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Migration and mobility of new Polish migrants in England

narratives of lived experience

Agnieszka Ignatowicz

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to understand the act of migrating in a period of growing movement of people. It captures the subjective experience of individual migrants, as narrated in the migration stories of 32 "new" Polish migrants in the West Midlands region of England.

Since the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, over half a million Poles have arrived and registered to work in the UK, constituting one of the largest migration movements in contemporary Britain and Europe. This influx of predominantly young migrants opened up public and academic debates regarding the social relations between the Polish migrants and the host society, their duration of stay, and the impact on the economy and social services. While a substantial amount of research has now been undertaken on this migration, this thesis highlights some of the significant features of migration to Britain and Europe today, namely its dynamic, fluid, complex and varied character.

Through four themes of lived experience of migration, migration and mobility, gender, and return migration, this thesis uncovers and explores the phenomenon of post-2004 EU migration from the perspective of migrants themselves. Migrant stories in this thesis are linked with experiences and meanings of migration, but also migrants' emotions, perceptions, views and opinions. By exploring individual journeys of migration and deliberating over the determinants and consequences of migration, this thesis asks how the processes of migration and mobility come into play in the everyday lives of migrant people, and how this impacts on questions of identity, home, belonging, gender, as well as return.

Keywords: post-2004 Polish migration to the UK, lived experience of migration, migration and mobility, transnationalism.

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Sapere aude
(Horacy)

Agnieszka Ignatowicz
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This chapter sets the scene for this study, and discusses the background and the rationale for the research. It provides a brief description of the methodology and an overview of the thesis chapters.

1.1 The research problem

What does it mean to be a migrant? What is a migrant's story of migration? This thesis begins with questions of migration, of how it is envisaged, understood, experienced and remembered. It seeks to explore the experiences of and meanings attached to migration, a phenomenon that as Burrell (2003) argues, "can be both a monumental upheaval and an ordinary activity" (p.1). Inspired by the stories of post-2004 Polish migrants in England, this research emphasises emotive elements of migration and human mobility: migrants' experiences, feelings, thoughts, their views, opinions, perceptions and understandings of migration. Focusing on themes such as the lived experience of migration, migrant mobility, gender and return migration, this thesis highlights the migrant stories and their testimonies. How do people experience migration? How do they experience return migration? How do they attempt to reason or make sense of the processes of migration, return, their gender, and ideas about home, identity and belonging?

Guided by such questions, this thesis concentrates on the subjective meanings and lived experience of migration. Firstly, it endeavours to assert a "person-centred" approach to migration and human mobility and attempts to understand the complexities of being a migrant. As such, it supports past

research that scrutinizes the qualitative data on the phenomenon of post-2004 European Union (EU) enlargement Polish migration to the United Kingdom (UK), and attempts to "transcend the empirical" (Hastrup, 1995) as a means of emphasising and understanding the migrant condition. As Kershen (in Burrell, 2009) argues, migration research has mostly considered macro or meso level studies which explored the economic aspects of migration, migrants' employment status and their social status, but neglected the migrant herself/himself. Thus, this thesis conceptualises migration at a micro level and converses with other studies that argue that the story of one's life can uncover a great deal not only about that person, but also about their society (e.g., Schwartz and Jackobs, 1979; Apitzsch and Inowlocki, 2000; Breckner, 2007). Through migrants' own accounts of migration, it is possible to learn not only about the migrant himself/herself, about their emotions and perceptions, but also about the relations between migrants and the host society, and issues of gender.

Secondly, this thesis explores the lived experiences of migration and mobility. It sought to overcome some of the shortcomings of quantitative research that focuses exclusively on the "numbers" and the broad scope of migration flows, but overlooks the challenges and issues of individual migrant experience. More specifically, it attempts to highlight a diversity of experiences involved in migration, against universal and stereotypical descriptions and understandings of who is a migrant, what it means to be a "migrant" and what migration entails (e.g., Estmond, 2007). As a number of writers (e.g., Conradson and Latham, 2005; Yeoh and Willis, 2005) have highlighted, all migrants are ordinary, because they perform ordinary activities: they eat, sleep, work, shop for food, keep in contact with their friends and families or deal with new environments and people. Therefore, rather than thinking of migration as constituted only through the processes of physical movement from one country to another, this thesis considers the everyday experiences of migrant mobility and their lived experience of migration, and allows to reflect on how migrants themselves construct and perceive their migration journey (Conradson and Latham, 2005; Cresswell, 2006).

In short, the intention is to capture the contemporary processes of migration and mobility through the eyes of migrants themselves, and to discuss and analyse their lived experience as a means of encapsulating and understanding migration. As Eastmond (2007) points out, migration often involves a change from the familiarities of daily life, and for many migrants entails a re-negotiation of self in the new reality. Through the stories and narratives of migration, this thesis attends to the ways in which migrants describe, understand and build their migration experience. By placing the focus on migrants themselves, it is possible to bring out the diversity of their perspectives and reveal the dynamic, varied and complex nature of the post-2004 Polish migration to England.

1.2 Post-2004 Polish migration to the UK

1.2.0 Background

On 1st May 2004, eight east European countries (A8): the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, joined the European Union (EU). The UK, Ireland and Sweden - three of the "old" states of the EU, granted immediate employment and relatively free movement rights to nationals from the eight new countries. Consequently, since 2004, there has been significant migration of A8 nationals to the UK. In the period from May 1st 2004 to March 31st 2007, around 630,000 workers migrated[1] to the UK from these countries (Home Office, 2007). The Home Office (2007) statistics show that these new workers were: (i) predominantly young (83 per cent were aged 18-34); (ii) Polish (65 per cent); (iii) and clustered in urban areas. Of all the UK's regions, the West Midlands region has received one of the largest groups of A8 migrants: the Home Office (2007) estimated that, since May 2004, around 180,000 migrants had moved into this region (Home Office, 2007).

In the period immediately following the EU accession, international travel between the eight new EU countries and the UK doubled, from 677,000 entries in 2003 to 1.29 million in 2004, including 528,000 from Poland (Office for National Statistics, 2005, Duvell and Garapich, 2011). What is more, within the first 12 month of the Workers Registration Scheme[2] (WRS), more than 276,000 applications were made and 232,000 people were registered (Home Office, 2005a). Of these 132,000 (48 per cent), were of Polish origin. According to WRS figures, some 70,000 applicants already worked in the UK prior 1st May 2004, mostly as an irregular and often illegal immigrant workforce. Initially, only five per cent of new EU members came with relatives, constituting another 15,225 persons. The Association of Labour Providers (ALP) (2005) further claimed that because not everybody had registered with the WRS, the total number was rather 350,000 employees, of whom around 120,000 worked irregularly.

[1]There is an ongoing debate as to what differentiates "migration" from "immigration". Following Jarman (2004), I use the term "migration" throughout this thesis to denote the movement of Poles after 1st May 2004.

[2] Even though the UK granted the free movement and employment rights for the new members of A8 countries, the compulsory registration with the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) was introduced. Migrants were restricted for the first 12 months and not entitled to social benefits. However, not all A8 workers are thought to have registered. The scheme was often viewed as bureaucratic for those, who only intended to work for a short period of time (Duvell and Garapich, 2011; Association of Labour Providers, 2005).

By the end of March 2009, 949,000 applicants to the WRS had been made; 627,000 (66 per cent) were from Poland. On top of these, some 118,620 people had been registered as dependants (Home Office, 2009). Therefore, a total of 1,067,000 A8 nationals have been estimated to have migrated to the UK between May 2004 and March 2009 (Home Office, 2009). The Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2010) puts the number of Polish-born residents in the UK in 2010 at 515,000[3], but other research estimates the number of Poles at 800,000 (Moszczyński, 2008). Initially, it was assumed that the UK would only attract a low level of East-West migration, 5,000-13,000 annually (Dustmann *et al*., 2003). But these estimations proved to be incorrect. It is believed that the low salaries in Poland, sometimes around £200 a month, were one of the reasons behind this mass migration to the UK (BBC News, 22nd August 2006). Nevertheless, as Duvell and Garapich (2011) among others argue, these figures demonstrate an enormous influx of Poles to the UK. For the UK, and the Polish migration in particular, the date of 1st May 2004 marks a pivotal moment in the history of migration (Burrell, 2009).

1.2.1 Opening a debate

Polish migration to the UK is not a totally new phenomenon. As others have argued (Duvell, 2004; Górny and Ruspini, 2004; Jaźwińska and Okólski, 2001; Morawska, 2002; Okólski, 2001; Triandafyllidou, 2006; Duvell and Garapich, 2011), this migration occurred before 1st May 2004. For more than a century, Poles have been a part of a highly mobile migrant workforce in Europe. Therefore, it has been argued that the recent influx of Poles to the UK is a continuation of migrations that began with the arrival of Poles during the world wars, rather than a distinct and new migrant flow (Burrell, 2009; Garapich, 2008). Therefore, as Garapich (2008b) argues, the academic interest in the post-2004 Polish migration presents a transformation in the perception of this wave of migration. In other words, Polish migration to the UK is nothing new; its "novelty" is somewhat politically and socially constructed. Others, such as Okólski (2006) and Burrell (2009) suggest however, that the post-2004 migration to the UK represents a totally new phenomenon, which demonstrates changing patterns in migration generally. But what is "new", if anything, about the post-2004 Polish migration to the UK?

[3] These figures are not very representative, as they are based on the WRS applications and do not account for dependants of migrants, short-term migrant and generally those who did not register. Arguably, this is the reason behind the disparity between the Office for National Statistics' and Moszczyński's estimations.

Arguably, many parallels can be drawn between Polish and other waves of migration to the UK. For Irish and Polish migration in particular, the comparison has been pertinent. This is not only because of historical experience of being mostly emigration countries, but also because of the specific migration experiences in the UK: reasons behind the migration that were generally economic, the existence of networks of migrants which facilitated migration, the general trend of "trading down" in the labour market or similar assimilation issues, which have been experienced by both groups (e.g., Belchem and Tenefelde, 2003). At the same time, the physical appearance of these migrants and their whiteness, made them relatively "invisible" in Britain. This in turn, impacted upon how they were perceived by prospective employers and the rest of the host society. The whiteness of Polish and Irish migrants is thought to bring few of the benefits that are not associated with the non-white migrations. However, as research on Irish migration (e.g., Roediger, 1991) also indicates, it may construct hierarchies of whiteness in the British labour market. As McDowell (2008) points out, the whiteness of migrant workers may also place them according to the hierarchy of acceptability. Polish migrants may be perceived as less desirable employees, just as the Irish have been, because of their religion, class, language or perceived stereotypes.

But the differences are also important, especially in the size and significance between the Polish and other migrations. Here, the greater freedom of new Polish migrants as a result of lack of visa and working restriction as well as the nature of the British economy and its openness to migrant flows may differentiate the post-2004 Polish migration from previous waves of migration.

Indeed, most recent research reveals some "new" characteristics of post-2004 migration to the UK. These include: the strongly increased mobility of predominantly young people and the often short duration of their stay (see Burrell, 2009; Trevena, 2010). Iglicka (2001) notes, with regards to previous waves of emigration from Poland, that in the 1990s migration was mainly seen as a "way of life for some specific segments of society: older, less-educated persons who were unable to adapt to Poland's new market economy and young people, mainly vocational school graduates" (pp. 41-42). After the EU enlargement however, it was mainly young people, often well educated, who took advantage of opening borders and migrated to the UK. Even though some have called this migration "circular" or "pendular", the prevailing view is that Polish migrants have settled in the UK permanently (Kupiszewski, 2005, Drinkwater *et al*., 2006). Obviously, the circular flows of migration and the mobility of young people are not new phenomena. However, as I already mentioned, the changing nature of the labour market in the UK, the economic downturn and slow recovery, the developments in communication and air transport and their interactions with these

new characteristics of Polish migrants, are new. These kind of conditions may reflect changes in who migrates, why, how long for and their experiences as migrants.

Furthermore, at least two other factors have been described as marking this migration as "new". Firstly, as Burrell (2009) argues, this influx happened over a relatively short space of time. The growing number and significance of Polish shops and businesses, the availability of Polish food in mainstream supermarkets, and even the presence of Poles not only on the streets, but in places of work and in the British media, could identify this migration as new. For instance, the *Daily Telegraph* (9th February 2006) wrote that "Great Britain decided rightly" in granting free movement and employment rights to Poles, *The Times* (16th February 2008) reported that this "wave of immigration helped to fuel Britain's early 21st century boom", whilst tabloid papers like the *Daily Mail* (9th February 2005) named British people as "workshy" and compared them with the Polish workers, who "want to work...are magnificent". As Burrell (2009) further points out, in comparison to previous waves of migration to the UK, Polish migration presents the fastest growing and the most the visible migration wave in recent British history.

Secondly, with the arrival of A8 migrants in the UK, the characteristics of migrants have changed, so too have migration debates. Even though the more "established" migrant groups in the UK are much larger numerically, migration from Eastern Europe has been described as "one of the most important social and economic phenomena shaping the UK today" (Institute of Public Policy Research, 2008). The presence of Poles has raised questions about duration of their stay, impact on economic and social services, the labour market and issues of integration. A number of writers have argued that such a large number of Polish migrants in the UK has not only impacted on social and cultural relations (Robinson and Reeves, 2007a) but also challenged social inclusion and cohesion (Marghertis, 2007; Markova and Black, 2007).

Clearly then, the question as to "what is new" about the post-2004 migration to the UK is but one of a number of problems that this influx of migrants has posed. As many of the old political barriers between Western and Eastern Europe collapsed with the enlargement of the EU in 2004, and as increased economic and political union within the European community became a fact of life, what it means to be a migrant and how migration is experienced are still issues of academic importance. And since this mass phenomenon of Polish migration to the UK also coincided with the process of worldwide economic crisis and slow recovery, the presence of Poles in considerable numbers may take on even greater significance.

1.2.2 The rationale

Eight years on since the 2004 EU enlargement, there is no doubt that Britain has experienced a significant influx of migrants (Burrell, 2009, Garapich, 2008a). It is also evident that a considerable body of research has already been generated on post-2004 Polish migration to the UK. This thesis concentrates on the subjective experiences of new Polish migrants in England. My aim is to highlight the ways in which individuals make sense of their migration and how it impacts on their migration trajectories: their decision making, feelings, opinions, views, and experiences of being migrants in England. I therefore see this thesis as contributing to the field of migration in a number of ways.

Firstly, the post-accession Polish migration to the UK presents an interesting case for the study of contemporary processes of migration and human mobility. Set against the events of the enlargement of the EU in 2004, this migrant group is particular, because it experienced far greater agency than many migrants from non-EU countries. As noted earlier, Poles were subject to transitional restrictions in other EU member countries, but the UK, alongside Ireland and Sweden, opened their labour markets from the beginning. As a result, Polish migrants were able to enjoy similar rights to those of the majority of the UK population without being subjected to broader structural inequalities and practices that other non-EU migrants might have experienced. Therefore, this thesis argues that rather than being a stand-alone process, this migration is a component and outcome of broader global and political processes.

Secondly, and following other research (e.g., Triandafyllidou, 2006; Basch *et al*., 1995; Levitt, 2001, 2004, and 2007), this thesis views migration as a dynamic and on-going process. As such, it reflects a move away from static and flexible concepts towards more mobile and unbound perspectives on contemporary migration events. It has been widely argued that the recent developments of new communication technologies and cheaper modes of travel have changed the way migrants travel and keep in contact with their home country, making it much easier to sustain active links over large distances (Urry, 2000; Papastergiadis, 2011). This thesis then presents an opportunity to highlight the limitations of definitions and understandings that underpin the study of migration, particularly the way that they do not acknowledge the core role that the political contexts and meanings play in the lived experience of migration. This lack of recognition of these core elements of the migrant experience poses the risk of the body of research producing findings that have limited relevance to the experience of people migrating within the borders of the EU. This

research then advances conceptual work on migration and mobility, on everyday aspects of migration, and offers a unique opportunity to understand a group of migrants who have redefined their personal mobility.

What is more, this thesis adds to the research on a local scale of post-2004 Polish influx and complements other studies on Polish migration to the UK (Triandafyllidou, 2006; Garapich, 2008a; Burrell, 2009; Datta, 2010; Ryan *et al*., 2009; White, 2011). Other research projects (for example, Ryan *et al*., 2009; Datta, 2010, Eade *et al*., 2007; Stenning *et al*., 2006) explored the phenomenon of post-2004 migration to the UK by looking at groups of migrants in specific locales. However, to date there has only been one study looking at "new" Polish migrants and their experiences in the West Midlands region (Kozłowska, 2010)[4].

Finally, this thesis presents a different perspective on research on post-2004 migration to England as it combines the focus on four aspects of migration: the lived experience, mobility, gender and return migration of this particular group of migrants. The choice of these four broad, but interlinked areas of research was guided by the process of data analysis and gaps in migration literature, but also by a personal interest in exploring migration. The lived experience of migration presents the main focus of this thesis and provides a context for the rest of the research. Migrant mobility, gender and return bring to the fore the specific aspects of the ways in which migrants understand their everyday and lived experience of migration. By studying individual migrant stories and their varied experiences, this thesis aims to breach the gap in the existing literature in order to produce a more encompassing picture of the Polish experience which will hopefully benefit current research on migration within the EU.

As such, this thesis considers the narratives of migration of post-2004 Polish migrants living and working in England. It explores their lived experience of migration and the meanings that migrants themselves attach to this migration. It contributes to the analysis of contemporary processes and discourses of migration within the EU. However, it goes beyond this contribution by building on our understanding of migration processes, and highlighting them so that we can actually document how migrants live their lives in multiple social settings. In a globalizing world, the characteristics and the process of migration have been changing. This thesis adds to the evidence and theoretical basis of the processes of migration by attempting to establish a link between contemporary

[4] This unpublished PhD thesis explores the lived experience of young, underemployed and economic post-2004 Polish migrants in the context of post-communist migration from Poland to Britain, and employs Critical Discourse Study as a research design.

processes of migration and migrant's lived experience. It uncovers how Polish migrants in England experience, negotiate and construct their migration within the borders of the EU and highlights the importance of researching the lived experience. Work within this thesis involves looking at some of the key impacts of migration and addressing the manner in which lived experience of migration, its meanings and constructions sit alongside issues of home, belonging, identity, gender and return alike. This knowledge can not only inform EU migration policy, but also permit learning about contemporary migration phenomena in a global fashion by generalising the findings from this research to other migrant groups migrating within the EU contexts.

1.2.3 Transnationalism

Migrant transnationalism, broadly referring to practices and links that migrants, non-migrants and institutions have in their home countries, represents a field of ever growing academic interest (Vertovec, 2007). Transnational migrants are thought to "link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch *et al*., 1995, p.6). As Burrell (2003) argues, "the experience of transnationalism increasingly overlaps with the experience of migration", because migrants are able to live in two spaces simultaneously (p.3).

With regards to Polish migrants in the UK, a body of research suggest that this migrant group pursue transnational practices (e.g., Duvell and Garapich, 2011; Eade *et al*., 2007; Ryan *et al*., 2009; Burrell, 2003; Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009). They are thought to be simultaneously attached to Poland and the UK. For instance, a study by Ede *et al.* (2007), reveals that out of a group of 50 people that were interviewed, 40 frequently visited Poland, even three to ten times a year; 35 maintained strong economic and personal interest in their home community, either through businesses, education, job seeking, voting in Polish elections or expressing general interest in social and political affairs back home; and 12 have bought or were planning to buy property in Poland. Similarly, another large scale research project (Garapich and Osipovic, 2007) showed that around 20 per cent of Poles visited Poland four times a year, 40 per cent twice a year; 25 per cent had daily contact with their families and friends; and 43 per cent maintained contact a few times per week. What is more, 52 per cent of these Poles used Polish internet sites and 28 per cent watched Polish TV on a regular basis. As Siara (2009) comments, Poles in the UK use the Internet for a variety of reasons. For many, the Internet has become one of the means that fosters and shapes their transnational lives. Many, given access to the Internet, can make calls to family members, keep in contact with friends and read about current events in Poland. As such, the use of the Internet has

been described by some as weakening and blurring the "real" boundaries between Poland and the UK (e.g. Duvell and Garpich, 2011). One example of this is a double identification signature, indicating two places - one in the UK and other in Poland - that Polish migrants employ when using the internet, such as: "Ania, Birmingham/Gdańsk" or "Agnieszka, Wolverhampton/Szczecinek". These embodied practices, something that Foucault (1980) calls the "little tactics of the habitat" (p.149), are strategies that Polish migrants use to make themselves feel at home. And as Duvell and Garapich (2011) point out, this may be seen as an important act in creating belonging, as many Polish migrants perceive that both being from a particular locality in Poland and currently living in the UK form inherent parts of their migrant lives.

This thesis converses with the field of transnationalism. It contributes to the discussion on theorising and researching contemporary migration events departing from a transnational paradigm. Transnationalism is understood here as both the practices that are defined by global markets and the technologies of globalization, including practices of travel and border crossing, as well as the experiences of those who engage with these transnational practices (Vertovec, 2007). In particular, this thesis uses a transnational approach to focus on the significant and continuing ties that migrants have in their countries of origin (e.g., Basch *et al*., 1995; Tsuda, 1999; Levitt, 2001, 2004, and 2007). The processes of transnational migration are thought to impact on the social, political, and economic activities and migrants' ties (Basch *et al*., 1995). These processes are, as Levitt and Waters (2002) describe, about "how ordinary individuals live their everyday lives across borders" (p. 8). With the focus of this thesis on migration, mobility and migrants' experiences, transnationalism allows for the fluidity and diversity of the migrant experience to be revealed. While recognising that the transnational movements of people have changed and questioned the concepts and experiences of migrant identity, home and belonging (Ahmed *et al*., 2003, Vertovec, 2007), this thesis also acknowledges the relationship between migrant mobility and transnationalism by considering the centrality of mobility to migrants' lives. As such, it explores the different experiences of being a migrant, given that much of recent theorising around migration emphasises movement as a central feature and individual experience of migration in the contemporary global world (e.g., Castells, 1996; Bauman, 2000; Robertson *et al*., 1994; Urry, 2000).

1.2.4 Methodology

This thesis, then, rests on the narratives of migration of 32 Polish migrants living and working in West Midlands region of England. Of the 32 interviews, 20 were with women and 12 with men; of all participants, 6 were recent returnees. By exploring narratives of migration, this research recognises the significance of migrants' voices in migration research (Brettell, 1995). As others have argued (e.g., Yans-McLaughlin, 1999; Burrell, 2006a; Eastmond, 2007), qualitatively focused approaches, including narrative methods, are better at highlighting the complexities of being a migrant and bringing the migrants' experiences to the fore.

At this point, it is also important to acknowledge my own position in the research process. As Hall (1996) suggests, all researchers start from a particular place and it is important that they locate their own experiences and culture in research. My interest in the area of post-2004 Polish migration to England developed as a result of my own experiences as a Polish migrant, as a woman and a non-native English speaker, and the experiences of my fellow Polish migrants. I closely observed Poles struggling to make sense of their new migrant lives and those who successfully managed their migration experience. These observations have led me to question what it means to be a migrant and how migration is experienced. As Jung (1996) notes, "the meaning of my existence is that life has addressed a question to me...or conversely, I myself am a question" (p.65), in a similar way, my experiences as a migrant have made me seek an answer to a question: what is the lived experience of a Polish migrant in England?

I decided that the best way to explore the migrant experience was to use a qualitative approach as discussed in Chapter 3 which would embrace the experience of migration in all its complexity and reality. This choice was based on my epistemological stance and belief that knowledge is influenced by the perceptions of the person in the context of their lives, and that there is not one but many understandings of any one phenomenon.

As will be evident in the following chapters of this thesis, the approach used in this research attempts to provide a detailed understanding of the experience of post-2004 Polish migration from a person-centred approach and makes an important contribution to the body of knowledge on contemporary processes of migration and mobility in Britain and Europe. Having briefly outlined

the rationale and approach used in this thesis, I will now provide a summary of the structure of this thesis.

1.3 Overview of the thesis

Each of the following seven chapters addresses questions of migration and mobility through migrants' lived experience. Within each theme (the lived experience of migration, migration and mobility, gender and return migration), different narratives, questions and issues are examined in order to provide a rich and complex picture of post-2004 Polish migration to England. At the start of each chapter, the use of a short excerpt from the researcher's fieldwork serves to "introduce" the participants, so that the reader begins with the voices of migrants and perspectives of migration as it is lived.

However, this thesis is not concerned with systematic examination of the totality of migrants' experiences. Rather, through the examples and quotations, I develop a number of arguments about the particular interweaving of migration and migrants' experience that enable social relations to be performed, organised and mobilised.

In Chapter 1, I locate the thesis within a broader context of post-2004 Polish migration to the UK. This chapter identifies the starting point of the study, and sketches it connections with the aims and objectives of this thesis. It provides an overview of the events of 1st May 2004 and its significance for the Polish migrants' mobility. I then discuss the research problem and the transnational perspective that informs much of the discussion in this research project.

The subsequent two chapters discuss the relevant literature review and methodology. Chapter 2 first focuses on historical and geopolitical aspects of Polish migration to the UK. It then reviews the relevant theories, frameworks and past research. Four central research themes: lived experience of migration, migration and mobility, gender and return migration are explored. Within each broad theme, theoretical ideas and empirical research are discussed, underlying the ways in which the research may advance contemporary debates around migration and mobility within the European Union. These categories are clearly analytical constructs, which inevitably overlap. Therefore, the examples of studies that I draw upon are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Chapter 3 moves away from the literature review, and concentrates instead on methodology. This is a discussion of practices and complexities of methodology: the choice of interpretive framework and method, the researcher/research participants binary, and negotiation of power relations and responsibilities within the research. The first part situates the study within the methodological and theoretical framework. It explores the choice of qualitative methodology and the use of narrative as a methodological strategy to gain the interview material. The second part discusses ethical considerations in research and the reflection around the role of the researcher in the construction of knowledge.

With the theoretical and methodological framework established, the next chapter considers the lived experiences of new Polish migrants in England. At the heart of Chapter 4, are the "social" and "material" elements of the everyday experiences of migration. These accounts all draw attention to the importance of migrants' everyday life, namely the daily practices, structures and processes of migration. Questions of what it means to be a migrant, to live and work in England, are addressed.
Chapter 5, while recognising that movement of people is crucial to understandings of the complexities of migration, reflects interest in changing experience of migrants' mobility and the everyday experiences of new Polish migrants in England. The enlargement of the European Union in 2004 has facilitated the expansion of commuter transport and new opportunities to travel for those who have gone to work or live in Britain. Today, the use of low-cost airlines has become the dominant mode of travel that has enabled Eastern European migrants to increase their frequency of travel to and from Poland. This chapter attempts to make sense of migration and mobility, in the context of people's lives and of notions of travelling home. I analyse the ways in which travelling back to Poland is experienced, and how migration is narrated in relation to individual mobility.

Questions of gender lay at the core of Chapter 6. It discusses the gender dimension of new Polish migration to England. It draws attention to the ways gender shapes the conditions, opportunities, and experiences of migration and how migratory processes, in turn, both reproduce gender relations and push them along new trajectories.

Chapter 7 centres on return migration. It offers an insight into the experiences of six returnees. Of a particular interest here, is how the return is shaped and influenced. My objective is to examine not only the experience of return *per se* but primarily the meanings attached to this experience. That is, questions of what it means to return, and how return is understood in the light of past migration experiences, are asked and explored.

The closing chapter looks back at the central findings of this enquiry and examines its implications for theorising migration and mobility. It also identifies the main contributions and implications of the research, limitations, and potential areas for further research.

All together, the chapters in this thesis bring to the fore the stories of lived experience of migration as told by migrants themselves. However, they do not assume to tell the "whole story". This thesis does attempt to be a comprehensive study of a Polish migration to England; it does not attempt to make any broad generalisation. Rather, by exploring the experiences and practices of migration, this thesis elaborates on and contributes to the theoretical discussion on contemporary processes of migration and mobility in Britain and Europe.

The next section reviews the theoretical literature and examines previous empirical research on migration. It proceeds to examine the literature by looking at various aspects of migration, mobility and transnationalism, and their relationship to migrants' lived experience, gender and return migration.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I critically review the literature relating to migration. The aim is to establish a context within which a more specific focus on post-2004 Polish migration to England can be created and understood. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), a literature review is used to "stimulate theoretical sensitivity by providing concepts and relationships that are checked out against actual data" (p. 49). Moreover, as Punch argues (1998), it may be used "as part of the research planning and question developing stage" (p.43). However, within this research project reading and writing of some parts of the literature review had to be deliberately delayed. When work on this thesis began in 2008, the research on the post-2004 Eastern European migration to the UK was in its infancy. Little had been published on the issues of "new" Polish migrants in England. As the data collection and analysis commenced, the understanding of certain theoretical work and research became imperative for the advancement of this thesis. Therefore, much of the literature in this chapter covers the broad scope of research on international migration and is driven by themes identified in the beginning stages of data analysis process. The research on Polish migration to the UK and its relevance for this project is discussed, but the list is not exhaustive as much of the critical engagement with relevant work is located in the substantive chapters of this thesis. In other words, driven by the practical needs of the research and the gradual accumulation of knowledge, this literature review was developed in parallel with the analysis of data. This approach resembles what Henwood and Pidgeon (2006, p. 350) term a "theoretical agnosticism". They argue, on the example of grounded theory research, that theoretical agnosticism is best understood as a "...watchword than theoretical ignorance to sum up the ways of using the literature at the early

stages of the flow of work." In this sense, the relationship with the literature review during the research process in this thesis was what Dunne (2010) calls a "pragmatic kind", whereby the literature was identified in order to progress the research.

This chapter then acts as an umbrella for the analysis of data in this thesis. It critically reviews scholarly and professional literature, considers journal articles, research theses, and publications produced by government departments and agencies. The first part presents a review of the historical context of Polish migration to the UK. It provides a foundation for the discussion of Polish migration after the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and its wider significance in Europe. The rest of the chapter focuses on four central research themes: the lived experience of migration, migration and mobility, gender and migration and return migration. Within each broad theme, the main theoretical ideas and debates are discussed, underlying the ways in which this research may inform the contemporary debates around post-2004 Polish migration to the UK.

2.1 Polish migration to the UK in historical perspective

Migration from Poland to the UK is not a recent phenomenon. It began as early as the sixteenth century (Davis, 1981). The nature and size of the flows were different at particular points historically, although it has been argued that the two largest flows took place during the Second World War and its aftermath, and in the post-accession period. The following section provides a brief overview of the history of Polish migration to the UK up to the European Accession and sets the background for the study of post-2004 Polish migration to England.

2.1.0 Poles in Britain before 2004

Poles have been migrating to the UK for a few centuries. However, it was not until the nineteenth century that the Polish community in Great Britain established itself, mainly through a small group of political immigrants, who left Poland in the aftermath of the November Rising (1830-1831)[5].

During the First World War, the Polish community in the UK grew in numbers and played a minor, but still an important role fighting for the Polish independence (Sword, 1989). The formation and

[5] The November Uprising was an armed rebellion in the heartland of Poland against the Russian Empire. The uprising began on 29 November 1830 in Warsaw when the young Polish officers from the local Army of the Congress Poland's military academy revolted, led by lieutenant Piotr Wysocki. Despite some local successes, the uprising was eventually crushed by a numerically superior Imperial Russian Army (Linch, 2009)

recognition by the British Government of the Polish Republic in 1919 made Britain the official place of residence for the Polish political representation and marked a new era of Anglo-Polish diplomatic relations. Specifically, the Anglo-Polish Society that was active during the war had been launched in 1932 in conjunction with the Polish Embassy (Sword, 1989). Edward Raczyński, who became the Polish Ambassador to Britain in 1933, established a good relationship with the British Government and his embassy provided the base for the arrival of the Polish Government in exile in July 1940 (Davis, 1981). However, as Davis (1981) points out, at the same time the problems of nationality, identity and recognition surrounding the Poles became very marked. Moreover, the situation was further aggravated by the divide between the "official" (the government) and "local" groups of Poles, who engaged in different political and social activities in the UK (Davis, 1981).

During the inter-war period, migration was still developing. In the 1931 Census, there were 44,462 people claiming Poland as their birthplace (Holmes, 1988). As a consequence of war and the events that followed it, the Polish community became stronger and further consolidated. Although Poland seemed to be far more connected with France politically, Britain remained a significant international ally.

The Second World War resulted in an unprecedented influx of Poles to the United Kingdom. Out of the thousands of Poles who found themselves in Britain during and immediately after the Second World War, very few arrived directly from Poland. Davis (1989) argues that among the Polish migrants who left Poland during the events of September 1939, very few left with a decision to permanently emigrate. The majority, once they entered Britain, waited for the war to finish with the hope of returning home. However, because of the Yalta Agreement in February 1945, which left some eastern parts of Poland in the hands of the Soviet Union and the Polish Government controlled by the Soviets and the communist regime, some Poles could not return home.

In the 1950s, the relaxation of travel restrictions to and from Poland resulted in further migration to the UK. The scale of this influx was much smaller than during the World Wars and their aftermaths, but Sword (1996) notes that around few thousand Poles came to the UK each year after 1958. The general perception of Poland as a country too dangerous to return to during the communist era reinforced the status of Poles in the UK as exiles. At the same time, it has been argued that the presence of post-war Polish immigrants provoked a number of tensions between the Poles and the British society (Burrell, 2008c).

The fall of communism and the introduction of the free market economy changed the way the labour market worked in Poland. As Iglicka (2001) argues, in the communist type planned economy and for ideological reasons, unemployment did not exist. Rather, the surplus labour was employed in state administration or state controlled enterprises. At the same time, rural areas absorbed part of that surplus labour through hidden unemployment in subsistence farming (Iglicka, 2001). The introduction of competition between companies and the end of state subsidies had an effect on the Polish labour market. Specifically, following a large number of lay-offs, the unemployment rate rose to 6.5 per cent in 1990 and 12.2 per cent in 1991. Therefore, after 1989, permanent emigration from Poland decreased and began to be replaced with various forms of economic short-term mobility (Cyrus, 2006). This increasing mobility was linked to the increasing short-term labour migration as, according to Okólski (2001), in 1995 around 1.5 - 2 million Poles travelled for work abroad. With the rise in short term mobility, the direction of migration flows changed. Short-term migration to the US dropped, while the waves to the EU countries and the UK grew in size (Iglicka, 2001).

In the case of the migration of Poles to the UK, the 2003 Labour Force Survey (LFS) indicates that prior to accession in 2004, there were 34,000 Poles living in Britain who had been there for a period of less than 12 months (Salt and Millar, 2006). What is more, according to the National Census of 1991, there were 73,700 Polish-born people living in the UK in that year. This number fell to 58,000 in 2001 as a result of ageing of the post-war migration population (Drinkwater *et al*., 2006), but also because of a considerable number of return migrants, who decided to leave the UK for Poland (Fihel *et al*., 2006; Fihel and Piętka, 2007). However, the number of Polish-born nationals quoted by the 2001 Census has been questioned. At the time, many Poles were living and working in the UK illegally. Interestingly, there had been a considerable increase in the number of legal entries of Poles to the UK in the year prior to Poland's EU accession. The National Insurance Number (NIN) registration figures show that 11,200 new applications had been made by the end of March 2004 (Fihel and Piętka, 2007).

Undoubtedly, as Trevena (2009) argues, in the 1990s and early 2000s the number of Polish migrants in the UK grew in numbers. Drinkwater *et al*. (2006) note that many Poles in the late 1990s and onward, took advantage of a provision granted by the Europe Agreement of 1991 (ratified in 1994) between the EU and 2004 EU candidate states, which allowed members of these states to remain in the UK and work as business people. They further show that in 2003, the number of Home Office applications for an extended stay in the country as a person of independent means

or as business persons grew by 156 per cent in comparison to the year before. Nevertheless, the true number of Poles in the UK was difficult to establish as many had been working illegally and had entered the country on either student or tourist visas (Drinkwater *et al*., 2006; Duvell, 2004; Jordan, 2002; Trevena, 2010a). The Immigration Service Enforcement Directorate reported that between the years 2001-2003, Poles were the national group that was most likely to be refused entry to the UK (Drinkwater *et al*., 2006). Hence, it has been argued that the number of Polish migrants already wanting to enter the UK was growing even before EU accession (Pollard *et al*., 2008).

