# Feeling at Home in Time:

# Polish Migrant Families in Manchester

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## Abstract

This thesis investigates the workings of belonging to explore the concept's inherently temporal nature. Through in-depth qualitative case studies of ten Polish families who have moved to Manchester since the 2004 European Union enlargement, time is revealed as a prominent theme in the search for belonging. While the field of migration studies tends to portray migrant belonging as a simple linear accumulation, my study focuses on the more nuanced and complex way in which my participants' relationship with time as a subjective, relational and lived experience of space has impacted on their migration stories. Time-space is prominent in their tales of searching for belonging as the Polish migrant families make the decision to leave their home country, make their new homes in Britain and face the decision whether to return or remain. By exploring the way in which homely time-spaces are (re)created, negotiated, and interpreted, I highlight the significant role of a temporal framework in understanding migrant belonging.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

As debates arise surrounding the prospect of further states joining the European Union, negative reactions in the British press and public discussions have led to claims of 'enlargement fatigue' (BBC News, 2013). Much of this is attributed to the experience of the latest significant enlargement. On 1st May 2004 the EU was extended eastwards to include the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.[1] Of all the A-8 countries, migration from Poland has by far received the most attention which may be explained by the relative impact of its accession to the EU: as the largest of the A-8 countries, with a population of 38.5 million (Europa, 2008), Poland is estimated to generate around 66 percent of British immigration from the A-8 countries (Home Office, 2009: 8).

The impact of recent Polish immigration is substantial with the movement affirmed as Britain's largest population influx in recent history (Salt and Rees, 2006).The 2011 census declared Polish to be England's second language, British supermarkets now stock a wide range of Polish food products, and the *polski sklep* has become a common sight in the urban landscape. Since Poland joined the EU, Britain's population has increased by an estimated half a million Polish recent arrivals (ONS, 2010) attracting considerable academic research, alongside significant public and media interest. Headlines such as the Daily Mail's 'Immigration Influx from Eastern Europe is Driving Down Wages' (Slack, 2007) typifies many concerns surrounding the impact of Polish migration, as Poles utilise the right to move freely within the EU's borders to increase their wage earning potential. However, as Britain entered an economic downturn reports suggested many would return to Poland which largely escaped the global economic crisis. With limited statistics,[2] speculations such as the BBC's headline ''Polish Builder' flees credit crunch' (Henley, 2008) represent a superficial understanding of the nature of Polish migration movement. My research contributes to the knowledge of this movement by focussing on the role of belonging on the decisions Polish migrants are making to settle in Britain or return to Poland. This significant movement within the EU's recently expanded borders represents

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[1] These member states became collectively known as the Accession-8 (A-8), and are referred to as such throughout this thesis.

[2] Statistics regarding post-accession migration are acknowledged as estimates, with much data based on sources that cannot accurately record all data, such as the Workers Registration Scheme which relies on self-registration which many migrants are either unaware of or choose not to do (Anderson *et al*, 2006).

a unique opportunity to explore the experiences and perceptions of migrant belonging as the supranational becomes an increasingly relevant scale of study in today's globalised world.

Population movement from Poland to the UK following EU enlargement in 2004 has generated an abundance of academic and media attention focused on the economic impact of the influx. This is typified by the stereotypes of the 'Polish builder' or 'Polish plumber' that dominate perceptions of Polish migration in newspaper headlines and public debates (Fomina and Frelak, 2008). The large-scale arrival of Poles was initially viewed positively by the British government as a means of filling vacancies in low-skilled and low-wage occupations (Anderson *et al*, 2006), but a rising unemployment level has seen a growth in more negative attitudes to Polish workers expressed by the public and reflected by the media. A similar shift in perception has occurred in Poland where emigration was initially seen as a 'welcome labour market relief' in the context of high unemployment levels but the severe decline in the working population is now viewed as a 'threat to the Polish economy and society' (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009: 23-4). A major large scale survey of post-accession migration conducted by Pollard *et al* in 2008 found that Poles were indeed attracted to Britain by the prospect of greater earning potential; however, the majority returned home as they missed family and friends who remained in Poland. This was a process observed to continue in a cyclical fashion over and over, and labelled 'turnstile' migration with the notion that migrants could enter and leave Britain freely according to the balance of economic and emotional needs.

However, this research conducted predominantly with young, male migrants is supplemented by a number of studies which reveal that the families of many of these workers are now relocating to be reunited and live together in Britain (Elrick and Brinkmeier, 2009; Moskal, 2009; White, 2009). This is evidenced by the huge increase in the number of Polish children living in Britain, with Polish-speaking children now constituting the largest group of 'non-English speaking newly-arrived schoolchildren' in England (Pollard *et al*, 2008: 27). By removing the draw to return to Poland by having one's loved ones in Britain, the rationale for continual cyclical movement between the home and host[3] countries becomes weakened and new questions regarding settlement

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[3] I recognise that the term 'host society' is problematic with the associations of the word 'host' creating an assumption of the migrant as 'visitor' and the country of arrival as 'welcoming' (Pillai and Paramasivam, 2011). However, in following the conventions of migration literature and in order to provide consistency, it is the term I will be applying throughout the thesis.

plans are raised. Early predictions that this intra-European movement would 'take the form of short-term, circulatory commuting' and that increased migration into the new EU member countries would present a greater issue than immigration to the UK (Wallace, 2002) are under question. Many studies into the Central and Eastern European mass migration movement have acknowledged that A-8 migrants' planned lengths of stay are often subject to change (Garapich, 2008; White and Ryan, 2008; Burrell, 2010). By conducting research with Polish families, my thesis explores the way in which experiences of settlement are impacted by this context. Ten in-depth case studies of Polish families who have moved to Manchester following Poland's accession to the EU explore whether these migrants plan to stay in Britain or return to Poland, and how the possibilities of movement at a supranational scale impact on feelings of belonging.

There are several factors which foreground a discussion of belonging for post-accession Polish migrants in Britain. The influx of Poles following the country's accession to the EU is not Britain's first experience of Polish immigration. Recent arrivals join British Polish communities that have been established since many sought refuge in the context of World War Two. Poles worked alongside the British forces during the war and many refugee camps were set up to accommodate Polish nationals escaping their war-torn homeland. Following the war, Poland remained politically unstable and economically deprived, leading many Poles to choose to stay in Britain establishing communities in which a diaspora culture celebrating Polish food, language, and religion continues to operate (Burrell, 2009). However, previous research into the topic has revealed that post-accession Polish migrants are not necessarily enlarging a diaspora by seeking out well-established communities of previous generations, and it is important to consider this new wave of arrivals as distinct from these previously established communities (Brown, 2011).

However, the history of Polish migration may have played another role in the context in which the post-accession arrivals have gained entrance into Britain. Although Poland joined the EU in May 2004 its nationals did not automatically and immediately obtain the right to the principle of free movement between all EU nation-states. Britain, alongside Denmark, Ireland and Sweden, implemented the least restrictive immigration regime with regard to quotas and entry requirements for those joining the EU in 2004, making it more accessible than other EU countries. Some academics view Britain's decision as the opportunity to acknowledge and provide an amnesty for the undocumented workforce of Poles that had continued to illegally enter the country since the settlement of the wartime

generation (Garapich, 2008; Elrick and Brinkmeier, 2009). Others evoke a discourse of whiteness in claims that increasing Polish workers was a means to 'reduce their reliance on non-white, non-European migrants' in favour of those more 'ethnically 'similar' and/or culturally 'proximate'' (Favell, 2008: 704). Whether politically, economically or culturally motivated, the early legal stance of the British government towards Polish migrants appears to have had a significant impact in terms of welcoming the migratory flow.

It is also important to consider this migratory movement within the wider politics of the UK and the balance between rights and responsibility in the construction of citizenship. This balance is noted to have shifted significantly during the New Labour government and their actions in response to a population perceived to be increasingly reliant on the state benefit system and on Jobseekers' Allowances in particular. Through a series of policies, beginning with the introduction of the 'New Contract for Welfare', the Labour government emphasised the responsibility of citizens to reduce the 'burden on the taxpayer' by generating and accumulating individual economic sustenance through employment (Department of Social Security, 1998). Discursively and structurally constructing employment as the route to becoming a 'good citizen' has had significant implications, not only for existing citizens, but also for migrants and asylum seekers (Cruikshank, 1994; Rose, 1996; Jordan, 2004). A previous association of migration with sanctuary in a multicultural Britain has come to be replaced by a 'managerialist regime' in which migrants are accepted or rejected according to their ability to be a 'good citizen' (Jordan and Brown, 2007). In doing so, the Labour government arguably created a system of 'civic stratification' in which so-called 'economic migrants' were valued more highly than those unable to fulfil the 'good citizen' role through participating in the workforce, such as asylum seekers (Kofman, 2002; Morris, 2001).

The shift in the framing of the conditions of citizenship in the UK coupled with the increased securitisation and increased border control in a post-9/11 world has seen an increasingly exclusionary migration regime with unprecedented levels of restrictions regarding conditions of entry and length of stay (Kofman, 2002, 2005a; Nagel, 2001; Waite, 2012). This 'managed migration' approach has persisted, and arguably become more restrictive, following the Coalition government's rise to power in 2010. With the EU's emphasis on movement for economic purposes and to fulfil labour shortages, nationals from the post-accession countries have found themselves amongst the most 'acceptable' migrants (Ford, 2011). However, as Britain faces job shortages in the

economic downturn and the EU's borders extend further East, the context of Polish migration is again shifting. Kofman (2005b: 87) notes that:

> 'states are increasingly differentiating between those economically performative, that is the skilled, and those who are supposedly not useful, the unskilled, who may be seen as problematic and dangerous for social order and stability.'

This is evidenced in the Labour administration's 2008 introduction of a points-based immigration system and the Coalition government's cap on the number of migrants entering from outside of the EU according to labour needs, and the latter's restrictions on recent EU accession country members: Bulgaria and Romania. Migration is clearly an important focus for current political debate, and further understanding of Britain's current experiences of EU migration is necessary to inform such discussions and policies. This introductory chapter has provided some insight into the complex historical, geographical, economic and political background in which the study is based and raised issues for further consideration as the thesis progresses.

My thesis places the migration experiences of those with whom I conducted research within the context of a wealth of interdisciplinary literature which surrounds the field of belonging. In the following chapter I begin with an in-depth exploration of factors associated with belonging in migration studies, considering the relevance of belonging in modern debates surrounding migration and the routes through which it is thought to be achieved. In light of such discussion, I establish my own definition of belonging and highlight the aspects I feel have been overlooked by other research on the theme. In the third chapter I then outline the methodology employed in my project, emphasising the complexities of conducting in-depth research with migrant families. This includes a consideration of a range of practical and ethical issues, including family dynamics, shifting perspectives, the difficulties of conducting transnational research and the complex researcher-researched relationships inherent in such research.

The thesis then moves on to present an analysis of the data collected from the research, tracking the migration experiences of my ten case study families and how it has shaped their senses of belonging. In Chapter Four I begin by considering the rationale provided by the families for their relocation and how they view their journey from Poland to Britain. The economic motivations for migrating which are outlined by previous research are given an alternative interpretation by considering the move alongside the perceptions of family

life and prospects within the home and host countries. Chapter Five then explores the way in which settlement is established in the host country as families navigate the complex process of reunification in a new potential home. Testimonies from different family members highlight how they (re)learn to belong with each other as well as in a new home space. This new home is put into a perspective in Chapter Six in a discussion of the way in which the families negotiate their place as migrants within a supranational context. Considering the different scales of home within the EU, both imagined and lived provide a nuanced exploration of the way in which belonging operates geographically and materially. Following this, Chapter Seven raises the question as to whether the families consider their settlement to be temporary or permanent and how this impacts on their migration experiences and their sense of belonging. In a concluding chapter I summarise my findings before outlining the potential implications of the research for policy makers and practitioners within the migratory field.

# Chapter Two: Understandings of Belonging

## 2.1 Introduction

''[B]elonging' may well be one of the 'softer' social science concepts but it is central to any discussion of some of the hardest issues facing human societies today: immigrant integration and cultural diversity' (Skrbiš *et al*, 2007: 261)

As this quotation illustrates, the relationship between belonging and migration is a significant topic for current investigation. Feeling belonging by acquiring a sense of attachment is deemed an essential component of a functioning society and of individual wellbeing (Bess *et al*, 2002; Doná, 2010). One of the seminal theorists of belonging, Yuval-Davies, suggests migrants pose a question as to how and to where such a sense of attachment is located by 'being 'in' but not being 'of' the space they physically occupy' (2006: 544). To understand migration we need to engage with the concept of belonging, and arguably an exploration of migration can deepen our theoretical understanding of belonging. Migrant belonging is an inherently difficult term to define, raising questions such as belonging according to whom and according to what criteria. This chapter explores some of the literature and research which has oriented itself around this issue in order to situate my own definition of belonging which forms the basis of this thesis. The chapter begins with an exploration of the major 'routes' to belonging that tend to inform the approach of migration studies, before proposing an alternative way through which belonging can be conceptualised. Finally, I highlight an aspect of belonging that remains largely undertheorised, but essential to the progression of migration studies, that forms the basis for my theorisations of belonging.

## 2.2 Locating the routes to belonging

Migration is a pervasive subject in British politics and popular public debate. The provocative issues surrounding migration involve the notion of belonging: where, how, the extent to which migrants belong and according to whom. Academic literature seeking to respond to such questions varies in the perspectives they take and consequent conclusions drawn. While migration theorists assume migrants express a desire to belong, the changing contexts of migration have arguably led to a change in assumptions as to where and how the basis for belonging is located and accessed. This section charts the predominant routes to belonging prescribed in government approaches and policies, and

the economic, social and cultural practices that migrants have been expected and observed to have taken in their routes to belonging.

