Agency and Emotion in Transnational Migration Stories:
Life-Changing Experiences of Polish Women in South-West England

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Rebecca Anne Davies

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Abstract/Summary

This study is about issues of agency and emotion in transnational migration, specifically between Poland and the UK, from the perspective of nine Polish women living in south-west England. By appreciating the emotional dynamics of transnational migration, and the agency enacted by individuals in wider contexts, the study illustrates how multiple and varied stories are lived behind the widely reported statistics. By focusing on the experiences of women, and analyzing the different contexts of their sending and receiving environments, this study takes a gendered approach to understanding transnational migration and its opportunities and challenges. Listening to the life histories of individuals reveals transnational migration as a life-changing experience.

Mahler and Pessar's model of "gendered geographies of power" has been employed to frame the findings of the research and assist in understanding the different levels of analysis on which power and context are 'played out', and the processes by which individuals negotiate them in different ways. The scope of the study is suggested in terms of understanding the dynamics and social-political relationships which lead to individual and wider change. Anthropologists have been at the forefront of understanding migration as "transnational", and more recently as "emotional", making up for earlier approaches which more recent anthropologists have widely criticized.

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

Since Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004, and the UK Government's confirmation of its 'open' policy towards EU immigration (Ruhs, 2006: 8), more than half a million Polish nationals have migrated to the United Kingdom (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2011: 1-4). Even since the recent economic downturn, it has been argued that there remains the same economic incentive for migration to the UK from the so-called Accession 8 (A8) countries (Vargas-Silva, 2013). This movement of people is widely described in simple terms of economic migration of migrant workers responding to this economic imbalance and the opportunities that structural adjustment has created. In British media and politics, immigration from East European countries is a perpetual "hot topic" (Kearney, 1986: 332). The rhetoric is noticeably focussed on Polish immigration as Polish migrants make up the largest number, and are therefore the most statistically visible group, of the new A8 countries (ONS, 2011: 1-4). In the UK today there is further political and media prediction about what will happen when restrictions regarding the immigration of Romanians and Bulgarians are lifted in 2014. While in the British popular media, East European migrants to the UK are described as a "flood" (*The Telegraph*, 2013), or a "flock" (*Express*, 2012), "snatching" (ibid) scare jobs from young British people (*BBC*, 2012) especially during the economic recession (*The Telegraph* 2012).

Meanwhile, "immigrants have no voice" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000: 111) and yet, anthropologists have pointed out that "economy is ultimately not about money, but about people" (Barth, 1997: 233-4). Thus, first and foremost, the aim of this study has its foundations in a characteristically anthropological endeavour of finding out "what it is like to be…" (Eriksen, 2010: 197) a Polish immigrant in the UK. This study aims to learn the stories of some of the people behind the statistics, to complicate this reportedly simplistic movement of people. Migrating to a different country has been described as representative of a "crisis

[event]" (Lutz & White, 1984: 414) in people's lives, while others emphasise the huge emotional upheaval of leaving behind family and friends (Svasek, 2008: 214). It is well reported, academically and politically, that migrant workers work the longest hours for the smallest amount of pay (Drinkwater et al, 2010: 173). Surely there is much more involved in decisions to migrate than is popularly reported, and much more to be learned about the experiences of migration.

This study's introduction may benefit from the story which inspired it. In south-west England, I am employed as an outreach support worker for a local domestic abuse charity. Through this position, I met a young Polish woman called Justyna. Justyna had migrated to the UK four years earlier, with her long-term boyfriend. They had arrived looking for higher paying work than it was possible for them to find at home. This man had always been violent and controlling towards Justyna, but she had witnessed her father's violence towards her mother and no one had agreed with her then when she had spoken up about it. Justyna told me that migrating to the UK gave her the physical distance that she felt she needed from their families to enable her to report her partner's violence and to cease living with him. She further explained that the support she had received from statutory and non-statutory services in her new area of residence facilitated her resilience and enabled her to protect herself, and the baby they had since had, from her ex-partners' domestic abuse. As a result, Justyna was ostracised by her family and friends in Poland, as they had said that they had put up with similar abuse so why shouldn't she. Her family had also expressed that Justyna's loyalty to the father of her child should be prioritised above her well-being. Despite this, Justyna told me that she is so much happier now and excited about her future. She has met a new Polish man in the UK and they hope to work and save money with which to migrate onwards to Canada or Australia, with her child. This woman's story raises the questions which help form the rationale for this research. Justyna told me that migrating to the UK had been a "life-changing experience", but she wasn't referring to any wealth she had accumulated. What other stories are being lived behind the statistics? To begin to

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understand this, this study re-examines Justyna's life history and those of eight other Polish women living in south-west England.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that more women than men are now migrating to the UK from Poland (*World Bank*: 2007). The gendered nature of migration has been widely researched in recent years by anthropologists and other social scientists (Hondganeu-Sotelo, 2000: 119; Pessar, 2003: 75). The aforementioned story hinted at the different gendered contexts Justyna moved between, as well as the host services which may exist to assist in making changes relating to these. Therefore this study is about contemporary migration of female Polish migrants to the UK. It focuses on the motivations of the individuals within this growing social group by examining their decision making, feelings and perceptions, hopes and dreams. It observes the actions taken by individuals while looking at the services available for the migrants and the services they proceed to provide for themselves. It assesses how migrants may engage with their new environment and shape it into new transnational spaces. It examines the power and agency the women are able to, and choose to, exert within the specific givens of processes out of their control. This study asks how migratory experiences can be said to empower individuals and will discuss the validity of this kind of feminist inquiry.

In taking a "life history" (Brettell, 2003: 24) approach to the methodology, this study embraces the realisation that "[w]hen anthropologists conduct ethnographic research, no matter what the problem, they encounter people who engage in narrative and storytelling" (ibid). This study values the personal and reflective perspectives of individuals in understanding the dialectical relationships between macro processes and people's lives. By spending time and energy on engaging with the participants and building as much rapport with them as possible, I aim to gain the privilege of hearing these life stories in detail to understand the myriad and depth of experiences and feelings about the migration experience, and a greater understanding of human agency and social change in general.

The interviews for this study will themselves become transnational spaces which may allow assumptions between the interviewees and the interviewer to be discussed. Introducing individual immigrants as thinking, feeling social actors and providing them a voice may help to act as a 'bridge' between the immigrants and the host community. Clearly more work needs to be done to encourage an understanding of these new "exotic others" (Foner, 2003: 49) in UK communities, particularly as European migration looks set to continue. Additionally, this study may enable comparative analysis between the life histories of these women and those of other migrants. More widely, this study aims to understand how women become empowered to make positive decisions to change their lives. If we can understand what has enabled some of the women in this study, then this could inform practitioners and service providers, such as the one I work for, to assist more women to facilitate a better, safer, more fulfilled life.

This study was carried out broadly in south-west England, mainly because it is the residential area of the researcher and secondly because Polish migrants are vastly more represented here among those from other nations (Drinkwater et al, 2010: 82). Specifically, the research was conducted in west Somerset, west Cornwall and in the Devon towns of Bideford, Barnstaple, Great Torrington, Tiverton, and Crediton. I carried out participant observation in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, a bilingual children and parents group, a Polish Saturday School, a participant's home, and at a Polish language Mass at a local Catholic church in Devon. As in any environment, south-west England presents significant contexts in which social relationships and individual lives are lived and transformed.

This study will begin with a review of the anthropological literature about migration, and particularly women in migration. The review will demonstrate how developments in the discipline since the 1970s have led to more reflexive approaches to the constitution of

understanding, including from a greater emphasis upon context on all analytical levels and more recent research about the significance of emotions to the dynamics of transnational migration. The following chapter will then proceed to describe the methodological approach to the study and its theoretical underpinnings. This chapter will describe the rationale for gathering life histories by carrying out semi-structured interviews, and as well as describing the aims and procedure, it will also reflexively evaluate the decision-making and outcomes throughout the study. Next, the findings will be analysed and discussed. Once the contexts of the participants have been described, in terms of their motivations for migrating, and the host environment and the participants' occupations have been illuminated, the previous anthropological literature will be employed as comparative tools for understanding their experiences. An emphasis will be placed on the power and agency the individuals feel they have in relation to these wider contexts, including over their social locations and their ability to create transnational identities, or even transnational spaces. These questions will be assessed in terms of the emotional dynamics of their life histories and to what degree transnational migration has been life-changing for themselves or others.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter is a review of how anthropologists have tackled studies of transnational, economic migration, particularly since the reflexive turn in the discipline from the 1970s. The review begins with a look at how anthropologists have researched migration and more recently, how they have come to conceive of it as a transnational process. Secondly, this chapter will examine the different ways anthropologists have approached women as migrants, from early efforts to correct the prevalent "male bias", to women-only studies especially during the feminist "second wave", to a more recent "gendered approach". Thirdly, the review explores how anthropologists have continued to review the importance of the 'micro-level' as well as 'meso- and macro-levels' in studies of migration. That is, how anthropologists value an understanding of the experiences and decision-making of individuals while appreciating the wider contexts in which they are positioned. Following this, the review will describe ways in which some anthropologists have suggested that an understanding of emotions may help towards a greater insight into migration.

Migration as a Transnational Process

Before the reflexive turn in the discipline, anthropological studies of migration had been dominated by theories of modernisation (Kearney, 1986: 333) and evolutionism (Eriksen, 2003: 2). This theoretical position was based on neo-classical economics and the belief in unilateral, progressive development. The basic conceptual premise was that people migrated from developing to more developed countries, and from rural to urban environments (Kearney, 1986: 333). These movements were seen as inevitably towards the West (Eriksen, 2003: 2-3), in an advance towards modernity. Such theories are analogous with neo-classical approaches to migration and 'push-pull' explanations of individual motivations (Castles, 2003: 22). They represent individuals as rational decision-makers

responding to economic imbalances (ibid) "who migrate to a new land, settle, assimilate, and ultimately forsake ties to their homelands" (Mahler, 1999: 691). This "classic bipolar model of immigration" (ibid) remains prevalent in some disciplines and contributes to the general concept of globalisation as a homogenising force (Kearney, 1986: 337). In these terms, migration is seen as a "global" process, characterized as being "largely decentred from specific nationalities" (Kearney, 1995: 548).

During the 1970s, anthropology was criticised from within the discipline for being slow to focus on migration as a process (Brettell & Berjeois, 1992: 41). It has been suggested that this was because, "it did not fit the timeless and bounded idea of culture that framed [anthropologists'] analyses" (Brettell, 2003: ix). However, changes in the world had been happening - in particular, with the spread of market economies, there was an increased rural to urban migration in the areas anthropologists traditionally studied (Brettell & deBerjeois, 1992: 41). As a result, "[t]he interest in migrants and immigrants grew in conjunction with the development of both peasant studies and urban anthropology" (ibid). Much of the literature available with which to analyse the findings about environmental and geographical factors comes from urban anthropology as it is cities which tend to be "the receiving areas for new immigrants" (Brettell, 2003b: 168). In line with predictions made about the future of the discipline during the 1990s (Kearney, 1995: 547; Geertz, 1997: 3), there has been an "increased extension of ethnographic approaches to the study of modern industrialized societies, including our own" (Geertz, 1997: 3) with anthropological studies of migration.

During the 1980s, migration research became a "hot topic" (Kearney, 1986: 332), across the academic disciplines, in response to socio-political debates in the United States at the time about national immigration policies (ibid). As a result, research from the Americas is over-represented in the anthropological literature about migration from this time (Brettell, 1995: xiii). Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc are three such anthropologists who were carrying out their fieldwork among immigrants in North America. From an ethnographic

perspective anthropologists have found that migrants find ways of asserting their nationalist traditions, ethnicity and cultural difference. This has contributed to what Glick Schiller et al (1995) have called "[t]he paradox of our times" (59), that is, "that the growth and intensification of global interconnection of economic processes, people, and ideas is accompanied by a resurgence in the politics of differentiation" (ibid: 50).