In conclusion, this part of the literature review chapter sets out a background to the thesis by briefly presenting a historical context of Polish migration to the UK. In particular, Polish migration has been described as an example of the changing nature of internal borders and political changes in Europe (Burrell, 2008c; Iglicka, 2001). While post-war migration for many was about their survival, in the post-communist period, migration reflected political changes. Since 1991 Polish people were granted visa-free travel in Europe, but entry to the UK was still very much restricted. If Poles were allowed to enter on a tourist visa, and wanted to take up employment, their choices were limited to the secondary illegal labour market. Finally, once Poland joined the EU in 2004, migration from Poland to Britain entered a new phase.

This research endeavours to understand the ways in which Polish migrants make sense of the events of 2004 and how it impacts on their migration trajectories: their decision making, feelings, opinions, views, and experiences of being migrants in England. But before doing so, the focus of the next sections will be on the relevant past research on migration and ways that this research may illuminate the contemporary debates around the post-2004 Polish migration to the UK.

2.2 The lived experience of migration

This section focuses on the literature on lived experience and migration, as it is an overarching theme guiding the interpretation of this thesis. While I endeavour to limit the discussion to the topics relating directly to the research at hand, it is difficult to do so, as the topic of experience spans so many areas within the field of migration, and outside of it. Therefore, for the purpose of this research project, this section covers the literature searches through which I explored the relationship between lived experience and migration.

The term "experience" is often used to describe something that "an individual can at a given time remember, organise and verbalise. Conscious experience includes inner feelings and thoughts as well as overt behaviour of one's self and others" (Theodorson, 1970; p.72). Dilthey (1985) suggests that lived experience includes an immediate and pre-reflective consciousness of events in one's life. A number of thinkers have noted however, that it is impossible to uncover an immediate manifestation of lived experience, but rather only its reflective part. What is more, the meaning of lived experience can never be fully uncovered, since it implies the totality of one's life. Methodologically then, the interpretive assessment of lived experience, as von Manen (1990) argues, relates the "particular to the universal, part to whole, episode to totality" (p.36).

The literature on lived experience has been an exciting development in the field of social research. Of significance is the fact that while the roots of such research rest in sociology and social psychology, the work on lived experience reflects the increasingly multi-disciplinary nature of contemporary sciences. Existing literature that focuses on lived experience, and the contexts in which it have been applied, span a number of disciplines: from sociology and anthropology to ethnography and philosophy (see, for example, Gardiner, 2000; Sheringham, 2006).

The work on lived experience offers an opportunity to learn from the insights of the participants themselves. Rather than relying on abstract generalizations and theories, exploring lived experiences provides an alternative that allows researchers to have access to the unique nature of each human situation. As van Manem (1990) notes, the field of lived experience enables "a reflexive re-living and reflective appropriation of something meaningful" (p.36).

However, despite growing interest and the multidisciplinary nature of research on lived experience, the field is characterized by much diversity and inconsistency. Arguably, this has been as a result of the absence of a clear definition of lived experience. For many contemporary social scientists, lived experience is a social construct that they take for granted and, therefore, the term "lived experience" is often used to refer to everyday human experience. Schutz (1972), for example, argues that the everyday world is archetypical for our lived experience of reality, while Pink (2012) refers to the notion of everyday life as a category for referring to the way life is lived. Scholars researching and writing about lived experience are increasingly attending to everyday human experience, while also taking into consideration its relevance to specific themes and questions of lived experience. In the thesis I follow this trend, by arguing that lived experience can be understood through the practices and experiences of people's everyday life. Therefore, the lived experience is understood here as

involving sets of everyday practices and processes that are inevitably personal, embodied and social (Ho and Hatfield, 2010).

Today, the experience of migrating comprises multiple aspects, from familial, social, and cultural to political and personal, in which people's lives are explored to understand the complex relationship between self and social context. The idea that migrants' way of being in the world is reflected in his or her everyday lived experiences is not new. A large number of studies have considered the lived experience of migration, covering a wide range of themes, from issues of everyday experience of arrival and assimilation to the construction of identity, migrant's belonging and their experiences in the labour market (e.g., Waters and Jimenez, 2005; Vertovec, 2001; Al-Ali and Koser, 2002; Fortier, 2000). Even though the everyday experience of migration has become a field of study, there are still many areas that could benefit from a closer scrutiny. As Barkan (2004) argues, the issues migrants face may differ from one migrant group to another, and there is now an interesting body of research that has focused on social (e.g., Dudley, 2011; Tse, 2011) and material (e.g., Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004; Ramsey, 2009) elements of everyday life of different groups of migrants. This focus on material and social aspects of migration explores migrants' negotiations of everyday activities like shopping or eating, as well as the role of objects in sustaining transnational lives in two countries (Hindman, 2008; Law, 2001, Tolia-Kelly, 2004).

While much of this work highlights ways in which people construct their new sense of living as migrants, they overlook the everyday experiences of migrants' emotions, opinions, views and perceptions. Nor is there much attention paid to how the understandings of gender or return are being reworked and re-imagined through the lived and everyday experience of migration. By listening to migrants' voices and their stories, it is possible to understand life as migrants live it, "rather than as we conceptualize, categorize or theorize about it" (von Manen, 1984; p.1). As such, this way of capturing experience permits a deeper understanding of the nature and meanings of migration experience. In this thesis, building on and departing from existing trends in researching everyday life and lived experience, I attempted to understand both, the lived experience of and meanings assigned to migration. In doing so, I hope to examine how processes of migration are lived, experienced, represented and mediated in the narratives of migration. The multifaceted nature and the ways in which the lived and everyday experience can be understood, in this thesis presents an opportunity rather than a challenge. As Ho and Hatfield (2010) argue, even though "the variety of ways in which the everyday may be interpreted can challenge its conceptual incisiveness, each of

these interpretations contribute to a more nuanced understanding how migrants experience life" (p.711).

2.3 Migration and mobility

This part of the literature review chapter looks at theoretical and empirical research on migration and mobility. Given that the field is characterised by considerable diversity, I concentrate on the major theoretical perspectives that appear to be relevant for this study. My discussion is informed by the conviction that fuller understanding of post-2004 EU enlargement Polish migration requires the conceptual framework within which the experiences of Poles can be structured and understood.

2.3.0 Theorising migration and mobility

Mobility and migration are complex phenomena. As such then, there is no single theory that explains all drivers of migration, but rather many theories, which have been developed separately from one another. At the same time, the lack of clear differentiation between the terms "mobility" and "migration" means that they are often used synonymously in migration literature. Nevertheless, mobility is generally understood as any human movement from one country to another for economic reasons; whereas migration is a human movement with a change of residence (Tassinopoulos and Werner, 1998). Therefore, the nature of migration implies its permanent character, whereas mobility is seen as a temporary act.

Different forms of migration have attracted much scholarly interest. For example, various kinds of human movement have generated academic discussion on previously static concepts, such as border or community, and resulted in a new and more fluid ways of understanding migration. While the traditional ways of thinking about migration using the dichotomous categories based on time/space, location/direction and causes dominated academic research until the end of the twentieth century, with new modes of migration and mobility, researchers have begun to draw attention to new perspectives and explore, for instance, the effects of migration (Aho *et al*., 2009). At the same time, with the expanding integration of markets and societies in the late twentieth century, scholars have become increasingly aware of the issues surrounding human mobility. Shamir (2005), for example, argues that considering migration as part of a global economy, nation-states and economic realities may limit mobility. As such, he observes that free movement is not possible for everyone, but

rather only a minority of the world's population can move freely from one country to another. As a result, increasing attention has been also paid to "marginal" topics, such as different forms of temporary migration, the mobility of high-skilled workers or forced migrants (Aho *et al*., 2009). Interestingly, temporary migration is one form of migration which for many years had not been given enough attention, despite the fact that it is a component of much of today's migration flows (Duany, 2002). Nevertheless, work that has looked at temporary forms of migration explored the socio-economic motivations and determinants of temporary migration (e.g., Stark, 1991; Dustmann, 1996, 1997; Bojras and Bratsberg, 1996), migrant's decision to return to their country of origin (Radu and Epstein, 2007) or the amount of time spent abroad, irrespective of the form of temporary migration. Scholars have also observed that temporary migration brings about mutually dependent labour markets and transnational lives. The transnational turn in migration studies opened up new ways of researching migration, and resulted in an increased interest in migrant's transnational connections and ties with the home countries. In the field of transnationalism, scholarly research emphasizes the diasporic communities which are created in the processes of migration and facilitate a transfer of knowledge, skills and remittance, thus creating ties that span from the host to the home country (Itzigsohn and Saucedo, 2003; Levitt *et al*., 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004). Hence, the issues of economic and transnationalism need more detailed consideration.

2.3.0.1 Economic theories of migration

A number of scholars have argued that in order to understand migration better, it is necessary to analyse the individual migrant's decision making process as an underlying cause for their movements (Tassinopoulos and Werner, 1998). Therefore, this section commences with a discussion of general theories of migration, which mainly focus on migrants' decision making. This is a deliberate choice, since if we argue that the causes and consequences of migration are interrelated (de Haas, 2008), then we need to take into consideration that the causes of migration will influence the kind of migration experience people will have. However, the focus is only on those theories that seemed most relevant, and which guided and reinforced directions that this thesis has taken.

One of the most influential approaches to migration is rooted in neoclassical economic theory, which perceives migration as a consequence of wage differentials (Lewis, 1954; Todaro, 1976; Borjas, 1989). That is, the premise of neoclassical theory is that workers in low-wage regions migrate to high-wage regions. After a certain time, migration balances out the wages in the two

regions and therefore the incentives for migrating are removed when the wage differences no longer exist. However, as others note (e.g., de Haas, 2008), this reasoning does not fully explain why people migrate. For example, in case of North African/Turkish and West European migration in the 1960s, the same conditions were present before and after 1973, the year migration arguably ceased. Rather, the reason for migration, as Albrecht (1972) argues, was the demand for foreign workers in the Western Europe. In the same vein, other empirical research (see, for example Bauer and Zimmermann, 1999) has produced mixed results about the importance of income differentials between countries as a significant determinant of migration.

New economics of migration theory (Stark and Bloom, 1985), in contrast, considers migration as a household strategy to minimise family income risks or to overcome financial constraints. The fundamental assumption is that people, households and families act to maximise incomes, but also to minimise risks. Migration is therefore seen as a household response to income risks and the remittances that migrants send to their home countries as insurance. While remittances are not perceived as playing a role in neo-classical migration theory, in the new economics of migration theory, they are seen as important factors in migration decision-making (de Haas, 2008). Therefore, this theory makes it possible to explain why migration continues, even if levels of salaries at origin and destination countries are converging. Stark and Taylor (1989) further argued, with regards to the new economics of migration theory, that migration decision-making is also influenced by differences in revenues of migrating and non-migrating families. They noted that households take into account their relative position in the local community, and that migration may occur to reduce relative deprivation of a household, not only to increase its income (de Haas, 2008).

In addition to wage differentials and household strategies of minimising income risks, a number of scholars point to the central role played by other factors in migration decision making as well. Among these, the host country's labour markets, demographic determinants, are the most common. For instance, studies of migration repeatedly point to the central role of age, arguing that the older a person is, the less likely he or she is to migrate. As Tassinopoulos and Werner (1998) observe, migration constitutes a human capital investment and the benefits of migration depend on age, because older workers have a shorter period over which they can gain from migrating and higher migration costs than younger people. What is more, it has been argued that the potential costs of migration increases with a number of family members (McConnell and Brue, 1995) and migrants often follow the routes previously taken by family, friends and relatives (Spittel, 1998). The network theory of migration argues that social networks are a consequence of migration, but also

allow for reduction of costs and risks associated with migration, thus making international migration relatively easy and attractive to people.

At first sight, income differences appear to be the most important drivers of post-2004 migration from Poland to the UK (Blanchflower *et al*., 2007; Radiukiewicz *et al*., 2006). Research indicates that many of Polish economic migrants arrived in the UK seeking "normality" and a "better future" (Galasińska and Kozłowska, 2009). With lack of legislative and/or administrative procedures in the EU, such as work or residence permits, and a high demand for unskilled low-paid work, it is not surprising that workers migrate to where they can obtain higher wages. Although many Polish migrants are thought to be working in unskilled jobs paying slightly more than the minimum wage, this level of earnings seems attractive enough to migrate. This would theoretically support the arguments of the proponents of economic theories of migration. However, owing to the developments in the field of transnationalism, scholars have also argued that simply placing emphasis on economic motivations is no longer sufficient to give the full picture (e.g., Lewer *et al*., 2009). Therefore, some have suggested that economic factors for migration ought to be taken as a point of departure when explaining reasons for migration (Pedersen *et al*., 2004; Warin and Svaton, 2008). This thesis then, in order to grasp the lived experience of migration, departs from understanding the post-2004 Polish migration to England as driven by economic rationale. Since the factors influencing migration decisions are also likely to shape the experiences, this research will attempt to understand the causes and consequences of migration in their wider context. For instance, it is imperative to understand whether post-2004 Polish migration to England was an act of looking for income, or rather a migration of young people in search of different experiences (White, 2011). Without examining the causes of migration, it is difficult to understand migrants' lived experiences that comprise migration.

2.3.0.2 Transnational perspectives on migration

Transnational theory in the early 1990ecame popular when a group of US-based anthropologists observed that the migrants with whom they worked had developed or transnational practices that traditional migration theories could not explain (Basch *et al*., 1994). They argued that migration theory, informed by and developed in the framework of the nation state (Kearney, 1991), saw migrants as individuals who either departed (emigrants) or arrived (immigrants). To overcome this false dichotomy, and to illustrate migrants' multiple attachments with their host and home societies, researchers suggested that migrants should be understood as part of two or more intertwined

worlds, and transnational migration as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch *et al*., 1994, p.6). Therefore, sending and receiving societies became understood as constituting one field of analysis, rather than two separate research entities.

Subsequent advocates of a transnational perspective argued that migrants stay connected with multiple nation-states, and that their practices contribute to the development of transnational communities (Levitt, 2001) or transnational social spaces (Faist, 2000). Thus, a transnational perspective abandoned methodological nationalism (the assumption that the nation-state is the logical, natural container within which social life takes place; see Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003 for a broader discussion on the topic) and required that scholars changed their focus "from place to mobility, and from 'place of origin' and 'place of destination' to the movements involved in sustaining cross-border livelihoods" (Sørensen and Olwig, 2002; p.48). Researching migration through the lens of transnational approach involves looking at a different set of questions than those, which traditional migration scholars have taken into consideration. Transnational scholars have argued, for example, that migrants must be studied within the transnational social fields. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) define social fields as a set of multiple networks and relationships through which practices and resources are exchanged and transformed. However, the initial excitement in the field of migration about transnational communities was quickly met with criticism. Most scholars agreed that transnational activities are not universal and are only pursued by some migrants (Itzigsohn and Saucedo, 2005; Portes *et al*., 1999). At the same time, scholars pointed that diasporic communities are nothing new and that transnational phenomenon had already existed before the world wars. What is more, transnational lifestyles are thought to be only accessible to a small minority of migrant groups and cannot be generalized to all migrants (Gutiérrez and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2009).

Nevertheless, transnational migration can be observed in many parts of the world and has been investigated thoroughly since the early 1990s. The concept of transnational migration and transnational social spaces, for example, has been applied to the European migratory space. Faist (2000, 1999), Jurgens (2001) and Pütz (2004) have explored the phenomenon of transnationalism among Turkish migrants in Germany, and Müller-Mahn (2000) studied Algerian migrants in France, while several other researchers worked on transnational retirement migration to the European countries (King *et al*., 2000; Warnes, 2004).

Applying a transnational lens to post-2004 Polish migration to England, as I argued in the Introduction to this thesis, allows for the fluidity and diversity of migrant experiences to be revealed. Yet the literature to date does not seem to fully explain the condition of contemporary Polish migration to England. Today's migrants, as Glick Schiller (1997) notes, are qualitatively different to earlier migrants. Post-2004 Polish migrants are more likely to engage in transnational practices than the older generations and live dual lives, which span both countries. There is much more to say about Polish transnational migration and its relationship to everyday and lived experience. Therefore, it is my hope that this thesis may advance our understanding, more generally, of what migration experience might mean to migrants, how migration experience might take shape, and the role which a transnational perspective may play in these.

2.4 Gender and migration

As discussed earlier, individuals may migrate for economic reasons, out of desire for a better life, or to escape poverty, or social and family pressures. These are often factors, which may play out differently for women and men. Gender roles, relations and inequalities may affect who migrates and why, how the decision is made, and the impacts on migrants themselves, as well as on home and host countries. For instance, past research shows that migration can provide new opportunities to improve women's lives and change gender relations (e.g., Martin, 2007). However, migration can also entrench traditional gender roles and inequalities and expose women to new vulnerabilities as the result of either, their legal status or exclusion and isolation (e.g., Pessar, 1999a). A gendered perspective then appears to be essential in order to understand the causes, consequences and experience of migration, and I will now focus on gendered issues in migration research.

2.4.0 Gender in migration research

Recent studies of the gendered nature of migration looked at its implications for labour market experience, entitlements and migrant's rights (e.g., Piper, 2007). A gender analysis emphasised the significance of broader social factors in influencing women's and men's roles and their access to resources and services while being a migrant. For instance, research has shown that some women tend to view migration more as part of their personal development than men (Danneker, 2007). What is more, Morokvasic (1984) has argued that mobility can have a significant impact on women's positioning in society. Historically, the research associated women with passiveness and

invisibility, while being described as dependants of their migrant husbands, fathers or brothers (Martin, 2007). Indeed, family formation and reunification are still reasons of significant impact for migrating. At the same time, in many societies, even though there is an increasing trend towards the feminisation of migration[6], the obstacles and barriers to women's mobility may still exist (Morokvasic, 2007). In other countries, however, women enjoy the freedom and empowerment that comes from migration. Looking at the emancipatory potential of migration, researchers have explored changing gender relations within the household (e.g., Levitt, 2001; Waters, 2002; Yeoh and Willis, 1999) and social constructions of gender relations (Chamberlain and Leydesdorff, 2004; Pessar and Mahler, 2003). One of the arguments of these studies is that the status of migrant women improves due to their increased access to resources available through employment (Pessar, 1995; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991). What is more, through work, women are exposed to diverse patterns of gender relations and might adapt different views to those in their home country. Interestingly however, for men, migration may imply a change in their 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. As a result, men are thought to be more likely to consider the return home in order to regain their gender status. Moreover, evidence suggests that migrant men often try to emphasise their traditional gender norms as a means of re-establishing their identity (De Snyder and Diaz Ptrez, 1996; Goldring, 1991). Migrant women are therefore perceived to want to settle in the destination country for longer, because return represents going back to traditional understandings of gender.

Perhaps more importantly for the research at hand, a growing body of literature (Mahler and Pessar, 2001; Pratt and Yeoh, 2003; Ryan, 2000; Waters, 2002; Yeoh and Willis, 2005) has also suggested that women and men differ in the ways in which they live migrant lives. Women who migrate alone leaving children in the care of other family members remit more than do women who migrate as part of an intact household (Vertovec, 1999; Wong, 2003). Several US studies have also examined women's transnational activities by tracing their transnational ties, pointing to women as agents for change in their countries of origin (Levitt, 2001; Mahler, 1999, Salih, 2001, Kofman, 2004). This literature adopts a transnational perspective in analysing women's mobility and argues that for

[6] Feminisation of migration refers to a phenomenon whereby migrating women increasingly outnumber migrating men (Piper, 2007). Global estimates by sex confirm that for more than 40 years since 1960, female migrants reached almost the same numbers as male migrants. By 2000, female migrants constituted nearly 51 per cent of all migrants in the developed world and about 46 per cent of all migrants in the developing countries (ILO, 2003; p.9). As Piper (2007) notes, feminisation of migration is connected to at least four other phenomena: 1. improved statistical visibility of women (see Rojas-Wiesner and Angeles, 2007); 2. the increasing participation of women in most types of migration; 3. inability of men to find full-time employment in the home countries; and 4. Increased demand for feminised jobs.

many women in Europe, migration became a life-style and a strategy for gaining social status at home (Morawska, 2000; Iglicka, 1999; Irek, 1998). Other studies examined how family concerns influence men's and women's decisions to migrate, and acknowledge that gender affects the social identities and social ties in multiple places (Constable, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Kofman, 2004). With temporary forms of migration, research shows that transnational participation is gendered. For instance, Goldring (2001) observes that migrant women tend to be more engaged in the social life of the host country. She points out that these differences result from the fact that men are thought to lose their social status and therefore be more orientated towards the country of origin. Women, on the other hand, do not experience status loss and are much more engaged in improving their lives in the host country. This has led some researchers to conclude that women generally adapt better to the challenges of migration (Mahler, 1999).

Many scholars have also questioned an overgeneralization of migrant women's experiences (Tienda and Booth, 1991). A number of studies indicate that gender relations in migration process are shaped by class and ethnicity. As Pessar (1999b) points out, some studies on gender and migration are far too optimistic about the gains of migration to migrant women. Migration may equally be the cause of the improvement, deterioration, or renegotiation of gender inequalities. For instance, Pessar (1999a) indicates that Dominican and Cuban migrant women often choose to take on the role of housewives and this decision is seen as reaffirming the middle-class status of the household. Zentgraf (2002), on the other hand, argues that through the reconstruction of traditional gender relations among Salvadorans in Los Angeles, women have taken on new roles that result in their empowerment and increased self-confidence. Therefore, "there is now broad consensus that immigrant women attain some limited, albeit uneven and sometimes contradictory, benefits from migration and settlement" (Pessar, 1999a; p. 586).

In conclusion, it is now well established that gender is a crucial factor in understanding the causes and consequences of migration; and that gender affects all aspects of a migrant's life (Piper, 2005a; Donato *et al*. 2006). Thus, an understanding of the gender and migration context in Poland is crucial.

2.4.1 Gender and migration in the Polish context

The events of 1989 and the end of the Cold War triggered a vast mobility of persons, including a large number of women (Morokvasic *et al*., 2008). In line with international tendencies of

feminisation of migration, research based in Poland and other Eastern European countries provides evidence about mobility of large numbers of women employed around the world in low-paid jobs in the service sector. However, the tradition of female migration in Poland dates back as far as the 18th and 19th centuries. The reasons for these movements were primarily associated with economic and family factors (Slany and Malek, 2005). What is more, data from the Polish National Censuses indicates the increase of female mobility from 213,100 in 1988 to 423,100 in 2002 (Polish Central Statistical Office, 2002). According to the 2002 Polish Census, the percentage of Polish women among all migrants was 54 per cent. Even breaking down the figures by gender and the regions where women stay, in most European regions female migrants outnumber their male counterparts. These figures also reveal that most Polish migrants in Europe are female (56 per cent female versus 44 per cent male).

Migration is arguably one of the key processes influencing the lives of millions of women from poorer countries (Slany, 2008). In the case of Poland, the opportunity to migrate and changing gender relations mean that women could enjoy more independence. Past research (e.g., Coyle, 2007, Morokvasic, 1994, 1999; Cyrus, 2008) suggests that international mobility plays an important part in the strategies of these migrants. For instance, Polish women moving between Poland and Germany are thought to create a "transnational migratory space" (Morokvasic, 1994, 1999). Mobility enables them to optimise the opportunities and minimise the obstacles relative to their paid and unpaid work, as it depends on family needs or obligations in the home country (Morokvasic *et al*., 2008). At the same time, as Cyrus (2008) states, the double presence of Polish women who live between their host and home country provides other opportunities for them to exercise their agency. Rather than trying to migrate and settle in the host country, they stay mobile as long as it improves their (and their family's) quality of life (Diminescu, 2003; Morokvasic, 1999). Mobility, in other words, is used a resource to maintain the centre of women's life in the home country. Furthermore, none of them regard themselves as migrants, because they do not think they left the country (Morokvasic, 2003). Many women speak of their journeys rather than migration. They are not concerned with issues of assimilation or settlement, but rather with maintaining their Polish links and identity. This can be especially true of married women with children, who engage in stretched and borderless motherhood (Brown, 2003). This, in turn, reinforces the debates about the consideration of Polish migration as transnational or at least exemplifying transnational patterns.

Some studies of migration and gender show that women migrate alone (e.g., Woo, 2002) and as a result of complex decision making, not only because of economic or familial reasons. The former would appear to support the recent Polish influx to the UK, where the majority of female migrants were found to be young women aged between 20 and 35, often travelling without the company of males (Office for National Statistics, 2006). As Slany (2008) argues, these women have become the "hypermobile global female worker" and are characterised by reliability, cheapness, efficiency, competence and commitment. Research has also argued that the attitudes towards women's work have made their experiences as migrants different from those of men (Morokvasic, 2003). For instance, the perception of domestic work as non-productive that requires little skill could make women less likely protected by national legislation and institutions in the host country. In case of Polish migrant women, past research indicates that those employed as the domestic workers tend to work for "cash in hand" and for less than the national minimum wage (e.g., Cyrus, 2007).

Female emigration from Poland has not been fully investigated. Much of the previous research on gender and migration concentrated on females with families, neglecting the young, single and childless migrants. As argued in the previous chapter, and in the light of statistics, the typical Polish migrant in the UK is young, educated and unmarried (Home Office Statistics, 2006). A broader understanding of gender in the processes of post-2004 Polish migration to England offers an opportunity to explore the complexities of gender for this particular group of migrants. Furthermore, the sheer diversity of gendered experiences of migration presented in this chapter defies any generalisations and consequently, this research explores how gender is articulated in the process of migration for a number of Polish men and women. In doing so, it highlights how the transnational processes contribute to understanding the lived experiences of gender.

2.5 Return migration

The last section considers theoretical approaches and past research on return migration. As it was the case with all research discussed in this chapter, what follows provides a central source of reference in later discussion of return migration in the context of post-2004 Polish migration to England.

2.5.0 Theoretical perspectives on return migration

While return migration is a subject of increasing scholarly attention (e.g., Cassarino, 2004; Hammond 1999; Olesen 2002; Rodriguez and Egea, 2006), there is still a lack of insight into the factors which determine migrants' intentions and decisions to return. Notably, as it is the case with determinants of migration, academics offer often opposing interpretations of return migration (Constant and Massey, 2002).

According to neoclassical theory for example, return is the outcome of a failed migration experience, which did not yield the expected benefits. That is, return occurs as a consequence of migrants' failed experiences abroad or because their human capital was not rewarded as expected. On a related note, scholars have also argued that the likelihood of return decreases when social and economic ties with home countries weaken (de Haas and Fokkema, 2011). In particular, family reunification is commonly thought to be a factor that decreases the possibility of return. At the same time, if migration is only perceived in terms of the cost-benefit analysis, successfully integrated migrants would not be expected to maintain social and economic ties with home countries, because maintaining ties would involve not only the financial, but also psychological costs of staying. The other way around, attachments to destination countries may decrease the costs of staying and increase the costs of returning.

There is some empirical evidence, which supports those claims. For instance, Waldorf (1995) argues that job satisfaction is associated with declining return intentions. She also observes that return decisions decline with time, suggesting that the more established migrants are in the host society, the less likely they are to return. In the same vein, Haug (2008) observes that the more social ties migrants accumulate in their destination country, the less they were inclined to return. What is more, Dustmann (2008) found evidence that educational investments in children, as well as permanent wages, are positively associated with the probability of permanent migration of the father.

However, in recent years this assumed negative correlation between assimilation and return has been challenged by the literature on migrant networks and transnationalism; in particular, the idea that the maintenance of social and economic ties with countries of origins is a result or cause of migrants' inability or unwillingness to fully integrate. Some empirical evidence supports the idea that integration and transnational ties are not necessarily mutually exclusive phenomena. Portes *et*

al., (1999, 2002) and Granovetter (1995), for example, assert that transnational orientations and activities are generally positively associated with the integration and can facilitate successful adaptation by providing opportunities for transnational entrepreneurship or economic mobility.

While the literature has questioned the idea that transnational ties may weaken integration and lead to return migration, the new economics of labor migration offers a different conceptualization on return migration. The new economics of migration theory views return migration as the logical outcome of a "calculated strategy", defined at the level of the migrant's household, and resulting from the successful achievement of migrant's goals. As such, return is an outcome of a successful experience abroad during which migrants meet their goals, such as higher incomes and accumulation of savings, while remitting part of their income to the household in the country of origin. In other words, if the main motivation for migration is to improve the economic situation at the origin, migrants will only return once they have succeeded, saved and remitted enough financial and human capital in order to realise their investment plans. Notably, this interpretation of return migration turns the neoclassical economic theories upside down: from an indication or result of integration failure according to neoclassical theory to a measure of success, according to new economics of migration (de Haas and Fokkema, 2011; Cassarino, 2004). Therefore, as far as their analytical frameworks are concerned, both of these theoretical approaches have several shortcomings. As Cassarino (2004) argues, the first relates to the actors themselves and their motivations for return. These seem to be determined by financial or economic factors only, while providing little explanation of how remittances and skills are used in home countries. Moreover, while neoclassical economics and new economics of migration theories try to explain when and why the decision to return home takes place, they do not offer reference to the social, economic and political environments at home. Finally, several empirical studies have demonstrated that the success/failure paradigm cannot fully explain the return migration phenomenon (e.g., de Hass and Fokkama, 2011), as it tends to isolate the decisions and strategies of the returnees from their social and political environments (Cassarino, 2004).

Other approaches, such as the structural approach, argues that return is not solely analysed with reference to the individual experience of the migrant, but also with reference to social and institutional factors in countries of origin. Just like new economics of migration, the structural approach to return migration attempts to understand how crucial to the return decision and the reintegration of the migrant are the financial and economic resources brought back to origin countries. There has been much debate and contention with regard to the impact of return migration

on the societies of origin (e.g., Böhning, 1972; Rhoades, 1978). Discussion has centred on whether return migrants bring back valuable work skills, capital, and new ideas which result in changes in societal structure. Cerase's (1974) article on Italian returnees from the US provides many examples of how complex the relationships between the returnees' expectations and the social and economic context at home are. He identifies four different types of returnees, emphasising their aspirations, expectations and needs: (1) return of failure (those returnees who could not integrate in their host countries owing to the prejudices and stereotypes they encountered abroad); (2) return of conservatism (those migrants, who before emigrating had planned to return home); (3) return of retirement and (4) return of innovation (who are "prepared to make use of all the means and new skills they have acquired during their migratory experiences" (Cerase, 1974; p.251)). In this sense, the structural approach to return migration shows how influential contextual factors may have an impact on the migrants' capacity to return.

The relationship between causes and consequences of return migration then is likely to depend on a number of factors: from initial motivations to migrate, livelihood opportunities in origin and destination societies to educational, cultural and other specific features of migrant groups. Gmelch (1980) further suggests that while significant steps have been taken with regard to conceptualisation, little has been added in respect of the development of a comprehensive theory of return migration. Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all theory, and depending on the specific context, only a combination of theories might provide an explanation.

2.5.1 Research on return migration in the context of Poland

It is not surprising therefore that research on return migration to Poland has, like the general field itself, suffered from a poor statistical base and ontological-theoretical weaknesses. As Kolankiewicz (1996) points out, in Poland, the phenomenon of return migration has been taking place on a significant scale in the recent past. This particularly applies to the period since the collapse of communism. Until 1989, the freedom of international mobility had been restricted and Polish nationals were not allowed to return from emigration that took place to the West. However, emigration, both for political and economic reasons, took place illegally or under the pretext of tourist trips, summing up to at least 3 million emigrants with especially high figures in the 1980s (see Sakson, 2002 and Alscher, 2005). Moreover, only since the beginning of the 1990s, Poland became an attractive country for both foreigners and return migrants (Górny and Kolankiewicz, 2002).

What is more, the state of research on return migration remains limited despite high estimates on scale of return migration to Poland. According to speculations of the Polish Central Statistical Office, every second immigrant in Poland is a Polish national returning to the home-country (Iglicka, 2002). At the same time, for a long time, the main obstacle for undertaking research on return migration was lack of precise statistical data: migrants who had left Poland were rarely registered as emigrants, unless they cancelled permanent residence in Poland. Thus, those, who were not regarded as emigrants officially, could not be registered as return migrants either.

A number of publications have nevertheless appeared on return migration to Poland (e.g., Górny and Kolankiewicz, 2002; Weinar, 2002; Górny and Osipovič, 2006), focusing on return migrants' experience abroad, their motivation of and preparation for return, and their strategies and activities in Poland. More quantitative accounts show that for many return migrants, the motivation to return to Poland goes beyond pure economic reasons and that many of them actively contribute to economic, social and political development in Poland, while still living abroad. In-depth qualitative studies also indicate that the decision to return is not as straightforward. Weinar (2002), for example, presents a typology of motives of migration: rational motives, sentimental and mixed motives. Rational or economic motives are related to an economic strategy, when people return with a view of increasing their economic capital; sentimental motives apply mainly to political emigrants. Mixed motives, which are a combination of the rational and sentimental factor, may be relevant to the majority of returnees. In fact, their importance has been confirmed in a number of studies on return migration from the West (see Górny and Kolankiewicz, 2002).

There has been comparatively little research on the individual and contextual factors, which determine return migration from the UK[7]. This thesis aims at contributing to filling this gap by analysing not only the return intentions, but also lived experiences of return among new Polish migrants in England. As they form one of the largest migrant groups living in the UK, the case of post-2004 Polish migration may be particularly relevant to in a European migration context. What is more, the fact that a large number of Polish migrants had returned to Poland as a result of the economic crisis has already registered in the British media since 2007. Now, as Britain is slowly recovering, the influx of Poles to the UK presents an entirely different and more challenging research context. It has been argued, for example, that while the economic downturn might have impacted on migrants' decisions to return home, it did not discourage the majority (Iglicka, 2010). At the same time, due to the temporary nature of this influx, we cannot certainly state that even

[7] With the exception of Iglicka (2010) and Górny and Osipovič (2006).

though some migrants returned, the new migrants have not arrived, or indeed that the "old" migrants have not returned. If the return migration is really happening on such an extensive scale as reported by the British papers, it will have important consequences for migrants' experiences. As such, the timing and consistency of the return migration debate in the post-economic downturn period, makes the subject of return migration contested. At the same time, the Polish case presents an interesting one, especially when conceptualising issues such as post-return migration experiences and migrants' return decision making.

2.6 Research on post-2004 Polish migration to the UK

The post-2004 migration to the UK has already attracted a considerable amount of academic research. This section then briefly presents some of the key works in the area. However, as explained in the introduction to this chapter, is not exhaustive. A more comprehensive engagement with the literature on post-2004 migration and its relevance for this project is located in the substantive chapters of this thesis.

A number of the most recent reviews of work undertaken on post-2004 Polish migration to the UK (e.g., Trevena, 2009; Burrell, 2010) identified the main themes that have been researched as migrants' motivations and strategies, work, social networks and local settlement. Research has explored some underlying issues for this migration, and more pertinently, people's intention to stay in the UK. For example, as Drinkwater *et al*. (2006) emphasised, Polish migrants' decision-making was a reaction to extremely high levels of unemployment (20 per cent in 2003). At the same time, scholars noted the fundamental significance of the opening of the UK boarders and labour markets as a crucial factor for this migration. Therefore, as already argued, this migration has been primarily defined in terms of the economic rationale. Other motivations for migration have been explored, especially with regards to migration of young people, and this research pointed to migration as an experience, a new way of living, a way to meet new people and to improve English language skills (Datta, 2009; Garapich, 2007, Fabiszak, 2007).

Other studies have examined migration patterns (Burrell, 2007; Fihel, 2007), patterns of migration and its duration (Eade *et al*., 2007; White, 2007), family migration as a migration strategy (Ryan *et al*., 2009), and dynamics of settlement (Osipovic, 2007). Much of this research has been rooted in the transnational perspective, considering mobility and transnationalism, exploring migration and

mobility and linking theses with wider debates around the timing, scale and "materiality" of the of travel (Burrell, 2008a; Jileva, 2002; Wallace, 2002; Fortier, 2006, Favell, 2008).

Migrants' work experiences have been also explored, with a study of hospitality workforce experience (Janta, 2007), and a study of migrants in low-wage employment (Anderson *et al*., 2006; Cook *et al*., 2008). In this research, academics considered, for example, wage levels (Drinkwater et al., 2006), differences between educational qualifications and the nature of work undertaken in the UK (Pollard *et al*., 2008, p. 37), and opportunities for social mobility through employment. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report (Anderson *et al*., 2006), noted that the A8 migrants continue to face difficult conditions at work, and are more likely to be in temporary jobs which provide less legal protection and personal satisfaction.