Traditional theories of the nation-state assume a geographical correspondence between territory (state) and its citizens (nation). According to this premise, as citizens living outside of their territory –indeed within the territory of another- migrants inherently do not 'belong' as they do not possess a citizenship identity which corresponds with the nation-state in which they are living (Heisler, 2001; Gilmartin, 2008). In addressing this disjuncture, states have applied a range of ideological and political tools. This section begins with charting these responses and the historical and geographical contexts in which they were conceived and applied in order to give a background to how belonging is understood from a state perspective in relation to this study.

Britain's largest influx of migration in recent history came in the wake of the Second World War when, alongside many Western European countries, the state sought an increase in labour supply in order to help rebuild a war-damaged infrastructure. This labour source largely came from those seeking refuge from the war and from British overseas colonies and former colonies, particularly those from South Asia and the West Indies. Some counties, such as Germany and France, classified this post-war migrant workforce as 'guestworkers' with an emphasis on a temporary basis for presence in the host country and therefore outside of the traditional citizenship framework, resulting in 'differential exclusion' (Castles, 2000). However, in Britain the significant presence of colonial and ex-colonial 'subjects' changed the face of migration policy as many of the post-war migrants remained, forming communities and bringing up generations.

In Britain, it was assumed the post-war migrants would come to belong by following the process of assimilation: defined by Tamaki as 'the erosion of difference…between immigrants and the native born individuals' (2011: 150). The theory of assimilation assumes that by adopting the cultural markers of the host country, such as language, behaviour, dress, customs and religion, migrants will become integrated politically, socially and economically (Gordon, 1964). Through this process, migrants are assumed to accumulate belonging with the assimilation effect becoming stronger from generation to generation (Gordon, 1964; Park and Burgess, 1969; Warner and Srole, 1945).  Such theories of assimilation have faced criticisms of essentialism in the assumption that migrants are willing and able to replace their own 'culture' with that of a homogenous host society in order to belong (Kymlicka, 2001; Nagel, 2001). There is also a lack of

appreciation and understanding of the way in which migrants change the host society, with the difference between migrants and citizens assumed to be defined in relation to a static host culture (Nagel, 2009). Within the British context, the state faced accusations of racial superiority in their assimilationist ideology, as former-colony members were forced to adopt the 'culture' of the 'mother country' evoking discourses of empire and colonial hierarchies which were being fought against in a post-colonial world (Gilroy, 2004; Hall, 2000). Such critiques were expressed not only in academic circles but also amongst the wider public, and by the late 1950s the discrimination inherent in the rhetoric and outcomes of this form of assimilation were evidenced in the London and Nottingham 'race riots' of 1958 (Grillo, 1998).

This acculturalist model of belonging was clearly not appropriate or effective, and the government sought to improve the political and social standing of migrant communities in Britain. Legislative changes, such as the extension of citizenship to those born of British parents as well as those born on British soil (Grillo, 1998), were accompanied by the adoption of a 'multicultural' ideology. Described as a '*laissez-faire* attitude to integration' (Kofman, 2005a), this approach was designed to foster a greater sense of belonging through the celebration of Britain's migrant legacy and presence. However, this approach was deemed insufficient in addressing the deep-seated dissatisfaction and unrest surrounding the rights of minorities in Britain. Dubbed the 'saris, samosas, and steel band' attitude (Troyna and Carrington, 1990), policies and campaigns celebrating the multicultural agenda were criticised as taking a superficial, reified and stereotypical perspective of culture that only served to reinforce inequalities and perpetuate segregation (Alibhai-Brown, 2000).

By the end of the 1990s, multiculturalism was largely acknowledged as a defunct ideology, and a new approach to belonging in Britain was sought and outlined in the 'Parekh Report' (Parekh, 2000). This introduced a so-called 'new multiculturalism' based on shared values rather than emphasising different cultures as defined by race or ethnicity (Parekh, 2000; Vertovec, 2001). This approach has been deemed by some as a partial 'return to assimilation' in its purpose to make migrants 'similar in some aspects' (Brubaker, 2001: 534). These aspects are presented as those designed to foster greater 'community cohesion', an issue pertaining to belonging arising in political debates following the riots and disturbances across England in 2001 (Cantle Report, 2001), and more recently in the wake of the 7/7 London bombings in 2007. This form of assimilation

or 'neo-assimilation' was enshrined the Labour government's introduction of the state's first formal citizenship test in 2005. The 'Life in the UK' test requires proficiency in an official British language and a knowledge of British history, geography and culture. Following the Coalition government's rise to power in 2010, the use of the citizenship test and subsequent citizenship ceremony has continued to be the process through which to demarcate who belongs. However, the participation required from potential citizens in the preparation, sitting and payment of the test supports the assertion that migrant belonging is defined increasingly by both the actions of the state and the migrants themselves (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2006). Having gained the cultural tools deemed necessary, migrants are expected to continue their process of assimilation through participating in the work force and contributing to the economy, perpetuating the assumption that it is a migrant's responsibility to 'earn' his or her place within the host society (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). The remainder of this section explores the ways in which migrants seek belonging within and beyond the state rhetoric, reflecting a methodological shift in migration studies from state theories of belonging to migrant stories of belonging (Lawson, 2000; Gilmartin, 2008).

Numerous academics have called for an understanding of citizenship that goes beyond legal and state-defined terms to recognise migrants' own practices of belonging (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2003; Staelhi and Nagel, 2006; Veronis, 2006). While the British government has recently sought to embed some cultural aspects of belonging within the formal citizenship procedure through the citizenship test, some scholars assert that the process of assimilation through the acquisition of cultural markers is a process migrants undergo independently of state involvement (Hage, 1998). Indeed, Hage (1998) argues that the acquisition of 'cultural citizenship' has usurped formal citizenship as the dominant route to belonging. 'Cultural citizenship' refers to the acquisition of cultural signifiers necessary for social integration and a sense of belonging that comes from participation in the host society. The 'cultural citizenship' referred to by Hage and other migration scholars is far more extensive than that prescribed in the citizenship test and informed by the lived experiences of migrants themselves. The criteria for such 'cultural citizenship' are often discussed as symbols of 'whiteness': markers that denote a cultural proximity to the host population that serve as a 'passport of privilege' in accessing socioeconomic routes to belonging (Kalra *et al*, 2005: 111).  These cultural markers include both inherent characteristics, such as appearance, and acquired attributes, such as language ability (Colic-Peisker, 2005). They refer to both state-ascribed and recognised characteristics,

such as immigration status (Parutis, 2011), and more subtle individual factors, such as accent (Colic-Peisker, 2005; Reynolds, 2010). Migrants viewed as 'whiter' are found to face less hostility from the host population, experiencing less discrimination, more favourable immigration policies and greater access to employment, housing and social networks (Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Beyers *et al*, 2009; Ford, 2011). For Polish migrants, such as those in my study, whose membership within the supranational entity of the EU negates the necessity to acquire formal citizenship, this sociocultural route to belonging is of particular pertinence.

State assimilation policy was found to fail when based on an expectation that migrants could and should be homogenised to become culturally 'the same' as the host population: a failure evidenced by the unrest and riots of late 1950s Britain. Theorists such as Faist (2000: 204) are critical of the way in which homeland culture was depicted by traditional assimilation theory as 'cultural baggage' that must be shed in order to acquire the 'culture' of the host country and consequently feel a sense of belonging. Faist notes that assimilation theory depicts the adoption of the host country culture in opposition to that of the homeland, assuming ties to the homeland to be detrimental to the successful settlement in the host society. Those studying the practices of diasporas have long asserted that such a space facilitates a multiple belonging to the original homeland within a new homeland, as Walter describes:

> 'Diaspora involves feeling 'at home' in the area of settlement while retaining significant identification outside it.' (2001: 206).

The term diaspora was originally applied to the Jewish population following the Second World War, but has come to be employed in the generic description of 'communities of people dislocated from their native homelands through migration, immigration, or exile' (Braziel and Mannur, 2003: 4). One belongs to a diaspora through the subscription to a collective national identity: 'a yearning for community, history and roots' (Turner, 2008: 1051). The diaspora space is created through 'a longing for home that [is] embodied and enacted in practice' (Blunt, 2005: 14). Diasporic belonging is primarily researched in spaces seen as representative of and 'membered' by a diaspora community (Fortier, 1999: 59). Such spaces are those in which socio-cultural practices associated with the identity of the diaspora are practiced and displayed, such as churches, community centres, and ethnic shops. Being within such spaces can engender a sense of belonging to both the sending country, by continuing practices associated with the homeland, and to the host

country, by providing a spatial and usually social connection within the new locale. While assimilation theorists place an emphasis on the host nation-state as the basis for belonging, diaspora studies reflect the enduring role of the original homeland identity in providing a basis for belonging in settlement. As Brubaker (2005: 10) notes, 'discussions of diaspora are often informed by a strikingly idealist, teleological understanding of the nation-state', which can result in the overlooking of the influence of the host country's culture (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002; Mavroudi, 2007).

Numerous recent investigations into migrant lives have provided evidence which supports the notion that people can retain multiple senses of belonging across nation states (Levitt *et al*, 2003; Ehrkamp, 2005; Dyck and Dossa, 2007; Garapich, 2008; Ho, 2008; Bacigalupe and Lambe, 2011; Dürr, 2011; Tamaki, 2011). These studies seek to emphasise the connections between countries through a transnational approach. This approach is observed to have emerged in response to the dominance of assimilation theory and critiques the image of the nation-state as a container on which traditional notions of belonging were based (Mansfield, 2005; Vertovec, 2004a ; Vertovec, 2009). Transnationalism is not a new phenomenon, as diaspora studies have long highlighted the continued cultural home practices of migrant communities within the host society context. However, the study of transnationalism in its current form is thought to be revolutionised by the prevalence of heightened global connections and the time-space compression associated with globalisation. This context has influenced the way in which transnational connections can be created and maintained with much research into transnational migrant belonging focussed on the increased direct and virtual communication between migrants and their homeland(s).

Transnationalism places an emphasis on a social route to belonging realised through the 'sustained ties of persons, networks and organisations across the borders across multiple nation-states' (Faist, 2000: 189). Contact with the homeland from a distance, predominantly via the internet, is seen as the 'social glue' of transnational migration (Vertovec, 2004b). There is an assumption that through transnational connections people can belong anywhere as online spaces come to represent 'habitable' spaces capable of providing migrants with a sense of belonging that enables them to remain in a host country (Collins, 2009; Moore, 2008). However, such claims have led to criticisms that the transnational movement tends to 'exaggerate the consequences of technology' (Stein, 2001: 107). Research on the transnational practice of virtual communication emphasises

that 'virtual co-presence' is not always a valid substitute for 'being there' and the sensual longing for 'physical co-presence' can prompt return migration rather than sustain belonging from a distance (Baldassar, 2008: 260).

While the assimilation model faced criticism for its assumption that belonging can come to be provided by the new nation-state, transnationalist theory has been criticised for its overemphasis on the original homeland (Antonsich, 2010). Despite claims of operating beyond the constraints of the nation-state, such studies have faced criticism of 'methodological nationalism', as national identity remains the factor privileged for providing a sense of belonging (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002). Economic, social and cultural routes for belonging are all viewed within the context of the nation-state, whether original or host. While traditional assimilation theories assumed belonging would stem from replacing the original national identity with the host nation identity, transnationalism assumes identity will continue to be provided by the original homeland. While across social and cultural geography there has been an acceptance that identities are multiple and complex (Valentine, 2007), migration studies continue to remain preoccupied with the nation as the primary basis for identification and therefore belonging. Migration studies also tend to focus on a particular route to belonging, orientating research around either economic, social or cultural practices. Belonging is a complex process and does not necessarily equate with one particular dimension of life or a national identity. Accepting a more nuanced, multiscalar, multidimensional understanding of identity and experience involves a more complex notion of belonging that my study seeks to address.

This section has explored a range of routes to belonging, be they legal, political, economic, cultural and/or social. States understand that providing migrants with a sense of belonging is integral not only for migrant wellbeing, but for the functioning of wider society. The 2001 Home Office report, 'Secure Border, Safe Haven: Integration and Diversity in Modern Britain', revealed that the public would only tolerate further migration if they were 'assured migrants have a sense of belonging and identity.' The government approach to how this belonging is acquired and maintained and its role within this process has shifted, reflecting changing demographics and acknowledgements of failing policies. Research with migrants themselves has revealed the host nation government is just one of many influences and routes to belonging, particularly in the context of supranational citizenship provided by entities such as the EU. In the following

section, I propose a lens through which to explore the complex understandings and enactments of belonging for these recent supranational migrants in this shifting context.

## 2.3 Feeling at home

This chapter has thus far presented the legal, political, economic, social and cultural routes to belonging and highlighted the national bias in migration studies. Viewing migrant identity through a national lens prevents an in-depth understanding of the way in which belonging operates, limiting our empirical and theoretical understanding of the concept. In this section, I examine an alternative route through which to access a deeper and more representative understanding of migrant belonging. Despite being central to our understanding of migration, as the previous section has shown, belonging is critiqued as 'a notion both vaguely defined and ill-theorized' (Antonsich, 2010: 644). As is highlighted in a recent theme issue on the topic, 'seldom are questions asked that explore what belonging feels like; how it 'works'' (Wood and Waite, 2011: 201). My research responds to such calls to go beyond the facts of identity to explore the emotional operation and impact of belonging.

