as competition, a cause of pressure or even danger (Williams, 2006).

Like Zyta, Lena at first engaged with the Polish community and had a positive outlook on the relationship, but with time realised that her fellow countrymen (they were male employees) exploited her good will. At the point when Lena decided to set boundaries in her professional role, she was subjected to verbal abuse. Consequently, Lena broke off the connection to the wider Polish community as the relationship proved detrimental to her, and therefore was not a source of support nor belonging. Instead, Lena's example points to the reoccurring theme of trust (Chapter 2.3.3.4). When Lena withdraws her additional support and reduces the interactions to transactional, albeit well in line with her professional role, she is no longer regarded as a 'helpful friend', can no longer be trusted, and is subjugated to harassment.

Two further research participants stressed that they preferred to keep their distance from the wider Polish community, although they maintained contact with a select group of Polish migrants. Bogna (1996) for example explained her choice as follows: *'I have met quite a few Polish people here (in England) and the truth is that they would stick a knife in the back of the other. Especially abroad. So, I am trying to stay away.'* Her statement makes it very clear that for her it is a conscious choice to avoid the wider Polish community as in her view they do not wish each other well and are potentially dangerous, even more so in England. Again, this finding reconfirms earlier research that highlighted the ambivalent relationships between Polish migrants (Fomina, 2009; White & Ryan 2008; White, 2011a; Ryan, 2009; Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2005). Bogna (1996) also reflects on distrust that she experienced when she intended to join the Polish Church, which led her to the decision to withdraw from the group:

'I tried joining the Polish Church, but it just didn't feel right. I might be led by intuition here but (...). I've joined several meetings and it didn't feel right. (...) I was sat in this circle and I could see how they were looking at me. The look was enough to know that what is shared in this circle does not stay there but that these women are badmouthing me behind my back'.

Bogna's (1996) narrative illustrates that despite her attempts to connect within other women in the Polish Church community, on an 'emotional' level she felt the relationships were not genuine nor supportive. Her main reason was the fact that she felt she could not trust the group. Even though Bogna was born in 1996 it appears

that her perceptions of 'trust' towards the group are closer in line with a 'pattern of trust' rooted in the communist past (Chapter 2.3.3.4), whereby one should not trust strangers, because they do not wish one well (Wciórka, 2008; Giczi & Sik, 2009; White, 2011a, p. 80). Thus, it could be argued that patterns of trust developed during communism and reinforced during the transformation are still relatively vivid in contemporary migration experiences, and appear to transgress immediate generational belonging but instead reverberate in transgenerational experiences, that is even in the generation which had no direct lived experience of communism and the then developed trust patterns.

Another example of negative experiences with the Polish School was offered by Mira (1985). Mira suggested that she did not feel comfortable with the parochial attitudes that she experienced in the Polish school. As an example, she mentioned that the other teachers insisted on calling each other by their surname preceded with the Polish Mrs/Mr, which she felt was archaic. What is more, Mira also experienced how members of the Polish School have been less than amicable towards other nationalities. She recollects a situation where some Polish School teachers failed to communicate adequately with non-Polish speaking parents (some of the children attending the classes were of mixed heritage): *'They didn't even try. I mean if you want to communicate you can try. Use your arms and legs but they didn't. It was Polish or nothing!'* Effectively, these negative experiences led to Mira ceasing her involvement with the Polish School as she was not prepared to engage in their practices and attitudes.

Nonetheless, the majority of women in this study maintained close contact to a select group of Polish migrants in England. Often these networks formed before or on arrival in the UK offered initial support on the women's migration journeys. Mira (1985) comments on the experience of connecting with Polish migrant networks on arrival as follows: *'At first I've met a lot of fantastic Polish people'*. Also, Hania (1990) suggests that making friends with other Polish migrants helped her to gain employment and find her feet on the mobility path. She comments: *'I was so lucky. I met this girl on the flight (to the UK) and it turned out she helped me with finding a job and a place to stay. We are still friends'*. The narratives about the practical help received by the participants from other Polish migrants, myself not excluded, was

also described by other researchers (Ryan, et al., 2009; Jordan & Duvell, 2003). However, the support offered by these networks is not limited to practical support and the importance of networks and friendships with other Polish migrants is discussed further in the next subsection. There will be a particular focus on shared experiences of material culture such as food, and how these experiences manifest in home making practices and belonging.

5.4.2.2 Transnational networks

In addition to networks with other Polish migrants pre- and post-migration, some of the women also mentioned transnational networks, indicating that their relationships span between host and country of origin and are therefore multiple and fluid. Of course, the importance of rapidly developed computer and phone technology enables the maintain frequent contact with home (see also Chapter 4.3.3). Thus, the internet, inexpensive phone calls, and texts have enabled migrants to maintain frequent, affordable communication with their relatives and friends (Galasińska, 2010, p. 310) and indeed as Vertovec (2004) argued are a form of ‘social glue connecting small-scale social formations across the globe’ (ibid., p. 219). Also, in this study participants maintained frequent communication with family and friends back home, and similar to Bell’s (2016) findings, although regular contact with family and friends provided emotional support, paradoxically it also often perpetuates feelings of homesickness and missing kin. Jagna (1977) stressed for example that her parents offer close emotional support facilitated via video calls; she comments: *‘We speak all the time. It is really important for (her children). Sometimes it gets really emotional. When they were younger, my youngest would often cry and my mum would cry because they miss each other so much’*. On the other hand, the example illustrates that apart from providing emotional support the contact with close ones abroad can be a source of emotional distress. As Bell (2016) suggests the more frequent the contact (also virtual) across borders is the more significant is the separating effect, increasing social and emotional distance (ibid., p. 85).

Although transnational networks can offer emotional support at a distance, the importance of physical proximity should not be overlooked (see chapter 4.3.2).

Hania (1990) spoke of the fact that she misses her family and her siblings and that only physical proximity can mitigate this emotional longing: *'I really miss my siblings, a lot more than back in Poland. I wish one of them could move here, but they have their lives set up in Poland'*. To bridge the physical distance the majority of the women in this study visit their relatives in Poland, or are receiving visits from their relatives. However, post visits feelings of longing often intensify, Judyta (1993) for example observes the following: *'Every visit to Poland is emotionally taxing. I am really upset every time I come back.'* This example also reinforces Jagna's earlier example of communication across borders and former research (Bell, 2016) illustrating the impact of visits and frequent calls on feelings of separation and homesickness.

In addition, transnational networks can also reinforce migration decisions. Two women in this research highlighted how maintaining frequent contact (at distance and in person) with friends and family in Poland has given them the opportunity to reflect on their mobility trajectories and reassess where their future homes would be located. Hania (1990) for instance shares: *'My friends reassure me that if I return back to Poland, I'd have great job prospects'*. Similarly, Judyta (1993) makes the following comment: *'My friends back in Poland tell me not to worry. That if I returned, I'd easily find a job and a flat. It is them who mainly persuade me to come back ...'*. In both instances it could be argued that the transnational relationships have encouraged the women's thoughts about returning to Poland. It could be concluded that the relationships maintained across borders reassured the women in their decision to see England as a temporary home. White (2014) noted that informal networks, or the lack thereof, in Poland interplayed in return migration decisions. It could be said that the findings in this study reconfirm that informal networks in Poland can support migration decision making as in both cases Hania's and Judyta's the participants relay on the information re employment opportunities on return to Poland provided by their transnational network of friends in the sending country,

However, transnational ties in particular within a family were not only described as a source of emotional support. Some of the women expressed feelings of guilt in relation to maintaining and sustaining relationships over time and space. As such Hania (1990) commented: *'I feel terribly guilty, for leaving them'* (her parents)

there (in Poland) [...] My parents are getting older... I'm sorry that I haven't spent the last eight Christmases with them'. Similarly, Judyta made the following statement: *'My parents are getting older, and I wish I could spend more time with them.'* What is more Jagna (1977) shared the following: *'If anything would happen to my parents, I guess I would need to pack up my stuff and go back'*. What reverberates in all the statements above are underlying emotions of guilt, and family obligation. Baldassar (2015) suggested that within migration emotions of guilt can act as a significant motivation to maintain and transnational relationships but also can be a driver in obligations to return. Drawing on Baldassar, it could be argued that some women in this research project expressed feelings of guilt, implicitly (Lena) but also openly (Hania) which in turn can affect their return decision. What is more, Jagna's statement implies kinship care obligations. Vermot (2015) has stressed the gendered aspect of care responsibilities within migration scenarios and that some women can feel guilty because of their gendered socialisation, when they are not able to provide the care needed for aging relatives. It could be assumed that for Jagna the care obligations for her elderly parents could impact her return decision.

5.4.2.3 Relationships within the receiving country

It should be added that experiences with ethnic networks were however not the only relationships that impacted on the research participant's sense of belonging. Several of the women also built meaningful professional and personal relationships with a wider group of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, a number of research participants were in long-term relationships with British nationals, however little was shared in the life story interviews as to the impact of these intimate relationships on the women's ideas of home and belonging. Nevertheless, in some of the narratives contact with other ethnicities through work or social engagements were described as fostering feelings of belonging.

For example, several women have socialised with people from different ethnic backgrounds at work, place of study or at leisure. Hania (1990) very fondly spoke about her multicultural co-workers and how the relationship with this network supported her feelings of belonging in the UK: *'I loved working there. I met so many*

fantastic people there (...) I also often socialised with them outside work. I have great memories of that time, they made me feel at home'. Lena (1978) also reflected on relationships with wider non-Polish networks which she connected with mainly due to the fact that she has children: *'We have all sorts of friends, couples with children, all nationalities*. The extension of social networks as a result of motherhood was also noted by Ryan (2007). In addition, some of Lena's close non-Polish friends have now also become the godparents of her youngest child, which reasserts feelings of belonging to the receiving society.

5.4.3 Belonging and home-making practices

As already acknowledged in chapter four foods and their consumption are important elements in migrant identity constitution, as it has the potential to appeal to the sense of belonging, the sense of home and the sense of community through commensality. The link between food and migrant experiences has been discussed across disciplines,¹⁴⁰ also as in relation to Polish migrants in the UK (Rabikowska & Burrell, 2009; Rabikowska, 2010; Coakley, 2011).¹⁴¹ White (2011a: 180) noted that *'food is one of the most visible and commercialised aspects of ethnic identity'*. This subchapter uncovers how 'home-making' practices such as food making and sharing within the migration context are interwoven with practices of recreating and performing of cultural rituals and traditions. Particular focus is placed on the question of whether the enactment of cooking and sharing of food generates feelings of being at home, as well as what role the participants, particularly in their gendered identity, play in the process. In exploring the link between food practices and 'home-making' I am mostly interested in the 'doing' aspect rather than the 'being', so that the stress is on the action, the process through which meaning is expressed (Thrift, 2000) as

¹⁴⁰ For a selection of works on food and migrant experience see the following: in relation to identity (Beoku-Betts, 1995; Keafsey & Cox, 2002), gender (Duru, 2005; Williams B. , 1984), home and belonging (Ehrkamp, 2005; Petridou, 2001) and food rituals (Avieli, 2005; Bardby, 2002).

¹⁴¹ In discussing ritualization of national identity through food, Rabikowska suggests: 'Food in its very sensual dimension serves as vehicle for the recreation of the abstract meaning of home through materially involved activities which alleviate the sense of fragmentation and discontinuity caused by displacement. National identity from that perspective comes with an idealised concept of "home" which has been lost and becomes fragmentarily reconstituted through different practices, including daily rituals of consumption' (2010: 378).

‘practices and skills produce people, selves and worlds’ (ibid., p.216). I have chosen to concentrate on the ‘enactment’ or performances¹⁴² of homemaking through food practices and the role of gendered identities in this process. The latter is of particular interest in light of the paradigm of Matka Polka, as discussed in chapter 2.3.3.3, as ‘community’s performances reflect and embody its values, beliefs and traditions’ (Bial, 2004, p. 263). Therefore, the role of women in homemaking and food practices is examined (Chapter 5.3.3.3). The analysis begins with autoethnographic reflections on food preparation practices at Christmas, where the festive ritual of making dumplings (pierogi) is seen as a way to enact cultural heritage, connect with kin and foster attachment (Chapter 5.5.3.1). The next subsection offers some reflections on festive food rituals and intergenerational and cultural transmission (Chapter 5.5.3.2). Following this, the role of women in food practices during festivities and the process of recreating cultural heritage and a sense of belonging is discussed. Finally, the act of food sharing beyond family and/or ethnic circle is considered as a way to build kinship ties and strengthening a sense of belonging (chapter 5.5.3.4). The choice to concentrate on the homemaking and food during a festive occasion was led by the fact that the subject has surfaced in the interviews. Furthermore, the timing of the interviews might have added to the topic as some of them have taken place directly after Christmas. Festivities are highly ritualised with great attention on tradition and family, as well as being marked by a strong emotional dimension.¹⁴³ Consequently, the section depicts how such festivities are experienced and enacted within the migration context.

5.4.3.1 *Making Dumplings – festive food rituals as embodied acts of belonging*

Sabina (1978): Every Christmas Eve, or ‘Wigilia’ our kitchen turns into a production line of traditional dumplings. There is photographic evidence portraying me and my children making, what seems like endless amounts of ‘pierogi’. We make different fillings, then roll and cut the pastry, fill the

¹⁴² For an understanding of performance metaphor as a tool to examine food and cultural identity, see: Coackley, L. (2011b).

¹⁴³ Kathy Burrell (2011c) offers an interesting discussion on the emotional significance of material objects (oranges, wafers and carp) at Christmas.

dumplings, then squeeze the edges and align them onto every free space on the kitchen counters ready to throw into the hot water bath. The children love it. We listen to Polish Christmas Carols and often speak to family whilst doing it, showing off how many we have already prepared, whilst they share their progress. The dumplings are prepared according to our family's traditional recipe, passed on to me via 'learning by doing' method through my great grandmother. Forty years ago, I was in place of my children making pierogi or dumplings with her for 'Wigilia'. Of course, the ingredients are often carefully sourced: mushrooms that my mother herself collected and sent over in a package, but often also supplemented with produce from the local Polish shop. This ritual of collective dumpling making is part of my heritage, a skill and tradition that I wish to pass on to my children. It is part of what I remember Wigilia to be, the shared experience of cooking and eating, feeling home.

The above autoethnographic passage reveals that food practices, such as the preparation of festive dishes for Christmas can be an expression of cultural belonging.¹⁴⁴ The process relies on traditional recipes passed on through generations within the family and is based on ingredients which in England need to be sourced from Polish shops¹⁴⁵ (or send by relatives). The food making practice becomes significant as it recalls and reconnects with family and cultural heritage, therefore the 'ritual' or process of making dumplings could be understood as an embodied act which can produce a sense of belonging (Fortier, 1999).

The repeated enactment of these festive food preparations has the potential to strengthen family ties, also through passing on of traditions to my children. The generational passing on of food making traditions is enacted through an embodied process of 'making dumplings': my children are joining me in the food practice and learning-by-doing, just like I did, which enables them to carry on the knowledge and pass it on to future generations.

¹⁴⁴ Polish/Silesian heritage in my case but Polish only for the other participants

¹⁴⁵ For further discussion on material practices such as the consumption of traditional Polish food and their importance in the process of feeling at home within the migration context see also Rabikowska & Burrell (2009): *The material worlds of recent Polish migrants: Transnationalism, food, shops and home*.

In addition, by staying in touch with transnational family during the ‘dumpling making’ reinforces kinship ties despite distance. In this sense the food practice strengthens and brings the family together, whilst reaffirming cultural heritage. Furthermore, the process of making the dumplings also contains memories of people and places (family and home(s) past), even if at times it is bittersweet, since part of my family are not close by, or may even be even deceased (my great grandmother). Recalling and reconnecting with these practices and traditions within the migration context can also generate a feeling of being ‘at home’. In this sense they have the potential to connect with others (transnationally), whilst at the same time can create a sense of belonging locally (in the UK) (Burrell, 2011b). Moreover, food practice not only strengthens family ties locally and transnationally, but also allows to transfer important cultural practices onto my children who are growing up in England, consequently having the ‘double effect of rooting’ them in both cultures (Coakley, 2011: 214), a topic which is discussed further in the following section.

5.4.3.2 *Festive rituals as intergenerational and cultural ‘rooting’*

Within the life-story interviews Jagna (1977) also stressed the importance of involving her children in passing on of traditions and food practices at Christmas. She shared that in the past her children did not show much interest in participating in the food preparations but only recently have started to become more involved:

‘This year was great! They have both helped me and were keen to learn. Not in the past so much...I guess it would be different if we were in Poland. They’d be sat in the kitchen with my mum all day and we’d prepare everything. That’s what we would do back home.’

Jagna’s comment emphasizes that she was glad that her children have recently showed more of an interest in traditional Polish festive food practices as this implies that on the one hand, she will be able to share the activity with them and on the other hand, that she will be able to pass on the tradition onto the next generation. Her statement implies that within the migration context the involvement of her children in the preparation is not as active as it might have been if they were in Poland, where it would be reinforced through shared practice. Thus, Jagna is

concerned that her children, by not participating in the shared food practice, do not have a strong connection to their cultural heritage and that the sense of home that she is intending to evoke through the festive practice does not resonate with her offspring. However, she then goes on to explain that she normally celebrates Wigilia with a group of Polish friends and that her children enjoy the festive occasion (the aspect of shared celebration of Wigilia with other Polish migrants will be discussed further in this section).

5.4.3.3 *Women's work – the role of women in recreating and performing belonging through homemaking and food practices*

Ultimately, Jagna's (1977) disappointment with the lack of help from her teenage children could also be interpreted through a different lens. The food preparations for Wigilia are normally very time-consuming (see also Jagna's comment above 'sat in the kitchen all day') and difficult, particularly for women within the Polish traditional scenario who would normally take the most share of the workload, a similar observation was also made in Coakley's (2011) study. The fact that food practices and preparations for Wigilia were often women's work is also attested by my own experience, and was confirmed by other participants. Hania (1990) who hosted several Wigilia dinners for a number of Polish friends noted that it was her and her Polish girlfriends who gathered at her place on the morning of the 24th of December to prepare the food: *'The three of us met here in the morning and made the preparations. It is good fun, we have a drink and chat and cook, the kids are running around'*. Despite that fact that she clearly enjoyed the company and the shared practice, nonetheless the 'kitchen space' and the food preparation was mainly done by women.

The Polish cultural paradigm of *Matka Polka* (Mother Pole) was especially during communism and post-socialism defined by a specific version of 'kitchen matriarchy,' and therefore often occupied the domestic space. However, the term does not necessarily imply a position of power (as explained below). Although women can be potentially 'gatekeepers' of food (as this is the main focus here) in the house and therefore exercise influence by providing a valued substance (festive foods), at the same time the position is also linked with female subordination through women's

need to serve, satisfy and defer (Counihan & Kaplan, 1998). Particularly during socialism, Polish mothers went to great lengths for their families whilst negotiating professional work and household obligations in a system which limited access to food and other material goods. Therefore, running a household was a difficult undertaking. According to Titkow (2012) this specific version of 'matriarchy'¹⁴⁶ implied that regardless of the fact that Polish mothers were often physically and mentally exhausted, they nonetheless would hold a 'justified sense of being irreplaceable managers of family life' (ibid., p. 33).¹⁴⁷ Zyta's (1966) narrative illustrates this position poignantly as she commented on the fact that often she felt utterly exhausted by all the house work and food preparation that she had to accomplish before she could sit down at the *Wigilia* table with her family. Zyta shared the following thoughts: '*By Christmas I was usually coming down with a cold. I was exhausted after all the cleaning and cooking!*'. Based on my own autoethnographic reflections as well as Jagna's comments and Hania's narrative the practice of festive foods was and perhaps still is 'women's work' and reverberates with the myth of *Matka Polka*. It is therefore noteworthy that the impact of traditional role models can still be traced in the life-story narratives, regardless of the generational group the women belong to. Here, the narratives speak to the fact that the traditional gendered role model, specifically *Matka Polka*, prevail trans-generationally, as they are recounted by both women who were born in the 60's, 70's but also 90's.

Furthermore, based on the narratives within the migration context of this study in terms of gender roles, it appears that women play an important role in

¹⁴⁶ Titkow (1995) in *Kobiety pod presją? Proces kształtowania się tożsamości [Women under Pressure? The Process of Identity Formation]*, coins the term 'managerial matriarchy' (or 'domestic matriarchy') the symbol of which is an exhausted woman, sleep deprived and overwhelmed with shopping bags, who feels she is the indispensable manager of family life (ibid. p.31). In the world of rationed coupons, the Polish mother turned into the Gastronomic Mother preoccupied with feeding her family and executing her power in the kitchen and in the dining room [cf. Sławomira Walczewska quoted in Kaneva (2016) *Mediating Post-Socialist Femininities*, p.60].

¹⁴⁷ An example of such incarnation of *Matka Polka* is offered in M.A. Bakalar's (2012) *Madame Mephisto*. Magda's mother is mostly depicted in a domestic environment, which could be interpreted as an implicit reference to her status as a model *Matka Polka*. Magda's mother is a dominant figure in the family, who organizes the household and family life. Her position of dominance seems to be strictly related to her role as the ultimate manager of the family life, which translates into her reluctance to delegate domestic duties. When her thirty-year-old twin daughters offer to help prepare some of the traditional Christmas dishes, she asserts her ability to singlehandedly deal with the copious amount of work: 'I'm perfectly capable of doing everything myself' (Bakalar, 2012: 100)

recreating performing traditional and cultural 'home-making' practices and therefore, also manifesting a sense of belonging. Researchers such as Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992; 1989) highlighted how within mobility scenarios women are on the one hand, carriers of national ideologies and, on the other, agents in shaping their cultural identifications in the host country. Anthias and Yuval-Davis observe that the literature on migration has reduced ethnicity and race to belonging to minority groups, or subordinate groups within a nation-state (1989, p. 3). Women, they suggest, occupy a central place in the process of signification embedded in racism and nationalism. Yuval-Davis and Anthias point out the relationship between women and nation: 'Women are also controlled in terms of the 'proper' way in which they should...reproduce the boundaries of the symbolic identity of their group or that of their husbands...Women are seen as the 'cultural carriers' of the ethnic group' (Yuval-Davis, N., & F. Anthias, 1989: 9). As such, Braidotti (1994) argues that within migration 'women usually play the role of the loyal keepers of the original home culture' (ibid., p.22).¹⁴⁸

Within the life-story interview Hania (1990) also voiced an awareness about subjecting herself to traditional gender roles (even if only temporarily see chapter 5.3.3): *'Since the first Christmas here, when (a friend) has taken me in, I'm now also being the 'good mother' and am putting on a big feast for all our friends.'* Hania's statement illustrates an understanding of her gendered position ('good mother' could also be read as *Matka Polka*). She felt obliged to continue putting on a shared Wigilia dinner, similar to the experience on her arrival. This first shared Wigilia in the UK instilled a sense of the belonging in Hania. By repeating the shared Wigilia and the Polish culture with others, Hania is actively fostering a sense of belonging and the Polish family through and with the Polish community in England.

¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, in migrant literature the role of women in creating links between 'home making' and belonging is highlighted. One example is Angelika in Bakalar's second novel *Children of Our Age* (2017). Angelika (who could be identified as a *Matka Polka*), moved to London together with her husband and two children, and utilises food to foster emotional bonds within the family as well as create a link between Poland and the UK. The careful preparation of traditional dishes allows Angelika to express her affection whilst preserving the ideal of a 'happy Polish family.' It could be argued that by means of food making, and therefore 'home-making,' Angelika provides the family with a sense of belonging against the 'unknown' context of migration. Ultimately, Angelika's devotion to 'home-making' is closely linked with traditional gender roles.

5.4.3.4 Festive food sharing practices, kinship ties and belonging

The sharing of the Christmas Eve dinner with friends and family is important for attachment, as Hania: *'We had twelve people here! Everyone, well those who can because if you work late there is not much time to make a dish, brings something. We were sat here till the morning hours.'* It is apparent from Hania's tone of voice that she feels proud of organising the event and that she and her guests derive joy from being with each other at this time. Through the sharing of the meal with Polish friends, family-like bonds are created between the Poles living in England and to some extent these bonds fill the void left by the absence of close family. The aspect of commensality in the context of migration can foster a sense of community and belonging (see also chapter 4.5).

Just as Hania, also Jagna (1977), when in England, spends *Wigilia* with a circle of friends and to some extent these relationships stand in for family. This is the same for her children, as is revealed in her comment: *'We were singing (carols) and then we watched the recordings of (her children) singing last year. We had a great laugh. It feels good to have these things to fall back on...'* Her experiences emphasise that the practice of food sharing builds kinship-ties¹⁴⁹ (although here in both cases the bonds are friends not family) and also strengthens the sense of home and belonging which extends to her children for whom, as second generation migrants, they might not be as strong.

Shared food practices at *Wigilia* not only offer an opportunity to share Polish culture with other Poles but also with other nationalities and show how it is done 'the Polish way'. For instance, Jagna (1977), like myself, shared the festive food practices with English friends also invited to the *Wigilia* (in my case it is immediate family and friends). She remarked: *'it's great that it's a mix of people, it's great to share, to do it together'*. Jagna's comment, and I would agree, suggests that sharing of the festive meal with others, not only Poles, extends the affirmation of heritage and is also reinforces positive experience with friends and family in England.

¹⁴⁹ The emotional aspect of singing traditional Polish carols should not be disregarded for kinship building, although an in-depth analysis is beyond the scope of this section.

5.4.4 Negotiating ambivalent notions of identity and home

This subchapter discusses multidimensional and at times ambivalent dynamics of (non) belonging depicted through a polysemous relationship to the country of origin as well as the receiving society. As in the preceding sections, within migration, notions of belonging and identity appear as negotiation processes, rather than 'fixed' and are subject to changes through both external factors and personal choices (Bauman, 2004). This section aims to understand the dynamics of the multivocal and at times also ambivalent ways in which the research participants reflect and negotiate notions of identity and belonging within the mobility context. To this end, following on from theoretical considerations it examines the incidences of polymorphous belonging among the participants

5.4.4.1 *Nomadic (non) belongings*

There is an emerging body of research on the identities of Polish migrants (see also Chapter Research Context: Identity, Home and Belonging) and this subchapter continues the discussion on multidimensional and, at times, ambivalent notions of belonging among Polish women migrants. The participants in this study are active social actors, whose identities span transnational spaces beyond national borders (Glick-schiller, 1992; Vertovec, 2009). Thus, their identities and sense of belonging escapes ethnic categorisation and are instead embedded in global and transnational social fabric (Anthias 2000:9). Anthropologists and social scientists conceptualised ethnic identity as a contextual entity (Barth, 1969; Cohen, 1969; Gluckman, 1958; Horowitz 1985). More recent scholarship focuses on intersectional perspectives placing the individual within simultaneous, and at times competing, power relations of race, gender, class etc. (Brah & Pheonix, 2004). Contemporary research on identity further raises the question of cosmopolitanism (Werbner, 2008). In such contexts identity and belonging surface as dynamic, relational, and polymorphous, performed contextually in interactions with others (Kempny, 2012). The themes from the interviews and autoethnographic reflections (not only in this section but throughout the thesis) illustrate various attempts to take control, re-shape, resist and escape

from 'pre-formed' ethnic, local and gendered identities. Although the women are not rejecting their ethnicity, they are rejecting essentialism and hence could, to some extent, be understood as 'subjects in transit' (Braidotti, 1994: 10). Thus, I am suggesting that the concept of the nomad, which was first coined by Deleuze and Guattari (1988) and then elaborated by Rosi Braidotti (1994) into 'nomadic subjects' and could be a useful figuration to explore multidimensional and at times ambivalent dynamics of (non) belonging.