Apart from analysis of the decision to migrate, patterns of employment and experiences of work, many other studies have focused on life beyond the workplace. Developing these findings, scholars investigated the relationship between new and older generations of Polish migrants (Garapich, 2007c; Ryan *et al*., 2007a, b) and coexistence between the two groups (Galasińska, 2006b). Work by Ryan *et al*. (2009) revealed issues and risks many new migrants experienced on arrival, whether looking for work or a place to live, arriving with poor English language skills and little knowledge about Britain. In the same vein, Osipovic (2008) observed the complex legal position of migrants as do not realise what rights and obligations they have.

Identity was also researched, one approach being issues of identity negotiation and construction processes in the context of transnational migration (Ryan, 2007), but also negotiation of ethnicity (Garapich 2007a), class (Garapich 2007b), identity politics (Datta and Brickell, 2009), and constructions of identity by shopping and eating habits (Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009) and ethnic identity (Ryan, 2010). Migrants' adaptation to the new society was also scrutinised, in particular problems of integration (Rodriguez, 2007), experience of hostility (Dawney, 2008; Lee-Treweek, 2010), cosmopolitanism (Datta, 2009), a sense of being a stranger (Metykova, 2007), and emotions related to being a migrant (Svašek, 2007). Whether about identity, class or eating habits, most research acknowledges and highlights that Polish migrants have been defined as workers, and that the issues of their arrival and settlement have been varied and complex.

A number of studies on post-2004 Eastern European influx to the UK appear to be particularly relevant for my research. For instance, the report "Migrants' Lives Beyond the Workplace: The

Experiences of Central and East European Migrants in the UK" (Spencer *et al*., 2007) explores the experiences of migrants employed in low paid sectors. This research touches upon many interesting and important issues shaping migrants' experiences, such as the types of information about the UK that migrants have upon arrival, the accommodation that they live in, the language skills they have or migrant's relationship with the members of the host society. Although my research goes beyond focusing solely on these aspects of migration experience, this study is relevant to the discussion of every day migrants' lived experience in Chapter 4.

A book edited by Anna Triandafyllidou (2006), "Contemporary Polish Migration in Europe: Complex Patterns of Movement and Settlement", is also of interest for this study. More specifically, a number of chapters examine the experiences and the livelihoods of Polish migrants living in Germany, Italy, Greece and the UK through the eyes of migrants themselves. For instance, Kosic (2006) illustrates how Polish migrants understand themselves as migrants, as workers and as individuals living in a foreign country. She thus investigates the processes of negation of one's identity not only focusing on ethnic and national characteristics, but also personal and professional. What is more, Kosic makes a crucial point that is relevant to my research. She advocates listening to migrants' individual experiences and argues that one should not assume that all Polish migrants will have the same understandings of their migration, because they share the ethnic background. This study is relevant to my thesis as it forefronts researching the contemporary processes of migration and mobility through the eyes of migrants themselves and discusses their lived experience as a means of encapsulating and understanding migration.

Finally, a series of chapters in a book edited by Kathy Burrell (2009), "Polish Migration to the UK in the 'New' European Union", act as a point of reference for much of the discussion in this thesis. This book's focus is of importance to my research, as it deals with the issues of Polish migration in the context of post-2004 influx to the UK, and highlights gender and return as areas of migration research that need more attention.

It is clear then that a considerable amount of work has already been undertaken around the post-2004 Polish migration to the UK. This thesis, exploring the lived experience and the meanings attached to this migration, contributes to the study this phenomenon. It concentrates on aspects that, as yet, have not been researched together (the lived experience of migration, gender, mobility and return), considers aspects that have already been explored, but with a different approach (the lived experience and meanings attached to migration using narratives), and complements research on the

local scale of post-2004 Polish migration to UK, by researching migrants from the West Midlands region in England. Seen from this angle, this thesis is more extensive in its scope than any existing research on Polish migrants in England, and whereby individual experiences of Polish migrants are grasped, presented and analysed in reference to their understandings of migration, gender and return.

2.7 Conclusion

The work discussed in this chapter addressed the theoretical underpinnings of the line of inquiry directing this thesis: how can we understand the migration experience of post-2004 Polish migrants in England? The literature review discussed in this chapter, undertaken in a continual process of reading and interpretation, was used to understand, guide and reinforce directions the thesis has taken. It critically reviewed scholarly literature, considered journal articles, research theses, and other publications, and attempted to develop an overview of the vast and ever growing body of work on migration and mobility. Apart from illustrating some of the key concerns of research in the field of lived experience, transnationalism, gender and return migration, this chapter also highlighted the past research on Polish migration to the UK and located this recent influx in a historical context.

Therefore, this chapter laid the foundation for the forthcoming investigation. However, it is also important to address the interplay between the literature review and the empirical investigations, in which they both inform and are informed by each other in order to allow for further refinement of both the conduct and analysis of the whole research project. The next chapter provides an account of how the research process unfolded and discusses the methods used in this project.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the practices and complexities of methodology: the choice of interpretive framework and method, the researcher/research participant binary, and the negotiation of power relations and responsibilities within the research. The first part situates the study within the methodological and theoretical framework. This is a discussion of choice of qualitative methodology and the use of narrative as a methodological strategy to gain the verbatim interview material. The second part deals with ethical considerations in research and contains a reflection about the role of the researcher in the construction of knowledge. The chapter concludes with a consideration of research limitations and shortcomings.

3.1 Conceptualisation

This thesis is concerned with exploring the dynamics of migration and mobility of "new" Polish migrants in England through thinking about constructions of migration, exploring migrants' lived experience, and deliberating over the determinants and consequences of migration. More broadly, it asks how the embeddedness of migration comes into play in the everyday lives of migrant people, and how this impacts on issues of understanding home and belonging, as well as gender and return.

The thesis originated from two motivations. Firstly, from a "person-centred" approach to migration and mobility. This study supports past research (e.g., Triandafyllidou, 2006; Ryan *et al*., 2009; White, 2010; Siara, 2009; Galasińska and Kozłowska, 2009) that scrutinizes the qualitative data on

the phenomenon of post-2004 EU enlargement migration to the UK and attempts to "transcend the empirical" (Hastrup, 1992, p.128) in order to understand the migrant condition. It looks at the complexities of being a migrant, and the meanings that migrants themselves attach to migration and mobility. Secondly, this thesis stems from a motivation to study the lived experiences of migration and mobility. It sought to overcome some of the shortcomings of quantitative research that, as opposed to qualitative research, focuses exclusively on the numbers and the broad scope of migration flows, and overlooks the challenges and issues of individual migrant experiences.

From these general motivations, a number of specific research questions and issues emerged and were further refined in the course of developing the research methodology. The main broad questions were identified through the initial literature review, the pilot study, and from the researcher's own observations and experiences of being a migrant in England. However, as already mentioned, the background reading and the literature review was an on-going process. Initial reading influenced "formation of research objectives" (Johnson, 1994, p.173), but new articles were published during the research, which had a significant impact on the work, predominantly to reinforce the findings, so reading continued throughout the research period.

The broad questions that this thesis addresses are:

- What are the stories behind the decisions of migrants to migrate?
- How is migration and mobility managed and experienced?
- What are the migrant's views on his/her migration experience, as well as his/her future expectations?
- Are gender norms and ideologies being challenged in the processes of migration?
- What is the meaning of return migration in a period of growing movement of people? How does return migration affect migrants?

These questions aim to shed light on the issues of personal, social, cultural and gendered contexts of migration and mobility; and the analysis of these may be considered of a great importance for the understanding of the totality of the migration experience. However, these research questions also require a specific theoretical and methodological understanding of migration and mobility and therefore require a specific method of data collection.

The next section traces the underlying framework and methodological approach that guides this research project: the Interpretivist paradigm and the phenomenological inquiry.

3.2 Theoretical and methodological framework

It is often a daunting task for a researcher to choose an approach for a research project. As Snape and Spencer (2003, p.11) argue, "deciding how to study a social world has always raised a number of key philosophical debates". What is more, Grix (2004) warns that people who want to conduct clear, precise research need to understand the philosophical underpinnings that inform their choice of research questions, methodology, methods and intentions. Therefore, how one views the constructs of social reality and knowledge affects how they will go about uncovering knowledge of relationships among phenomena and social behaviour and how they evaluate their own and other's research.

This section of the methodology chapter sets out the theoretical and methodological framework for this project. Within the qualitative focus of this study, two specific interpretive perspectives emerged: the Interpretivist paradigm and phenomenology. These core philosophical values and principles of methodological engagement guided the interpretation of this research project. The Interpretivist paradigm's main principle is that research can never be objectively observed from the outside; rather it must be observed from the inside through the direct experience of the people. Therefore, the role of the researcher in the Interpretivist paradigm is to, "understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen *et al*, 2007, p. 19). Phenomenological research is particularly effective at bringing to the fore experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions (Laverty *et al*., 2003). According to Welman and Kruger (1999), "phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people" (p.189). In other words, a researcher applying phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of people involved (Greene, 1997; Holloway, 1997; Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 1996; Maypole and Davies, 2001; Robinson and Reed, 1998), or who were involved, with the issue that is being researched.

3.2.0 The Interpretivist paradigm

The goal of this research was to understand the lived experience of migration, which is the often personal, individual and qualitative aspect of one's life. Therefore, the Interpretivist paradigm was deemed the most appropriate for this research. Easterby-Smith *et al*. (2008) describe Interpretivism (Constructionism) as something which "focuses on the way that people make sense of the world, especially through sharing their experiences with others via the medium of language" (p.58). The experiences of life are thought to form the basis for individual constructions of reality (Crotty, 1998). Schön (1987) observes that "in the constructivist view our perceptions, appreciations and beliefs are rooted in worlds of meaning that we come to accept as reality" (p. 87). Amaratunga (2002), Creswell (2003), and Collis and Hussey (2009) all assert that the Interpretivist philosophy refers to the subjective aspects of human experience by focusing on the meaning rather than the measurement of social phenomena. The Interpretivists state that "aspects of social reality have no existence apart from the meanings that individuals construct for them" (Gall *et al*., 1999, p.14). Since the focus of this thesis lies with the experiences of Polish migrants as they construct them, and the meanings they themselves attached to the understandings of migration, this research fits the Interpretivist paradigm.

However, the underlying assumption of Interpretivist philosophy is that one's constructed reality does not necessarily reflect the true reality, or that this reality is the same as others have constructed it. Rather, it is the individual's perception and their personal interpretation of past experiences that form the person's reality (Law, 1999). This is further supported by Wilson (2006), who drawing on the work of Locke (1632-1704) argues, that we do not know anything that does not come from our own experiences. He supports a view that, as humans, we are born with a mental "blank slate" and that through a gradual accumulation of experiences, we build and construct our reality. As an understanding of socially constructed reality, in case of this thesis the lived experience of migration, was the goal of the research project, a qualitative approach was chosen. Qualitative researchers are thought to "stress the socially constructed nature of reality, and the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being studied" (Denzin, 2000, p. 8). The Constructivist paradigm formed the ontological basis for the work; within this paradigm the approach of phenomenology was selected to guide data collection and analysis. The following section develops the phenomenological research inquiry and demonstrates how the Interpretivist paradigm can be translated into the phenomenological research methodology, which can be

employed by migration researchers seeking to understand the lived experience of migration and mobility.

3.2.1 Phenomenological inquiry

As Groeneweld (2004) argues, phenomenology is not a rigid school or uniform philosophic tradition. Rather, phenomenological thought is understood through the framework of "phenomenological movement" (Cope, 2003). The philosophy of phenomenology was first developed by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), whose seminal works were later extended and developed by Alfred Schutz (1899-1959), as well as by existential phenomenologists such as Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980).

In simple terms, phenomenology has been described as the "study or description of phenomena" (Pettit, 1969); where a "phenomenon" is anything that appears or presents itself to someone (Moran, 2000). Consequently, Hammond *et al*. (1991) refer to phenomenology as the "description of things as one experiences them, or of one's experiences of things" (p.1). Thus, the aim of phenomenology is to bring out the "essences" of experiences and to describe its underlying "reasons" (Pivcevic, 1970).

The aim of phenomenological inquiry[8] is to understand the subjective nature of "lived experience" from the perspective of those who experience it, by exploring the subjective meanings and explanations that individuals attribute to their experiences. Polkinghorne (1983) identifies the focus of phenomenological approach as trying to understand the meanings of human lived-in-experience. At the same time, the phenomenological perspective intends to examine the taken for granted experiences and perhaps uncover new and/or forgotten meanings (Polkinghorne, 1983). Similarly, Patton (1990) defines the focus of phenomenology as describing "what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience" (p.71). The methodological implication of this focus on lived experience is that an individual's interpretation of the experience is an essential part of the experience itself (Patton, 1990). Bogdan and Taylor (1975) summarise this phenomenological stance as "the phenomenologist views human behaviour - what people say and do - as a product of how people interpret their world. The task of the phenomenologist, [...] is to

[8]For a detailed discussion of phenomenology as an interpretive practice, refer to Burrell and Morgan (1979), chapter 6. In addition, refer to Holstein and Gubrium (1994) and Schwandt (1994).

capture this *process* of interpretation…In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behaviour, the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view" (p.14, italics in original).

This desire to understand the actor's definition of a situation and to seek the meaning attributed to experience locates phenomenological inquiry within the Interpretivist tradition (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Holstein and Gubrium, 1994). Although phenomenology is often described as a "programme of description" (Hammond, 1991), it is also an "uncompromising interpretive enterprise" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1994; p.264), as the basic assumption underlying phenomenology is that a person's life is socially constructed, where experiences interrelate coherently and meaningfully.

A variety of methods can be used in phenomenological research, including interviews, conversations, participant observation, action research, focus meetings and analysis of narrative or personal texts. Hence, phenomenological inquiry is inherently qualitative in nature. As Thompson *et al*. (1989) argue, the world of "lived experience" does not always go hand in hand with the world of objective description, because objectivity often implies trying to explain an event or experience as separate from its contexts and setting. To try to provide generalisable laws is seen as untenable in phenomenological terms. This is mainly because such a process does not embrace the idea that the meaning of experience is always contextually and temporally situated (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Van Mannen (1983) provides a description of the qualitative method that echoes the objectives of phenomenological inquiry: "It is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (p.9).

Inquiring into the world of lived experience has been described by the researchers as complex, because when conducting phenomenological inquiry, one needs to be able to translate the interpretive accounts that individuals give of their experiences. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) point out, "subjects, or individuals are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts, or stories, about what they did and why. No single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience" (p.12). A key idea of phenomenological inquiry then is the recognition that any explanations given of phenomena "are at best 'here and now' accounts that represent a dynamic process that, in the next instant, might represent a very different aspect" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; p.155). It is important to realise that the same person may well

interpret things differently at different times and in different contexts. At the same time, this means that what is known by the researcher is created through a personal and interactive relationship between the investigator and the subject/object of investigation (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Schwandt (1994) describes this as a "second-order" interpretation of an individual's process of "Verstehen" (Weber)[9]. Put more simply, it is important to be aware that any interpretations offered by researchers engaged in phenomenological inquiry are the result of an interpretive process in which individuals under investigation make sense of their past and experiences.

One of the most defining factors of phenomenological inquiry, however, is that it is firmly located in the "context of discovery" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 1994; Symon and Cassell, 1998). This issue relates to the "presuppositionless" (Cope, 2008) character of phenomenology, where any prior values, beliefs and philosophical commitments are suspended. Phenomenological inquiry argues that *a priori* theoretical propositions and hypotheses should be suspended in order to describe phenomena from the perspective of those who experience it. It is only then that investigators can develop an authentic and holistic appreciation of a phenomenon.

The primary aim of this research was to explore the nature of migration and mobility from the level of migrants' lived experience. The importance of a phenomenological commitment was reflected in the emphasis on the participants and their stories, and in seeking access to an understanding of their lifeworlds through exploring their lived experience of migration. However, as will be seen, the study did not follow all principles of phenomenological stance as it presented the experiences of Polish migrants within the context of previous research. Any truly phenomenological study would seek to "bracket" these from the research, but I decided to first explore the migration-as-experienced by Polish migrants and then discuss how those experiences might shed light on the objectives of this research. However, I am also aware of the limitations inherent in seeking to identify and represent the lived experience of migration. As already mentioned, a phenomenological research process requires of the researcher an ability to be open and see the world as it appears to others, and to "bracket" own experience and the interpretations it brings. My stance involved standing outside of my own migration experience, pre-judgments, notions of what migration is, and accepting the migration experience as presented by my participants. The way this

[9]The term is particularly associated with the German sociologist, Max Weber. As Patton (1990) explains, Verstehen means "understanding" and refers to the human capacity to make sense of the world. First introduced into the social sciences by Max Weber, the Verstehen doctrine presumes that human beings have a unique type of consciousness, and so the study of human phenomena will be different from the study of other forms of life and nonhuman phenomena. The tradition of Verstehen places emphasis on the human capacity to know and understand others through empathic introspection and reflection based on direct observation of, and interaction with, people.

was enacted in a research process is described in more detail in the later sections of this chapter. However, at the same time, I acknowledge that a researcher is never able to fully "bracket" his or her values and beliefs, but rather apply what Donald (2007) refers to as a "heuristic in-betweenness" (p.305). I address this issue further in the data collection and analysis section of this chapter.

The following section moves on to explanation of a choice of narrative as a method for data collection. Interviews based on narrative approach seemed appropriate, because of the research focus on migrants' own constructions of migration experiences and processes.

3.2.2 The narrative method of inquiry

A narrative is defined as a "spoken or written account of connected events, a story" (Soanes and Stevenson, 2004, p.244). Others like Smith, (1981, p. 20) however, consider any "verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened" as a narrative. Lieblich (1998) and her colleagues, see narrative as "any study that uses or analyses narrative materials. The data can be collected as a story…or in a different manner (field notes of an anthropologist who writes up his or her observations as a narrative or in personal letters)" (p.2). As such, narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience, collaboration between researcher and participants, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction.

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, because of their ability to explore knowledge about life experiences and illuminate diverse aspects of migrant life. For example, narratives allow researchers to learn about how people themselves make sense of migration.

As Eastmond (2007) argues, narratives rest on the assumptions that people make sense of their experiences by selecting the elements of experience they want to talk about and the ways in which the stories are told. Therefore, in order to understand migration experience and the process of migration and mobility held by Polish migrants, I needed to examine their stories and became aware of the underlying assumptions that those stories embody.

The narrative analysis is grounded in the phenomenological assumption that meanings are assigned to the phenomena because they are experienced, and that one can only understand other people's experiences when they share them in their own words (see Schutz, 1972). Thus, analytically, the understanding of narratives requires a clear distinction between "life as lived", "life as experienced", and "life as told by someone" (Bruner, 1986). The past experiences are usually remembered through the prism of the present (Eastmond, 2007). Therefore, narratives have been argued to reduce the true value of experience, as they are only expressions of person's experience as he or she remembers (Bruner, 1986). That is, narratives, according to Bruner (1986), cannot be seen simply understood as reflecting life as lived, but rather should be seen as constructions and interpretations of one's past.

The choice of narrative as a method of generating data was directed by the necessity to orientate the study towards understanding migration through the migrant's own perspective. Therefore, this research required a method that would allow the wide range of migrant experiences through the stories they told during the interviews to be explored. I considered narratives as a more dynamic means of data collection that would allow Polish migrants in England to be viewed as individual subjects, acting and reflecting on their migration and mobility (Eastmond, 2007). As such, narratives acted as means that "retained the complexity of the situation in which an action was undertaken and the emotional and motivation meaning connected with it" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 11) and as the focus of analysis.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

This section considers data collection procedures and the analysis of material. However, before engaging in an explanation of how the narratives were carried out and analysed, it is useful to describe the theoretical context in which they were conducted.

Reflecting the phenomenological desire to understand and describe the phenomenon of migration and mobility as it is "lived", it was essential to "bracket" any theoretical presuppositions regarding the nature of the phenomenon. However, as I argued in Chapter 2, it was necessary, at least initially, to explore the wider literature on migration in order to generate broad themes that would act as points of reference in the interview process. Consequently, deciding upon the necessary level of prior exposure to literature was one of the most difficult aspects of the fieldwork process. At the same time, during the fieldwork, I attempted to purposefully ignore these existing theories and

ideas. For instance, I would keep a degree of naivety regarding the migration experiences of the participants, despite the clear "insider" status in the research.

As already noted in this chapter, the attitude that I adopted with regards to the researcher's interpretative function, may differ from traditional phenomenological approaches. McLeod (1947, cited in Ashworth 2003) observes that "the phenomenological question is simply 'What is there?', without regard to Why, Whence or Wherefore" (p.23). That is, as Moustakas (1994) argues, "phenomenology is committed to descriptions of experiences, not explanations or analyses" (p.4). I however, place Polish migrants' experiences in theoretical perspectives of economic migration, transnationalism and past research. I purposely examine and analyse the lived experience of migration to see how, where, through what, such experience may be constructed and enacted. This is clearly a limitation in my research, because there is no single sophisticated understanding of how to conduct phenomenological research.

3.3.0 The choice of participants

To find potential participants prepared to tell their stories of migration and settlement in England, I relied heavily upon the extensive networks of friends and colleagues[10]. The "informer approach" (Blumer, 1969) was employed, taking as a point of entry an individual who would, to some extent, participate in the research as a "co-researcher", and provide access to other participants. Blumer (1969) further suggests that the researcher "seeks the participants in the sphere of life who are acute observers and…well informed" (p.41). The research design then involved mapping the various other people that these respondents engaged with. Interviews were then conducted with people that the informants worked with or with their friends. These contacts then became a dominant feature in shaping the direction of this study and generated further interest in the work, with some of these participants suggesting other people as potential respondents. This is however, also one of the limitations of this study, as the stories of migration discussed here may present a participant bias.

The aim was to gain multiple perspectives of migrant experiences. While it was possible to gather a broad cross-selection of experiences from men and women who migrated to the UK after the enlargement of the EU in 2004, it was decided that the scope of the study should be narrowed. The focus was to be upon creating a history of the lived experiences of people who had migrated to the

[10]These networks included non-Polish friends and colleagues, as well as employees and learners at an adult education institution in the West Midlands, where at the time the researcher was employed as a language tutor.

West Midlands and who had lived there for at least one year. I felt that the one year period was an ultimate time for migrants to experience most of the aspects of migration (from arrival, issues of assimilation, finding work to finally settling in) and make their decisions about their future. Had the research focused on participants who had lived in England less than one year, it would have been difficult to understand and grasp the lived experience and for participants to reflect upon their diverse experiences. At the same time, in the attempt to be "inclusive" rather than "exclusive", I also considered the occupation, education, age and gender when approaching the prospective respondents. Overall, 32 people were interviewed and re-interviewed one more time over the period of 12 months. Of these, 12 were males and 20 females; six returnees and 26 migrants self-reportedly still living in England[11].

3.3.1 Initiating the interviews

Once prospective participants were identified, I approached each participant individually and in person and outlined the project. Follow up phone calls were then made and in two cases, a formal letter introducing the researcher as a university student and the description of the nature of the research, were sent for the purpose of legitimising my visit to the migrant's home. Three people declined the invitation to be interviewed, giving lack of time or lack of interesting migration story as primary reasons. These that initially agreed to be interviewed, were contacted further on the phone or via email to arrange a meeting time and place.

The interviews with the returnees took place in Poland in May 2010. I travelled to two cities in Poland and conducted six interviews over a period of five days. These participants were initially contacted by email, and then on the phone in Poland to arrange time and place. All 6 interviews took place in returnee's homes. The returnees were people with whom I established contact while they were still living in England and who migrated back to Poland within the period of 12 months from establishing the connection.

3.3.2 The pilot study

The pilot study took place in England during the early summer of 2009. The aim was to make some initial contacts, to acquire useful information for the main fieldwork research, and to take a limited

[11]For a more detailed description of participants, please refer to Appendix D.

number of interviews in order to review the method of data collection. The establishment of these relationships enabled an initial network of contacts and starting points to be built in order to proceed to the main fieldwork research. Furthermore, four interviews were conducted, which were included in the data analysed for the purpose of this study. The initial experience of conducting research with the use of narrative methods proved to be of great importance, as it was the first time I had used narratives as a means of generating data. Following the pilot study, I rephrased the wording of the opening question and added some discussion themes that participants had spontaneously mentioned.

3.3.3 The interview process

In all cases, the interviews were recorded using a dictaphone, conducted in public spaces, such as restaurants, pubs and cafés or migrants' homes. They followed the British Sociological Association Guidelines and Code of Ethics. The nature of the public places where most of the interviews were conducted meant that the interview process could be disrupted at any time. However, because all interviews except one were conducted in Polish, it appeared that the participants felt at ease to share their stories.

In conducting the narrative interviews, the description proposed by Thompson *et al*. (1989) provided clear direction. They specify that the goal of the data collection based on phenomenological inquiry is to gain a first-person description of some specified domain of experience, where the course of the dialogue is set largely by the participant. The role of the interviewer is to provide a context in which participants feel free to describe their experiences in detail.

Overall, 32 narrative interviews were conducted and lasted approximately one and a half hours each, with the longest interview lasting nearly three hours. The interview focused on the migrant's story of migration. As Thompson *et al*. (1989) state, with the exception of an opening question, the interviewer must have no *a priori* questions concerning the topic, only general themes. According to Schütze (1992), the way the initial opening question is formulated has an outstanding role to play within the narrative interview setting. Consequently, participants were informed at the beginning of the interview that the focus of the research was on their personal recollections and stories of migration to England. This was then followed by a broad question: "Tell me the story of your migration. Start from the beginning: how did the idea of migration germinate? Then tell me about

your experiences of migration, the best and worst times that you experienced. Finally, tell me about your future plans". I hoped that by focusing on what lived experience was like but also, through reflection, what significance these experiences had for the migrants, would provide a richer picture of migration.

Any other descriptive questions asked during the interview flowed "from the course of the dialogue" (Thompson *et al*., 1989; p.138), but I referred to the interview guide[12] to ensure the clarity of questions and a range of themes discussed (Patton, 1990). As such, this research allowed the interviewees to influence the content of the interviews within the general framework, which prioritised their perspectives on the problems raised. Some of the interviewees, who did not give elaborate accounts of their migration story after the initial question[13], provided detailed stories when I returned to points they had already mentioned. Douglas (1985) argues in favour of such technique within qualitative interviewing, as it encourages the interviewees to speak about the issues they may have left out.

3.3.4 Transcribing

Transcribing, with close attention to the truest representation possible, is absolutely essential in narrative research. Riessman (1993) advises that the researcher begin by getting the entire interview, including both words and selected features (crying, long pauses, laughter), on paper in a first draft. Then portions can be selected for re-transcription.

Following Reissmann (1993), the transcribing of the interviews was first completed as a draft. Sections of some tapes were replayed and the transcripts were revisited numerous times. Then, the specific content was selected for later analysis according to the chosen theme. Only those quotes that were used in this project were translated into English.

3.3.5 Field notes

Field notes by the researcher are crucial in qualitative research to retain data gathered (Lofland and Lofland, 1999). This implies that the researcher must be disciplined to record, subsequent to each

[12] For a copy of the Interview guide, please see Appendix A.
[13] This can be attributed to a number of reasons, among which participants' characteristics and apprehensiveness about sharing personal and emotional stories with a stranger may be most common.

interview, as comprehensively as possible, but without judgmental evaluation, for example: "What happened and what was involved? Who was involved? Where did the activities occur? Why did an incident take place and how did it actually happen?" Furthermore, Lofland and Lofland (1999, p. 5) emphasise that field notes "should be written no later than the morning after". Besides discipline, field notes also involve "luck, feelings, timing, whimsy and art" (Bailey, 1996, p. 13).

Following Groenewald (2004), four types of field notes were made: (1) Observational notes – "what happened notes"; (2) Theoretical notes – "attempts to derive meaning" as I thought or reflected on experiences, (3) Methodological notes – "reminders, instructions or critique" to oneself on the process.

The field notes in this thesis were regarded as a first step in data analysis. Morgan (1997) remarks that because the field notes involve interpretation, they are "part of the analysis rather than the data collection" (pp. 57-58). However, the field notes also acted as secondary data. In order to discover the essence of lived experience of migration, an ethnographic approach in addition to in-depth interviews was carried out. Narrative interviews were primary method of data collection, while non-participant observations formed secondary data. The purpose of this was to extract as much detail as possible and supplement the data collected through the interviews. Denscombe (1998) comments that different methods can be used to collect data on the same thing from a different perspective, and that the opportunity to collaborate findings can enhance the validity of the data.

3.3.6 Analysing the data

Following Killick (2011), the data analysis proceeded in three stages: (1) The initial stage of phenomenological descriptions of the lived-experience of each participant; (2) The second stage of thematic descriptions across and among the participants; (3) The third stage of discussion in which the lived experience as described is explored against the theoretical positioning of this thesis. Therefore, the first two stages are very much stages of a phenomenological inquiry, but the final stage reflects more of a "phenomenological perspective" (Patton, 2002; p.107).

The stage one involved thorough reading of each participant's lived experience. In this stage, the lived experience of migration was considered as revealed by the migrant himself/herself, and required of me to set aside, or just be aware of, my assumptions or viewpoints. The exploration was framed within the two areas of focus of the thesis, the lived experience and meanings attached to

migration. During this stage the elements and essential structures of lived experience of migration were uncovered and defined within each of the two main themes. All other relevant features were drawn out and listed under a series of sub-themes. This was a highly iterative process, but helped me become immersed in the data.

The stage two involved the analysis of data and moved from the individual to the thematic phase. Again, this process was one in which I thoroughly re-read the transcripts. This time however, the focus was on the thematic understanding of lived experience and meanings attached to migration in all transcripts to capture the totality of the lived experience.

The third stage, synthesis of data, involved intuitive-reflective integration of data and descriptions to develop a broader picture and position it against what is already known in the field of migration. In this stage, I identified the different ways in which themes were talked about and used these ways to develop theoretical accounts of recurrent patterns. My concern in this stage was to highlight and show how, where and in what ways migration experience is constructed, understood and enacted among Polish migrants, and what processes and understandings might have contributed to those.

As with any qualitative work, I encountered problems dealing with the large quantities of data. The whole process of analysis was conducted in the traditional, manual way as I chose not to use any computer or analytical software. This had a negative effect that was related to the speed and time of data analysis, as it took me a long time to identify themes and sub-themes and to familiarise myself with the data.

3.4 Cross-cultural considerations in research

The final section of the methodology chapter addresses the complex methodological issue of researcher's positionality, the ethical need for complete researcher transparency and the awareness of building the relationship with the respondents. The section ends with a discussion of the limitations of the research.

3.4.0 Ethical issues

Plummer (2001) describes all ethical debates in qualitative research as an ambivalent process where researcher's actual experiences are understood as a struggle "with the self, but a struggle that must be shared publicly because we need stories and narratives of research ethics to help fashion our own research lives" (p. 229). Though each research is unique, there are some ethical issues that all researchers need to consider, especially with regard to informed consent and responsibility to the participants[14].

3.4.0.1 Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained for all interviews. This required informing participants about the overall purpose of the research and its main features, as well as of the possible risks or benefits of participation. Consent was given in written format, verbally and also audio-taped.

In this study, much consideration was given to the type of informed consent produced, in particular to whether this was carried out in English or in Polish[15]. As stated above, all interviews were conducted in Polish, with the exception of one. Explanations of ethical considerations regarding confidentiality of data collected and anonymity were fully disclosed before each interview.

3.4.0.2 Responsibility to the participants

In ensuring confidentiality, I did not report private data that identifies the participants. The names of the interviewees were changed and pseudonyms used. Once the interviews were transcribed they were deleted from the dictaphone.

As with all research, it was absolutely essential to establish a trusting relationship with the participants. Ideally, as Lowes (2006) argues, there should be reciprocity in what participants give and what they receive from participation in a research project. I am indebted to participants for sharing their experiences and my reciprocity often entailed giving time to help out, providing

[14]For a broader and more in-depth discussion about ethical issues, please refer to Rynkiewich and Spradley (1976); Beauchamp, Faden, Wallace, and Walters (1982); or Bower and Gasparis (1978).
[15]For the copy of the Informed consent and Participant information sheet, please refer to Appendices B and C respectively. The documents are available in English and Polish.

informal feedback, buying a drink, tutoring in English or translating official mail into Polish. As Lowes (2006) further comments, this reciprocity should fit within the constraints of research, personal ethics, and within the framework of maintaining one's role as a researcher.

3.4.1 The issue of researcher's positionality

The phenomenological inquiry has been described as a valuable methodology that can produce rich data. It is also a methodology that, according to Cope (2003), respects and values the experiences of the participants, and gives priority to their interpretations of experiences. However, it is not without pitfalls. In particular, such an approach can have significant implications in terms of the relationship between the researcher and the researched, as Eccles (2000) found in her phenomenological interviews with addictive consumers:

> "By adhering to the spirit of existential phenomenology, the direction of any conversation has to be participant-led - a move away from most other research methods. The researcher is therefore required to relinquish her control. Having decided upon and organised all other elements of the research, the researcher at this stage has to allow the participant to control and dictate the progress, and to an extent, the process of the interview." (pp. 137-138)

This issue of direction and control, expressed in Eccless' quote, is particularly significant in phenomenological inquiry as it presents an important limitation. On the one hand, the researcher must allow the participant to tell their own story, in their own words and from their own perspective. On the other, the researcher is interested in finding about some issues and experiences that are broadly related to the questions underlying the research (Cope, 2003). In practice, it can be very difficult for the researcher to maintain a passive role. The excerpt from the researcher's field notes below is particularly insightful into the issue of control that I faced in the interview process:

> "Yet again I am finding myself interrupting the interview! My mind wonders around, I keep thinking of questions to ask, things I want to say. I keep thinking about my own experiences as a migrant. It is so difficult to stay objective!" (My field notes, February 2010)

As Eisenhardt (1989, p.13) argues, it is impossible for researchers to start with a "clean theoretical slate". My perceptions of migration were influenced, both explicitly and implicitly, by exposure to theory and my own experiences as a migrant. Consequently, an important methodological reflection from this research is that maintaining a "pure" phenomenological approach often proves difficult.

Furthermore, it is extremely important that researchers using the phenomenological approach recognise the implicit issues of their identity that they bring into the research process. Reflexivity, whereby the researcher engages in an explicit, self-aware meta-analysis of the research process, offers a way to analyse how subjective elements influence research (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity can be understood in a number of ways; it can be viewed as a personal account of methodology or as examining one's own personal actions. The issue of the researcher's identity and membership in the group being studied is relevant to all approaches of qualitative methodology, as the researcher is thought to play an important role in both data collection and analysis. Whether the researcher is an insider, because of sharing the characteristics, roles, or experiences with the group under study, or an outsider, it is still imperative to acknowledge one's membership position in relation to those participating in the research.

The impact of insider epistemology has been considered by qualitative researchers who are insiders to the population under the study as well as by those who are outsiders. Griffith (1998), for instance, commented on the issues of epistemological privilege linked with insider status, and pointed to a number of questions that are often discussed in relation to this: does the biography of the researcher – their race, class, gender and past experiences– privilege their knowledge production or not? Are researchers with knowledge of the group under study able to elicit better accounts of the research problem? Therefore, Asselin (2003) suggests that for insider researchers it is best to collect data while assuming that they themselves know nothing about the phenomenon being studied. She argues that although the insider researcher might be part of the culture under study, he or she might not be necessarily able to grasp the subculture. Acker (2001) further problematizes this binary implied in the insider/outsider debates, by asking "how do we even know when we are inside or outside or somewhere in between?" (p.190). Naples (2003) argues that neither insider nor outsider exist as fixed positions, rather they are constantly negotiated by the researchers. As such, one can occupy more than one position at the time. Thus, engaging in reflexivity is a core element of qualitative methodology (see, for example, Norum, 2000; Olesen, 2003; Wilkinson, 1998).