One of the seminal theorists of belonging is Yuval-Davis, who sees the concept as being fundamentally 'about emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home'' (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 197). Her description highlights the emotional nature of belonging that is frequently neglected by migration studies which categorise belonging through economic participation, social connections or cultural practices. Defining belonging as 'feeling at home' provides an emotional dimension to the concept which is often ignored by migration studies. The current body of migration studies which neglect the emotional impact of these potential routes to belonging leaves a superficial understanding of how belonging actually operates in conjunction with the migrant experience. I propose that the notion of feeling at home and homeliness represents an ideal dimension through which to explore migrant belonging.

While I do not equate feeling at home and homeliness with being at home, it is important to explore all the dimensions that the term 'home' and the space it evokes can encompass. Much of the reason for the rich and complex insights that home can provide lies in the multifaceted nature of the concept. In the early 1990s, Somerville sought to classify the ideological attributes of the home, summarising it as 'shelter, hearth, privacy, roots, abode and (possibly) paradise' (1992: 332). By the mid-1990s, these romanticised and idealised assumptions about the home space began to be challenged as a wealth of

research emphasised the importance of recognising that not all homes are homely and that the home can often be a site of oppression and violence, particularly for women (Ahrentzen, 1992; Porteous, 1995; Sibley, 1995a; Anthony, 1997; Young, 1997; Olwig, 1998; Badgett and Folbre, 1999; Chapman and Hockey, 1999; Wardhaugh, 1999; Jones, 2000; Manzo, 2003). Calls were made to:

> 'focus on the way in which the home disappoints, aggravates, neglects, confines and contradicts as much as it inspires and comforts us' (Moore, 2000: 213).

In recognition of the significant amount of work addressing the ambiguous nature of the home, in their seminal book on the topic, Blunt and Dowling (2006) declared a new 'critical geographies of home' movement. The physical home evidently represents an 'emotionally heightened space' capable of housing both positive and negative experiences and feelings, which lends itself to researching themes of identity and self (Anderson and Smith, 2001: 8).

For migrants having undergone the process of leaving one home and coming to live in another, the contradictory elements inherent in the concept of home are arguably more poignant as they 'negotiate homes 'here' and 'there'' (Staelhi and Nagel, 2006: 1599). The process of deconstructing the old home and the making of a new home presents a route through which to explore migrant identity. Both Tolia-Kelly and Hatfield have conducted research into the objects in migrants' homes which have revealed an understanding of their identities and relationships with their current and former homeland cultures (Tolia-Kelly, 2004a; 2004b; 2004c; Hatfield, 2010; 2011). While Tolia-Kelly and Hatfield focus on the material home, the insights their studies provide into the social and cultural imaginaries of home supports the assertion of Massey that home is 'constructed out of movement, communication [and] social relations which always stretched beyond [the dwelling]' (1992: 14). Other researchers report similarly rich insights gained from projects conducted within the home space (see Dupuis and Thorns, 1998; Blunt and Varley, 2004; Mallett, 2004; Pink, 2004; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Harrison, 2007; Brickell, 2012).

Home is often used as a synonym for the house, the physical dwelling represents a valuable research site for exploring themes of home, and some of the most influential founding work on the home comes from housing journals (e.g. Saunders and Williams, 1988; Somerville, 1989; Easthope, 2004). However, it is important to note that '[w]hile homes may be located, it is not the location that is 'home'' (Easthope, 2004: 135). In their

seminal work on the topic, Blunt and Dowling sought to emphasise the simultaneity of home as both a material space and an emotive ideology:

> 'Put most simply, home is: a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relations between the two' (2006: 2)

This definition highlights the concept's potential to provide access to multiple elements of belonging. The complex meanings of home make it a rich channel through which to access different aspects of belonging. Manzo (2005) notes that research on the home tends to take a 'residential focus', leading to dismissal of other potential spaces of homeliness and of those who do not occupy a fixed dwelling, such as nomadic communities. Manzo argues that the ambiguous emotions that can be asserted with the physical home and the potential of other places to be homely, means we should use the terms 'at-homeness' and 'homeliness' with caution. It is important to be aware that the dwelling may or may not be a site in which homeliness and belonging are experienced, but studies have clearly shown the physical home can provide access to other spaces and discussions of belonging.

The multifaceted nature of the concept can make it difficult to attain the comprehensive insight necessary to access the different potential elements of belonging. In a recent review of literature on home, it was observed that:

> 'researchers generally limit their analyses to particular dimensions of home – typically those aspects that routinely fall within their own disciplinary orbit.' (Mallett, 2004: 64)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the shifting focus towards the country of origin and the persisting national lens of transnationalism, home has tended to feature in migration studies as shorthand for homeland: the country of origin (Noble, 2002; Muir, 2010). The relationship with the homeland is seen as:

> 'a natural connection between people and territory, a legitimate and sacred connection that is fundamental to [one's] sense of belonging' (Svašek, 2010: 870)

However, while the homeland remains a key site of belonging, it is important to recognise that the migrant becomes relocated in another location -a potential place in which a sense of home and belonging can be (re)created: with every 'uprooting' there is a 'regrounding' (Ahmed *et al*, 2003). The tendency of the transnational paradigm to focus on being 'there' rather than 'here' has left understandings of other references for home

and belonging underexplored (Antonsich, 2010; Ralph and Staeheli, 2011), an issue my research seeks to address.

As well as focussing on the original homeland as the hub for belonging, the transnational paradigm has tended to overemphasise mobility, leading to calls from geographers to refocus on the lived experiences of settlement for migrants (Antonisch, 2010; Brickell and Datta, 2011). In a world of unprecedented mobility, there remains 'the desire to fix home with particular meaning by attaching it to place' (Butcher, 2010: 23). The dynamic element of the homemaking process, both in establishing a sense of emotional homeliness and in creating the material home in the host country, make it an ideal route for accessing feelings of belonging. While the emphasis on national identity conveyed by previous migration studies portrayed belonging as relatively fixed and one dimensional, considering belonging as a process that is reflected and represented in the homemaking practice provides access to the workings of migrant belonging in settlement. The making of home occurs within a specific space located within the 'physical, economic and social realities' of the world which the individual inhabits (Easthope, 2004: 129). There are limits to homemaking in the present, however, for most it is acknowledged that the 'actual home tends to be our best approximation of our ideal home, under a given set of constraining circumstances' (Tucker, 1994: 184). Under this premise it can provide an invaluable insight into how we feel we can belong.

Homemaking is the striving for the attributes of homeliness, a process that occurs both within and beyond the physical dwelling, as Higgins summarises:

> 'The real sense of home is essentially a metaphysical concept which transcends particular sets of physical arrangements designed to foster domesticity' (1989: 172)

The hub of the home is influenced by the world in which it is located, impacted by multiple scales of space and time: we do not create our homes in abstract space. Both our physical dwellings and imagined senses of home are contextualised and established in relation to external factors and the perspectives and actions of others. This reflects the fact that belonging is a process that requires both internal and external identity claims and acceptance as '[i]dentities have two intertwined meanings: the self-defined sense of who we are; and, second, how we are constructed by 'outsiders'' (England and Stiell,

1997: 196). Difference is produced 'both within and beyond 'the subject'' (Bell, 1999: 5) with a sense of belonging reliant on feeling welcomed and accepted into a space.

This section has demonstrated how the migrant home can provide a route to understanding belonging which encompasses multiple elements. The multifaceted nature of the concept of home, lends itself to exploring multiple components of belonging, including and surpassing economic, social and cultural dimensions. The experience of homemaking is also a fitting means of accessing the process of belonging, acknowledging it as dynamic and fluid: 'a process (*becoming*) rather than a status (*being*)' (Antonsich, 2010: 652). Home is an inherently temporal phenomenon, as a sense of homeliness is arguably marked by settlement over time and investment for the future (Chowers, 2002). Exploring why and how migrants negotiate a sense of homeliness in the context of change in the intimate context of the home provides a more in-depth insight into the migrant experience of belonging. The way in which the new home is created, negotiated and experienced both physically and emotionally represents an opportunity to explore the processes within an alternative and important spatial dimension of belonging.

## 2.4 Belonging over time

The previous section has highlighted the dynamic quality of belonging: theorists assert belonging is a process rather than a state (Doná, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). The traditional theory of belonging through assimilation within a new nation-state assumes belonging to operate in an accumulative manner, with a sense of belonging in the host country increasing as ties to the original homeland gradually decrease over time. This notion of belonging operating within a linear time framework with permanent settlement viewed as the route to belonging is contradicted by the subsequent research of transnational theorists. Their research emphasises mobility and a transient view that belonging could be multiple and ties sustained across numerous nation-states. There appears to be room for a greater understanding of the relationship between migrant belonging and time, with conclusions drawn thus far contradictory and limited in their evidential support. This section explores the way in which time has currently featured in migration studies, and looks to other potential conceptualisations which inform this study.

The way in which time and belonging is considered in migration studies can take different forms. The majority of research is concerned with the length of stay, on the assumption that belonging is accumulated over time spent in the host country (Hammar, 1994). Migrants have been traditionally observed and expected to undergo an embedding in the

host society over time as they find more stable employment prospects (Piore, 1979). Particularly in the domain of population studies with a political or legal leaning, there is a tendency to classify migrants as either long-term or short-term (Cwerner, 2001). However, there are calls for the blurring of boundaries between these categories (King, 2002) in recognition that the length of stay is a continuum and therefore categorising migrants in this way is problematic (Bailey, 2001). Crude categorisations based on quantitative calculations of years passed since arrival and the associated assumption that belonging is accumulated in a linear fashion over time, fail to provide an insight into the workings of belonging and the lived experiences of temporary or permanent settlement.

It is important to recognise that temporariness and permanency refers to more than just the length of stay in the host country, and the terms' qualitative dimensions have important implications for understanding belonging. Considering both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of temporariness and permanency, reveal the complexities of the terms' implications. For example, Juul (2011) describes refugees from the former-Yugoslavia in Denmark as living in a state of 'permanent temporariness', as they travel between their home and host countries in order to maintain social ties and maximise the benefits of a seasonal economy. While in this case, the research portrays this state in a positive light as a way of life that has been chosen and is enjoyed by those involved, this is not always the case. Asylum-seekers can find themselves held in a state of 'permanent temporariness' as they await the decision of whether they will be granted refugee status and given the opportunity to remain in the host country. This is a situation deemed unhomely and insufficient in providing a base for belonging (Vitus, 2010). Whilst the proclaimers of the new era of transnationalism place increasing numbers of migrants in a state of 'permanent temporariness', the political and legal system has not adjusted to reflect this phenomenon (Bailey el al, 2002). While transnationalism emphasises the importance of movement and interactions beyond borders in today's globalised society, Bailey (2001), urges us to recognise that these transnational migrants remain located within space and time. In contexts such as the EU in which migrants are afforded free movement and a supranational citizenship, these notions of temporariness and permanence require further investigation.

The assumption that belonging is accumulated over time has created an interest in a generational analysis of migration and belonging. Traditionally comparing generations has provided a basis for judging the success of migrant assimilation, with the assumption

being that the second generation and subsequent generations will gradually become more culturally similar to the host population and as a result more economically prosperous (Skrbiš, 2007). However, this supposition has been challenged by empirical research, such as Gans' (1992) discovery of 'second generation decline' in terms of economic progression, and numerous studies which note the desire of second generations to reconnect with the homeland culture of their parents' generation (see Singla, 2008).

Another temporal aspect that population geographies have begun to recognise is the important role that the individual biography or 'life course' plays in the decisions to migrate (see Bailey, 2009). This has resulted in a range of conclusions drawn from large scale data collection that have implications for understanding belonging. While previous studies tended to focus on continuous variables, such as age or income data, there has been a shift towards the consideration of more qualitative data, termed the 'event-history' approach (Kulu and Milewski, 2007). By considering events in the individual biography, such as marriage, divorce, child birth and job history, researchers are able to construct models and draw conclusions about how and when people are most likely to migrate. These findings include that people of job seeking age are most likely to migrate and that having a family reduces the propensity to migrate (Dahl and Sorenson, 2010; Kley, 2011; Mellander et al, 2011). The data relied on by such studies, leads to an emphasis on the 'spectacular' -the big and recordable events in life- leading to an underrepresentation of the more 'mundane' experiences of time and belonging (King, 2002: 102). Such research provides an important background for studies such as mine; however, small-scale in-depth research is needed to provide a more nuanced understanding of belonging.

The legacy of traditional assimilation models has been the dominance of a linear conceptualisation of belonging in the field of migration studies. However, research into nationalism in the context of nation-state citizenship has begun to recognise belonging as operating through less linear and more complex temporal dimensions. Theorists of nationalism have observed the way in which citizens' sense of belonging to the nation shifts over time. Collins (2012) identifies 'time bubbles of nationalism' in which dramatic events, such as the American 9/11 terrorist attacks trigger collective expressions of nationalism lasting for months at a time. Wood (2012) observes that heightened periods of increased feelings of belonging to the nation can be far shorter and evoked directly by an individual's surroundings, such in the context of musical performances. The notion of

shaping a sense of belonging through time is considered through the notion of 'national synchronicities' in Edensor's (2006) work on national time-spaces. He argues that a sense of belonging to the nation can be asserted through a national rhythm, established in the institutional regulation of temporal aspects of everyday life ranging from speed limits to school holiday dates to the opening hours of commercial and leisure facilities. Kinvall (2004) and Skey (2010) claim that in an increasingly globalised world, many are seeking the 'thick' attachment and sense of belonging derived from the nation-state. Ellison (2014) differentiates this notion of 'thickness' belonging derived from the time spent engaged in embedded activities in the nation-state with the 'thin' time associated with networks and engagement with virtual communities beyond the nation-state. He notes that belonging and citizenship is best understood as a temporal experience that is to varying degrees spatially embedded according to context. These theories of nationalism are marked by the salience of a sense of time, and demonstrate a sophisticated notion of the temporal dimension that goes beyond the linear and object understanding that underpins much of migrant studies. The exploration of belonging as an experienced migratory process is restricted by the conceptualised understanding of time in migration studies. Although transnationalism sought to address the spatial linear assumptions of migration studies (Ho, 2006: 1287), it did little to address the *temporal* linear assumptions.