During the 1990s, it was anthropologists, Glick Schiller et al, who first used the term "transnationalism" to describe "the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement" (Glick Schiller et al, 1992: 1). These processes, they said, were rooted in everyday activities and social relationships, and explained how "transmigrants… take actions, make decisions, feel concerns, and develop identities" (ibid). Since then, Glick Schiller et al and numerous other anthropologists have adopted the term to help theorise the migrant lives they were trying to make sense of. To the terms "transnational migration" (Glick Schiller et al, 1995: 48; Pessar & Mahler, 2001: 812-846), and "transnationalism" (Kearney, 1995; Glick Schiller et al, 1995), others such as "transnational identities" (Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 35) and "transnational spaces" (Guanizo & Smith, 1998: 165-195; Pessar & Mahler, 2003: 812-846) have been widely used to describe these processes.

This reconfiguration of migration differed from earlier "global" notions by grounding processes in the daily lives and relationships of individuals rather than conceiving of a more abstract and vague "global force", or a, "kind of Hegelian world spirit looming above and beyond human lives" (Eriksen, 2003: 5). In understanding migration as a transnational process, it has been considered inherently important to take into account the effect the geography and social environment of the receiving area on the experiences of the participants, as *transnational* refocuses the significance of 'place' in migration studies (Brettell, 2003: 166). Furthermore, while it must be remembered that, "both points of departure and points of arrival are in cultural flux" (Appadurai, 1990: 41), nevertheless, these

points do exist on spatial and conceptual levels, and are significant to the way migrants live their lives (Mahler, 1999: 692). Recent anthropological studies have looked at how transnational processes themselves have added to these cultural changes in sending and receiving societies (Foner, 2003: 32).

Studies have used these notions to show how nations and cultures continue, deterritorialised, by the activities of transnational migrants living abroad (Appadurai, 1990: 37). Additionally, many anthropologists have written about the importance to immigrants of a "myth of return" (Garapich, 2008: 6) and on the role of this myth in helping migrants to continue transnational relationships (Buijs, 1993: 4; Garapich, 2008: 6). The continuation of cultural practices and social relationships based on a national or ethnic identity of the sending country has led anthropologists to call on theories of "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983; Brettell, 2003: 19). This is also reflected in growing studies of migration and the role of new forms of communication technology in transnational relationships. This present study aims to examine how the individuals have used the cultural and social tools of both national contexts to create transnational identities and transnational spaces.

Migration and Gender

This section reviews how anthropologists have tackled the issue of gender in studies of migration. The reflexive turn in the discipline was largely inspired by the critique of the wide-ranging male-bias in anthropological studies. Female anthropologists travelled to field-sites worked on by earlier, male anthropologists and made very different findings as a result of this new perspective. In 1974, the first collection of studies about gender was published (Lamphere et al). Within this collection was Ortner's famous assertion that women are universally subordinate to men in "every type of society and economic arrangement and societies of every degree of complexity" (Ortner, 1974: 67). This perception must have left a great impression on anthropologists at the time, and certainly to the theoretical conceptions

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of those studying women and migration. Such theorising framed the research questions of the increasing numbers of anthropologists of migration and gender from that time. Such questions largely considered the potential of migration as a generator of social change, altering relations of power and gender, and empowering women.

The male-bias in earlier anthropological and other social-science studies of migration meant that, "it was commonly accepted that the migrant, and especially the international migrant, was a young male who left his homeland for economic reasons" (Brettell 1995: ix). Meanwhile, women in migration were briefly explained as either followers of the men or as their dependents remaining behind (Morokvasic, 1981: 13; Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 28). Women's roles in decision-making, work or cultural reproduction was largely ignored or only spoken about as belonging to the domestic sphere which was considered outside of the rational economic reasons for migration and so conceptually invisible. During the 1970s, a number of 'special issues' to tackle the discipline's lack of empirical work about migration were published in anthropological journals, including in 1976 when the *Anthropological Quarterly* published a special issue that dealt with the topic of women and migration. As, summarized by Beuchler in her introduction to this special issue, the articles discussed this issue of migration as "an important avenue for upward social mobility" (1976: 2), but suggested that it was rarely straightforward (ibid). An example is Bloch's contribution to the issue which focused on the "changing domestic roles among Polish immigrants" in the United States (1976: 3-10). Bloch argued that migration had brought the women in her study economic equality and independence, but that this had been at the expense of the social status and family context they upheld as part of a large domestic network in their sending country (ibid). Many of the anthropological studies of migration and gender focused on the change in roles of immigrant women coming from a context where they were not involved in wage labour to their new context of working for a wage and having financial independence for the first time (eg Bloch, 1976; Jones-Correa, 1998: 338). Again, many of these studies were less than optimistic and often presented the concept of a "double-burden" of migrant

women as they were now occupied in public, productive work as well as reproductive work in the family (Bloch, 1976; Jones-Correa, 1998: 338).

These earlier anthropological studies of women and migration were dominated by Western feminists greatly influenced by 'feminist standpoint theory' (Pessar, 2003: 85) which posited that women all over the world share womanhood in common thus reducing the significance of other variables in research (ibid). This was part of what has been called, "second-wave" feminism and its endeavours "to give voice and agency" (ibid) to women were done with arguably, the best of intentions (ibid). However, the approach was criticised for being ethnocentric by the fact that it has not properly addressed social, cultural and other wider contexts. A pertinent example to this present study is that offered by Polish academic, Graff (2007), who has since pointed out that Poland, and many other countries, did not experience second wave feminism (ibid: 143) and so may not view gender equality in the same way. Graff has explained that, feminism in Poland has been seen as anti-nationalistic since the end of the socialist regime (ibid: 147) and so, whereas there is a more recent trend among a "third wave" (ibid) of western feminists to give up universalising claims and to celebrate national differences in gender, contemporary Polish feminists "consider themselves to be nationalism's hostages" (ibid: 151). In this way Graff has described feminism in Poland as political arguing that, "the rise of post-socialist nationalism has largely defined the feminist agenda in Poland" (ibid: 152). Such insights have warned against ethnocentric, Western approaches to feminist studies of women (Pessar, 2003: 86) which must include an unproblematic notion of what constitute "empowerment" for women.

Back in 1975, in the introduction of an important collection of essays dedicated to an anthropology of women, Reiter had called for a focus on studies of women to address the male-bias with the "final outcome" (16) to later be, "a reorientation of anthropology so that it studies *humankind*"(ibid). Into the 1980s, women-only studies were further propelled by the rise in "migration streams… dominated by women" (Brettell, 1995: ix). As a result, "the

dearth of research on women was replaced by a flurry of… studies that took women migrants as the primary subject of inquiry" (Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 29). Anthropologists have since called for an end to women-only research, bemoaning its continued relegation to "the woman's panel" (Pessar, 2003: 97), and it being treated as a marginalised, "sub-field" (ibid: 78). Some anthropologists have expressed particular frustration with "the practice of researching and writing only about women migrants while characterizing such work as 'gender'" (Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 29).

Since the 1990s, anthropologists have called for and demonstrated ways forward for a gendered approach to migration (Pessar, 2003: 75). Scholars of a range of different disciplines recognize that migration is a gendered process (ibid; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000: 119), notwithstanding contemporary east-west migration in Europe (Engersen et al, 2010: 20). Some researchers have demonstrated ways that immigrant employment is gendered (Friberg, 2010: 24). Some detailed ethnographies have described the experiences of women migrating for cross-border marriage arrangements (Constable, 2005), while other anthropologists have examined ways that the policies and social context of the receiving countries "affect the formation, unification, and material well-being of immigrant families" (Foner, 2003: 40). It has been suggested that anthropologists are best positioned to carry out this gendered research due to the discipline's grounding in detailed ethnographic methodology (Pessar, 2003: 76). In particular, anthropologists of gender and migration have focussed on relations of power (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000: 119) and issues of identity (Pessar, 2003: 89), which will be reviewed in more detail in the subsequent section.

Mahler and Pessar (2001; 2006) have put forward a model for conceiving of "gendered geographies of power" (ibid) which aims to analyse the issues described above, and to compare them across different ethnographic examples. Within this model are four scales on which gender operates in transnational contexts, "that begin with the body and extend across continents" (Mahler & Pessar, 2001: 441). The first is on "geographical scales"

(Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 43), between national contexts of gender. The second scale demonstrates the multiple "social locations" (ibid: 44) which individuals occupy on multiple hierarchies at the same time, which they themselves have not necessarily created (ibid). Thirdly, the model examines "the types and degrees of agency people exert, given their social locations" (ibid). Finally, Mahler and Pessar's model regards the role of individual characteristics including "initiative" (2001: 447) and "imagination" (ibid) in affecting a migrants' agency in negotiating these different gender regimes. That is, the ability of an individual to *imagine* themselves occupying a more satisfying social location along with the personal qualities required to help them access the agency to embody it. These anthropologists have viewed gender as a dynamic process (Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 30), "rather than as static structures or [biological sex] roles" (ibid). In their studies, gender has been employed as "an analytical tool equally relevant to our understanding of men's migration as it is to our understanding of women's migration" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994: 2-3) which describes relationships between individuals and wider structures "that organize immigration patterns" (ibid: 3). The following section will review more widely the different levels of analysis used to understand migration holistically.

This present study aims to consider whether, and how, contemporary Polish migration to south-wWest England can be said to be gendered, and it will make use of Mahler and Pessar's (2001; 2006) model in analysing the results between the current informants and across other ethnographies. In order to achieve this, despite only examining the lives of women migrants, the theoretical background of this study regards gender, identity construction and transnational relationships as ongoing processes.

Analytical Levels of Migration

This section of the review will show how anthropological studies have taken into consideration the significance of all levels of analysis – from the individual to the macro – to

work towards more typically holistic anthropological studies of migration. After all, "[e]xamining the dynamic relationships among systems, institutions, groups, and individuals has long been central to anthropology's holistic epistemology" (Pessar, 2003: 86). Such an approach has been inherent in anthropological studies in general since the beginnings of anthropology. For example, many facets of social life including the wider structures operating on its periphery were considered by Malinowski in the Trobriand Islands (Malinowski, 1984 [1922]). Anthropologists have represented these levels of analysis as being in dialectical relationships with each other (Kearney, 1986).

Despite the dominating view in anthropological studies of migration that decision-making is made at an individual level, or at most by families (Eriksen, 2003: 20), it has further been seen that "such decisions are clearly not made in a vacuum" (Brettell, 2003: 10). A grasp of the wider, macro structures has been considered essential in understanding the pressures affecting migration. The spread of the market economy along with uneven wages and rising prices can become significant factors, pushing individuals into making a decision to emigrate. While, other macro factors such as the expansion of the European Union and the United Kingdom's immigration policies have had an undeniable effect on huge numbers of Polish individuals who have migrated in this direction sine 2004. Furthermore, by taking into consideration the wider contexts of migration including historical, national, cultural and political, anthropologists have challenged these seemingly straightforward 'push and pull' factors. For example, Erdmans (1992) has described how international migration in Polish culture can be seen as "*a moral issue*" steeped in nationalist politics due to emigration previously being taboo under socialism (ibid: 1), where Golanska-Ryan (2006) has described the, emotional "strategies of resistance" (ibid: 159) utilised in the Polish Campaign against European Union membership. Such comparative anthropological analysis reminds scholars that "every person is a node in a web of contradictory relations and obligations" (Barth, 1997: 240). A strength of anthropology lies in "making the world a more complex place and revealing the nooks and crannies of a seemingly straightforward, linear historical change"

(Eriksen, 2003: 3), and so it has more recently been seen imperative that anthropologists become involved in interdisciplinary discussions about migration. Anthropologists have argued that studies of migration benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach (Brettell & Berjeois, 1992: 41-63) as, "no matter what the discipline, a shared set of questions relate to why people move, who moves, and what happens after they move" (Brettell, 2003: 1). What differs are the emphases and approaches (ibid) implying a need for the analytical perspectives of different disciplines from economics, to sociology and human geography, as well as community research, in order to gain a more complete picture of migration (Brettell & Berjeois, 1992: 41; Brettell, 2003: 4). As a result, anthropologists have become increasing involved in interdisciplinary volumes of edited research about migrations, enabling their contributions to remain concentrated at the level most suited to their methodology of detailed ethnography. As Eriksen sums up, "anthropology needed a better grasp of the large-scale processes in order to make sense of the small-scale ones" (15).