In applying nomadism to the analysis, I am drawing on feminist works with Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) conceptualisation (Buchanan & Colebrook, 2000; Braidotti, 1994; Probyn, 1993; Kaplan, 1996; St. Pierre, 1997) as well as applications of the metaphor in literary studies as applied to Polish migrant literature by women (Pasterska, 2015; Chowaniec, 2015). Feminist thought has highlighted both the assets and difficulties associated with the application of nomadism. Colebrook (2000) reminds us however that: 'To do away with the subject is to do away with any ground or thought; thought becomes nomadic' (ibid., p.11). Thus, 'doing away with home' is departing from (or 'doing away' with) confining territory which has kept women subjugated to dominant thought patterns. In this sense the aspect of 'nomadism' that this section intends to address is not how 'faithful or correct' the concept is but instead how it 'can be made to work' (Colebrook, 2000: 8).

In this sense 'nomadism' is not utilised as a narrowly outlined framework in which the research participants are located, instead the intention is to sketch lines of connections, given that in Deleuzian terms to connect is to realise other possibilities whilst 'making visible problems for which there exists no programme, no plan, no 'collective agency' (Rajchman, 2000: 8). In using nomadism to explore notions of belonging and identity, this study neither intends to make any claims to totality, nor uncover any hidden truths or psychological drives. Instead, as Buchanan noted, 'what is important about nomadism is its ability to stand as 'a figuration of an other mode of thought' (Buchanan, 2000: 117). To avoid substituting one essence with another, while the narratives offer traces of nomadic thought the women are not labeled as 'nomads'. Neither is the study suggesting that a nomadic existence is a preferred way of being/living, rather the notion of 'nomadic subjects' is employed as an alternative

interpretational lens to consider notions of (non)belonging within mobility experiences.

Rosi Braidotti proposes that the concept of the 'nomadic subjects' is a 'suitable theoretical figuration for contemporary subjectivity' (Braidotti, 1994: 1), which, whilst acknowledging the bodily roots of subjectivity, at the same time rejects any form of essentialism. Furthermore, the 'nomadic subject' often responds critically to discourses and practices that determine the condition of their existence and is rarely integrated into established social structures. Braidotti observes that the 'nomadic consciousness as a form of political resistance to hegemonic and exclusionary views of subjectivity' (1994: 23) and describes it in Foucauldian terms¹⁵⁰ as a counter memory that has the potential to 'enact [...] a rebellion of subjugated knowledges' (ibid., p.25).

Deleuze and Guattari have stressed that 'it is false to define the nomad by movement' (1988:380) and Braidotti¹⁵¹ noted 'it is rather the subversion of set conventions that defines the nomadic state, not the literal act of travelling', adding that 'some of the greatest trips can take place without physically moving from one's habitat' (1994:5). Therefore, although travel or migrant mobility is integral to this study, it is not the travelling *per se* that constitutes the 'nomadic subject' but instead the position of the women participants versus gender politics,¹⁵² geo-politics, cultural and emotional norms as well as somewhat ambivalent dynamics of (non) belonging. Despite the fact that the narratives in this study are anchored in migration and

¹⁵⁰ However, resistance is not taken as the reverse of a top-down configuration of power. In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault defines power as dependent on resistance: 'Where there is power, there is a resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority, in relation to power' (1990: 95).

¹⁵¹ Braidotti, however, emphasises the interdependence of travelling and nomadism in responding to a number of critiques that have problematised the use of travel metaphors in contemporary social and cultural studies and in feminist theories specifically (Kaplan, 1996; Wolff, 1995). In attending to Kaplan's objections to the romanticising of the notions of deterritorialization and the nomad, Braidotti maintains that the 'radical nomadic epistemology Deleuze and Guattari propose is a form of resistance to microfascisms in that it focuses on the need for a qualitative shift away from hegemony, whatever its size and however 'local' it may be' (1994: 5). Although I share Braidotti's ideas on the subversive potential of nomadic subjectivity, I am also agreeing with Kaplan's reservations about the absence of specific historical and cultural context within which nomads should be situated and analysed (1996: 90).

¹⁵² Braidotti, by feminising the nomadic figure, challenges both the traditional view of the nomad as male and the gendered critics of male supremacy by rejecting any ideas of such supremacy and hierarchical difference between men and women, instead valorising sexual difference as nomadic and female.

therefore the notion of ‘nomadism’ could be partially interpreted as ‘traveller’, it is important to note that ‘being a nomadic subject is not a glamorous state of jet-setting – integral to and complicitous with advanced capitalism. [...] It rather points to the decline of unitary subjects and the destabilisation of the space-time continuum, of the traditional vision of the subject’ (Braidotti, 2014:179). Nonetheless, despite criticism¹⁵³ I would argue that the figuration of the nomad may enrich the exploration and analysis of mobility, not as a romanticised vision of freedom and independence but by making visible subversive possibilities and perspectives. As, such this study aims not to ‘conflate’¹⁵⁴ material and symbolic categories but rather to shed light on the mobility experiences of women migrants – conventionally confined to the domestic sphere and rooted within the space of the country of origin – who in the narratives of migration have offered an account of alternative subjectivities (Braidotti, 1994: 100), where women are different, in becoming¹⁵⁵ subversive and outside state/male control.

However, some of the women have narrated their mobility as a process of travelling which could pass as ‘nomadic’. They perceived their migration as a ‘choice’ as opposed to the narrative of economic migration and as such they depicted migration as a way of ‘experiencing’ life (for example, Judyta in Chapter 4.3.2) in a different country and emphasised their appreciation for Britain’s multicultural society. Hania (1990) made the following remark regarding this: *‘If I was ever to go back to Poland, I’d miss the British multiculturalism. I know there is a growing ethnic*

¹⁵³ Criticism of Braidotti’s model range from citing blind spots of elitism and ethnocentrism to reminders that liberating effects of transnationalism are not to equally available to everyone, see also Radika (1999). Other thinkers have stressed that the gendered vocabulary of travel marginalises women, which is why a new terminology needed to be found to reflects women’s mobility. As such, Janet Wolff (1995: 128) offers the figure of the ‘stranger’ to illustrate women’s mobility. Sarah Ahmed (2000) further explores the figure of the stranger and the corresponding concept of ‘estrangement’ to illuminate women’s transnational mobility.

¹⁵⁴ Ponzanesi (2002) warns against a fusion of metaphorical and material migrant category: ‘The migrant as a ‘material subject’ moving from one continent to the other, fleeing civil wars, famine, political persecution or just in search of better opportunities, must be distinguished from the notion of the migrant as a symbolic category. The latter expresses migrant subjectivity as crossing the boundaries of hegemonic discourse, and of imposed categories of identity formation. [...] Though highly interlocked, these two reading of the migrant condition should not be conflated. An inflated migrant rhetoric will rob actual dispossessed people of their language of suffering and loss’ (ibid., p.207).

¹⁵⁵ For an interesting discussion inspired by their nomadology see Papadopoulos & Tsianos (2008) who among other attributes focus on the in-becoming aspect of mobility.

mix in Poland [...] Still the majority is fairly monolithic. I'm not sure I would cope well with that.' Furthermore, she perceived England as only a stop in her mobility trajectory, Hania commented: *'I know that England is not my final destination. I don't know yet where I will go but I will'*; and others were already planning to move somewhere else, for example, Bogna (1996) shared: *'I've recently travelled to Iceland and it was amazing. Now I am thinking that this could be my next stop. I met some people there and made contacts.'* In addition, some were convinced that they could just as easily adapt and feel at home in a different country, for instance Zyta (1966) commented: *'I now know that if this here doesn't work out, I can just pack my bags and go somewhere else!'*

As noted above, nomadic subjects are subjects in transition marked by the ability to recreate a home everywhere. In Deleuze & Guattari's sense, this 'home', the territory that the nomad occupies, is 'a smooth space' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 380). It is an open space not 'striated by walls, enclosures and roads between enclosures' (ibid., p. 381). Spread in the 'smooth' space the nomadic subject is then not permanent but entangled in shifts and changes, she passes through, connects, circulates and moves on; 'follows customary paths; goes from one place to another; [...] is not ignorant of points [...]' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 380). However, it is the moving between these points, 'the intermezzo' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 380) that enables the nomadic subject to have a form of autonomy and independence. It could be argued that that due to mobility some of the participants have entered a transitional place which has enabled them to detach from home (see also chapter three), 'a place of escape yet as a home-away-from-home ... as a transit-place'¹⁵⁶ for

¹⁵⁶ Braidotti has stated her special attachment to 'places of transit, ... in between zones, where all ties are suspended and time stretched to a sort of continuous present' and has further defined them as 'oases of non belonging, spaces of detachment, no (wo)man's land' (1994: 18-19). Although Braidotti refers here to real places of transit, like stations and airport lounges, which she associates with sources of artistic creation for women, I am suggesting that the metaphor of transit can be used to stress women's experiences of existential fluidity in real and/or imagined spaces. As Wolff notes 'the notion of feminine identity as relational, fluid, without clear boundaries seems more congruent with the perpetual mobility of travel than is the presumed solidity and objectivity of masculine identity' (Wolff, 1995: 124). At the same time, I am aware of Kaplan's (1996) critique that imaginary discourse of travel has been associated with the existential expansion of white bourgeoisie Western man. Nonetheless, as McDowell (1999: 206) notes, 'travel, even the idea of travelling challenges the spatial association between home and women that has been so important in structuring the social construction of femininity'. Consequently, despite the challenges, transit as a metaphor can be helpful in rethinking of gender and subjectivities in a socio-cultural and historical context.

women able to use it' (Morris, cited in Wolff, 1995: 122). Mobility, therefore offers the opportunity to get away from the stagnancy of every day routines and to break the monotony of real time and search for different modes of existing in the world.

In addition, Hania's narrative further reinforces the fact that mobility has enabled her to escape a preformed reality by stressing the desire to 'keep moving'¹⁵⁷ with the aim to escape the stagnancy which crept in after some time of living in England. She comments: *'I miss these early days. Things were easy...I needn't be so responsible. I guess I want to move on to be in that state again'*. Here it seems that it is the lifestyle and associated responsibility which have a stagnating impact on Hania, a state which she would like to escape from. Krzaklewska (2019) in her study of Polish migrants' representatives of the generation born at the beginning of the 1980s suggested that some defined mobility through a prolongation and celebration of youth, as periods of light-heartedness, jaundice, easiness, freedom and joy (ibid., p.51). Although, Hania belongs to Generation Y, her statement suggests that movement in a way allowed her to escape the pressures put on her related to adult life in Poland (the stressful and demanding job) and she has positive memories of the 'early days' when she moved to the UK as a time experienced as carefree and happy. Her mobility experience is therefore fluid and defined by an ongoing search (also spacial) and reflexivity (Krzaklewska, 2019). The example further illustrates, that mobility experiences identified as specific to a particular generation (here those born in the early 1980s) echo as well with a later generation (Hania belonging to Generation Y) and could therefore be said not to be fixed, but instead, it could be assumed, that certain attitudes penetrate birth cohorts.

Hania's narrative illustrates that migration has enabled her to break from a fixed reality, but also that she feels the desire to return to this state and 'keep on

¹⁵⁷ As Chowniec (2015: 82) fittingly discusses Olga Tokarczuk in *Flights* also presents a figure of the travelling/wandering woman who needs to journey as an metaphorical, allegorical and existential path: 'a fundamental concept in travel psychology is desire, which is what lends movement and direction to human beings as well as arousing in them an inclination towards something. Desire in itself is empty, in other words it merely indicates direction, but never destination; destinations, in any case, always remain phantasmagorical and unclear [...] By no means is it possible to ever actually attain a given destination, nor in so doing, appease desire. This process of striving is best encapsulated in the preposition "towards". Towards what?' (Tokarczuk, 2007: 81).

moving' to live a less settled life and that the 'home' that she has created in the UK is only temporary:

'Maybe there isn't such a thing as a stop for me. [...] I don't know if there's such thing as "my place" [...] I've phases when I need a cosy, homely place for a while and then I want to keep moving. When I bought this house, I knew I am not buying it to stay here for good. I got it to have better prospects. It's a phase. I can be the obsessive pedantic hostess for now. But soon this will flip again and I will want to keep moving to feel not responsible, with an easy job, rent a room and be somewhere far away. I'm not sure that this circle will ever come to a close and that I'll settle somewhere for good. Sometimes, I think I 'm chasing a phantasma, like that the grass is always greener somewhere else. I wish I'd had this peace inside me to know where I belong, but in the back of my head is this voice that tells me that there might be another experience out there waiting'.

The statement implies that Hania's 'home' in the UK, mainly described in material terms (economic asset) and as a comfortable place to stay is, however, only transitory. Thus, notions of belonging also seem indistinct and uncertain. Noteworthy in Hania's quote above is the ambiguous relationship to notions of home. On one hand stands her above statement, on the other (as established in the preceding subchapter), Hania actively engages in home-making practices such as Wigilia, which foster a sense of belonging through traditional food practices alongside reaffirming of traditional gender roles. However, as her narrative attests, Hania is of the view that these 'home-making practices' are only temporary measures and, on another level, Hania is driven to carry on experiencing other ways of being.

Braidotti (1994) suggests that being a nomad involves shifting subject positions which on one hand allow an individual to be active in their community, whilst at the same time not requiring that person to accept the conventions of the very community one belongs to.¹⁵⁸ In other words, one can be in connection with the

¹⁵⁸ Braidotti states, 'Being a nomad, living in transition, does not mean that one cannot or is unwilling to create those necessarily stable and reassuring bases for identity that allow one to function in a community ... rather, nomadic consciousness consists in not taking any kind of identity as permanent. The nomad is only passing through; s/he makes those necessarily situated connections that can help her/him to survive, but s/he never takes on fully the limits of one national, fixed identity. The nomad has no passport-or has too many of them.' (Braidotti, 1994: 33).

community but not necessarily 'of' it. The 'nomadic subject's' connections to their organic community are open, negotiable, not fixed or permanent. As Braidotti notes they 'blur boundaries' without 'burning bridges' (1994: front cover). Thus, they do not deny their position but by detaching from it, they make it temporary and leave it and themselves open ('smooth') to new possibilities. As such, the continuous movement or departure from where one is opens up possibilities to resist dominant discourses of gender, race or nationality. It could be argued that the experience of mobility has allowed Hania (and others - see above) to realise the potential of existential 'fluidity', what in Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) suggest could be identified as a 'smooth' in opposition to the 'strident' or stagnant state.

Entangled notions of (non) belonging were also articulated by other research participants and are detectable in autoethnographic reflections (see the beginning of this section) who have stressed that they did not 'feel at home' in the UK, but also that they did not feel that they belonged in Poland either. Mira (1985) describes this polysemous (non)belonging as follows:

'I don't belong neither here [England] nor there [Poland]. I also don't identify as a member of the Polish community, 'cause I don't feel comfortable with them. And [English] people talk to me as if I was a representative of the whole Polish nation! I've lived here for thirteen years now, so I guess I am comfortable [...] I have learned their [English] ways.'

Again, the quote emphasises indefinite notions of attachment. As in other chapters, it demonstrates that Mira's sense of self and belonging are troubled by her alienation from Poland and the 'Polish community' in the UK (see also chapter 5.3.1) as well as her unwillingness to approve of the receiving society (chapter 5.2.4). Mira dissociates herself from her fellow Poles in Britain and values British multiculturalism, as opposed to Polish homogeneity, but rebels against what she perceives as British patronizing superiority (see also chapter 5.3.5).

A polysemous sense of belonging was also expressed by Zyta (1966):

'I feel Polish but I couldn't live in Poland anymore, not in the cultural and political climate. I don't miss the 'Polishness', this 'victim mentality'. I prefer that here [in the UK] nobody asks me about my political standpoint and I am free to be who I want to.'

Thus, Zyta attests to ambivalent dynamics of (non) belonging, that is a polysemous relationship to the country of origin. This is despite her involvement with the Polish community in England, but also her generational experiences (Generation '89) and first-hand experiences of the Solidarity movements which could be argued to have been defining for her attachment to the country of origin. Her example therefore indicates that despite significant socio-cultural and political experiences during the formative years and childhood Zyta transgresses generational belonging but instead has changed her perspective and attachment to Poland, may this be as a result of her mobility experience or generally socio-political developments in the country.

In contrast, Wanda (1963), although also pointing to an indefinite sense of belonging, stated that her attachment to Poland was connected to the past: *'I will never be English, but my life is here [England] ...in Poland... there is nothing left for me there, only my parents' graves'*. For Wanda the home that she once had in Poland has an emotional connection to memories of close relatives. However, it is no longer the place that she feels she belongs to.

This sense of non-belonging to either Poland or Britain is also depicted in migrant literature, in particular in M.A. Bakalar's novel *Madame Mephisto*. The main narrator describes herself as a chameleon, a metaphor which resonates strongly with my own mobility experience, *'displaying a combination of accents and faces, depending on what suited me'* (2012: 165). Magda, the main protagonist, then goes on to explain her conflicted attachment as follows:

'I was too British for the Poles, and too Polish for the British. [...] Who are you really, they kept asking me, here and there. I was whoever they wanted me to be, a kaleidoscopic image with multiple colour combinations.' (2012:165)

Another perspective that is beneficial in understanding the polysemous narratives of (non) belonging, is what has been noted in postcolonial criticism as 'the intertwining of identity and otherness [...] "hybridity"' (Leerssen, 2007), or what has been framed by Appadurai (1990), Bhabha (1994) and Hall, (1991) a 'third space', a space in-between. In this sense, within mobility being 'at home' in such transitional spaces, as suggested by Rajchman (2000), could mean 'to see oneself as native prior to the identifying territories of family, clan or nation' (ibid, p. 95), a wandering self on

nomadic paths of one's life. Rajchman further puts forward that the task at hand is 'to invent an 'at home' of a very different kind, no longer given in the opposition of 'lived space' to 'abstract space' and requiring a different idea of what territories and borders are' (2000: 94).

Connections to 'nomadic subjectivity' can be mapped to examples where mobility has enabled the participants to reclaim and readdress their subjectivity in relation to gender, culture and nationality. The narratives attest that the research participants are constantly negotiating the constraints of national, gendered and cultural scripts, and are often making nomadic choices. Although the women in this study were often expected to inhabit subject positions created by hegemonic socio-cultural and historical discourses (for example Hania, the hard-working Polish cleaner discussed in chapter 5.3.5), they display attempts to distance themselves from conventional identities. They move from one point to another as a pragmatic choice of not being able to accommodate themselves in a 'straited' space. Mobility is marked by new beginnings, false starts and ruptures. In their narratives they become 'nomadic' in relation to body and age, by distancing themselves from other Polish migrants, or in their narratives of becoming (see Wanda chapter six, Mira and Lena in chapter 5.4.2.1). Likewise, in the preceding subsections of this chapter, attention has been drawn to their ethnic/racial positionality, as well as the polymorphous relationships with local and transnational kinship which impacted on the women's perceptions of self as well as belonging and home, which in turn could also be interpreted as notions of nomadic (non) belonging.

5.5 Conclusion

This part of the thesis focused on the everyday lived experiences of migration. The analysis started by examining how language is entangled within the mobility experience. Although in migration questions of language are often understood through an integration paradigm, this research reinforces the view that questions of identity and belonging are multidimensional and should not be reduced to language proficiency or national identity. The women's lived experiences of migration revealed that language is not only a 'powerful tool' in enabling communication or access to

resources such as employment, but also an important identity/alterity marker. At the same time, language can also act as strong barrier, either preventing communication and access to cultural or human capital as well as defining or limiting belonging. Finally, the aspect of language and cultural emotional scripts was explored, highlighting that cultural and emotional scripts are manifested in and reinforced through language. It is suggested that navigating between different languages as well as cultural and emotional scripts has the potential to open hybrid in-between spaces for creative alternative ways of being and self-expression.

By examining narratives of common day-by-day encounters this chapter also revealed how differences in varying cultural scripts are prevalent in everyday experiences of mobility. Apparently trivial expressions or the presence or absence of a smile can have a profound impact on mobility experiences. Some of the life-story narratives voiced that even seemingly subtle differences between the Polish and English culture (courtesy or the lack thereof) can have a strong impact and lead to feelings of alterity and not belonging (either feeling as different in the receiving culture or departing from attitudes of the sending culture). Historical circumstances, such as legacies of the socialist regime, are still intertwined in certain varying attitudes towards politeness and friendliness within the Polish migration context. The narratives testified to perceived ambivalences in the English cultural script, on one level strongly implementing politeness and friendliness, on another level understood as a source of micro aggression and offence. Although microaggressions, are often overlooked and difficult to articulate, such experiences had a profound impact on mental and physical wellbeing of the participants. Supposedly mundane and quotidian everyday experiences such as the Anglophone conversation opener 'Where are you from?', while not intended as malevolent, were identified as sources of micro-aggression reaffirming unconscious bias. Such seemingly menial everyday experiences and interest in the participants' perceived race, ethnicity, and nationality were identified as harmful enactments of othering. The mechanism of othering was revealed also through lens of 'whiteness'. Some of the women testified that they experienced xenophobic stereotyping within encounters with the receiving society. Others even chose to deflect singular marker identification by withholding their ethnic origin. The narratives exposed negative emotions such as pain and frustration

caused by the stereotyping experienced in encounters with the receiving society. A further mechanism of othering was revealed in relation to the migrants' inferiority complexes towards Westerns originating in ideas inherited from socialism and implicit in the East-West dichotomy. It was discussed that such legacies of communism were still echoing in generations that did not experience it first hand. However, the narratives also voiced some resistance to perceptions of Eastern Europe (here precisely Poland) as the 'Other' and of lesser status than the West and offered examples of a more positive self-image. Overall, the narratives exposed that the experience of microaggression, implicit bias, xenophobic prejudices and othering impacted on their migration trajectories and resulted in the women's feelings of non-belonging within the receiving society.

Different networks and relationships have interplayed in the women's migration trajectories and shaped their sense of home and belonging. Although, it could be assumed that Polish migrants may develop a sense of belonging, or not belonging for that matter, by engaging in different relationships with diverse networks, ethnic, local and transnational the analysis revealed that these relationships are not static but fluid and can change over time. Furthermore, the implicit connection to the wider Polish community as a source of attachment is questioned, indicating that some relationships within the network had a negative impact on the participants' sense of belonging to Polish community. It was explored that legacies of the communist past and the then developed patterns of trust resurfaced in contemporary relationships with other Polish migrants but also the receiving society. Lastly, the importance of transnational and local networks in regarding Britain as a permanent place of settlement was discussed, again uncovering that depending on the networks built and/or maintained the women were either considering to 'make' England a permanent or temporary home.

Notions of home and belonging were examined in relation to food practices, particularly with regard to the festivities of *Wigilia*. The examples demonstrate that food practices within the migration context (particularly at festive occasions such as *Wigilia*) can be identified as 'home-making' practices which therefore foster a sense of belonging through the re-enactment of cultural traditions across generations and borders. Furthermore, the narratives also voiced that festive food and 'home-making'

practices reinforce traditional gender roles and paradigms such as *Matka Polka*. Thus, putting women in the troubled position of the 'domestic matriarch' whose responsibility it is to re-enact the cultural traditions by means of foodways. It appeared that the transmission of the traditional gendered roles (i.e., *Matka Polka*) permeated independent of birth cohorts and therefore could be said to occur transgenerationally. Commensality (eating with others) played an important role as it not only reinforces ethnic kinship ties, but also allows for these bonds to extend beyond cultural and ethnic heritage.

Finally, nomadic (non) belonging was introduced as a paradigm to interpret polysemous expressions of home and belonging. Analysis of these narratives has revealed that within the experience of migration there are ambivalent emotions between 'here' and 'there'. Drawing on Braidotti's figuration of nomadic subjectivity and the variety of ways that were represented in the life-story narratives, it was revealed that it is the idea of permanence that is being questioned rather than belonging itself. The women in this study have offered examples of fixity as both challenged and accepted and were therefore seeking more dislocated and flexible identities and ideas of belonging. Their attitudes towards mobility and belonging, such as the prolongation of youth (for further discussion see also chapter 6.3.1), penetrated birth cohorts and were therefore not transgenerational. In moving between unstable but also contradictory subject positions and notions of belonging, the participants were trying to reweave patterns of their lives whilst forging new relations to the world surrounding them. The women's voices have attested to the fact that they are rooted in different places (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992) with multiple positions, relationships and emotional ties. As such their emotional life, as well as notions of home and belonging, are often marked by contradictions (Svasek, 2008).

Chapter 6 Breaking the gendered pattern? Embodiment and migration

6.1 Introduction

When examining experiences of migration, this study is specifically interested in the lived, embedded and embodied (Braidotti, 2011). It is the latter aspect that is critically analysed in this subsection. Gender is interwoven in the migration narratives at various points in the study, (see also Chapter 4 and 5), and this section complements the exploration of gender and migration by examining how the gendered body, with its cultural, sexual and political markings, is conveyed in the women's experience of mobility. By focusing on the gendered embodied experiences of migration, this thesis expands the analytical perspective by drawing attention away from the frequent reduction of migrants' bodies to images and numbers, and instead reclaims the body as an active and individual site of signification.

The body is here understood as, on one hand, the intimate terrain and privileged site of lived subjectivity. On the other, it is understood as an analytical tool for understanding the lived experiences of migration that bridges the personal and the political, macro and micro processes, structure and agency. Indeed, the body can act as an important and revealing expression of personal and societal perceptions and concerns around the topic of migration. Thus far, mobility studies mainly focused on the corporeal frame as a mode and/or facilitator of mobility concentrating broadly on: the motion itself that the body enacts, or disrupts; an attention to place (be that a point of departure, arrival, or intermediate locations on the journey itself); and an analysis of the meaning and emotional attachment of subjects under analysis to such embodied locations (Bond, 2018). In contrast, this chapter argues that the exploration of representations of gendered embodiment offers a valuable interpretive lens and a key to understanding how histories and experiences of migration are worked through, renegotiated and rearticulated on the body. The focus is on examining how gendered corporality is challenged by the limitations of existing national, political and cultural constructions (in Poland and the UK), and how migration trajectories both subvert and reproduce cultural, national and gender norms and inscriptions.

This analysis draws on Merleau-Ponty (2008), Foucault (1978), Bourdieu (1984) and a range of feminist thinkers for example Susan Bordo (1993), Elisabeth Grosz (1994) and Iris Marion Young (2005) whose work aimed to ‘bring the body back in’ (Farnell 2012:8), supporting the notion of the importance of the body for exploring experiences of migration. The ample legacy of feminist academics within in the field of ‘body studies,’ offers rich and interdisciplinary scholarship, demasking women’s bodies as both sites of oppression and resistance.¹⁵⁹ For the purpose of this study a selected range of gendered bodily experiences was chosen including femininity norms and age, standards of beauty and femininity, and control of women’s sexuality dictated by the Catholic Church. Although the choice of themes was led by fictional works and participants’ narratives and, and is partial, it nevertheless is particularly salient to Polish women and the context of this study. The section begins with an autoethnographic vignette which offers an entry point into gendered embodiment and body politics within the Polish migration context. Next, the discussion brings to the fore the intersectionality of gender, body and age, highlighting how social and economic exclusion impacted on gendered embodiment and how such experiences shifted in the mobility context. This is followed by an analysis of gendered beauty perceptions and corporal deviations, and the ways in which these are negotiated in migration experiences. The final section examines the control of women’s sexuality enacted by the Catholic Church and its impact on migration trajectories.