The conventional consideration of time in migration studies –if considered at all- is static and/or linear, providing a snapshot of a migrant's life at a particular moment, or mapping their experiences according to objective time, such as the number of years spent in the host country or the anticipated length of stay. This is to some extent due to practical difficulties in conducting in-depth longitudinal qualitative research, but is perhaps better explained by migration studies' limited engagement with sociological theory, in particular the conceptualisation of time as multiple, fluid and subjectively experienced (Adam, 2004). This section explores the potential of alternative conceptualisations of time and geography to better represent the complex way in which time is experienced by migrants, and critiques the main ways in which time and belonging is currently theorised in migration studies.

In 1978, Carlstein *et al* described time as geography's 'bastard-child which received attention only when it cried out too loudly to be neglected', claiming that 'geographers did not recognise that society and habitat had a temporal structure just as they had a

spatial structure' (Carlstein *et al*, 1978: 1). The exposure of the absence of time in geography, led to the development of the time geographies movement and in 1975, Parkes and Thrift announced that geography was entering a temporal paradigm. However, in the decades which followed, time has remained relatively under-theorised in human geography and in the social sciences more widely, as Adam notes:

> 'Even social scientists charged with the explanation of social life tend to take time for granted, leaving it unaddressed as an implicated rather than explicated feature of their theories and empirical studies.' (Adam, 2004: 3)

We are 'necessarily chronological beings' (Jenkins, 2002: 268) and therefore exploring the temporal dimension is pertinent in furthering our understanding of how life is experienced and perceived. Early incorporations of time in geography are characterised by diagrammatic representations of time-space popularised by Hägerstrand –'the father of time-geography' (Gren, 2001: 209). These diagrams quantitatively plotted time as a line on a graph, reflecting the dominant understanding of time as an objective linear progression (Davies, 2001). However, other social scientists and philosophers have highlighted that time does not exist on a singular, linear plane; our lives are lived in what Nowotny terms 'pluritemporalism' (1992: 424).

Time theorists assert that time is principally conceptualised in two ways: objective and subjective time. This distinction has been made by many theorists, but is most commonly attributed to Bergson's (1888) differentiation between the *temps* and the *durée*. *Temps* refers to the conventional temporal framework through which everyday lives are organised and analysed according to discrete units: minutes, hours, days etc. It is known by numerous names, including objective, absolute, metronomic or clock time. Described by Adam as 'empty time', it is 'measured [in] the same abstract units anywhere, any time' (2004: 43). It is this form of time that dominates the majority of geographical studies with a temporal consideration, a trend which is generally echoed in migration studies. Although the clocks and calendars which chart objective time have become our established temporal frame of reference, expressing time solely in this manner ignores the complexities of how we actually experience its passing (Geißler, 2002). Mead (1932) dismisses objective time as simply a convention and believes a true understanding of human experience must encompass an exploration of the dimension of subjective time or what Bergson terms the *durée*. The *durée* –also known as subjective or relational time- refers to the way in which time is experienced. It encompasses the ways in which time is

felt and imagined, and as such it can speed up or slow down for an individual according to the experiences they are undergoing (Bergson, 1888). It is important to note that objective and subjective conceptualisations of time are not mutually exclusive; they 'co-exist, interpenetrate and mutually implicate one another' (Adam, 2004: 69) and are able to be 'held simultaneously without causing cognitive distress' (Adam, 2004: 1). Individuals are capable of an awareness of an amount of time in terms of conventionally measurable temporal units while also experiencing how that period feels as a lived time.

Another key element of time that has emerged as central to recent time theory is the conceptualisation of the past, present and future. Just as subjective and objective time can be regarded as operating in conjunction with one another, understandings of past, present and future are also formed in reference to one another. The past is not simply a fixed actuality; it is fabricated from our memories which are themselves subjective, selected and reconstructed in the context of a new present and changing vision of the future (Mead, 1932). Many prominent time theorists assert that subjective time is always oriented towards the future (Grosz, 1999; Heidegger, 1980; Husserl, 1964):

> 'When we observe the world around us it appears as a progression from past to future. Yet, from the relative position of the Self, we must admit that life involves an unbroken chain of future-oriented decisions that bring the future into present and allow it to fade into the past.' (Adam, 2004: 54)

Therefore how a person anticipates their future has important implications for their current experiences and perspective of their life. This notion of what we are to become impacting on our present fits well with our understandings of belonging, particularly in conjunction with Probyn's (1996) deconstruction of the term. By highlighting the two etymological components of belonging –'being' and 'longing'- she draws our attention to both the present lived experience and the desires for past and/or future selves, strengthening the case for a temporally contextualised understanding of belonging. We are both what we are and what we hope to become, and for migrants facing a decision of where and how to settle, these aspects of belonging are complex and require in-depth investigation.

An area of geography that has sought to question the taken-for-granted assumptions of time and develop the notion of future selves is that of children's geographies. Critical of the assumptions of a linear pattern of childhood development in which age in years

corresponds with particular maturity or biological development, academics in this field have sought to highlight alternative conceptualisations of growing up and the transition from childhood to adulthood as a non-linear 'becoming' (see Arnett, 2004; te Riele, 2004; Worth, 2009). However, it is important to acknowledge that alternative experiences of time are experienced by everyone, not just children. Recognition of the difference between objective and subjective time is particularly relevant in the field of migration, for as migrants arrive and settle in the host country, time is not solely experienced in the linear manner in which migration scholars have traditionally portrayed it.

The migrant journey is a particularly time-sensitive experience and migrants are perhaps among those more attuned to considering their experiences of time having undergone the pivotal moment of relocating and deciding to settle in a new environment. Migrating fulfils the definition of a pivotal moment as an 'occasion in human life when one makes a decisive choice, a commitment which gives definitive form to one's future and a retroactive meaning to one's past' (Dreyfus, 1975: 151). In his seminal work on time and narrative, Ricoeur (1984) asserts that our lives are made meaningful by the way in which we order them and fit events, experiences and situations within our individual narratives of self. Transitions within the life course, such as becoming an adult or retiring, represent significant elements to be incorporated and understood within the self-narrative, and the same is true of any significant event or 'pivotal moment' within the life course (Hankiss, 1981; McAdams, 1993). As migrants become migrants, rather than remaining inhabitants of their countries of origin, their life narratives receive a new event which must be made to fit within the story so far. This can require significant retelling and reimagining in order for the individual to feel they still belong within their story in their new state as a migrant. I consider migration not only as a process of seeking belonging in a new nation-state, but of situating oneself afresh within one's life story.

The neglect of the temporal dimension of migration is made perhaps more curious given that the current dominance of transnationalism in migration studies stems from a reconfiguration of time and space in the context of globalisation. Globalisation is associated with time-space compression, a phenomenon described by Harvey as the 'processes that . . . revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time' (1990: 240). In a globalised world, increased connections facilitated through advances in information communication technologies and an availability of relatively cheap and fast transportation have decreased the perceived geographical distances between places as they become

temporally more closely connected –or in the case of the internet, instantaneously accessible. Despite this revolutionary conception of time-space forming the foundations of current transnational migration studies, the temporal dimension remains largely undertheorised in this field (Dodgshon, 1999).

As noted in the previous section, transnationalism in migration studies has shifted the focus from finding belonging in the host country through classical assimilation models towards the continuing role of the homeland as the original and sustained site of belonging. This bias not only neglects an understanding of belonging as it is being experienced in the host country, but also abandons the future orientation inherent in assimilation models in favour of prioritising past ties and present practices. This temporal orientation is at odds with time theorists' theoretical consensus that time is experienced as future-oriented –once again reflecting a lack of engagement with relevant social science theories amongst scholars of migration. A consideration of time as future-oriented may aid a better insight into one of the most pertinent temporal issues in migration studies: the question of how long migrants will stay, with the assumption being that a greater sense of belonging will develop with an increasing length of stay in the host country. Bailey identifies the 'continuum' between 'short-term temporary' and 'long term permanent moves' (Bailey, 2001: 415) as a key analytical categorisation tool within migration. However, this temporal dyad is rarely studied in its continuum form. Migrants tend to either be categorised as long or short-term, despite findings that a migrant's planned length of stay is prone to postponement (Cwerner, 2001; Coe, 2010; Boccagni, 2011). There is little investigation into the impact that a discord between anticipated and actual length of stay has on migrant belonging. However, how long a migrant plans to reside in the host country is likely to impact on whether they perceive the context as 'hotel' or 'home' (Ho, 2006: 391), with the latter more likely to be associated with a permanent or long-term stay.

Research finds temporariness in migration is associated with a lack of desire to stay (Al-Rasheed, 1994) and prevents a sense of belonging from being established due to a lack of motivation to invest materially, emotionally or socially in a temporary dwelling (van der Klis and Karsten, 2008). For those experiencing a permanent state of temporariness, as is in the case for many asylum seekers, living in wait of a future they have no control over has been found to lead to a sense of powerlessness that is damaging to psychological wellbeing (Vitus, 2010). While asylum seekers occupy a very specific temporal dimension

due to the circumstances of their migratory process, all migrants experience some form of waiting. Migrating stimulates an anticipation of what life will be like in the host country, often involving hopes for betterment, such as being reunited with family members, learning the host country's language, making friends, finding work, and creating a home. All of these events take time to achieve, and most are on-going processes. In our imaginations, by anticipating such events, we constantly 'seek to colonise the future' (Giddens, 1991: 125). This sense of futurity leaves many with an impression of waiting that is 'more than a certain *amount* of time, it is *experienced* time' (Schweizer, 2008: 127). Belonging involves a struggle between agency and structural circumstances, and the process of negotiating a sense of belonging in a new country involves waiting that is both active and passive, both within and beyond the migrant's control. By exploring the way in which migrants wait to belong –not within the exceptional circumstances of the asylum seeking process- but within the ordinary space of the home, my research provides an insight into this dimension of belonging that –to some extent- we all undergo.

Despite theoretical advances in the conceptualisation of time that reflect the lived reality of time as future-oriented and both measurable and experienced, a comprehensive understanding of time remains lacking in migration studies. The aspiration of time-geographers that we would enter a temporal paradigm is unrealised and the prioritisation of space rather than time remains a trend across the discipline (May and Thrift, 2001). While the time-geography theorists play an important role in drawing our attention to the dimension of time within the discipline of geography, their tendency towards abstract theory has been at the expense of furthering the discipline through empirical explorations of time. The experiences of migration represent an opportunity for a rich empirical insight into the way in which the pace of life can change according to experiences and perceptions, and the role that an awareness of past, present and future play in the construction of self. In turn, the temporal theories outlined in this section have important implications for understanding how settlement is experienced and senses of belonging are (re)formed.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The defining characteristics of belonging –the variety in the ways and to what people feel attached, and the dynamic nature of belonging- are yet to be fully recognised in migration studies. Migration studies have moved from the assumption that migrants should strive to belong to their host nation-state through economic and socio-cultural assimilation, to a

transnational approach that emphasises movement and an on-going relationship with the original homeland. This shift has been accompanied by a methodological preference for more small-scale qualitative research, exposing the importance of more localised spaces of belonging. However, while the nation-state is claimed to be less relevant as other scales come to the fore and the transnational paradigm proclaims the declining role of national borders, this chapter has demonstrated that the nation-state continues to play a defining role in migration and a certain methodological nationalism has become inherent in migration studies. Nationality is assumed to be the foundation for attachment and markers of belonging with economic, social and cultural routes to belonging explored predominantly within a national framework. I have presented an argument for home, as both a spatial reality and imagined ideology, as a new lens through which to understand belonging as a multifaceted and individual process. I argue that by conceptualising belonging as a sense of homeliness, further aspects of migrant belonging can be accessed and analysed beyond the constraints of methodological nationalism.

I have emphasised the temporal nature of migration, and the need for migrant studies to reflect belonging as a 'work-in-progress' (Gedalof, 2007: 90). As Massey asserts, 'space and time are inextricably interwoven' (1994: 260) and therefore migrant belongings need to be theorised in both spatial and temporal dimensions. Home has been shown to be a processual, spatial, ideological and material concept that provides a fitting lens through which to explore the way in which migrants construct a sense of belonging in settlement. By analytically privileging the home as the site of belonging and focussing on the temporal, as well as spatial, experience of migration, my research seeks to contribute empirically and theoretically to geographical understandings of migrant belonging.

# Chapter Three: Seeking the Polish Migrant Family Story

## 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter emphasised the investigative priorities within this thesis, highlighting the importance of considering time and home within understandings of belonging. Gaining an insight into these dimensions requires access to the intimate spaces of the lived and imagined home and personal stories of self over time. Such in depth qualitative research involves a range of methodological considerations. In conducting research with migrant families in their homes over an extended period of time, a multi-faceted and evolving methodology was required. This chapter explores the practical and ethical issues encountered during the design and execution of this research process.

The chapter takes a largely chronological approach in outlining the research process and the considerations and observations made at each stage. Firstly, I describe the selection of the location of the research and the subsequent recruitment strategy of participant families, before moving on to discuss the methods applied to access the data sought. In doing so, I explore the need and outcomes of building up relationships with families and the individual family members in the home: including the methodological strategies applied and ethical implications involved. I then go on to describe the way in which the data obtained has been analysed and will be presented throughout the thesis in order to best reflect the experiences and perspectives of my participants.