Anthropologists have examined migration on "meso" levels of analysis (Brettell, 2003: 6), for example by exploring the roles of kin networks and migrant groups in facilitating transnational migration. Some scholars have argued that this level has been the most important in anthropological perspectives of migration because this is the level of social relationships (ibid). Anthropological research has widely described the significance of social networks in the "perpetuation of migration streams once they have started" (ibid), as well as in helping migrants retain transnational connections with their home country. This is because social networks "lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration. Network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon" (Massey et al, 1993: 448). Furthermore, a focus on these social networks describes how individuals decide to migrate for other reasons than purely economic (Brettell, 2003: 6-7). Additionally, anthropologists have shown how social networks of immigrants have led to migrant communities within which shared national and cultural identities of their homelands are reproduced (Glick Schiller et al, 1995). However, other anthropologists have

demonstrated that the "ethnic community" (Brettell, 2003: 165) is not inevitable among immigrants and is again influenced by other levels of analysis (ibid). For example, Brettell (1982) has explained that, in Paris there is no "little Portugal" (4), instead due to strict immigration policies relating to urban planning in France, the migrants "interact individually, or at most as a family, with the city and with French society rather than through the buffer zone that an ethnic community might provide" (Brettell, 1982: 4).

An appreciation of multiple levels of analysis has reconfigured migrants as "social actors" (Brettell 03: 39), rather than passive individuals responding to economic imbalances.   A micro-level perspective has led to a focus on issues of the types and degrees of agency individuals can exert within larger given structures as well as how transnational identities are created through the migration process. In these studies, the individuality of experience has been emphasised by the dominant methodological approach in anthropological studies of migration being the examinations of "life histories" (Gmelch, 1992; Constable 1997). These studies have stated that they do not want to, and more to the point, do not believe it is possible to, describe a generic person representative of a wider culture, unlike in earlier life history methods of Native Americans (Brettell, 2003: 40). Instead, anthropologists have come to value multi-vocality. More recent, general anthropological research about individual agency has been synonymous with considerations about identities. For example, European ethnographies have demonstrated how individuals negotiate different identities within culturally prescribed gender contexts by using the symbolic tools of their social environment with which to position themselves against (Herzfeld, 1985; Kirtsoglou, 2004). In migration studies, anthropologists have contributed to this body of knowledge by examining a concept of, the "remaking of self" (Buijs, 1993: 2) that migrants do in new contexts, and more recently, the ways immigrants negotiate multiple transnational identities for themselves depending on the different contexts and their individual characteristics (Brettell, 2003: 90; Pessar, 2003: 89). However, additionally Foner (2003) has warned that these approaches will only be valuable, "as long as shared cultural symbols, meanings, and values are not

slighted in the quest to document multiple perspectives, resistance and struggle" (51). As such, this area of anthropological inquiry has reinvigorated the importance of culture as, "those symbolic constructs out of which identity and experience are forged" (Pessar, 2003: 89).

These analytical levels are multi-dimensional, affected by time as well as space. An understanding of the historical contexts of migration is essential. Contemporary young Polish women migrants have not come from the same context Bloch (1976) was examining in the 1970s. It cannot be understood from these earlier ethnographies that the women in this present study are coming from a context of reproductive labour alone and making similar decisions. Changing economic and political regimes have changed the conditions and experiences of the individual women. Anthropologists have argued for a "need to better historicize and contextualize our claims regarding continuities and change in pre and post migration gender ideologies and practices" (Pessar, 2003: 89). Of course, these levels affect every individual and every social relationship, but anthropologists have shown that "in the migratory context this negotiation seems more complex and intense, because it happens among more numerous negative and positive reference groups, significant Others and situational decisions Polish migrants have to make in their daily lives" (Garapich, 2008: 9). This study will examine the experiences of the participants by examining how they engage with micro, meso and macro contexts, as well as the dimension of time, to enact individual agency and negotiate transnational identities.

Emotions and Migration

As illustrated above, anthropological studies have described how the individual and the social are involved in "dialectically related processes" (Svasek, 2006: 7). A review of the literature about emotion is important in this study as, anthropologists have begun to understand emotions as, "forces that bridge 'the individual' and 'the social'" (ibid), and

people as, "positioned, socially embedded, thinking and feeling individuals" (ibid). As transnational migrants have been regarded by anthropologists as simultaneously being involved in social relationships in at least two different national contexts, then more recently scholars have presented the significance of emotions in the dynamics of migrant lives, whether explicitly or implicitly. Contributions are present from other disciplines. For example, historian Kathy Burrell (2006) has carried out life history research of three migrants, examining their, "emotional journey" (ibid: 26) complementary to their physical relocation. But anthropologists of emotions have cautioned that, "[c]alling something 'emotional' is not the same as critically exploring context… or as examining in more detail the emotional practices and embodied experiences in which migrants are engaged" (Svasek, 2008: 217). Marusa Svasek (ibid) has criticized the approach to emotions taken by Burrell by arguing for the importance of the researcher to be reflexive about how they perceive different emotions to avoid the "Reason/Passion opposition" (ibid) reemerging in contemporary ethnographies. In studies of migration this opposition has classically dichotomised "rational" and "emotional" motivations positioning them on etic rather than emic scales of significance (Lutz & White, 1986). An attitude of reflexivity in anthropological research has questioned the myth of rationality and of the unfeeling, objective researcher, which has meant that emotions have come to be taken seriously as significant in the social experience. There has been a trend of researchers expressing their own thoughts and feelings within ethnographic texts, including about their own experiences of migration (Gmelch, 1992; Svasek, 2008). This may be more pertinent in studies of migration as it has been noted that so many scholars of these issues are "insiders" (Gans, 2000: 82) to the degree that they are also migrants (ibid).

Reflexivity is reflected in more recent methodological approaches to understanding migration. In particular, the life history method encourages informants to describe their experiences and feelings about the migration process and their transnational lives. Anthropologists have recognised that, for the informants, migration is likely to be "the

paramount experience of their lives" (Gmelch, 1992: 312) and that it is the strong and varied emotions that are part of this process that "create vivid memories… more likely to be reliable than dim ones" (ibid), and so more likely to be recalled in the appropriate methodological conditions. Emotions in studies of migration have been demonstrated in the changing ways and means migrants communicate with their families in their sending country (Svasek, 2008: 213-224; Baldassar, 2010: 1-15). Other contributions to this growing body of literature assess the complex and varied emotional responses to macro processes (Golanska-Ryan, 2006: 174), as well as within them, and how "emotions are inherent in political dynamics" (Svasek, 2006: 1). It has been made evident that this pervasion of emotions extends to all aspects of the research process and in the relationships anthropologists form with informants. In the reflexive accounts of anthropologists employing the life history approach it can be further inferred that researchers are drawn to the narratives of their most expressive informants (Gmelch, 1992). Anthropologists have considered that empathy comes from an "*interpretation* of other people's narratives" (Svasek, 2008: 215), and so caution must be heeded that alternative experiences, and individuals who are less expressive, are not ignored. However, emotions are also suggestive in people's "body language" (ibid) which presents a further opportunity to anthropological researchers, though one which needs to be treated just as carefully with consideration of context and reflexivity.

Svasek (2008) has offered a definition of emotions as, the "processes in which individuals experience, shape and interpret the world around them, anticipate future action and shape their subjectivities" (218). Such dynamics have been described as being embedded in "notions of morality" (ibid), as the concept of emotions has been understood as originating from the point in a child's social development when they are taught to control how they express their feelings (ibid). The significant effect of cultural context on this process has been emphasized (Lutz & White, 1986: 417-8). Further, and importantly for the issues in this study, moral codes about emotions have been found to be gendered (Baldassar, 2010: 14). As has already been seen in this review, the literature has described feminism in Poland as

political (Graff, 2007), and political dynamics as always emotional (Svasek, 2006: 1). This present study investigates how emotions are affected by this transnational movement from one moral context to another, and specifically between moralistic notions of gender. Further, this study will assess emotions as motivators and as "driving forces" (Brettell, 2008: 219) in the life changing experiences abound in transnational migration.

This chapter has reviewed some of the anthropological literature about migration by showing how academics have come to view the phenomena as transnational, gendered, in dialectical relationships with multiple analytical levels and driven by emotional dynamics. Since the reflexive turn in the discipline, anthropologists have come to view social life as contextual and processual. An understanding of these issues is important for the scope of this present study. Empathetic and comparative analyses of the life histories of transnational migrants may reveal the varied tools individuals utilise to empower themselves, which may inform social policy and procedure to create more optimal conditions for other individuals to exert agency over their lives.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The primary data collected for this study are life histories of nine Polish migrant women living in south-west England. The data were gathered from August 2012 to January 2013. Anthropologist proponents of the life history method have argued that migration is not easily observable (Gmelch :321; Brettell, 1995 [1985]: 2-3) so "It makes sense… to rely on the migrant's own detailed accounts of their decision making and behavior" (Gmelch: 321). What can be observed are the transnational spaces in which social relationships take place between the migrants and other parties. So it is these intersections of migrants' networks which I identified to carry out participant observation. The limitations of the methodology are discussed throughout the chapter.

Rationale

The aim of this study is to understand the experiences, emotions and decision-making processes of individual Polish migrant women with a view to assessing the dynamics of individual agency and empowerment in response to larger macro economic conditions. The life history approach aims to understand individual experiences. This approach to understanding migration refocuses the research object towards people (Eriksen, 2003: 4). After all, despite the large numbers involved, "it is ultimately individuals, or at most families who migrate; not cultures, societies or even social groups" (Brettell, 1995 [1985]: 2). Life histories provide an insight into the subjectivity of experience. By striving to understand the decision making processes and agency of individuals, in response to changing social, political and economic contexts, the dynamics of a "dialogue between [these levels]" (Brettell, 1995: xiv) may be analysed. Studying individuals in this way enables us to see the multiplicity of experience as they negotiate their own ways through the various constraints

and opportunities in the changing context of their lives, in terms of migration (Svasek 2008: 224).

An individual's life history "reveals the subjective world of attitudes, ideas and emotions" (Gmelch, 1992: 323). This is an important theoretical consideration of this study as emotions are considered intrinsic in the experience of power and powerlessness, motivations, decision-making and action. Moreover, the life histories view the migrant women, "not as isolated respondents reacting to emotional triggers, not as collectivities fully determined by shared norms of emotional behaviour, but as positioned, socially embedded, thinking and feeling individuals" (2006: 7). Their emotions will affect and be affected by their life histories and the way they negotiate in wider, fluid contexts. An understanding of the individual's emotions in their own narratives will help us to assess migration as empowering or disempowering. However, the availability of emotional data is more complex and requires closer attention to the dynamics of research, as shall be explained later in this chapter.