Throughout the research process, I acknowledged my insider status and identity, as a Pole, as a migrant and a female researcher:

> "…if being Polish gave me the advantage of speaking the language and having access to migrant groups, my relationship with participants prove not to be so straightforward. People seem surprised that my interest is in studying Polish migrants and I often have to reassure them that it is

an interesting topic…From the moment I began the first interview, I realized that not only the research but also my identity is being constantly questioned. Some people seemed confused, because of my perceived superiority of being a doctoral student at a British university, someone who has never worked in factory or struggled with the English language (not true!!). My identity was often negotiated before the interview, in order to "locate" me in relation to a participant. The differences of my (perceived!) status, migration experience and even gender marked me and this seemed to override our commonness..." (My field notes, December 2009)

As evident in this excerpt, although shared status can be very beneficial as it affords access, entry, and a common ground from which to begin the research, it can also potentially impede the research process as it progresses in ways that both Watson (1999) and Armstrong (2001) acknowledge. Watson addressed this issue in relation to her interpretation of the text and analysis. She stated, "I still remain unclear whether this is my interpretation of an actual phenomenon, or if I am projecting my own need [. . .] onto my participants." (p. 98). Armstrong also addressed her concerns about being a member of the group studied when she commented on the possible impact that her insider status may have had on the interviews. She commented, "At the same time, my empathy and enthusiasm for a subject dear to my own heart may have kept them from considering certain aspects of their experience" (p. 243).

In this research I tried to use the phenomenological "bracketing" and detail my reflection on the subjective research process. I attempted to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of my participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience. For instance, I often asked for participant's clarification if in doubt. In many sociological studies, there are power, gender and identity differentials and the best approach is a use of a strategy that "…acknowledges, respects and works with difference; recognizes and takes responsibility for differential power relations that may exist between the researcher and those participating in the research; chooses methods that empower the 'researched' and that allow depth of analysis and complexities to come forth; and challenges and transforms unequal power relations" (Skelton, 2001a; p.90). Any researcher must be aware of these "strategies" and challenges of qualitative research.

3.4.2 Shortcomings and limitations of the study

As with any methodology, there are limitations and shortcomings to be considered when conducting phenomenological research. One particular issue is that in adopting a phenomenological approach, we must accept the individual nature of the world, and the difficulties inherent in

knowing what lived experience means to different people. That is, because of the focus in this research on lived experience of individual migrants, I was only able to have a "limited" access to their experiences. For instance, participants' accounts of their experiences of migration may differ from those remembered by others. The stories of migration I had a privilege to hear are stories told from the perspective of my participants. Hence, the narratives in this study must be seen as interpretive, and myself as interpreting those, despite the fact that I employed "participant validation" as a way to "prove" the validity of my research (Eastmond, 2007). As Giovannolli (2004) argues, when the participant agrees with the researcher's assessment, it is seen as strengthening the researcher's argument. Such argument, however, may be contested as another researcher or a study undertaken on lived experience of migration, may present a different story. In his critical exploration of participant validation, Ashworth (1993) supports this claim, but warns against taking participants' evaluations too seriously as it may be in their interest to protect themselves. As he notes, "participant validation is flawed nevertheless, since the 'atmosphere of safety' that would allow the individual to lower his or her defences, cease "presentation", and act in open candour (if this is possible), is hardly likely to be achieved in the research encounter" (p.15). In this study, I made attempts to validate the research by offering the participants to read through the scripts of the interviews. However, no one took up the offer.

At the same time, and supporting earlier arguments, even though my interest was in the lived experience of migration, I have restricted my interest to only certain aspects of that experience. As such, this impacted upon all levels of research, from conducting interviews to data analysis, in which I might have focused more attention on those experiences which seemed more likely to offer relevant insights.

Finally, as has already been argued, when using narratives as a method of data collection, the researcher is supposed not to impose any pre-existing frameworks on the research process. This represents a significant methodological risk on the part of the researcher, but also on participants, who are given a lot of control over the interview process. Apart from an opening question, the interview had no structure and "intended to yield a conversation, not a question and answer session" (Thompson *et al*., 1989; p.138). Consequently, the interview process was often ambiguous. In particular, such an approach might have had implications in terms of the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Eccles, 2000). For instance, as noted in the previous section, my perceived superiority might have made the participant uncomfortable and unwilling to talk about aspects of his or her migration experience that were not successful. Therefore, this issue of control

in the interview process is particularly significant in phenomenological terms, as the researcher has to abandon control in order to open himself/herself to the phenomenon in its own right. In practice however, for reasons I have already explored, it was very difficult for me to maintain such a passive role, as the research questions driving this thesis needed answering in order to produce work that can make a genuine contribution to knowledge about the phenomenon of the lived experience of migration.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an account of how the research unfolded. The first part situated the study within the methodological and theoretical framework and discussed the key aspects of Interpretivist paradigm and phenomenology that I found to be particularly helpful to draw upon for ways of exploring the research questions. The second part dealt with ethical considerations in research and the reflection on the role of the researcher in the construction of knowledge. I have examined my stance as a researcher in the complex web of interrelations with the participants. The complexities of how stories are remembered, retold, relived and recorded were outlined. This included the intricacies of power relations and the multifaceted layers that form relationships between the participants and the researcher working on the "inside" in a small community. The chapter concluded with a consideration of limitations and shortcomings.

The following chapters bring to light the participants' experiences as individuals, and the themes which flow among them.

CHAPTER 4

Lived experience of migration

May 2009, late afternoon. Ania and I are walking to her house, where I am to meet her friends, and prospective participants for this research. It is during this journey that Ania tells me about her life in England: a difficult beginning, where she could not find a permanent job and worked for less than minimum wage; her feelings of homesickness and loneliness, but also about her anxiety to speak English; the sacrifices she felt she made after migrating to England; and finally about the friends she lost when she finally got promoted to a managerial position at her current workplace. All this however, appears not to affect how she feels about England. Ania seems generally content with her current life and does not express a desire to return to Poland: "No, I don't want to go back. Why would I? England is where I want to be. Whenever I go back [to Poland], I am always happy to come back; you know what I mean? Poland is grey, it's old and backwards. I feel alien when I go to visit. Like, I have changed but Poland stayed the same. No dream of returning for me. I am just happy to visit", she tells me during her interview. Ania's narrative does not strike me as particularly surprising. In fact, her friends that I interview confirm what she asserts. Both, Tomek's and Kasia's stories are very similar to Ania's. They are all in their late twenties; they arrived in England with no intention of settling, at some point of their migration journey they worked in low-paid jobs; finally, they all have no desire to return. Looking back at the conversation I had with Ania, I think about how people construct their lives in the process of migration, what strategies they employ, what happens to their identity, understandings of home and belonging. During my conversations with Kasia and Tomek, I wonder about what it means to be a migrant. I remember reading about the ambivalence of the term "migrant". For some, it is a positive image of a cosmopolitan person and a traveller; for others, of a dangerous and dirty foreigner, who abuses the welfare system of a nation state. I think about Anne-Marie Fortier's argument of how for migrants "where you are from" is remembered and rearticulated with "where are you at". Questions of identity, home and belonging seem to be always posed in relation to migration. However, Ania's, Kasia's and Tomek's stories reveal much more. They illuminate diverse aspects of migrant life as a process, as a psychological development and cultural patterning; they shed the light on the lived experience of Polish migrants in England.

4.0 Introduction

As Dilthey (1976) argues, any experience "urges toward expression, or communication with others", but only those experiences that are "formative and transformative" and "erupt from and disrupt" the everyday life, are particularly insightful (in Turner 1986; p.35). The increasingly global and transnational nature of migration has brought attention to the need to explore migrant experiences. At the same time, as Malkki (1995) argues, some researchers raised concerns about universalising migrant's experience and the tendency to portray all migrants as an undifferentiated group, despite their individual differences. While migration involves a change for migrants, what that change brings, and how it is understood and dealt with by migrants, cannot simply be assumed.

The focus on lived and everyday experience is not new. In the social sciences, a number of researchers have long argued for a greater attentiveness to the everyday processes that make up peoples' lives (De Certeau, 1984). Within feminist research, for example, scholars have championed the need to explore the taken-for-granted everyday activities that challenge gender and other ideologies (Dyck, 2005). What is more, those working in phenomenology and human geography have taken as their focus conveying "the meaning of lived reality" by better understanding "a person's first-hand involvement with the world" (Rollinson, 1990, p.47).

Within the field of migration, as I argued in Chapter 2, there is now a small, but growing body of work that explores the negotiations of migrant lived experience. These studies are thought to emphasise the need, as Conradson and Latham (2005, p. 228) observe, to "highlight the significant amounts of energy, resources and organisation that go into sustaining transnational lives and communities". Scholars of the lived experience of migration have considered the often forgotten and invisible aspects of migration: the labour of homemaking (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002; Blunt, 2005); the localised negotiations of everyday activities like shopping (Hindman, 2008; Burrell and Rabikowka, 2009); migrant's working habits (Huang and Yeoh, 2007); and the role of objects (Tolia-Kelly, 2004; Walsh, 2006) in forming and maintaining life across different locations. As such, these studies illustrate that migration and migrants' lives comprise the "the very real, often small-scale but time and energy consuming experiences taking place on a daily basis" (Ho and Hatfield, 2010, p.637).

This chapter then introduces the lived experience of migration. It engages with the everyday social relations and material aspects that make up migrants' experiences of migration (Ho and Hatfield, 2010, p.637). The narrative and journey thematic focus of this thesis allows the lived and everyday experiences of Polish migrants in England to be revealed, commencing from the germination of the initial idea to migrate and their experiences of settlement, to their subsequent reflections on the decision to migrate and future plans. The lived experience is here understood as the taken-for-granted efforts that "go into negotiating [the] life-worlds" of individuals and migrant groups (Conradson and Latham, 2005, p.228).

Each of the following chapters takes a different focus to bring to the fore specific aspects of the ways in which we might understand everyday and lived experience of migration through migrants' stories; each presents the lived experience of Polish migrants, yet offers a different entry point into the analysis. Therefore, this chapter situates this thesis and provides context for the forthcoming discussions in other chapters. As such, this approach has been selected to progressively show how lived experience and migration may develop across a range of different social contexts.

In this chapter, I attempt to provide a greater understanding of the lived experiences of Polish migrants in England in relation to: The decision to migrate – the germination of the idea to migrate; Migrants' experiences of arrival in England and initial impressions – migration processes and the emotional cost of moving; Language – the significance of being able to speak English, and the link between aspirations and available work; Employment – the experiences and complexities of working in low paid jobs as migrants; and finally, Remaining in England – reflections on migration, identity and questions of belonging. As will be revealed, these themes encompass a number of other subsidiary themes, such as class, discrimination or relations between Polish migrants. Other than class, these are brought into explorations where they are raised by the participants. As I argued in the Literature review chapter, the lived experience of migration is a complex phenomenon and for different migrants, it may encompass a number of different features. As such, the themes discussed in this chapter form a significant feature of Polish migrants' experience, but beyond these, other significant themes emerged across all participants to impact on the nature of their experience. At the same time, even though I listed these themes under separate headings, each theme is implicit in the others. This thesis then attempts to recognise these intricacies and variations constituting the lived experience of migration and seeks to highlight those as they are experienced and expressed in the course of an individual migrant's life.

4.1 Decision to migrate - the germination of the idea to migrate

With this chapter's focus on the lived experience of migration, it makes sense to firstly pose a question - how did the decision to migrate initially occur to the individuals who subsequently migrated to the UK?

The narratives of migration point to a number of factors that influenced the decision to migrate. Among them, the possibilities for personal betterment, lack of job opportunities, and the significant experiences specific to participant's life are the most common. For the majority of respondents however, the decision to migrate is depicted as a positive one. Magda comments:

> "I just wanted to come to England to see how it really was. When I came, in 2006, a lot of people migrated. I suppose I just wanted to know if what it was said about England was true. It was not really to look for a job, but rather out of curiosity, need for change. I just thought: I am young, I have nothing to lose, but more to gain." (female, 24 years old)

In a rapidly changing world, where migration and mobility are increasingly available to people and made easier by the advancement in air transportation, the motivations and expectations behind migration decisions and the very nature of these decisions, may become much more diverse. For Magda, the choice to leave Poland appears not to be primarily motivated by a search for economic gain, nor is it tied to a desire for an increased standard of living. Rather, for young people like Magda, the decision to migrate is a result of curiosity about travel and the world generally, something that she describes as the "need for a change". Eade *et al*. (2007) argue, in the context of post-2004 migration to the UK, that many young Poles migrate as "searchers". They see their decision to migrate as a search for new skills and experiences, as well as economic advancement. Magda's comment adds to this argument and seems to demonstrate the particular agency of young Polish migrants in their decisions to migrate. As White (2010) argues, many young Polish people assert their independence and display their agency through migration processes.

For Karolina, a 33 year old female, what appears to be driving the decision to move from Poland is her view of the advantages of living abroad, even though this means leaving her family, friends and native country. This awareness, together with her intentionality for self-improvement, is evident throughout the narrative:

> "I just got sick of working in Poland for next to nothing, the long hours, not feeling appreciated, not being noticed at all. I am a hard-working person, I am not scared of changes and I

know what I want. But I could not achieve it in Poland. It was not a simple and a quick decision, as I often hear from other people. You know, like I woke up one day and decided to go, not at all! I had my family to consider, my fiancé. I just believed that life is much easier and better here, in England. And if I work hard, someone will give me a chance, promote me. I had to go. And I came."

Karolina's motivations to migrate are interesting. Even though her decision is a primarily economic one, rather than explaining her motivation as a search for improved economic conditions, Karolina constructs it as seeking greater possibilities for self-actualisation. This resembles some aspects of "existential migration" (Madison, 2006), where migrants are thought to be migrating for diverse reasons, such as fulfilling one's potential and exploring foreign cultures in order to assess one's own identity. Though Karolina's migration decision making does not explicitly match this description, her motivations appear to be more complex than first meet the eye. Specifically, questions arise with regard to her personal orientations and ambivalence towards Poland, something that I will explore in the next section of this chapter.

Beyond migration decision making as a quest for adventure and self-fulfilment, for the majority of Poles in this study, migration was a "way out" and the answer to high unemployment in Poland:

"Well, there was no way I could find a job in Poland. I had just graduated from university and I was either overeducated or did not have enough experience. So I bought the plane ticket." (Witek, male, 31 years old)

For Witek, it was the insecurity of available work that "pushed" him towards migrating. As a university graduate, Witek lacked work experience required to compete in a difficult Polish job market. White (2010) notes that, at the beginning of the 21st century, nearly 50 per cent of 19 to 24 year-olds have attended university. As a result, in the years preceding EU accession, the Polish job market could not keep up with the demand for work. Many young Poles seek employment abroad, because of a "brain overflow" (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009, p. 44). Monika states:

"Poland produced an overeducated society. People have a higher education degree that is worth nothing, because everybody has a degree. So then we joined the EU and many of us came to England." (female, 28 years old)

Some research suggests this sense of a lack of employment opportunities at home has been one of the main motivations to migrate, even for highly educated young Poles (Von Ossowski, 2006). Tomek, another graduate, puts forward a similar argument:

"Initially, I was meant to come for a summer, try to earn some money, and then go back, finish off my master's dissertation and look for a job. But I realised that going back to Poland won't get me a job, so I decided to stay." (male, 26 years old)

In Tomek's case, his decision to migrate was one in which material incentives played an important role. However, even if the initial motivation for leaving was an economic one, in the process of migration, unemployment in Poland pushed him to reconsider his motives for migration. The discourse of lack of employment opportunities is prevalent in most narratives of university graduates in this research project, and indicates that for many, migration is increasingly becoming a livelihood strategy (see, for example, White, 2010).

For the migrants in this study, even though some decisions appear to be quite diverse, all seem to be fundamentally motivated by economic concerns. Maciek comments:

"It was difficult, I had no choice. I had two young children and a wife in Poland to look after. The factory I worked for was laying people off. The jobs that I could get did not pay enough to cover even the basics. One evening I sat down with my wife and we decided that I needed to go abroad. There were few of us in the same position, laid off, you know. We heard that they employed people for seasonal jobs in England. So we came […] Yes, I just did not have a choice." (male, 37 years old)

Larner (1991) states that migration decisions are often made "in a cultural setting in which there are strong obligations of family members to one another" (p.55). In fact, Maciek's comment testifies to this. For Maciek, a strong obligation to financially support the family was an important impetus to make the decision to migrate. What is interesting is that Maciek states that he did not have any other choice but to migrate. White (2010), in her research on young post-2004 Polish migrants in the UK, observes that a number of Poles migrated from Poland because they felt that their personal situation made them. Family obligations can then clearly acts as a push factor for migration.

For Basia, another Polish migrant, her reasons to migrate were similar to Maciek's. She reveals:

"There is nothing really interesting to say about how I got here. Like thousands of us [Poles][16], I had no money. No job equals no money. No money, no job and that's how I got here. It is really difficult to find jobs in Poland, well, good jobs anyway. If I just wanted to work as a cashier in Biedronka [Polish supermarket chain] for 900 zloty a month[17], I would have stayed in Poland. But it is not even enough to feed myself and my daughter and pay the bills!" (female, 35 years old)

[16] [ ] Author's annotations
[17] Ca. £220 (February 2011)

Both Maciek's and Basia's narratives reveal that behind the decision to migrate are not only ideas of looking for skills, experiences or self-actualisation. Personal relationships in Poland are frequently implicated in decisions to migrate. The decision to migrate is thus also about sense of obligation to provide for families left behind. This, in turn, appears to be motivating migrants to stay longer periods of time in England.

In conclusion, it seems that economic dynamics still play a significant role in pushing people to move from Poland and, even though other factors exist, the narratives of migration in this thesis illustrate that Poles are experiencing economic difficulties and that for many, migration is an attractive option. On the one hand, young Polish migrants demonstrate agency in their migration decision-making. Many are "searchers" of migration (Eade *et al*., 2007, p.11), either looking for independence, self-fulfillment or experience of travel. On the other hand, Polish migrants face many constraints in Poland. Their choice to migrate appears not to be completely free, but are due to personal reasons, family obligations or lack of employment opportunities. As such, the findings in this thesis support many other studies that explore the rationale for migrating to the UK (Fabiszak, 2007; Eade *et al*., 2007; White, 2010).

4.2 The experience of arrival and initial impressions - migration processes and the emotional cost of moving

For almost all migrants interviewed for this thesis, the experience of moving to England was an emotional journey, one in the course of which their views of the self and of Poland have been challenged. And as Ania, Tomek or Kasia at the beginning of this chapter reveal, many did not initially view their move as "migration". For instance, Andrzej, 47 year-old male, left because of the lack of employment opportunities in Poland. For Andrzej, England equalled place of work, but he did not envisage experiencing any of the negative feelings associated with a move to another country:

> "First time living here, total culture shock. I came to work in England so thought to myself: one year, no longer and I will go back, no point thinking and worrying about where I will live, what I will do in my spare time, how I am going to cope without any English. It should be easy, the goal was to earn money. But I landed here and it was only then that I realised how different it was."

Andrzej describes his expectations of migration experience as journeying through: "one year, no longer […] no point thinking and worrying", and his narrative seems to point to an interesting

observation. Some migrants, as I mentioned earlier, find themselves in situations where migration is the only feasible option for quick economic gain. Migrants tend to see monetary incentives as a primary goal of their migration; consequently, they often purposely overlook the challenges. Another reason why Andrzej might have not anticipated these difficulties is that, very often, the advantages of living abroad are overemphasized by migrants who return for short visits home. Migrants already living in England tend to play an important role in "colouring" the reality of migration to prospective migrants, highlighting only the benefits and leaving out the bad experiences. Juliana, in her 50s, for instance, migrated with her daughter in 2005. She too did not expect to encounter any major difficulties settling in:

> "Well, do not understand me wrong, I was not naïve. I knew that I am moving to another country, with a different language, different ways of living. But I underestimated the extent of the changes [...] You hear people talking about others going abroad, earning good money, coming back home better off and happy, money growing on trees, all that [...] we (her and the daughter) found the first two years in England difficult [...] actually, at the beginning I thought that it was me, my age, because my daughter seemed to be adapting a bit better [...] It did make me question my decision, made me miss my old life."(female)

Juliana's narrative seems to refer to this positive picture of migration, but more importantly, illustrates the perceived issues that migrants face when arriving in England. It has been argued that migration involves a change; it is "the transplantation of old roots and a search to find new roots in change itself" (Erikson, 1960, p.1). Those participants who had been in England for a longer period of time emphasised that adjustment took time. They often conveyed in detail their various experiences, usually highlighting both the emotional cost of leaving Poland and the difficulties of living abroad. Some, if not all, spoke of difficult situations they encountered on arrival to England. For instance, Basia (female, 35 years old) revealed that her first accommodation, a three bedroom terraced house, was shared with ten other Polish migrants; Dominika (female, 22 years old) described her first job as working in an extremely cold and dirty factory, where health and safety rules were not followed, and Tomek (male, 26 years old) recalled a story of a Polish migrant who, after being unsuccessful in finding a job and not having enough money to return home, slept on park benches. As Garapich (2006) argues, upon arrival in England many Polish migrants could not be picky, but rather needed to embrace all the difficulties that migration brought.

Despite the negative initial experiences, and the fact that many participants mentioned that settling in England was a difficult and challenging time, some nevertheless reflected upon the positive aspects of their migration:

"The beginnings were hard, I did struggle to find the job, changed my accommodation a few times, but you know what? I never thought that I would be able to do it." (Paulina, female, 25 years old)

Juliana, too, articulates a similar point:

"All this, moving to England, starting a new life, made me think, that you are never too old to start again. Who would think that a 50 something year old woman would manage living in England? [laughs]" (female, in her 50s)

The narratives of migration as a personal change highlight a new gained self-confidence and a positive self-image. The degree to which these changes take place or whether they happen only as a consequence of migrants' mobility is not always clear. It appears however, in case of Paulina and Juliana, that through their initial time in England they both developed more positive sense of themselves.

With changes in migrants' physical environment come changes in language, culture, as well as personal situations and working lives. With these significant changes in migrants' lives, Bottomley (1992) observes that people often "must come to terms with already existing schemes of understanding" in the host country (p.39). Ryan (2010) argues, based on the example of Polish migrants in London, that because of moving to the UK many of them are confronted with new realties and only by identifying them, migrants begin the quest for "normality" in the host country. Borrowing Goffman's (1972) term "adjustment", she further points out that this process encompasses adaptation to new situations, but with "old" understandings of life as a reference. For example, the process of adaptation takes place when migrants combine their migration experiences in such a way that it reflects their understandings of life before and after migration. As in case of Ryan's (2010) participants, Juliana began the adaptation and quest for normalcy when confronted by the feeling of "difference":

"I did feel different […] I was aware that we were not, well, we were considered to be foreigners. It's very confusing […] I get so irritated with the people here who think we are just stupid Poles, who came to claim the benefits!" (female, in her 50s)

In her narrative, Juliana explains how, upon arrival in England, she instantly felt different and foreign. Even though she does not elaborate on what that feeling encompasses, one can imagine that it reflects the ideas around cultural understandings of migration and assimilation. What is more,

Juliana relates that feeling to being perceived as "a stupid Pole". Similarly, Monika, a 28 year-old female, comments:

> "I have never felt more Polish than during the first few months after arriving in England. I had travelled. I mean I have been to Tunisia, Egypt, a few times in Spain, not to mention Germany. But only in England, for the first time I was faced with being Polish, Eastern European."

For Juliana and Monika the reality of arriving and living in England presents a challenge to their prevailing ideas about themselves and Poland. They both seem to be displaying a marked dislike to being labelled "different", as this typically sets them apart from the rest of people in the host society. Although often confusing and incomplete, their narratives illustrate how they think they are being seen by "others" in England. Tomek's narrative explains this further. He reveals:

> "I was very puzzled by the fact that being Polish meant being Eastern European and it took me a while to understand that for British people, Poland is Eastern Europe. For us, Poles, Poland is in Central Europe. For us, Eastern Europe is associated with (pause) Ukraine, Belarus." (male, 26 years old)

What is interesting, the majority of the respondents, in one way or another, commented on their feeling of discomfort associated with being called Eastern European. Małgosia states:

> "Eastern Europe is associated with lack of progress, Eastern Europeans with drunk, misbehaving and dirty people. Of course I get upset if someone calls me Eastern European." (female, 21 years old)

It would appear then that migrants in this study shared many of these stereotypical beliefs about Eastern Europeans and Poles. What is more, many stereotypes were also reproduced by Polish migrants themselves. As Małgosia's quote indicates, Polish migrants associated Eastern Europe with negative traits and this association in turn impacted upon their how they were perceived in England. As such, stereotypes played a powerful role in constructing Polish migrants' identity. Eriksen (1993) argues that "identity becomes an imperative status, an ascribed aspect of their personhood from which they cannot escape entirely" (pp. 5-6). And as Keith and Pile (1993) further note, identity is formed through the social interaction and relationships that people have. As I will argue in Chapter 6, just as migrants become aware of their gender identity, it is also through lived experiences and interactions that migrants discover and construct their sense of identity. However, this identity is not only constructed by migrants themselves, but also by the processes of ascribing the identity to them by others. Therefore, as Ryan (2010) comments, through the "process of

ascribing and labelling", Polish migrants are confronted by negative stereotypes of being Polish, Eastern European, drunk and misbehaving (p.362).

Interestingly, in some cases, the issue of being Polish/Eastern European had a positive connotation for the participants. Marcin (male, 32 years old) recalls:

> "When I applied for the job, the guy who interviewed me, told me: 'Oh you're from Poland. That's good. We have a lot of hard-working Polish men working for us'. That was my interview, just like that, you know, I got the job, because I was Polish and the Polish guys that worked for (a name of a building company) were loyal and hard-working. So immediately, I was labelled hard working and loyal. You know, a bit like they thought all Polish men are like that (laughs)."

The story described by Marcin, reveals a reverse situation, where being Polish is viewed as having being hard-working and having a strong work-ethic. While some of the participants sought to distance themselves from being either Eastern European or Polish, because of the perceived negative constructions, others like Marcin see it as an advantage. Past research on migration indicates that migrants often receive ambivalent stereotypes (Lee and Fiske, 2006). Most migrant groups are not seen as uniformly good or bad, and this indicates that Poles may receive different, and often conflicting, stereotypes. People's differing evaluations of what it means to be a Polish migrant in England appear to be shifting between descriptions of Poles as drunk, misbehaving or stupid and those who view Poles as hard-working and loyal. For instance, Anderson *et al*. (2006) found that, for British employers, the main advantages of Polish employees were migrants' high motivation and flexibility to work in low-paid and demanding jobs with long hours. As McDowell (2009) argues, this praise for Polish migrants reflected the difference between Poles and other non-white migrant groups. She further observes that whiteness is clearly a marker of privilege even for Polish migrants who are generally considered to be at the bottom end of the British labour market. What is interesting, and will be explored in Chapter 6, is that Polish migrants in this study often use these positive stereotypes to their advantage. As such, a common feature of all migrants' narratives of arrival and settlement in England is migration as a journey, during which not only how migrants are portrayed by others is challenged, but also their own views about what migration means and entails, are questioned.

Through these challenges some participants also reflected upon their own initial experiences of migration, and their accounts show that Poland as a country was often presented in a negative light:

"I thought to myself that if did not make the decision to migrate, you know, stayed in Poland, I wouldn't be able to develop […] as a person. I would probably get married, get stuck in a dead-end job. I would think like my parents think, no progress, no need to see the world, learn." (Karolina, female, 33 years old)

"I see how people look at me when I go back to Poland to visit: like I am mad, because I want more from life." (Anna, female, 28 years old)

Karolina and Anna express a general view that life in the UK is more forward looking and less traditional than in Poland. This, in turn, indicates that in comparison to the life in the UK, life in Poland offers fewer prospects for the future, opportunities for career advancement and less growth as a person. What is more, for a number of Polish migrants in England, and despite initial difficulties, the future is not always envisioned as a return, something that I will explore in more detail in Chapter 5.

In conclusion, the experience of migration and the subsequent initial integration, for some of my respondents, appear to be more difficult than they envisioned prior to coming to England. Their narratives unveil the lived experience of unfamiliar and often confusing experiences on entry to England. The participants' expectations of life abroad were, to some extent, countered by the stories of migrants already living in the UK and their actual lived experience. What is more, and despite the initial negative experiences, through their time in England, a few participants saw the benefits of migrating in their increased positive self-image. The interviewees' identity as a Polish migrant and an Eastern European was also challenged in the process of assimilation, because it was reinforced and imposed by the host society (e.g., Ryan, 2010). It appears therefore that we are unable to speak about Polish migrants' experiences in England without reference to how their nationality, or to mechanisms within which their nationality and stereotypes attached to it, construct their migration experience.

4.3 Language – the significance of being able to speak English, and the link between aspirations and available work

Speaking the language is considered to be a central component of the integration of migrants into their host societies (Brown, 2008; Spencer *et al.*, 2007). Thus, it may be addressed as a specific problem of integration in general. According to Esser (2006) the significance of language is related to its functionality. Firstly, language is a valuable resource through which other resources can be obtained and therefore it is part of the migrant's human capital. Secondly, it is a symbol through

which people can describe and explain situations, but also activate stereotypes about themselves, such as their accent potentially associating them with certain prejudices. Finally, as Esser argues, language is a medium of communication, which secures "understanding" of the meaning.

Only three of my respondents, Witek, Iza and Paulina, professed to speak English confidently, with the rest speaking little or even no English at all. The ability to speak and understand English is aspired to and is a valued commodity for opening up possibilities for the future. Kasia comments: "My life in England would look totally different if I could speak good English" (female, 26 years old). Barbara also reveals:

> "Language is important. I can't understand why Poles do not learn English. It puzzles me, you know, those people that have been living here for years and can't understand a single word except thank you and please! How can you function in British society without any English?" (female, 40 years old)

For most of the respondents, English language however, posed a problem. Some were often faced with the problem of the usability of their educational background and occupational experience in England, because of the lack of language skills:

> "I have nearly fifteen years' experience in primary school teaching. So what? Here it does not really matter. My qualifications are not recognisable; my English is not good enough. So I am starting from the beginning again, the only job they could ever offer me is as a teaching assistant." (Maria, female, 42 years old)

Maria's comment illustrates the interaction between language and employment in shaping migration experience. Her lack of adequate language skills for the job positioned Maria in a lower status work. Poor language skills often force migrants to occupy lower grade jobs, which is well established in the migration literature (Wright and Pollert, 2006; Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003). However, choosing to work in low-paid employment may also provide opportunities to develop language skills (see, for example, Anderson *et al*., 2007; Eade *et al*., 2006; Kosic, 2006; Spencer *et al*., 2007). Agnieszka comments:

> "I had all sorts of jobs when I first arrived here, I worked in a factory, did some cleaning jobs even […] I couldn't really speak English that well, so I was looking for jobs that required only basic language skills […] I met people that were willing to help me, you know, with my English, in fact I am learning English at college now […] I will eventually look for a better job when I feel more confident speaking English." (female, 40 year old)

As others have noted (e.g., Janta *et al*., 2012), positioning oneself in a lower status jobs is often a temporary situation for Polish migrants. After improving their language skills, many planned to seek alternative employment.

A number of participants mentioned feeling nervous when required to speak or spoken to in English:

> "I was absolutely petrified to open my mouth. I just had this idea in my head that people will start laughing at me, because of I can't speak correctly or because of my accent." (Iza, female, 28 years old)

> "At work, I would constantly feel nervous that the customers will ask me something and I won't be able to understand. And that people will think that I am stupid or something. It took me a while to feel comfortable to speak." (Tomek, male, 26 years old)

The inability to speak English, in Basia's case, increased the feeling of difference and alienation that some of the other respondents also recalled. Language, cultural barriers and misunderstandings can get in the way of effective communication and create complications in the workplace. Consequently, language can have a symbolic effect on labour markets, for example when stereotypes arise in relation to an accent. Therefore, as Esser (2006) points out, language (or lack of language skills) can ultimately have adverse effects, despite qualifications and experience. This fear of speaking English, either of making mistakes or because of the accent, has further stopped some migrants from forming friendships at work. Basia recalls:

> "It is true that I only socialise with Poles, I can't talk to the rest of the people at work. It's difficult to understand them […] Yes, I could learn English, there are night classes, but after a whole day at work, I am too tired to go." (female, 35 years old)

What is more, some participants in this study felt that their lack of language skills was often mistaken by native speakers for not wishing to cooperate at work or laziness. As Basia's comment above reveals, some of the Polish migrants often did not prioritise learning English, either because of the long hours and demands of work, or simply because they did not see their move to England as permanent. However, the importance of networks and interactions in developing language skills has been emphasised by a number of researchers (e.g., Janta *et al*., 2012; Lugosi and Bray, 2008). If we argue that capitalising on these learning opportunities at work is important for language development, this may help to understand why the lack of language skills has been such an important theme in the migration stories of Polish migrants in this thesis.

What is interesting is that for those for whom learning English mattered, it was not enough to learn English. Migrants had to learn "proper" English. Two of my female respondents spoke of "picking up" the factory English:

"When I arrived here, I could understand some English if someone spoke slowly. My English was poor, I am not going to lie to you. When I began to work in the factory, I picked up some English from the girls I worked with. The problem is that I only work with Asian women and Poles. So when I went to college, to learn English, I discovered that what I was actually learning at work was not even close to real English (laughs)!" (Ela, female, 42 years old)

What Ela refers to is the language used to communicate in factories, where the majority of the employees are non-native speakers of English. Ela explains: "It's English, but without grammar. You learn all the jargon, to do with sewing, materials, but they (Asian employees) don't use any grammar! I would constantly ask everyone "what you do?" The language skills that Ela picked up from her work colleagues did not help to improve her vocabulary and Ela realises that if her language learning remained in factory work, it would further reduce her opportunities in the labour market.

Outside of the workplace, being able to speak English was also perceived as important. Accessing basic services, such as health care, opening a bank account, or getting an internet connection at home are other areas where inability to speak the language is a constant concern. This is demonstrated unequivocally by both Kasia and Monika:

"I can't even see the doctor if I am ill, I can't explain what's wrong with me. I got ill a few times but I couldn't go to the doctor [...] I could ask for an interpreter to be present during my visit, but even to ask for an interpreter, you need to be able to ring and ask for one in English!" (female, 26 years old)

"I've been here, for three years and I have always relied on others to do everything for me (…) the worst thing is that you have to find somebody to accompany you, whenever I need something to be done. That's what I find horrible, having to ask all the time, because you can't speak English well." (Monika, female, 28 years old)

Basia's and Monika's narratives illustrate the frustration and limitations to everyday lives that their inability to speak English poses. For a number of migrants, it was the existence of social networks in England that played an important role in overcoming these limitations. More "experienced" migrants offered language advice, or even acted as interpreters in situations that required face-to-face contact with natives.

Finally, in the narratives of migration language was also a cause of small misunderstandings and laughter between the Polish migrants and native speakers. Karolina recalls at situation at work:

"I cannot pronounce "either", I just can't. I have been teased for it a lot at work. We have a good laugh about it. Like, some of my co-workers will use it in the sentences more often when they talk to me" (female, 33 years old)

"It is quite funny, when we have to go and ask the supervisor for time off, the three of us (Ela and her two female co-workers) sit down and write what we have to say and then learn it by heart. The problem when she answers back. Then the three of us stand there, next to her, pointing to the calendar and trying to figure out what she said! (laughs)" (Ela, female, 42 years old)

The fact of not being understood (or being misunderstood) may obviously cause discomfort and emotional sensitivity to migrants, making further distinction between "us" and "them" among Poles in England. However, what is significant about the accounts in this section is that they are not just highlighting the practical barriers of not being able to speak English. They also reveal that without language skills, many migrants use may use humour to conceal their true feelings about their inability to communicate well in English. In some cases, it made migrants more determined to learn the language.

4.4 Employment - the complexities of working in low paid jobs as migrants

The majority of migrants interviewed for this thesis work in low-paid jobs, which for some of them means downward mobility from the qualifications or jobs they held in Poland. The jobs they perform are mainly based on physical tasks, in which English-language skills or a specific qualification are not required. In the narrative of migration, the dominance of work is evident throughout participants' comments. As I argued earlier, for some, securing employment was the purpose of their migration to England. For others, migration was a survival strategy. However, the price of their economic gain was often perceived by the Polish migrants to be higher than they anticipated. Even though employment is seen as the key to gaining money and economic security, many migrants revealed that while the work they did was often hard, the jobs were not hard to get, and that migration was not an easy answer for their economic difficulties. Ania comments:

"I work a lot, sometimes 12 hour shifts, it often feels that I live to work [...] The work is not great, I would say OK, really tiring and often boring. I keep thinking that one day it will all pay off

[...] don't get me wrong, I am not complaining There are people out there who can't find jobs, I am just saying that life here is not so great as I thought it would be." (female, 28 years old)

Ania's narrative exemplifies the importance of work in the lives of some Polish migrants. Like many others, Ania endures the long hours at work, the tiredness and a slight disappointment with the job she does by keeping her sights on the future and the goals she hopes to achieve. Similarly, Ela, a 42 year-old seamstress, states:

"I work all day on my feet. It is very hard work. And there are even days when I have no time to eat. In a busy period, when we have many orders, we work all day Saturday too to make the deadline."