6.2 My body my choice!

Sabina (1978): On a cold and rainy Sunday afternoon in November 2020 my son and I joined a socially distanced local protest to show solidarity with Polish women which have been flooding the streets in hundreds of thousands in Poland and beyond. We came out to protest against the tightened abortion laws in a country which already has some of the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe. The group we joined was a mixed bag, with women of all ages, mixed nationalities, some children and men. Most participants had posters and

¹⁵⁹ See for example Adair (2002), Collins (2002), Conboy, Medina and Stanbury (1997), Weitz (1998)

placards, their slogans demanding justice for women in Poland, the red lightning sign¹⁶⁰ proudly worn on their masks. Some also carried wire hangers, others a black umbrella. My son and I did not bring a poster, so we made the most of our voices, chanting and leading on the call and response: 'My body, my choice!'. Suddenly, my son asked: "Mum, why do we shout: 'My body, my choice?' And what is it with these wire clothes hangers anyway?". I stopped in my tracks, unsure how to explain the connotation of a wire clothes hanger and abortion procedures to a 9-year-old. In fact, his question made me realise that since we live in England, both my children and I will not be exposed to the precarity of illegal abortion procedures in Poland. At the same time, I realised that many women in Poland are not in the same privileged position.

This personal account and epiphany related to the wire hanger, illustrates that migration offers a potential agentic opportunity to shift gendered body politics and transgress power relations. The act of moving out of the Polish socio-cultural and political context, altered the subjugation to the respective reproductive control regime. Indeed, body politics and gendered embodiment can be challenged, renegotiated but also reaffirmed (as is discussed later) within migration trajectories. Still, partaking in the Polish women's protest, even more so given my child's presence, made it apparent that yet again the woman's body has turned into a battleground, that they are a site of power inscription and contestation. Perhaps it is not a surprise that Barbara Kruger's seminal 1989 poster¹⁶¹ has gone on show everywhere in Poland. The urgent and brave protests of Polish women attests that their bodies are a medium of culture and power struggle. As Grosz says, the body is a 'medium on which power operates and through which it functions' (1994: 146). For example, women's bodily experiences of abortion laws in Poland reveal not only the women's personal struggle for bodily self-determination but also the complex web of gender ideologies about motherhood, sexuality, and family. They also reveal how class and

¹⁶⁰ The lightning sign is a symbol of rage, force and speed of action. The choice of this (in many cultures archaic) symbol points to the rage and protest against the unhumanitarian government laws against women in Poland.

¹⁶¹ Kruger originally made the graphic work of a woman with a bisected face for the Women's March in Washington DC in 1989, which had been organised because the Republicans were trying to overturn Roe vs Wade, the 1973 ruling which made abortion legal in the US.

gender inequality increase the vulnerability of poor women's bodies to dangerous interventions and show the power of the medical and Catholic Church establishment to influence women's decisions about their bodies. Researchers noted that power and inequalities not only characterise the organisation of social systems and institutions but also run deep into the flesh of individuals (Bourdieu, 1984; Schilling, 2003). Martin, reflecting on Foucault's work, noted that 'power seeps deep into the very grain of individuals, reaches right into their bodies, permeates their gestures, posture, what they say, how they learn to live and work with other people' (Martin, 1988: 6). Indeed, power and inequalities are embodied, however this is not to be understood as a unidirectional process. On the contrary, 'bodies are parties in social life, sharing in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct...bodies are both agents and objects' (Connell, 1999: 463).

The need to control women's bodies is clearly rampant in Poland, choreographed by the Catholic Church and right-wing politicians. But, 'strajk kobiet' [women's protest] has a much wider agenda than just the abortion law. The Polish women's plea not only spans geographical boundaries but also a multiplicity of issues and ages, which was very poignantly expressed in my son's questions, and movingly represented by a couple of children with rainbow-coloured umbrellas accompanying their mum. They held up posters which read: *'Our mum shows us how to overthrow bad government!'* and *'LGBT+ Rights are human rights: in Poland we are not a family but an ideology!'*. The protest crosses borders and is also enacted by Polish migrants in the UK (Germany and Netherlands), documented in cross border political activism and abortion support, as well as social media campaigning activities.

6.3 Femininity, appearance and gendered embodiment

Feminist scholars have long argued that women's bodily appearance and demeanor are central to the social construction of femininity.¹⁶² The way women dress and move, the size and shape of their bodies, the amount of space they claim are essential to performances of gender, race, class, nationality and sexuality. Body shaping procedures 'the altering of body weight, the training of the flesh through regular exercise, the building up of muscles, diets, Botox injections, cosmetic surgery, including the correction of inherent "flaws"' (Chowaniec, 2015: 84); is one of the most startling documentations of cultural power manifestations and violence enacted through models of physical attractiveness. Bordo (1993) provides one of the most powerful cultural readings of how domination is enacted upon and through women's bodies. Gendered codes are inscribed and enacted onto the body. Women are compelled to adapt to these gendered body codes and to meet desirable expectations.¹⁶³ Thus, the body, male and female, is marked by culture and structured through systems of social inequality (Lorber, 1994). By embodied reiteration or disruption of socio-cultural expectations women (and men) consequently perpetuate or undermine such systems (West & Fenstemaker, 1995). Dominant constructions of femininity dictate how women's bodies should look, how women should behave and feel. The question examined in this section addresses how gendered discourse, age, heteronormativity and national identity imperatives have helped configure certain types of feminine embodiment in Poland and how these gendered embodiments are lived out in migration trajectories.

¹⁶² For instance Arthurs and Grimshaw (1999), Bartky (1990), Bordo (1993), Brownmiller (1984), Chapkis (1986), Jeffreys (2005), Weitz (1998)

¹⁶³ Gimlin (2002) defines the process as follows:

Because the body is arguably the location from which all social life begins, it is a logical starting point for sociological study. More important, though, the body is a medium of culture. It is the surface on which prevailing rules of culture are written. The shared attitudes and practices of social groups are played out at the level of the body, revealing cultural notions of distinction based on age, sexual orientation, social class, gender and ethnicity. But cultural rules are not only revealed through the body; they also shape the ways in which the body performs and appears. [...] And the body is central to modern conceptions of gender. Components of the gender dichotomy as conceptualized in contemporary Western society – including strength and weakness, activity and passivity, sexuality and neutrality – are linked inseparably to the physical. the very 'nature' of maleness or femaleness is intrinsically embodied. (p.3)

The existing model of embodied femininity in Poland is shaped by Western expectations and religious beliefs. The former is tied to a nation-build scheme that involved a purposeful attempt to become European-like. The latter, whilst also connected to nationhood ideology (see also Chapter 2.3.3.3) is determined by role models perpetuated by the Catholic Church. Both models advance heteronormativity and regulate sexuality and gender embodiment. While women in Poland negotiate forces common to other Westernised societies in terms of beauty standards and femininity, they also are defined by the glorifying repertoire of maternal bodies dictated by the Catholic Church. The maternal body within the Polish context is however not only tied to nursing or pregnant bodies but also extends to traits naturally associated with motherhood, specifically nurturance and sacrifice on behalf of others (Park, 2004). The ideology of the Catholic Church in Poland further burdens gendered embodiment of women in Poland by the fervently promoted cult of Virgin Mary – embodiment of both chastity and abnegated motherhood. The cult synthesizes two contradictory characteristics: virginity and motherhood. Such ideals are for most women impossible to achieve.

6.3.1 Age, invisibility, social and economic exclusion

The amalgamation of dominant femininity models dictated by Western beauty standards with Catholic Church ideology means that women of mature age in contemporary Poland often describe their gendered embodied experience of later life as a time marked by discrimination and marginalization. Western feminine beauty standards attribute negative connotations to aging and therefore often exclude, marginalise and stigmatize middle-aged women and women of advanced age. In addition, the dominant religious ideology in Poland relegates the female body to the realm of the private, reduced to caregiving activities and marked by a specific dress code. As a result, mature women are not only excluded on a social and economic level (as is examined later in this subchapter) but also deemed invisible. For example, the narrator in Tokarczuk's novel *Flights* sums up the position of older women as follows:

'Year by year, time becomes my ally, as it does to all women – I have become invisible, transparent. I can move about like a ghost, look over people's

shoulders, listen in on their arguments and watch as they sleep [...]
(Tokarczuk, 2019: 25)

Notably, Tokarczuk's travelling narrator presents the mechanism of equating age and gender with invisibility, as liberating for the protagonist of *Flights*. Here the middle aged body, excluded from physical beauty standards and gendered performances allows the travelling protagonist to, as Tokarczuk elaborates in *Flights*, vanish from maps - cultural, political, gendered and embodied. Thus, invisibility of the middle aged female corporality enables agency, permits the protagonist to keep moving on the margins, in Braidotti's terms as a 'nomadic subject' (1994: 5), an alternative figuration for contemporary subjectivity. Tokarczuk's representation of the female body of advanced age is agentic, trespassing gender expectations, suggests that the gendered embodied experience of age can be transformative; 'invisibility' equates with mobility.

Also, Wanda's (1963) narrative suggests that invisibility, and the social and economic exclusion associated with the aging female body in Poland, was a factor that interplayed in her migration trajectory. Wanda compared in the life-story interview the intersection of age, gender and physical appearance as lived through in Poland and England respectively:

'In Poland a woman over the age of 40 is deemed as old, all that she is made to think about is her retirement. In her mind she wants to retire, she can't wait until she retires. The majority of Poles pictures a woman over 40 in the church and in her home. [...] I remember that the fashion in Poland for over forty-year-old women was making the women look even older than they are! Here [in the UK] there is no difference between a woman whether 60 or a 20-year-old, both are free to wear jeans and trainers when it suits them, and that's okay. Even if they dye their hair in a bright color. My manager says that he liked me in the pink hair, I told him it was purple not pink. I am too old now so need to tone it down, the hair is purple!'

Wanda's narrative attests that the pre-migration experiences related to gendered embodiment stirred up feelings of invisibility and irrelevance in her.¹⁶⁴ She portrays women in middle age as confined to their homes with their only social outlet becoming the Church. As suggested, within the Polish context certain socially constructed gendered age norms are closely connected with other identifications, for example religion as well as political views (Novikova, 2017), and 'inscriptions' or markings of this mechanism are then reflected on the women's bodies. Novikova's (2017) study of gender and age aestheticization stereotypes in Poland, for instance, demonstrates that the intersection of gender, age, religion and politics is incorporated in certain pieces of clothing worn by older women, such as the mohair beret. The aesthetic dimension of the mohair beret, which is a wool cap, denotes that it is cheap, fashion independent (or rather old-fashioned, not vintage), asexual and therefore a characteristic of old age (ibid. p. 213). Reflecting on Wanda's narrative, it could be asserted that she is referring to this type of clothing, which makes Polish women on one level invisible, whilst at the same time denoting a symbol of right-wing religious devotion. However, Wanda with her fashionable outfit, her brightly colored hair and extrovert personality, did not want to be reduced to a religious devotee in a mohair beret. Migration therefore enabled Wanda to leave some of the age-related gendered embodiment limitations behind. Wanda's outfit, hair and make-up are bold and stylish. Fashion provides for Wanda a platform to be perceived differently through the medium of clothes.¹⁶⁵ Twigg (2013) suggested that the relationship between advance age and fashion is complex, and as much as clothes could be viewed as ways of controlling aging bodies, they may also become a source of fun. The latter appears to apply in Wanda's case. She clearly enjoys her colorful outfits and looks to her these are means to break one of the main fears: invisibility. Through her appearance, and her playful looks, she is making herself visible and is opening the eyes of others to notice and acknowledge her presence. Thanks to mobility she has carved out a space to express her individuality, and thus also to

¹⁶⁴ It needs to be noted that old age in Poland is associated with social exclusion, marginalization and overall socio-economic degradation for both men and women (Halik, 2002; Trafiałek, 2003).

¹⁶⁵ The reading of body projects through the vocabulary of clothes is something that Weber and Mitchell (2004) have also proposed as a fruitful frame of analysis.

reclaim her body and a sense of self away from the exclusion and invisibility experienced in Poland. Of course, this is not to say that women of mature age in England are not subject to ageist exclusion and invisibility. Still, in reflection of Wanda's pre-migration experiences, it could be said that the invisibility and exclusion that she was subjected to in Poland shifted since she moved to England.

Wanda's narrative also uncovers a further level of interplay between body, gender and age that she experienced in Poland pre-migration. She portrayed middle-aged women as socially and economically excluded, confined to their homes with their only social outlet becoming the Church, as evidenced in her earlier quote and also elaborated on:

*'For a woman over the age of 40 in Poland, particularly in small towns - it might be different in big cities - there is not much chance for a professional career over the age of 40. Unless you have worked in a company all your life, then you can climb up the ladder but otherwise there is not much chance on the job market for a woman over 40.'*¹⁶⁶

It should be stressed that since Wanda moved to the UK, she not only learned a new language but also started a new career. Certainly, migration for Wanda presented an opportunity to shift gendered embodiment, from exclusion (social and economic) and invisibility. Likewise, in fictional texts on migration similar experiences are depicted, where mobility opened up potential paths to avert gender and age-related exclusion (social and economic). For example, in Nowak's novel *Migration Tale* Clara's aunt comments:

'To start everything all over in Poland at the age of 49? Embarrassing! Who'll employ me? How will I show my face to Robert? No one here bats an eyelid ... I am a fully-fledged member of society here, and not some old hag whose pension must be paid for by the hard-working young. And in Poland? ... it's not the done thing to even wear a shortish skirt. All you have waiting for you is a

¹⁶⁶ It should be mentioned that although the unemployment rate in the over 50 group in Poland is decreasing, employment rates for workers 50+ are still one of the lowest in the EU and the numbers among women are significantly lower than among men. What is more, although the overall number of women in employment is increasing the situation presents itself differently when the age factor of women in employment is considered. On account of age 50% of women in employment in Poland are of the millennium generation with an average age of 38 years. (Żołnierczyk-Zreda, 2015).

rocking chair and the chore of looking after your grandchildren. But me, I still want to live a little.' (2010: 56).

Novak's novel speaks to the fact that migration offered an alternative gendered embodiment, in contrast to the limiting parameters in Poland. Bielawska (2018) asserted that living outside of Poland gives migrants, particularly women who might have felt oppressed due to their age and gender, personal freedom that they would not exercise in their place of origin. Consequently, they perceive the UK as tolerant and liberating and migration offered them chances that would be unavailable in Poland. The sense of freedom and a feeling of liberation resonated also in Wanda's story, who indicated that in the UK she is free to make choices about her appearance which would not have been tolerated in Poland (such as her hair style and garments), and had a chance to pursue a second career later in her life, which seemed unobtainable in Poland. Therefore, to some degree Wanda's mobility experience has allowed her to negotiate negative societal stereotypes (Furman, 2013) associated with age and the unwelcomed changes in physical appearance (Nettleton & Watson, 1998).

The expectations that Wanda is faced with, also demonstrated by Klara's aunt in Nowak's novel, are reducing women of mature age to certain roles (grandmother, Catholic devotee), confining their social interactions (church and family). The limitations of the spaces that the women's bodies occupy, and imposition of pressures regarding how they appear, are therefore a manifestation of the fact that women are aged by cultural concepts rather than aging itself (Gullette, 1997) (this fact is very clear in Wanda's statement that 'the majority of Poles pictures women of her age', here the societal pressure is evident). Wilińska & Cedersund (2010) observe that the position and role of older women in Poland is also often marked by familization, they are often pushed into the family sphere and expected to take on the role of the caring grandmother, which particularly within the Polish context is an extension of family caring responsibilities that women are burdened with in the face of a lack of institutionalized child care provision (Twigg & Majima, 2014). In their study on aging, body and identity Hofmeier et al (2017) found that women have depicted a 'decline in their perceived societal value,' which many found challenging and longed to be noticed [...] and respected' (ibid., p.10). It can be assumed that

Wanda, similarly to the woman portrayed in Novak's novel (2010) still longs to be more than just a 'grandmother' locked in the home and Church. Migration has therefore offered these women a new cultural environment in which they are able to renegotiate gender regulating roles and body images and redefine socially and economically limiting experiences. Thus, it could be suggested that for the generation of middle-aged women migration offers a potential route to improve their economic and psycho-social wellbeing, and therefore also opens a path to 'new beginnings' (Lulle, 2019). Although it was noted, specifically for the generation born in early 1980s (Krzaklewska, 2019), that migration can be an act of prolongation of youth, it could be argued that for middle aged women, as illustrated on Wanda's example, mobility can act as a rejuvenation (physical, mental and professional) and therefore an extension of maturity rather than marginalization of age (as would have been the case in Poland).

6.3.2 Beauty work– gendered body perceptions

Feminine embodiment and the appearance and performance of women's bodies intersects with other discourses such as gender, age and national identity. This section examines how migration trajectories impacts on gendered body perception, both in relation to migrant women's self-image and embodiment but also their views of the host culture. Physical beauty and dress code, judged by very narrow standards and modeled on Western ideologies, play a prominent role in Polish culture. This is particularly pertinent within a Polish (and other Eastern European) context, as paradoxically, due to historical circumstances, it could be said that women in the former Eastern bloc experienced what is often referred to by Western feminist as 'culture lag' (Štuhlhofer & Sandfort, 2005:176) resulting in a longing to reclaim their femininity lost during communism (Remmenick, 2004). Contrary to their Western counterparts', women in former socialist countries felt that they were forced into equality and male roles. Thus, with the end of the Cold War, they often looked to role models propagated by American cinematography of sexy housewives, 'beauties and homemakers' (Remmenick, 2007: 336). Consequently, Western feminism was perceived as forcing them back to the equality role models associated with

communism and depriving them of their 'attractiveness, femininity, and sex appeal' (Remmenick, 2007:336-337). It needs to be noted that the contemporary gender discourse in Poland still resounds the notions that Western feminism is blind to differences between sexes, discrediting motherhood and negating beauty and personal care (Goodwin, 2018).¹⁶⁷

Notably, however, some participants in this study shared that since they have moved to England, despite the geopolitical and cultural situatedness within the realm of the 'Western' world, they have observed a more relaxed attitude towards beauty ideals and feminine embodiment. Wanda (1963) for instance shared these thoughts comparing pre-and post-migration experiences of gendered beauty stereotypes:

'In Poland there are high expectations of a woman's appearance, that's different here in the UK. I would have never left the house in Poland, even if it was just to walk the dog, without doing my hair and putting on full make up! Yes, of course it is my personal choice to wear make-up, but people in Poland also pay a lot more attention to these things.'

Wanda's statement evidences that in her opinion the pressure exercised on women's bodies to adhere to beauty stereotypes in Poland was stronger than what she experienced since moving to the UK. Feminist researchers stress the impact of the regulating gaze on women's embodied experience, evidenced in Wanda's case by the application of make-up even when performing menial activities such as walking the dog.¹⁶⁸ According to Young, women are encouraged to see themselves through the gaze of others, including the 'male gaze' (Mulvey, 1975), as an effect of which women become more aware of themselves as objects under the scrutiny of others. Wanda's narrative includes traits of self-objectification, a framework for understanding the female experience within sociocultural context that sexually objectifies the female body (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). For Wanda the inevitable application of make-up is led by the belief that she will be an object of viewing. She

¹⁶⁷ For a comprehensive summary on the topic of femininity ideals and beauty in post-communist society see also Goodwin, K. (2018): Class, gender and ethnicity performance amongst Polish women in the United Kingdom and New Zealand/Aotearoa: an intersectional perspective. PhD Thesis, UCL

¹⁶⁸ Bartky (1988: 71) reminds us that 'a woman's face must be made-up, that is to say, made-over and so must her body; she is ten pounds overweight, her lips must be made more kissable, her complexion dewier, her eyes more mysterious. The 'art' of makeup is the art of disguise, but this presupposes that a woman's face, unpainted is defective'.

will be looked at; this may include the male gaze but also other women. The fact that women must deal with the predicament of viewing themselves as objects to be viewed, judged and interpreted as 'works of art' has been long discussed by feminist scholars. Mulvey (1975), describing the Gaze Theory observes that women have the characteristic of 'to-be-looked-at-ness.' The Gaze is aimed onto the female body, usually by a male, and it then actively projects the man's fantasy onto the woman's body. In this relationship, women are then an object to be gazed at and a showpiece to be displayed (Mulvey, 1975). The 'gaze' can therefore be identified as both 'the act of observation and internalisation' (Michel, 1996: 232). Furthermore, women are conditioned to perceive their bodies as always visible and available for judgement by an unknown male observer as well as other women. In effect, this act of surveillance mirrors heteronormative social power structures that intend to control women (Bartky, 1988; Spitzack, 1990; McKinley, 2011). Young (2005), whilst discussing feminist approaches to embodiment argues that the female body is not experienced as a direct communication with the active self, instead it is also experienced as an object. Self-objectification can increase anxiety within women about their physical appearance, for example fear of how the body will be viewed or evaluated.

However, Wanda's perception and embodied experiences of femininity shifted to some extent within the migration context. She commented that since she has moved to the UK she feels less pressured to adhere to dominant beauty models and has adopted a different dress style leaving the 'old dress code behind':

I don't miss the smart blazers; it is a lot more comfortable in denim and trainers. I don't miss them [smart blazers], plus as strange as this might sound, I am still sometimes being complemented on my outfits, despite my weight. It makes me laugh because I am not trying to look particularly stylish, but yes, I do still get compliments.'

As a result of migration, Wanda changed her formal outfits and despite the new look (with casual clothes and additional weight) her body is perceived as attractive, evidenced by the compliments. The positive endorsement of her body stands in contrast to pre-migration experiences, where her body was subjected to narrow beauty standards or relegated to the realm of the private and deemed invisible on account of her age.

Despite the fact that migration trajectories can open up pathways to new gendered embodiments and body perceptions, at the same time some of the participants expressed judgemental views on account of femininity, appearance and beauty norms in the receiving society. Therefore, it could be said that being 'feminine' meant different things for Polish women, which effectively suggested that Polish women were more 'groomed' and were more conscious of their appearance and the way they dress. Other researchers have stressed that Eastern European women often perceive themselves as 'more feminine, more beautiful' (Heyse, 2010:72) in comparison to Western women, or even consider themselves as dressing with more 'grace, taste and everyday elegance' (Goodwin, 2018:180). Some studies also found that on arrival in the West some respondents were surprised by the 'plainness and lack of style in their dress' (Remmenick, 2007: 338). Similar sentiments were also reiterated in this study, for example, Judyta (1993) commented:

'A woman in Poland, even if she is dependent on state benefits, which are of course minimal, cares for her appearance regardless. This is not the case here in the UK. Here a woman, who has a well-paid job, is not necessarily paying too much attention to her physical appearance. It is as if they don't care that much. I guess in Poland people are a lot more judgemental though, you kind of have to meet certain expectations. Here it doesn't really matter if you dye your hair pink and shave half of your skull, nobody cares. People are a lot more accepting!'

Judyta's narratives show that socio-cultural beauty norms in Poland were imperative and limiting in contrast to what she observed in England. The quote also implies a judgement on account of women in the UK who apparently do not attend to their appearance in the same way as women in Poland would, although in comparison they have all the material resources to do so. Such perception of femininity and appearance could be understood drawing on Riley et al (2015) as the 'postfeminist gaze' exemplified by a judgemental gaze which is consumption oriented, 'requiring that women understand their value through their ability to work on their bodies to produce themselves into recognised (hetero)normative, consumer oriented definitions of beauty'(ibid. p.104).

Wanda (1963) also made a judgemental comment on gendered embodiment as observed since she moved to England: ‘

I am not so sure that English women, and this might be a generational problem, but they aren't very classy...! I don't think that they have great taste, again I do not want to generalise, but some of them... Some of the young women wearing very tight-fitting clothes, fat bulging everywhere. Not in a thousand years would I have dressed like that! If it was me, I would wear something to cover it up. They are constantly buying and wearing new clothes, every week, but it just looks awful! Or the fake eyelashes. Oh, my word...! Some of them look as if they had sweeping brushes attached to their eye lids. It just looks so artificial. Or the notorious DIY self-tanning, leaving irregular dark orange spots on their body and hands. Why don't they go to a beauty salon instead of applying it themselves? Oh, it looks terrible!’

Here her narrative emphasises the connection between femininity, consumption and bodily beautifying practices. Thus, the body is a property, which can be shaped, beautified and improved, which turns ‘self’ into a project requiring transformation also through modes of consumption (Riley, Evans, & Mackiewicz, 2015).¹⁶⁹ Wanda’s perceptions of gendered embodiment and beauty norms are conflicted by what she observed in England, particularly in light of the assumed spending-power of English women. The latter is also emphasised by the following comment: *‘In Poland if a woman has enough money, then she regularly visits beauty salons and goes to the hairdressers.’* For Wanda to respond to certain beauty norms and appearances seems of importance, she therefore is unable to understand why women in the UK would not invest, and therefore improve their appearance in the same way as she and other women in Poland did. Her statement accentuates that the body images and therefore expectations which internalised in Poland, whether encouraged by Western

¹⁶⁹ This type of consumption is enabled through multiple body techniques, products or services (e.g., skin treatments, tanning, waxing, manicures, hair extensions etc.) which many women now perceive as normative feminine practices and are therefore consuming a significant amount of time, money and efforts (Evans & Riley, 2013; Riley & Scharff, 2013). As such the ‘beautifying techniques’ could then also be understood through the discourse of self-transformation as a self-improving practice (Foucault, 1988). In postfeminist beauty work the lines between objectification, judged by the male gaze, and subjectification become blurred as the transformation through beautifying techniques becomes an act of ‘consuming oneself into being through the rhetoric of agentic individualism, choice, and empowerment’ and as Riley et al note (2006: 98).

perceptions or not, still reverberate in her. Although the migration experience partially shifted certain gendered body shaping expectations for her, at the same time she also adheres to normative femininity and body image expectations. Thus, it can be argued that migration experiences on the one hand, offer an opportunity to readdress gendered embodiment, whilst at the same time certain bodily perceptions and notions of femininity and beauty developed pre-migration remain strong and dominant. It is also notable that beauty ideals based on attractiveness, femininity, and sex appeal, as explored earlier, prevalent within the Polish culture due to its socio-historical conditioning, appear to be transgenerational, echoing in the narratives of the participants regardless of their age.

6.3.3 Alternative bodily inscriptions

This subsection turns to gendered embodiment as inscribed on the skin in form of tattoos, and how the migration experience removed negative perceptions associated with dermal inking and female beauty norms. In modern Western societies the tattoo has shifted from being a marker of extreme rebellion or societal marginality to mainstream, popular cultural practice. However, heavily tattooed women's bodies in Poland still provoke negative reactions, in comparison to the UK as Judyta's (1993) life-story demonstrates: '

When I had my first tattoo done in Poland my mother, grandmother and my aunts were shocked. I remember they were lamenting about what the people in Church would say, what the priest would say... They would make comments like: 'why would such a pretty girl do this to herself' and I had to make sure I am well covered up in certain social situation not to provoke any 'looks'! My mum was ashamed, in her view it is not proper for a woman to wear tattoos. Well and so did my grandmother and my aunts...Here [in England] it does not matter if I have tattoos or not it does not make me less of a woman, but in Poland this is 'not woman like' to have a tattoo. So absolutely, here women are freer to be who they want without the judgemental looks.'