The life history method was further chosen due to methodological issues relating to the constraints of the geography in which this research was conducted. It is not the breadth of the study location which presented this challenge, rather it is the fact that Polish migrants are scattered across it in individuals. The participants have commitments which are at the core of their migration dynamics. Many go to work for more than 40 hours each week, others have families, and children to take to school. Traditional anthropological methodologies of living with participants and observing every facet of their life is just not possible in the study of contemporary economic migrants. In light of this, this current study, as is the trend of anthropological studies of migration more generally, are becoming increasingly reliant on interviews with individuals not only on their own merit but also as a way in to the migrant community. South-west England is a broadly rural peninsula peppered with market towns and fewer more greatly populated towns or cities. At first, I had intended to carry out the research in a more localised enclave such as a single small town but in these areas, there

was no 'little Poland' (Brettell, 1985: 4), only individuals or small groups and businesses from which I had to rely on willing participants. Approaching potential volunteers in this way did not prove successful as will be discussed later in the section about gatekeepers. The individuals were busy and more or less integrated into their new social environment, and "the differences among them must be traced with reference to individual migration strategies and unique processes of social adjustment or adaption" (ibid.), ideally achieved through life history narratives.

A benefit of the life history approach is its narrative, personal quality and, as Brettell has suggested, it presents "the humanistic side of anthropology" (Brettell, 1982: 2). In this dissertation I have used an ethnographic approach akin to Constable's (1997) in that I have written into the analysis and discussion illustrative quotes from the participants. This decision was largely due to the limited space in the dissertation. Each participant presented a very different story with different experiences and different feelings, although, as Gmelch (1992: 261) found in his similarly small study of 13 individuals, "threads do run through their accounts that we can pull together" (ibid). Thus, these threads have informed the Findings, Analysis and Discussion chapter.

Women Only

Early on, the theoretical and methodological decision was taken to research the specific experiences of female migrants. This decision was borne out of my social position as a domestic abuse worker in the local area who had met female Polish clients who had made great changes to their lives through their migration process and their engagement with wider socio-political processes. Theoretically, I began to wonder how life for women changes as they move from one national context to another and what opportunities and constraints this presents them in terms of power and agency. Additionally, I had begun to make

observations of local agencies which were tailoring their services to the needs of female migrants and began to notice ways that migration may be gendered in this context.

Methodologically, the decision to interview women only was made because I felt I would be able to gain better access to the emotions of female rather than male participants. Oakley (1981) has stated that a "feminist interviewing women is by definition both 'inside' the culture and participating in that which she is observing" (57) and this is representative of feminist standpoint theory as described in the Review chapter. Although I would be more cautious than to make such a presumption (Davies, 2008: 111), particularly in light of the constructive criticisms made of Western feminism being ethnocentric, I did find that women interviewing women may be considered to be beginning their relationship on some fertile common ground. To give some brief examples, some of the participants wanted to know if I had any plans to have children; we empathised with each other about the idea of choosing between child rearing and having a satisfying career; and there were occasions when we would wryly laugh about the differences in contraception administration between our nations. These moments of shared understanding helped to create the "rapport" necessary for the participants to disclose their feelings and emotions. However, this was a tentative process which required me to "listen" to more than the participants' words but to other communicative clues – something which it has been argued women do every day in personal interactions (De Vault, 1990: 96-116), and which I practice daily in my professional role. That is, at trying carefully to manufacture a comfortable environment using my body, facial expressions and tone of voice responsively and paying attention to "beyond simply what is said" (Davies, 2008: 106).

I had concerns about how potential participants, the participant's partners and the gatekeepers might respond to a study specifically about women migrants. Some women asked why I was only studying women but seemed happy with my explanation and continued to volunteer as participants. Most of the participants were very understanding of

why I might be interested in a female perspective and were very supportive and interested in this approach. At points during the research process, I encountered Polish men and felt concerned that they would think me rude or meddling by only seeking to interview women. During participant observation in the ESOL class, I met a Polish man called Feliks. The two Polish women who had volunteered to take part in interviews with me teased Tom about the fact that he was not going to be involved. I felt guilty about this but he laughed it off and I had an opportunity to restore rapport with him by working together on exercises during the lesson and by being as approachable and friendly as possible. However, when I asked if his girlfriend (not present in these classes) might be interested in taking part he dismissed the idea saying that he didn't think her English would be good enough. The second time something like this happened was when Celina invited me to her house for Polish tea and so that I could interview her. Her husband, Aleksy was at home and remained in the room for the entire two hours of my visit, chatting away about Poland, answering my questions and asking questions of me while Celina was running about the house preparing the food and looking after the children, refusing my assistance when I offered it. I am not sure if this was due to a misunderstanding Celina, Aleksy or both had about my research or not. If it wasn't due to a misunderstanding that I had intended to interview Celina than this might be said to have been an insight into the gendered division of labour in their household. I was too afraid to reiterate my research aim to either of them for fear of creating tension or of appearing ungrateful.

I have considered that the decision to interview women only may have discouraged some women from volunteering. They may have suspected a feminist agenda which they were not comfortable with. The ESOL tutor warned me that some of her student's husbands were "proprietary" and that they may need to ask their husband's permission to take part. Coming from the professional background that I do, this was of great concern to me. I was very anxious of creating tension between partners and I did not push people to take part when they seemed unsure.

'Breaking the Ice' - an Introduction to the Participants

The first task was to 'break the ice', or, access a network of potential participants. I could hear what sounded like East European languages being spoken in the streets but I did not want to assume the speakers were Polish, or to approach people cold in this way. As a local Polish Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) warned me, "there are loads of Polish everywhere but it's hard to find them amongst the woodworks".

I began by carrying out community research using local media and Internet searches to identify "gatekeepers" (Davies, 2008: 54). The term "gatekeeper" in this study refers to individuals, from any nationality or background, in contact with Polish migrant women, or as in Davies' (ibid) definition, "control access to research sites or information" (ibid).   Whereas I was reluctant to persist in encouraging unwilling individuals to participate, some persistence was required with some of the gatekeepers, some of which seemed either overprotective or apathetic about passing on the information. Other gatekeepers expressed great enthusiasm about the study imparting often valuable information or 'signposting' me towards others, while encouraging me to pass on their name to increase my credibility.

I contacted tutors of ESOL courses at local colleges and community centres, sending them information about my research and asking them to either pass this on to their female Polish students or if they would allow me to, to visit a class to present the information myself. One gatekeeper passed on my details to her students of which one, Irena, contacted me by phone to volunteer. Another gatekeeper seemed more protective of her students and furnished me with reasons why her students would be unlikely to be interested – they work long hours, their husbands would be suspicious – but she promised she would at least ask them. Two of her students were interested so the tutor invited me to a lesson to meet them. From this meeting, the two volunteers, Sara and Julita, and I arranged an interview to take

place on a different evening in a local pub. I continued to attend lessons as a way of showing my commitment, continuing to build rapport and friendships and because I found the ad hoc conversations useful in my analysis. Julita later volunteered to help me design and translate the information sheets and posters advertising the study. This was in return for my assistance with preparing her curriculum vitae.

I contacted local Polish Saturday Schools by email and letters. I did not receive any reply. From networking with other gatekeepers I was able to discover more detailed contact information including names and phone numbers. Eventually I was able to speak with one of the teachers at a particular Polish Saturday School who invited me to come along. I did not have an opportunity to talk with this woman in any great detail about her experiences as she was busy at the school and with her young baby. However, she was an extremely helpful gatekeeper as she organised time for me to meet Zofia and Adrianna at the school who both volunteered to share their life histories with me. Additionally I was able to meet some of the children and to observe the lessons.

In some cases, 'breaking the ice' was facilitated by my various "social locations" (Pessar and Mahler, 2006: 44). I am an ex-employee of a police force in the region which I disclosed when networking with useful constabulary employees such as the PCSOs. This set common ground on which to begin a research relationship as they were aware of my previous role and my consequent appreciation of the limitations of their roles and the importance of confidentiality, as well as there being other topics to discuss which did indeed serve as 'ice-breakers'. From Internet research of local newspapers I identified a Polish PCSO called Nadzieja. I was able to research her police email address and sent her information about my research asking if she would be interested in taking part. Nadzieja replied very quickly and was very keen to take part. She invited me to a Polish Consulate advisory event, which I attended, and took part in an interview before furnishing me with contact details of other Polish women who may be interested in taking part.

Another of my "social locations" as a current employee of a local domestic abuse charity certainly facilitated my privileged access to Justyna and her life history. Justyna was referred to me by the local police in my professional capacity and it was my work with her which inspired the topic of this study. I carried out one-to-one confidential meetings with Justyna in my outreach role before beginning this academic research. Her case with our charity had been closed before I approached her and asked if I could use her life history as part of this study. I had asked my colleagues to pass on information about the study to their closed-case Polish clients but nobody else volunteered. I imagine that some of these women will have been too nervous about taking part for a variety of reasons and are likely to have been busy with making arrangements for themselves and their children in relation to the circumstances for which they were being supported. For these reasons I was highly cautious about encouraging these women to take part.

This professional role also meant that I had pre-existing working relationships with some of the local children's centres – particularly the one in which I attended the bilingual parent and child play-group. This meant that the children's centre staff that ran the group were more than happy for me to attend and treated me like a volunteer worker there which enabled me to blend in very well. It also increased my confidence as I knew the centre very well and could properly assist the attendees and their children. The group contained parents with a range of different nationalities. I met four Polish families at the group whereas none of the other parents shared nationality. Immediately, I was approached by a woman called Celina. Celina was very interested in my research and was very enthusiastic about being asked to share her experiences and observations with me. Celina introduced me to the other Polish women there informing them in Polish of my purpose. Celina's introduction may have increased the women's confidence in talking with me creating a "snowball sample" (Higgins, 2004: 706) as Yetta subsequently volunteered to impart her life history.

The methods described above proved fruitful because they 'broke the ice' through physical and meaningful introductions either by myself or through a gatekeeper. Conversely, a wholly unsuccessful method used was that of displaying posters in places where Polish migrants may congregate – such as on notice-boards in Polish grocery shops, in the Catholic churches and in community centres. I received no response from this methods, likely due to the personal distance, between myself and these potential participants, which I had taken such measures to shorten through the more successful methods described above.

Sample

The sample for this study was Polish migrant women currently living in south-west England. The sampling process was not intended to locate a group any more homogenous that stated by these criteria. There was no desired age-group, occupation or duration of stay. Despite this, it happened that the nine women who participated were all off a similar age, that being mid-twenties to mid-thirties. In hindsight the research methods may have been biased towards this age-group in that I targetted places mainly designed for young families and children where it is more likely that women of child-bearing age will be. An additional description of the final sample is that none of the women have lived in the UK for more than 10 years with only one having migrated prior to Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. Again, this could be a factor relating to their age as they all migrated soon after finishing their education or at least while they were in their early-twenties. Another area I targeted for recruitment of volunteers was in ESOL classes where more recent migrants may be more likely to be found. The women were all highly educated with most having obtained a university degree including some with post-graduate degrees. All of the women were legally living in the UK and had taken part in wage labour at some point during their stay.