Issues of difficult and tiring work, stress and most importantly, dissatisfaction appear to be interwoven through many of the narratives. As many other studies on post-2004 Polish migration to the UK indicate (Anderson *et al*., 2006, 2007; Eade *et al*., 2006), the general feeling among the migrants in this research project is that of dissatisfaction with the type of work they are doing: "It's a job, it pays the bills, but I don't want to be doing this when I am 50" (Gregorz, male, 33 years old), "Cleaning other people's toilets [...] it's not a job that you can, how to say it, be satisfied with" (Basia, female, 33 years old). Witek, who had a degree in marketing and was working as a supervisor for a British industrial company, talked about how through migration his thinking about work had changed:

"So this is how I think about work. I don't only think about how much I am earning, you know, what I can buy for the money I earn. I mean it's important, nobody ever survived on bread and water (laughs) [...] There is much more to work than that. Like, whether you like what you're doing, does it give you any satisfaction, you know, this kind of motivations. And I often think whether I would be happy with the kind of job I am doing here (in England), if I lived in Poland." (male, 33 years old)

Witek's comment illustrates how migration may trigger significant changes in the understandings of the ways in which individuals experience and perceive working in jobs below their skills and qualifications. Paulina, a graduate from Polish university, who at the time of the interview was completing her master's degree at a British university and worked as a part-time sales assistant, states:

"The thing is that I am not going to be stacking shelves for the rest of my life. I am at university, when I graduate, I will look for something that pays more and has more prospects. For now, I am happy to do what I am doing [...] I would probably not work as a sales assistant in

Poland but it pays O.K. Well, it pays enough to live and pay the bills (laughs)." (Paulina, female, 25 years old)

Educational level, understandings of one's class and status back in Poland, are all factors that play a role in migrants' interpretations of their work experiences in England. Class appears to be most evident in Paulina's comment, as she remarks that she would probably not work as a sales assistant if she still lived in Poland. Migration is often thought to blur class distinctions (Hilfinger Messias, 2001), but at the same time class often influences how migrants value and measure the quality of their work. Eade *et al*. (2007), for example, focus on the issue of class among the post-2004 Polish migrants and argue that educated Polish migrants perceive their work not only as a way to earn money, but also as a chance to progress in life more generally. Consequently, so many Polish migrants view their low-paid jobs only as a "phase" in the migration journey. Many, as Paulina exemplifies, also plan to get better jobs in the future. Therefore, migration appears to change how migrants view their future possibilities, although it does not necessarily result in them changing how they perceive their class and the work they are currently doing.

What is more, to confront their downward social mobility, migrants tend to rationalise their employment status:

"In Poland I worked in an office. And yet, in terms of money, it was nothing to what I am earning here." (Asia, female, 26 years old)

Garapich (2006) explains this in terms of an economic trade off where migrants view working in lower status jobs in England as more profitable that than jobs of higher social status in Poland. As Anderson *et al.* (2006) further note, working in low-paid jobs was for many migrants their only option due to the nature of migration itself and their lack of English. However, even though some migrants had the opportunity to move up occupational or career ladders, such as Paulina, for many it was impossible. Some of the respondents that I interviewed over the course of the fieldwork for this research changed their jobs[18]. However, many still remained in low-paid sectors with long working hours. This seems to support the findings that even though EU accession may have potentially improved the living and working conditions of Polish migrants, some are still subjected to exploitation, homelessness and unemployment (Burrell, 2009; Garapich, 2011). Przemek's lengthy narrative is particularly insightful, as he describes working as a car valeter for a large car sales garage:

[18] See information about participants in the Appendix B.

"I found work through an agency, a Polish agency. Well, the woman that got me the job was Polish, she was a thief anyway… For the month I worked there, every Friday, I had to go and ask her for the money…This company was paying her instead of me! And she was stealing from me, not giving me all the money, making excuses and coming up with strange explanations! I did not know what to do, where to ask for help, so I quit. " (Przemek, male, 26 years old)

The existing literature indicates that some Eastern European migrants experience discrimination at work, which is often reflected in being paid less than other workers or being the first to be laid off (Spencer *et al*., 2007). The example that Przemek provides however, is that of him being exploited by another Polish migrant. Here, too, research on the post-2004 Polish wave of migration to the UK reveals that new Polish migrants are hostile towards their fellow migrants as a result of competition for jobs or their status (Garapich, 2005; Spencer *et al*., 2007).

4.5 Remaining in England - reflections on migration, identity and the questions of belonging

As I described in this chapter, the processes of arriving and settlement in England were often seen as revelatory in terms of understandings of and migration construction. The participants' expectations of life in England were, to some extent, countered by their actual lived experience. Despite initial negative experiences, through their time in England a few participants saw the benefits of migrating in terms of their increased positive self-image. The interviewees' identity as a Polish migrant and an Eastern European was also challenged in the process of assimilation. As such, the lived experience of migration challenged migrants' sense of identity. Migrants are thought to occupy what Brah (1996) terms "diaspora space", spaces with their own cultures, which influence how they as migrants are received in the host society and how they, in turn, perceive others.

In reflecting on their sense of identity-belonging, Polish migrants provided various examples of their changing perspectives and redefinitions of self and how they saw and presented themselves to others. Migrants usually found such subjects difficult to talk about: "In terms of identity… it's a tricky one…I don't really know." (Kamila, female, 25 years old). A cosmopolitan, traveller, even an EU citizen were some of the ways participants characterised themselves:

"I would describe myself as a citizen of the world, cosmopolitan." (Kasia, female, 26 years old)

"I am a cosmopolitan person, a traveller, even an EU citizen but not a migrant." (Iza, female, 28 years old)

According to Devlin-Trew (2007), identity becomes only problematic when migrants leave their home. She notices that the "question of authenticity arises in a way that it never did in the home society, since there is now a gap between one's inner identity and one's behaviour vis-à-vis the surrounding society" (p.554). One's identity is no longer understood in the realm of home country. Hence, as in Kasia's and Iza's case, Polish migrants in this thesis would add a new perspective to how they viewed themselves. Interestingly, the theme of not wanting to be described as a migrant echoed throughout a number of other migration stories:

"I am not a migrant. Well, I don't feel like one anyway." (Karolina, female, 33 years old)

"Migrant? Hmm…No, not really, I can go back home whenever I want." (Andrzej, male, 47 years old)

As Papastergiadis (2000) argues, in the context of a globalised world, migration is increasingly seen as a social problem, linked to the destabilization of traditional communities, and migrants are being blamed for "stealing" jobs from members of host country and putting pressures on social and public services. What is more, the vast literature on migration casts the economic benefit as a main factor for moving abroad (Drinkwater *et al*., 2002; Fabiszak, 2007; Eade *et al*., 2007; White, 2010). The motivation for people to move from one place to another is then primarily attributed to the possibility of generating greater economic profit. Employers are thought to see migrants as a cheap source of labour, and migrants are thought to leave their homes in search of prosperity. However, as other research and this study indicate, the parameters of choice in migration are difficult to pinpoint. All this leads to ambivalence towards migrants, and the term itself acquires a negative undertone. The Polish migrants in this research were very much aware of the long history of migration to the UK and the negative connotation attached to migrants; thus, the majority would prefer not be associated with being a migrant. Just as being Eastern European was seen as being problematic, being a migrant is seen as limiting aspirations and desperate, as evoking suspicion and even as a social threat (Papastergiadis, 2006). Although these views are sometimes concealed or not expressed directly by the participants in this study, being (or feeling like) a migrant manifests itself in both obvious and indirect ways in the daily lives of interviewees. Stories of exploitation in the workplace or in accommodation, as I mentioned in the previous section, are not uncommon among the participants and reflect the vulnerability, which arises from being a migrant, not being a native

English speaker and not knowing the British laws. Two interviewees describe these constraints on their day-to-day existence. Kasia, for instance, expresses:

> "I couldn't find a job for a long time, and finally a friend of mine told me about this factory where they bind books and magazines and they employed a lot of Polish people, even the supervisor was Polish, so they did not require English, so I went. But they never paid me right, like they would pay 50p for binding so many pages and you literally had to fight over the work, because when the delivery came everyone was grabbing as many pages as they could because they wanted more money. The problem was that binding was time consuming and sometimes it would take half an hour to bind a book and then I would realise that I would earn only over a pound! People (the workers) would come and go, but the people that couldn't speak English, like older migrants would work there, sometimes even ten hours a day [...] An English person would never work there, but we (Polish people) have no choice." (female, 26 years old)

Kasia's story is especially moving as it describes a number of levels at which migrants can be subjected to discrimination at work: being paid less than a minimum wage, exploited due to long working hours and taken advantage of because of their lack of English language skills.

Renting accommodation constituted another arena, where being (or feeling like) a migrant manifests itself. Tomek, a 26 year-old male, comments:

> "He (the landlord) refused to give me my deposit back because he knew I was Polish, he must have thought that I was stupid. I said I was going to the police [...] then he said that we never had a contract, he never signed anything. I had no documents to prove that I lived there, I felt desperate."

Kasia's and Tomek's excerpts illustrate that even though most participants refuse to be labelled as migrants, their lived experience of migration indicates the contradictions in the way they are treated by others, and the type of accommodation and jobs that are available to them. Hence, describing oneself using constructs, such as a cosmopolitan person, a citizen of the world, even an EU citizen is preferred by many. In many ways, these constructions of identity-belonging, to some extent and for some of the respondents, compensated for the idea of being a migrant.

Interestingly, when asked directly whether they felt discriminated against because of their nationality, all migrants except Kasia and Tomek discussed above, answered no. It would appear then that Polish migrants have a selective perception of what discrimination entails, as many recalled situations where other ethnic minorities experienced prejudice. One reason for this may be that Poles lack the vocabulary to speak about diversity, discrimination and racism (see, for example

Nowicka, 2010). The majority grew up in a mono-ethnic white society, and only through migration do they learn what acceptable and inacceptable ways of speaking about diversity in the UK are.

What is more, Polish migrants in England were also hesitant about constructing their narrative of migration with a reference to one particular "home". Karolina comments:

> "There is more than one place that I would call home. It's strange, because when I am in England, I call Poland home, but when I am in Poland, England is home. Can one have two homes? K (the home town in Poland) is my home, because I am emotionally connected with people there." (female, 33 years old)

Not surprisingly, reflections about what constitutes "home" and where home prompted feelings of ambivalence and confusion. The longer migrants stayed in England, the less concrete their answers were. For many, as exemplified by Karolina, this resulted in not really feeling at home anywhere. The ambivalence of home is illustrated in her understanding of home as a place where she is currently not present. As other have argued (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002; Ahmed, 2003), feeling at home is often intertwined with a feeling of not being at home. The developments in the transnational field have further complicated how migrants perceive home. Through their mobility, transnational migrants are often thought to live in two places simultaneously, but never really feeling at "home", as the term "home" is assigned to the place where one is not rather than where one currently is.

A number of participants view the idea of home with this intense ambivalence. Hania recollects:

> "I don't think there is a place that automatically springs to mind when you say 'home'. England versus Poland (laughs). Poland is where I was born, England is where I work and live [...] So it's like I have no home. I miss Poland, I never miss England, but then I can go back (to Poland), you know, visit. It's complex, but I suppose my home is here and there." (female, 26 years old)

In Hania's narrative there is a clear competing feeling between understandings of Poland and England as home. As such, Poland is the place where Hania grew up, but England represents her current life. Interestingly, the return visits to Poland, something that I explore in the next chapter, seem to be providing Hania with a solution for this ambivalent feeling of not quite having home. Like many other migrants, Hania seems to be expressing a view of belonging to both England and Poland.

Significant to their lived experience of migration was also how participants felt about their migration journey, their reflections on earlier decisions to come to England and their appreciation of the outcomes of this decision. Karolina responds:

"I feel happy living in England. I made the right decision." (female, 33 years old)

As Karolina's indicates, feeling happy about her decision to migrate prevailed in her reflection about migration, despite her earlier comments of not feeling at home anywhere. Agnieszka, a 32 year-old female, was also content with her life in England: "We (Agnieszka and her husband) made the right decision to come over here." Only once the dictaphone had been switched off did she add: "I would have never decided to leave Poland, if I knew that the beginning was going to be that difficult". Agnieszka's comment illustrates the dichotomies inherent in the lived experience of migration. On one hand, she justifies her decision to migrate. On the other, she states that having experienced the difficulties of migration and knowing what she knows now, she would have decided to stay in Poland.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the lived experience of migration. The narratives discussed here provided valuable insights into the migration experiences of Polish migrants in England. In particular, they confirmed that a migrant's understandings of his or her identity is subject to changes, and in constant negotiation with the self and others in home and host countries. How migrants perceive themselves and are perceived is actively created in interaction with others. As Poles confronted the daily reality of lived experience of migration, their identity as a Pole, as a migrant, a cosmopolitan person, and Eastern European was negotiated and re-negotiated in the context of work, their language skills, decision to remain in England and reflections about their migration journey.

What is more, although for most people in this research migration was revelatory in terms of their identity, the narratives of migration also provided insights into how the idea of migration germinated in the consciousness of Polish migrants and their initial impressions upon arrival in England. It was revealed that migrants encountered problems that they did not envision prior to coming to England. Their narratives unveiled the lived experience of unfamiliar and often confusing experiences, as expectations of life abroad were, to some extent, countered by the stories of migrants already living in the UK. What is more, and despite the initial negative experiences,

through their time in England, a few participants saw the benefits of migrating in terms of their increased positive self-image.

The lived experience of migration also indicated, by and large, negative experiences at work and dissatisfaction with lack of employment opportunities due to class, educational background, personal experiences or inability to speak English. Hence, some migrants saw their jobs as temporary and accepted a trade-off between working below their skill level and earning more money than they would have had in a similar job in Poland (Garapich, 2006). Significant to the lived experience of migration was also how participants felt in relation to their understandings of home and belonging, something which was not always clear, but clearly had impact. The lived experience of migration highlighted the dichotomies inherent in feeling and not feeling at home and belonging and not quite belonging. Regardless of bad experiences, migrants appeared happy about their decisions to migrate.

Finally, the accounts of migration explored in this chapter emphasised the importance of continuing to look at the lived experience of migration and to see migrants' experiences as linked to broader spatial and social conditions in British society that affect migrants as well as the host community. At the same time, the narratives of migration illustrated the challenges that relate to the discursive construction of migrants as problematic. This construction, as Gilmartin and White (2008) argue, "serves to dehumanise migrants, to deny the realities of their everyday lives, and to inhibit their possibilities for belonging" (p.147). Hence, it important to recognise the barriers to belonging for migrants, and to highlight the role of discursive constructions in creating the migration experience.

The next chapter explores migrants' mobility. It attempts to make sense of migration and mobility, in the context of people's lives and of notions of travelling home. It looks at the changing experience of migrants' mobility and analyses the ways in which travelling back to Poland is experienced, and how migration is narrated in relation to individual mobility.

CHAPTER 5

Migration and Mobility

July 2009. I arrange to meet Basia after work. She is wearing her uniform. She asks a lot of questions about my research, admires my student ID. We order tea, no milk. We share a joke about the as yet unsolved "mystery" that is drinking tea with milk in England. Then the interview begins. I ask Basia to tell me the story of her migration. She looks at me as almost needing reassurance that it is interesting to talk about. Basia is 34 and the mother of a 16 year-old daughter who has been left in Poland with Basia's parents. She works for a large industrial cleaning company. She speaks little English, which she sees as hindering any prospects of advancement in the job. However, this seems not to worry Basia greatly; she says she enjoys her job. In the afternoons and evenings, she earns an extra income cleaning private households. Since coming to England nearly four years ago, Basia has alternated between periods of unemployment and short-term, agency work. Her migration story is moving and emotional. She tells me in detail of her daughter, who she misses greatly, and her plans to move her daughter over to England. She wants her to go to university in the UK, to get the education and life that she never had herself. Basia speaks about her difficult childhood, her teenage pregnancy and her struggles to raise her daughter while being a single mum. Then she tells me about her decision to migrate, about her lack of money and perspectives in Poland. About the suitcase she brought with her when she first came to England that contained everything from soap and pillow to body towels; her first accommodation in England that she shared with seven strangers; and a Polish partner she met in England that never supported her emotionally. I cannot but to think that I am being let into her private life as if we have known each other for years. Then Basia speaks about her frequent visits home. The visits, which she can afford now she has a permanent job and a stable income. She mentions using Skype, flying and low-cost airlines, searching for cheap tickets months in advance. Basia's everyday migrant life seems to revolve exclusively around keeping in contact with her daughter and these short visits home. At first, it appears to me that these contacts are exclusively Basia's attempts to see her daughter. But then Basia tells me: "I left my daughter, everything I knew back in Poland. If migrating to England doesn't work out, I am only a short plane journey away from home" and her connections seem more to provide a potential escape route from the UK.

5.0 Introduction

The phenomenon of migrant mobility represents a topic of rapidly growing academic interest. Indeed, the past two decades have witnessed an enormous growth in work that seeks to understand the processes of international mobility of migrants. We have seen increasing numbers of studies of migration circuits (Rouse, 1991), "mobile livelihoods" (Sorsen and Olwig, 2001), "mobile motherhoods" (Morokvasic, 2004) and patterns of circular migration (Duany, 2002). A central element of this scholarship has been a concern for the field of transnationalism, widely understood as migrants' activities – economic, political, cultural and personal – that require continued contact and travel across national borders (Portes *et al*., 1999; Vertovec, 2007).

As I argued in the Introductory Chapter to this thesis and in Chapter 2, migration scholars have long argued that migrants maintain contacts with their families in homelands. However, until recently, migrant scholarship focused mainly on issues of migrants' assimilation and incorporation. As Vertovec (2007) comments, it was not until the late 1990s that academics embarked on research on the nature and function of border-crossing, social networks and remittances (Verotvec, 2007). Hence, the studies in transnationalism begun to problematize the conventional and static understandings of migration, home, identity and belonging. This concern with the transnational nature of social life is now increasingly researched in a variety of ways. With qualitative research, for example, the studies on migrant mobility gain depth when used with a "new mobilities paradigm" (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Given that migration is a multifaceted phenomenon, rather than taking the movement of people, ideas and objects for granted, the new mobilities paradigm considers how social life manifests itself through the movement of people. In other words, the mobilities perspective pays attention to how human mobility is made meaningful and possible (Cresswell, 2006; Urry, 2007). Who moves and who stays put, how mobility is managed and ordered, are both pressing and contested issues. As Cresswell (2007) points out, it would be simplistic to state that all people experience mobility in the same way. Rather, the experience of human mobility is certainly of more than one kind. The mobilities paradigm provides a framework for rethinking migration in ways that open up a discussion about human movement which increasingly takes into consideration the political, economic, symbolical and technological aspects of human life (Urry, 2005).

In the discussion that follows, I attempt to understand the meanings of migration and mobility. In line with the objectives of this thesis, what interests me here are the lived practices inherent in migrants' movement across the borders. As such, I am concerned with exploring how new Polish migrants to England negotiate and understand their practices of mobility. In particular, I use migrants' visits home as a contextual case study for exploring wider themes around migration and mobility. Arguably, mobility can transform many aspects of economic and social life of mobile migrants (Cyrus, 2008; Diminescu, 2003; Morokvasic, 2004). The question then is not whether being mobile matters to migrants but how? What is the meaning of mobility at the level of the individual's life? These are among the important questions that this chapter addresses through assessing experiences and practices of Polish migrants' mobility.

5.1 Capturing mobility: mobility, meaning, and the "visits home"

The focus of this section is on meanings and experiences of mobility in the narratives of migration. I am concerned here not only with how migration is experienced in relation to mobility but also how identity, belonging and kinship are formed in relation to mobility. I use migrants' journeys home as a starting point from which to think more broadly about the migration and mobility of new Polish migrants in England.

Journeys home have a significant meaning for migrants; they are what Burrell (2005, p.354) calls "the axes on which migration turns". As Basia in the beginning of this chapter narrates, for migrants the journeys home are not like any other journeys. Migrant journeys, as Burrell (2008) argues, are different to any other journey, because they are integral and embodied in the experience of migration and mobility. Travelling and visits home are practices that play an important role in thinking about migrants' lived experiences. Hence, as Burrell further notices, it is interesting that even though scholars acknowledge the importance of migrant mobility and its implications for migration, they tend to consider migrants' experiences only once they settled in the destination country. Given the widespread use of various communications, such as cheap phone calls and the Internet, the questions of why do migrants physically travel and how their journey home is experienced are even more significant (Vertovec, 2007). Hence, there is a need for research that accounts for Polish migrants' return visits home and the role that being mobile plays in their migration processes and experiences. People seem to be finding increasingly creative ways of living in more than one place at the time, and this raises interesting questions with regards to their

experience, especially while some migrants seem to be returning home and others are successful in managing their "new fluid living patterns" (O'Reilly, 2007).

5.1.0 (Re)constructing Polish Mobility: the significance of low-cost air travel

The post-2004 Polish migration to the UK presents an interesting example of migrants' mobility. As Burrell (2008) notes, it is emblematic of the transformations in the construction and migration experience of "east" and "west" in Europe. Before 1989, for the majority of Poles the West remained closed and unattainable, due to restrictions on obtaining an international passport (see Burrell, 2008; Iglicka, 2001). But with the EU accession and freedom of movement, mobility and travel have changed.

Arguably, the introduction of cheap air travel and, more recently, the expansion of low-cost airlines has changed the experience of mobility for many Poles. Several participants mentioned the importance and increased use of low-cost airlines as means of transportation:

"I can't imagine travelling to Poland on the coach! 28 hours! Never!" (Tomek, male, 26 years old)

"Ryanair, Wizzair, even Easyjet, if you search well, you can fly home for less than £60." (Marcin, male, 32 years old)

For Marcin and Tomek, low-cost airlines embody quick and cheap means of travelling between the countries. What is more, their comments also exemplify a larger trend in Eastern European air travel and migrant mobility. As Dobruszkes (2009) suggests, the rise in the number of low-cost airlines and the west-east air routes could be a response to the post-2004 migration need for mobility. Undoubtedly, for new Polish migrants in England, travel is eased by the existence of reasonably priced airlines, regular air routes and relatively short travel times.

What is more, as the following testimonies illustrate, even though initially for some of the participants the price of the plane ticket had been a major consideration when making a decision whether to travel home or not, with more stable incomes and longer time spent working and living in England, the price became less important:

"Yes, I used to look for a cheapest ticket possible. But now I earn more money, I mean the price is still important, but I can afford to fly whenever I want to really." (Anna, female, 28 years old)

"If I want to go home, I usually will. It doesn't matter that the plane ticket is more expensive [...] Low-cost airline tickets are not that expensive anyway." (Witek, male, 31 years old)

In most cases, it was the convenience that the plane journey offered that mattered, but also the geographical proximity and accessibility of the airport, both in England and Poland. Iza, Sławek and Barbara comment:

"I travel with Ryanair, because it is the only airline that travels to (town in the south-west Poland)." (Iza, female, 28 years old)

"I often have to travel to London Luton Airport because there are no flights to Warsaw from Birmingham Airport." (Sławek, male, 31 years old)

"East Midlands (Airport) has really good flight connections to where I live, but it is a nightmare to get to. Public transport takes ages." (Barbara, female, 40 years old)

The examples listed above demonstrate, as Dobruszkes (2009) argues with regards to new west-east European low-cost services, that Polish migrants in England have taken advantage of the new freedom of border crossing and embraced the more flexible migration trajectories that this freedom permits. They also illustrate that with the expansion of the EU in 2004, for Polish migrants the meanings of borders have changed (Burrell, 2008). The reduced passport scrutiny for the EU members, together with the expansion of low-cost airlines, seems to be having an impact on how migrants understand and position themselves with regards to travel and on patterns of border crossing. As Burrell (2008) argues in her study of post-socialist Polish migration to Britain, "once the absence of the passports, now the absence of visas, and until recently the right sort of passport, the absence of legal documents have had a strong presence in the mental mobilities of the migrants" (p.370). Prior to 1989, Poles faced structural difficulties in travelling abroad as a result of lack of passports. After 1989 however, passport were commonly available, but Poles faced issues of not having the right kind of passport. As Burrell points out, many Poles had negative experiences crossing borders as they encountered longer queues and interrogation from immigration officers. This all changed with the accession of Poland to the EU. Polish migrants can now not only frequently cross borders without fear of not being able to return, but also have more opportunities than previous generations of European migrants in term of choosing their migration destination and duration of their stay (Krings *et al*., 2009).

Interestingly, the issue of lack of passport control and visas did not surface from the narratives of migration in this study. Interviewees spoke at length about their experiences of mobility, return visits home and air travel, but did not explicitly link these experiences of being able to freely move across Europe to the political changes that took place in post-2004 Europe. One explanation for this is that for the Poles in this research, the discourses around migration altered. As the majority were relatively young, the difficulties that earlier migrants encountered when crossing borders might have not been considered by them. As such, for the migrants in this thesis, increased mobility and free movement represent the very essence of what it means to be part of the EU.

5.1.1 The rhetoric of journeys home

As Skelton (2009) argues, "migration, alongside the physical action of moving countries, is also a metaphorical and emotional journey to be travelled" (p.324). That is, migration is not only about physical movement from one country to another, but also about the emotional and psychological cost of moving. In the same vein, the journey home is not just about the physical movement. How can we then understand the journeys home? For that matter, how can we understand the motivations, dynamics or emotions of these journeys? In this section, I explore the rhetoric of migrants' journeys home - the rationale, the emotive elements of travelling, the preparation for travel, and the act of travelling itself.

5.1.1.0 The rationale for travelling

At first glance, the majority of respondents travelled back home to see their families and friends:

> "I travel to (Poland) because of my parents. My mum and my dad are in Poland. They look forward to seeing me, you know, it's important to visit the family. " (Tomek, male, 26 years old)

The patterns of mobility displayed by many Poles in England are bound into networks of kinship that appear to be playing a central role in sustaining and supporting the movement of Polish migrants home. Of course, this has been a widely recognised aspect of migration. The importance of family and kinship relations for international mobility has been documented in a number of research studies (Levitt 2001; Sassen 1996; Vertovec 2002). For new Polish migrants in England, family networks in the home country indeed act as a facilitator of their visits home. In some cases even, the act of travelling home is concentrated around sustaining these very networks:

"It's definitely my parents who I go to visit, it's important to them that I stay in touch and visit as often as I can [...] even if it's for few days, I try to go and visit them, at least every three, four months." (Kasia, female, 26 years old)

The visits home also demonstrate the centrality of family networks to the new patterns of mobility. Some of the interviewees suggested that if not for their families in Poland, their visits home would have not been as frequent:

"I don't think I would fly home so often if it wasn't for my mum [...] I go to see her whenever I can." (Ania, female, 28 years old)

"If my family lived here with me, I would probably visit Poland once a year or not all." (Witek, male, 31 years old)

This raises interesting questions with regards to the form and dynamics of the relations through which patterns of mobility are nurtured and maintained (Vertovec, 2001). Conradson and Latham (2005) have begun to answer these kinds of questions, but in relation to young New Zealanders in London. They argue that New Zealanders' social networks assume an important role not simply because they exist, but rather because they offer meaning for mobility. As many of the Polish respondents demonstrated, regular contact with friends and relatives gave form to much of the mobility they displayed.

However, for new Polish migrants in England the connection with Poland organised through mobility can operate on many other levels. Some of the informants made it explicit that among the reasons for travelling home is also the desire to display the newly acquired social status and show off the achievements of migration. This point came out very clearly in Marek's narrative, as he openly admits:

"Travelling home is all about money and how well you are doing in England. It is about showing off, showing off to the people who did not migrate [...] why do you think so many Poles spend loads of money before they go home (laughs), I am not talking about gifts for the family, I am talking new clothes, new mobile phones, showing off. " (Marek, male, 25 years old)

Kasia's comment very much echoes Marek's statement about the journey home as a "successful" migrant:

"It's nice to be able to come back home knowing that you are doing well in England." (Kasia, female, 26 years old)

Travelling home for these Poles reflects thus in part their strategies to seek a social status at home. For Marek and Kasia, being mobile is about being able to display their "wealth" accumulated in England, but also about the pressures of migration. It is about the pressures to fulfil the expectations of being successful as a migrant. As Marek comments, for the majority of Polish migrants being able to afford new clothes, electronic goods and gifts for the family and friends, is a marker of this "success". There are of course, differences between migrants' wealth and the standard of living in England, as well as between the meanings and values attributed to the processes of showing off their "success". For some Poles, travelling home is about the optimisation of resources and money they have earned in England. For example, some of my respondents waited until visiting home to go to the dentist or the hairdresser, which are cheaper in Poland than in England. Here, mobility is central to Polish migrants in the context of the economic power it embodies. It opens up possibilities to choose how to manage the migration experience. More importantly, however, the existence of low-cost air services have allowed people to travel more frequently, and this movement of people is becoming increasingly important. It is not just a movement for family or kinship motivations. Being mobile for Polish migrants has become a way of negotiating and manifesting social status in Poland and navigating their way around their story of migration as a thriving migrant.

5.1.1.1 The emotive elements of travelling

Even though a number of studies on human mobility focused on migrants' hopes, fears and expectations, only few have included "emotions" in their analysis of the processes of migration (Skrbišš, 2008; Duval, 2003). This is surprising, because studies on emotions form a rapidly growing academic field, which has produced a number of works highly relevant to the study of migration and mobility. Writers like Urry (2006) argue that mobility and travel are significant within many peoples' lives. If we recognise that travel and mobility are important to migrants' everyday lives, then we need to explore the feelings that encompass migrants' journeys.

A number of interesting points emerged from the discussion of emotive elements of travelling home. The first is the feeling of nostalgia that often accompanies Polish migrants on their journeys back to Poland:

"I don't know…there is something about knowing you are flying back to Poland. When the plane touches the runway, you know you are home, somewhere you know well. I still feel emotional then, even after five years of living in England." (Kamila, female, 25 years old)

In Kamila's comment, the journey home becomes idealised, revolving around deeper considerations regarding Poland as home. Riccio (2002), in particular, argued drawing on the example of Senegalese migrants in Italy, that the perception of the country of origin as "home" becomes more intense when migrants are highly mobile. Germann Molz (2008) further writes how mobile migrants often "find themselves living their lives at the increasingly complicated intersection between home and mobility, negotiating movement through a prism of attachment and affect while negotiating belonging through various intersecting mobilities of people, technologies, cultures, images and objects" (p. 326). In explaining her feelings while travelling to Poland, Kamila emphasizes the familiarity and comfort that the idea of home conveys. It is the memory of place and home, the journey itself, the plane and even the act of landing that are all bound up with the processes of mobility. In this way, "home" and nostalgia for home are inseparable from migration and mobility.

The second point, exemplified in Paulina's narrative, is that of feeling of reflection and rupture:

"When I travel home, I often think a lot about my decision to migrate. You know, did I make the right decision? It then becomes hard to go back to England. Knowing that in a week's time I will have to leave everyone and everything I know behind all over again." (Paulina, female, 25 years old)

For Paulina, travelling home involves deeper consideration for migration processes and the life that she left behind in Poland. Visiting home for migrants can involve complex and sometimes sensitive sets of negotiations and practices. The following comment is especially revealing:

"It sometimes feels like you have no home, this travelling, because your one foot is here (England) and one there, in Poland. And you cannot do anything about it, because you are emotionally connected with Poland." (Anna, female, 28 years old)

As Skrbišš (2008) argues, being a migrant poses a challenge for the existing relationships with family and friends. While much emotional investment goes into the maintenance of transnational contacts with family and friends, for many migrants, it is the embodied co-presence that is considered to be important. Hence, longing for the country of origin, the need to stay in touch and emotional connections are often present in migrants' narrative, as was exemplified in Anna's quote.

For some of my informants, mobility is associated with perpetuating movement and a sense of homelessness, while some see it as a normal aspect of the act of migrating. Andrzej for example, saw travelling home as an embedded part of his migration. As he puts it:

> "I got used to it (travelling to Poland). It has become part of my life, you know, like going home for Christmas, visiting my family." (male, 47 years old)

In Kaplan's (1996) research, she reflects on her own migrant mobility and travel. Because her family lived in various countries, travel was for Kaplan "unavoidable [...] and always necessary for family, love and friendship as well as work" (p.9). Mobility as the social and cultural movement home is part of a more general process of social networks that, as I have already argued, is central to the mobility demonstrated by new Polish migrants in England. As such, there are complex connections between mobility, social networks and travelling home in sustaining family connections and assisting these new mobility patterns. On the one hand, mobility for new Polish migrants in England represents choices, and possibilities of managing the migration experience. It allows a continuous relationship with their country of origin to be maintained, optimising their economic resources and displaying new social status. On the other hand, as emerged from Natalia's and Paulina's comment, this new form of mobility can entail difficult negotiations of home, identity and the decision to migrate.

5.1.1.2 The preparation for travel

An important aspect of journeys home is also the preparation for travel. For the majority of the respondents, preparation for travel home involved shopping for presents for relatives and friends. What is more, and as the past research indicates (Salih, 2003; Burrell, 2008), the activity of choosing presents was given much consideration as the type and the quality of presents was perceived as a migrant's status marker. Salih (2003), in her study of Moroccan migrant women, illustrates how during the journey home the luggage containing the gifts for the relatives embodies symbolic capital. Miller (1998) further argues that the act of gift giving has long been established as part of the transnational relationships. And as Burrell (2008) notes in her research on Polish migrants in Britain, presents are central to the preparation and anticipation of the journey itself. Hence, it can be argued that presents embody not only a migrant's social status, but also the emotions of migrants' mobility.

The journey home, however, may also imply economic sacrifices. For many of the participants, travelling home meant high expenses resulting from managing relatives' expectations:

"Everyone expects presents, my family, my friends! Sometimes it makes me angry. It spoils going back home [...] it becomes about the presents, the money, not the people." (Kasia, female, 26 years old)

"The journey home involves money. I don't buy presents but take money with me. Loads of it! And I end up spending it all, on my family, friends." (Bogdan, male, 28 years old)

As both of these testimonies demonstrate, the return visits home are also about the economic pressures that migrants face. Olwig's (1993) study of migration shows "how migrants living abroad make trips home, but are expected to share their reputed wealth generously" (p.65). It can be argued then that for migrants, it is not only the gifts but also the lifestyles that migrants display when travelling to Poland are marked with significant economic sacrifices in England. Hania comments:

"Unfortunately, many Poles go home and try to show off, you know, spend a lot of money, live beyond their means. I know people who save for months, live on bread and water in England, only to go to Poland and spend two weeks living like kings." (female, 26 years old)

Hania's comment suggests something interesting demonstrated by Polish migrants when going back to Poland. Narratives of migration are full of anecdotal stories of migrants going home and spending their life savings during one return visit home. As Skrbišš (2008) among others argues, it is through this behaviour that migrants assert themselves as successful, as people who have a good life in England, and illustrates the extent to which migrants want to be perceived as people for whom migration experiences have played a major role in who they are now. As such, the return visits become an integral part of the migration story, even though for some migrants the journeys involve negotiation of expectations and obligations and are transformed into a display of success and a conscious recognition that whenever they travel back to Poland, they are associated with England, not Poland (Burrell, 2008).

5.1.2 Flying home

The actual process of flying home is often discussed in migrants' narratives. The main examples of such narratives focus around the behaviour of Poles at the airports and clapping when the plane lands. One participant recalls:

"Migrant Poles queue at the gate hours before it opens, they push in to get on the plane first, they unbuckle the seatbelt when the plane is still moving and get absolutely drunk before we take off! It's awful [...] to travel with Polish migrants!" (Karolina, female, 33 years old)

Karolina's comment mirrors some of the findings of other research around new Polish migrants in the UK (see Ryan *et al*., 2009; Burrell, 2008; Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009; Garapich, 2007). It has been suggested that Poles abroad are increasingly trying to keep their social distance from other Polish migrants, something that Garapich (2007) termed a "discursive hostility". Karolina obviously resents other migrant Poles and her resentment also extends to the behaviours that other Poles display when travelling home. For Karolina, the journey home constitutes drunkenness of her fellow migrants, something she does not identify with. She expresses a feeling of alienation from the ways in which Polish migrants act and behave at the airports. Cheng (2001) and Lan (2000) reported that migrants may also enhance their social status by drawing a hierarchical distinction between themselves and their fellow migrants, seeing them as lower down the social hierarchy. And as I argued in the previous chapter, through negative stereotypes attached to being Polish in England, Karolina is being connected with the constructions that she would rather not be associated with.