Judyta has several larger tattoos on her arms (so-called arm sleeves). However, nothing apart from the dermal inking distinguishes her from heteronormative beauty

ideals: she wears full make-up, her hair is done up, her nails are manicured and vanished. Her appearance juxtaposes two different looks that of the (hetero)normative beauty myth and that of the tattooed rebel. Although, for Judyta her tattoos are part of a beauty practice, a way to express herself in her own alternative manner, such alternative body projects which move away from (hetero)normative beauty ideas are often perceived as aberrant, challenging 'hegemonic ideology about femininity' (Atkinson, 2003: 16). Dermal inking of images, symbols and words that hold a specific meaning for the subject (although not always decipherable in the same way for the viewer) has become one of the primary means to communicate a sense of self, orientation or the development of their life narratives. Judyta's alternative embodied identity is misread within the Polish context: it is deemed a form of anti-social outburst. Above all generational bias is evident in Judyta's narrative: she implies that it is her mother, grandmother and her aunties who are responding overwhelmingly negatively to her tattoos. She even indicates that her mother felt 'ashamed' of Judyta's tattoos. The shame factor could on one level be linked to the influence of the Catholic religion where women's bodies are viewed as near asexual, spiritual, akin to the Virgin mother. On another level, it could be paralleled to the sense of shame (as indicated also earlier when analysing Wanda's practice of always wearing make-up) that women experience when they do not meet culturally accepted beauty norms, so that Judyta's mother feels ashamed that her daughter does not adhere to the (hetero)normative body image. Expressed also in the scornful comment '*why would such a pretty girl like you do this to yourself?*' which captures the transgressive act and betrayal of the beauty culture. Judyta's significant tattoos are considered ugly, deviant, and perhaps also masculine. Thompson (2015) notes that heavily tattooed women are often viewed as challenging gendered norms by taking on what is considered 'masculine' body decoration forms and reframing them as 'beautiful'. This practice can then be read as 'call[ing] attention to the artificiality of gender roles, to mock the very concepts of masculinity and femininity' (Griffin Crowder, 1993). Small, cute, and hidden preferably located on a sexualised body part, tattoos are considered feminine. However, if the tattoos become large and therefore 'ugly', they become public and are often faced with social sanctions (Thompson, 2015). Still, for Judyta, her tattoos are beautiful and are marks

of her individuality and identity. It could be argued that she resists the pressure for normative beauty by ornamenting her body, hence stating this is 'my body my choice'. Living in the UK where her tattoos do not induce the same negative reactions as in Poland, Judyta feels free to express herself and 'to be closer in line with (...) [her] self-image' (Sweetman, 1999: 68). Thus, Judyta's example attests to the fact that gendered embodiment can alter in migration trajectories. Following the move to the UK, Judyta's dermal inking no longer evokes the same negative reactions as pre-migration, and she is therefore able to 'beautify' and inscribe her body in a way that she chooses, by adorning it with tattoos.

6.4 Incarnated embodiment – nationality, femininity and religion

Gendered corporality is dictated and challenged by existing national, political, cultural and religious constructions. This section examines how constructions of Polishness in which nationality, femininity and religion overlap, impacted on embodied migration trajectories. Specifically, the impact of the Catholic faith on gendered embodiment is subject of discussion. It could be argued that nowadays the lines between the two spheres of 'sacrum' and 'profanum' are blurred. For example, Tokarczuk (2019), dissects (at times literally) embodied experiences in *Flights*, demonstrating how nowadays corporality is intertwined and strongly exposed within the realm of the divine by describing a TV show that her protagonist watches by flicking through the channels in one of the hotel rooms at night:

'Channel 348, the Holy God Channel. Here I beheld a crucifixion scene (...) The Virgin Mary had perfectly plucked eyebrows. (...) Her massive breasts, cone shaped, protruding absurdly; her tiny waist. (...) Channel 350, Blue Line TV. A woman masturbating (...)' (2019: 105-106).

Here the protagonist juxtaposes the two different spheres, whilst also indicating that the lines between these two are blurred, one flick away. It could be even argued that in *Flights* the sacrum becomes profaned by embodiment, the body has been incarnated in the divine. Tokarczuk then also goes on to elaborate that the cult of the body is not a recent development within religious culture but has been practiced throughout centuries and gives an example: *'In Prague in the year 1677 you could go*

to Saint Vitus Cathedral to see: the breasts of Saint Anne, totally intact, kept in a glass jar' (Tokarczuk, 2019: 109). The author suggests that Christianity has a history of body cult practices and effectively advocates that there is nothing supernatural about the human body, and attempts to assign divine attributes to it are in vain. However, within Polish society, religious ideology exercised by the Catholic Church even today provides a blueprint for idealized gendered embodiments. Polish society is one of the most religious societies in Europe. Over the last 20 years 90% of Poles have identified as religious (CBOS, 2017) and the Catholic Church occupies the position of one of the most important institutions of social trust and authority (ibid). Accordingly, religious faith in Poland correlates with traditional gender stereotypes, hence femininity is often interpreted in essentialist and naturalistic terms, where the calling to motherhood and marriage, legitimised by sacral justification, is placed at the centre of womanhood (Leszczyńska, 2019). Catholicism offers a mixed perception on the role of the body oscillating between sin and redemption, therefore offering up a clashing vision of femininity and sexuality. The messages relating to female role models in Catholicism are ambiguous with the most powerful impersonations on the one hand, in the figure of Virgin Mary, the virgin mother; and Maria Magdalene, the redeemed seductress, on the other. Mary is the symbol of the Catholic Church's attitude towards women, her purity manifested in her virginity denies her a sexual nature. In many ways, and as Warner (1983: 335) argues, '(t)he Virgin Mary is not the innate archetype of female nature, the dream incarnate; she is the instrument of a dynamic argument from the Catholic Church about the structure of society, presented as a God-given code'. In this sense the figure of the Virgin Mary has been uplifted to a symbol of unattainable female perfection which is built on 'goodness, motherhood, purity, gentleness and submission' (Warner, 1983: 335).

Ostrowska (2005), in her study of patterns of sexual behaviour of Polish men and women, indicates that sexual scripts within the Polish society are marked by religiousness, especially in young women who were 'under the powerful influence of religion and the church' (ibid p.160). The controlling impact of the Catholic Church on femininity and sexuality was evident in Bogna's (1996) narrative: *'I was raised Catholic and, in my faith, sexual relationships before marriage are taboo. (...) Sexual relationships before marriage complicate the relationship.'* Throughout the almost

three-hour long interview Bogna made several references to the conflicting relationship models between the host society and home country. In fact, the 'clashing' models had a profound effect on her emotional wellbeing, she broke into tears every time the subject came up in the interview and recounted times when she suffered from depression following a relationship breakdown. The main obstacle to building meaningful relationships in the UK was the fact that Bogna was unable to reconcile her religious beliefs and therefore also ideas of feminine corporality and sexuality with the host society. Most of her male partners were not prepared or used to engaging in relationships without sexual contacts before marriage. Bogna, on the other hand was not prepared to distance herself from her religious beliefs. In fact, she also made reference to negative perceptions of female corporality in terms of women's sexuality and their embodied presence in the host country. For example, she mentioned that when her parents were debating which one of them would migrate first, her mother or father, they finally decided that it would be best if Bogna's mother went first given the promiscuous nature of English society: *'Back then my dad's friend was already here [in the UK] and he said that it was absolutely awful because the women went out at the weekend and get really drunk. He said that it was disgraceful the way they dressed, their dresses were often so short, they were practically half naked...Well, you know what it's like on a Saturday night on the High Street. So, my parents decided that my mum would go first, that this would be safer'*. Bogna's comment critiqued liberal female dress codes, alcohol consumption and embodied presence in the UK. Further, the decision for her mother to come to the UK first was reinforced with the fact that it was 'safer' for her to come and expose herself to the environment in contrast to her father who should not be tempted and subjected to the profligate, immoral and 'awful' behaviour of the women in the UK. In addition, Bogna's above comment also points to the fact that women's sexual and gender role behaviours perform a larger social function, beyond the personal. Women and their gendered sexuality are used as moral pillars for social groups and nations. In most societies woman's sexual behaviour and their conformity to traditional gender roles are representative of family values. Hence, the choice to send Bogna's mother first, who then acts as the moral anchor and establishes a safe ground for the rest of the family, a mother figure who sacrifices herself for the family.

Equally, in many societies, it is particularly the behaviour of young women, or daughters, that is indicative of the moral standing. It is Bogna's gendered behaviour and sexuality which needs to obey the traditional moral code.

The control exercised on Bogna's corporality by her parents and particularly her mother was detectable at various points in the life-story interview. For example, Bogna commented that her parents repeatedly reminded her and cautioned her not to engage in sexual relationships before marriage: *'I am too delicate, like my mother always said, and if I had a sexual relationship before marriage, it would destroy me. (...) Well, I am too emotional, although my parents have always stressed that I need to be rational and not to give in into my emotions. Feelings are important but certainly not more important than being rational. My mum has always told me that there was no need to rush such things, that I was better off alone, then in a relationship with somebody who isn't worth it.'* The quote illustrates the regulating voice of Bogna's parents. She is made to believe that firstly she is too fragile to cope with the emotional impact of embodied intimacy and secondly, that it was unsafe outside the premises of the sacral realm of marriage. Adorno and Horkheimer (1997), in their work on Enlightenment, suggest that the development of Western society was based on the rejection of emotionality over a regime of regulation and control, whereas within the Christian tradition the body or flesh was viewed as a source of evil. Equally the Cartesian rationalism within the Western tradition at its core has long embraced the divide between the body and the mind. Western Christianity is based on a system which splits reason and desire, the mind and the body, in particular it is the body which is associated with darker meanings (Turner, 1997). Bynum (1991: 146) suggests that Western religious traditions 'had long told women that physicality was particular their problem'. Bogna's understanding of herself is induced by the need not to give in to emotionality, irrationality and therefore to control the flesh.

Fictional texts on migration depict how conceptions of femininity framed by the Catholic Church are reinforced by mothers within the Polish context. For example, the protagonist in A M Bakalar novel *Madame Mephisto* (2012) blames her domineering Catholic mother who in the novel embodies the narrow-minded patriarchal attitudes towards women for playing an instrumental role alongside the state educational system in indoctrinating Catholic gender role models:

'It was not only how she groomed us at home when we were children: weaving ribbons into our plaited hair, buying colourful fabrics on the black market to sew skirts on the Singer sewing machine, knitting pullovers out of pink wool; my childhood was full of my mother's commanding voice: 'Don't splash soup on your blouse'; 'Stop laughing so loud'; 'Sit straight with legs together, you are not in a barn.' Don't be surprised. My mother is the product of a strict Catholic upbringing (...) Unfortunately, it did not end with my mother. At primary school, Alicja [the protagonist's twin sister] and I were taught to bake, knit, and make sandwiches, while the boys built birdhouses, learnt about car engines, and assembled radios. I, too, wanted to build birdhouses. At secondary school, my mother made sure Alicja and I attended classes on religion. Catholic religion— it is not like in the UK where you have a chance to learn about other denominations. Here you will learn only about sweet Jesus' (Bakalar, 2012: 7).

Bakalar exposes how traditional and religious gendered role divisions permeate the world of her protagonist from an early age. There is limited scope for variations from the script and indeed scriptures, hence women are to make good mothers and housewives, and Catholicism is the one and only religion.

Although the parents, or specifically mothers, control over Bogan's corporality and sexuality is rooted in Catholic ideology it could be also read as an attempt to preserve 'traditions' and gender ideologies, which are often observed within migrant families (Espin, 2015). Espin (2015) notes that the strictness surrounding women's roles in migrant communities could be viewed as an 'attempt to protect and safeguard what remains of emotional stability' (ibid. p.242), which is often shaken by the mobility experience. Therefore, the act of controlling of women's sexuality becomes a vehicle for order and continuity, conveying the impression that not all is lost, not all has changed. At the same time 'returning women to their "traditional roles" continues to be defined as central to preserving national identity and pride' (Narayan, 1997: 20) in a mobility scenario that destabilises the self. Regardless of the motivation and experiences of mobility, the transition set off by migration can often cause feelings of 'loneliness from the absence of people with shared experiences; strain and fatigue from effort to adapt and cope with cognitive and emotional overload, confusion in terms of role expectations, values and identity;

(...) and shock resulting from differences between the two cultures' (Espin, 1997: 447). Consequently, the individual may struggle to reorganise and reintegrate identity within the new context (ibid). Thus, it could be assumed that Bogna's parents' expectations towards her gendered embodiment and behaviour were intensified since the arrival in the UK, and in an attempt to control the unsettling mobility experience.

Bogna's life story attests to a difficult balancing act between religious beliefs and the need to build relationships in the receiving society. Bogna's mobility experience had a negative impact on her well-being due to the fact that she is not able to break the conflicting gendered pattern; that of the Catholic religion and that of the host culture, which is leaving her feeling lonely and depressed. Consequently, Bogna's embodied mobility experience is marked by marginalisation, due to the religious gender role expectations, which are dictating a relationship model which is not commonly practiced in the UK. She was not able to develop stable long-term relationships and also has difficulties identifying with the gendered role models in the UK, which within the Catholic paradigm are viewed as too liberal and permissive. Bogna's case, regarded through the generational lens, sheds light on the intergenerational transmission and generationality within the family. Weigel (2006) stressed the importance of biological aspects defining generations, focusing on the nation, traditional family and religion. It could be said that the transmission of beliefs and ideas is passed on from the mother to the daughter. The mother, who as the equivalent of *Matka Polka*, is instrumental in ensuring that ancestral, religious and therefore also state ideology is passed on to the forthcoming generation, her daughter. Thus, although Bogna was born in the 1990s and could be classified as Generation Y, 'shadows of the past' impacting specifically on the situation of women in Poland (as discussed in chapter 2.3.3.3) are resurfacing in her experience, passed on intergenerationally from mother to daughter.

6.5 Conclusions

This chapter argues that body politics and gendered cultural ideologies are fleshly matters. Indeed, the bodily worlds of Polish women migrants are not only

important in their own right, but also offer a useful analytical lens for understanding migration trajectories. Women's narratives (in all forms) afford significant insights on substantive fields of gendered embodied experiences that shaped their migration trajectories. By drawing on the intersection of age, gender, body, nationality, religion and sexuality this chapter has revealed migration experiences lived through the body.

This chapter firstly explored how socio-historical circumstances shaped the situation of gendered embodiment and body politics within the Polish context and how it translates into mobility experiences. It examined the intersectionality of gender, body and age, highlighting how social and economic exclusion impacted on the gendered embodiment of the participants in Poland and how such experiences altered in the mobility context. Specifically, the embodied perceptions of mature women (Generation '89) showed that, for this generation, migration has the potential to transgress limiting conditions within the sending country and offers an extension of maturity and rejuvenation. The analysis of gendered beauty perceptions and corporal deviations showed that: on the one hand that beauty ideals developed because of socio-historical conditioning in Poland were still present in the narratives, recounted by different participants regardless of their birth cohort; on the other, that beauty ideals are re-negotiated in migration experiences. The final section discussed the control of women's sexuality enacted by the Catholic Church and explored the intergenerational transmission of embodied gendered roles within family. It showed for one, how the intergenerational transmission is instrumental in passing on ancestral, religious, and state ideology; for other, how conflicting embodied gendered role models between sending and receiving country can impact negatively on women migrants.

Part V Conclusions

This study contributes to knowledge about migration by exploring personal and subjective everyday experiences of three age cohorts of post-2004 Polish women migrants in the UK. This concluding chapter offers final reflections on what was argued throughout the earlier chapters, highlighting the most significant issues raised. Discussions move on to consider the unique contribution to knowledge that this research makes, methodological and empirical. Finally, ways in which the research might be developed beyond the scope of this study are suggested.

7.1 Thesis conclusions

A person-centred approach to exploring the complexities of the lived experience of migration of women from post-socialist Poland to UK after the 2004 EU enlargement revealed some of the human consequences of migration, which have hitherto not been considered. An investigation of the experiences and meanings attached to mobility from the perspective of the migrants themselves, went some way towards correcting the imbalance in migration studies which have been largely dominated by statistics rather than focusing on migrants' personal stories. In considering the ways in which women make sense of migration this study gave voice to personal experience, motivations, decision making, feelings, imagination, opinions, memories and the individual's interpretations of their migration journeys. Several dimensions of the complexities of the subjective experiences of migration formed part of the analysis. These dimensions included an examination of social identities (specifically gender, **generations** and ethnicity), demonstrating how these subjectivities are lived out through relationships, commonalities and differences with other Polish migrants and the receiving society ~~host community~~, as well as embodied gendered experiences and notions of home and belonging. The legacies of the socialist past are an important part of the discussion. The findings of the analysis were complex and multifaceted.

Motivations and decision-making practices of Polish women migrants are more complex than is often assumed. This thesis argues that economic and rationalistic motivation models are one-dimensional, as the participants in this study

illustrated a catalogue of social, cultural and economic motivations which overlapped, contested and supported one another. For example, the narratives highlighted the fact that migration decisions for some women were related to the emotional toll of family separation; or present an opportunity to gain independence both economically and more importantly from parental control; as well as a chance for adventure, self-fulfilment and an alternative lifestyle. Decisions to migrate were not always methodical or deliberated, but at times impulsive, with either an element of chance playing a part in securing migration opportunities. A further theme related to emotions and imagination. Transnational kinship ties and the emotional impact of family separation and reunion was significant in migration decision-making. Pre-migration imagination and expectations, specifically in relation to the imaginary West, impacted on individual trajectories and this study explored how such notions were affirmed and challenged on arrival in England. Suitcases and their content taken on migration journeys, acted as vessels of memories and emotional connection. The accounts of objects and goods carried across borders attest to the personal and interpersonal importance of materiality, emotionality and memory within mobility.

Within migration trajectories social identities, specifically in relation to ethnicity and gender, both in terms of general perceptions as well as the day-to-day realities, are renegotiated, contested but also reaffirmed. Language and identity in day-to-day migration trajectories were intertwined, highlighting adversity experiences based on intersections of language and nationality, as well as the inability to express the 'self' and the emotional repercussions of such experiences. In exploring language in migration trajectories this study moved away from discussions on instrumental aspects and integration, but instead focused on the intersection of language, identity and emotions. The narratives demonstrated that language was used to differentiate between 'us' and 'others', including perceptions of difference that influenced social interactions between ~~host community~~ receiving society and the migrant women in this study. Implications of languages and differentiating cultural and emotional scripts in Polish and English, and the consequences these have on the ability to express one's emotions were revealed. Participant's language choices and uses were influenced by wider concerns of self and other identification rather than simply being issues of instrumental need. Speaking Polish is for some participants an

important part of their identity of being Polish, and also of their emotional scripts. Changing the language spoken involved questioning the way participants presented themselves and how they related to others, also on an emotional level. Different languages were linked to different ways of thinking, feeling, ways of relating to people, attitudes, and ways of expressing feelings. Finally, the investigation of language within mobility revealed the potential to create alternative 'in-between' language spaces characterised by cultural and linguistic heterogeneity, where identity can potentially be renegotiated.

Migrant subjectivities lived out through relationships, commonalities and differences with the ~~host community~~ receiving society, transnational as well as other Polish migrants influenced the participants' notions of identity and belonging. The exploration of everyday experiences of migration uncovered supposedly small day-to-day encounters that highlighted ~~essential~~ cultural differences that affected personal migration trajectories and feelings of belonging and Otherness. Quotidian and mundane everyday encounters were identified as a source of microaggression and ethnic differentiation, which added to the participants' feelings of non-belonging in the ~~host community~~ receiving society. Some of the narratives revealed experiences of being treated as 'White Others'. Phenotypical 'whiteness' and therefore the lack of a visible difference did not preclude the participants from feelings of exclusion and ethnic discrimination. The examination of the construction of ethnic and national identities with a focus on relationships with other Polish migrants in the UK disclosed that national and ethnic identification was complex, as it included both networks of support and rivalry, whilst some participants sought to reduce ethnic contacts and engaged in acts of ethnic self-monitoring and social distancing. The study questioned an implicit connection between the individual participants and the wider Polish community as a source of attachment, indicating that some relationships within the network had a negative impact on the participant's sense of belonging. The importance and impact of transnational relationships on migration trajectories revealed that the maintenance and negotiation of such relationships, had an emotional impact on the participants, both as positive but also difficult experiences. Consequently, the different types of transnational and local networks impacted on the participants' decision to regard Britain as a permanent place of settlement.

Depending on the networks built and/or maintained, the women were considering to 'make' England either a permanent or temporary home.

An inquiry into notions of belonging and home lived out in everyday processes, practices and materiality within migration trajectories identified that foods their preparation and consumption are important elements in migrant identity constitution. Foods and food preparation have the potential to appeal to the sense of belonging, home, and a sense of community through commensality. 'Home-making' practices such as food making and sharing within the migration context are interwoven with practices of recreating and performing cultural rituals and traditions and thus creating a sense of identity and belonging. Such food-practices were identified as linking generations (including second-generation children and grandparents) and fostering and maintaining local and transnational connections. The different narratives highlighted that in the context of migration commensality can foster a sense of community and belonging. Examples illustrated that foods from the ~~homeland~~ country of origin were used as gifts to foster new and strengthen established relationships, and to expand ties in the ~~host community~~ receiving society.

The exploration of the different narratives voiced ambivalent dynamics of (non) belonging through a polysemous relationship to the ~~homeland~~ country of origin as well as the ~~host community~~ receiving society. In migration, notions of belonging and identity are negotiation processes, subject to changes through both external factors and personal choices. The participants in this research offered various examples of attempts to trespass, reassess, contest and depart from pre-formed categories such as race, gender and ethnicity. Through the framework of 'nomadic subjectivity' this research considered these polymorphous and ambivalent notions of (non) belonging, thereby offering an alternative understanding of subject positions within the context of migration. By adaptation of 'nomadic subjectivity' this study questions ideas of belonging defined through means of permanence or hegemonic socio-cultural, historical and national discourses. Instead, the findings suggest that mobility offered some participants the possibility to readdress, reclaim and renegotiate subjectivity.

Different aspects of migrant social life are tied together by the dynamics of gender and this study documented the complex ways in which these threads are interwoven. The narratives revealed a contradiction regarding the ways in which migration challenges and influences gender. Gender differences were apparent in the way the participants constructed their narratives. Thus, some women expressed difficulties in reconciling the various gendered 'locations' across transnational spaces, often occupying conflicting positions. Coping with these ambiguities was a constant challenge, further shaping the female migrant's experiences. Other narratives revealed that the Polish migrant women were agentic in casting a voice in migration decision making, seeking self-fulfilment and transcending traditional gendered roles. Although the gendered aspect of migration experiences was a scarlet thread throughout the findings particular attention was drawn to gendered embodied experiences of migration. By exploring how the gendered body, with its cultural, sexual and political markings, is conveyed in the women's experience of mobility, this study furthered the discussion on gender and migration. Drawing on the intersection of age, gender, nationality, religion and sexuality, this study revealed how migration experiences are lived through and on the female body. The personal narratives documented that for some participants mobility opened possibilities to shift gendered embodiment and trespass heteronormative gendered models related to body, age and femininity. Other participants attested to the fact that gendered corporality particularly dictated by existing national, political, cultural and religious constructions of Polishness hindered agency and intergender relationship formation in the host community receiving society.

The study questioned how socio-historic perspectives, specifically the socialist past, were implicated in migration experiences. Long-standing worldviews in Polish society such as the myth of the West, the imaginary West and inferiority complexes towards the West, were still present in the migration narratives. Narratives of the imaginary West were related through materiality and childhood memories about Western goods. Such imaginations, which arose in childhood, might have had an impact on later migration decision making, although further examination is needed to explore this notion. Other participants spoke of their pre-arrival constructions of a positive picture of the UK and how the migration experiences did not reflect their

expectations. Furthermore, some of the Polish migrant women in this study felt inferior to Westerners suggesting that within Polish society, notions of post-dependence are still very present day and that such perceptions impact migration trajectories, as in effect participants engaged in strategies of self-othering. Legacies of the past translated also into current day relationships with other Polish migrants but also the receiving society and were depicted in patterns of mistrust towards others. Thus, the impact of the legacies of socialism was still detectible in Polish society and lived out and experienced in migration trajectories regardless of birth cohort.

Finally, this study examined how Polish women from different generations, who were socialised in different historical locations with different connections to the past, present and future meet experiences of migration with varying responses. In showing generational experiences of mobility for different age groups this study illustrated that certain aspects of mobility, such as motivations and decision-making processes, were for some, due to the socio-political and historical circumstances, generation defining experiences (for example those born in the late 1970s and early 1980s), for others, born at a different time period, mobility was part of their life-style choices (cohort born in the 1990s). However, in some instances the generational optic did not enhance the understanding of the complexities of mobility for example when considering migration decisions and motivation as these were mostly emotive and connected to family separation (both participants born in the 1960s). Further the research illustrated that generational belonging is not only determined by birth cohort but sometimes also impacted by specific historical events, such as legacies of the socialist past, which are often immanent beyond the point in time when they directly occurred and can be transgenerational transmitted in interactions between generations. Thus, notions of 'shadows of the communist past' were depicted by both those who experienced communism and the transformation to a free economy directly but also later generations. This aspect of transgenerational nature of the legacies of the communist past was also specifically prominent in relation to gender role expectations where the genealogical dimension of generations surfaced. It is noteworthy that narratives also showed that transgenerational attitudes occur not only as 'echoes of the past' (transmitted from older age groups onto younger

generations) but can also be traced in reverse direction. Consequently, some of the middle-aged women in this study displayed attitudes towards mobility which were identified in former research as cohort specific for those born in the 70s, 80s and even 90s. In fact, the narratives of women in middle adult hood illustrated that their generational belonging was also shaped by subsequent transitions in their lives (socio-historical and cultural factors such as the free market economy) and maturity as well as intergenerational influences. Overall, this study reconfirms that the generational optic can be a useful concept for understanding migration, it however also highlighted that generational belonging is complex and that generational divisions can be subjective, blurred and interdependent.

7.2 Key Contributions

This section outlines the thesis contributions to the field of migration and mobility and the implications of the research findings.

7.2.1 Methodological Contributions

While contributing to the literature in a range of disciplines, in this research several significant issues involving methodology and methods were raised. This study demonstrated that autoethnography can be applied fruitfully to the field of migration and mobility. As an autoethnography, this work is significant partly because of the lack of similar work in existence. Ultimately, to date, no other project adopting an autoethnographic approach within the field of Polish migration studies was identified within the extended literature search. Therefore, the autoethnographic lens applied in this research makes an original and key contribution addressing the lacuna in migration and mobility studies. Ellis et. al. describe autoethnography both as process and product; consequently, one significant outcome is this document's very being (2010). This thesis is the outcome of an autoethnographic enquiry into my position as a migrant through the production of written text. Taken from a holistic perspective, this thesis is a new construct and as such holds an inherent value, contributing to a body of knowledge on migration and mobility, as well as to autoethnography. Furthermore, the autoethnographic approach has given an

opportunity to give voice to a social group which does not often, if ever, have the opportunity to be represented in the first person in academic texts.

This thesis makes a valuable contribution to wider epistemological debates in research methodology in several areas. Firstly, the use of the rhizomatic thought image for exploring narratives on the experience of migration. Secondly, the use of different narrative sources which offer a richer understanding of the phenomenon and experience of migration. Thirdly, the application of the crazy patchwork quilt as a research tool to spark innovation in radical qualitative research. Finally, the use of duality in research, in this case the position as researcher, migrant and women. It is in the realm of storytelling that this thesis demonstrated that narrative methodology is particularly useful in attending to emotive elements of migration. Furthermore, the combination of different narrative types (autoethnographic, life-story interviews and fictional) interwoven in this thesis add to its unique methodology realized through Deleuze and Guattari's work on rhizomes and the crazy patchwork quilt. As such, the methodological approach and the combination of narrative sources in this research could be considered innovative for generating new data on everyday migration experiences. The narrative methodology captured a multivocal, heterogenous and at times also contradicting account on the experience of migration that contrast unidimensional, hierarchical storylines. The methods were based on particular choices that I made, the particular types of data that I collected, and my (im)plausible readings of them. This study makes no claims to historical exactness, no claims of truth or objective knowledge. The rhizomatic methodology applied here provides a closely detailed analysis of the ways in which Polish migrant women experience migration to the UK, drawing attention to the particularly individual ways that women constitute themselves as subjects in their daily lives. Through its rhizomatic form, this study becomes another point on their journey. It is an event or an encounter with multiplicities that dislodges fixed ways of perceiving the world, and offers emergent ideas and perceptions that re/create multiplicities. By allowing the research methodology to evolve organically, the resulting data offers original insight into Polish migrant women's emotions and intimacy, a juncture all too often omitted in the field of migration studies.