As a necessary requirement based on the theoretical, methodological and ethical underpinnings of this study, all of the participants had volunteered to take part. Despite the

wide community research and networking carried out for this study, only nine women volunteered and invested their time and effort into sharing their life history. This relatively small sample may not be considered a limiting factor as the aim of this study is not to draw conclusions about a generic Polish migrant woman. Rather, the study aims to understand the experiences of different individuals. The participants had all given their informed consent and have been assigned pseudonyms to protect their privacy and create an atmosphere where they might be more likely to share personal feelings and experiences. Likewise, the specific towns and places where the research was carried out are anonymous in the dissertation (Brettell 1995: 13). The participants were made aware of the limitations of these measures in guaranteeing anonymity (Davies, 2008: 60). These ethical considerations were made in line with the Association of Social Anthropologists guidelines (1999).

Perhaps because the demographic of the participants, that is educated and working women in their late-twenties to early-thirties, was so similar to my own, and due to the close, personal, reciprocal attitude I took to the research methodology (Oakley, 1981: 47), I felt myself becoming friends with most of my informants (Brettell, 1995 [1982]: 2). Evidence of this was in the laughter we shared, the unspoken gestures of smiles and knowing looks, the nods in agreement with each other. There was a positive correlation between the more evidence I found of friendship forming between myself and the participants, and the belief I had that I was gathering the data I had set out to find – that is, the real experiences, personal feelings and emotions of the Polish migrant women (Davies, 2008: 91).

Procedure

Interviewing

An intention of the study was to make participation as easy and trouble-free for the volunteers as possible. I did not want them to incur any financial costs or to take up any

more of their time than was necessary. Therefore, I travelled to meet the participants in locations of their choosing. If this was in a café or bar then I bought them their drink. All visits to participants' homes happened to take place during Christmas time and home-made mince-pies became the gift I used to express my appreciation to them, and also to set an atmosphere of a two-way cultural exchange as I was demonstrating some English food as they were sharing information with me about their cultural background. I intended for each interview to take no longer than one hour, even when the participant themselves expressed enthusiasm to continue beyond this agreed time limit. In practice this did not always happen as it was difficult to keep an eye on the time without appearing disinterested and because it was hard to resist the temptation to hear more from the participant when they were insisting they would like to continue.

I was the sole interviewer and the majority of the interviews were carried out with one participant at a time. I did state that the interviews could be carried out one-to-one or alternatively in focus-groups depending upon the preference of the volunteers. The fact that the interviews tended to be carried out one-to-one was a result of the fact that most of the volunteers did not know each other. Otherwise, one-to-one interviews allowed the participants to talk in confidence with me about their experiences. The only other format of interview was the first interview I carried out with Monika and Julita who were friends from their ESOL classes and who were both independently invited to take part but at the same time. They offered to be interviewed jointly and this process was very successful as they seemed to encourage each other to share information with me by asking questions of each other and helping each other with Polish-English translations of words they wanted to use. Where possible, multiple interviews with participants were carried out in order to gain more insightful information as our relationship developed.

The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone-style device, following the participants' consent. Transcripts of the interviews were then typed up verbatim. This proved a very

effective recording tool (Holstein & Gubruim, 1995: 78). It meant that I did not have to sit and write notes during the interview which might have been disruptive to the participant's story-telling and distracting for the both of us. It meant that we could disguise the recorder under a menu or serviette during interviews in public places so as to avoid drawing attention to ourselves and also to reduce the formality of the procedure. This recording technique was optimal for gathering the participants' life histories in their own words. All of the participants of this study speak Polish as their first language. All of the interviews were conducted in English. I made an effort to learn some basic Polish in order to demonstrate respect for the participants. The participants seemed to possess excellent command of the English language but, it must be accepted that "some levels of meaning are going to be lost in translation" (Davies, 2008: 124).

The interviews were semi-structured in that, prior to the data-gathering, I had identified information that I was keen to find out from each participant, as well as ways of phrasing questions relating to these points. I knew that ensuring I had some similarly themed information from each participant would facilitate the analysis phase of the study. Being only semi-structured, the interview was free to flex beyond my expectations (Davies, 2008: 106). The data-gathering could also be referred to as "ethnographic interviewing" (ibid) as the interviews were "[combined] with participant observation and thus [the] relationship with [the] interviewees [went] beyond the particular interview" (ibid).

Participant Observation

In addition to the semi-structured interviews which were "set off in time and space" (Davies, 2008: 106) from normal interaction, I carried out "unstructured interviews" (ibid: 105) in the form of conversations with the participants during participant observation in a Polish Saturday School, ESOL classes, a bilingual parent and child play-group, a Catholic Mass and a Polish Consulate advisory event. Additionally I was interested in working towards

multi-levelled single-site fieldwork, that is, "studying the same setting from the perspective of different social groups participating in it..." (Eriksen, 2003: 15). This was a result of the unrequested comments I received from host society members and observations of local services for Polish migrants. As a result, I recorded observations from some of these other actors in order to gain a wider perspective of the cultural context and perceptive environment in which the participants live.

Chapter 4

Findings, Analysis & Discussion

This chapter will analyse and discuss the findings of the study. It is organised into two parts. The first part of this chapter will discuss the findings in terms of how the participants have "settled in" to the area, from their motivations for migrating, to the contexts of their new environment, to how they make their living and occupy their time. The second part of this chapter uses Mahler and Pessar's (2001; 2006) model of "Gendered Geographies of Power" with which to analyse the dynamics of emotion, identity and change in the life histories of the participants. All of the participants of this study have exceeded the duration of time they intended to stay in the UK. In this second part, the analysis will discuss the different effects each social scale has had on changing individual lives, while considering the subsequent potential for change on wider levels too.

Part 1: Settling In

Motivations for Migrating

Part of the intention of this study was to complicate the category of economic migration. The methodological approach taken has illuminated other reasons why the participants were motivated to migrate. While all of the participants of this study gave economic explanations for their decision to migrate, these were more complicated that a simplistic model of wage-work and accumulation of wealth. Many of the women said that they were motivated to migrate to the UK to improve their English language skills in order to then obtain a better paying job back in Poland. Zofia said that she intended to migrate with her family to earn more money only because the UK's National Health Service provided a drug she wanted to buy to help her chronic illness. Yetta decided to come to the UK with her husband with the intention of starting a family and having a more independent lifestyle from their parents as,

had she remained in Poland, she and her husband, despite both working full-time, would not have been able to afford to live on their own. Yetta further explained that if they had had children in Poland, financially, she would have been forced to return to work when they were newly born leaving her parents to look after them. The economic benefits that motivated Yetta to migrate were from an increase in wages but also an increase in child welfare benefits from the UK government, as well as more affordable child-care for when she did return to work. All of the women commented that they felt migrating to the UK was the only alternative to living with their parents or partner's parents. While some of the women were good-humoured about the less than ideal option of returning to live with their parents, others were more serious about the negative implications of this and suggested that it remained a motivator for being successful at their migration, either by accumulating enough money to return to better more independent circumstances in Poland, or by remaining away and earning a higher wage.

Four of the participants said that they came to join their boyfriend or husband who had gone ahead in search of work and money, and who had subsequently succeeded in encouraging them to follow. Monika and Nadzieja both had had satisfying jobs in Poland and happy relationships with their family, both of which they had been reluctant to leave behind. However, as they missed their partners' at the same time as receiving phone calls and emails from them expressing their enthusiasm about the prospect of wealth in the UK, they were motivated to migrate. Julita's story was very similar except that she had two pre-school children to take care of so she waited to follow until her husband had found suitable accommodation for the family. At first glance, these women might fit into the box of women following men but they clearly were not passive in this process, they were active decision-makers with migration strategies which would be hidden from quantitative analysis.

Seven of the participants said they came to the UK planning to stay for three months. Interestingly, this ties in with recent interdisciplinary research about Polish migration to the

UK, which, by analysing survey research from various sources found that in their sample, "around 15% reported that they intended to stay in the UK for *more* than three months" (Drinkwater et al, 2010: 78 [emphasis mine]). The participants of this present study tended to account for this initial time limit by saying that they had previously felt it would give them enough time to see if they "could find a job" or "improve their English" and "earn some money". Three months seems an extremely short amount of time in which to achieve all this. The strong emotions many of the participants described about leaving their homeland, saying farewell to their family and ending their satisfying, though underpaid jobs, may have necessitated this "myth of return" (Garapich, 2008: 6). On an individual level, saying goodbye to all these things for three months can be seen as a strategy for preventing "feelings of longing" and "homesickness" (Svasek, 2008: 220). Some of the participants described how they continue to keep short-time limits on their stay which are constantly exceeded. For example, Irena explained how much she misses her family and longs for her twice yearly return trips home. She smiled ironically when she said that she tells herself, "I stay here from holiday to holiday", despite having already lived in the UK for eight years. On a wider scale, scholars have described the romantic notion of a "mythical" (Garapich, 2008: 6) return migration in Polish national culture, depicted in the national anthem (ibid). There is insufficient data about this from the participant's life histories to draw inference on how far this scale has pervaded their 'decision' to stay for much shorter periods than they actually do.

Environment as Context

The use of the word "environment" in place of the category, "city", which has been used by previous anthropologists (Hannerz, 1980; Brettell, 2003: 166) is important in communicating that the participants in this study do not live in cities, rather they reside in small towns with average population sizes of between 6,000 and 18,000. South-west England is largely a rural, farming region with villages and small towns, as well as some larger towns and two

cities. There is a lack of literature about transnational migration to rural areas yet this is a feature of Polish migration to south-west England. Community research has described isolated immigrants working on Cornish farms (Nicholson & Stennett, 2010: 1-140). Due to this "remote scattering" (ibid: 22) of immigrant workers in Cornwall, the authors of that report were unable to interview them in a focus-group for the research (about underemployment of migrant workers in the South West) and so these immigrants' views went unheard (ibid). Such research challenges may also contribute to this aforementioned gap in the academic literature. The participants in this present study were less physically isolated in their work and home than the Cornish farm-workers, as their homes and work were located in, albeit small, towns. However, as other researchers in the area have found, "there is a paucity of places in the south-west England where migrant workers meet" (Nicholson & Stennett, 2010: 40). There is no "ethnic community" (Brettell, 2003: 104) of Polish immigrants which was something the participants tended to talk about positively. Zofia and Celina both compared life as a Polish immigrant in Devon to the experiences of their Polish friends in London and other large cities outside of the region. Zofia boasted that, "I have no Polish neighbours so we get to know the English people who live here". Celina commented, "In the cities it is like a ghetto but living in this area you have to mix and you get better at English because of that". It may be the relative isolation of these participants compared to those living in cities that has facilitated many of them to integrate into the host society in some of the ways discussed later.

Temporal factors relating to the environment as context for immigration were also evident. The context of the environment is in flux and has changed in a short space of time. When I began researching for this study, I believed I was discovering a particular Devon town to have a thriving Polish community. Initial Internet research rapidly revealed tourist information leaflets of the town translated into Polish, the town's very own 'Anglo-Polish organisation' and a thriving Polish Saturday School frequently receiving the attention of the local television and press. Disappointment began to set in as each 'lead' I followed revealed

the information to be contained in out-of-date websites representing a picture of the migrant community as it was 3 or 4 years ago. Gatekeepers and participants explained that, since the economic recession, the number of migrants has dwindled and many of these services have had to close. I visited the Polish grocery shop which had been relocated from a location on the 'high street', to a less visible side-street. The 'Anglo Polish organisation' had ceased to provide its once diverse range of services and support to new migrants. For example, this voluntary organisation used to offer welfare benefits advice, assistance with writing CVs and support with employment tribunals. In 2011, the decrease in new migrants, including a loss of some of its volunteers as they returned to Poland or moved on to larger UK towns, meant that the organisation continued to work only on its Polish Saturday School. The Saturday School itself is also a much smaller, less prominent organisation than it once was, with far fewer children now attending. I visited the employment agency in the town and spoke to a British woman there who informed me that there are not so many Poles here anymore as many had lost their jobs in the recession and either returned home or moved to larger settlements in the area.