My thesis exhibits an appreciation of the self-reflective turn in feminist geographical research, the positive effect of which has been noted by a range of academics (see Burawoy, 1991; England; 1994; Rose, 1997). As such, I represent my methodology openly as an evolving process and acknowledge both the successes and failings of the research plan. I doing so, I seek to contribute to a fuller picture of the complexities involved in the research process and the importance of learning from the challenges and changes encountered during the research journey.

## 3.2 Locating the research geographically

Geographically my research is based in Manchester, a large city in North-West England. While migrant settlement tends to be concentrated around London, the settlement pattern of migrants from the eight Central and Eastern Europe which joined the European Union in 2004 has been far more widespread across Britain. Drinkwater *et al*'s (2008)

quantitative analysis of Census and Workers Registration Scheme data found that just 13 percent A-8 migrants are located in London compared with 40 percent of all immigrants arriving in Britain. Initial empirical studies did not reflect this atypical geographic dispersal with the majority of early post-accession research with Central and Eastern European migrants located in London and the surrounding South-East region of England (Burrell, 2010). Studies have since been conducted elsewhere, including: Northampton (Callender, 2009); Newcastle (Stenning and Dawley, 2009); Leicester (Burrell, 2003; Roberts-Thomson, 2007); the Midlands (Galasińska, 2010a); Leeds (Cook *et al*, 2011); Edinburgh (Botterill, 2011) and across Scotland (Moskal, 2009, 2011). However, the North West of England remains largely underrepresented amongst research with this migrant group (cf. Temple, 2010; Cook *et al*, 2011), despite data indicating a sizeable population located in the region with 21,231 Polish language speakers recorded to be living in Greater Manchester in the 2011 Census (ONS, 2013). Manchester is the largest metropolitan area within the region with a population of almost half a million living within the city (Manchester City Council, 2011) and a total of 2.9 million estimated to be living within Greater Manchester in 2009 (ONS, 2010). As well as the destination location for many Poles arriving in Britain since Poland's accession to the EU, Manchester is also home to a significant established Polish community comprised of those who settled in the area during and in the aftermath of the Second World War. This population established a community marked by institutions, such as Polish churches, social clubs and Saturday schools, that are still in operation today. In fact, studies show that such spaces have received a youthful boost to the predominantly aging post-war Polish community due to the recent influx of Polish migrants and their families following Poland's EU accession (Garapich, 2008; White and Ryan, 2008). The current wave of Polish migrants have also marked their presence in the urban landscape primarily through the numerous Polish food shops (known as *polski sklep*) that have arisen in response to the demands of a growing population seeking recognisable Polish products and brands.

While the commercial, religious and socio-cultural establishments which mark the presence of Polish settlement are frequented by both the established wartime Polish community and more recent Polish migrants, the two groups cannot be considered as a cohesive community having migrated under very different circumstances from a homeland that has greatly changed over time (Brown, 2011). Gill (2010a) criticises the tendency for researchers interested in the current wave of Polish migration to recruit participants from solely within the established Polish church community, arguing that

such sampling does not reflect the recently arrived heterogeneous Polish population amongst which church-goers represent a minority. In appreciation of this critique and in recognition that being a member of a church community may have an impact on the belonging processes of my participants, I chose to recruit from a varied range of sites and sources. With the permission of proprietors, I displayed English and Polish language posters and handed out leaflets detailing my project and calling for participants in Polish food shops, churches, community centres, Saturday schools, and facilities likely to attract families in areas with significant Polish minorities, namely leisure centres and libraries. I also posted details of the project on local community websites, targeting both the local neighbourhood (www.gumtree.com) and local Polish community (www.PolishForums.com), recognising the importance of the internet as a communication tool amongst Polish migrants (Metykowa, 2010). Gatekeepers from a Manchester-based migrant charity ('Migrants Supporting Migrants'), a Polish Scouting organisation, a language school, and personal language exchanges[4] also provided me with access to participants. Almost all participants were recruited in isolation from one another, with plans to recruit through snowballing prevented by participants' lack of contact with other suitable and willing families. Previous studies have noted a scepticism and lack of understanding of being involved in research amongst Polish migrants suggested to stem from a fear and mistrust of authorities and institutions in the context of a post-communist Poland (Sime, 2010; Garapich, 2011). In order to counteract such perspectives, I chose to spend a significant amount of time building relationships with the families in my study. The process and outcome of this approach has ethical implications which are explored further in the following section.

## 3.2 Locating the research methodologically

Methodologically my research is located within the qualitative tradition of in-depth case studies, following ten Polish migrant families in Manchester over the course of a year.[5] While previous large-scale surveys provide a breadth of knowledge and statistical data about the Polish migrant population, there is a need for a greater depth of understanding of, not just this migrant group, but the way in which migrants settle and negotiate belonging over time. My research reflects the methodological advances instigated by

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[4] As a non-Polish speaker, throughout my PhD I undertook Polish language training and exchanged my English language skills in return for learning Polish with native Polish speakers. While I was unable to reach a level of proficiency needed to conduct interviews in Polish, learning the language did provide me with a gateway into the Polish community and demonstrated a genuine interest in Polish culture which arguably afforded me greater trust and rapport amongst my participants.

[5] Details of participant families for reference throughout the thesis are presented in Appendix 1.

feminist geographers of the 1970s who rallied against the neopositivist and masculinist tradition of the discipline to represent a more heterogeneous research subject, and create a more transparent research process by exposing the masculine gaze of the researcher (Hanson and Monk, 1982; Bondi, 1992; Philo, 1992). This methodological movement involved a rejection of the positivist insistence on the researcher as a 'dispassionate, camera-like observer' (Marcus and Cushman, 1982: 32), exposing that this ideal, objective researcher was an impossible myth:

> 'the conventional assumption that the researcher is a disembodied, rational, sexually indifferent subject- a mind unlocated in space, time or constitutive interrelationships with other, is a status normally only attributed to angels.' (Grosz, 1986: 199)

Recognising the intersubjectivity inherent in the research process, feminist geographers dismiss the possibility and appeal of the researcher as an objective, unfeeling machine (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1988; Okely, 1992; Opie, 1992; England, 1994). While feminist geography has developed theoretically and empirically in a vast range of directions (see McDowell, 1993; Longhurst, 2001), certain methodological legacies remain and are inherent in my own project. The first is the acknowledgement of positionality within fieldwork. By locating oneself within the intersubjective research process, the researcher gains an awareness of how fieldwork is experienced and can be improved for both the researcher and participant. In this section, and throughout the thesis, I reflect upon how research encounters, methods used, and contexts inhabited impact on the research experience. Another aspect of the feminist tradition that has impacted on my research methodology is the aim to shift the balance of power from researcher to researched. Feminist geographers were the first to see research as being *with*, rather than *for* or *about* the research participant, with a methodology deemed particularly suitable to this quest being 'qualitative, detailed, small scale and case study work' (McDowell, 1992: 406). By choosing such an approach, employing the methods detailed later in this chapter, and by maintaining an awareness of my positionality as the researcher, I endeavoured to provide participants with an active role in the research production.

A key issue to reflect upon in terms of positionality is the dichotomy of insider/outsider: whether or not the researcher 'belongs' within the group they are researching. In all research projects the researcher will very rarely fall within the category of either 'insider' or 'outsider', and in in-depth research which includes a range of participants and focuses

on a range of topics the insider/outsider dynamics are particularly complex and likely to shift (Mullings, 1999; Kusow, 2003). Structurally I am an 'outsider' in terms of my British nationality, non-migrant background, and lack of children in a project about Polish migrant parents and children. Being an outsider is known to help to shift the power balance from researcher to researched as the latter can be made to feel that they hold the greater knowledge (Smith, 1988). Promoting my participants as the 'experts' that they are on their experiences, I use my outsider status to elicit more in-depth information or clarifications that I may not otherwise obtain if participants assumed I had experienced a similar situation.

However, creating a sense of commonality is also key in building the rapport necessary in my research methodology (Hertz, 1995), and at times other factors came to the fore providing both an explicit and implicit 'insider' status: be it my residency in Manchester, my experience of moving house and relocating to a new city, my white skin colour, my gender, or my time spent in Poland and within Polish institutions in Manchester. The feminist tradition from which my methodology originates encourages the sharing of information between researcher and researched in order to break down power hierarchies in which the researcher possesses the knowledge and control (Gilbert, 1994). Emphasising factors in common with participants is one way in which such sharing can occur. The insider/outsider boundary crossing that this can incur changes according to participant, situation, and over time. For example, my enjoyment of cooking was shared by some participants and presented the occasion to discuss this homemaking practice and its role in participants' lives. While working with children individually, I adopted a more childlike character, playing with toys and demonstrating an interest in youth culture, such as music, and talking about my experiences as a child to gain a sense of connection. White and Bushin (2011) emphasise the importance in creating such connections as a means of gaining the rapport particularly necessary when working with children. In their research project with refugee children attending a childcare facility in Ireland, in order to build relationships with their participants they partook in:

> 'the performance of normative gendered identities in interactions with the children [such as painting fingernails or braiding hair (Naomi [Bushin]); playing football or building cars out of old cardboard boxes (Allen [White])]'
> (White and Bushin, 2011: 332)

I similarly would emphasise or play down my gender in my interactions with participants as a means of gaining a connection with them, such as playing with toy cars or computer games with boys and discussing jewellery or fashion with girls. However, it is important not to assume such gendered performances are appropriate and I took my lead from participants recognising that gender plays a complex role in identity construction.

Despite certain structural constraints, the researcher can (re)invent themselves and draw upon appropriate commonalities to create the rapport with participants that is fundamental in achieving the data sought in in-depth qualitative research. Recognising that 'status emerges from the interaction between the researcher and the participants' (Kusow, 2003: 597), Kusow highlights the importance of the shifting boundaries of insider/outsider for gaining access and building research relationships when conducting research with migrant groups who may view researchers with suspicion. As the previous section noted, Polish migrants have been idenified as a group reluctant to participate in research and suspicious of researchers' intentions (Sime, 2010; Garapich, 2011). By getting to know my participants over time and building up a sense of rapport, such suspicions were alleviated and relationships came to be associated with companionable time spent together.

As well as providing the time to build such relationships, the longitudinal nature of my project also reflects the focus on the temporal dimension within my research. By following the ten families over the course of a year, I witnessed them undergo some changes in their lives with the potential to impact on their sense of belonging, from moving house to changing jobs to visits from Polish family members. By conducting the research over the course of a year, I was able to explore the impact of such events and to understand how belonging changes over time. As noted in the previous chapter, the present is understood in relation to a past and future which are constructed in the moment of the present. By following the families over a year, I was able to explore how the progress of time changes such notions of past and future, particularly as some future aspirations are realised, for example in the purchasing of a house.

## 3.3 Family profiles

The following section is designed to provide a brief introduction to each of my ten participant families and to be used as a point of reference for research material cited throughout the thesis. All of the ten families arrived in Manchester between 2004 and

2006 and have children aged between six and 18 years old[6] in full-time education. The families either arrived in Manchester as a whole family or have been reunited following a period of one parent moving to Manchester to organise employment and accommodation first. In all of the families at least one parent is in full-time employment, with participants working across a wide range of sectors. The majority of the families include two heterosexual married parents, while three of the families are single parent families in which the mothers were divorced from their children's fathers in Poland. The families live in neighbourhoods across Manchester in dwellings ranging from a privately rented two-bedroom flat to a council-owned two-up-two-down terraced house to a mortgaged four-bedroom detached house.

***The Markowska Family***



| Basia, 48 | Maria, 18 |
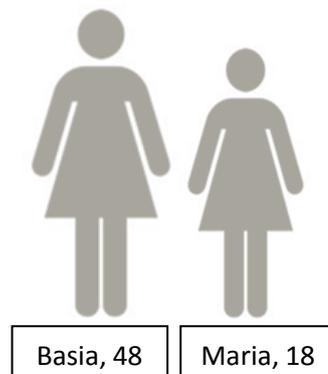
Basia Markowska[7] moved from Warsaw to Manchester in 2004 and was joined by her daughter, Maria (18 years old), a few years later after she had completed her schooling in Poland. In the meantime, Maria stayed with Basia's mother in Warsaw. Basia divorced Maria's father in in 1995, with Maria losing contact with him a few years later. Having lived in several shared houses with other migrants, Basia had moved into a two-bedroom rented flat when Maria joined her. This is where the family continue to live. After taking many temporary administrative roles Basia currently works as translator for the NHS.

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[6] All ages given are those of the children at the start of the research process in September 2010. Families with children under the age of five years old were not included in the project as the methodology requires the involvement of all family members and under-fives are unlikely to be able to participate fully with the methods I intend to use.

[7] All of the names used are pseudonyms given to provide anonymity to the participants involved.

*The Kowalski Family*



| Gizela, 42 | Zarek, 40 | Florentyna, 9 |
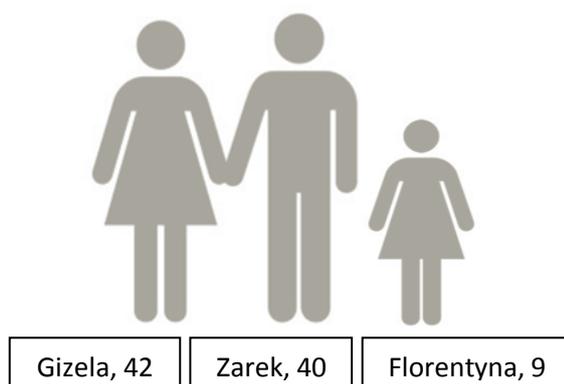
Zarek, Gizela and Florentyna (nine years old) moved from the city of Wroclaw to Manchester in 2006 following Gizela's adult son's successful settlement in the city. They migrated together and moved into the rented two-bedroom apartment which Gizela's son had lived in, and he moved in with his girlfriend in a nearby town. During the course of my research they relocated to live in a three-bedroom council house in a different area. Gizela works as a cleaner, while Zarek works as an independent electrician, having also worked as a cleaner for several years before converting his Polish electrician qualifications to British standards.