This study offers insights into scholarship on reflexivity in qualitative research. It adds to debates around researcher's positionality in research and the notion of insider and outsider in fieldwork. Even though the researcher and the participants both shared commonalities such as ethnicity, gender or age, the positionalities encountered were not entirely unproblematic, nor defaulted either party as cultural insiders. Indeed, notions of belonging in terms of ethnicity or gender and assumed commonalities were not always easy to work out. Hence, the relationship between the research partners, researcher and participants, is crucial to consider with regard to how specific commonalities and differences may affect the research process. This study used reflexivity as a guiding principle during both fieldwork and written work to make it as transparent and accountable as possible.

This research was carried out across two languages in which the migrant researcher of the same national/linguistic background as the participants also assumed the role of the translator. Studying one's own ethnic group in a foreign country, while also acting as the translator, calls for substantial reflexive considerations. The special location of a researcher who conducts a study on migrants from her own ethnic background is defined by complexity and multiplicity. When a researcher studies her own ethnic group and writes in a language other than her mother tongue, she takes on multiple roles, including speaker, listener, and mediator, and these roles are determined by the relationship with the audience and the researched. Thus, this study furthers the understanding of positionality and translation debates in the context of migration research, the growing international mobility of academics and the dominant role of English in disseminating knowledge by arguing for more recognition of translation issues.

7.2.2 Empirical Contributions

This study makes an original contribution to the field of migration and mobility by capturing the complexities of lived experience by the adoption of a person-centred approach. Its contribution to the field of migration and mobility is on a micro-structural level, combining different aspects of migrant's subjectivities (gender, ethnicity, relationships and networks, feelings, imagination and memories, embodiment) under the umbrella of everyday lived experiences. In particular, this

study breaks new ground in research on Polish migration to the UK in that it uncovers some of the ambiguities, compromises and conflicts involved in notions of belonging and identity (cultural, ethnic and gendered).

Furthermore, this thesis provides a contribution to the field of gendered migration studies, in offering a gendered perspective on identity formation that included the perspective of different generational cohorts of Polish women in the UK, and also considered gendered embodied experiences of migration. By adopting a generational account of gender, this study captured data on minority groups underrepresented in existing scholarship, specifically middle-aged women ~~of advanced age~~ and diverse characteristics. Up to this point, Polish women migrants' generational experiences have been studied in relation to specific generational cohorts and their migration trajectories at the time of their formative years, or within the historical context of a particular generation. By exploring the generational perspective, this thesis shares similarities with former research, but elaborates on the subject by not only investigating generational experiences of one specific age cohort of young adults who migrated to the UK shortly after 2004, but also perspectives from several age groups. This includes participants from middle adulthood as well as voices from women migrants, where migration coincided with their formative years, but occurred several years after the EU accession. By offering an account of different age groups this thesis brings attention to the complexity of generational experiences, whilst highlighting that generational migration experiences are often not 'sealed off' but instead occur in interactions with the past, present, and future and are constantly renegotiated across multiple lines. Transgenerational interactions and transmission between age groups was significant regarding the 'shadows of the communist past' (also concerning the genealogical dimension and gender roles) but also in the interchange and impact of younger age groups on older generations. The inclusion of the perspectives of middle-aged women furthers the understanding of generational migration experiences by arguing that for this specific age cohort mobility has the potential to renegotiate gender and age specific power dynamics and restructure their lives. In addition, the empirical findings provide a new understanding of the gendered perspective of migration by examining migration experiences lived through, and on, the body, whilst bringing to

the fore the intersection of age, femininity, nationality, religion and sexuality. Although the growing field of body studies, including important work by feminist scholars, has reflected on key aspects of women's embodiment of Europe and the United States, little is known in relation to corporal experiences of Polish women migrants to the UK. This research draws on the vast literature in the realm of body studies but also extends the field by adding the perspective of Polish women migrants in the UK. Ultimately, this study not only adds to the field of body studies, but also offers a multidisciplinary link between migration studies and respective other disciplines such as feminism and social sciences. By highlighting gendered embodied experiences of migration on a personal level, this research situates and connects bodily experiences within the wider socio-cultural and political context. Thus, the personal narratives offered an entry point into understanding how gendered embodiment is entangled, articulated, (re)negotiated and the reinforced in migration trajectories.

This thesis makes a timely contribution to the wider 'emotional turn' currently emerging in migration studies which seeks to understand more about the personal and emotional worlds of migrants. With the exception of work by Svašek (2008) and studies on the emotional responses to Brexit (Giralt, 2020; Gawlewicz & Sorkasiira, 2019), little empirical work was specifically carried out to record the feelings and emotions of Polish migrants. Even less has been written regarding the emotional identities of Polish migrant women. This study therefore bridges this gap, as the Polish migrant women interviewed were found to be navigating their experiences, commitments and identities across a landscape of emotions.

This thesis has gone some way towards enhancing the understanding of tacit microaggressions and covert discrimination occurring in seemingly menial everyday experiences of migration. The findings shed new light on the impact and experiences of implicit bias and xenophobic prejudices reported by Polish migrants, specifically highlighting the complexities, fragmentation and limitations inherent in 'whiteness discourse' and 'othering' in England, and thus inclusion or exclusion from the English national imaginary.

The results of this study add to the growing field of research on migration and legacies of communist and the following transformation in Polish society. Myths and

perceived ideas of the West are still present and underpin migrants' experiences. Narratives about the West, alive during socialism, are still practiced - even by those who were only children or born after the transformation. **Patterns of trust developed during communism also prevailed in the narratives and impacted on social interactions within the migration context.** This research extends the understanding of the legacies of socialist societies by highlighting those communist discourses as 'shadows of the past,' still interwoven in everyday experiences of migration and therefore impacting on the migrant's subjectivities.

Finally, the key strength of this thesis is its interdisciplinary nature, integrating information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and theories from disciplines and bodies of specialized knowledge in order to advance fundamental understanding of the phenomenon of migration beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.

7.3 Future Directions

This study raises a range of questions that could form the basis for future research. These questions are focused on further exploration of personal experiences of Polish migrants in the UK. The scope of this study was limited in terms of participant numbers and future research with a similar focus would benefit from extending the sample. Further research examining the notion of Polish migrants (men and women) navigating a landscape of emotions, would be interesting. In particular, this study calls for more detailed inquiry into Polish migrants' emotions in relation to language, notions of belonging and home.

Another area that warrants further research is linked to the embodied experience of migration. The exploration of representations of gendered embodiment offers a valuable interpretive lens and a key to understanding how histories and experiences of migration are worked through, renegotiated and rearticulated on the body. However, potential future research would benefit from expanding the embodied optic onto migration and mobility not only to explore the intersection of gender and corporality but also to include other characteristics and aspects, for example addressing how working conditions, mental states or consumption patterns are lived out in and on the body of migrants.

This thesis offered a generational perspective by examining personal narratives about the experience of migration by different age cohorts of Polish women. The dynamic between different generations of migrants, as in this study or also for example parents, grandparents and children (second generation migrants) navigating the emotional terrain of migration and intergenerational relationships as well as notions of identity, home and belonging would be my main area of expansion for this project. Although studies on the experiences of Polish migrant children are beginning to emerge in the field of Polish migration studies, a broader piece of research on Polish migrant children's ideas of home and belonging would be valuable. In addition, further research on the perspective of middle-aged and older Polish migrant women ~~of advanced age~~ would be worthwhile. Older migrants were not yet subject to deeper investigations within the realm of Polish migration research, apart from a few economic and demographic studies (for example Pemberton and Scullion, 2013 or Kałuža –Kopias, 2015) as well as small body of work on post-war migrants who aged in place (Bielewska, 2012a and 2012b, Garapich 2008b, Temple, 2001). The Office for National Statistics (2017) data shows that over 48,000 Poles aged 50+ currently live in the UK and the number can be expected to grow due to the aging of society. Although this research offers a small-scale perspective on Polish migrant women in the UK, research that specifically focuses on the experience of this age group is yet to be conducted.

7.4 Concluding Thoughts

Post-2004 migration of Polish women to the UK could be perceived as a journey bringing no difficulties due to the initial lack of formal barriers to travel and access to the employment market, and because of apparent cultural similarities between the country of origin and host community receiving society. However, personal narratives in this thesis provide evidence that the move from Poland to England involved a complexity of factors that impact on the lived experiences of migration. The complex nature of migration experiences concerning social identities, notions of home and belonging and the legacies of the socialist past were revealed through an exploration of fictional texts and personal narratives. The methodological approach developed in this research specifically allowed for the emergence of issues

in relation to emotions and imaginations, opinions, views and memories. Above all, by application of autoethnography this research invited the readers 'into the lived experiences of the presumed "Other" and to experience it viscerally' (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014: 15) and thus offered a cultural analysis through personal experience. Finally, autoethnography is a legitimate way of utilizing story telling within academia, and it is given its legitimacy through its increasing use. The strength of stories lies in their ability to work against what Guattari refers to as 'the reductionism that accompanies the primacy of information' (2005: 67). We tell each other stories in order to live (Didion, 2006), and in this time and age we are increasingly aware that we live together, and so we need stories more than ever, stories acknowledging that individuals can transcend existing and historically fixed notions of nationhood, borders and boundaries.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Participant Consent Form

Research Participant Consent Form

Title of the project:

Personal reflections on the experience of migration to the UK post 2004 by three generations of women from Poland

Please circle as appropriate **Yes** or **No**

I confirm that the purpose of the project has been explained to me, that I have been given written information about the project and have had opportunity to ask questions. YES / NO

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time, and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.

YES / NO

I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be personally identifiable, and any research outputs will be anonymised.

YES / NO

I agree for the anonymised data I provide to be archived.

YES / NO

I give permission for the researcher to record the interview onto a digital voice recorder. YES / NO

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with the researcher and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

I agree to take part in this research.

Name of participant [printed] Signature Date

Researcher [printed] Signature Date

Project contact: Sabina Fiebig [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Appendix B Research Participants

Name	Birth Year	Arrival in UK	Marital status (with/out child/ren)	Household composition (family size/ country of origin/ residence)	Education/occupation
Wanda	1963	2008	Widowed, two children	Living on her own, her grown up children both also live in the UK	Vocational training in Poland, Care Home Activity Coordinator in the UK
Zyta	1966	2005	Married, three children	Living with Polish partner, children are grown up and have moved up but are all living in UK	Secondary Education, Business owner
Jagna	1977	2006	Single mother with two children	Living with children	Secondary Education, Carer
Sabina	1978	2007	Married, two children	Living with a British partner and children	Postgraduate, Academic Development Officer
Lena	1978	2004	Married, three children	Living with a British partner and children	Graduate, home stay mum
Mira	1985	2007	In partnership with no children	Living with British partner	Postgraduate, Freelance artist
Hania	1990	2009	Married with no children	Living with Polish partner	Graduate, Accountant
Judyta	1993	2016	In partnership with no children	Living with British partner in shared accommodation	Graduate, Clerical worker
Bogna	1996	2016	Single, no children	Living on her own	Vocational training in Poland, currently studying for a college degree in UK, part-time carer and seamstress

Appendix C: Interview guide

INTRODUCTION (Before the interview begins)

- a. Introduce myself and my roles as an academic and a researcher and fellow PL migrant woman.
- b. Explain how the interview will be conducted, and what will be done with the information they provide.
- c. Go through the informed consent form and get it signed. Stress anonymity and confidentiality.
- d. Check if OK to record for transcription – can send a copy of the interview once transcribed to ensure that they are happy with the content of the interview.

LIFE-STORY INTERVIEW:

Tell me the story of your migration.

Start where you want and talk about your experience as you wish. It is your choice. Just as an idea you could perhaps think of such questions as: Why did you migrate? Your life before migration? Your arrival in England? How did you feel when you arrived in England? (probe for experiences upon arriving in England, significant events from that period, feelings, emotions, understandings of migration, expectations, differences with Poland.) Tell me the about your life now? (probe if anything changed, feelings about living in England, any significant events from this period, any significant changes as to how the participant sees herself, experiences with others i.e., host-community, other migrants, transnational networks and family ties, day-to-day experiences of migration, travelling home, overall happiness and satisfaction, reflection upon decision to migrate, Poland and home, relationships with others, any difficulties encountered.) Tell me about your plans for the future? (probe about future plans, intentions of staying or returning.)

Appendix D: Sample Interview Transcript

- SF 00:00 Raz Dwa Trzy nagrywany ok. Ehm, czyli o uczuciach w sensie w sensie tego jak czujesz się w Anglii? Jak czujesz się w Polsce, gdy jedziesz z powrotem? Jak czułaś się może w Polsce zanim wyjechaliśmy, chociaż o tym już opowiadałaś. Ale może jeszcze jakieś pewne rzeczy chciałabyś nawinąć - Jak czujesz się z Anglikami? Jak czujesz się z Polakami? O tym też już mówiłaś... o takich rzeczach.
- Participant 00:30 Jak się czuje w Polsce. Wiec... Wiesz co: w Polsce się czułam dobrze. Chyba wydaje mi się do momentu wyjechała do Stanów. I wtedy zasmakujesz tego innego życia. Chcesz to jakoś... nie wiem... skopiować. Jakoś, jakoś...ehm... znaleźć podobną drogę, żeby jakoś może żyć tak samo, tylko że się nie da.
- SF 00:59 Dlaczego się nie dało w Polsce żyć tak samo albo podobnie?
- Participant 01:03 Rzeczywistość ... kultura osobista Polaków... zachowanie. Tak jak ci mówią co zaobserwowałem w pracy: są kumplami do momentu, póki ktoś nie zobaczy, ile ten miał na payslipie: 'bo on ma więcej niż ja! - Dlaczego on ma więcej niż ja?!' Więc taka zazdrość i nie wiem czy to gdzieś jest może na przykład z komuny gdzieś jakieś tam wiesz, że się nie ma, i zawsze patrzysz nowego sąsiada... Może... może tak byliśmy wychowani po prostu. Obserwując gdzieś tam podświadomie też rodziców reakcja: 'Aaa bo ten sobie kupił nowe auto! Jak on sobie kupi nowe auto? Tyle ma wypłaty...' gdzieś tam wiesz co może nie uczestniczyliśmy fizycznie w tych rozmowach, ale gdzieś tam się odbijało, nie...? Albo: 'O, ta spod piątki Piątkowska znowu przyszła po szklankę cukru. Co miesiąc to robi i znowu przyszła po ten cukier...!'

- SF 02:10 Ja też tak myślę, że nawet jeżeli to nie ja stałam przez dwie godziny w kolejce po podpaski, to i tak gdzieś we mnie to się zapamiętało.
- Participant 02:19 Ale ja pamiętam, ja kawy nie piłem, ale ja stałam po kawę! Bo musiałam. Więc stałam, bo mi mama i tata powiedzieli, że tu muszę stać i pilnować kolejki. Bo oni kupili paczkę i później wrócili. Bo była paczka pamiętam w srebrnym opakowaniu, nie mielona, 250 gram i było na głowę! Niezależnie od tego czy to było dziecko, czy co, było na głowę. Więc kto miał miejsce w kolejce dostał. Ja to pamiętam. Pamiętam stanie po mięso. Ja pamiętam właśnie... i tego np. nie pamiętam, ale pamiętam to z rozmów: że w sklepach nic nie było, ale każdy miał pieniądze. Bo to rodzice często powtarzali. Każdy miał pracę, bo musiał w komunizmie!
- SF 03:01 My ostatnio byliśmy na Kubie, to znaczy ostatnio...jako w podróży...jak się mówi: honeymoon? Pojechaliśmy na Kubę i to była dla mnie po prostu powtórka z rozrywki. Każdy, każdy ma kasę - a nic nie ma w sklepach!
- Participant 03:15 Dokładnie! Spod lady ci wyciągają! Jak... albo po znajomości! Ja pamiętam! Rodzice mieli znajomości u rzeźnika! Tylko dlatego wiesz co.... ale, w tym... bo moi rodzice prowadzili hurtownie a to było po drugiej stronie ulicy, więc już jak oni nie dostawali pomarańczy czy coś... To było za komuny tak...?! Dobrze jest mieć znajomych?! Ty temu pomarańcze, a ten tobie wyciągnie mięso spod lady później, wiesz na jakąś imprezę. Czy nie wiem.... święta idą czy coś. To zawsze był ten kawałek porządnego mięsa odłożony. To już pamiętam.
- SF 03:55 Czyli jednak taka kultura jak znajomości, że...
- Participant 04:03 (interrupts) I na tym się później wychowujemy. Ja zauważyłem właśnie: zmianę kulturową i podejście ludzi. Tak jak wspomniałam przy naszej ostatniej rozmowie, tak? Stoisz w

kolejce do kasy i kupujesz bilety. Masz trzy latka (dziecko w wieku 3 lat), tak masz 3 latka, który...,czyli poniżej 3 (lat) nie płacisz. Od 3 płacisz. (Polak) Ma masz 3 latka, podchodzi do kasy i mówi, że dwa miesiące przed trzecimi urodzinami! Anglik tego nie zrobi! Ale to jest, tak? Nasze podejście takie, żeby zaoszczędzić 2 złote.

SF 04:53 Tak ja zgadzam się. Ja też takie obserwacje robię

Participant 04:57 I będąc tutaj, i mając męża Anglika, i obserwując go, i żyjąc z nim przez tyle lat: zdajesz sobie pytanie 'dlaczego my się tak zachowujemy? Dlaczego tak musi być? Dlaczego nie możemy być mili, do siebie? Dlaczego np. w Polsce jest tak że jak jesteś już na stanowisku kierowniczym musisz, ludzi, którzy są pod tobą... pokazać im: że ty jesteś na stanowisku kierowniczym?! dlaczego musisz ich...eehm belittle... czyli w niektórych sytuacjach musisz im pokazać kto tu jest, kto tu jest, kto tu jest szefem. I poniżać ich w pewnym momencie, i rozmawiać w taki sposób a nie w innym. Dlaczego nie potrafisz to zrobić w sposób konstruktywny. Jako kierownik powinieneś...

SF 05:53 Przypuszczam, że nie ma tej kultury pracy która...

Participant 05:57 (interrupts) Dokładnie tak myślę. Takie rzeczy właśnie zauważyłam.

SF 06:04 I co w Polsce...? Więc wróciłam z Ameryki do Polski... ze Stanów

Participant 06:07 Tak i zaczęłam tak jak wiesz co...? Tak to wszystko obserwować... i obudziłam się z jakiegoś snu...! I tak patrzę, patrzę na te panie, tak jak ci mówiłam, i pani się zapytała.... Codziennie się pytała przy kasie: 'Oh and how are you today?!' -nie!? Pytają się, uśmiechają się do ciebie. Tak jak ci powiedziałam pierwsza pani, która się mnie zapytała przy kasie: o mało jej połowę mojego życia opowiedziałam! Bo nie wiedziałam...tak? U nas w Polsce to się zaczyna zmieniać, bo widziałam teraz się już zapytają, czy znalazłam wszystko co

chciałam...i to obojętnie czy pójdziesz do Lidla czy do Biedronki. Już zaczynają prowadzić taką rozmowę..., ale nie wiem... Wydaje mi się. Nie wiem. Społeczeństwo jest zgorzkniałe, to po pierwsze. Jest gorzkie. Ja widzę to po moich ciotka, jak ciągle, ciągle narzekają! One przychodzą i nie ma żadnego jakiegoś takiego pozytywnego... pozytywnej... tej pozytywnej atmosfery. One wejdą i one już zaczynają się nakręcać jedna na drugą. To są momenty chyba gdzie ja myślę. Rany...jak dobrze, że ja tu nie żyję! Tak teraz byliśmy w październiku, teraz w zeszłym roku w październiku. Strasznie chciałam jechać, miałam potrzebę, ale jak ja już tam byłam to, dzień drugi albo trzeci, ja już chciałam wracać! Właśnie to były sytuacje, dlaczego ja chciałam wracać. Chyba nie potrafiłabym wrócić do tego stylu, i tej atmosfery, i tego takiego nie wiem... nie.... że ciągle brakuje...bo już nie brakuje! Takie domy się budują..., że byłam w szoku! Jak moja kuzynka wzięła mnie na budowę. Ja mówię: no nie..., ale przecież w Polsce nie ma pieniędzy... nie ma pieniędzy!? Jak tu się takie osiedla domów buduje? Z taką prędkością jeszcze. Wszyscy narzekają. No, jak narzekasz? a jeździsz BMW, stoi ci pod drzwiami. Na co narzekasz? To chyba jest taka, wiesz, bo to żeśmy chyba w płynie, z krwią matki, z mlekiem matki dostali...!

SF 08:28 A jak się czułeś w Polsce jako kobieta?

Participant 08:34 Nie wiem czy jestem w stanie...

SF 08:35 Zanim wyjechałaś ...?

Participant 08:38 Nie wiem...pojechałam mając 21 lat. Wróciłam. Pojechałam znowu. Wróciłam i wyjechałam. Więc jak wróciłam to ten okres wrócenia nie był taki długi... Wróciłam zostałam rok kolejny, rok studiów. Wyjechałam. Wróciłam, obroniłam się... Wyjechałam.... Wróciłam... i jestem w Anglii więc z tego okresu, gdzie tak naprawdę stałam się tą kobietą, kobietą (!) bo tak naprawdę w tym okresie nie pracowałam w Polsce. Po obronie

pracy magisterskiej od razu wyjechałam, ja się obroniłam i wyjechałam. Więc nie miałam okazji już, nie miałam tak naprawdę okazji nie pracowałam nigdzie w Polsce. Wiesz ja miałam ten okres takiego doświadczenia, gdzie jak jesteś na studiach musisz sobie zrobić ...jak to się nazywa... referencje...staż... tak sobie robisz ...to ja pracowałam w [nazwa firmy]. To było: wszystko co one pozwoliły mi zrobić to było składanie papierów do folderów i jeszcze musiałam jeszcze coś co jeszcze mi zdały do zrobienia...Musiałam zwolnić wszystkich uczestników rozmowy kwalifikacyjnych, którzy nie dostali do następnego etapu. Dostałam listę, nie wiem ilu osób musiałam zadzwonić i podziękować, poinformować ich, że się nie dostali do następnego etapu. Dziękujemy i powodzenia w przyszłych osiągnięciach! Bo tylko tyle dały mi do zrobienia... to jak ja się mogłam wykazać!? Ale nie było. Nie było żadnych takich, takich sytuacji, gdzie mogłoby...

SF 10:19 Czyli nie czułeś się, że tak naprawdę profesjonalnie, w jakikolwiek sposób nie mogłaś się dalej kształcić... dalej jakby...

Participant 10:27 Wiesz co, może gdybym została?! Może sytuacja byłaby, wyglądałaby inaczej. Ale my mówimy o roku 2000. Tak naprawdę są one chyba wiedziały, że jestem tylko na parę miesięcy, żeby odbębnić starz ...I tak naprawdę to pewnie... (exhales): wynieść, przynieść, pozamiataj! Aczkolwiek, wiesz co, mam przyjaciół, znajomych którzy są na stanowiskach kierowniczych w Polsce. I też są sytuacje czy anegdoty, gdzie słyszysz, jak opowiadają. I tak się zaczynasz zastanawiać...tu by się raczej nic takiego, tak jak powiedziałaś z tą szkołą, by nawet nikt nie pomyślał, żeby coś takiego naświetlić, żeby w ogóle podnieść głos i tracić swój czas... no to tak mi się wydaje. Wiec tak naprawdę w Polsce jakoś chyba, chyba... nie wiem czy nie próbowałam...! Pewnie nie próbowałam.... Wiedziałam, że

nie chcę zostać, więc jakoś tak, jakoś może się też nie starałam. Poszłam na kilka rozmów. Poszłam na kilka rozmów... tak pamiętam jako stewardessa po sobie pomyślałam, że wtedy muszę latać po kraju, bo miałam ciążoty i angielski był idealny, ale pani mi powiedziała, że nie mam wzrostu. Powiedziała, że nie będę w stanie włożyć torby do luzu nad głowę pilota.

SF 12:01 Tak faktycznie...! (burst out laughing)

Participant 12:01 Więc ja jej powiedziałam, nie pamiętam jak dzisiaj, ja jej powiedziałam: 'A jak stanę na palcach?!'. Bo ja mam... byłam taką... wiesz... mam chyba taką naturę, wiesz... ja chciałam wszystkich ośmieszyć. I tak jak pamiętam stałam wyciągnęłam ręce: 'jak stanę na palcach?!' (she demonstrates). I podziękowała mi...! Może nawet, to i dobrze, bo tak jak mówiłam... Później w Gliwicach się ubiegała o jakąś pracę, która... w firmie, oni ścigali kontenery z Chin. Ale nie przyjąłem, i tak naprawdę to mój wtedy narzeczoną poszedł na rozmowę a ja dostałam ofertę...! Nie wiem z jakich... z jakiego punktu widzenia. Nie wiem...

SF 12:53 A teraz nie patrząc tylko na pracę, ogólnie: Jak czuła się będąc kobietą w Polsce.

Participant 13:00 Ja chyba nie byłam kobietą w Polsce. Trzeba powiedzieć. Kobieta to chyba w tym wieku...

SF 13:03 To może młodą, młodą kobietą? Czy tam na przełomie lat...?

Participant 13:10 Tak naprawdę zaczęłam się czuć jak dostałam swoją pierwszą pracę. Bo wtedy zaczęłam zarabiać pieniądze... tak nie miałam żadnych.... wiesz co... Ta kobietom? Bo jaka jest definicja 'kobiety'? Co dostajesz pierwszy okres i jesteś kobietą, bo jesteś w stanie się rozmnażać? Czy... czy kobieta... Co cię definiuje kobietą? Bo ja się czułam u jako dziewczyna...!? Wiesz co chyba jakoś nie było tego konceptu, kiedy ja się zaczęłam czuć kobietą. Kobietą chyba zaczęłam się czuć i jak byłam na swoim: czyli

miałam w Anglii to mieszkanie, miałam pracę, zarabiałam pieniądze i byłam.... responsible. Czyli odpowiedzialna sama za siebie. Wiesz... Co już powiedziałem, odpowiedzialna sama za siebie, także rodzice jakoś w żadnym stopniu mi już nie pomagali. Tak jak wcześniej: byłam na studiach nie musiałam się martwić o rachunki, nie musiałam się martwić o to jak i za co mam jedzenie kupić, bo jedzenie było... tak? Dojazd do uczelni, bo to wszystko moi rodzice się tym zajęli...nie? Więc nie musiałam o tym myśleć. Wszystko co musiałam zrobić to się obronić i już zaliczyć kilka imprez. To było moje życie. Życie się zaczęło takie prawdziwe, kiedy już zaczynasz... jak pojechałam do Stanów po obronie, to też tak naprawdę... OK czułam się jako młoda kobieta, która potrafi się... która chyba... chyba stara się odnaleźć w tym całym świecie. Zarabiałam kieszonkowe pieniądze, miałam dach nad głową i miałam jedzenie zagwarantowane. Pieniądze mogłam sobie wydać na co chce, ale tak naprawdę to jeszcze nie było prawdziwe życie! Bo tak jak mówię: wszystko zostało opłacone. Ja jeszcze żyłam z rodziną, oni jeszcze płacili za moją pracę, którą ja wykonywałam więc tak naprawdę nie byłam jeszcze testowana przez życie.