Some of the participants described they have had to travel up to 35 miles to Exeter or Taunton to go to ESOL classes, which has been difficult to fit in around work and overtime, particularly during the first few years, when all of them had to rely on rural public transport rather than having their own vehicles. Polish language Mass is only held in Catholic churches in the much larger settlements and some of the women express regret that this means they are unable to attend as often as they would like. Despite this relative scattering of immigrants into individuals and families, there are two distinct kinds of intersections where migrants do meet. The first is kin networks. Apart from Adrianna who arrived in the area as she was posted here as an au pair, all of the participants described their migration as being facilitated by kin already in the region, firstly by helping them to "settle in", and secondly as people with which to share social activities with, staving off feelings of isolation and homesickness. As sociologists White and Ryan (2008) have observed, these networks

mean that contemporary Polish migration to the UK can be "quickly endeavoured, but also quickly over in case of failure" (1486). Additionally, "[s]ocial networks, both transnational and British-based, make migration easier to bear emotionally, and therefore easier to extend indefinitely" (White & Ryan, 2008: 1499). For example, when Julita's husband was made redundant, she describes how a friend of theirs from Poland who was living nearby assisted them financially and gave them the encouragement she felt they needed to continue with their migration strategy. Additionally, Julita and her husband have shared their home with her husband's brother for over a year while he has taken time to save money for a deposit to rent a home of his own.

The second type of intersection where migrants meet is in the form of migrant organisations and it is these places which enabled me to physically engage with potential participants during this study, as well as to take part in participant observation. These migrant organisations and groups include those created and maintained by migrants themselves, as well as those provided as part of the social-political environment of the host community. As already mentioned, many of these organisations have closed in recent years. What has tended to remain are Polish Saturday Schools, which are registered with the Polish Education Society and typically run by Polish migrant volunteers. Two of the participants of this study were volunteer teachers at the Saturday School I visited. One of the reasons Zofia decided to settle in the town she and her family did was because of the reputation of the Polish Saturday School there. Colson (1987) has similarly described the process by which "voluntary migrants... create new motivations that link them to fellow immigrants and celebrate the key symbols of their homeland" (10). Such motivations have become significant in the migration strategies of new families, like Zofia's. These migrant groups assisting new migrants are not always grounded in place and physical contact. "Imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983) are reinforced on the Internet through social networking websites and Internet forums. Cheap telephone tariffs and email are made use of by all the participants I interviewed in order for them to keep in touch with family and friends in Poland.

Many of the participants told me that their telephone contracts allow them to speak to people in Poland for up to 59 minutes before incurring a charge and that they made use of this facility most evenings. Furthermore, the participants in this study described how they time their visits to Poland during points in the year when the air-travel companies reduce their fares the most. This context has enabled the participants to maintain relationships in both the UK and Poland.

The social-political environment of south-west England offers services directly for Polish and other immigrants. The services include those offered by statutory organisations such as the Police, local councils and education services. The local police forces appear to have taken on a prominent role in aiming to integrate migrants into the wider community. In particular, I liaised with gatekeepers who worked as PCSOs – unsworn police workers whose job it is to improve relations between communities and the police. West Cornwall is the only place in the country where PCSOs are employed exclusively to support migrant workers and to educate concerned local people about the new immigrants living in their area. A British PCSO working in this role explained how she "educated" the local community by comparing the circumstances of the Polish migrant workers to Cornish tin-mining emigrants to America at the turn of the last century. Local council websites have links to information translated into Polish. Zofia said, "I think it is brilliant the effort that the local council here put into migrants". Some of the participants had come into contact with local voluntary agencies. For example, after Justyna reported to the police an assault on her by her ex-partner, she was referred to the local domestic abuse charity. Moreover, as Justyna was not working at the time of the domestic violence incidents which she reported, due to being at home taking care of her young baby, she was entitled to free legal advice which enabled her to become informed about her rights and to have solicitor's letters sent to her ex-partner about child contact arrangements so that she could feel free of his direct harassment.

The positive attitude suggested by the local gatekeepers and breadth of statutory services was not reflected in the responses I received from other people in the local area who I came into contact with during this research. There was an observable juxtaposition, and this was noted by some of the Polish gatekeepers such as a male Polish PCSO and a female Polish university tutor. This juxtaposition is further observable in national political discourse and media. Opinion was divided among the British individuals I liaised with during this study. Negative opinions about Polish women migrants and the endeavour of seeking to hear their stories largely came from those who had had no meaningful contact with them, whereas very positive comments were heard from most of the individual gatekeepers who were employed to assist them.

Education services for migrants can be split into two types to aid analysis. There are those education structures focused on services for children, and those for adults, particularly offering ESOL lessons. Some of the local schools have taken on the role of introducing Polish parents to other Polish parents. Celina's local school had informed her that there were four other Polish families in the town and encouraged them to meet up, Celina told me she had no desire to become friends with them because she felt that they didn't have anything else in common with each other. None of the women in this study seemed enthusiastic about being matched with other Polish people, often for similar reasons to Celina, and also due to the lack of free-time they had to socialise. Zofia and the other women running the Polish Saturday School liaised with the local schools in order to form and maintain their collective. Most Polish Saturday Schools in the region are held in Catholic primary schools as practicing Catholicism is integral to the structure of the Saturday School and so participants explained there is common-ground on which to build such a working relationship. However, the Polish Saturday School that I visited had moved from the Catholic school to a Church of England primary school in the same town. Sywia explained that this was because the head-teacher of the Catholic school was very unhelpful and so she decided to look elsewhere and the head-teacher of the Church of England school has been

very accommodating. This demonstrates the different impacts different individuals can have on the wider socio-political geography of the receiving environment.

Children's centres which exist to assist parents of children aged under five years in the area have also taken a role in integrating migrants into local services. The outreach services they run have targeted new, migrant parents of all nationalities. The participants in this study who have had babies while living in this country all describe how they stayed at home with their children during this period while their partners continued to work. This practice was facilitated by the state welfare benefit payments the women were entitled to – a feature of the national socio-political environment as experienced by individuals. During this time, the women were encouraged by the children's centres to integrate by attending general groups for mothers and babies or young children. Additionally, many of the children's centres in the region run groups specifically for migrant families from any nationality. I attended a bilingual children and parents' play-group during participant observation, which was held late in the afternoons. Celina's husband was the only male parent who attended and this was because it coincided with the time he finished work in the same town. The group was run by a male member of staff and the centre was intended for mothers and fathers to join but it was gendered due to larger socio-political factors relating to the time of day it was held. That is, during a time when most of the participant's partners had not finished work. The women were able to attend this group and to have greater face-to-face contact with the schools as they had already adjusted their outside work around the children's school times and so tended to be available at this time of day.   As in the findings of Jones-Correa (1998) about immigrants to the US, "[t]hrough their children, women come into a much broader contact with a range of public institutions than do men" (327). Moreover, ESOL classes for adults are run across the region by a variety of local organisations including adult education services in colleges, children's centres and by migrant organisations making use of public buildings. All of the participants of this study had attended an ESOL class at some stage since migrating to the region.

Work and Wages

Whereas much of the earlier anthropological studies of women and migration described migrant women as coming from a context of not participating in work outside of the private sphere in the sending country, to then joining the waged work force in the receiving country and gaining financial independence for the first time (eg Bloch, 1976 etc), this was not the case for the participants of this study. More akin to the descriptions of the men in these earlier studies (Jones-Carrea, 1998: 327), the women in this study had left behind higher status jobs in Poland having just started out on their careers.

All of the participants in this study have been highly educated in Poland and all left behind satisfying, higher status jobs. Most of the women have university degrees, including post-graduate degrees. However, all the participants in this study began their employment in England working for the national minimum wage. As is widely purported to be the case across the world, the immigrants in this study began jobs which were "the dirtiest, most boring and worst paying" (Gmelch, 1992: 267). Irena started work in a geriatric care home when she arrived eight years ago, and she had continued to work in the same place doing much the same job at the time of this study. Nadzieja worked as a cleaner during her first five years in the UK, before becoming a PSCO aided by skills she had gained doing voluntary work alongside her full-time job. Justyna worked in a local factory until she had her baby, and plans to return to factory work as soon as she can. Sara has worked in the same factory since she arrived five years ago. At the start of this study, Julita had just begun to look for work at the local factories. Following encouragement from Sara and assistance with her CV from me, Julita had considered applying for something related to her degree and work experience in Poland. However, Julita did not feel she had the confidence to promote herself and by the end of the data collection period of this study, she had accepted a meat-packing job which had come up at the factory. Adrianna is the only

participant of this study who had migrated to the UK prior to Poland's accession to the European Union. Adrianna arrived in the region at an au pair placement in 2003 but since then has given up this job to care for her own young children. All of the participants of this study were in current paid employment, apart from Adrianna who was out of work having just given birth to her youngest child.

Adrianna expressed the most frustration and despondency about her position. Adrianna was desperate to find a job. She had been in the UK for ten years having worked as an au pair for much of that, honed her English language skills and participated in a lot of voluntary work. She said, "I need money but I want a better job than a factory job". Adrianna explained that she feels every job on offer in the UK requires a different specific qualification which she does not have. She has considered becoming a translator but believes that market to be saturated now. Adrianna feels hopeless and doesn't know what to do. She would like to return to Poland but feels there is no better chance of getting a good job there either stating, "in Poland you are nothing without a masters degree. I don't have on, so I don't even compare with my brothers, who do, and so I can't work there". Most of the participants said they are just happy to be earning a decent wage. Irena simply said, "maybe I am not really happy doing what I am doing now but the money's good" and this attitude reflected that of most of the other participants who described themselves as doing jobs for which they felt over-qualified. This attitude has also been described by anthropologists researching other migrant workers (Gmelch, 1992: 268).

Although the women had already been working for a wage before they migrated, for the first time, they were now earning enough money to have financial independence. For all of these participants, that meant living apart from their parents. As anthropologists have pointed out, emigration provides "freedom from parental control" (Pessar, 2003: 93). To begin with, some of the participants lived with members of their kin network already in the UK, but only for the first few months until they found somewhere to rent alone or with their partner and

children. The participants described that people at home have particular assumptions about the life they are living in the UK with regards to money. Celina does not have a very good relationship with her parents and rest of her family and she complains that, "they want us to send them money all the time and they would rather see our money than us". Some of the participants described how they felt under pressure to help their families in Poland and the tension that is created as they try to explain to them that they cannot afford to. Sara described conversations she has had with friends who have remained in Poland who assume she has a lot of money. Sara has told them: "yes I earn more money but you don't have to pay for rent, for food, for flights or anything because you live with your parents". She added, "so I haven't got that much, but lots of Polish people think you have lots of money and an easy life – you don't have to go to work, there is money lying on the street for you to take". However, in the same interview Sara told me that she would much rather be in the situation she is now in the UK and she cannot understand why anyone would want to stay in Poland earning such a small wage and living with their families.

Some of the participants had been able to accumulate wealth by working in the UK. Nadzieja said that she "would like to say thank you to the British country that they gave me so much because for five years hard work I was able to get a mortgage to buy my own house and to buy a car" and she did not believe she could ever have achieved these had she remained working just as hard in Poland. Irena and her husband had been saving money and using it to build a house in Poland for them to move into eventually. It should be noted that both Nadzieja and Irena were two of the longest resident migrants in this study and had lived in the UK since long before the economic recession. As such, they both worked full-time hours and overtime for years – an opportunity which all the participants lamented was very rare now due to local factory closures and greater competition for work. An example of a more recent migrant is Julita who arrived with her daughters soon after her husband in 2009, just as the economic recession set in. Julita described the stress and the worry she has felt as within her first week in the UK, her husband had been made redundant

as a result of the factory closing where he worked. Thankfully he managed to obtain another factory job soon after that but more recently, during the time of this study, he had again been "laid off" as a result of the economic downturn. Julita had just started part-time work at the chicken factory when this happened which would bring in a small amount of income but she had not felt relaxed about their situation since they migrated. Julita said that she didn't see returning to Poland as being an option as it could only mean that they would have to live with her mother and she felt that that would cause too much tension between all the parties.