*The Nowak Family*



| Magda, 36 | Greg, 38 | Stan, 11 | Alex, 6 |
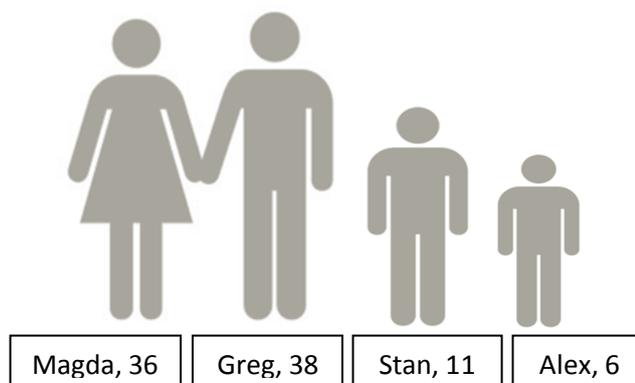
Greg and Magda moved from Poznan with their two sons, Stan (11 years old) and Alex (six years old) in 2005 when Magda took up a post-graduate position at the University of Manchester. Greg worked as an IT technician at the same university. The family rented a three-bedroom house in an area recommended to them by colleagues at the university. Having completed her PhD and been offered a post-doctoral position in Melbourne, Magda and the family relocated to Australia towards the end of the fieldwork period.

*The Wilk Family*



| Sylwia, 40 | Edward, 45 | Oliwia, 17 | Zofia, 15 | Simeon, 10 | Asia, 18 (lives in Poland) |
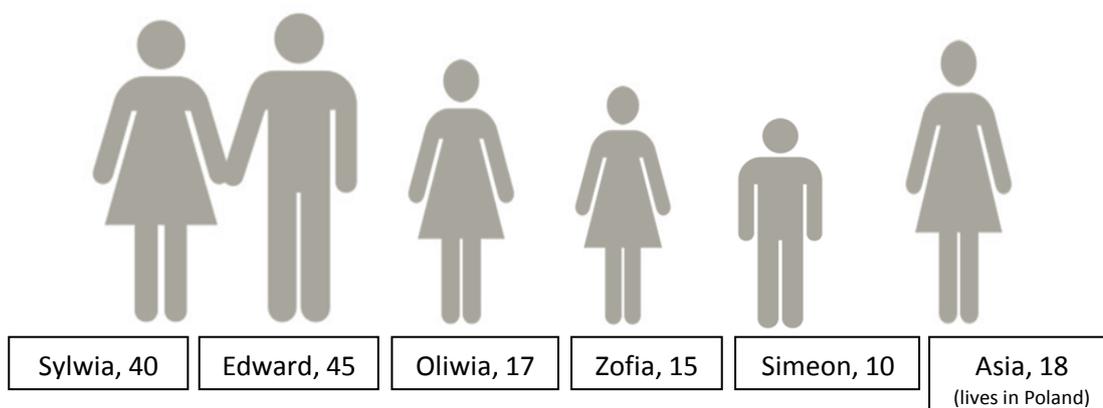
Edward moved from Wroclaw to Manchester in 2005 to earn more money in his profession as a confectioner. He bought a mortgaged four-bedroom house, renting out the unoccupied rooms to other Poles, before being reunited by his family. He was joined in 2007 by his wife, Sylwia, and three of their four children: Oliwia (17 years old), Zofia (15 years old) and Simeon (ten years old). The couple's eldest daughter, Asia (18 years old), remained in the family home in Poland with Sylwia's mother to complete her studies. Asia visits the family in Manchester every summer for a few weeks.

*The Zieliński Family*



| Kristina, 40 | Bogdan, 40 | Agata, 15 | Monika, 13 |
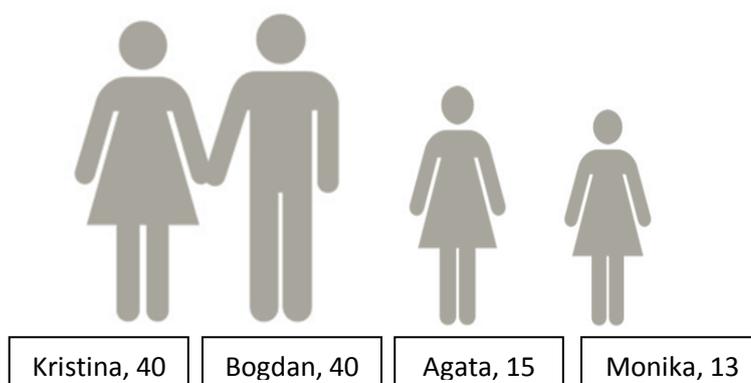
Bogdan left his wife and two daughters in their small Polish hometown of Oswiecim to move to Manchester in 2005. He was selected in a recruitment drive by a British bus company and arrived in Manchester with a group of other Polish men who were recruited alongside him. Bogdan lived in a shared house with six of these fellow drivers before being joined by his wife, Kristina, and daughters, Agata (15 years old) and Monika (13 years old) a year later. Having lived in two rented properties, the family now own their own three-bedroom house. Bogdan continues to work as a bus driver and Agata is a housewife.

*The Kaczmarek Family*



| Urzula, 36 | Ryszard, 18 | Wladimar, 10 |
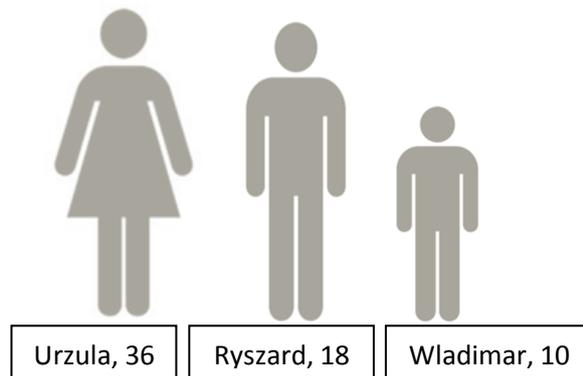
Urzula moved from Warsaw to Manchester in 2006 with her sons, Ryszard (18 years old) and Wladimir (ten years old). Urzula divorced her husband and father of Ryszard and Wladimir when Wladimir was a toddler and neither she nor the boys have any further contact with him, but know he resides in Poland. The family initially privately rented a two-bedroom flat before moving into a three-bedroom council house. Urzula works as a care assistant. Ryszard is autistic and attends a specialist college where he studies ICT.

*The Lamiński Family*



| Petra, 34 | Gerek, 35 | Nikolai, 10 |
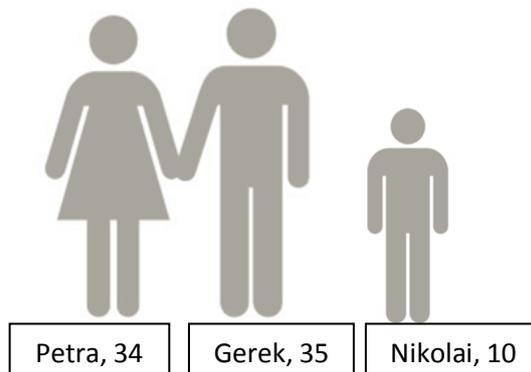
Petra was a single mother to Nikolai (ten years old) in a small town in Northern Poland where the two shared a room together in Petra's mother's apartment. Gerek and Petra have known each other since childhood and began a relationship shortly before Gerek moved to Manchester in 2004 and remained in frequent contact. Hearing Gerek's positive impressions of Britain, she decided to join him and seek employment in Manchester. Having found a retail job to sustain the family, Petra returned to Poland to bring Nikolai to join the couple in the room they rented in a student accommodation block in Manchester. The family then moved to a two-bedroom council flat which they lived in for six years before moving to a three-bedroom semi-detached council house. Petra was diagnosed

with cancer in 2010 and has since been unemployed with Gerek supporting the family through his job as a nightshift shelf-stacker in a supermarket.

*The Grabowska Family*



| Luisa, 42 | Klara, 17 | Damien, 19 (lives in Poland) |
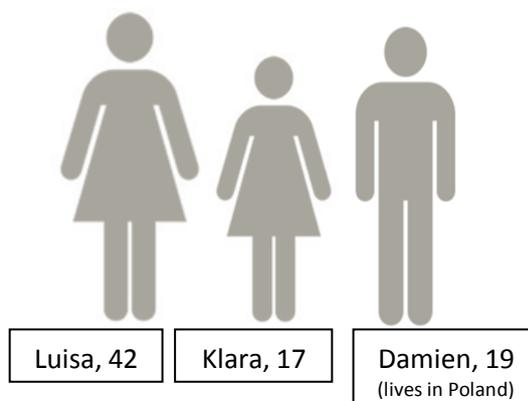
Luisa moved to Manchester in 2006 following a divorce from her Polish husband and father of her two teenage children, Klara (17 years old) and Damien (19 years old). She took many temporary jobs from agencies before finding work in an elderly care home where she quickly progressed from her position as a cleaner to that of care assistant. In the summer following Luisa's arrival in Manchester and acquisition of a permanent job, she was joined by her mother and two children for a visit. She hoped this visit would instil a desire in her children to join her in settling permanently in Britain. However, both children expressed that they would miss Poland too much and did not want to relocate. At 15 years old, Luisa deemed Damien old enough to make this decision and her parents agreed to care for him in Poland allowing him to complete his schooling. He remains living with Luisa's parents in Poland and is currently preparing for his final school exams (*matura*) which he hopes will enable him to train as a fire-fighter in Warsaw. Klara did move to Manchester to live with her mother in the October following her initial visit and began school. She has remained in Manchester and is currently studying ICT at college with plans to apply to university in Britain next year.

*The Lewandowski Family*



| Brigitta, 40 | Andrzej, 43 | Fil, 18 | Antoni, 13 | Tobiasz, 12 |
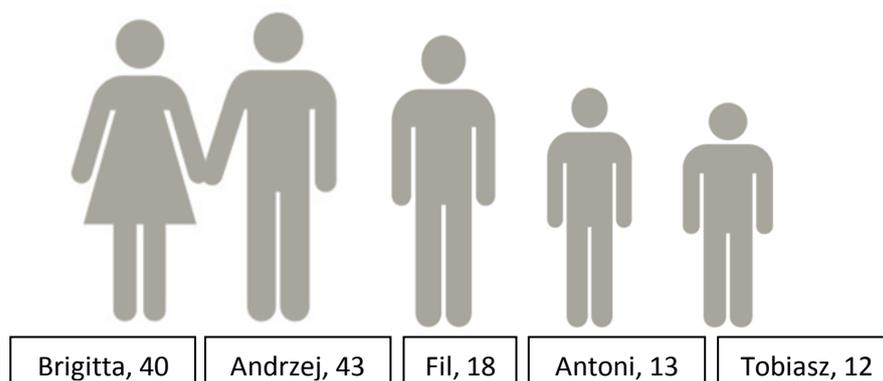
In 2004 Andrzej was offered a transfer from the shipping company he worked for in Warsaw to the company's new base in Manchester. The whole family moved to the city together, with Andzej's wife, Brigitta, and the couple's three sons, Fil (18 years old), Antoni (13 years old) and Tobiasz (12 years old). Fil lives in Cambridge during term time where he is a university student studying Physics. Brigitta works in an administrative role. The family bought a four-bedroom detached house upon moving to Manchester which they are still paying a mortgage on and living in.

***The Jankowski Family***



| Ruta, 34 | Kazik, 34 | Wiktor, 12 |
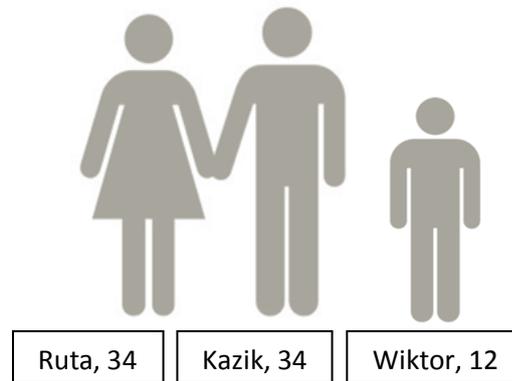
Kazik and Ruta moved to Britain in 2006 with their son, Wiktor (12 years old) when Ruta was offered a transfer from her logistics company in Warsaw to a branch in Manchester. Having worked as a civil servant in Poland, Kazik now works as a bus driver while he improves his English language skills. The family lived in two-bedroom privately rented flat for three years before moving into their current mortgaged two-bedroom terraced house.

## 3.4 Locating the research within the family home

Given the close association of the family with the home, and the lack of research into Polish families within the context of the enlarged European Union, my research is designed around the family at home. The perception of the home and family as feminine spaces has led to research on these topics traditionally involving solely the wife/mother figure. However, men are gradually becoming incorporated into such research recognising the important role that gender dimensions play in family and homemaking (Gorman-Murray, 2008). In the field of migration studies, research into men and the home include Walsh's (2011) exploration of British expatriate men's homemaking practices in Dubai, and Datta's (2008) study into the dreams of Polish builders working in London of building homes back in Poland. While these studies address the gap in literature on men and migrant homemaking, they do not focus on men in a family dimension. Family migration

research has always focussed on men and is critiqued for its traditional portrayal of women and children as 'the passive appendages of male breadwinning husbands and fathers' (Ackers and Stalford, 2004: 42). However, a focus on economic migration has historically suppressed the venture of research into men's socio-cultural and emotional experiences as members of migrant families. Some recent studies into transnational families separated by the father's economic migration have considered this dimension, with Pribilsky's (2007) study of Ecuadorian male migrants in America and Parreñas' (2005) work with Philippine transnational families exploring male migrants' continued performance of the role of the authoritarian and disciplinarian father at a distance and on return visits.