As Karolina emphasised the negative characteristics of Polish migrants, others reflected on the aspects of clapping when the plane landed, something that has come to be associated with the collective notion of Polish or Eastern European and which is very much un-British:

"I think it is only us (Poles) who clap when we land." (Dominika, female, 22 years old)

The activity of clapping often causes a feeling of embarrassment among the respondents, especially if other nations are on board. Ania commented:

"The famous clapping! Why do Poles clap when we land? Isn't it embarrassing?" (female, 28 years old)

In this sense, the journey home, the airports and even the planes, as Burrell (2008) comments, are all places where the meanings of mobility are negotiated. They are also places where feeling like and being a migrant manifest themselves in a number of ways.

5.1.3 Travel as an obligation

Visits home are often also about obligation. As other research has noted (Baldassar, 2001) weddings, funerals and religious occasions are examples of events where migrants may feel obliged to travel home. The narratives and experiences of travel among the respondents reveal that travelling home is often embedded in obligation:

> "In a way, I feel obliged to travel back to Poland. My mum would never forgive me if I just visited once a year." (Przemek, male, 25 years old)

> "It is sometimes difficult to go home, you know, because of work commitments, but I often feel compelled to fly due to circumstances. Like, last year it was my aunt's funeral, this year it was my friend's wedding and in few months I have to go because my sister is having a baby."(Ania, female, 26 years old)

As Skrbišš (2008) points out, family reunions can be seen as having symbolic meaning for migrants. They are often of great significance in the lives of mobile migrants, because they are more than simply continuing and recognising religious or cultural traditions. The obligation to travel also acts as a spur for the maintenance of transnational ties and relations. However, the social obligations for Polish migrants to travel home are often caused by expectations that their family members in Poland tend not to visit them in the UK:

> "My parents expect me to visit during Christmas. During the five years I have spent in England, they only came to visit once." (Ania, female, 28 years old)

This is consistent with studies of migration that suggest that it is the migrant, rather than those in the home country, who should visit (Mason, 2004). Furthermore, some scholars (e.g., Smith, 2001; Ong, 1999) have pointed out that social relations ordered through mobility are different to those structured around emplacement. For some Poles in England, social relations constructed through mobility are about duties and obligations to see families and friends, but they are also about the cultivation of family life. As such, being mobile can assume different meanings and consequences for different migrants.

5.2 Constructing Polish Migrants' Mobility: From Migration to Mobility?

The existence and possibility of quick and low-cost travel home can potentially enable many migrants to change and transform their migration experience. As noted earlier, for Basia, having the option to fly home became an alternative to unsuccessful and unpleasant experience of migration. "If migrating to England doesn't work out, I am only a short plane journey away from home. It's great", she comments. For Basia, movement is central to her experience of migration, it is embedded in her migrant life. It is a movement not only for economic reasons, but also for kinship and friendship motivations. Where the decision to migrate once denoted leaving a home, a family, a country and an indefinite return home, contemporary forms of mobility have questioned this understanding. And where the term migration has been once used for a settlement in a destination country and assimilation, migrant mobility has been defined in terms of what it is not (not home, not settlement). In this sense, Basia, like many other migrants around the world, is challenging the conventional understandings of migration (Conradson and Lantham, 2005). Her mobility is synonymous with movement, embodiment, with the way of living and the migrant life itself. What is more, and closely linked to the first point, for a number of migrants within the European Union, of whom Basia is an example, migration is increasingly depicted as mobility. Such understandings of migration emerge from a complex set of factors, among which the freedom of movement within the European Union and the existence of low-cost air travel are primary. With the possibility of regular travel home and the freedom of border crossing, it is not surprising that some Polish migrants have taken advantage of this new mobility. For Basia then, mobility bears a meaning of freedom and opportunity, and more recently dramatically increased travelling. Finally, but perhaps most significantly, Basia's narrative is particularly insightful as it offers a look into how migrants negotiate life-worlds that involve travelling across international borders. It is a world of cheap phone calls, Skype, the internet, text messaging, and airports that such mobility is dependent upon. In other words, it is a world both emplaced and given order through mobility.

What is more, for migrants like Basia, the experience of mobility is about being able to travel back to Poland whenever the experience of migration becomes difficult. Mobility then can also come to take on a more complex personal significance. Basia expresses a degree of contentment at being able to quickly and conveniently fly home, as it allows her to take a more relaxed approach to the act of migrating. Conradson and Latham (2005) argue that mobility as a strategy can be

empowering, but only if it is under migrants' own control. In a mobile world, mobility and travel entail possibilities but also many downsides. In Basia's case, being mobile embodies autonomy and freedom to move across the borders and mediates many of the reservations associated with migration. Furthermore, this figurative proximity of Poland and England expressed in Basia's comment is very much symbolic of her mobility and migration experience. The voluntary nature of mobility and travel home places Basia in a position of privilege and control regarding her own standards and itineraries of mobility. It is not the actual physical movement that Basia is considering however, but rather the perception of mobility when desired. Basia's mobility can therefore be understood in terms of actual physical movement, but also as an act of imagination, which enables her to treat migration both physically and cognitively (Urry, 2005). As such, mobility is not only about actual physical movement but also about a feeling of being in a privileged position to go home at any time in the migration process and most importantly, remain flexible and mobile.

In this way, Polish migrants' mobility is a very flexible migration trend structured both by the freedom of circulation within the European Union and the expansion of the low-cost air-travel. While it is clear that Poles have always constituted a highly mobile society with a long history of migration (see, for example, Sword, 1989), the dynamics and meanings of this mobility have changed since the enlargement of the EU in 2004. While earlier patterns of mobility involved traditional understandings of migration as a linear process and permanent settlement in the host country, the nature and the frequency of migrant mobility, together with technological developments and expansion of low-cost air carriers, seem to constitute important changes with respect to the past. Indeed, Polish migrants' view of the nature of their migration is heavily coloured by the feeling of being mobile. Hence, this mobility needs to be seen in the context of these broader cultural and technological formations.

What is more, many Poles came to England after EU enlargement in 2004 with no intention of settling but stayed longer than they initially planned. All of the participants in this study travel home for weddings, funerals, doctors, dentists, hairdressers or just to visit their families. They use the national health services in both countries; they spend holidays in Poland and come back to England to work and study. Their migration trajectories are structured by national and EU borders. In England they are subject to laws and regulations for EEA migrants. Yet their lives are closely bound up with Poland. This strategy enables new Polish migrants in England, like many other migrants in the contemporary world, to turn mobility into a way of life and to construct more fluid

lifestyles which do not resemble traditional understandings of migration. More importantly however, it allows us to consider mobility in terms of a plurality of experiences and narratives, and the role that the political and institutional structures play in facilitating this mobility.

Finally, many young Polish migrants have no intention of settling in one place. They employ, what Moriarty *et al*. (2010), refer to as "deliberate indeterminacy" or Garapich (2006) calls "intentional unpredictability": the strategy of not deciding what the next step in migration trajectories is. Many Poles utilize this approach because they do not see their choice as limited to living in one country. Indeed, some of the participants in my sample mentioned the possibility of further migrations to other countries, rather than a return home:

> "I don't have set plans for the future. It changes often. Maybe I will migrate to Canada, or Australia. I've heard that there are a lot of Poles in Sweden, so maybe I will go there." (Tomek, male, 26 years old)

> "I don't know what my plans are. I don't know whether I want to go back to Poland. Ask me in ten years." (Monika, female, 28 years old)

As Duvall and Garapich (2011) argue, the "I don't know" answers of Polish migrants are:

> "(O)ne the one hand [...] dynamic decision-making processes, liminal identities or carefully balanced responses, rather than genuine considerations regarding individual perspectives. On the other hand, such open answers reflect a specific migration strategy: these respondents do not commit themselves to certain periods or locations; instead they keep all options open, constantly assess the social, economic and cultural environment and remain flexible in responding to changing conditions." (p.34)

However, they can also reflect, as Basia's quote shows, more individualised and flexible life choices. In the case of new Polish migrants in England, being mobile allows them to make decisions based on the opportunities they encounter during their migration journey, which for some may include the possibility of further migrations. In this way, participants' narratives also illustrate the nature of migration in contemporary Europe and Britain, namely its fluid, complex, dynamic, and varied character.

5.3 Conclusion

The notion of migrant mobility developed in this chapter incorporates several ideas. Firstly, I have suggested that the ways in which the journey home and the distance between England and Poland

are encountered by Polish migrants are critical to their understandings of migration. Because of the figurative proximity between Poland and England and "when desired" nature of their movement, Polish migrants are placed in a position of privilege and control regarding their mobility. What is more, in processes of migration, migrants' narratives of mobility and travel home are concentrated around ideas of keeping in contact with families and friends, obligation, optimisation of resources, means of displaying social status and wealth accumulated in the process of migration. As such, this chapter attempted to argue that Polish migrants in England utilize their mobility in a variety of ways. As others have noted (Skrbišš, 2008), return visits are seen as embedded aspects of migrants' life; not as a break, but rather a continuation of a migrant life (Burrell, 2008).

Secondly, I have argued that Polish migrants participate in the construction of a more fluid way of living that entails a great deal of mobility. This is not to suggest that the mobility of new Polish migrants in England is a totally new phenomenon. Recent work on globalisation and migration sees mobility as central to migrants' lives. However, it has been argued that the mobility of new Poles, in terms of both its dynamics and meanings, have changed because of the expansion of air travel. Low-cost airlines are central to new Polish migrants' mobility and travelling home. Without the complex systems of cheap mass air travel, socio-economic conditions and freedom of movement within the EU, the meanings attached to Polish migrants' mobility would have been utterly different.

The next chapter discusses the gender dimension of new Polish migration to England. It draws attention to the ways in which gender shapes the conditions, opportunities, and experiences of migration and how the processes of migration, in turn, reproduce gender relations and push them along new trajectories.

CHAPTER 6

Gender and Migration

July 2009. I am introduced to Agnieszka by our mutual friend. As we sit down to conduct the interview, she tells me about her husband, Maciek, who she joined four years ago in England:"Maciek came first, we didn't think he would stay, in fact, I didn't think I would join him. But he got the job, was earning well, and you know, we had just got married and needed money". Agnieszka's comment alerts me to the ways in which migration and mobility can shape the economic lives of migrants. Interestingly, in reflecting on her experiences in England, Agnieszka provides various examples of her changing perspective and redefinitions of work, roles, and identity. "Because Maciek worked a lot, and found a job in the first week when we arrived, it was down to me to find a flat, open a bank account, buy things for the flat, even do his tax return forms! I was the first one to go to college and start learning English, I knew my way around the town quicker [...] I found a job where I could practice English, whereas Maciek always worked with Poles. Because I speak better English, it is me who deals with English people, the accountant, the tax office people. Maciek still struggles, sometimes I think he will never learn English [...] I have to do all those things on my own, he is sometimes working seven days a week", she says. Agnieszka's narrative reflects the less visible work she does for her husband, which situates her in new and different social and gendered spaces created by migration. Running through her statement, and through the ensuing discussion, I cannot help but think that for Agnieszka migration to England presents not only a chance for economic betterment, but also an opportunity to challenge the norms and expectations informed by gender filtered through the lens of her migration experiences.

6.0 Introduction

While the previous chapter discussed meanings of migration and mobility for individual Polish migrants, and described new and enriching ways in which migrants live their lives simultaneously in two places and rationalise their agency through particular meanings of mobility, this chapter addresses issues of gender.

The contemporary processes of migration and mobility do not diminish the importance of gender; quite the reverse. Gender, as a structuring element of the entire process and experience of migration, is significant because "gender permeates a variety of practices, identities, and institutions" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000; p.117). In the context of migration research, as Datta *et al.* (2008) argue, there is a growing body of literature which acknowledges the role of gender in shaping the experience of human mobility and migration. Indeed, gender norms are so embedded in migration, that "migrants often become particularly aware of the relational and contextual nature of gender as they attempt to fulfil expectations of identity and behaviour that may differ sharply in the several places they live" (Donato *et al*., 2006, p.6). Thus, as many have argued (e.g., Fouron and Glick-Schiller, 2001; Huang *et al*., 2000; Mahler, 1999; Osella and Osella, 2000; Pessar, 2005; Yeoh *et al*., 2003), just as the notions of identity are challenged, gendered identities, ideologies and practices are also formulated and renegotiated as migrants move across borders, yet maintain ties with their home countries.

Issues of gender appear to be particularly relevant for new Polish migrants in England. Home Office statistics confirm that the post-2004 influx of Poles to the UK is a migration of predominantly young and single people, of whom women comprise nearly a half of all migrants (Home Office, 2006)[19]. However, as I discussed in Chapter 2, past research on female emigration from Poland tended to focus on family and household strategies, suggesting that gender is somehow enclosed only within the domestic domain (e.g., Praszalowicz, 2008; Cyrus, 2008). While this has led to an interesting and recent follow-up work on post-2004 EU accession children, families and transnational motherhood (e.g., Moskal, 2008; Ryan, 2010; White, 2010), it has also led to the

[19] The data is derived from Workers Scheme Registration applications between 2004 and 2006: 82% of all workers were aged between 18 and 34; 93% of registered workers state they have no dependants living with them in the UK when they registered. The male:female ratio for those who applied between May 2004 and June 2006 was 58:42.

neglect of the gendered migration experiences of young single women[20]. Although women moving on their own internationally and globally are numerically a minority, their migration nevertheless raises important questions about the social position of women in home and host societies. At the same time, attention needs to be drawn to the negotiation of male gender identities. Emerging research on men and migration suggests that the complex nature of men's migration impacts on male identities, which is due to a range of factors, including: hegemonic (and counter-hegemonic) gender regimes in a migrant's home country and the extent to which these gender norms, identities or beliefs are reproduced, intensified or challenged during the migration journey (Pessar, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Parreñas, 2005; Pessar and Mahler, 2003). Hence, to understand the post-2004 Polish migration to England, it is essential to examine how both women and men make sense of their migration experience and how these experiences are also shaped by a set of gendered cultural considerations: prevailing normative expectations and standards, social roles and obligations, and shared understandings relating to family, work and place.

This chapter then examines gender in the processes of migration and mobility, and considers the research that puts gender "squarely on the shoulders of migration studies" (Bélanger and Linh, 2011, p.23). The discussion complements the remaining chapters in this thesis and draws attention to the fact that the entire migrant experience (for example, migration strategies and decision making, the flows of migration, the process of adapting to social life in the destination country) is fundamentally shaped by gendered considerations (e.g., Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Boyd and Grieco, 2003). In line with the general objectives of this thesis, which focus on migrants' individual and lived experience of migration, what interests me here is gender as lived and constructed by migrants themselves. What is more, by examining the gender dynamics of young Polish migrant women and men, this chapter provides an account of gender beyond a simple model of family and household, and considers how migrants negotiate gender in the processes of migration and mobility.

The next section considers gender in the public as well as private sphere, since "the social relation of gender organises, shapes, and distinguishes the migration patterns and experiences of men and women" in relation to both the labour market and the household (Parreñas, 2001; p.29). In particular, I focus on the negotiation and interaction of gender and illustrate some of the gendered

[20] With the exception of the research conducted by Siara (2009) on gender and ethnic identity discussed by post-2004 Polish migrants on Internet forums.

responses of Polish women and men to the economic and social challenges in the post-2004 Polish migration to England.

6.1 Migration as a gendered experience

As feminist research on migration shows, migration is a deeply gendered phenomenon that not only organises, but also forms the lives of women and men in a different way (Brah, 1996; George, 2005; Parreñas, 2001). Women and men are argued to inhabit different social spaces and have different migration networks, and their social locations are reconstructed in different contexts in relation to the labour market, the household and the community (Bao, 1998). The examples provided here demonstrate how migration decision making, social interactions, gender norms and roles in the host country and in Poland shape the construction of femininity and masculinity of new Polish migrants in England. In particular, they reveal how practices of autonomy, independence, work and socializing contribute to the wider constructions of engendered opportunities and experiences of migration and mobility for many young Polish migrant women and men.

6.1.0 Gender in transition? Money, autonomy, freedom and decision making

An analysis of female narratives of migration demonstrates how Polish migrants required major emotional and structural adjustments to their new lives in England. Dominika's narrative is particularly insightful as to how the negotiations around autonomy, decision making and money shaped young women's experiences of migration:

> "Here I was, on my own, well without my family, with one suitcase, starting a new life in England. I was scared [...] I told my parents that I am moving to England, that I am an adult, that there is no way for me to have a normal life in Poland. Surprisingly, they did not object. I mean, my mum was worried, she still does (laughs), but I am glad I left Poland. I feel that I can be truly responsible for myself here, like you know, I decide how to spend my money, I have to worry about paying the bills, my parents are miles away, I miss them, but I feel free." (Dominika, female, 22 years old)

Dominika's comment highlights some of the ways gender can play out in the processes of migration. Firstly, as others have noted (e.g., Pessar, 1995; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991), in many respects migration can enhance the autonomy and freedom of women. When young women migrate, they become acquainted with new opportunities that exist for women. When they take employment, they have access to financial resources that otherwise would have not been available

to them. This economic improvement is certainly one of the benefits of Dominika's migration. In her statement, Dominika expresses ideals of her migration. Her view prioritises economic gain, but also gendered opportunities: to grow up, to attain independence, a sense of individual achievement, and a new and exciting life away from the limitations of Poland and watchful eyes of her parents.

Asia, like Dominika, shares some of these objectives and goals of migration:

> "I suppose I needed to try something new and migration seemed like an adventure [...] I lived with my parents, I could not afford my own flat on a hairdresser's wage. I come from, you could say, a less well-off family, and there were always arguments about money, gas bills, food. But my parents always looked after me and my sisters. It's different now [...] At the beginning it was difficult. Coming here, I was forced to look after myself, it made me stronger, you know [...] yes, I do often send money to my parents, how could I not? But they don't know how much I earn, they don't control how I spend it (laughs). Don't get me wrong, it's nice to have money and it is nice to be able to share it with the family, and I would not be able to do it if I stayed in Poland." (Asia, female, 26 years old)

As Jackson (1963) highlights, for many females "emigration represents a chance to grow up, to be independent […] have freedom to spend their money as they like" (p.28). Asia attaches a strong value to this newly acquired independence, which is mediated through a discourse of new acquired earning power. What is more, this freedom and autonomy – positions that are perceived not to be attainable in Poland – is where the economic independence and gendered opportunities blur for these young women. For Asia, this economic independence means that she is able to send money to Poland and help her parents financially. Past research suggests that women's strong sense of responsibility towards their family and obligations to send remittances may reproduce gender inequalities and subordination of daughters (Hadi, 2001; Bélanger and Gianger Linh, 2011). Hence, it has been argued that some migrants may control the amount of information they provide to their relatives back home to protect themselves from these financial requests and obligations. What is more, Hochschild (2003) makes a distinction between gender ideologies "on top" – that is, the ideas of what women want to identify with – and the gender ideologies "underneath" – that is, the way they actually feel about them. Asia, like Dominika, shares the ideal of gender equality – young women being able to work and make autonomous and independent decision about their migration trajectories. Her migration journey was described as a difficult one, as she argues that being "forced to look after herself" has made her "stronger"; but she now feels more "independent" – the statement that highlights her ideologies "on top". However, the ideologies "underneath" – feeling obliged to send money over, wanting to help her parents financially – indicate that gender is continually negotiated and re-negotiated in the processes of migration and mobility, and involves

some sense of sacrifice and work for women. Shaped by the emotional obligations, just like the visits home discussed in Chapter 5, gender is lived by Asia through the realities of life at "home" and her new life in England.

What is more, this idea of adventurism expressed in her narrative: "I suppose I needed to try something new and migration seemed like an adventure" is, as Broughton (2009) argues, usually associated with traditionally masculine ideals of migration, which relate to self-determination, assertion and independence of migrant men. It would appear then that the practices of masculinity in migration are also increasingly open to young single women. As Martin (1998, p. 474) notes, "since masculinities and femininities are cultural values and practices, everyone can do both." This seems to be mirroring some of the other findings on post-2004 Polish migration to the UK. Fabiszak (2007), for example, argues in the context of the determinants of this migration, that many young Poles see their move to England in terms of "gap year" experience.

Like Asia, Dominika's statement reveals ambiguity between her gender identity and her emotions. One way in which Dominika may imagine and negotiate these complex changes may be through what Zavella (2000) calls the perspective of "peripheral vision". Migrants are thought to imagine their own situations and lives in terms of how they believe it compares with their home country. "Peripheral vision" allows Dominika to express contentment about her autonomy and freedom in England. At the same time, she reflects upon her current lifestyle and realises that it would not be possible in the Polish reality: "If I stayed in Poland", she comments, "I would probably go to university, still live with my parents, still be dependent on their income, and still be asking for money." What Dominika refers to, is the fact that in Poland, unlike England, the work opportunities for students are limited due to the demands placed on attending the classes and learning. Therefore, parents are expected to subsidise the costs of educating their children. If Dominika stayed in Poland, she would go to university and follow this pattern. Seen from Dominika's perspective, migration may be understood as a particular expression of independence and autonomy from her parents, as an act of growing up and one's agency. What is more and, as I argued in Chapter 5, the experience of migration and travel within the European Union has been transformed for many Poles. For the young women discussed in this section, the experience of post-2004 migration however, is not that which is associated only with economic betterment. Their migration stories demonstrate, it can be argued, the ways in which these two young women, away from Poland, not only make instrumental decisions about their migration, but also negotiate their gendered identity and entry into adulthood through their migration experiences. This could

represent a discursive departure from the gendered frameworks of typically reducing women's migration and migrant decision making to either a purely economic model or driven by social and cultural influences of family and kinship ties (Martin *et al*., 2006). Rather, as Herzig (2004) argues, women's migration processes and experiences result from a particular intertwining of individual, family, economic and political factors.

To some extent, Polish men's narratives of migration appear to be lacking discussion of autonomy and freedom. The decision to migrate is depicted as instrumental, driven by the possibility of, and hopefully quick, economic gain. Tomek (male, 26 years old) migrated to England four years ago. He described his migration experience as difficult, but then added that he quickly started making good money and that compensated for his hardship. "I came, I saw, I conquered (laughs), this is a story of my migration", he summarises his migration experiences. Similarly, Przemek (male, 26 years old) remarks: "I needed money [...] I knew it would be difficult at the beginning, but that did not stop me." Both narratives seem to point to a particular picture of a male migrant as a "heroic man", who has achieved a lot in despite of the difficulties and hardships he had faced in the beginning (Herbert, 2008b). However, very often whilst some parts of the respondents' narratives highlight this construction of a '"heroic man': "it was hard, but I coped" (Maciek, 37 years old), "I found it difficult at the beginning, but managed" (Jan, 28 years old), "I knew it would be difficult at the beginning, but that did not stop me" (Przemek, 26 years old), other parts show similarities with the narratives of women. Maciek comments:

> "This migration […] I learnt the hard way. I learnt what the real world is really like, that you have to work hard if you want to achieve anything. I learnt to nod and smile when my boss talks to me about something that he has no clue about, I learnt the value of money. I suppose it is a normal process of growing up, but because it all happened in England, and I am a migrant, it was harder. But it is paying off, I have a good life here, no money worries" (male, 37 years old)

Maciek's narrative stresses the hardships of migration, whether this is in terms of the labour market experience or adjusting to a new life in England, but it also points to the idea of migration as a passage to adulthood. Maciek states that he had learnt a lot and grew up, but adds that this process was difficult. As others have noted (see, for example, McKay, 2007), one of the strategies migrant men often employ to cope with the challenges of their migration, is to apply "delayed gratification". McKay (2007) argues that male migrants can deal with the demands and challenges of migration, because they look for the "rewards" of migration later, usually when they perceive themselves as successful or when they return home as successful migrants. As such, it would seem that male migrants may also operate a "double masculine consciousness", as McKay (2007) notes, the

subordinated consciousness on one hand and hegemonic on the other. In case of Maciek, subordinate masculinities ("I learnt the hard way", "I learnt to nod and smile") have been transformed into hegemonic norms ("it is paying off", "no money worries"), although this is done within the constraints of the broader processes of migration.

What is more, Maciek just like Asia and Dominika, attaches a strong value to the new acquired earning power. Maciek however, as I argued in Chapter 5 with the example of other migrants and their visits home, embraces money and material possessions and appears to be using them as progressive markers of merit and success of his migration. It can be argued then that gender differences are silent in migration processes when economic gain is discussed. This is perhaps because money is seen as a reward and a compensation for the hardship migrants experience abroad: "It is paying off, I have a good life here, no money worries" (Maciek) and "I decide how to spend my hard earned money" (Dominika). And since hardship is an inevitable part of the narratives of migrants discussed in this thesis, this can be read as means of rationalising decisions to migrate and the challenges of human mobility for both, women and men.

In summary, the examples above illustrate that the construction of gender in migration can be complex and multifaceted. In particular, they reveal how practices of autonomy and independence may contribute to the wider constructions of engendered experiences of migration and mobility for young Polish migrant women. While the narratives of Polish males emphasise migration as instrumental, the female narratives highlight more than that. They illustrate that away from home and parental control, migration can be a rite of passage into adulthood for young women, something that past research on migration associates only with migrant males (Monsutti, 2007). Therefore, the social impact of mobility on a newly gained freedom can be seen as a gendered opportunity for women. Migration may be negotiated through the gendered aspect of women's agency, as the status of migrant women improves due to women's employment and access to economic resources (Pessar, 1995; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991). As such, the post-2004 migration to England appears to be complicating traditional understandings of gender in migration. As Gutmann (1996, 243) argues, "numerous women and men have become aware of gender identities as impermanent and changeable" as a result of their migration experiences. These gender identities are inevitably embedded in national identity, prevailing normative expectations, social roles and obligations in a migrant's home country. Hence, the next section considers these normative gender roles in Poland and sheds light on how Polish migrants negotiate the gap between their gender ideologies and the gender hierarchies that they encounter in England.

6.1.1 Migration, gender roles and gender order

Gender-role stereotypes and gender expectations about the fashion in which males and females behave in Poland are likely to have an impact on migrants' behaviours and on feelings about that behaviour when they are in England. Kasia mentions:

> "I now live in England, but people still expect me to behave like I am in Poland. Why? I remember, one time I went to visit my family in Poland, my aunt was stunned when I told her that I no longer go to church or that I live in the same house with my foreign boyfriend. If it was up to my family, I would be married, with three kids and struggling to manage work with housework." (female, 26 years old)

Kasia's comment draws a complex picture where gender roles and expectations in Poland may impact on migrants' lives in England. Gender and power relations, as LeVine (1993) points out, not only describe the roles of migrants, but also become visible in the normative and expected gender roles of females and males. Traditionally, men are culturally obliged to provide economically for their families. The ideal woman is therefore subordinate to that man, responsible for the domestic duties and wellbeing of her family. According to Sierzpowska-Ketner (2000), the situation of working women in Poland is, to a large extent, still defined by the dual role that woman are expected to fulfil according to the stereotypical dominant model of family life. This model requires of a woman that her professional career must not be in the way of her role in the family life, and most importantly, demand that she meet the social expectations related to motherhood. The cultural expectations of motherhood emphasise sacrifice and self-effacement as the basis for ideal maternal behaviour and in some cases, there is even an expectation for young women to get married and have children before a certain age. For Kasia, this tension between the Polish and the new "gender norms" is strong, just as it is for Karolina:

> "In Poland, when you are my age and you are not married, people assume that there must be something wrong with you. Why should it be anybody's business that I am single? Maybe I don't want to be married! I fell happy being single. It's only when I go home, when I see that all my high school friends are married, are having children, that I am reminded how reactionary Poland is […] I want a career then a family." (female, 33 years old)

As many other social commentators argue, migration may challenge how traditional gender roles are viewed by migrants (Jolly and Revees, 2005). Hence, rather than viewing gender roles as fixed, scholars now emphasize their dynamic nature. Gendered ideologies and practices change as people change and renegotiate their pasts (Brettell and deBerjeois, 1992; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, 2003;

Mahler and Pessar, 2001). As Donato *et al*. (2006) argue, the relational nature of gender is only confronted by migrants when they migrate and struggle to meet the expectations of identity and behaviour that are different to those in their home country. It would appear then that for Kasia and Karolina, migration allows them to voice their different views on gender roles. Migration therefore may become the platform for the negotiation of gender roles, even if the women's opinions are formed before the actual act of migrating.

What is more, women in Poland, in Kasia's and Karolina's observations, conform to an ideal of Polish womanhood that encompasses definitions of femininity inscribed through discourses of motherhood and heterosexuality. Women are socialized to place family first and personal goals second (see, for example, Markham and Pleck, 1986; Shihadeh, 1991): "If it was up to my family, I would be married, with three kids and struggling to manage work with housework", states Kasia. Not wanting to conform or not wanting to have a family and a husband, is seen as equal to assuming "that there must be something wrong with you". Gender is then the modality through which the cultural specificity is represented. Assumptions such as the one expressed by Kasia signal the extent to which women's subjectivity is constructed through the gender roles. Hence, gender in the processes of migration and mobility may be contextual, shaped both by the realities of life in Poland and notions of gender in England.

For Agnieszka, mentioned in the opening of this chapter, the tension between the gender norms in England and Poland was not as strong as for Kasia or Karolina. On the contrary, Agnieszka says that she would probably be the same wife if she and her husband had stayed in Poland:

> "No, I don't think I have changed as a woman or as a wife since we came here. I still cook, clean, take care of my husband […] Maciek (husband) works hard, he is a builder, I cannot expect him to come back home and do the washing." (female, 32 years old)

In many respects, migration can then also serve to reinforce the traditional gender roles, rather than challenge them. Agnieszka seems not to consider negotiating the gender roles assigned to her; rather she feels happy to combine the role of a wife and second income earner. She explains that it is her job to perform domestic duties as Maciek works hard and reveals her reluctance to change the prevailing normative expectations of Polish femininity. She further describes herself as "being lucky" for finding "such a good man" and managing so well economically. However, when probed about her migration experience, Agnieszka mentions that as a woman, she copes better than her husband:

"Because Maciek worked a lot, and found a job in the first week when we arrived, it was down to me to find a flat, open a bank account, buy things for the flat, even do his tax return forms! I was the first one to go to college and start learning English, I knew my way around the town quicker […] I found a job where I could practice English, whereas Maciek always worked with Poles. Because I speak better English, it is me who deals with English people, the accountant, the tax office people. Maciek still struggles, sometimes I think he will never learn English [...] I have to do all those things on my own, he is sometimes working seven days a week." (female, 32 years old)

The contradictions that her migration story embodies are interesting. As a wife, Agnieszka balances the power dynamics tied to gendered and economic constructions of marriage by elevating the value of the non-economic work she carries out on a daily basis. Research in the context of the US has shown that many migrant men often find integrating to the host society problematic or even resist integration, because they perceive their migration as only temporary (Jolly and Reeves, 2005). By contrast, their wives experience migration more positively because of, for example, engagement in employment and increasing independence. In case of Agnieszka, the skills she gained while living and working in England (the language, the knowledge of tax laws and ways around the town) enable her to assume, to some extent, new roles within the marriage and household. Agnieszka's new roles illustrate her endeavour to create a sense of equality between hers and her husband's work, despite the fact that he is the main breadwinner. While Maciek, her husband, is fulfilling his part of a traditional gender role, working sometimes seven days a week, Agnieszka's position is of a more complex nature. She is a working wife, an interpreter and an accountant for her self-employed husband. It would appear then that she can negotiate gender ideologies from a different position to other working migrant wives in England, where in fact, the normality of the traditional gender roles have not necessarily been challenged. Even though she has more respect and appreciation for herself as a woman, as a wife and a migrant, I would argue that the normal gender order remains unquestioned.

As I have discussed so far, the evidence from the narratives is mixed, pointing to the contradictory outcomes of migration on gender order. Migration seems to be challenging the views of normative gender identities only for single female participants in this study. Kasia and Karolina, just like Dominika and Asia discussed in the previous section, uncover the gendered complexities of migration. After the female migrants arrive in England, their ideas of gender roles and sense of self may be challenged. Under such conditions, new ideas of gender roles are articulated through the discourses of freedom, autonomy and women's agency. However, for Agnieszka, a married migrant wife, the traditional gender roles appear not to be questioned. While her economic and bargaining power within the marriage may have improved, the traditional gender order has not. She is still

asked to perform the majority, if not all, household duties and participate in the formal labour force, while her husband appears to be fulfilling only his traditional gender role of the main breadwinner.

The examples discussed above demonstrate that the traditional gender roles may be resistant to change in the processes of migration, but they also demonstrate that there is nevertheless potential for agency behind some of the aspects of the gender order. The next section explores how ideas of gender and gender roles form the experiences of Polish migrants in the English labour market.

6.1.2 Gender and work

This section considers gendered experiences of labour market. As I argued in Chapter 4, the Polish migrants in this study have tended to find employment in low paying jobs, despite some having relatively high levels of education[21].

The narratives of experience of work reveal the emotional costs of migration. Magda comments on her first job in England as a full-time cleaner:

> "I have a degree in chemistry from (Polish university) […] I couldn't find a job for a long time […] Well, it was not ideal, but it was a job. I thought to myself, it's only for now, I will find another job, something that will preferably not involve cleaning other people's toilets (laughs) and something that pays better […] I am not saying cleaning is a bad job, but you know, I mean, it's not a job that you can, how to say it, be satisfied with […] that was my first job ever, I had never imagined that it will be a cleaning job, but in the circumstances […] My English is not good, I can get by but not very well [...] I took the job." (female, 28 years old)

Magda's story illuminates some of the dilemmas inherent in the process of migration, namely migration as downward mobility and the perceived costs associated with employment in the domestic service. Magda is a university graduate who, to break the cycle of lack of employment opportunities in Poland, chose to take a low-status job in England, a job that, as she narrates, she would never have considered if she had not migrated. What is more, the negative connotation she attaches to this type of work is the result of not only the perceived nature of the work itself ("cleaning other people's toilets"), but also because in Poland, like many other countries, domestic work is located at the bottom of the social ladder. Her job choice is then not only the result of the circumstances of migration (a lack of language proficiency and lack of any work experience), but

[21] This seems to reflect the overall employment statistics for Polish migrants arriving in the UK after the Enlargement of the EU in 2004. For an overview of the migrants' profiles in this study, refer to Appendix D.

may also reflect the fact that this type of work is one of the few occupations open to all migrant women due to gender segregation in the labour market (see, for example, Glenn, 1986; Parreñas, 2001). Thus, as others have noted (Boyd, 1984; Raijman and Semyonov, 1997; Robinson, 1991), and in addition to her migrant status, Magda experiences further difficulties as a result of the "double negative" effect of gender and being a migrant. What is more, working in a domestic service job may represent a decline in her social status, as she points out that she had not envisaged working in this type of a job in Poland. This indicates that effects of migration on gender may be mediated by class. From a gender perspective however, young women like Magda, arguably pay an emotional cost for economic betterment. Interestingly, when probed about her experiences as a female migrant cleaner, she responded that she does not feel like she is treated differently because of her gender. Therefore, having to negotiate her gendered position in the labour market did not come up as a major challenge, as migrant women are thought to be automatically subordinated by the hegemonic masculinity and "double negative" effect of gender and their place of origin (Robinson, 1991).

A similar picture surfaces from the narrative of Basia, a single mother who left her daughter with grandparents in Poland. Basia, like Magda, works as a cleaner. Before she came to England, she worked in an office for a small company that went bankrupt:

> "[...] it's a hard job, when I first started cleaning, my legs hurt, my back hurt, it is not a job in the office [like] I did in Poland [...] I always had to take care of my daughter, her father wasn't around. I miss her, but this job, even a cleaning job, is paying for her books and food in Poland [...] And only this matters." (female, 35 year old)

Basia, like Magda, pays a high cost for the economic improvement. Although the issue of decline in the social status, as I shall discuss later, may apply equally to migrant men and women, "transnational motherhood" (Morokvasic, 2004) is clearly a gendered issue. Past research on transnational motherhood helps to understand the manner in which the meanings of motherhood change as women adapt to the new circumstances created by international migration in the era of globalization (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997). The emphasis on her economic role as a single mother appears to help Basia re-evaluate her own definitions of work, as expressed in the words "this job, even cleaning a job, is paying for her books and food in Poland [...] And only this matters". Even if Basia is subjected to gender segregation in the labour market and the loss of her perceived social status, her job acquires a specific meaning: it provides financial security for her

daughter in Poland. As such, Basia like Magda does not question her gendered position in the labour market.