The community report (Nicholson & Stennett, 2010) about "underemployment" found the "surprising" outcome that 36% of their 200 respondents had done some voluntary work (56). Likewise in my study, at least 4 out of the 9 participants had taken part in voluntary work, most of this involved setting up Polish migrant organisations. It could be suggested that the sort of migrant who is willing or able to take on voluntary work may also be more likely to be the sort of migrant willing to take part in research about their migration experiences. Taking part in voluntary organisations has helped some of these participants to gain the work experience, local contacts and confidence required to enable them to gain more satisfying employment. However, such a story does not always translate to a successful migration. For example, in the research described above (Nicholson & Stennett, 2010), there is a case-study presented of a Polish woman who followed a similar progression (68-9). This highly educated woman worked in a meat-packing factory for the first few years in the UK, she then started volunteering at the Saturday School as a teacher and the experience she gained from this enabled her to successfully apply for a part-time teaching assistant job at a local school. However 'fulfilling' this new job was, it was insufficient to cover her childcare costs and so this woman returned to Poland to live with her mother, leaving her husband behind to continue accumulating money from his factory job (ibid). A story such as this serves as a reminder that the underlying motivations for migrating are broadly economic.

Many of the participants explained that they had very little leisure time. Sara and Julita described how the only social time they spend is cooking and eating at their house and the houses of their kin who live locally. Celina and her family spend their weekends visiting tourist attractions across the UK. All of the participants describe their return visits to Poland as their only holidays. Nadzieja and Zofia in particular felt that these return visits were essential for their children to maintain their Polish ties, especially with their grandparents. Adrianna's hopelessness described above may have been amplified in the interview as she had just returned from a holiday in Poland earlier that week which had made her realise how much she missed the place and her family. Irena described how close her relationship is with her family and how happy she feels when she sees them. She and her husband had recently returned from a visit to help the residents of her home village after it had flooded severely. Baldassar (2010) has suggested that return visits home may be motivated by a feeling of "guilt" (1-15) from not being there to help their families or to "share the gift of self" (ibid: 1) the remainder of the time. In this way, Baldassar has argued for "guilt as relationship-enhancing" (ibid: 1). In this study, even Justyna who was not looking forward to her next holiday home as it will be the first time she will have seen her family since they ostracised her, remains determined to make the trip because she wants her daughter to have a relationship with her family in Poland.

Part 2: Integrating

"Gendered Geographies of Power", Emotions and the Negotiation of Identities

As Jones-Correa (1998) has observed of male and female immigrants to the US, "the loss of occupational status may not be crucial to immigrants' sense of identity and definitions of success" (332). Certainly, as demonstrated above, the highly significant increase in income can help to offset negative feelings of this apparent downward mobility. The participants' narratives in this study have revealed other multiple and complex ways that they manage

emotions relating to their migration experiences. Mahler and Pessar's (2001; 2006) model of "gendered geographies of power" is used here to help frame the findings of this study. However, I have discussed the components of this model in the opposite order to Mahler and Pessar's presentation. Therefore, the analysis is described from "the body" extending across nations (Mahler & Pessar, 2001: 441), in that order. This is the more logical perspective for this study which takes the individual as the point of departure for an insight into the multi-dimensional and gendered landscape of transnational migration.

"Initiative" and "Imagination"

Mahler and Pessar (2001) have used this scale to make visible the "quintessentially individual characteristics" (447) of transnational migrants hailing from very similar social and geographical contexts, and to explain why each may differ in the way they engage with migration or "initiate" and "imagine" change (ibid; Constable, 2005: 16). As well as the importance of imagination inspired by a new context, has been the subsequent ability to dream, followed by the initiative to make it reality.

Each of the women in this study was unique in her personal characteristics. Nadzieja was most explicit about her initiative and imagination. She described the anguish she felt as she approached the decision of leaving her exciting job in Poland that she had worked so hard to become qualified for, to emigrate to an unknown future in England. She described the first few years working on her own for long hours as a cleaner. Nadzieja believes it was her "anger" of being unable to express herself in this new context that motivated her to "change my mentality". She said, "I explained to myself, when you start somewhere you do not get everything just like that, you have to work really hard". Nadzieja then proceeded to enrol onto ESOL evening classes. She began volunteering at the Citizen's Advice Bureau helping other Polish migrants, during which time she met another motivated Polish woman and together they helped each other to set up a Polish migrant organisation. Nadzieja described

how this improved her confidence enough to successfully apply to become a PCSO. In this current job Nadzieja described herself as feeling "very satisfied" and "very happy and very proud" of herself. Despite the obvious initiative and resilience demonstrated by Nadzieja in her life history, she accounted for her achievements as resultant of her "destiny" and described how it was her belief in God which enabled her progression.

Religion was used by some of the other women as a tool for managing the juxtaposition between gendered expectations in Poland and what they perceive those to be in the UK. Some of the participants imagine the lifestyle of British women as being amoral, and position themselves more favourably against them. Julita and Monika portrayed British women as "going out to restaurants every night rather than cooking at home", as being quick to initiate divorce rather than to make a marriage work, and of being sexually promiscuous. The reason the participants gave for Polish women not behaving similarly was that "we are more religious", rather than giving any economic or political explanation. A similar characteristic has been found in immigrant women in the United States "Filipinos and Vietnamese, for example, assert the morality of their communities by denouncing the sexual improprieties of American society and white women and praising the sexual restraints of their own ethnic cultures and women" (Pessar, 2003: 91). Taking the "moral high-ground" (ibid: 92) may be a way that the participants have protected themselves from a decrease in self-esteem as part of their relative loss in personal status during the migration process. That is, by positioning themselves as a good Polish women.

Another way that some of the participants have imagined themselves in this new gendered context is by being responsible for their children remaining connected to their Polish identities. This is reminiscent of the cultural expectations of the Polish national ideal of the good mother (Pustulka, 2012: 167), as "self-sacrificing for her family" (Titkow, 2007: 144-5, in Pustulka, 2012: 167)   Zofia and Adrianna had both helped to create a Polish Saturday School and both continued to volunteer there as teachers, despite leaving relatively

unrelated jobs in Poland as an accountant and engineer respectively. The Polish Saturday Schools Association produces "a syllabus designed to prepare children to adjust back into the Polish school system when they returned" (White & Ryan, 2008: 1490). However, for Zofia, who said she does not plan to return to Poland with her nine-year-old daughter, the school is considered "important for the children to learn Polish and about Poland so that they can have relationships with their grandparents and to understand the country they are from". Other ways that the participants have been motivated by their children is by the hopes and dreams they have for them. Celina does not plan to return to Poland for many reasons but told me that what confirmed this position was that, "the children are happy so I am happy". Conversely, Julita's concerns that her children were growing apart from her since they had started school and speak much better English than she can was adding to her anxieties and low confidence about living in a new country.

Another clear example of individual characteristics affecting a migrant's agency is within Justyna's life history. While keeping her plans to herself, Justyna imagined a safer, happier life for her daughter and herself, making a personal promise that she would telephone the police if her partner ever assaulted her again. Despite her family's attitude, Justyna felt that it was wrong for him to hurt her. She had grown up watching her father hit her mother and describes how it made her feel determined that she was not going to allow her daughter to feel the same way. Justyna's ex-partner's abuse had worsened once they had moved into the same house for the first time when they arrived in the UK. Justyna carried out her plan despite knowing that she would be "labeled... as [a betrayer of her culture and homeland]" (Pessar 2003: 92) by her family and friends. Justyna's life history emphasises the importance of appreciating individual agency within wider cultural structures.

Some anthropologists have observed that migrating together as a couple can improve spousal relations (Chai, 1987: 1). It is not evident whether or not this has been the case for many of the participants of this study. Irena did describe how she and her husband equally

share the household chores. Irena accounted for this has being due to the fact they each work between 40 and 60 hours each week, in shifts which are rarely in sync, and so Irena simply was not at home to wait on her husband in the way she described her mother does on her father. Sara described how she has always felt angry about unequal gender roles and expectations in Poland. She explained that living in the UK has enabled her to imagine a different way of life. In particular, Sara and Julita described how impressed they have been to see a Polish woman bus-driver in the area. It has allowed them to imagine different ways of being a woman while at the same time fuelling their anger at Poland for not allowing such a thing and reducing their dream of returning.

Agency

This component of Mahler and Pessar's model encourages an examination of "the types and degrees of agency people exert, given their social locations" (2006: 44). Confidence was an important individual characteristic which had the greatest impact on an individual's ability to negotiate more satisfying identities and social positions. The participants' narratives portrayed confidence as being intrinsically linked with both language and time. Most of the participants freely described their lack of confidence and confusion during their first few years in the UK, and the negative impact it had on their ability to exert agency. It took time for Justyna to understand her rights as a victim of domestic abuse in the new gendered context. It took years for Nadzieja to feel that it was time for her to take control of her life. Julita had not been in the UK for as long as the other participants and her confidence was clearly much lower than the others'. Julita is still unaware of local services that may help her. The time scale affecting personal confidence development may be said to have slowed since the economic downturn as so many of the migrant organisations that used to offer assistance and support to these newer arrivals have had to close. Kin networks within the receiving area may be continuing to provide a safety net for some, as they are for Julita and

her family. However, in the transnational context of this study, Julita received assistance with her curriculum vitae from the researcher.

Proficiency in English language had fortified some of the participants with the confidence and ability to assert agency in their new environment, but this process is also reliant on time. Irena said evocatively what all the other participants had conveyed about their first two years in England: "I felt like I was disabled, without a tongue". Irena, Julita, Sara and Celina explained that they were too afraid to try to communicate in case they were not understood, and because they wanted to avoid feeling embarrassed. Nadzieja, Irena and Sara further described how, even after they had grasped a decent amount of English to get them by every day, they continue to feel frustration at not being able to fully express themselves to the degree they would like to given their educational attainment and interests. These participants gave this as a reason for taking part in this study, that is, as an opportunity to be listened to as part of an intellectual exchange.

The environmental context, as described above, meant that the participants had generally had to interact with local English people on a daily basis. Some of the participants said that this geographical factor had enabled them to improve their English language skills at a quicker rate and so to feel more integrated into their new surroundings. Julita, who was at home looking after the children for the first three years of living in the UK, did not have such an enforced interaction with English people. Whereas Yetta, who lived in a different area of the region was integrated into the local English and Polish community by her local children's centre outreach service, Julita said that she did not feel comfortable to attend the children's centres herself due to her lack of confidence in her English speaking. As a result, Julita accounted for her lack of agency as being related to her persistent perception of English women as being "more brave and confident".

Some of the participants described the lack of agency they felt able to exert in relation to wider, macro and meso structures. Adrianna said that it is not possible to obtain a satisfying job in the UK, describing a constant set of barriers in the form of specific qualifications she is unable to afford to attain. Conversely, Nadzieja's said that her dream is to become a police officer in England and she believed she could achieve that if she worked hard enough. Assessing the context of many of the participants' statements about their agency requires the examination of individual characteristics, as discussed above, as well as an understanding of the changing emotions of migration (Svasek, 2008). Adrianna had spent most of her time in the UK as an au pair for a very wealthy family. Now, she has two very young children of her own to look after and feels impotent to provide for them the lifestyle she witnessed during that time.