Children too are becoming an increasing focus in the field of migration studies with a shift from the portrayal of the child in the migration process as 'object' to 'subject (worthy of interest in their own right/for their own sake)' (McKendrick, 2001: 462). Migration research has been critiqued for its traditional representation of children as 'silent belongings...things transported by adults…non-persons lacking both feelings and agency of their own' (Dobson, 2009: 356). In response, recent studies with migrant children have demonstrated them to be active agents with alternative migration experiences to adults (Bushin, 2009; Dobson, 2009; White and Bushin, 2011). While such studies into men's, women's and children's socio-cultural and emotional migration experiences within families goes some way to address the gaps and economic bias in migration studies, there continues to be a lack of research into whole migrant families' experiences of settlement. Research which may appear to be based on studies with whole families is often misleading for a range of reasons: employing one family member to speak for all family members (Hertz, 1995; Bushin, 2008); interviewing children's parents or guardians about their children's experiences, rather than children themselves (Mazzucato and Schans, 2011); and misleadingly referring to unrelated groups of parents and children as families (Ryan and Sales, 2010). Having conducted my own research and spoken to other researchers in the field, I suspect this underrepresentation to be due to the difficulties in recruiting whole families –particularly involving men who may also view research into the home and family as a female domain (Barker and Weller, 2003).

Defining 'family' is a complex and perhaps impossible task, as Valentine notes,

> 'It is intensely difficult to retain the term family in academic writing, given the fluid and multiple composition of modern households.' (Valentine, 1997: 39)

'Family' can be conceptualised in a multitude of ways and it is important to consider alternative family structures to the traditional nuclear family model of two heterosexual married parents and children. There have been calls to recognise alternative family structures and include extended families in migratory research (Chamberlain, 1994; 2005). In this study, some alternative family structures were included, such as single-parent families and children living with grandparents. Defining children within the parent-child relationship is also problematic, however, this project focused on parents and their children (aged six to 18 years old). This age range is stipulated to include those able to participate in the oral and visual methods involved in the study, whilst being wide enough to explore a range of childhood experiences.

Given the focus of my research on home and the family, all of the research process subsequent to recruitment took place within the participant families' homes in Manchester. As explored in the previous chapter, the home is an intimate and private site. By conducting research within the home the researcher is both a guest and a researcher, evident in the way in which participants often 'go all out' to welcome researchers with refreshments either homemade or purchased especially for the visit (Larossa *et al*, 1981: 307). While providing an interview setting in which participants are likely to feel comfortable and therefore more likely to open up is generally beneficial to data collection, Larossa *et al* (1981) warn the researcher's guest status can cause participants to be more open than they would in other interview situations, leading to them unintentionally 'disclosing more about themselves than they had originally planned' (*ibid*). Assured confidentiality and the option to withdraw from the project at any time protect participants in this situation. Being a guest within the home also brings implications for the researcher in terms of behavioural expectations. Interpreting and observing behavioural codes was particularly important within my project, as my longitudinal case study methodology required me to build a rapport with participants that would facilitate multiple visits and significant periods of time spent in their homes –usually between two and five hours at each visit. In order to build an amicable relationship with my participants and to show my appreciation of their involvement, I presented families with a small gift upon each visit, such as a bunch of flowers or a cake. I also learned to respect the norms of being a guest within their homes, adhering to customs such as removing my shoes and exchanging them for slippers provided.

Playing the role of guest and host repeatedly during the multiple visits to families' homes and the informal nature of the visits resulted in the building of rapport and comfort with participants fitting of my methodology and necessary to conduct an in-depth case study within the intimate realms of family and home. The creation of such a context involves some integral ethical decisions, such as whether to financially remunerate participants for their involvement. I chose not to do so, taking direction from Gilbert's (1994) feminist study into the role of mothers' support networks. In her in-depth interviews with ninety-five African American, Latino, Vietnamese, and Anglo mothers in their homes in Massachusetts, Gilbert found that to pay the women 'contradicted the feelings of friendship and intimacy that had been created in the interview process' (Gilbert, 1994: 93). In my own project I believed paying participants would have established a researcher/researched relationship indicative of a formality and entrenched within a power hierarchy unfitting of the methodological location of my project. While the participants in my research did not benefit financially from their participation, many expressed a sense of fulfilment gained from being involved, referring to benefits such as the opportunity to practise English language skills with a native speaker, to get to know someone new in a friendly setting, to reflect on family migration experiences, and to share their story.

It is important to acknowledge that the home is a space that is comprised of many spaces which impact on conducting research with families within the home. Family members experience different spaces within the home differently (Sibley, 1995b). In order to find spaces in which individuals feel comfortable to express themselves in confidence 'out of earshot' of other family members can be problematic. Hertz (1995) warns this can be particularly relevant in houses and flats with limited space: a setting in which most of my participant families lived. For children, finding a private space in which to conduct individual and confidential interviews is problematic in other ways. With most rooms within the home seen as adult-controlled spaces, children's bedrooms represent spaces in which children are more likely to feel in control and comfortable, however, as Punch acknowledges, 'adults should not assume that children necessarily prefer their own environment, they may actually prefer an adult researcher *not* invade their child space' (2002: 328). In light of this, all children in my project were asked to choose where they wished their individual interview to take place. Although a few of the children chose to be interviewed in the kitchen or living room with their parents moving to another room to accommodate this arrangement, the majority chose to conduct interviews within their

bedrooms. While some researchers express concerns about conducting researching alone with children in their bedrooms due to issues of child protection (Morrow and Richards, 1996; Barker, 2003), by leaving a door ajar and ensuring I possessed and made available to parents evidence of full CRB clearance, I did not experience any such issues. In fact, I found the bedroom the ideal site for researching with children as by being surrounded by their possessions they could interrupt or change the focus of research by referring to something in the room and introduce new topics for discussion or divert from subjects they found uncomfortable. In the case of younger children, playing with them in their bedroom while in conversation provided a less formal and more engaging and productive interview situation.

## 3.5 Capturing the migrant story

The families in the project took part in a range of methods, including interviews, diagram drawing, photography and a guided tour of their homes, all of which will be described in this section. The previous chapter has demonstrated home to be a theoretical concept associated with physical, emotional, analytical and lived dimensions; therefore different methods prove appropriate for accessing its various facets. Although semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary method, visual methods supplement the interviews and produce an alternative avenue to data. Triangulating data from various methods is thought to address what Pink (2004: 28) describes as 'the old anthropological question of the difference between what people say they do and what they really do.' However, in a study such as mine, concerned with subjective experiences and individualised perspectives, multiple methods serve a different function. Using a range of methods provided me with different routes through which to access stories and views and gain the rich and multi-faceted data necessary to represent a migrant experience recognisable to those involved. Methods were also designed to be enjoyable for participants and inclusive of them as active agents in the research process.

Following recruitment, participants were fully briefed of the project with a leaflet written in both English and Polish before signing consent forms that made explicit the guarantee of confidentiality and security of the data and their freedom to withdraw from the project at any time (see Appendix 1). Participants were all given the option of participating in the research in English or in Polish with the use of an interpreter. Most participants were competent in expressing themselves comfortably in the English language and chose to conduct their interviews and home tours in English. However, in the case of the parents in

two of the families (the Wilk family and Zieliński family), an interpreter was used. In conducting interviews in English and Polish on the topic of home, it is important to recognise that our use of the word 'home' -with its associations of dwelling, feeling at home, family and homeland- is not necessarily present in other languages. For example, in Mand's (2010) exploration into the way in which locality and belonging is experienced for British-born Bangladeshi children living in London, he considers two relevant Bengali terms used by the children in interviews: '*desh* (homeland or home/nation) and *bidesh* (foreign country associated with being away)' with *desh* usually used to refer to Bangladesh while *bidesh* described Britain. In the Polish language, the term *dom* is used in a similar way and with similar associations as the English 'home' –being 'a word that does not make distinctions between the social, cultural, geographic and material aspects of dwelling' (Datta, 2008: 320) - enabling participants to explore all dimensions of home whether using the term in the English or Polish language. In cases of idiomatic expressions that did not have direct Polish-English equivalents, the interpreter gave both a literal translation and an explanation of the phrase, so that both the language and the meaning was conveyed for the researcher and the research participants.

As well as considering the linguistic implications of including non-English speakers in my research project, working with interpreters unavoidably introduced another experiential dynamic into the research process. The presence of another person in the research setting, the interpreter's positionality, and the act of conversing through an interpreter can all impact on the research experience for both the researched and the researcher. The interpreter used in my project was a white, Polish female in her early thirties, previously unknown to the participants involved in the study. In order to create a sense of comfort in the research context and maintain the rapport established between the researcher and the participants, the interpreter was present throughout the research process with the families which required her involvement and partook in interactions with the families outside of the interview process. The interpreter was briefed on the project's aims and the research methodology in order to provide her with a sense of understanding of the research and her role within the project.

Conversing through an interpreter can introduce a sense of discomfort as the researcher and researched do not have an instantaneous understanding of the other's question or response and awaiting an interpretation can induce an uncomfortable, anticipant moment of exclusion from the conversation as the interpreter speaks. This was particularly evident

in instances of comic remarks, such as when laughter was shared between Polish-speakers as a funny comment was made in Polish, and then my own amused response was eagerly awaited as the comment was then interpreted in English. Such moments of disjuncture are unavoidable and generally minimised by the sense of rapport built up between myself, the interpreter and participants. While the inevitable break in the flow of conversation incurred through the use of interpretation generally has an undesired impact, it did also bring about an unexpected benefit. The time taken for remarks to be expressed by the interpreter provided participants with a chance to reflect on what they have just said often prompting follow-up comments or elaboration that would have not otherwise occurred. It also gave me as the researcher opportunity to reflect on the progress of the interview and formulate further points of discussion.

### 3.5.1 Uncovering stories: interviewing within the family

The family represents a complex context for conducting research. The way in which families perceive and present themselves does not necessarily reflect their lived experiences as families select whether  to reveal the ideal of the family they 'live by' or the realities of the family they 'live with' (Gillis, 1996: xv). In doing so, they construct a narrative to present to a researcher which may not reflect the realities or the complexities of the family's experience. This is particularly pertinent in the case of migrant families in which the 'ideology of family privacy' (Roche, 1999: 478) often engenders the image that all family members support a decision to migrate, while in reality family members often have complex and contradictory views on the subject. In order to explore beyond what Hertz terms the 'official family account' (Hertz, 1995: 435), my methods included multiple interviews with families: conducting a series of both whole family interviews and individual interviews as a means of exploring how stories change over time and how they are interpreted by different family members. Interviews followed semi-structured interview schedules of themes (see Appendices 2 and 3), and were designed to be conducted as a 'conversation with a purpose' (Berg, 1998: 57), lasting between one and three hours.

The 'official story' presented by most of my participants upon our first meeting and their initial accounts of their family migratory experience were predominantly positive, creating a picture of a united, successful settlement experience. However, in subsequent conversations, experiences and perceptions were often revealed that were contrary to this 'official story': either less positive accounts of settlement and/or stories of individual family members which contradicted the 'official story'. This process of constructing and

narrating the 'official story' may or may not be conscious. A positive and cohesive story is far easier and more socially acceptable to present than one that tells of negative and contradictory aspects. Additionally, given my positionality as a British citizen from outside of the Polish community, the desire to present a positive story of settlement and to avoid criticism of '*my* country' may prevent negative aspects of the settlement process from being revealed until I have gained a family's trust. However, perhaps most importantly, subscribing to an 'official story' can fulfil a comforting and uniting purpose in creating a sense of family togetherness and optimism. Migrating is an emotionally risky undertaking, generally stripping those who move from familiar contexts and placing them in uncertain circumstances, and the 'official story' can provide a comforting and self-assuring narrative, a theme explored further in the following chapter.

Spending time with participants, gaining their trust and working with members of the family collectively and individually allowed me to uncover multiple stories and understand how the 'official story' was constructed and the purpose it serves. For example, upon first meeting the Wilk family, the parents, Edward and Slywia, were quick to assure me of how welcome they feel in Britain, emphasising the acceptance and support of their 15-year-old daughter Zofia who attends a special needs school as she has Down's Syndrome, contrasting their perceptions of Britain's promotion of diversity with Poland's negative attitude towards difference. In this context, when asked whether they ever felt unwelcome, the family adamantly claimed the contrary. However, in a later conversation, Edward revealed with pride that the he had installed a £250 CCTV camera overlooking the family's front yard and street following a series of attacks on the family, including the vandalism of their car and verbal and physical abuse of their daughter, Oliwia, just outside the family home. The family explained the incidents as racist attacks by locals who objected to a Polish presence in the neighbourhood. When asked whether the attacks made them feel unwelcome, Edward was quick to emphasise that everything was now OK as the camera ensured their safety and had even improved their relations with neighbours and the local police as their CCTV footage was called upon to solve local incidents, such as a missing wheelie bin. In order to maintain a sense of security necessary to feel at home, both in terms of personal safety and feeling welcome in a neighbourhood, such incidents had been erased from the 'official story' with the CCTV camera presented as insignificant, 'normal' and 'a small price to pay' for its role in maintaining the ontological security necessary to feel at home. Having spent time with families over a series of visits, the

complexities of their stories are given the context to be heard as conversations, have time to develop and meander in an atmosphere of familiarity and trust.