The feeling of dissatisfaction and unhappiness with working in the low status, something I more broadly explored in Chapter 4, is also evident in the narratives of male Polish migrants. The following comment from Tomek, who also came to England after completing his degree, is particularly revealing:

"I work as a builder, you know, physical and tiring work […] It's a job. Do I want to be building houses for the rest of my life? Definitely not!" (male, 26 years old)

Tomek's narratives highlights that migration stories reinforce masculine notions of work. The work that Tomek does is depicted as requiring physical strength. Such understandings of masculinity and gender and work were not uncommon in other narratives. For example, Jan, a 28 year old male, also commented on this issue: "I am really good at what I am doing, because I am hard working and precise [...] I may not be able to speak good English, but I am an excellent worker."

Tomek's and Jan's narratives are in many ways typically masculine versions of migration experience and work (Gardner, 2002). Given that the predominant constructions of men stress their role as providers and breadwinners, work is a crucial factor in the construction of their (hegemonic) masculine identities (Datta *et al*., 2008; Boehm, 2004; Herbert, 2008b; Lupton, 2000; Pessar and Mahler, 2003). This strong identification of masculine migrant identity with work, described in the accounts of Polish men above, is often argued to be a product of the cultural, social and economic realities in Poland (Datta and Brickell, 2009). Therefore, it would appear that social concepts of masculinity still influence gendered work spaces, migrant men's experiences and views of the labour market.

Another instance where migrants discuss gender at work in the narratives of migration is through emphasising their coping strategies. Whereas both men and women may develop strategies that would help them understand the costs entailed in their migration and experience of work, the particular strategies chosen by migrants in this study tend, to some extent, be patterned along gender lines. For instance, Małgosia, a 21 year old factory worker, describes her advantage in the English job market:

"Everybody thinks that Polish girls are amazing. Hard-working and beautiful [...] We have an advantage there, when they (employers) hear that you are Polish, [...] it helps to attract the blokes, I mean [...] And British girls are exactly opposite."

Recent literature on female migration challenges the earlier myth of women's lack of agency and their image as victims of migration. Rather, research moves towards the detailing of strategies employed by many to cope with the challenges of human mobility (Manalansan, 2006). Women's coping approaches are supported by a multiplicity of gendered strategies. Among these, gender stereotypes and femininity play a prominent role, not only by giving women access to substantial economic, but also social privileges (Lundström, 2010). Małgosia seems to suggest that the young Polish women in England were feminized in such a way that allows them to use their physical characteristics and gender stereotypes to secure certain privileges. Polish female migrants are meant to be "hard working", "trustworthy", "sexy", "beautiful", and make "good wives", characteristics seemingly not attached to British women. For Małgosia, it is these gendered ideas of femininity that shape the employment opportunities open to her as a migrant.

Kamila, a 25 year-old female working in a hotel, also describes using femininity to her advantage:

"You know, there was one time when these two guys were staying at the hotel, and they were like: 'Oh, you are Polish. What such a young and beautiful girl doing here, away from home? '. So I told them about myself and they seemed astounded that a girl would come over here, work and try to make a new life for herself. I work hard for the money and they appreciated that. Every day I would get a large tip from them. I guess being Polish then is not so bad (laughs)."

Kamila relies on her "repertoire of roles" (Goffman, 1971), projected through her femininity and gender, and uses them according to different situations. She downplays or overplays her physical characteristics and gender stereotypes, depending on the image she wants to give of herself. It is somehow a situation of distance/proximity that she adopts: sometimes she insists on her difference with regard to her customers (notably the fact of being a single Polish woman in England) but sometimes she uses her resemblances to gain more trust (as in the case of emphasizing the kind of work she does). From this point of view, her condition "as a unity of nearness and remoteness" is close to the condition of the Stranger described by Simmel (1976, pp.402-408). Being to some extent excluded (she acknowledges her migrant position as an excluding factor), Kamila seems to gain the ability to develop a variety of social strategies that help her deal with the challenges of migration and her life as a migrant.

The readiness to accept femininity as a defining feature of gender seems to be related to how desirable or advantageous women perceive it to be in the context. Kamila and Małgosia downplay and overplay their gendered and stereotypical characteristics and highlight how the control of gender, femininity and stereotypes is an important tool in attempting to re-appropriate one's own gender identity and experience of work. It is through social interaction with the host society and each other, that these women negotiate different perceptions of gender coping strategies and performances. Gender is then produced and transformed through the perceived aspects of femininity, and used to the advantage of a female Polish migrant.

Males in this study, similarly to females, employ a variety of strategies to cope with the challenges of migration and work. Indeed, some of these strategies required the performance of particular forms of masculinity, described by building contractor, Grzegorz:

> "[...] the thing with working in construction in England is that you can't let people manipulate you, so what you are Polish? I don't always agree with the project manager [...] I am not scared of him. I told him few times what I think of him, told him that we can meet up after work and sort things out in a manly manner (smirking)."

Then he quickly adds:

> "I am just doing my job, I do it well, the best I can. And it is a stressful and a hard job, I am sometimes responsible for the health and safety of ten people working in my team [...] it is hard." (male, 33 year old)

It would seem that Grzegorz employs audacity, and even overconfidence, to deal with the challenges of work. However, he is quick to stress the value of his work. As such, rather than dwelling on the difficulties of being a self-employed contractor and a migrant in the English construction sector, Grzegorz dwells on his work, which can be seen as a way of further affirming his masculinity. This coping strategy resembles somewhat other findings from research on migrant men, most extensively discussed in the study conducted by Datta *et al*., (2008) on low-paid migrant males in London.

In summary, this section of the chapter discussed gendered experiences in the labour market. I suggest that some of the dilemmas that Polish migrant women may have to face in the English labour market are not necessarily gendered, but the strategies they develop to cope with them mostly are. Furthermore, as femininity and gender stereotypes play a prominent role in shaping the

experiences of work, it would appear then that they overshadow the need to challenge the gendered position of migrant women in the labour market. Using the example of Magda, and to some extent Basia, I suggest that the economic rewards that construct a sense of confidence and legitimate women's choice of employment surpass any negative feelings a woman may have when accepting a lower-status job that she would have never considered in Poland. The male narratives of gender and work bear some similarities with females and highlight the feelings of dissatisfaction with de-skilling in the labour market. However, they also reveal the emphasis that Polish male migrants place on masculine notions of work.

What is interesting about the narratives of migration presented here is that both males and females in this study tended to work in the low-paid gendered occupations. This seems to reproduce gender stereotypes of work for both genders. However, at the same time, the narratives of migration illuminated how migrant women's economic work is perceived as undervalued, because of the gendered dichotomies of public/private work, while masculine notions of work are seen in a positive way. Drawing on Newendorp's work (2010), I argue that focusing on lived experience of gender in a migration process may challenge these simplistic understandings of the relationship between migration and gender in work. Instead, as Newendorp argues, gender is best understood as being produced not by imposing of normative gender ideas, but rather through women's and men's interpretation of these. For instance, Basia even though she appears to be subjected to gender segregation in the labour market and suffers from the loss of her perceived social status, her job acquires a specific meaning as it provides the financial security for her daughter in Poland. As such, gender as something constructed and reconstructed in the processes of migration is highly individual and subject to different understandings because of a number of factors (Newendorp, 2010; Resurreccion and Sajor, 2010).

Finally, this section also indicated that gender may be further complicated in the processes of migration. Despite the fact that women and men seem to be experiencing migration differently, gendered expectations apply to both. Just as migrant men affirmed their roles as providers and breadwinners through the discussions of notions of work, some women also assumed similar roles through sending remittances. However, as discussed earlier, some Polish women in England appear to be increasingly challenging women's position in the Polish society as a mother first and a worker second. Hence, they contribute to the renegotiation of traditional gender roles, and this appears to have a bigger impact on migrant women as they choose to take on a more active role as breadwinners as well (White, 2010).

6.1.3 Gender outside of work

While the previous section illustrate how the ideas of gender order, femininity and masculinity shape the experiences of work and labour market for Polish men and women in England, this section considers how this phenomenon operates in other social contexts. If the experiences of labour market can play a role in shaping the gendered experiences of migrants, so too do their experiences of migration when Poles move beyond the workplace and assimilate in the host country (Ryan, 2003). Karolina's and Paulina's narratives respectively, are particularly revealing:

> "I don't want to socialise with (young) Polish women here. They are always talking about money and commodities, about their intimate relationships. They flounce around the town like they are special and unique [...] short skirt, high heels. And sometimes I just get fed up, sometimes even embarrassed, because of that you know. [...] But we talk, we talk about Poland, cooking, make-up, clothes, you know, girl's stuff." (Karolina, female, 33 years old)

> "Polish girls are desperate, desperate to get noticed by British men, desperate to achieve something and not to go back home empty-handed. No wonder they sleep with British guys, they don't respect themselves. They realise that they have nothing except their bodies and looks, no education, no language skills." (Paulina, female, 25 years old)

These excerpts provide insights into the different ways in which gender and femininity are acted and reacted upon in the processes of migration. As I argued earlier, women are expected to conform to an ideal of Polish womanhood that encompasses definitions of femininity inscribed through the discourses of motherhood and heterosexuality. Since the Polish nationalist version of femininity stresses domesticated motherhood, and draws on mythical and religious qualities of Mother Pole ("Matka Polka")[22], the behaviour of young female Poles in England is seen as threatening to these traditional characteristics. Women are thought to represent the continuity of the nation, not only through the biological reproduction, but also by passing on religious and cultural values (Yuval-Davis, 1997). As Butler (1990, p.54) argues "gender is a project which has cultural survival as its end". Polish women are described by Paulina as "promiscuous", "drunk" and "rude", and what is more, their desire for adventure and excitement lead to all Polish women being branded as "slags". Research suggests that even after migration, there is still a moral dimension attached to traditional practices from the homeland and a resistance to the dimensions of gender in the new country of settlement (i.e., Le Espiritu, 2003). Paulina's narrative seems to imply that some young Polish

[22] Matka Polka is a construct that arguably limits femaleness to "procreation and domesticity". Its main features are said to be "faithfulness to the church, obedience to a husband, devotion to household chores as well as handiness connected to permanent tidiness" (Miodowska, 2009; p.1).

females in England may be the "repositories of their community's traditions" (Luibhéid, 2005, p.122). From this point of view, it is clear that the migrants' perceptions of the ways in which Polish femininity is constructed are often contradictory. On the one hand, there is an image of a "good" female migrant who gets a "decent" job, earns a good wage, and sends money home to her parents. In opposition to this migrant, there is a female migrant who is overwhelmed with consumerism, and money, fails to achieve a "decent" job and maintain a "decent" way of life. As such, I argue that the femininity of new Polish migrants to England represents a contradiction in the way that gender is constructed through the processes of migration and mobility. Gender and femininity act as a boundary that serves to frame, regulate, and maintain the lives of female Poles and subsequently allows the established definitions of a "Polish woman" to be revisited.

At the same, time as Polish migrant women discuss the behaviour of their female co-migrants, they also comment on the behaviour of Polish males. For example, Hania, a 26 year old female, states:

> "Don't get me wrong, all the Polish men I know are either dirty alcoholics or drug users. I know I am probably making generalisations, and it seems like I have something against Polish males here (in England), but I used to share a house with men like that. They would not have money for a soap or deodorant, but their daily routines involved a visit to a local shop to purchase a packet of cigarettes and a four-pack of beer."

Monika, a 28 year old, also expresses her discontent with Polish males in England:

> "If I am looking for a boyfriend, a Polish guy is not an option [...] I usually go out with British men [...] They know how to treat women, they dress better, earn better, you can have a normal conversation with them [...] I don't know, they are different [...] Yes, I am in a relationship now and he is British."

Both of these quotes indicate that young Polish women like Hania and Monika, favour British men over Polish. The women explain this arguing that Poles are "drunken men", "irresponsible men", "dirty men" and "working men". At the same time, British men are considered to be "at a premium", because of their higher earnings and cultural capital: "Polish women like foreigners because of money", explains Dominika, "that's why they are in relationships with them" (female, 22 years old).

Somewhat ironically, and contrary to female migrants' constructions of the attractiveness of British men, Polish men state that it is the Polish women that are the most beautiful. "The foreign women, they are ugly" – states Marcin (male, 32 years old) and Andrzej adds, "Of course Polish women are

the most beautiful women in the world. They are good mothers, brilliant wives and excellent lovers" (male, 47 years old). Another male participant mentions that British women are promiscuous, claiming that many of them approach men, desiring sex with them without "strings attached": "British women, how shall I put it, well they dress provocatively, they get drunk on a night out, I mean drunk so they can't walk and then offer you sex (laughs)" (Marek, male, 25 years old]. These kinds of beliefs may serve two purposes – to reinforce gender stereotypes of a Polish woman as pure and "Mother Pole". Simultaneously, they construct British women as "not desirable" and "loose", reflecting the ways in which feminist scholars have constructed the notions of virgin/whore dichotomy (Wyman and Dionisopoulos, 2000).

What is more, the emphasis on the physical appearance seems to be crucial in the narratives of both men and women. Migrant men are portrayed by Polish women as "dirty" and unhygienic: "They (Polish migrant men) would not have money for a soap or deodorant, but their daily routines would involve a visit to a local shop to purchase a packet of cigarettes and a four-pack of beer" (Małgosia, female, 21 years old), "I just can't stand how Polish men dress here! In Primark a t-shirt is £3 pounds, £3 pounds! I guess even a new t-shirt won't help if you don't not wash yourself (laughs)" (Karolina, female, 33 years old).

Polish migrant men would also judge the way Polish women look, and as others have argued (Siara, 2009), expect that they dress in a manner that fits the specific feminine construction of a "Polish woman". This seems to illustrate the complex social dynamics inherent in what Winship (in Lury, 1997) refers to as "work of femininity", where women are increasingly constructed as those, who in order to measure up, or to be loved, must work on their appearance to achieve the goal of respectable femininity (Skeggs, 1997). This work of femininity is linked to heterosexuality, as the whole purpose of work of femininity, as Ahmed argues (2000) on the example of Italian women in the UK, is to attract a male and secure a marriage proposal. Femininity is then not "natural", but rather constructed. It acts as a resource for "specifically feminine cultural competencies" (Lury, 1997; p. 150) and further subject women to Poland's patriarchal culture.

Finally, one other comment encapsulates the gender dynamics with respect to femininity, masculinity and stereotypical notions of personal appearance. Marek rhymes:

"Do you know that joke? How do you recognise a Polish migrant man in England? By the rucksack he carries. How do you recognise the female migrant? By "ciapak"[23] by her side" *(Jak poznac Polaka w Anglii? Po plecaku. Jak poznac Polke w Anglii? Po ciapaku" - in Polish."* (male, 37 years old).

Clearly a controversial joke, Marek's comment nevertheless draws attention to the discourses of gender as constructed through the processes of migration to England. The gender interactions described here can be explained through the concept of racialization. Although definitions of racialization differ, as Dawney (2008) notes, it can be explained as a process that categorises and delineates the group boundaries and power. Interestingly, even in the jokes, and despite the clear racialization of Asian man, Polish females are still represented through gendered forms of dependency on men, which simultaneously grounds the production of privileges for males. Hence I argue that, while women are able to convert their femininity into a strategy in the labour market and in some cases, secure their economic betterment, outside of work, femininity reflects the contradictions and vulnerabilities that women must negotiate.

6.2 Conclusion

Many feminist scholars have pointed out that different areas of life are organised according to gender norms, resulting in all sorts of conflicting interests and hierarchies of power and privileges (Bhabha and Shutter, 1994; Massey 1994; Mahler and Pessar, 2001). In this chapter, I wanted to grasp the gendered experience of migration, because when men and women migrate, they are confronted with alternative gender ideologies, institutions, and practices. This encounter can lead to varied (and mixed) outcomes. As this chapter highlights, gender operates on many, often contradictory, levels for migrant men and women.

The discussion of gender in the context of post-2004 migration to England highlights clear contradictions in which migration involves a complex web of intersections and tensions between women's and men's roles and responsibilities. In particular, the accounts discussed in this chapter reveal how gendered practices of autonomy and independence may contribute to wider constructions of engendered experiences of migration and mobility for young Polish migrant women. While the narratives of Polish males emphasise migration as instrumental, the female narratives highlight more than that. They illustrate that away from home and parental control,

[23] "Ciapak" is a derogative description of an Asian man, widely used by Poles in the West Midlands area and constructed through the colour of the skin. "Ciapak" is meant to imply the combination of black and white, somewhat spotty, or in-between, but definitely not white or black.

migration can be a rite of passage into adulthood for young women. Therefore, the social impact of mobility on a newly gained freedom of female can be gendered. What is more, these narratives that the traditional gender roles may be resistant to change in the processes of migration, but they also show that there is nevertheless potential for agency behind the apparently unchallenged gender order. I suggest that some of the dilemmas that Polish migrant women may have to face in the English labour market are not necessarily gendered, but the strategies they develop to cope with them mostly are. Furthermore, as femininity and gender stereotypes play a prominent role in shaping the experiences of work, it would appear then that they overshadow the need to challenge the gendered position of migrant women in the labour market. Using the example of Magda, and to some extent a single parent, Basia, I suggest that the economic rewards that construct a sense of confidence and legitimise women's choice of employment surpass any negative feelings a woman may have when accepting a lower-status job that she would have never considered in Poland. Finally, they unveil the complex and opposing pictures of the understanding of femininity and masculinity in the process of migration and mobility.

The next chapter explores the questions of what it means to return, and how return is understood in the light of migration and mobility for "new" Polish migrants in England.

CHAPTER 7

Return Migration

May 2010, Poland. I make an eight hour train journey to see Marta, a 32-year old female, who after living in England for four years, moved back to Poland. I visit her in the new flat. She shows me around, pointing to the new fixtures and furniture that she and her fiancé Sławek bought with the money they earned in England. Sławek is at work. He got his old job back, working for a building wholesaler. We sit down, chat about mutual friends in England and life in Poland since Marta came back: "If you think I am going to say it was easy to come back", she pauses and looks at me, "you are wrong. You probably hear it a lot, people coming back and having wonderful lives but if they say it to you, they are lying. It is hard for people like us to come back. People judge you, they judge you for migrating, they judge you for coming back". Then she tells me that she has not been successful in securing a job and is thinking of going back to university and pursuing a master's degree. "I thought that the language skills I gained (in England) would help to get a job, it's not like I did nothing in England, I worked, I went to college to learn the language [...] Sławek had no choice but to go back to his old job [...] He worked (in England) on building sites, making good money, but working a 6-day week, 12 to 15 hours sometimes" she continues, "We had a comfortable life, I mean we lived normally and could save money, something that we could never achieve in Poland. We were happy [...] One day he got back, aching, angry, and said he wants to go back [...] We wanted to start a family [...] I was glad to have experienced England, but was looking forward to going back. Little did I know that life is not going to be easier in Poland [...] We spent the money we earned in England and the reality hit home". Marta's revelation strikes me as poignant, where the return present many complex challenges. For Marta and Sławek, the return to Poland is deeply entwined with the difficulties of everyday life: finding employment, money and disappointment in the aftermath of migration to England. What is problematised in Marta's account is what it was hoped return would have accomplished - the belief that migration, both as a material and symbolic journey, would have been a journey of success. Yet, confronted by the reality and uncertainty of life in Poland, for Marta and Sławek, I suspect the return home becomes a journey of finding new ways of living and experiencing the consequences of their decision to migrate in the first place.

7.0 Introduction

Traditional understandings of return imply the completion of migrant's journey and their story of migration; in this way the study of transnationalism challenges traditional understandings of migration as a one-way movement (Olesen , 2002). As I discussed in Chapter 5, contemporary migration processes have been challenged by developments in the field of transnationalism. As Ley and Kobayashi (2005) point out, because of transnationalism, "migration is better described as continuous, rather than completed" (p.111). Through decreased transportation costs, the emergence and expansion of low-cost airlines and increased global connectivity, multiple migrations are possible. Migrants within the EU, for example, can easily choose where to move, because there are no visa and political restrictions, they can return home or even migrate further. As such, migration understood as a decision that restricts migrants' movements to one country, is no longer true (see, for example, Devoretz and Ma, 2001; Constant and Massey, 2002). The "grand narrative" of migration as a one-way movement, generated by push-pull factors and experienced through the arrival in the destination country, the process of incorporation or assimilation and gradual settling down over time, has been challenged. Rather, as Ley and Kobayashi (2005) argue, return migration changes the traditional and linear understandings and models of migration to circular ones. In this view, return migration provides a "sidebar to the historic immigration narratives of departure, arrival, and assimilation" (p.4) and recognises the role that transnational connections play in facilitating the return. Circular patterns of migration are features of much of today's migration (e.g., Vertovec, 2007; Newland, 2009). Given the choice, many migrants choose to move back and forth between their home and host countries. Through circular migration, they can not only avoid making a definitive choice with regards to migration, but also maintain significant social ties.

It is within this context of transnationalism, heightened mobility and interconnectedness, that the post-2004 Polish influx to England offers a rich case for the study of return migration. As I argued in the Introduction, many Polish migrants settled in England, but many in fact returned. As other researchers note, and this study confirms, some migrants treated their move instrumentally, as means of quick economic gain (Duvell and Garapich, 2011). The vast majority, however, saw their move to England, at least initially, as temporary. In fact, the theme of return of "new" Polish migrants has featured in the British media since 2007, when the economic downturn created a

different and more challenging context for migration[24]. *The Independent* (27th February 2008) wrote: "Tide of migration turns as Polish workers return", *The Guardian* (6th April 2011) entitled one of their articles: "Going home: the Polish migrants who lost jobs and hope in the UK", whereas the *Daily Mail* reported (21st February 2009) that Polish "builders and plumbers have packed up their trowels and spanners and are heading east now that the main purpose for moving to Britain – making money to send back home – has been taken away". At the same time, there is only limited evidence to suggest that the downturn triggered large-scale outward migration from the UK. Moriarty *et al*., (2009) suggest that this is because the majority of Polish migrants remained in employment, in spite of the downturn, and even if they lost their jobs, the welfare state in the UK offered support and protection. More importantly, however, the decision to return is not reached only on the basis of economic considerations; a number of factor can play a role (e.g., Iglicka, 2002; Górny and Kolankiewicz 2002; Weinar 2002; Górny and Osipovič, 2006).

This chapter then considers return in migration. As such, and in accordance with the objectives of this thesis, I am interested here in how the meanings of return fit within a wider framework of migration and mobility, and how return is experienced by new Polish migrants in England[25]. What is more, as de Bree *et al*, (2010) argue, migration and transnational literature has mainly focused on migrants' life in the host country. Hence, this chapter seeks to correct this imbalance by considering migrants' post-return experiences. Even though scholars have long established that migrant's cultural norms and values play an important role when they migrate, they rarely investigate the ways of looking and thinking they bring back when they return home. As Basch *et al*. (1997) ask, with regards to the significance of return, what happens to migrants' understanding of return when they "already forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations between societies of origin and settlement" (p.7).

In this chapter, I intend to explore migrants' post-return experiences in Poland and the role that transnationalism plays in creating these experiences. I seek to explore how, on their return, Polish returnees construct their meanings of migration and mobility. This chapter then contributes to the

[24] I refer here to the media discourse around the mass return of Poles that was allegedly instigated by the economic downturn (and subsequently weaker Pound Sterling) in the UK in 2007. Later, the media speculated that the return presented British or Polish government propaganda. According to the Home Office (2008) statistics, some 7,000 fewer Workers Registration Scheme applications were made in 2008, and around 50,000 fewer Eastern Europeans arrived in the UK in comparison to the year before. However, a precise quantitative assessment of east-west migration flows within the EU remains difficult due to a lack of reliable and meaningful data on labour flows within Europe.

[25] As I noted in the Methodology Chapter, the Return Migration chapter draws primarily from the interviews with six return migrants. However, for the purpose of broader discussion on meanings of return, it also considers the narratives of all participants in this thesis.

already vast literature on return migration, mobility and transnationalism. It provides an insight into migrants' post-migration experiences. By allowing returnees to explain why they returned, this chapter not only reflects upon the processes and experiences of migration, but also sheds light on alternative approaches that illustrate migrants' decision-making and experiences and permit interpretations that are informed by contextual considerations.

The next section considers the return intentions of Polish migrants from England. It begins with a consideration of the meanings of return. In particular, it examines in greater detail the dilemmas of migrants caught between the decision to either stay in England or leave for Poland, and those who had already made the decision to go back.

7.1 To return or not return?

This part of the chapter explores some of the ways in which new Polish migrants in England and returnees express the meanings of return and how this influences their perceptions of migration and mobility. It considers how migrants negotiate their decision to return and the role that transnational discourses and processes play in their return decision making.

7.1.0 Between leaving and staying

This section focuses on migrants' return intentions. As Waldorf (1995) observes, the focus on actual return in the migration literature is based on the assumption that the return is preceded by a desire to return. The factors, which impact upon actual return, may affect migration intentions in a similar way. As such, the intentions and actual decision to return may differ, but equally provide an opportunity to study migration motivations that may or may not precede actual migration behaviour (de Haas and Fokkoma, 2011).

The starting point for the analysis of the meanings of return is a series of statements that the Polish migrants in this study express in their narratives. A number of participants articulate a strong conviction of the temporary nature of their migration, with some, as I argued in Chapter 5, expressing the desire to migrate further to other countries. Yet, paradoxically, at the same time, they express the permanency of their decision to stay in England. Tomek, a 26 year old male, comments:

"Well, I am here only to earn enough to open my own business in Poland. Nothing major, you know, when I go back. I have been looking on the Internet, the laws have changed, it is not so difficult now to open a small business [...] It has been five years since I came. Wait, five? Yes, five. It feels longer (laughs) [...] I am still in the same job when I came, got a promotion to a supervisor, I have a good chance to be promoted again. I suppose I have a normal life [...] I met a girl, Polish, we are kind of dating [...] Going back (to Poland) will have to wait, I suppose."

Like Tomek, Karolina's statement reveals this contradiction:

"I planned to come only for a year. One year changed into two, two changed into three, three into four, and so on. Every year, I kept saying to myself, only one more year, but now it has been seven years [...] I still think I will go back, still think I am not going to live in England for the rest of my life, but it is getting harder and harder to go back. And what is the point of going back when you go back to nothing? At least here I have a job [...] nostalgia for Poland has not gone, no." (female, 33 year old)

This interplay between the temporary nature and permanence of migration is evident in the majority of narratives in this study. Initially, Tomek and Karolina believed their migration was a short-term move to England and that they would return to Poland. However, with the passage of time and a significant economic betterment, Tomek's and Karolina's decision to return seems to be challenged. On the one hand, they find it difficult to completely relinquish their hopes for, and pursuit of, a better economic life; on the other, they cannot help but to feel nostalgic about Poland. In fact, many migrants in this research expressed a strong sense of nostalgia for Poland. This was often articulated in terms of a sense of emotional connection with the places they knew and left behind, or family and friends. Thus, between the two choices of "leaving" and "staying", as I also argued in Chapter 5, most new Polish migrants choose "not to choose": "We will see" (Asia, female, 26 years old), "We will talk about it again [...] who knows what may happen in the future?" (Agnieszka, female, 32 years old). In this way, Polish migrants in England challenge their migration. As they seek to belong in England and reminiscence about Poland, their situation highlights the complex nature of decision to return. Constable's (1999) work on Filipina migrants illustrates this in terms of the ambivalence that migrants express towards home and return. Tomek's and Karolina's narratives demonstrate at one point, a sense of belonging to Poland, and at another, a sense of distance from Poland, or a continuing tie to England-as-home. Indeed for many, as Grzegorz comments, the decision about the return "is not straightforward and simple, it requires time and thinking" (male, 33 years old). Jan, who has been in England for nearly four years, admits:

"I had planned to stay but recently, these few months, I have thought that maybe I should go back. I am going to give myself time, I don't know. It's hard to say." (male, 28 years old)

Migrants' narratives of Poland and return are conceptualised in terms of the ways in which migration is experienced, and as a result they are continuously being challenged. The decision to return is not static; new Polish migrants seem to be altering their plans during the course of their migration. As Jan states, he did not anticipate going back home, but faced with personal difficulties, he changed his mind. Return, as an idea, an option and a possible question, dominates all of the narratives in this study, but the decision to return is never understood by migrants as straightforward. In fact, when directly asked about the return, most participants are quick to point out their mitigating concerns, of which the economic one is the foremost. Dominika reveals:

> "From my understanding, there are many people who wish to return. Some people have indeed returned. But the majority wants to go back, but they can't. They think of going back to Poland but because of the money, or rather lack of money, jobs, qualifications, they may not necessarily be able to leave. I can't go back, well, at least for now." (female, 22 years old)

Andrzej, a 47 year old male, is more explicit:

> "I could say to you that I don't want to go back, I could say that I am happy here, I have a job, friends, a bed to sleep in and a roof over my head. But the truth is that until there are jobs in Poland, and we can earn decent money, I won't go back. A person needs to work, air is not enough to live on."

Therefore, caught between leaving and staying, these respondents' narratives are a reminder that, migration is after all, an emotional journey, filled with all the complexities of choice, sacrifice, commitment and emotions, as Basia comments:

> "My life is better here because I am far from the problems, the problems that got me here in the first place [...] I think we all have special feelings for Poland. It is our home. Besides, my daughter is in Poland with my parents [...] I miss her, but what can you do? My job allows me to take care of her [...] I visit her often [...] But I want to die in Poland (laughs)." (female, 35 years old)

Authors, such as Iredale *et al*. (2003) note that social and family factors remain important for some potential returnees, but that transnational connections, better communication and ease of air travel are changing the understandings of return. In other words, returning home for family reasons is still important, but it is not the only factor. For Basia, it is the material ramifications that are the persistent factors that keep her in England, but it is the family and her daughter that continue to draw her back to Poland. As such, as long as she can travel to Poland now and then, her life in England remains tolerable. For migrants like Basia, remaining in England is the best compromise

taking into account her migration story, particularly if she can maintain transnational practices and regularly visits Poland.

It would appear then that the meanings of return discussed in this section can only be understood in the light of a variety of factors, including a participant's evolving goals with regards to their migration, attitudes towards return, and their particular personal circumstances. In fact, this is in line with other findings from this thesis that emphasise migrants' agency and appear to be pointing to a clear individualisation of the post-2004 migration to England. Hence, I concur here with Adda *et al.*'s, (2006) argument that in the transnational era, migrant's decisions are better understood as dynamic; migrants constantly revise their plans during their migration journey. And as I shall explore in the next section, there are many reasons that might motivate migrants to go home, such as changes in their preferences for staying, family, personal difficulties or lack of income.

7.1.1 The necessity to return?

The returnees, like new Polish migrants in England, reveal a complex set of dilemmas when the decision about the return is discussed. Sylwia, a 44 year-old female returnee, explains how she overestimated the potential gains from migration, without considering the high cost of living:

> "It sounds stupid now, but I actually thought that I will be able to earn enough to pay the bills, send some money over to Poland, save for the bad times and enjoy life. Maybe if I was earning £45,000 a year that would be possible (laughs), but on a minimum wage, it meant bread, milk and canned soup, no life [...] Then the factory (where she worked) lost a contract, there was less and less work, my hours got cut. I looked for another job, but it was not like in the beginning, 2004 or 2005, in 2007 you had to speak good English to get a job, even silly jobs required a good level of English, experience [...] I worried that the money I saved would run out [...] I had to come back."

What Sylwia describes here appears to be a mismatch between migrant aspirations and the reality of migration. The benefits of mobility are often overestimated and some of the real costs of migration are only realised later. This is perhaps because, as others have argued (e.g., Cresswell, 2008), migrant mobility is much easier in theory than in practice.

To Jan, a 28 year-old male returnee, Sylwia's feeling of disparity between expectations and migration reality, is familiar. He comments:

"We were led to believe that England is like a second America, you know, money growing on trees and all that [...] The problems started, the bills piled up, the construction sector went into standstill, the winter came and England did not look so great as when I first arrived [...] I went back, because there was no other option." (male, 28 years old)

Sylwia's and Jan's quotations could easily be examples of the abundant newspaper stories referred to in the introduction to this chapter. The economic dissatisfaction and the increasingly evident economic downturn in the UK have lead some of the respondents in this study to consider returning. Lack of employment opportunities and difficulties of finding a permanent job, dominated participants' narratives around the decision to return:

"The truth is that there were no jobs. And I thought to myself, if I am supposed to sit and do nothing, wait and wait, I may as well wait in Poland." (Dariusz, male, 33 years old)

"In 2006 nobody was asking whether you could speak English or not, or if you had any experience, nobody even asked if I had a national insurance number. But now every job requires at least conversational English." (Sylwia, female, 44 years old)

For Sylwia, Jan and Dariusz, return appears to be a strategy they chose to handle the economic problems that had arisen in England. Interestingly, their reasons for the return are strongly bound up with their motives for leaving Poland. As Dariusz's case best illustrates, the majority of Poles came to England with hopes of quick economic gain. The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted in late 2009/early 2010, which coincided with the intensifying impact of the global, economic recession. A combination of tightening economic conditions in the UK and a comparatively weak pound made it less attractive for some Poles to remain in England. About 250,000 of the UK based Poles are reported to have left since 2008 (Office for National Statistics, 2010). Before the economic downturn, it made sense for many participants to work in England, even for a lower hourly rate than national minimum wage. However, the exchange rates changed from once a rate of seven zlotys to the pound, to about 4.7[26]. Migrants' narratives illustrate how this money exchange rationale and economic crisis were affecting migrants' decision to return. For those migrants who came to England with the intention of financial gain, like Dariusz, the falling value of the pound appeared to have an impact. Tomek (male, 26 years old) observes: "When I first arrived here (England) it was just over six zloty to one pound so it was worth it". Ania, made a similar argument: "The UK economy is not so good [...] the exchange rate is poor" (female, 28 years old). Coupled with average wages nearly doubling back in Poland, the incentive to remain in England arguably disappeared. When there are no jobs, and the plans or intentions do not materialise, many

[26] Information correct for June 2011.

migrants may choose to go back. Hence, while on a superficial level it may appear that a primary cause of going back to Poland is the "return of failure" as migrants' economic dreams and goals are not fulfilled, I argue that this is not necessarily the case. As already noted in the literature review chapter, these migrants' decisions to migrate might also be viewed as a rational calculation. Hence, to explain return on the basis of whether a migrant "made it" in England is to overlook the structural, contextual factors, and the circumstances under which migrants may decide to return. As others have noted (see, for example, Escobal and Flores, 2009), social and cultural reasons for migratory motives and outcomes may in many cases override the strictly economic one.

Indeed, although a weak job market and limited job opportunities appeared to play a role, they are not the only factors that have prompted migrants' return. Sylwia, already mentioned above, reveals:

> "I don't know, I think I was not cut out to be a migrant. Like, you know, the Darwinian theory, the survival of the fittest. I missed my family, I really wanted to be closer to my parents. I longed to return, to the town and street I knew, to familiar faces, to family." (female, 28 years old)

The presence of family and familiarity in Poland, added to the lack of employment opportunities, made the thought of Poland and the prospect of return more plausible for Sylwia. Her decision to return to Poland is represented as a return to familiarity and family, something that Corcoran (2003, p.145) conceptualises as a "quest for anchorage". Sylwia talks about wanting to return and this return is defines in terms of a sentiment, familiarity, family and place.

Similarly, Marta introduced in the opening of this chapter, describes the desire to "escape" the life in England. In her words:

> "When we were in England, we both had very busy lives [...] He (Sławek) worked on building sites, making good money, but working a 6-day week, 12 to 15 hours sometimes [...] we wanted to start a family and we both wanted some changes [...] It was the pressure you could hardly face, you know, we hardly saw each other [...] earning money, it became about earning money [...] And Poland, in Poland I had family that could always help, we thought Sławek could find a less demanding job, I could look for a job, Poland was home, with lakes and forests [...] I was glad to have experienced England, but was looking forward to going back."

In many respects, Sylwia's and Marta's narratives emphasise an unspoken and normative connection to Poland; their narratives describe the decision of return as emotional, but also rational. In other words, by asserting a sense of belonging and connection to Poland, these migrants' decision to return is rationalised. Therefore, the interplay between the emotional and rational aspect

of return, it can be argued, add to the complexity of the interpretation of migrants' return decision making.