Social Location

This scale draws attention to the fact that individuals occupy "positions within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors" (Pessar & Mahler, 2001: 6). Moreover, it further highlights that individuals are situated in different situations within numerous hierarchies (ibid: 445). Just by the act of transnational migration itself, the individual is occupying at least two different social locations in each national context, as a Polish national and an immigrant resident in the UK. This was very clear among all the participants of this study.

Irena was in the process of building a large house in Poland which would be very unusual for someone of her generation. Yet, in the UK Irena worked as a carer and felt unable to express herself among English people. Meanwhile, Justyna was ostracised by her Polish family and friends, while at the same time being congratulated by domestic abuse workers, solicitors and police officers in the UK. Some of the women are qualified professionals in

Poland, while in England they are both minimum-wage workers during the week and Polish culture teachers at weekends.

Geographical Scales

Mahler and Pessar presented this component in their model to demonstrate that, "gender operates simultaneously on multiple *spatial and social* scales (e.g., the body, the family, the state) across transnational terrains" (2001: 445). A review of the academic literature suggesting changing gender ideologies in the Polish context took place in the Literature Review chapter. In this section, I will discuss the participants' experiences of moving transnationally, into a new gendered context, to review a key issue in this study which has also been asked by other scholars (Pessar & Mahler, 2006: 43). That is, does transnational migration, inevitably into new gendered contexts, change gender relations. Most of the women enthusiastically offered their perceptions on the different gendered contexts of where they are from and where they now live.

Some of the women described themselves as feeling angry about Poland for its gendered context. Yetta's anger was because, "Poland is supposed to think the family is important but it is not like that at all because women and men are forced to bring up their children in their parent's houses and to go to work as soon as their babies are born". Nadzieja's pleasure at her personal success, which she said she could only have achieved by migrating to the UK, was because her hard work led to remuneration that enabled her to accumulate wealth.

As we have already seen above, the changing geographical scale has "[pitted] one system of morality... against another" (Pessar 2003: 92). The majority of the women described the greater opportunities that women in Britain have compared to women in Poland. Sara said, "I don't think if you have not lived anywhere other than Poland that you can think how different life can be". In this new geographical scale, some of the women, like Sara

extended the perceived gendered opportunities of this new context to themselves, leading them to imagine new identities. While some of the other participants could not imagine these new identities and so positioned themselves against them by emphasising the gendered ideals of the Poland, "[t]hus we find that transnational actions, though often associated with the erosion of the nation-state, can indeed fortify it and in so doing also reaffirm asymmetrical gender relations" (Mahler & Pessar, 2001: 445).

Potential for Change

As is clear from the model above, gender, like all aspects of identity, can be conceived "not as a set of static structures or roles but as an ongoing process" (Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 30). Informants' memories about gender ideologies, identities and practices have been a way to gauge change (Pessar, 2003: 90-1). Some of the participants described how migration had changed them as individuals. Nadzieja said that migration "has strengthened me, given me confidence and allowed me to achieve stuff I could not have done in Poland", such as buying a house and a car, and having a job where she "has a mission to help the whole community". Yetta explained that migrating has meant she has had an opportunity to raise her children herself, rather than having to leave them with their grandparents for most of the day. Justyna told me that, had she not migrated, she would still be in a relationship with an abusive man but now she is happy and excited about her future feeling independent and safe, making new friends. Sara said, "living here has definitely changed me – I look at the world a different way now and see that a woman can do everything, even drive the bus!".

The life histories have also suggested that transnational migration has the potential to motivate social change in sending countries. Sara's regular telephone conversations with her mother have often focussed on the comparative roles of women in Poland and the UK. Graff (2007) has suggested that young Polish women have introduced their own mothers to feminism in the absence of "second wave" feminism in Poland.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This study has examined agency and emotions in transnational migration stories by listening to the life histories of nine Polish women living in south-west England. In this study, the life history approach was taken. This approach has revealed issues relating to transnational migration, and the decision-making of Polish migrants to the UK in particular. Furthermore, "[i]n reading their stories we have gotten to know them as individuals" (Gmelch, 1992: 261). The transnational space created by the interviews has uncovered a great deal of misunderstanding between Polish and British women, evocative of the type of prejudice and suspicion evident in popular media rhetoric, as referred to during the Introduction.

The Literature Review has demonstrated that anthropologists have been at the forefront of viewing migration as a transnational process since the 1990s. Similarly to much of this body of research, this study has identified how individual migrants have used the tools of both the sending and receiving contexts to cope with settling-in and integrating into a new context, including lower status employment. The tools the participants have used have been cultural and gendered including those embedded in religion and a religious, moral identity; a national "myth of return" (Garapich, 2008) enacted to cope with feelings of homesickness, and the ideal of the "polish mother" enabling feelings of pride through maintaining the Polish cultural identities and transnational relationships of their children. The individuals in this study have enacted agency to negotiate more satisfying identities within their new environment. Yet this agency has been constrained by powerful processes outside and within themselves, including those relating to macro-economics, and others relating to personal initiative.

The participants in this study referred to issues relating to a transnational and localised change in gendered context. While some of the participants have made use of these gendered opportunities, others have felt constrained by gendered challenges. Most of

mothers in this study have been integrated into services offered by the host environment which has increased their contact with British families as well as other Polish families, reducing feelings of isolation and increasing their English language ability. Meanwhile, other mothers have indeed described feelings of loneliness and isolation as they have refused opportunities offered by children's centres and schools, largely due to a lack of confidence. With their partners at work all day and their children at school, only returning home in the afternoons and speaking much better English than they, these women have continued to feel frustrated. Other women have described the enthusiasm they have felt, concurrently with anger towards their sending country, in being exposed to women carrying out job roles which are not acceptable in Poland.

Mahler and Pessar's (2001; 2006) model of "gendered geographies of power" (ibid) has been used to analyse the life histories of the participants in this study. As we have seen in the Literature Review, and in action within the Findings, Analysis and Discussion chapter, this model takes into account the importance of individual characteristics, as well as changing geographical contexts in understanding gender and agency. The participants expressing the greatest amount of self-esteem are those who have allowed themselves to dream, or "imagine" (ibid), and then identified the tools available to them from both geographic scales to negotiate more satisfying lives for themselves. This multi-scaled perspective could be used to understand how different individuals in seemingly similar contexts perceive and enact different degrees of agency and live different lives. For example, and returning to the example of how Justyna empowered herself from victimhood of domestic abuse, such an understanding may be applied to assess who may be at risk from similar crimes and which strategies may be effective in encouraging exertion of agency towards safer and more fulfilled lives. Further comparative research of transnational migration and family violence may reveal the potential of this perspective, as transnational migration offers an intensive example of social relationships (Garapich, 2008: 9).

This study has valued an understanding of the role of emotions in individual agency in transnational migration contexts. The life histories of the individual participants have illustrated how "migration is almost unavoidably a process that unnerves, motivates, excites, upsets or demoralises individuals, or moves them in alternative ways" (Svasek, 2008: 214). The Literature Review has shown that anthropologists have been at the forefront of this area of research. Emotions have been shown to be inherent in political processes (Svasek, 2006), including in gender ideals, specifically in the Polish context. Emotions have further been described as based in morals and so, given the findings from the Literature Review and the interviews for this study, it may not be surprising that the participants have used cultural tools relating to gender by which to cope with the emotional dynamics of their migration. Particularly as other anthropologists have pointed out, transnational migration pits one moral code against another (Pessar, 2003: 92), and it is within this context that some of the participants have gained a "moral highground" (ibid) to improve their self-esteem and transnational relationships.

The interview itself created a transnational space within which the Polish participants and myself, as a similarly positioned British woman, engaged in an exchange of observations and feelings. The process appeared to alter the participants' perceptions, and changed my own. As I embarked on this research, I expected to find numerous differences between the women and myself, however, as our relationships developed we all rapidly agreed how much we had in common. The highly emotional decision-making processes of the individual participants were based on feelings, social relationships and ambitions which were neither passive nor irrational as might have been suggested by gaps and debates in earlier literature, before the discipline's reflexive-turn. Furthermore, I was negotiating within "gendered geographies of power" myself and operated different social locations throughout the research process. As shown in the methodology chapter, I utilized some of my different social locations in the environment to gain access to participants through relationships with specific gatekeepers, and this will have had an effect on which potential participants

volunteered to take part. Additionally, my social location was not fixed in a classical, hierarchical relationship of "researcher/researched". Certainly, during most of the relationships I felt comfortable in the role of researcher, setting the parameters and asking the questions. However, during my participant observation at the Polish Catholic Mass I was very much an outsider to a context of which I occupied no social location and as such, I felt emotions of nervousness, lack of confidence and fear of being unable to communicate. These emotions enable others to relate to the feelings of transnational migrants (Svasek, 2008).

The women in this study had all volunteered to take part and as such they shared significant characteristics, including an operative degree of confidence in their English language ability, and in general. It is acknowledged that this study certainly represents a particular "strata" (Jones-Correa, 1998: 329) which can be considered a drawback of the recruitment methods, including snowball sampling (ibid). I believed that this has indeed been the outcome of this methodology. However, by virtue of my insider position in the domestic abuse charity, I gained access to Justyna's life history, which may not otherwise have been the case in this study. The different life histories of the individuals in this study strongly suggested that there here are hundreds of thousands of other stories not represented in this discussion. Further research would target women without the confidence to take part, to understand their experiences of how they are coping with the emotional upheaval.

Polish migration to the UK is far more complicated than the political and media rhetoric, and economic statistics, portray. Contemporary anthropologists are taking on the role of complicating macro processes by reminding others in academia that they are all based in social relationships. The life history approach, with its narrative value may have the potential

to communicate to the world outside of academia, especially facilitated as part of an interdisciplinary endeavour which takes into account all scales of analysis.

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Appendix

English Poster:

I am a student of the **University of Wales, Trinity Saint David**. I am doing a study about the experiences of Polish women who have come to live in the UK. The results of the research will be used in my **dissertation for a Master of Arts degree in Social Anthropology.**

I would like to do only one informal interview. It will take about 60 minutes. I will ask you to tell me about Poland, your experiences of migration and your life in the UK. We can meet anywhere/anytime of your choice. The interviews will be anonymous. The possible benefits of taking part include the opportunity to have your voice heard in a safe way, to practice your English, and to further our understanding of contemporary European migration. The interviews will be conducting until January 2013.

If you would like to take part in this research study please contact me by phone or e-mail.

Rebecca Davies
radavies249@yahoo.co.uk
07875 472717

Polish Poster

Jestem studentką **University of Wales, Trinity Saint David**. Przeprowadzam badania na temat doświadczeń Polskich kobiet mieszkających w UK. Wyniki badań zostaną wykorzystane w mojej **pracy magisterskiej na Master of Arts w Antropologii Społecznej.**

Chciałabym przeprowadzić tylko jeden nieformalny wywiad trwający około 60 minut. Pytania będą dotyczyć Polski, doświadczeń związanych z migracją i z życiem w UK. Miejsce i czas wywiadu będzie zależał od decyzji respondentki. Wywiad jest anonimowy. Potencjalne korzyści z udziału to m.in. możliwość wypowiedzenia się w bezpieczny sposób, praktyka swojego języka angielskiego i wsparcie w naszym zrozumieniu współczesnej Europejskiej migracji. Wywiady będą przeprowadzane do stycznia 2013.

Zainteresowanych uczestnictwem w tym badaniu proszę o kontakt telefoniczny lub na e- mail.

Rebecca Davies
radavies249@yahoo.co.uk
07875 472717