SF 15:07 Czyli chodzi też taką ekonomiczną niezależność...?

Participant 15:12 I wydaje mi się, że ten moment, kiedy zaczynam się kobietą być, gdzie te wszystkie elementy były zależne ode mnie. Tylko i wyłącznie ode mnie i ja podejmowała decyzje. Czy to były słuszne, czy niesłuszne były moje. Oczywiście wtedy nie musiałam negocjować z rodzicami... czy... czy... czy pytać mojej rodziny, z którą ja mieszkam czy mogę wziąć auto. Wszystko zależało ode mnie. I wydaje mi się, że wtedy czułam się jako prawdziwa kobieta, bo wtedy stałam na swoich nogach i to ja zdecydowałam o moim następnym kroku. Tak... tak... tak mi się wydaje. Wcześniej jako podłotek, się to mówi po naszymu...

- SF 15:53 Mi to wiesz... Wiesz, dlaczego mnie to interesuje? Mnie to interesuje z tego powodu, że ja np. moje obserwacje jest taka, że ja uważam że w Polsce są pewne inne schematy. I role jakie kobiety mają odgrywać w tym społeczeństwie i zawsze miały odgrywać w społeczeństwie czy np. na przykład stereotypowa matka Polka, jest takim przykładem. Tak? Albo też ktoś inny może powiedzieć, że inną taką rolą bardzo stereotypowa, jest rola, która jest bardzo silnie powiązany z Kościołem katolickim. Czyli... jesteś tak naprawdę Madonną. Tak...? I do momentu ślubu... i potem przejmujesz itd... Czyli taki powrót do bardzo tradycyjnych ról dla kobiet. Natomiast ja uważam, że..., że twoje życie jakby nie prowadziło w tym kierunku. No bo, ty sama pojechałaś jako kobieta sama, do Stanów. Właśnie to, że mówisz, opowiadasz, o tej swojej niezależności o tym staniu na swoich własnych nogach etc. To wydaje mi się, że nie do końca odzwierciedla to stereotypowe role.
- Participant 17:03 Nie, nie dałam się już! Nie dałam się. To jest brzydko, może brzydko tak powiedzieć, zapuszkować. Ja widziałam coś więcej dla siebie. Ale dlaczego? Wydaje mi się, że przez ten wyjazd! Bo ja pamiętam ja wróciłam i ja próbowałam zarazić moich znajomych tym... że jest to wspaniałe... i że nie, że do Stanów, że są inne kraje które można wiesz co....Takim właśnie kosztem zobaczyć jak ja. Jak inni może nie żyją, ale jak też życie wygląda w innym kraju.
- SF 17:43 Czyli poszerzyć sobie horyzont...tak?
- Participant 17:44 Dokładnie! Ja jakoś ..., ale ja chyba miałam jako jedyna chyba miałam ten głód. Ja jako jedyna zaryzykowałam postawienie mojego związku na przetestowanie czasu, bo uważałam, że jeżeli jesteśmy sobie pisani, to przejdziemy przez to. Moja przyjaciółka, z którą ja się wychowałam akurat zaczęła nowy związek, ona uciekła przed ołtarza...zaczęła nowy związek i nie

chciała podjąć tego ryzyka. Zawsze mnie podziwiała. i tak dalej, ale nie podjęła tego... tego kroku. I kilka innych mam... Mam też koleżankę przyjaciółkę, z liceum która wyjechała do Austrii! To nie do Stanów, ale do Austrii. I prawdopodobnie robi tą samą pracę co ty robisz. Pracuję na uniwersytecie i zajmuję się też całym, tym marketingiem i tymi imprezami. I ma studentów z różnych krajów. I jeździ na różne, na różne jakieś tam... nie wiem jak one się nazywają... te zjazdy... Ale wyszła za Austriaka. Tylko ja dokładnie to samo. Tyle że ja wyjechałam do Stanów jako aupairka. Ona wyjechała przez ten program Sokrates, to był jakiś program na studiach? Czy to jest tak że wymiana jeden studencka...czy Erasmus... w jednym z tych. Nie pamiętam który. Tak się stało. Pracuje w administracji. Także... także druga koleżanka z liceum wyjechała do Niemiec, ale do pracy. Wyjechała... świeże małżeństwo... nie przetrwało...niestety rozeszli się, ale oboje zostali w Niemczech. Są znajomi, przyjaciele, którzy wyjechali nie wrócili do kraju..., ale już dużo którzy niestety zostali... Chyba nie wiem? Czy to nie mieli takiej potrzeby albo się bali albo nie chcieli ryzykować np. bo już byli w jakimś związku Ja chyba postawiłam wszystko na jedną kartę. Ja gdzieś wiedziałam, że coś tam na mnie czeka. Miałam taki głód. Coś mnie ciągnęło, nie wiem. A może była to ucieczka po prostu z domu. Nie wiem co to było. Może po prostu wiesz podzielenie, kombinacja różnych rzeczy, które się nałożyły i dały mi taką energię, gdzie ja byłam w stanie góry przenosić. A jak byłam w Stanach to czułam taką satysfakcję, bo widziałam różnice, jak mój, jak moja możliwość komunikowania się zmieniła. Jak moja wiedza języka się zmieniła... i pamiętam, jak byłam w stanie sobie otworzyć konto sama bez żadnej pomocy. Czy... czy będąc gdzieś w jakimś... w jakimś biurze i ubiegania się o coś. Ja sobie tak myślę... że moja pani z angielskiego zawsze

mnie gnębiła, i mi mówiła, że mój angielski nie jest wystarczająco dobry... a tu jestem! W kraju, gdzie język jest ich pierwszym językiem! Bo musimy przyznać, mimo że jesteśmy tyle lat w Anglii dla nas pewne słowa nie będą brzmiały tak jak brzmią dla Anglika. Oczywiście że nie. Nawet jak ono ma wyuczony angielski i jest filolożka, niestety ona i tak mnie nie będzie słyszała w ten sposób, jak mnie słyszy mój mąż czy prawdziwy... prawdziwy Anglik, czy prawdziwy Amerykanin. I to było dla mnie takim zdaniem egzaminu z języka. Ja sobie pomyślałam... teraz ona może mi powiedzieć, że jestem nikim, że mój angielski mnie... nigdzie mi drzwi nie otworzy. A ja wiem, że to będzie nieprawda! I może mi dać trójkę... czy wtedy dwójkę... czy coś z języka..., bo tak było! Gnębiła mnie przez te ostatnie...jak wróciłam gnębiła mnie strasznie, bo chciała mi pokazać, że ja tak naprawdę nie znam języka. Ale mi nie zależało na tym, bo ja swój egzamin życia zdałam! Ona mogła mi postawić obojętnie co... A po mnie to po prostu spływało... Ja się uśmiechnęłam, powiedziałam: Dziękuję! To ja chyba po prostu gryzła. Pamiętam były jedne zajęcia, gdzie, gdzie coś tam, tematyka była... i coś tam chciał opowiedzieć i odwróciła się do tablicy i zwróciła się do tablicy (snapps her fingers) i mówi 'jak się nazywają te...te monety, które wypadają...?' i stoi... Odwróciła się do tablicy a ja mówię: 'coins!'. 'Kto to powiedział?...' Się nie przyznałam. Patrzyłam... nie ze się bałam, ale...miałam satysfakcję!

- | | | |
|-------------|-------|---|
| SF | 23:18 | Oczywiście... oczywiście! Czyli jakby doświadczenie języka i kultury tego środowiska powodowało to, że była o wiele bardziej... gdyby nie wiem...? |
| Participant | 23:33 | Wierzyłam w siebie! Bo całe życie ludzie ci mówią, że będziesz nikim, niczego nie osiągniesz! Z języka nie wiadomo, ile razy bys powtarzała dany temat: w podstawówce, ile razy powtarzaliśmy |

- tematy...! Przecież czasy to myśmy co roku powtarzali! Te same wałkowanie, to samo wałkowanie! I nigdy! Słuchaj: nigdy nie mogłam osiągnąć lepsze oceny aniżeli troję!
- SF 23:59 Ja uczyłam w liceum angielskiego i niemieckiego. I straszne przeprawy z innymi nauczycielami miałam, którzy już robili to przez dłuższy... długi czas ... oskarżali mnie, że zawyżam uczniom ocenę. Ponieważ, dla mnie nie było ważne, czy oni znają czasy... znaczy czas oczywiście jest w jakimś sensie ważny... ale najważniejszy było chyba dla mnie to że oni się czuli się pewnie i wygodnie z tym językiem. Ze potrafili i się chcieli pokazać, że chcieli i że starali się, że. Było dużo sporów na takich zebraniach, gdzie...' Ale Pani Sabino, przecież Pani im zawyża oceny! Przecież to jest ewidentne troję. On nic nie potrafi!'
- Participant 24:55 Ja pamiętam, jak chciałam zrobić wgląd do mojego testu. Dostałam chyba troje... znowu! To już po powrocie ze Stanów...! Panią chyba widziałam nie wiem, ile razy do tego pokoiku wchodziłam. Ona nigdy nie potrafiła znaleźć mego testu. Inne testy były...ale mój test.... Nie wiem co się z nim stało? Ja właśnie nie wiem co ja tej kobiecie zrobiłam...?!'
- SF 25:21 Może właśnie to, że pojechałaś... wiesz? Może to, że miałaś możliwość, której ona nigdy w życiu nie miała. A pewnie się językiem fascynowała, dlatego że pewnie by ja ten kraj...to by ją pewnie fascynował... zapoznanie się z tym wszystkim. Pewnie nie miała okazji zapoznać się, zdobyć takie doświadczenie. Ja też zauważyłam coś takiego właśnie będąc nauczycielem w Polsce, że jakby ta starsza kadra, oni mieli jakby... takie... nie wiem właśnie... zgorzkniali byli. Chyba z powodu, że im się wydawało, że ta młodzież, że ci młodzi ludzie teraz mają o wiele więcej szans, że wszystko można zdobyć i że idą sobie na łatwiznę...
- Participant 26:17 Ja miałam taką wizję, że... bardzo długo! Jak już dostałam moją pierwszą pracę tutaj w Anglii, chciałam...i chciałam przy wizycie

w domu, chciałam po prostu pojechać na uczelnię i ją odwiedzić! Z kwiatami i pokazać mój payslip, że pracuję w Anglii, na takim stanowisku i tyle zarabiam i mówię po angielsku codziennie! To wydaje się... dużo ludzi to... Przecież Chylińska też tak miała...? Ona pokazała (middle finger) do nauczycieli... przecież ma wielkie słuchanie. Ale dlaczego? zobacz kim jest dzisiaj, tak!

SF 26:56 Ja myślę..., że tutaj znów wracamy do tego o czym mówiliśmy wcześniej. Myślę, że system i tutaj jednak komuna i całe postkomunistyczne... Niektórzy ludzie mówią, że 60 lat będzie trwało zanim taka naprawdę będzie miała miejsce prawdziwa przemiana.

Participant 27:13 To będzie straszne! To będzie straszne. W ogóle wiesz, ogólnie kultura... tak sobie myślisz, że z komuny stanie w kolejkach...wiesz co nawet, nawet kultura wchodzenia do autobusu! Patrzysz tutaj wszyscy stają, wiesz co, stoją w kolejce. A w Polsce dalej walą się wszyscy kto pierwszy, żeby tylko na łeb na szyję, bo przecież miejsca nie będą mieli! Autobus nie jest długi wystarczająco by się wszyscy pomieścić. I zwrócił na to uwagę.... Nie wiem... nie wiem. Czy czekasz... jedziesz odwiedziny to są te wszystkie to takie małe detale, które widzisz na co dzień i wydaje mi się po tylu latach będąc tutaj zaczynasz nimi przesiąkać. Więc jak już jedziesz gdzieś to zaczyna cię to strasznie razić i wychwytyjesz te rzeczy takie.... wiesz? Dlaczego np... zwykły przykład...ludzie którzy wywożą śmieci, jacy oni czyści tutaj są! A nasi?! Nie rozumiem. Przecież wykonują tę samą pracę, tak...? Taki zwykły przykład...nie? Mały detalik, który bardzo szybko... jak wcześniej nie zwracał na to uwagi! Teraz poprostu one jakoś...są...nie wiem...?

SF 28:31 Sa takie...

- Participant 28:32 Tu jestem, tu jestem ! (she waves and points as if at the detail)
zauwaz mnie!
- SF 28:34 No... a jak czujesz się w takim razie w Anglii? Powiedziałaś mi
jak czujesz się w Polsce ...a w Anglii? Jak czujesz się?
- Participant 28:44 Czuję się spełniona. I wydaje mi się, że nie słyszę ciągle tego...
tego gadania...narzekania...n.p : 'tej łzawią oczy bo ona tyle lat
spędziła przed komputerem...! I nie było żadnej ostonki i ona
teraz ma problemy!... bo ona musi non stop dawać krople...i bo
jej oczy...' i tak... 'ta ciągle siedziała w przeciagu, bo miała biurko
przy drzwiach i plecy... tu ja wszystko rwie ...nie może się
wyprostować...' podobno to nie ma nic wspólnego z tym że nie
ćwicz regularnie i masz zastale mięśnie! To jest to że siedziała
30 lat czy 40 lat za biurkiem! (sarcasm) i w przeciagu! Te ciągle
takie... wiesz tak jak mówię np.: idziesz do parku masz nonstop
' nie skacz! Nie idź do piasku tam koty... koty sika! A tam...
uważaj na tą wodę !!!' Nie ma ... wiesz co.... dzieci.... My
mówimy, że tu w Anglii dzieci są w tym 'bubbles' w takim
otoczeniu, żeby im się nic nie stało. Ale w Polsce jest jeszcze
gorzej!
- SF 30:05 Ja myślę że to są dwie różne rzeczy do zauważenia, znaczy ja
zauważam np... To tak jak ty mówisz: 'Nie idź! Nie dotykaj!' itd.
A potem tak jak opowiadałaś przed chwilą na dziewiątym
piętrze myjesz okna...
- Participant 30:21 Ale to jest różnica 30 paru lat... Ale mi się...mamy 30 lat, gdzie
świat się nam zmienił. Mi się wydaje, że mamy 2 różne światy w
Polsce. Ja na przykład, tak jak mówię, biorąc pod uwagę to, że
moich rodziców nie było, bo pracowali ja miałam klucz na szyi...
byliśmy sami. Z nudów robisz rzeczy głupie, bo przychodzą Ci
głupoty do głowy, oczywiście. Więc moje myślenie było: OK,
jeżeli ja wyślę moje dziecko na gimnastykę, wyślę dziecko moje
na pływanie, wyślę dziecko tu. To po pierwsze oni się rozwijają.

Ale druga rzecz: niby... bo w przeciwnym razie jeżeli tego nie będziemy robić to co? To przyjdą do domu i co: 'a ja chcę oglądać telewizję, a ja chcę grać na komputerze'. Jeżeli jest jakaś alternatywa, gdzie może zainteresować dziecko. No i oczywiście jest cię stać na to żeby, zapisać na ekstra jakieś zajęcie... Jak najbardziej. Dlaczego nie? Wtedy i twój umysł rozwija (się) i twoją fizyczność... tak... się rozwijasz... Naprawdę?

SF 31:44 e no oczywiście że takie. Zgadzam się z tym, że...że jeżeli mamy takie możliwości to jak najbardziej. Ale i tak myślę, że, jakby w Polsce, że tutaj jest jednak ciężiej. Nie wiem jak u was jest, bo wy jednak mieszkacie tutaj tak bardziej na przedmieściach i nie ma tutaj takiego ruchu więc może by nawet jeżeli mogłyby się dzieci bawić wspólnie z innymi dziećmi, które tutaj mieszkają są sąsiadami itd. U nas nie tylko że na blokach to zawsze się tak robiło. Zawsze się bawiło na zewnątrz.

Participant 32:21 Nadal... ale mniej. Teraz już teraz już można kogoś masz babcie. Już masz babcie z dzieci. Ja się wychowałam sama na placu zabaw. Rany, gdzie myśmy nie biegali! Jak sobie pomyślę...Jak ja sobie pomyślę, gdzie byśmy Biegali! Ze nas nikt nie porwał...! Ze nam nikt... nie wiem czegoś nie zrobił...! Czy wiesz co. Czasy się zmieniły, to po pierwsze. Po drugie; znało się każdego z bloku. Wydaje mi się, że dostęp do informacji teraz na świetlił ludziom wiele rzeczy: porwania dzieci, czy nazwij to sobie jak chcesz... jest więcej tych też (pedofili) między nami... ale, ale może była taka sama liczba wtedy tylko się o tym nie mówiło bo informacja była kontrolowana w czasie komunizmu.

SF 33:19 ..Ale niemniej jednak jest tak np. ja mieszkam na ulicy która jest. kończy się ulicą. I w domach naprzeciwko mieszkają ludzie, którzy... Pani ma córkę w takim samym wieku mniej więcej jak moja córka... i troszkę niżej mieszka chłopak. Ja wiem, że gdyby

- to było w Polsce ja bym znała tych ludzi i te dzieci by się bawiły.
A to nie ma czegoś takiego!
- Participant 33:42 To jest kwestia też wspólnej inicjatywy. My się znamy tutaj ze sąsiadami. Ok. Starsi... starsi tutaj już mają wnuka... ale żeśmy się poszli podstawić
- SF 33:53 Ale ja się byłam przedstawić ...to nie ma żadnego... znaczenia... Ale nic... Wiesz, jeżeli ja jestem (w Polsce) i nadal ja to obserwuję, że ja jestem gdzieś tam u ciotki, coś tam: on bawi się z Bartkiem z przeciwka... Wiesz oni się. Oni się znają po imieniu ze swoimi sąsiadami. A to nie jest tak że oni z nimi spędzają czas. Ale dzieci bawią się. Oni też mieszkają w domkach na przykład. To jednak te dzieci jakoś tam tak się bawia.
- Participant 34:22 Tutaj nie! Bo tutaj zabierasz dziecko na zajęcia! Tak bo tutaj zabierasz dziecko... zamiast więc zamiast dziecko iść się pobawić z sąsiadami, ja zabieram dziecko na pływanie albo na gimnastykę. I ten czas jest zaplanowany. W Polsce, wydaje mi się że, ok...nie wszyscy... tak? Bo jeżeli masz pieniądze i sam jesteś w stanie zainwestować w rozwój swojego dziecka, to też wyślę ich na zajęcia i mam przyjaciół którzy robią coś takiego i żyją bardzo podobnym życiem jak my. Dokładnie. Lokalizacja też robi swoje. Ale jeżeli np. biorąc pod uwagę moją kuzynkę... jeje dziecko nie ma dodatkowych zajęć. Drzwi są otwarte i dzieci są... chodzi do sąsiadów i z powrotem... bo co mają robić. Jest opcja: telewizor, sąsiedzi, telewizor, sąsiedzi.
- SF 35:21 Ja widziałam, że jak do Polski jadę do dziadka, to to samo. I mój syn od razu się podłącza... to w ogóle...od razu automatycznie. To są dzieci sąsiadów które teraz mają dzieci, z którymi ja się bawiłem jako dziecko.
- Participant 35:36 Ale jeżeli mieliby zajęcia, to już nie miałyby tego sąsiada, do którego mogłaby się iść. Nie byłoby ich w domu. I wydaje mi się, że tu jest to. Jest też dostęp do tych pieniędzy. Tam (w

- Polsce) też, niektórzy sobie pozwolą na to niektórzy nie. A niektórzy mają tak (po tad/w nosie signals) jedno albo drugie?
- SF 35:56 Myślę że tutaj też tak jest, obserwuję... wpływ ma na to lokalizacja bo np. na St Pauls: tam też jest bardzo dużo dzieci, po których widać że nie mają żadnych zajęć . Nie ma co, całe popołudnie na podwórku. Zawsze widzę te dzieci na St Pauls. I tam jest masa dzieci, które na pewno nie ma żadnych extra curricular activities. Więc oni się bawią ze sobą wspólnie. Tutaj też są takie... i to też na pewno ma coś wspólnego z pieniędzmi.
- Participant 36:53 Z podejściem też rodziców... Jaki jest priorytet? Pamiętam też u nas (w Polsce) dziewczynka, która, niestety nie bawiła się z nami, bo ona miała szkołę muzyczną. Zawsze było: 'Ola choć! - Nie....Mam szkołę muzyczną!' , więc wiesz. Ona chciała, ale miała szkołę muzyczną. W Stanach mieszka dzisiaj...
- SF 37:21 Niemniej jednak wrócę jeszcze raz do tego tematu jak się czujesz tutaj jako kobieta? Czy jesteś spełniona?
- Participant 37:25 Spełniona! Bo pracowałam ciężko. To co chciałam miałam. Mogłam mieć, bo miałam... ten finansowy 'flexibility' czyli miałam tą możliwość... tak? Chciałam jeździć na koniu, jeździłam konno. Chciałam nauczyć się pływać, bo nie umiałam pływać. Wzięłam sobie kurs, który niestety się skończył, bo żeśmy się przeprowadzili. Więc jak chodziłam na jogę uczyłam obojętnie jakie zajęcia gimnastyczne jakie chciałam chodziłam. Nikt mi nie powiedział, że nie mogę, bo ja o tym decydowałam więc też nie brakowało mi niczego. I wydaje mi się nie mówię, że pieniądze... Nie wiem czy bym mogła sobie pozwolić na ten sam poziom życia... Tak bo widzę: Mam przyjaciółkę na kierowniczym stanowisku i widzę jak jej życie wygląda, mimo że jest na kierowniczym stanowisku. Tak mają dom... tak spłacają kredyt. Mają dwójkę dzieci, ale niestety musisz sobie zadać pytanie czy ona chce wziąć panią która umie jej okna w domu, czy ona

będzie musiała zrobić to sama. I bardzo często robi to sama, może chciałaby wziąć kogoś, żeby ktoś jej okna umył. Więc, jest mała różnica. Biega, ale nie pójdzie na siłownię, bo nie wyda pieniądze na miesięczny karnet, dlatego biega. Więc też jest alternatywa... ćwiczy, bo chcę, ale jeśli by chciała iść i mieć dostęp do pływalni do sauny... Musiałaby wydać na miesięczny karnet na co już nie może pozwolić. Biorąc pod uwagę obecny styl życia jakie mają: że jeżdżą do Wisły na narty, ale tylko dlatego że jej rodzice mają apartament w Wiśle. W przeciwnym razie nie jeździliby. Jeżdżą w okresie zimowym jak są warunki, tak to by, by co weekend jeździli...jadą tam i są na stoku. Więc widzę jak... jakie jest życie. Wiesz jaka jest różnica. I to też tak jak mówię, ona jest na stanowisku kierowniczym. On też ma bardzo dobrą pracę, więc nie jest to, że są na najniższej krajowej. Gdzie też borykają się jak związać koniec z końcem... nie są na tym etapie. Więc tak, wracając do pytania, jak ja się czuję jako kobieta: Nie miałam takiej sytuacji, gdzie bardzo bym coś chciała a nie mogła mieć. I wydaje mi się, że to sprawiło, że mam pozytywne doświadczenia. Tak później, już jako matka to już kompletnie inaczej. Co chcę to dzieci mają. Nie ma czegoś takiego, że brakuje im coś albo nie mogę im czegoś dać.

SF 40:50 A myślisz, że będąc matką tutaj się różni od bycia matka w Polsce?

Participant 40:59 Nie sadze ze mogłabym sobie pozwolić na trójkę dzieci i dać im to co daje. Nie sędzę. Biorąc pod uwagę fakt, że nie pracuje. ok szczęśliwie mi sie w życiu udało Tak jak mówię moja przyjaciółka (w Polsce) jest na stanowisku kierowniczym. Jej mąż na bardzo wysokim stanowisku. Też dwójka dzieci, dom... U nas jest tak: ja a nie pracuje, trójka dzieci mamy dom ok mąż na stanowisku kierowniczym. Jakość życia jest troszeczkę inna. Ja nie mówię, że materialne rzeczy dają nam dają nam szczęście, ale nie

zasmakowaliśmy braków. Tak...? Rozumiesz co chce powiedzieć? Chcę powiedzieć, że wydaje mi się, że byłyby może jakieś... jakieś łyż goryczy, że bardzo chcesz coś dać a nie jesteś w stanie dać. Tak jak bardzo wiele matek ma: chcesz coś dziecku kupić - musisz poczekać do następnego miesiąca. U nas nie było takiego problemu. Jak ja pamiętam w domu rodzice mieli rozmowy: 'tak wiesz... albo jedno, albo drugie nie możemy mieć obu'. Albo: 'chcesz buty, no niestety musisz poczekać na te buty Adidasa. Teraz! Już chcesz teraz! Ale ja nie mogę ci dać teraz!'. U mnie dziecko podchodzi: chce, idziesz i kupujesz.

SF 42:31 Ja myślę że wiele kobiet w Polsce zauważa coś takiego, wiele kobiet które wyjechało z Polski, matki szczególnie, zauważa coś takiego że model ekonomiczny w Polsce i model ekonomiczny tutaj na tyle się różnią o ile w Polsce nie mogłaby byś być tak zwaną 'stay at home mum' .

Participant 42:50 Nie z trojką albo z dwójką dzieci. Nie żeby posłać je do szkoły prywatnej i dać im tam wszystkie te ekstra. Ja nie mówię, że to jest szczęście, ale wydaje mi się że jestem kobietą spełnionym i szczęśliwą jako kobieta. Tak bo niczego mi na chwilę obecną nie brakuje. Nie mam łyż goryczy i żalu, że chcę coś a nie mogę czegoś dać. Oczywiście pieniądze nie kupują szczęścia. W wielkim stopniu pomagają, ale możesz spędzić czas z twoimi dziećmi... to jest najważniejsze. Nie tak jak moi znajomi: przychodzą są zmęczeni i jeszcze muszą ugotować. Jeszcze muszą posprzątać. A dzień jest krótki. Siedzą blisko godziny dwunastej, żeby przygotować jedzenie na drugi dzień. Odwieźć dzieci. Jeszcze ewentualnie jakichś balet, bo na to sobie mogą pozwolić, i to też dzięki babci, która zawozi i przywozi dzieci z baletu. Wydaje mi się, że jeżeli, nie wiem, jeżeli nie miała być tego od samego początku to nie brakowało ci tego!