As I have discussed so far, the evidence from the narratives is mixed, pointing to often contradictory and multifaceted notions of return. Transnational developments seem to be challenging migrants' understanding of return. Grzegorz and Tomek, discussed in the previous section, exemplify how new Polish migrants in England negotiate their return: their decisions are not stable. On the contrary, they are constantly negotiated and renegotiated during the migration journey. What is more, it is economic factors and not the social or cultural ones that act as a pull factors to England. For the returnees however, the balance of these valuations seems to undergo a significant reassessment. The idealisation of Poland as home, as a familiar and secure place, also appears to play a role. Hence, the decision to return appears to be made through a combination of factors, among which the economic ones are not primary. This is in accordance with other research (see, for example, King, 2000), that argues that pull factors generally have more influence in the decision to return than push factors, and that non-economic factors are often considered of more significance than the economic ones.

The next section explores how returnee migrants create a sense of post-return belonging and how transnational orientations and practices affect this process. It should not be taken for granted that Polish return migrants will fit smoothly into their communities of origin (e.g., Constable, 1999; Long and Oxfeld, 2004; Christou, 2006a).

7.2 Experiencing the return

While the previous section illustrates how migrants negotiate the notions and the decision to return, this section considers migrants' post-return experiences. Arguably, when people return, they do not return to the same place from which they originally migrated. Even if they do return to the same place, as Long and Oxfeld (2004) argue, that place may have changed significantly during their absence.

7.2.0 Ambivalence, contradiction and the cycle of migration

According to King (2000), return is often marked by a feeling of ambivalence. This ambivalence is often reflected in the narratives of return in the notions of change: as migrants return home, they notice that not only the place has changed, but they themselves changed. In many cases, the migrants in this study also began to realise that while they were in England, the way people view them in Poland has changed. Marta comments:

> "We decided to go back. Little did I know that life was not going to be easier in Poland [...] We spent the money we earned in England and the reality hit in [...] The neighbours would ask: oh, where did you live before? The answer was: England, and then they would look at you as if there was something wrong with you! In fact, one neighbour said to me that he feels sorry for all the young people that went to England to work, and it is a shame that so many intelligent and educated young people clean English houses and serve food in restaurants. I did not know how to respond to his comment, so I just nodded and left. Later that day, I rang Sławek, got even angrier, because he said this is how it's going to be for us now, we will have to face people's nasty comments and that I better get prepared and get my story right about why we came back. Was Poland always like that? Backwards? I kept thinking that it must be me, I have changed [...] I saw everything from a different perspective."

Marta's lengthy narrative provides insights into the different dilemmas that returnees may face. For Marta and her partner, return proves to be challenging. As others have argued (Austin, 1986; Werkman, 1980; King, 2000), returnees' readjustment problems may be a result of their own unrealistic expectations. The way Marta views her present situation is a composition of her pre-migration experiences, life in England, and idealised conceptualisations of what her life would be like when she returns. Migrants' memories of home society, as already noted, may be distorted, idealised or nostalgic. In the same way, the returnees' expectations of return may not be obtainable (King, 2000). Hence, after going back, migrants may suffer from a sense of "relative deprivation (Merton, 1938), as they compare their lives, not with what they were like in the past, but with what they think they should be like now and in the future. In Marta's case, this collision between expectations and reality is for the most part challenging, characterised by a feeling of hopelessness and even some aspects of alienation.

Another returnee, Jan, reveals:

> "The first year was very difficult. I was still thinking in English. If you return from England you are not the same any more. Those people here (in Poland) are 30 years behind; it is not the same as the rest of the Europe. Those people here are stupid." (male, 28 years old)

Marta's and Jan's narratives highlight the ambivalence and contradiction that the idea of the return conveys for many migrants. Despite leaving England, they tend to be highly negative about Polish society. For example, they appear to be avoiding situations where questions about their migration may be asked: "I was scared to talk to people about my migration, in case they do not approve" (Marta). They also tend to position themselves "above" people that did not migrate: "Those people here are 30 years behind [...] Those people here are stupid" (Jan, male, 28 years old). As Stefansson (2004) argues, migration often creates a social distance between migrants and non-migrants. This distance is however, only recognised when migrants return. As a result of time spent in England, Marta and Jan appear to be questioning the relationship between them and Polish society. But as Stefansson (2004) further comments, whereas migration is often viewed as challenging the connections between the migrants and the place of origin, in migration literature return is thought of as unproblematic coming back to a place where migrants belong. Therefore, return migrants are not viewed as migrants, but rather simply as people who come back home after being away. However, this understanding of return migrants as "homecomers" poses a number of questions. It implies that return migrants should have no problems fitting back into the home society and should not experience any resettlement issues (King, 2000). However, many studies on return migration do report such experiences. Research highlights that returnees experience the negative processes of re-adjustment, feelings of alienation and no longer belonging (see, for example, Constable, 1999; Long and Oxfeld, 2004; Christou, 2006a). Most highlight the sense of disappointment associated with the return experience, which also emerges in this research, as exemplified by Jan's comment. As such, migrants are thought to deal with these feeling by denying their own migration experience (Ní Laoire, 2009). Marta's statement reflects much of the criticism that relates to the stereotypes of a migrant in Poland. Migrants are often described by non-migrants as people, who could not "make it" in the harsh and difficult reality of Poland. Some return migrants like Marta are aware of these stereotypes and attempt to distance themselves from it, or indeed even deny their migration experience. This resembles some of the findings on Irish return migrants, where "the denial of return migrants' migrancy" is, as Ní Laoire (2009, p.41) argues, one way in which not only migrant herself/himself deals with difficulties of return, but also a way in which society deals with returnees.

As other research on return migration indicates, the narratives of Polish returnees in this thesis also reveal the issues of not fitting in. For example, Sławek reflects in his narrative on his own sense of not being the same, because of migrating to England. He admits:

"I know we decided to return to Poland, and maybe England is not the best place to live in the world, I mean Poland is not either. We had, we still have, some issues. But I will tell you one thing. I learnt a lot in England, it has opened my eyes to different things, new possibilities, the things I can do with my life. I know Marta feels the same [...] Coming back to Poland, how shall I put it? You are not going back to the same place [...] It's like the place is new, you are new, different and you have to start new."

However, Sławek's excerpt seems to be also pointing to a phenomenon of "return of innovation" (Cerase, 1974), where the return experience is depicted as a highly dynamic process, involving the agency of returnees who view themselves as "carriers of social change" (Flores, 2009). What Sławek refers to in his narrative appears not to be money, but rather new values and lessons that he learnt during his migration journey. As Flores argues, upon return some migrants may seek to apply these lessons. In Sławek's case, even though he does not name them, the acquired "skills" are thought to serve an inspiration for future life changes. However, "innovative migrants" often do not accomplish their goals after they return. King (1986) provide some reasons for this, which include a mismatch of skills and qualifications, as well as "the lack of an effective institutional framework" (p.65). They also observe that the economic capital of return migrants is often spent for consumer and housing needs, but do not mention the skills that migrants' may have acquired during migration journey. As such, the return of innovation may be seen as going beyond the understanding of migrant return as a success – versus – failure dichotomy. It attributes agency to return migrants, who bring back the ability to transform their post-migration lives.

Cerase's (1974) work, although dated, nevertheless carries relevance for much contemporary and transnational analysis of return migration, including my own argument. It contributes, first and foremost, to the understanding that there is a relationship between host and home societies, and that this relationship is reciprocal as it forms much of the post-migration experience. I argue then, following de Bree *et al*. (2010), that in case of the returnees in this study, return migration may be best understood as a new phase, not the end of the circle of migration or indeed continuation of the migration journey, in which belonging to a "place" and "society" has to be renegotiated upon the return. What is more, and corroborating Cerase's reasoning, this new phase nevertheless reflects migrants' experiences in England, as well as those in Poland.

7.2.1 Transnational return?

The narratives of return are also full of practicalities of migrants' return. Marta's and Sławek's comments describe:

"We decided to go back [...] But it was not straightforward. Things needed to be done, packing, Sławek had a contract to finish, I had a notice period to work. We travelled a lot during that time to Poland, looking for a flat, trying to find a job through my friends, then sorting the mortgage and down payment on the flat but it helped. I mean it kind of helped me deal with the decision to return." (Marta)

Sławek reveals:

"We spent a lot of time going back and forth, making sure we had somewhere to go back to when we returned. Marta went back first, she stayed with her parents for nearly three months, before we found a flat we liked, and the mortgage came through. I stayed back because of work commitments."

It is not uncommon for migrants to carefully prepare for their return (see, for example Weinar, 2002; King *et al*., 2000). Marta and Sławek appear to have prepared for their return by maintaining intensive transnational practices, constructing a place to live and looking for a job through their own social networks. Their return visits to Poland acted as means through which Marta could maintain what Duval (2005) calls "social visibility". That is, before she returned, Marta went back regularly which allowed her not only to negotiate the conditions of return, plan her final return strategically, but also to rethink the decision itself. Cassarino (2004) and Long and Oxfeld (2004), among others, make similar points, remarking that return visits may be used to overcome the fears and hesitation that surround return. What is more, Duval (2005) observes for the example of return Caribbean migrants that periodic return visits home often act as facilitators of return and that maintaining visibility is a strategy for many to ease the processes of re-assimilation. Marta, as I illustrated earlier, still faced social and professional difficulties on return, but the social networks and contacts she maintained and her back-and-forth movements reduced the initial reservations she had with regards to her return. Past research suggests that migrants thinking of return often prepare a safety valve, for example, by checking the local job markets, securing a place to live and sufficient economic funds (Long and Oxfeld, 2004). As Dariusz, another returnee, states:

"I opened a Polish bank account over the Internet and then transferred all of my savings [...] Twice I flew to Poland for a job interview [...] Accommodation was not a problem, I had a lot of friends in (large Polish city), renting a room was not a problem on my return." (male, 30 years old)

Opening a bank account, identifying potential employment possibilities or securing a new home was often a key consideration to some migrants for return. It would appear then that transnational practices can help to ease the initial stages of moving back to Poland.

What is more, these processes were also seen as enhancing the returnee's local social status. For instance, upon her return to Poland, Sylwia purchased a car with the money she had earned in England. Many migrants are thought to buy homes, flats and other material possessions upon return to their home country. In fact, return migrants are thought to engage in conspicuous consumption to avoid the local social stigma of being perceived as "failures" in their journey as migrants (see, for example, Marcus, 2011; King, 2000). However, Sylwia's relatives and friends – especially those who had never lived abroad – became jealous. She states:

> "I bought a car, a used one, to get around, you know. It is not BMW or Porsche, but it's mine and it gets me from A to B (laughs). My friends are envious! I am sure it must make them feel mad that I managed to save up for car in England."

Then she quickly adds:

> "You can't win. If you come back with money, they are jealous. If you come back with nothing, they ridicule you. I just wanted to feel, feel better, nobody else has a car."

As in the case of pre-return visits home, opening a bank account or attending job interviews before the return, buying a car seems to have a symbolic meaning in Sylwia's return. King (2000) cites several anthropological studies that explore the ways returnees must display their "success" and notes that although such behaviour may appear to be economically irrational, it has an important effect in legitimising the individual returnee's social position. Sylwia appears to have bought the car, because "others don't have it". However, buying a car enhanced Sylwia's local sense of belonging in that it provided both social status and a feeling of support during the return. Interestingly, and given the choice, she seems to prefer her family and friends to be jealous. As I argued in Chapter 5, return visits to Poland provide migrants with a context for legitimating their social status claims. According to Goldring (1999), return can act as a "zone of sociocultural intelligibility in which social trajectories that are invisible or devalued in the host nation can be recognised" (p.169). Goldring shows from the example of Mexican migrants in the US, how migrant' savings and sacrifices made during migration journey become worth it because migrants can return and enjoy instant social mobility. In a similar vein, for Sylwia, the conversion of economic capital acquired in England into symbolic and social capital (a car, acceptance, prestige and jealousy from friends and family) at home is an important means by which she has negotiated her re-entry into local social worlds in Poland.

What is more, Sylwia's comment also contributes to the discussion on how transnationalism and integration may relate to one another. As others have argued, transnationalism highlights the connections that migrants have between home and host country (Faist, 2003; Snel *et al*., 2006; Vertovec, 2004). Hence, transnationalism also challenges the assumption that if migrants integrate into the host country, as de Haas (2005) notes, their connections with the country of origin decrease. In fact, Sylwia's, Dariusz's, and even Marta's and Sławek's narratives illustrate, that before returning returnees may use their transnational practices as a means of negotiating their reintegration and social status. Hence, as de Bree *et al*. (2010) argue, transnationalism appears to play a crucial role in the experiences of returnees. While past research suggested that returnees would struggle to overcome the social constraints of their return (Cerase, 1974; Gmelch, 1980; King, 1986), they now argue that the returnees' agency acts as a means through which the practices and constructions of return and home are reworked and negotiated. Transnational practices, also in case of the returnees discussed in this study, appear to facilitate some aspects of reintegration and belonging to the home country (de Bree *et al*., 2010).

Finally, and in the stark contrast to new Polish migrants in England, the returnees in this study wish to stay in Poland, despite the fact that most were confronted with difficulties upon return. Sylwia and Jan comment:

> "No, I have no intention to migrate again…I made my decision, there is no point going back to England. I experienced what I had to experience…I still can't speak English." (female, 44 years old)

> "I will go visit, but definitely won't go back." (male, 28 years old)

While these quotations do not allow for a detailed analysis of migrants' reasons behind not wanting to re-migrate, it is a reasonable to assume that for less-skilled migrants opportunities to find new employment would be limited, particularly if they also lacked English language skills. As it was the case with decisions to migrate, the motivations to re-migrate are likely to be also complex.

7.3 Conclusion

As Koser and Black (1999) point out, studies on migration challenge the view that return migration is the ending of the migration cycle. What is more, as Ammassari and Black (2001) argue, for some of the migrants, in transnational era return is no longer seen as permanent, but rather a "stage along

a process of increasingly fluid movements between countries" (p.44). Hence, in this chapter, I wanted to grasp the complexities of migrants' returns home and role that transnational orientations and practices may occupy in their post-return experiences.

The discussion of the meanings of return in the context of the post-2004 migration to England highlights clear contradictions in which return is conveyed. In particular, in Grzegorz's and Tomek's case, this chapter argues that in the transnational era, the decision to return is not static. Just as new Polish migrants in England use their mobility to live their lives "between" and "across" two countries, they seem to be altering their plans during the course of their migration journey. Return is not simply about deciding to go home, but rather a more complex negation of "transnationally rooted forms of belonging" (de Bree *et al*., 2010; p.506).

What is more, the accounts in this chapter reveal how transnational practices may play a role in creating post-return experiences. As returnees negotiated and plan their return, they are thought to prepare for it by maintaining transnational practices and social ties (de Bree *et al*., 2010). Using the example of Sylwia, her transnational practices acted as means by which she negotiated her re-entry, belonging and status in Poland. Hence, as other studies have shown (Guarnizo *et al*., 2003; Snel *et al*., 2006), transnational practices do not conflict with migrants' integration or re-integration, but rather for some return migrants, have the power to change and renegotiate the feelings of belonging.

The following chapter concludes this research and examines its implications for theorising migration and mobility within the EU. The limitations of the study are also addressed.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

8.0. Introduction

This thesis set out to explore the subjective experience of post-2004 Polish migrants in England and the meanings migrants attached to their migration and mobility. This chapter provides an overview of the research, restating the research problem and the main themes discussed in the thesis. Following the summary of the main findings, I discuss the most significant issues they raise. Finally, I suggest the ways in which the research might be developed beyond the scope of this project.

8.1 The rationale for the research

Since the accession of Poland to the European Union in 2004 and opening of some EU labour markets to Poles, over half a million Poles have arrived and registered to work in the UK, constituting one of the largest migration movements in contemporary Britain and Europe. This influx of predominantly young migrants opened up public and academic debates regarding the social relations between Polish migrants and the host society, their duration of stay, and their impact on the economy and social services. While a substantial amount of research has now been undertaken on this migration, the aim of this thesis was to reveal some of the human consequences of post-2004 Polish migration to England. The research looked to explore the experiences and meanings attached to migration and mobility from the perspective of the migrants themselves. Migration research, according to Currie (2008), has been largely dominated by the studies that rely

on statistics, paying little attention to migrants' individual stories. This thesis attempted to correct this imbalance by focusing on the subjective experiences of migrants as narrated in their migration stories. 26 interviews were undertaken with Polish migrants living and working in the West Midlands region and 6 with returnees, illuminating the personal experience, gaining insights into individuals' motivations, actions, meanings, perspectives and their interpretations of migration journey.

To this end, I discussed some of the aspects of lived experience of migration and how being a migrant is constructed through the everyday life of Polish migrants in England. I examined how migration is perceived, understood and enacted through the experiences of mobility, travelling home and borders. I introduced the place of gender and gender roles in the migration experience; and discussed the idealised role of female Polish migrants. Finally, I focused on the experience of return; again, the personal experience of return was animated and explored as returnees navigated their lives in Poland after spending a considerable amount of time in England.

8.2 Discussion of main findings

There are several themes which emerged from the chapters of this thesis. However, what follows is the discussion of those themes that are particularly relevant for the understanding of the experiences of Polish migrants in England.

8.2.0 The lived experience of migration - identity, experience of work and migrants' agency in creating their own experiences of migration

Chapter 4 looked at migrant's lives as a whole and understand the complex two-way relationship between migration, everyday experience and self. It examined the lived experiences of being a migrant, both in terms of general perceptions and reflections, as well as the day-to-day realities. The lived experience of migration illustrated a number of themes, from migration decision making and issues of arrival and settlement, to employment experiences and understandings of self in the processes of migration.

For instance, this chapter argued that the decision to migrate is more complex than is often assumed and presented in the past literature. For migrants in this study, decisions are shaped and constrained

by a wide range of factors, among which economic factors still play a significant role. For older migrants, even though other factors exist, migration is an attractive option, because of the economic hardships they face in Poland. At the same time, however, younger migrants in this thesis see their migration decisions as a quest for adventure and self-fulfillment. It appears then that Polish migrants can be simultaneously agents in their migration and feel that they have no choice but to migrate.

One of the strongest themes to emerge from this chapter was the discussion around being Polish, Poland and migrants' identity. It has been argued that migrant lives are affected by their new physical and social surroundings (Huang and Yeoh, 2007); by the impact of new lifestyles (Willis and Yeoh, 2000); and by the need to re-negotiate relationships now performed at a distance (Parreñas, 2001). The narratives of lived experience of migration confirmed that identity is in constant negotiation with oneself and others. In the migratory context, this negotiation seems to be more complex, as it takes place not only with other migrants, but also with members of the host society (e.g., Ryan, 2010). Yingling (2004, p.245) argues:

> "constituting and re-constituting identity across a spatiotemporal milieu of a life is an "improvisational art" of adjusting to changes of milieu. The challenges to building identity have shifted as the cultural milieu changed from modern to postmodern. The "new self-conscious" of the postmodern individual is exposed to […] the vertigo of unlimited multiplicity."

This research suggested that as Poles confronted the reality of lived-in-experience of migration, their identity as a Pole, as a migrant, and a cosmopolitan, and even as an Eastern European, was negotiated and re-negotiated in the context of their arrival in England, experiences of settlement, work and the decision to remain in England. It appears then that Polish migrants were not able to speak about their migration experiences without reference to their nationality, or to mechanisms within which their nationality and stereotypes attached to it, constructed their migration experience. Even in such a context, "Polishness" remained a very powerful identification and participants referred to it, while at the same time negotiating other identities. Seen from this perspective, the construction of one's identity not only defines their migrant experience, but has a significant impact in terms of what happens next in their migration journey. As I argued in this chapter, the categories such as "migrant" are criteria through which access to resources is shaped and defined. One of the consequences of this is that whilst categories such as "migrant" are imposed on individuals, many also, regardless of their reasons for moving, find it difficult to be accepted and become integrated into their new society. As Papastergiadis (2006) observes, using Bauman's work (2001) as an example, migrants tend not to forget these stereotypes. Hence, they become "haunted by an

ontological dilemma: doomed to their disloyalty of they cut their ties to their original homeland, and treated with suspicion if they seek to fully join in to another family" (p.11)

The lived experience of migration also indicated, by and large, negative and positive experiences of work, and some dissatisfaction with the lack of employment opportunities due to their inability to speak English. Some migrants saw this as a trade-off (Drinkwater *et al*., 2006) between working below their skill level on the one hand and earning more money than they would have had, had they been in a job matching their skills in their home country. This migration strategy, as Garapich and Duvell (2011) argue, aims to satisfy the high-risk capitalist labour markets, where skills and traits such as being mobile and flexible in the labour market are seen as significant for migrants' survival and their experiences. As such, for many, migration becomes about acquiring social and cultural capital, establishing social networks and gaining experiences. Indeed, as other research on Polish migrants in the UK indicates, and as for many migrants in this study, migration became an alternative to economic problems, to a life bounded by the national borders of Poland, but also an opportunity to better oneself or even a rite of passage to adulthood. Therefore, many of these migrants made the decision to take jobs below their skill-level and make this trade-off. As Garapich and Duvell (2011) further note, and given the current economic climate, those who developed these flexible approaches will have an advantage in the British labour market, because "by keeping their options open, migrants attempted to insure themselves against the condition of the modern capitalist world" (p.16). As I argued in Chapter 5, migrants' understandings of their migration permit those flexible choices, because if migration experience turns negative, they can always go back to Poland. However, even though this way of managing migration has its advantages, it nevertheless stops the majority of Poles from progressing professionally, because they remain in low-paid jobs and therefore lack financial and social stability (Garapich and Duvall, 2011).

Finally, this chapter contributed towards expanding the work that explores the importance of researching the "everyday sociality and materiality" (Ho and Hatfield, 2011) in the field of migration. Academic work that highlights the lived experience of migrants may inform policy and community programmes aimed at migrants. As Cook *et al*., (2010) argue, this may include creating new opportunities for migrants, as well as tackling the barriers they face to social inclusion at work and beyond, and making greater provision for language learning (see, for example, Conlon, 2010; Dudley, 2011).

8.2.0 Migration and mobility – individual agency, living simultaneously in two places and transnationalism

This chapter examined the notions of travelling home to describe the nature of the contemporary processes of migration and mobility. It described new and enriching ways in which Polish migrants in England express their agency through particular meanings of mobility - contesting social constraints, retaining a sense of control or linking physical with social mobility. What is more, it demonstrated what being mobile means for individual life choices "here" and "there". I argued, among other things, that the visit home is a fundamental part of new mobility patterns and a crucial stage in the negotiation of migration itself. I suggested that the ways in which the journey home and the distance between England and Poland are encountered by Polish migrants were critical to their understandings of migration. Because of the figurative proximity between Poland and England and "when desired" nature of their movement, Polish migrants are placed in a position of privilege and control regarding their mobility. As such, the chapter brought to the forefront migrant individual agency and ability to deconstruct some specific hegemonic static notions of migration, something that Staniewicz (2011) calls the "sedentary bias". By examining the practices of migrant transnationalism, this chapter moved away from static and bounded concepts towards a more mobile understanding of contemporary migration and mobility in Britain and Europe.

At the same time, this chapter attempted to show that the type of migration does not define the migrant experience, but does have a significant impact in terms of what experiences migrants may have. This is because the nature of migration shapes the opportunities for the future. The opening of EU borders and lack of visas for Polish migrants became an important factor that shaped and defined migrants' experiences. Hence, this chapter not only revealed how Polish migrants directed their migration and mobility trajectories, but also highlighted that some did not recognise themselves in the categories used by traditional migration research. As such, this chapter suggested that paying attention to the lived experience of migration not only adds a nuance to the knowledge of migration, but also argues for different frames of understanding that alter our perspectives on migration altogether. A specific point here is that work on migration and mobility should consider the increasing importance of non-traditional modes of migration and patterns of mobility. We cannot take for granted that we know what migration or human mobility mean for migrants. Hence, these terms are increasingly open to question and interpretation. With this in mind, this chapter argued that for "new" Polish migrants in England mobility plays a central role in organising and

giving content to their migration. It indicated that migrant mobility, once reserved for the elites, is now increasingly available, at least in the EU context, for everyone. Hence, this chapter also reinforced the need to attempt to understand the nature and significance of mobility for migrants. As such, thinking about the ways migrants negotiate the "emergent structures of the global" (Conradson and Lantham, 2005; p.301), means that we need to carefully reconsider how we understand migration, mobility and transnationalism.

8.2.1 Gender – the ambiguity of gender roles, gender stereotypes and femininity

Different aspects of migrant social life are threaded together by the dynamics of gender, and this chapter attempted to unveil some of the complex ways in which these threads are woven.

In this chapter, I highlighted some of the gender aspects of migration experience of Polish migrants in England. I have discussed the ways in which the old and new gender roles are brought together in the migration process. The accounts of the participants revealed clear contradictions in how migration influences and challenges gender. In particular, they revealed how gendered practices of autonomy and independence may contribute to wider constructions of engendered experiences of migration and mobility for young Polish migrant women. The experience of migrating, finding a job and accommodation, learning a foreign language and learning how to deal with employers all created additional social capital for the these women. The initial encounters in England were thought to be important for female migrants in the way they determined the long term strategies for adjustment and coping. This chapter hence argued that certain aspects of gender may condition the type of accommodation which is available, the social networks which can be used, and work available to migrants. Coping with these ambiguities is a constant challenge, further shaping migrants' experiences. Regardless of the overall positive or negative assessment of their migration experience, the majority of young women in this study stated that through migration, they became more mature and better able to cope with the demands and hurdles of adult life. As such, migration experience contributes both materially and emotionally to challenging how women appreciate their gender and, for some of the women in this research, it also challenges their own understanding of who they are and what they want to achieve from their migration journey.

What is more, this chapter unveiled that traditional gender roles may be resistant to change in the processes of migration and that some of the dilemmas that Polish migrant women may have to face in the English labour market are not necessarily gendered, but the strategies they develop to cope with them appear to be. Indeed, the migrant condition seems not to be neutralising the gender identity of the informants, as some studies have suggested in the past (Morokvasic, 1984). This study found that migrants appeared to be finding that their migrant experience is deeply shaped by the gendered employment options open to them, but also that there were distinctions in how men and women responded to the constraints and opportunities of gender performance. Men tended to pursue a vision of the economically successful migrant by throwing themselves into very traditional performances of male prowess, and some get explicit credit for that in the workplace, as in the case of Grzegorz for example, but this limited their ability to perform other more flexible versions of gender in other locations. This, in turn, impacted on their wider experience as migrants. Women appeared to find themselves "exoticised" as a particular form of femininity, but also found ways of moving between different kinds of gender performance that made their lives as migrants easier to navigate. Femininity and gender stereotypes, for instance, seemed to be playing a prominent role in shaping the experiences of work for some of the women and men in this study. As such, this chapter also showed the complex and opposing pictures of the understanding of femininity and masculinity in the process of migration and mobility. Very little of the existing literature on migration to the UK explores these lived aspects of gendering and how migrants occupy a variety of gender expectations and roles by adapting their performances for different audiences. Therefore, this study attempted to move beyond previous studies of migration in an effort to explore other forms in which migration affects aspects of gender, by simultaneously focusing on gender and lived experience of migration.

On the whole, the chapter suggests that in understanding the gendered aspect of migration, a more subjective perspective, such as the one employed in this thesis, allows gender as lived by migrants to be seen and draws a more nuanced picture of how gender permeates a variety of practices, identities, and institutions implicated in migration.

8.2.2 Return migration – the complexities of the decision to return and the post-return experience

This chapter attempted to grasp the complexities of migrants' return migration and role that the transnational practices occupy in the post-return experiences. The discussion of the meanings of return in the context of post-2004 migration to England highlighted clear contradictions in the manner in which return was constructed and conveyed. In particular, this chapter argued that in the transnational era, the decision to return is not definite and static. Just as new Polish migrants used their mobility to live their lives simultaneously in two countries, they seemed to be altering their plans during the course of their migration journey. In the same vein, the decision to return seemed to be negotiated and re-negotiated in the processes of migration. As Christou (2006b) argues, return migrants "generate multidimensional understandings of self and belonging, rationalised through the return migratory project" (p.835). Some migrants in this thesis began to desire the positive attributes of a settled life, such as a house or a family. Others however, wanted to maintain their mobility for longer. As such, the decision to return appeared to be complex, and experienced differently by all migrants.

At the same time, returnees' narratives embodied the expectations of an easy return, but the reality reflected renegotiations of their social status and belonging. The return was perceived as a complicated process, during which migrants realised what they previously disliked about Poland. Interestingly, the returnees expressed feeling superior to those who stayed in Poland and perceived a gap between themselves and those who never migrated. Many talked about the emotional cost of returning and the denial of their own migrancy. Hence, the majority did not consider migrating again.

What is more, the narratives revealed how transnational practices may play a role in creating post-return experiences. This part of the chapter argued that transnational practices and ties may act as means by which migrants negotiate their re-entry, belonging and status in Poland. Some migrants used the resources earned in the process of migration to purchase commodities. These, in turn, were seen as enhancing the returnee's social status upon return. All migrants, it seems, had to prove (to themselves, their families and the rest of society) that they had not returned empty-handed. Hence, as other studies have shown (Guarnizo *et al*., 2003; Snel *et al*., 2006), transnational practices do not

conflict with migrants' integration or re-integration, but rather have the power to change the feelings of belonging for some return migrants.

8.3 Contributions, implications and further research

This section of chapter discusses the thesis contribution to the field of migration and mobility and the implications of research findings.

8.3.0 Methodological contributions

This thesis contributes to methodological processes of studying the lived experience of migration. Firstly, it reveals the benefits of applying a person-centred approach. The migration phenomenon may take place within contexts of particular historic, economic or social events, but we cannot understand the contemporary movements of people without exploring their day-to-day accounts of migration and the multiple meanings they attach to these processes. As this thesis indicates, the narrative methodology is particularly useful at attending to emotive elements of migration, as these are likely to include issues of freedom, adventure, economic and social betterment, an opportunity to re-negotiate gender and perhaps other identities, and finally a chance for migrants to reposition themselves imaginatively in the world and become cosmopolitan people on their own terms.

8.3.1 Theoretical contributions

This thesis's main objective was to capture the lived experience of migration and the meanings that migrants themselves attach to their migration trajectories. Its contribution to the field of migration and mobility is twofold. As I argued in the Introduction to this thesis, other large cities like London, Newcastle or Peterborough have been the places of numerous research projects (e.g., Ryan *et al*., 2009; Datta, 2009, Eade *et al*., 2007; Stenning *et al*., 2006), but to the date there has been only one study looking at the Polish migrants experiences in the West Midlands.

Secondly, this thesis is the first research piece on post-2004 migration to England that combines a focus on different aspects of migration (migrants' mobility, gender and return) under the umbrella of migrants' lived experience. It captures Polish migration in England in the period of economic

downturn and slow recovery. This allows some of the important aspects of this migration, namely its complex and varied nature to be highlighted.

Finally, this thesis contributes to the understanding of broader processes of migration and mobility. The variety of factors (for example, the free movement of people in the EU, lack of visas, the availability of cheap and accessible low-cost travel, globalization, the impact of the Internet), have led to a shift away from previous considerations of migration as "settlement" in the host country to increasingly seeing migration from the EU states as "mobility". This thesis illustrates how Polish migrants consider their position of being a migrant and argues that migration is better understood as ongoing. Thus, the study opens up a possibility of discussing the changing nature of migration in contemporary times.

8.3.2 Reflections on further research

Since a lot of work has been already undertaken around this new migration to the UK, research would benefit from a comparative analysis of Polish migrations in another place and context. There is a growing evidence and body of literature on Polish migration to Iceland (e.g., Zielinska, 2010). What is more, the German borders and its labour market were opened to A8 nationals in May 2011. It would be interesting to explore the dynamics, meanings and lived experience of Poles in these countries and compare it to the experiences of Poles in England.

8.4 Conclusion

Post-2004 Polish migration to the UK is the largest single influx of migrants of its kind (Duvell *et al*., 2009; Burrell, 2009). Whilst pre-1990 migration was mostly forced and politically motivated, since EU enlargement migrants have come for economic, educational and other reasons. Against the background of with this macro-context, the objective of this thesis was to apply a person-cantered approach and gain insights into the lived experience of post-2004 Polish migrants in England. The study addressed issues of this migration in relation to four overarching themes of lived experience, mobility and migration, gender and return. By studying the narratives and discourses underpinning them, this thesis showed the complex and varied nature of this migration. In doing so, it has contributed to our understanding of contemporary processes of migration and mobility in Britain and Europe more generally.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview guide

Tell me the story of your migration.

Start from the beginning: why did you migrate? Tell me about 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.)

What about now? 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/himself, experiences of work, 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.)

What about you future? Tell me about your plans for the future? (probe about future plans, intentions of staying or returning.)

Only for returnees

Tell me the story of your migration. Start from the beginning: why did you migrate?

Tell me about your experiences of migration.

Tell me about your return. Why did you return? Tell me about your experiences of return (probe about any difficulties encountered, changes in perception of migration experience, how others view the participant).

What about your future? Tell me about your plans for the future?

Appendix B: Participants' information sheet

"Migration and mobility of new Polish migrants in England: narratives of lived experience"

Thank you for taking time to read this information.

I am a doctoral student at Aston University interested in the aspect of post-2004 Polish migration to the UK. My research project involves interviewing Polish migrants about the story of their migration and experiences in the UK.

You will be asked to answer several questions which, if you don't mind, I will record on a voice recorder for the ease of administration. The tape will be erased after transcription of data. All data collected will be kept in the strictest confidence and only I will have the access to raw data. You will keep your anonymity as I will change your name in the research project. The results of the study will not identify you in any way. The interview should take about an hour and we can arrange a place to be interviewed where you will feel safe and comfortable. You are welcome to withdrawal at any time without detriment. During the interview, I will ask you from time to time if you are happy to continue and if you find any of the questions unsettling, we will move onto the next one. I am happy to answer all your questions at any point of this research project. Also, once my research project is finished, you are welcome to view the results. I have provided my contact details at the bottom of this sheet.

Now, if you are happy to participate, please read and sign the consent form provided.

Thank you.

My details:

Agnieszka Ignatowicz (e-mail: ignatowa@aston.ac.uk)

Appendix C: Consent form

Consent Form

"Migration and mobility of new Polish migrants in England: narratives of lived experience"

Please answer the following questions by circling your responses:

Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study? YES NO

Have you been able to ask questions about this study? YES NO

Have you received enough information about this study? YES NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study? YES NO

-At any time during the research project? YES NO

-Without giving a reason for your withdrawal? YES NO

Your responses will be anonymised before they are analysed (your name will not appear in the project)? YES NO

Do you give permission for a person involved in supervising this project to have access to your anonymised responses? YES NO

Do you agree to take part in this study? 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 an investigator and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant:..... **Date:** .....

Name (block letters):.....

Signature of researcher:..... **Date:** .....

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

Appendix D: Information about participants

Name	Age	Type of work in England
Ania	28	Factory supervisor
Tomek	26	Factory worker
Kasia	26	Factory worker
Karolina	33	Unemployed (1st Interview) Sales assistant (2nd Interview)
Witek	31	Full time student/Sales assistant
Maciek	37	Factory worker
Basia	35	Cleaner
Andrzej	47	Factory worker
Juliana	In early 50s	Factory worker
Dominika	22	Factory worker
Monika	28	Cleaner (1st interview) Hotel receptionist (2nd interview)

Małgosia	21	Cleaner (1st interview) Factory worker(2nd interview)
Przemek	26	Car valeter
Asia	25	Factory worker
Kamila	25	Cleaner
Hania	26	Care worker
Agnieszka	32	Care worker
Slawek	31	Construction worker
Marek	25	Factory worker
Marcin	32	Construction worker
Paulina	25	Full time student/Sales assistant
Jan	28	Factory worker
Anna	28	Care worker
Barbara	40	Cleaner (1st interview) Factory worker(2nd interview)

Maria	42	Factory worker
Iza	28	Part-time student/Language tutor
Ela	42	Factory worker
Marta	32	Care worker
Dariusz	30	Construction worker
Grzegorz	33	Construction worker
Bogdan	28	Factory worker (1st interview) Waiter/Bar staff (2nd interview)
Magda	24	Cleaner (1st interview) Factory worker (2nd interview)