- SF 43:57 Nie wiem czy nie brakowało... czy byś się nauczyła żyć na innym poziomie...?
- Participant 44:02 Tak! Nie ma i nie ma i niestety musisz to zaakceptować, bo nie ma! Więc ja gdzieś mam taką wizję. Ja nie wiem co się ze mną stało, ale ja sobie powiedziałam nie jesteśmy gorsi od Amerykanów. Pamiętam: pracujemy tak samo ciężko to też pamiętam. Dlaczego my nie możemy tego mieć? Dlaczego? Dlaczego nie możemy tak żyć jak inna narodowość? Dlaczego nie możemy mieć lepszego życia? Dlaczego? Dlaczego moja kuzynka musi chodzić do ciucholandu, kupować ciuchy swoim dzieciom w ciucho landzie? Dlaczego nie może iść do sklepu komfortowo i kupić to co ona chce? Dlaczego? To było osiem lat temu... moja przyjaciółka pisała do mnie żebym ja jakieś gryzaki wysyłała. Dlaczego ona mnie prosiła o to o te takie malutkie drobiazgi które ... (niestety ja wtedy jeszcze nie miałam mojego dziecka)? Ale nie było! Ja wysyłam jej zdjęcie... nie było tego w Polsce na rynku. Więc ona się spytała: Czy mogę jej to za prezentować. To też musi jakoś wpływać na kobiety, jeżeli ona musi kogoś prosić o pomoc to musi strasznie boleć. Pamiętam bardzo długo wysyłałam rzeczy do momentu aż się moje dziecko urodziło, bo wtedy, jeżeli nie możesz to możesz, ale przychodzi swoje własne dziecko i wtedy już zaczynasz patrzeć na swoją rodzinę. Jakoś tak jakoś mam takie uczucie, że jeżeli mi się powiodło w życiu i dobrze mi się ułożyło i mogę jakoś nie odczuje tego po sobie kupienie parę butów mniej. A te pieniądze mogłaby przeznaczyć na jakieś dziecięce rzeczy to po prostu wysłę. I tak też zrobiłam. Bolało mnie to że, dziewczyna dzisiaj pracuje na 2 etaty, rozeszła się ze swoim mężem. Jest więcej rozwodów, gdzie się nie obejrzy to jest ktoś rozwiedziony... albo nie ułożyło się tak jak się chciało ...gdzie kiedyś się przecież żyło... Nie pamiętam chodząc do szkoły, żeby

- było dużo rozwodów, żeby rodzice jakoś znajomych nie żyli razem. A teraz: bardzo dużo moich znajomych się rozeszło!
- SF 46:45 Myślę, że ogólnie czy obojętnie czy w Polsce, czy też na Zachodzie jest ogólnie taki trend że tzw. 'patchwork family'...
- Participant 46:59 Czuje się kobietą spełnioną! Wróciłabym do Polski? Nie! Co bym zrobiłabym mogła cofnąć czas. Przypuszczam, że gdybym mogła to zamiast podjąć może tę pracę to wyjechałabym do innego kraju. By zobaczyć nie wiem... może Nową Zelandię... albo Japonię... Tak jak już masz dzieci to się wszystko zmienia... ale takie miałam myślenie: trzeba było wyjechać jeszcze dalej jak miałam możliwość, bo tam potem wyjeżdżasz tylko do pewnego wieku...jako w programie. Nie chciałam wyjechać na własną rękę. Chciałabym mieć tak jak miałam wcześniej, wszystko zagwarantowane miałam rodzinę, z którą mogłabym mieszkać po to wtedy nie musisz się o nic martwić. Oczywiście... pewno bym pojechała! Gdybym wiesz..., ale wtedy nie miałabym wtedy... moja droga by się potoczyła zupełnie inaczej, nie byłabym dzisiaj tutaj. Chociaż gdzieś to było już ...wiesz co wydaje mi się, że ta droga...gdzieś była naświetlona, że tą drogą muszę. Nie wiem czy by była spełniona i szczęśliwa w Polsce. Nie ciągnie mnie tam. Ciągnie mnie do babci mojej. bo po co. To jest jedna z tych takich myśli, że nie możesz być blisko i nie możesz być tak często jak byś chciała. Ale czy bym się odnalazła mieszkając tam? Nie! Z każdą wizytą. Dzień trzeci...liczę dni do powrotu... brakuje mi tego, brakuje mi tego. Brakuje mi mojego ulubionego soku albo brakuje mi mojego ulubionego sera. Takie małe. Wydaje mi się że...
- SF 49:09 Pierwszy raz pojechaliśmy, jak żeśmy po wyjeździe do Niemiec pojechaliśmy do Polski, tylko ja i mój Tato ponieważ nie mogliśmy wszyscy wrócić, bo nie wiadomo czy by nas wypuścili. Jechaliśmy tym pociągiem i pamiętam jak inni pasażerowie

- głównie Polacy mnie pytali jak w tych Niemczech i czego im brakuje. Odpowiedziałam że jogurtu...
- Participant 49:32 Ja pamiętam przecież dziewczyna była która miała rodzinę właśnie w Niemczech i ona chociaż do szkoły pakowało kanapki...
- SF 49:40 Ja mailam z pasztetem...
- Participant 49:40 Albo z paprykarzem... Rzeczy, które ona miała! Słuchaj to klasa stała wokół...te miski (haribo) które ona miała! To wszystko tak pachniało! Jak ja to pamiętam to dzisiaj! Jak ona otworzyła pudełko swoje, to wszystkie dzieci się normalnie... (trzęśły się) Każde...Każde dziecko błagało czy mogłoby... kawałek? Słuchaj... kawałek ona da...ona da. Taka wredna była! I podzieliła się tylko z jednym, albo z drugim, reszta mogła tylko wachać. Co to było...? Wiesz co... nie przynosi takich rzeczy do szkoły, jeżeli jesteś w stanie komunistycznym. Nikt inny nie ma!
- SF 50:30 U mnie w domu było coś takiego, że nie wolno mi było brać czegokolwiek! A to nie było tak bo inaczej było np. jak miałeś rodzica, który wyjeżdżał i pracował za granicą. Inaczej jest, jak masz rodzica, który pracował i np. przywoził na handel rzeczy. Były u nas też takie dzieci w szkole na pewno u ciebie też więcej zawsze miały i też, ale my mieliśmy tam co tam wiesz ktoś paczkę przysłał czy coś...
- Participant 51:09 Właśnie ona... ona paczki dostawała.
- SF 51:11 No to my też. Ale nie wolno mi było do szkoły niczego przynosić. Ja myślę, że moja mama sobie zdawała sprawę z takich rzeczy... (zazdrość, smutek innych dzieci gdy widziały że ktoś ma słodyczne z zagranicy)
- Participant 51:21 To właśnie takie drobnostki. Nie wiesz, dopóki nie zobaczysz...! Bo ja będąc w komunizmie, nie byliśmy, nie miałyśmy tego. Tak
- SF 51:34 Jak poszłam pierwszy raz do sklepu z zabawkami w Berlinie. Ja się rozpłakałam. Ja po prostu stałam i patrzałam... nie

wiedziałam co się ze mną dzieje. Nie pytajcie mnie czy to było jakieś racjonalne...Nie sędzę że to było jakieś racjonalne, czy ja potrafiłam wtedy wytłumaczyć co się dzieje. Ja po prostu stałam tam w tym sklepie przed tymi zabawkami i płakałam.

Participant 51:55 Prosiłaś mamę, że coś chciałaś?

SF 51:55 Nie! Ja nic nie chciałam!

Participant 51:58 Ile lat miałas?

SF 52:03 Dziewięć. Moja mama mówi, że... Ja pytałam się i później, jeszcze zupełnie niedawno, chciałam, żeby mi wytłumaczyła czy ja coś powiedziałam? Czy o co mi chodziło? czy co? Bo pamiętam. Pamiętam. Dalej jeszcze widzę tą półkę w sklepie... czy tam w ogóle ten sklep tak wyglądał jak go pamiętam... ponieważ mam wrażenie że po prostu może mi się wszystko pomieszało? Mama mówi że nie. Ze po prostu płakałam, że nic nie chciałam. Po prostu byłam... Nie wiem co mi się wydarzyło...

Participant 52:34 Myśmy poszli do Peweksu. Poszliśmy. Nie wiem z kim. Wiem, że moja mama była Nie wiem po co. Nie pamiętam tego. Coś kupiłam chyba. I pamiętam zboczyłam lalkę Barbie. Ja też płakałam. I płakałam nie wiem przez ile dni... W końcu dostałam! Kupiła mi pudełko... ale kupiła mi podróbkę!

SF 52:56 Fleur! Mi też kupili Fleur!

Participant 52:56 Ja a nie chciałam podróbkę, ale mi wtedy powiedziała, że, tu mam dziewczynkę i mam kobietę i faceta i mam trójkę dzieci, więc mam więcej niż lalka Barbie. Ale ja nie chciałam. Nie bo ja chciałam lalkę Barbie. I to jest to te właśnie, te takie te uczucia, które wracają... Nie wiem, też na pewno niemożność rodzica, bo na pewno nie jeden rodzic chce a nie może. ... Ale dlaczego wykupiła cały pakiet? Ja chciałam tylko jedna lalkę.

SF 53:44 Ale o to chodzi właśnie. Ten zapach, to wszystko, te lalki... Dopóki mi się wydaje dopóki tego nie zobaczysz nie, zaskakuje że tylko cukierka, tego miska (haribo).

- Participant 53:52 Nie pojedziesz, nie zobaczysz, nie wiesz co możesz mieć. Bo nie wiesz! Też dużo moich znajomych nie wie, bo nigdy, nie opuścili kraju. Niektórzy nawet śląska nie opuścili. Gdzie oni się obracają? Wisła, Kraków, Wrocław...Na jakieś wycieczki weekendowe i tak dalej. Ale ile z nich było.. OK może nad morze... na Mazurach? Ile z nich było też w tych innych okolicach Polski, które też są piękne? Nie! Dlaczego? Przyzwyczajenie może? Kasa? Dużo jest właśnie takich małych... Wiesz, dlaczego mam jechać do Torunia na wycieczkę weekendowym jak mógł jechać do Krakowa jest bliżej. Co ja tam będę robił? Nie mam pojęcia to już muszę na noc zostać. Jest to samo tak, jak żeśmy ostatnio rozmawiali, o tym o tym jedzeniu na zewnątrz restauracji... i to jest normalne. A w Polsce musi to być okazja żebyś mogła iść i świętować. Więc jako kobieta... teraz może mniej..., ale czułam się sexy i czułam się spełniona. Czułam się atrakcyjna czułam się dobra w tym co robiłam Byłam dobra w tym co robiłam. Niczego mi nie brakowało, więc co miałam narzekać, gdzie miałam powody do bycia nie szczęśliwą czy niespełniona. Wszystkie te boksy które miałam do odhaczenia, ja odhaczyłam. Jak sobie wymyśliłam coś innego... to niewiele mi brakowało, żeby to osiągnąć. Żeby to zrobić. Więc, przeszłam przez trudny okres w moim życiu. Przykry. Serce mi pękło..., ale... Tak jak mówią czas leczy rany ja uważam, że nie leczy ran tylko uczy się jak z tym żyć. Zaakceptować stratę. Jak zaakceptować sytuację. Dlaczego? Nie wiem... Ale później jak tak analizowałam. Może gdzieś... gdzieś tak miało być. Niestety. Nie wiem... może gdzieś tak miało być, że ta moja droga po prostu miała iść w tą stronę.
- SF 56:35 Jak czujesz się z Anglikami?
- Participant 56:39 Teraz lepiej niż na początku. Może przez to, że... Ze względu na pracę, którą ja wykonywałam. Nie było opcji takiej żeby mogła

wyjąć przysłowiowe piwo, z osobami które znałem na co dzień. To mógłby być potem konflikt w pracy. Więc początki były ciężkie, bo tak jak powiedziałam nie wejdiesz do restauracji i powiesz: 'Przyjechałam tutaj i szukam przyjaciela!' Każdy ma już jakiś krąg, albo z liceum, albo jest to krąg ze studiów albo jest to krąg, jeszcze skądś z pierwszej nowej pracy... Czy już wszyscy...wszystko było 'established'. Wszystko już było ustawienie. Dokładnie tak! Jakby ktoś chciał wejść do naszej paczki (w Polsce), to jedynie przez partnera, to jest twój chłopak albo też twoja dziewczyna i wchodzisz do naszego kręgu. Ale tak żebyśmy kogoś przyjęli obcego... Tak znikąd. Wszyscy żeśmy się trzymali od liceum. Później każdy szedł na studia, do wszystkich doszło kilka nowych osób i to było tyle. Miałam kilka osób z którymi spędzała czas. Jakoś wtedy wydaje mi się, że nie brakowało mi tego. Wiesz. Wiesz co, praca, miałam te swoje zajęcia, które sobie tam... Tak więc a po drugie...

SF 58:31 A twój mąż był tutaj czy w Polsce jeszcze?

Participant 58:33 Był tutaj. Czyli to tak naprawdę miałam co robić wieczorami. To nie było tak, że ja siedziałam i się nudziłam, albo...czy wtedy jeszcze skypowało... bo to jeszcze skyp wtedy był. Bo to się nie dzwoniło wtedy.

SF 58:54 Dalej jeszcze jest skype i dziadek dalej krzyczy do komputera (śmiech)

Participant 59:00 Trójkę dzieci, więc to jest naprawdę rzadkością teraz. Chociaż facetime jest teraz, tak bo to jest automatycznie, nie musisz się logować nie musisz mieć komputera. Więc wcześniej się musiałam szykować do komputera, żeby była kamera. Teraz robi się to przez telefon jest kompletnie inaczej. Teraz masz Whatsupa możesz przez internet się połączyć. Wtedy nie było tego. Dzisiaj wchodzisz do banku otwierasz konto. Wtedy musiałas mieć list z pracy potwierdzający, że jesteś zatrudniona

w miejscu zamieszkania. Więc bardzo dużo się zmieniło. Bardzo dużo się zmieniło technologia na pewno posunęła się naprzód. Ale tak jak mówię jeszcze, że na początku jakby nie było... Wiesz co wydaje mi się, że, nie było mi ciężko odnaleźć się w biurze i znaleźć znajomych. Znajomych, bo ja nie traktuję tego jako przyjaciół. Moi przyjaciele byli w Polsce których znałam przez lata. To że ja kogoś poznałam. Tu się mówi 'o my friend, my friend' bo to się tak mówi. Nie mówi się 'colleague', nie ma tej różnicy między przyjacielem a znajomym niby... To wszystko dla mnie byli znajomi z pracy. Ale oni wracali do swych rodzin, do swoich dzieci, do swoich mężów. To że ja wtedy byłam już bez żadnych jakiejś takich 'commitments' nie było dzieci... Rozumiesz o co chodzi?

SF 01:00:28 Oczywiście.

Participant 01:00:29 Ja teraz widzę, jak życie wygląda jak masz rodzinę. Ja idę spać z kurami! Się musisz zająć się trzema małymi człowieczkami. I muszę myśleć: i iść do ubikacji, umyć ręce... tu wszystko...wiec głowa ci chodzi non stop. Nie miałam tego wcześniej. Czy poszłam o godzinie 12 spać, czy o godzinie pierwszej...Wstałam ciągle miałam dwie godziny na to, żeby sobie włosy wyprostować wałki nałożyć...Oko zrobić! Słuchaj wyjść do pracy jako modelka. I patrzyłam na te Angielki, które siedziały przy komputerach i po prostu się zastanawiałam, się zastanawiałam jak one mężów mają? Ja teraz widzę, jak wygląda życie rodzinne. Ja rozumiem, dlaczego wyglądały, tak jak wyglądały. Bo ja weszłam mając dwadzieścia parę lat, około 25 26 to jest ciągle jeszcze 20. Ja byłam świeżością tam. Na wszystko miałam czas, słuchaj. Teraz tylko podkład, nawet kreski sobie nie robię. Tylko podkład, jeszcze podkład! Zmarszczki! I koniec! Ja nie pamiętam żebym ja miała worki pod oczami z niedospania! Po trzy razy w nocy się budzisz do dziecka. Oglądałam program, i

mam odpowiedzi na to, o czym później na temat. Także jak nie wiem jaka jest definicja kobiety spełnionej? To, że ma rzeczy materialne może? Nie! Mam kochającą rodzinę. Zdrową rodzinę. A przede wszystkim mam męża, który zrobi wszystko dla nas. Który świata poza nami nie widzi. I vice versa. Jest to inny... inny poziom relacji niż te które miałam wcześniej. Kompletnie inny związek! Kompletnie! Nie wiem czy jest to czy przez to, że jest różnica wiekowa między nami? Czy kulturowa, też? Nie wiem, ale to są dwa inne życia, których w żaden sposób nie da się... tak jak się mówi, że porównuje swoich byłych... Nie da się kompletnie... inny wymiar kompletnie.

SF 01:02:47 Ja też myślę, że pewnych rzeczy nie da się porównać. Między tym związkiem, które teraz mam jako matka...z żadnymi związkami które miałam wcześniej, nawet jeżeli one trwały po dziesięć lat. Tak naprawdę wydaje mi się, że to są zupełnie inne parametry. Głównie przez to, że jestem teraz matką. Wydaje mi się...

Participant 01:03:04 Doświadczenie jest też inne. Czas też robi swoje robi

SF 01:03:08 To też... Rozmawiałam ostatnio o tym czy jest o wiele łatwiej... byłoby... mieć dzieci w wieku lat 20? Czy trzydziestu ileś? Ja uważam że jednak doświadczenie, ja się o wiele lepiej czuje niż jak miałam lat 20.

Participant 01:03:28 Psychicznie jesteśmy przygotowani. Wydaje mi się, że emocjonalnie jesteś w stanie dać tym dzieciom więcej. Przez to że sobie odhaczysz wszystkie te punkciki które chciałeś osiągnąć w życiu, nie masz... Nie żałujesz. Nie żałujesz, bo wiesz, że Ty to zrobiłaś. Chciałam wyjechać. Tak chciała. Chciałam wyjechać to pojechałam. Chciałam zrobić sobie kurs wspinaczki zrobiłam sobie, tak. Chciałam pojechać tam na wakacje. Byłam. Więc nie ma. Chciała iść na imprezę? Byłam! Byłam zalana? Byłam! Czy to wiesz, czy to jest fajne czy nie fajne?! Odhaczyłam! Więc

teraz będąc matką, to teraz przychodzę na kanapę ja chcę się przytulić. Ja nie muszę iść na imprezę. Ja nie muszę wychodzić. Dorosłam? Nie wiem jak to się nazywa. I tu właśnie chcę powiedzieć, czy się czuję kobietą spełnionym, czyli ten okres taki 25 plus 30 jest kompletnie innym aniżeli jak zaczęłam rodzinę. Czyli tak jak powiedziałam: być żoną i matką, bo teraz jako kobieta spełniona. Co jest dla mnie bycie kobietą spełnioną? To, że moje dzieci są szczęśliwe. To, że czułam na tym, że nikt ręki na mnie nie podniesie. Że są bezpieczne, że są wychowane w bezpiecznej atmosferze. Nie wiem, czy są rozpieszczone? Pewnie są! Mają za dużo. Absolutnie tak. Ale jeżeli jest możliwość, dlaczego im nie dać?! Takie jest moje podejście. Niektórzy mogą mnie za to krytykować, że mają za dużo. Moja mama mnie krytykuje, że spędzamy za dużo czasu w aucie, bo jeździmy non stop po różnych miejscach. Ale ona miała swoje życie, ona je przeżyła tak jak chciała. Może niezupełnie tak jak chciała. Ona je przeżyła tak jak ona jej przeszła. Ja przeżyję moje tak jak ja przeżyję. Może za 20 lat usiądę i sobie stwierdzę: może dałam moim dzieciom za dużo...? Może tak być.

SF 01:05:44 Ale wiesz, jak się mówi: hindsight, czy tam refleksja czasowa... jest wiesz? Wtedy zawsze się wydaje, że można było zrobić inaczej! Ja uważam, osobiście myślę sobie często, że nie warto spędzać czasu na takich refleksjach, bo tak naprawdę do niczego pozytywnego czy konstruktywnego nie prowadzą tak naprawdę.

Participant 01:06:13 Tak jak mówię, jak postanowiłam swoje decyzje wczoraj. Czy dzieci mają za dużo? Czy może powinniśmy obciążyć pewne ekstra zajęcia? Ale tak myślę że jeśli ja to zrobię, to wtedy będzie... A może powinny się trochę nudzić.

SF 01:06:33 Na pewno się powinny trochę ...

Participant 01:06:34 Ale mają weekend, mają niedziele, żeby siedzieć przed telewizorem!

SF 01:06:38 Na pewno powinny się trochę ponudzić, bo to dobrze jest się ponudzić trochę. To wtedy w jakimś tam sensie wymusza pewna kreatywność.

Participant 01:06:46 Ale my mamy czas na to! Nagrałam je wczoraj, co wypracowały w pokoju z ukrycia. Maja ten czas dla siebie. To nie jest tak, że każdą minutę mają zaplanowaną. Aczkolwiek wiesz co? Chcę, żeby próbowały nowych rzeczy. Przypuszczam, że tak jak ktoś powiedział, że one się odnajdą i zobaczą, gdzie będzie ich miłość w czym. Popróbują różnych rzeczy i zobaczą: 'Nie chcę tego robić.' Wtedy nie ma problemu a przecież tak to działa, jak muszą. A im więcej robią tym bardziej się rozwijają, bo im więcej robisz tym więcej ich neurony, się tak szybko tworzą i mnożą. I... nie wiem... nie wiem...Więc jestem spełniona. Jestem spełniona.

SF 01:07:41 Powiedz jeszcze raz z tymi Anglikami mówiłaś na początku że właśnie było ciężko...?

Participant 01:07:44 Ciężko było, żeby gdzieś się jakoś... nie dopasować... ale...

SF 01:07:57 Z czym ci było ciężko, mówisz, że każdy miał swoje kółka społeczne

Participant 01:08:00 Ale może to też było w moje głowie... Chyba tak naprawdę... nie wiem czy tak naprawdę próbowałam. Bo ja widzę różnice teraz jak mam dziecko i zaczynasz się spotykać w różnych takich np. kółkach, gdzie matki się spotykają. Nie wiem czy to przez to, że jesteśmy na tej...może było to, że ja nie miałam rodziny i dzieci ja nie widziałam tych problemów które... np.: mój brat! On tego nie widzi tak jak ja to widzę. On nie ma dzieci i ja to teraz rozumiem. Może ja taka byłam wtedy?! Może ...na pewno taka byłam, bo właśnie pewne rzeczy dla mnie nie istniały... Bo jeszcze... ta moja jak to się nazywa...amygdala? Którą się jeszcze

nie wytworzyła, nie obudziła się na tyle... I dla mnie to był odlot. Mam teraz, czuję ból każdej matki! Jak nie wiesz, dlaczego dziecko płacze. Jak obserwuje inne matki i widzę jak ona się denerwuje, że się stresuje i nie potrafi sobie poradzić. Ja czuję ten ból, bo byłam tam. Jakie to jest kompletnie inny poziom tego. Więc wydaje się mi, że jak już mam dziecko jestem, w tej grupie, tak jak szkoła czy zajęcia z pływania. Wszyscy jedziemy na tym samym wózku. I było chyba łatwiej, bo był wspólny temat do przełamania tej pierwszej bariery. Gdzie tak naprawdę ktoś mówił, że córka zrobiła to i to, i to, i to, i to i to i... Ja tak naprawdę też nie mogłam się jakoś wkręcić w tę rozmowę, bo nie mam nic do powiedzenia na ten temat. Tak naprawdę jak teraz tak myślę, jak zaczynasz mnie ciągnąć za język... zaczynam wracać do tego momentu, gdzie... dla mnie to było, wiesz co, skończyć prace...jechać do centrum handlowego... kupić sobie sukienkę albo parę spodni albo iść do restauracji coś zjeść z kimś... a one wracały do domu. 'Co gotuje się na obiad?' jedna do drugiej. No tak, no bo takie rozmowy się ma co będziesz jutro robić tak...? Jak nie gotowałam, to poszłam do Zizzi, albo poszłam do Bella Italia czy to coś ...Nie muszę gotować lunchu, mogłam sobie iść kupić kanapki. Ja rzadko przynosiłam swoje jedzenie. Mi się nie chciało tego pakować, robić dzień wcześniej, tak jak one. Czy resztki z jakiegoś obiadu. Van podjeżdża. Ja kupowałam świeżą kanapkę wydawało mi się, że świeża, robiona dzień wcześniej, czy dwa wcześniej. Czy podjechałam na stację tankowania i kupiłam sobie sałatkę zabrałam ze sobą do pracy. Czy wyskoczyłam do Subwaya. To są rzeczy, którymi ja się nie niestresowałam, bo nawet nie interesowałam. Kantyna była u góry. Cały czas mogłam mieć codziennie... Teraz myślę. Dzieciom? Co ja dzieciom włożę do... bo jak odbieram dzieci zawsze robię takie małe snack boxy. Wchodzą do auta i dostają.

Ten pierwszy głód, żeby zabić. Jest też trochę czasu od lunchu do kolacji. Aż dojdiesz do domu...Słuchaj to jest jak święta, jak otwierają te boxy..., bo mimo to że mają to samo każdego dnia... zawsze jest coś innego. I wiesz. Mojego syna słucham. Jak pudełko otwiera. A ja jadę. I to jest zawsze moment, kiedy chce go zobaczyć. Muszę to widzieć. To jest moment, który ja muszę widzieć... położy sobie pudełeczko, otworzy. I mówi: 'I ove ya mummy!'. Nie mówi 'love you' tylko 'ove you'. A ja na to: 'i ove ya too'. (laughter) No wiesz to jest lepsze niż święta. I później sobie tam maszkieci. Ja widzę teraz to, tak? Co mam im zrobić na obiad jutro? Kręcę się... żeby m się nie znudziło! Tak żeby cała trójka była szczęśliwa. Bo jedna, nie je pomidorów, druga uwielbia pomidory, trzeci pakuje. Trzeci przez ostatnie dwa lata swojego życia z jajkami musi mieć wędzonego łososia. Jak nie ma łososia to nie jajek nie zje! Więc ma! Moja córka nie je łososia, więc ...Nałożyłam jej. Mowie: 'spróbuj chociaż troszeczkę. Ty jadłaś łososia! Później ci się coś odpowiedziało, że nie.' Ona na to: 'Fuj!', to mój syn też zaraz 'Fuj!'. Jak 'Fuj!' jeśli kochałeś tego łososia ponad życie? Jesteśmy na wakacjach przez 7 dni z rzędu. Wszystko co jeszcze to jajko z łososiem na śniadanie. Protestujesz: 'nie zjem niczego innego!'. Aż pani z kuchni wyszła i się pyta: 'gdzie jest ten chłopak?' bo musiała zobaczyć który dwulatek codziennie je jajka z łososiem! Ale to jest tak: że on je tego łososia, najstarsza zje troszeczkę, ta w środku nie zje w ogóle. Najstarsza uwielbia pomidory, ta w środku nie zje pomidorów w ogóle. Ta w środku uwielbia paprykę. I teraz tak musisz zrobić, żeby każdy był szczęśliwy! I żeby się jako matka czuła spełniona, że dostarczyłam dobry obiad na stol i każdy zjadł, Zaspokoił swój głód i nie było: 'ja tego nie będę... Tego nie lubię tego jeść nie będę, bo tego nie lubię'.

SF 01:14:12 Powiem ci że u nas w domu nie było marudzenia, nie było tak że jak nie lubię czegoś czego jeść. Jadło się so się dostało!

Participant 01:14:20 Dokładnie, dokładnie tak! Nie pamiętam, tak jak sięgam pamięcią. I mój mąż powiedział dokładnie to samo nie było!

SF 01:14:34 Teraz bardziej się staramy dopasować do ich (dzieci) potrzeb.

Participant 01:14:41 Ale dlaczego? Widzimię?! Ale ty też tak masz: dzisiaj masz ochotę na kurczaka jutro nie masz!

SF 01:14:48 Zgadzam się, tylko że z drugiej strony, ja też po prostu jem co jest. Po pierwsze to jest taka, że ja je wszystkie resztki... Jem co już wszyscy czego wszyscy inni już nie chcą...

Participant 01:15:01 Było tak że Mama ugotowała gar, przez trzy dni z rzędu gotowała gar, i to było tyle! Tak! Tak w niedzielę był rosół. W poniedziałek zarazków było. W Poniedziałek jeszcze był rosół. We wtorek już była pomidorowa. To był wielki garnek. Gotowało się codziennie. Ale wydaje mi się też... wydaje mi się też, że jest to kwestia pokazania szacunku tym małym człowieczkom. Czego nam nie było dane. Bo to że ty nałożysz swoją wole na mnie, to jest 'surpressing'! Z perspektywy pozycji. Ty jako dorosły to jest tyranizm. Nie wiem czy takie słowo istnieje i czy dobrze go używam, ale to jest tyranizm! Bo ktoś zrobił zupę i ja ją muszę zjeść!

SF 01:15:52 Ale ja nie narzuca się w taki sposób...

Participant 01:15:55 Ale tak nasze dzieciństwo wyglądało. Ja pamiętam przyszła ciocia znajoma moich rodziców przyszła, nie wiem, gdzie moi rodzice byli. Ja pamiętam tą sytuację, że byliśmy w kuchni i jedliśmy zupę. Pomidorową. Moja ulubiona nie ma problemu. Nalała nam, ona nam nalała nie rodzice. Więc jako osoba obca, ona nas nie zna, nie wie, ile my jemy. My ciągle jesteśmy dziećmi. Nie zapominajmy o tym. Możemy zjeść tyle ile możemy zjeść. A ona sobie życzyła, żebyśmy mieli wszystko skończyć. I ja pamiętam: "że już nie mogę ciociu... już nie mogę... już nie

mogę". A ona na to : "Ok kochasz babcię? No to zjesz za babcię! z Za mamusie. Za tatusia nie zjesz? Nie zjesz za tatusia...?!" mimo że masz już tutaj (po dziurki w nosie/ you are full). "Za brata..., za jeszcze ciocie, za jeszcze jedna ciocie". I co się stało? Skończyłaś zupkę i co się stało? Zwymiotowałaś. Dlaczego nie pamiętasz wielu innych obiadów z twojego dzieciństwa, a pamiętasz to? Dlaczego ja ten obiad pamiętam? Bo tak mi się zapisał w pamięci! Co to sprawiło mi! Mam 40 lat i ja pamiętam, jak miałam 6 lat i jadłam tą zupę.

SF 01:17:17 Ja zgadzam się z Tobą, że to, że jest takie, że to jest ' a power relationship'. Zgadzam się z tym wszystkim. Ja moim dzieciom nie wciskam nic. Nie chcesz, to nie jedz. Ja na chłama nie będę Ci wciskać! Wiesz o co chodzi z moim synem to jest już inaczej. Sytuacja jest inna, bo, to jest na takiej zasadzie, że ja widzę, że u niego to są często widzimi się. Bo ktoś w szkole powiedział, że a nagle nie jemy czegoś... ty wiesz to są takie sytuacje jest ...naprawdę nie masz na talerzu.

Participant 01:17:48 Tak jak wczoraj: że on nie lubił łososia...

SF 01:17:51 Tak jak ty mówisz: piąstka jest piąstka. Zjesz, ile zjesz, ja rozumiem. Ale ja nie oczekuję od ciebie żebyś ty zjadł tyle, żeby ci zupa ciekła nosem. Nie, nie bawię się z Tobą w takie sytuacji albo staram się.

Participant 01:18:06 Ale nam było tak robione!

SF 01:18:10 Ja też rozumiem dużo z tej perspektywy. Rozumiem też to, że trzeba było jakby.... Nie było niczego w sklepach tak, jak żeśmy mówiły. Wtedy na rosół to trzeba było ten rosół przerabiać. Jeść w poniedziałek znów. We wtorek jadło się albo ogórkowa, albo pomidorowa... cokolwiek. Dopiero w środę były jakieś inne jakaś np. jajko z ziemniakami czy coś takiego. Czy mizeria. Czy filety rybne w piątek...Nie nawidze...

Participant 01:18:46 W Piątek z kapusta kiszona...

SF 01:18:50 Ja rozumiem, że byliśmy bardzo ograniczeni w pewien sposób. Więc dlatego też... ale ja patrzę czasem na moje dzieci i tak się zastanawiam... widzę że czasem to są widzimisie! Ja jestem taka że dam sobie spokój. Moj mąż to bardziej się upiera: Nie będziesz siedział i jadł! Czyli ja przez to że doświadczyłam to 'a jeszcze jedną łyżkę za mamusię i tatusia...' za to ja jestem już kompletnie lessez fair teraz. Ja nie będę cię zmuszać. Ja ciebie nie będę do jedzenia zmuszać, bo ja wiem, jak to było, jak mnie zmuszali do jedzenia jakie uczucie. Mąż mówi: 'ale on musi mieć pełny żołądek ', a ja mówię 'ale ja go nie będę zmuszać do jedzenia. Wiesz, jak będzie głody to zje nie będziemy się przecież... No ale tak jak mówiliśmy wracając do tych Anglików: jak to teraz jest z perspektywy czasu? Jak się czujesz z Anglikami? Jak się czujesz?

Participant 01:19:58 Mam kobiety w moim życiu, które dzielą te same priorytety, albo bardzo podobne priorytety, albo większość priorytetów naszych życiowych się pokrywa. Dlatego czujemy się bardzo dobrze w tym gronie mamy bardzo dobre przyjaciółki, gdzie spędzamy bardzo dużo czasu ze sobą i poznałam wiele innych matek na mojej drodze życiowej przez ponad siedem lat. Pewne przyjaźnie zostały z którymi się utrzymuję kontakt, bo to jest tak jak z małżeństwem. Przyjaźni też musisz pielęgnować. Pielęgnować to nie jest to że ona gdzieś tam jest. Musisz dbać o kontakt i tyle. Ile włożysz tyle dostaniesz i nie możesz oczekiwać, że non-stop ktoś będzie koło ciebie skakał. I w pewnym momencie wiesz masz dosyć. Wydaje mi się... jesteśmy tutaj prawie 8 lat. 8 lat będzie, jak jesteśmy. Wydaje mi się, że stworzyliśmy takie przyjaźnie które będą to przyjaźnie na życie, mam nadzieję. Chciałabym by przetrwały bardzo długi okres czasu. Jesteśmy w stałym kontakcie i widzę, że te osoby po

prostu są normalne tak jak Ty i ja. Nie wiem czy to jest odpowiedź na twoje pytanie...

SF 01:21:38 Ale ja nie mam ja nie mam przygotowanych odpowiedzi na moje pytania

Participant 01:21:43 W sensie że ja nie wiem czy odpowiadam na pytanie zadane... ja odpowiadam nie wiem, czy to jest odpowiedź na pytanie zadane jakie są relacje z Anglikami? Jedni z naszych przyjaciół będą rodzicami chrzestnym do [syna] gdzie w kwietniu będziemy go chrzcili. Zajęło nam to trochę czasu niestety... trzy lata prawie bo operacja serca mamy mojego męża. Potem tata... później już problemem z moim bratem, bo w zeszłym roku już sobie wakacje zabookował...więc żeby zorganizować żeby wszyscy byli dostępni no niestety to trwało. Ale nie są członkami rodziny, to są przyjaciele, którzy będą rodzicami chrzestnymi, którzy bardzo chcą ale... To też nietypowe było w ramach Polski na przykład u moich rodziców te pierwotne zawsze to byli rodzice rodziców. Tak, ale przecież cały ten koncept bycia rodzicem chrzestnym był kompletnie inny. Rodzic chrzestnym miał być, jeżeli to by się coś stanie. To jak dziadka możesz wziąć za rodzica chrzestnego? Jeżeli ten dziadek już jest dziadkiem i niestety odejdzie z tego świata wcześniej. To jest ktoś kto ma ci pomóc.... przejść

SF 01:23:11 A mogę zapytać i co robicie. Ceremonie macie jaką macie ceremonię macie humanistyczny czy chrześcijańską, czy katolicką?

Participant 01:23:20 Church of England! Niestety jak się moja pierwsza córka urodziła to chcieliśmy bardzo w Kościele katolickim, aczkolwiek żeśmy się odbili niestety i tu się taka złość we mnie narodziła. I powiedziałam: 'nie!'

SF 01:23:39 Wobec czego złość? Wobec Kościoła katolickiego?

Participant 01:23:43 Tak! Ponieważ myśmy nie byli małżeństwem wtedy, więcej nie ochrzczili mi dzieci. Tak. A po drugie. Drugie było, że musieliśmy zostać członkami Kościoła, czyli regularnie się pokazywać. Ja na to nie byłam przygotowana, bo powiedziałam mojemu mężowi, że moment, kiedy jest msza jest moment karmienia i moment drzemki naszego dziecka. Niestety to jest dla mnie priorytet aniżeli pójście do kościoła. Ja nie byłam przygotowana na to, żeby ciągnąć moje dziecko do kościoła które by leżało tam 45 minut lub godzinę, tak jak w Polsce się dzieje. Dzieci płaczą! Ok. Tutaj jest troszeczkę inaczej, bo mają te stoliki przygotowane, gdzie możesz iść możesz sobie nakarmić dziecko. Są wejścia w małe pomieszczenia, gdzie możesz się z tym dzieckiem bawić a partner ciągle uczestniczy albo możesz dziecko zostawić czy uczestniczyć kompletnie inaczej niż w Polsce. Ale tu nam powiedzieli: 'nie', więc ja powiedział mojemu mężowi 'nie! ty jesteś w church of England, więc ochrzczimy dzieci w Church of England'. Nie ma znaczenia. Więc dziewczynki są też ochrzczone w Church of England.

SF 01:24:51 A ślub gdzie braliście jaki? Zupełnie poza kościelny, czy nie katolicki?

Participant 01:25:00 Nie nie kościelny...

SF 01:25:00 Ja tak tylko pytam z ciekawości...

Participant 01:25:01 Nie, nie było takiej opcji, bo oboje jesteśmy rozwiedzeni, więc...w Kościele Katolickim w ogóle... W Church of England nie ma problemów...

SF 01:25:12 My też braliśmy ślub w Church of England. Ale wiem, bo rozmawiała z nami Ann, która była naszym reverent

Participant 01:25:24 Wiec to był powód, bo nas nie chcieli. Ja czułam się tak, że nas tam nie chcieli! Utrudniają po prostu sytuację dlatego... jeżeli chcą być sektą, ja to tak widzę teraz przykro mi, muszę to tak powiedzieć...

SF 01:25:36 Ale ja też mam bardzo, bardzo ciężkie podejście do Kościoła katolickiego więc chyba jesteś na tym samym gruncie...

Participant 01:25:47 Chrzczymy [syna] ze względu na to, że dziewczynki były ochrzczone, i wydaje mi się że powinniśmy zrobić coś dla syna żeby nie było później: 'a dlaczego one są ochrzczone a ja nie jestem!' więc podjęliśmy taką decyzję że po prostu trzeba to zrobić. Jeżeli w przyszłości będzie chciała być matką chrzestną do kogoś innego musisz być ochrzczone. Jeżeli nie jesteś ochrzczone to nie możesz być matką chrzestną. Wtedy traktują cię jako sponsora.

SF 01:26:27 Czyli mówisz, że masz te takie więzi z przyjaciółmi i....

Participant 01:26:32 Tak mamy. Bardzo dużo czasu za sobą i jesteśmy. Bardzo blisko... Tak jak mówię przyjaciele są będą rodzicami chrzestnym. Wydaje mi się, że przez to może też, że żeśmy się w końcu osiedlili. Wypuścili to korzenie tutaj. Wcześniej tak naprawdę ja podróżowała z kontraktem, czyli: byłam tu, i tam i wszędzie. Tutaj teraz wiem, że ja już tu będę. To jest miejsce dla mojej rodziny. Ja to czuję. I może też dlatego dbam o te relacje troszeczkę inaczej. Staram się, żeby te przyjaźnie były utrzymane. I dbasz o takie więzi społeczne.

Speaker 01:27:33 Czyli jakby na takim... takim tle wiem etnicznym czy nacjonalistycznym...Jakiegolwiek refleksje na ten temat nasz czujesz jakoś inaczej ze względu na twoją etniczność czy narodowość? Czujesz się inaczej, bo jesteś Polka tutaj? Czujesz się z Anglikami jakoś niewygodnie, bo jesteś Polką czy coś takiego?

Speaker 01:27:46 W parku się czułam! Jak byłam tą nową matką. Mnie się wydawało, że, każdy może...nie wiem... wydawało mi się może... to było wymyślone ...nie wiem... czułam się, że... To był okres nagonki na Polaków. Ja myślę, że rola mediów ma duży wpływ na całym świecie. Więc może to też może przez to, że

zmiany hormonalne były we mnie i wydaje mi się że widziałam rzeczy których nie było a może one były. Nie wiem. Tutaj, odkąd dzieci poszły do szkoły nie miałam żadnej sytuacji, która by sprawiła, że człowiek się poniża albo coś może dlatego że szkoła jest międzynarodowa. Są ludzie z różnych krajów. Mam przyjaciółkę, która się urodziła w Sri Lance. Przyjechała tu jako dziecko, więc jest drugą generacją. Rodzice przyjechali do pracy tutaj. Ona się tu nie urodziła się, ale się wychowała. Mam znajomych, gdzie matka jest w Tajlandii ojciec jest Francuzem. Mieszkają tutaj. Mamy Anglików mamy Francuzów... więc kogo jeszcze mamy

SF 01:29:08 Czyli środowisko raczej międzynarodowe i wiezi...

Participant 01:29:12 Ale tylko dlatego że, jesteśmy też cały czas exposed...Obywamy się cały czas w tym kręgu. Dokładnie tak jest. Nie ma tu wszystkich Anglików. Przecież Anglia jest i , [to miasto] jest, to się nazywa Cosmopolitan. Ale że masz właśnie różnych narodowości. Więc nawet nie wiem, czy byłoby... Druga para on jest Southafrican, czyli Anglikiem, gdzie ojciec wyjechał do Południowej Afryki wrócił tutaj. On się opisuje jako Southafrican i jego żona z Kenii, przyjechała też tutaj jako nastolatka, bo mama zmarła. Ojciec Anglik mama z Kenii. Mama ginie w wypadku samochodowym i przyjeżdżają do Anglii. Więc tak jak sobie patrzysz już też jest druga generacja, gdzie No tak. A ojciec Anglik wyjechał, tam jakaś sytuacja rodzinna się zmienia, bo tragedia się staje i nie zostaje tam tylko wraca tutaj i bierze ze sobą dzieci. I tu się wychowują. Więc jest Anglikiem tak? Jest Angielka ta kobieta? Czy nie?

SF 01:30:58 Znaczą przypuszczam, że paszport będzie miała... a może nie ma paszportu bo się nie urodziła... bo nie urodziła się tutaj ale i tak wydaje mi się że ma szansę ubiegać się o paszportu.

Participant 01:31:10 Wydaje mi się... na pewno będzie, bo ojciec jest Anglik więc musi być! Wiesz ona na przykład się nie opisuje, jako że ona jest anglikom. Tylko ona mówi, że Sri Lankom, bo ona nie da się ukryć, ale wychowała się tutaj całe życie. Tu poszła do szkoły, pierwszej szkoły, tu miała pierwszą pracę...

SF 01:31:37 Różnie ludzie się identyfikują. A ty jak się identyfikujesz?

Participant 01:31:46 Jako Polka! Kobiety zawsze jakoś się mnie zapytają skąd jestem, to się zastanawiam... się w którą stronę się ta rozmowa rozwinie. Czy to będzie koniec naszej relacji. Czy jeszcze się rozwinie. Dalej mam polski paszport nie wymieniałem. Nie mam obywatelstwa angielskiego. Tak musimy teraz zrobić to całe... (right to remain)

SF 01:32:04 Ja też muszę... Skąd ta niechęć. Się zastanawiam, o co chodzi.?

Participant 01:32:17 Gdzieś tam. Wydaje mi się, czujemy, że...nie wiem.... Czuję się dobrze! Wiele, wiele osób się mnie pyta i Kuzynki mi się pytały, czy wrócę do Polski. Ja mówię że, nie wrócę do Polski

SF 01:32:35 Teraz dla Ciebie sytuacja jest bardziej skomplikowana, mąż. dzieci...Tak jak mnie. Mój mąż jest Anglikiem. Moje dzieci się już wychowują. On ma tutaj rodzinę, więcej nie mogę sobie tak o: a jutro sobie wrócę do Polski. Zresztą ja i tak bym do Polski nie wróciła! Nie ma takiej opcji. Od tego trzeba zacząć. Ja się tam bardzo źle czuję. Z różnych powodów...

Participant 01:32:59 Wszyscy mówią, że w Polsce edukację trzeba mieć, wykształcenie! Ty masz wykształcenie... zobaczy jakie i źle się czujesz w Polsce?

SF 01:33:08 Ja się bardzo źle czułam w Polsce z powodów takich, że wydawało mi się, że ludzie są bardzo zamknięci. To się zmieniło ja tu już bardzo długo. Ludzie byli bardzo zamknięci. Chodzi mi o to, że nie byli otwarci na inne podejście do rzeczywistości ich poglądy Albo alternatywne jakby style życia nie były przyznawane. Ja spostrzegałam Polskę bardzo dużą ksenofobia

czy to na tle nacjonalistycznym. A propos naszej historii rodzinnej, czyli jakby niemieckie elementy wchodziły do tego my zawsze byliśmy Niemcami zawsze byliśmy, bo dziadek zawsze był hitlerowcy i na tym się kończyła w ogóle jakakolwiek rozmowa...

Participant 01:33:57 Do dziś to się dzieje! Na temat gejowskich par ze znaki są, naklejka w taksówce ze ich nie obsługuje. To jest po prostu wstyd dla reszty świata! Ja nie wierzę, że coś takiego się dzieje!

SF 01:34:12 Ja się z tym wszystkim bardzo źle czułam. Ja się ocierałam o to cały czas... Ja się bardzo niewygodnie z tym czułam, więc ja się tam nie potrafiłam odnaleźć. Poza tym było mi ciężko też na tle ekonomicznym było mi ciężko, bo będąc nauczycielem w Polsce muszę sobie wyrobić lata stażu, dopóki będę zarabiać jakieś pieniądze. Tak jak mówiłam na początku pracując na pełnym etacie zarabiam 600 złotych. Wynajem mieszkania kosztowało 600 złotych. Z tego jeszcze nic nie ugotowałam... i to tylko dla nas jako młodej pary ludzi, którzy naprawdę ciężko. Pod względem ekonomicznym też..., ale też jakby mi było ciężko... mi było szczególnie ciężko z tym, że ludzie wydawali mi się bardzo zamknięci

Participant 01:35:07 Ale dlaczego zamknięci? Przecież wszyscy się wszyscy znali... i każdy znał wiedział wszystko o twoim życiu...Ty jeździłaś takim autem... miałaś to...miałaś tamto...

SF 01:35:13 W tym sensie, że nie byli otwarci na inny styl życia...

Participant 01:35:20 Zaakceptowanie drugiej osoby, która niekoniecznie ma to samo podejście do życia...

SF 01:35:24 Np. Musisz wziąć ślub! Nie żyje się po prostu, nie ma co habitacji, po prostu bierze się ślub. Jeżeli się chce wspólnie żyć to się bierze ślub i się wtedy żyje w jakimś tam związku ...do końca. Takie podstawowe rzeczy. ...

Participant 01:35:41 Tu już krzywo patrzą: Jak ja mogłam np. być z kimś i mieć trojkę dzieci i się nie pobrać? Jak tak? konkubina! I to i tamto...

SF 01:35:55 Ja się czułam źle jako kobieta, bo mi się zawsze wydawało, że jednak było silne było takie kierowanie cię w stereotypowy schemat pod tytułem: ty się masz zająć domem, musisz zająć się tym, żeby wszystko było przygotowane, posprzątane etc etc. Ja jakby nie byłam i ani nigdy w tym nie odnajdywałam. To nie jest mój świat! Żeśmy wczoraj się śmieli z mężem oglądałam ten program na BBC o parach, które walczą o dom na Alasce. I śmiał się ze to ja bym mogła meble robić... właśnie, że ja, ja się nigdy w tym stereotypie kury domowej nie odnajdę. To samo w pracy ze wiecznie się trzeba było dyrektorowi podlizywać.

Participant 01:37:03 Ciężko cię było włożyć do szufladki tak?

SF 01:37:07 Ciężko mi było... Wiecznie się trzeba podlizywać panu dyrektorowi. Nie liczyły się moje kompetencje, nie liczyła się moja wiedza. Zaproponowali mi doktorat na Uniwersytecie we Wrocławiu a ten doktorat łączyłby się z tym, że ja bym robiła badania pod kątem pani profesor. Tak żeby pani profesor mogła książkę napisać. Dostałabym doktorat, ale ona tak naprawdę... Ale ona tak naprawdę by na podstawie moich badań napisała następną książkę. Rozumiesz? To wszystko jakby... mi się nie podobało... źle mi z tym było źle mi z tym było. Źle mi z tym było, że pracowałam w tym liceum i próbowałam wprowadzić jakieś zmiany i wszyscy rzucali mi kłody pod nogi. Gdzie tam jakieś takie innowacje. 'Ale o co Pani chodzi, Pani Sabino? No ale przecież oni są zupełnie... Oni przecież nie umieją mówić! (uczniowie nie umieją po angielsku/niemiecku) I te wieczne ... Ciężko... Nie wiem może się teraz rzeczy zmieniły... może... na pewno się do jakiegoś stopnia zmieniło.

Participant 01:38:31 Ale biorąc pod uwagę co się dzieje politycznie...

SF 01:38:34 Ja wiem że teraz bym się nie odnalazła w politycznej rzeczywistości w Polsce, na pewno bym się nie odnalazła! Na pewno by było bardzo bardzo ciężko!

Participant 01:38:46 Było zdjęcie opublikowane na internecie na temat kar cielesnych dzieci było przecież. Widziałas?

SF 01:38:53 Nie, nie widziałam...

Participant 01:38:54 Ja napisałam do mojej przyjaciółki czy to jest prawda. I ona napisałam, że tak. Ze taka a petycja była, żeby książka zniknęła z półek. Nie wiem jak ta sprawa się skończyła. Nie wiem, czy czytałaś ten artykuł?

SF 01:39:07 Nie...!

Participant 01:39:07 To się nazywa...nie pamiętam tytułu... ale to się naprawdę dzieje! Jest nawet napisane jak te kary cielesne dziecku zadać. Jest zdjęcie książki ze strony internetowej, że muszę ściągnąć spodnie przełożyć na kolano i w jaki sposób dać klapsa. To jest po prostu karalne to jest kryminał dla mnie. 'Pasterz serca' to książka.

SF 01:39:55 Czyli to książka, która tak jak Ci tłumaczy...

Participant 01:39:59 Krok po kroku. Są punkty ci pokazuje, jak masz zadać karę cielesną dziecku. Jest przykładowy dialog z rodzicami i dzieckiem...

SF 01:40:20 Bardzo ciekawa sytuacja

Participant 01:40:29 No i to się dzieje. Koleżanka mnie napisała...

SF 01:40:32 To (przemoc) i alkoholizm stały w Polsce. To też po prostu mnie dobijało. To, że wszyscy dookoła mnie... co oni robili...? To było tak że pracowali, pracowali, pracowali do weekendu. A w każdy weekend była impreza u kogoś w domu, tam wiesz wymieniali się, u kogo ta impreza była. I się siedziało, się jakby wież, siedziało się w dymie papierosów i piło... ja po prostu się źle z tym czułam. To nie był mój świat. Ja... Tak jak wchodziłam do

pokoju wszystko co widziałem to cztery osoby dorosłe palące rozmawiając...

Participant 01:41:07 U mnie nie było alkoholu, bo mój tata nie pił. Ja w życiu nie widziałam swojego taty pijanego. To znaczy nie widziałam, ale wiem że był taki przypadek... Pamiętam, że krzyczałam, mój tata był w ubikacji, ja krzyczałam, czy pogotowie mam wyzywać. Nie wiedziałam co się z nim dzieje. On wymiotował. Był u teścia, czyli ojca mojej mamy. I on postawił flaszkę i kazał się tam napić...a jednego... jeszcze jednego... Jednak mój tata nie potrafi pić. On się napić piwa, ale nie widziałam go pijanego przez całe moje życie. To był wtedy. On pił wódkę najwyraźniej. Przyszedł. Do ubikacji. Ja nie widziałam co się dzieje. Ja płaczę. Nie wiedziałam co się z tatą moim dzieje. Później się położył i spał. Ale nigdy go nie widziałam na bombie. Moja mama bardzo wesoła wracała z imprezy urodzinowej u mojej ciotki czy coś po lampkę jakiegoś tam Cinciano, albo Martini. Piły drinki martini. Więc moja mama była bardzo wesoła. Bardzo wesoła... zawsze tyle rzeczy obiecywała w tym stanie. Ja to pamiętam...pamiętam tak bardzo wiele rzeczy i takiej, takiej, takiej. Rzeczywistość była inna. Na szczęście u nas alkoholu nie było, aczkolwiek u mojej przyjaciółki sąsiadki był ojciec zawsze wracał pijany. Ja pamiętam jak na osiedlu, gdzie się wszyscy znają, to się widziało jak szedł zygziem. I grupka dzieci 5 czy 6 i go wyzywało. On pijany próbuje się ponieść... A ona ten wstyd! Myśmy tego nie widzieli wtedy. Teraz pamiętam, jak stałam na boku i teraz też wspomnienia wracają i się odbija na niej, tak odbija się ...pani

SF 01:43:10 Ale mi też chodziło o takie jakby brak, że nie było czegoś innego do roboty. Wśród młodych ludzi. Ludzi naszej generacji. Ja obserwowałam jak znajomi się spotykają co weekend i robią dokładnie powtarzają powielają to jakby to co rodzice robili.

Nie było też żadnej innej alternatywy. Tak jak mówisz, nie wychodziło się do pubu, czy gdzieś indziej...Nikogo nie było stać na to! coś tam czy...

01:43:41 Absolutnie.

SF 01:43:42 Łatwiej było kupić flaszkę, siąść u kogoś w domu w sobotę, czy w piątek wieczorem, przygryzać ogórkiem, posłuchać muzyki, śpiewać tańczyć...

Participant 01:43:55 Do teatru z rodzicami nie poszliśmy. Byliśmy tylko ze szkołą w teatrze. Kino tak, kino było. Nieczęsto, bo to musiałyby być jakaś okazja, żeby iść do kina. Więc tak jak mówisz, te edukacyjne takie ... Teraz tak chodzisz do teatru. Idziesz do teatru, bo jest to fajne doświadczenie i edukacyjne i też wiesz dla rodziny, bo jest ten czas rodzinny. Nie pamiętam tego wiesz. Do kościoła to samo. Przecież rodzice nas posyłali do kościoła. Oni nie szli do kościoła. Myśmy musieli iść do kościoła.

SF 01:44:4 Dobrze dziękuję.

Appendix D: Literary sources

Author	Title	Year of publication	Genre
Bakalar, A.M	<i>Madame Mephisto</i>	2012	Novel
Eva S.	<i>I came here to take your job</i>	2020	Memoir
Fice, Łucja	<i>Destiny</i>	2012	Novel
Gretkowska, Manuela	<i>My zdies'emigranty</i>	2001	Novel
Nowak, Justyna	<i>An Emigration Tale</i>	2010	Novel
Tokarczuk, Olga	<i>Numbers</i>	2008	Novel
Tokarczuk, Olga	<i>Flights</i>	2019	Novel
Zarska, Magda	<i>Suspended</i>	2007	Novel

Appendix F: Grants received

External Funding (Oct 2021 to date):			
October 2021	£2500	Fund for Women Graduates	This grant has enabled me to take a career break from employment and finalise the PhD thesis.