While spending time with participants can add depth to the understanding of family migration, so too can an exploration of the different perceptions and experiences that different family members may reveal in individual interviews. Conducting whole family interviews are valuable in revealing both family stories and the family dynamics incurred in the 'process of negotiation and mediation [that] takes place…in the production of a single collaborative account for the researcher' (Valentine, 1999: 68, 69). However, individual interviews are essential in understanding conflicting accounts or personal experiences beyond the joint account. In recognition that processes of migration and settlement are experienced both as a family and as an individual, I employ individual interviews to give each family member a chance to communicate his/her own version of their family migration story. Participants may feel uneasy about facing individual interviews in family research, fearing accounts may not accord with one another or that personal information may be revealed about them by another family member. Valentine (1999) recommends that to alleviate such anxiety, a rationale needs to be given for individual interviews with research schedules constructed so as individual interviews correspond with themes that do not need to be discussed in a whole family context. Therefore, I explained to my participants that individual interviews would be used to discuss their individual biographies, experiences of childhood homes and day-to-day lives –themes that would encompass personal experiences not shared by the whole family and therefore more appropriate to discuss in one-to-one interviews. Although individual interviews often then did encompass other themes relevant to shared family discussions, the rationale for individual interviews had by that stage alleviated any possible anxieties allowing such topics to be discussed in confidence. Exploring stories that had arisen in whole family interviews in individual interviews gives participants the opportunity to 'present different versions of the same story or put the same story to different uses' (Hertz, 1995: 441). This is evident in the following vignette involving the Lamiński family:

> *Having visited the family several times in their previous flat, this is the first time I visit them in their eagerly-awaited three-bedroom semi-detached council house which they have now occupied for two months. I am struck by the additional space the family now have, and Gerek jokes that they finally have enough space for a piano –pointing out a dilapidated piano that is sitting in the corner of their living room. In individual interviews with the couple, it transpires that Gerek purchased the piano in secret from Petra several weeks*

*ago, who was shocked when the piano was delivered and offended and annoyed that Gerek had not involved her in the decision to purchase such a substantial item. Despite feeling initially negative about the piano, Petra has since grown to love it as she enjoys the way in which Gerek's skilful playing can create 'a warm, calm atmosphere' making the 'house a home' as the whole family come together when the piano is played. For Gerek, while the piano also helps him to feel comfortable in the new house, this is for very different reasons. Gerek sees the piano as fulfilling his 'dream' to have his own piano to play in his house and buying the piano represents the personal freedom he feels is necessary to create his perfect home. He feels the secrecy involved in his purchasing of the piano was simply a necessity to achieve his desire, and glosses over Petra's initial reaction, emphasising how she now enjoys his playing.*

Whilst Petra emphasises the impact of the piano's acquisition and use on her relations with her husband and the creation of the family home, Gerek views the episode in terms of his personal freedom and pursuit of his dream home. The two different interpretations of the same story are indicative of this couple's alternative perspectives of homeliness (explored further in subsequent chapters) and demonstrate the ways in which stories can be viewed differently within a family.

Incorporating the voices of children is a key objective of my research, and therefore I tailored my interview method to best facilitate their involvement in the project. There is a debate in the field of children's geographies as to whether children, as 'competent social actors', should be treated the same as adults in terms of research methods employed (Punch, 2002: 321-2); however, it is generally recognised that children may have different competencies to adults, such as being more familiar with visual or written methods due to their use in school, and therefore may require different 'child-friendly' methods (James *et al*, 1998). Alternative methods to interviews are also suited to children who are likely to have less experience of communicating verbally with adults and may have shorter attention spans (Boyden and Ennew, 1997). Drawing and diagramming are recognised as 'child-friendly', engaging techniques which provide children with the opportunity to take a more active role in the research process (Barker and Weller, 2003; Punch, 2002). For the younger participants, in order to avoid the intimidation of a typical face-to-face interview, two diagramming techniques were employed to be used as elicitation tools in the interview. The first is the 'me diagram' in which participants were asked to draw a large circle on a plain A4 sheet of papers and then using felt-tip pens provided to draw or write

everything that is important to them within the circle (see Figure 1 for an example of such a diagram).

Figure 1: Example of a 'me diagram' (by Nikolai, aged ten)



The second diagramming technique is focussed more specifically on people: participants create a 'people in my life diagram' by drawing themselves or writing their name in the centre of the plain A4 page and then drawing or writing the people that are important to them within it (see Figure 2 for an example of this second type of diagram). The diagrams are solely used as elicitation tools designed to bring up topics and to get children talking about what is important to them in their lives. As the diagrams were not analysed beyond participants' own discussions of their diagrams within the interview with the researcher, images of the diagrams do not feature within the analysis chapters of this thesis.

Figure 2: Example of a 'people in my life diagram' (by Monika Zieliński, aged 13)



Encouraging participants to create images and diagrams and set the agenda of later discussions places them at the centre of the research process, minimising the influence of the researcher -a principle favoured by proponents of visual techniques (see Latham, 2003; Kelley and Betsalel, 2005; O'Brien, 2010). The child participants in my project were all aged between six and 18 years, therefore the uptake of the diagramming methods reflect the age and maturity levels of those involved. In recognition that child development is an individual process and biological age is not necessarily indicative of maturity or willingness to engage with 'child-friendly' methods (Woodhead, 1998; Valentine, 2003), all of the children in the study were presented with a description of the diagramming techniques and given the opportunity to partake in them. Generally the younger children chose to partake in the methods, and were sometimes encouraged to do so by parents who perceived the diagramming methods as a means of occupying children while their individual interviews took place. Observing parents' reactions to their children's diagrams can also provide an insight into family relations and perspectives, as is evident in the following vignette:

*While sitting with the Kowalski family in their living room, I give nine-year-old Florentyna directions for drawing her 'me diagram' which she plans to do in her bedroom while I conduct individual interviews with her parents alone. As Florentyna leaves the room to go to her bedroom, her mother, Gizela jokingly calls out to her, 'You better remember to put me and your dad on there!' When Florentyna returns later with her completed 'me diagram' she is quick to point out that 'I drew Mum and Dad first' smiling at her parents who smile back and nod approvingly. When I discuss Florentyna's 'me diagram' with her later in the privacy of her bedroom, she spends most of her time talking about her books, school and language learning, simply stating that, 'Well, of course I had to put my family' in reference to her drawings of 'my mum and dad' and 'my brother'. She reflects similarly on her inclusion of 'health', 'water' and 'air' in her 'me diagram': 'They're just important in my life, of course, I guess, so I drew them.'*

Figure 3: Florentyna's 'me diagram'
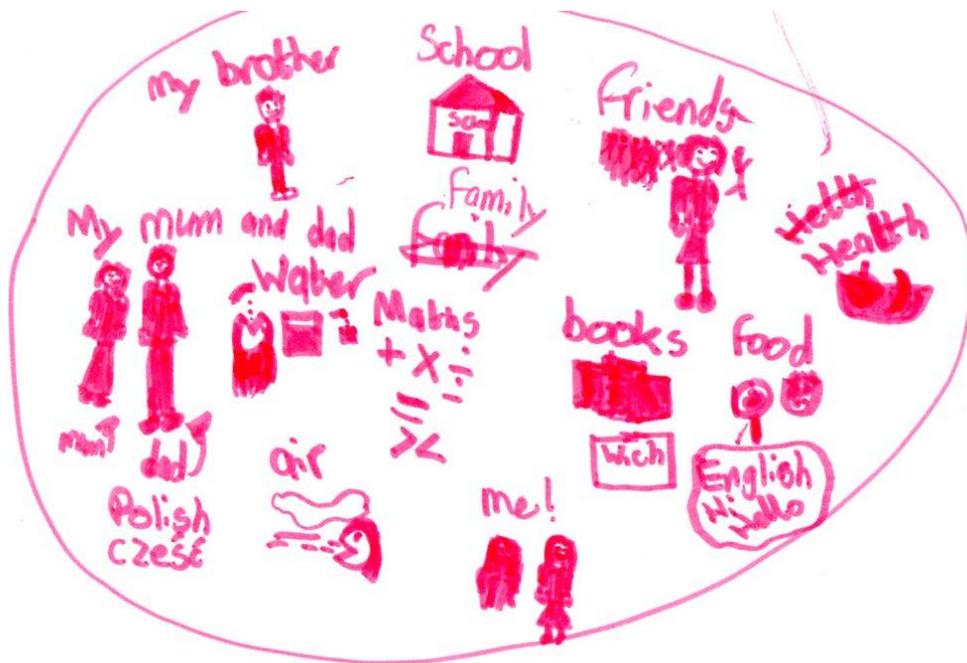


I note how Gizela's comment to Florentyna is made in English, despite the family usually conversing with one another in Polish. Both Gizela's remark and Florentyna's presentation of her 'me diagram' (see Figure 3) are displays of the central role of that family plays in their lives –an element also consistent in their interviews. Gizela overtly refers to family togetherness and is keen to demonstrate to me the importance she places on family in her interview. However, for Florentyna, family are the background to her interview, just as health, air and water are the foundations to her existence. While her parents are present in her story, such as the role of Zarek bringing her new books from Poland and

Gizela helping her with her reading in her descriptions of her passion for Polish and English books, they are a taken-for-granted element that she feels no need to emphasise to me as a researcher. Gizela's desire to show the centrality of family life for her family is emphasised in her comment to Florentyna to include her family in her diagram, made so as I may hear it, and her pleasure that her daughter has demonstrated to me, by her inclusion of her family in the diagram and by highlighting that they were the first elements she drew. Family togetherness is at the core of this family's 'official story', emphasising their move to Manchester as a reunion with Gizela's adult son as well as an economic necessity and stressing the importance in making the journey as a whole family. The 'official story' is usually presented by the parents in the initial interview and often returned to in subsequent interviews with parents. As this example shows, children show far less mindfulness of the 'official story', and while its elements may be incorporated into their own stories –as in Florentyna's case- their absence in the construction and promotion of the 'official story' may reflect their absence or lack of agency within the family decision-making process. Uncovering all of the voices and the stories that are told over time within a family is integral to gaining a fuller account of family migration.

### 3.5.2 Accessing the material: the home tour and photography elicitation

While interviews formed the dominant data collection method in my project, incorporating a home tour within the methodology provided me with access to an alternative insight by focussing on the material home. As Latour notes, materiality is an inherent aspect of living:

> 'Consider things, and you will have humans. Consider humans, you are by that very act interested in things.' (Latour, 2002: 20)

It is an aspect which cannot be fully captured in an interview setting and requires a physical exploration of a space. This need reflects the assertion of proponents of walking interviews that 'if you really want to understand a place you have to go and see it for yourself' (Emmel and Clark, 2011: 4). Walking interviews, also known as the 'walk and talk' (Jones *et al*, 2008), the 'bimble' (Anderson, 2004) and the 'go-along' (Kusenbach, 2003; Carpiano, 2009), are seen as 'an ideal technique for exploring issues around people's relationship with space' (Jones *et al*, 2008: 2). They are a 'hybrid' of interview and participant observation techniques (Kusenbach, 2003; Carpiano, 2009) which can take on any number of forms. For Kusenbach, the walking interview was used to discover how Los Angeles residents experience and perceive problems in their local neighbourhood by

talking with them while simply 'hanging out' in the area (Kusenbach, 2003:463). For Emmel and Clark (2009; 2011), exploring experiences of neighbourhood community within inner-city Leeds, participants gave a tour of their local area while giving a commentary of their use of the space. Whether being given a tour by participants or simply being with them in the field, walking interviews are valued for their capacity to empower participants and to build rapport between researcher and researched (Carpiano, 2009). Walking interviews are associated with being 'out-and-about', usually within a neighbourhood locality; however, employing a similar method within the home brings about the same benefits without the disadvantages of difficulties in using recording equipment out in the open, the risk of bad weather, and the public exposure of the participant known to be associated with walking interviews (Emmel and Clark, 2009).

Home tours have been used in two significant pieces of research into the home. The first proponent of home tours as a social science method was Pink (2004) in her investigations into the sensory home as a gendered domestic space in Spain and Britain. Pink focused on the ways in which domestic space is created, experienced and maintained, recording men and women's discussions and enactments of their domestic routines with a video camera as they gave tours of their homes. The second prominent use of home tours is in Tolia-Kelly's work with twenty-two South Asian women living in North-West London, conducting interviews, focus groups, visual mapping and home tours to explore the way in which their physical homes represent their identities as British immigrants (2004a; 2004b; 2004c). She found that self-expression through the appearance of one's home becomes even more significant in the dwellings of migrants in which objects 'operate as a gateway into other environments, moments and social experiences' (Tolia-Kelly, 2004b: 286). In her study, objects displayed in the home represented both the individual participants' biographies and their collective identities as South Asian migrants, described by Tolia-Kelly as 'textures of identification to a sense of community, home and heritage' (2004c: 326). For her participants, objects were a means of asserting a sense of territory- building both a material and cultural home in which they feel they belong. Her study reflects the important interplay between the material, the sensual and the imagined. The nature of display is also an important theme in discussing the materiality of the home, as objects reflect not only how one views oneself, but how one wishes to be viewed by others (Leach, 2010). Pink's home tour method focused on the experience of the home while Tolia-Kelly concentrated on specific objects within the home, with both recognising the home as a site inherently linked to identity and belonging.

The methods used to capture the home tour data in Pink and Tolia-Kelly's studies reflect the type of data they sought: with video reflecting the embodied, sensory nature of Pink's work, and the photography reflecting the object-as-artefact emphasis in Tolia-Kelly's project. In both of these cases and others involving walking interviews or home tours, photographs tend to be presented as evidence or examples of observations for readers. In other studies, the technique of photograph elicitation is used to provoke conversation by sharing photographs with participants. However, my research utilised photography in a different way that combines the benefits of both of these techniques. My home tour consisted of participants showing me around their homes, talking about the creation and lived experience of each room and pointing out objects they found significant to photograph. The interview schedule used in the home tour was designed to prompt discussion on how the room was been created, how it was experienced and the story behind objects pointed out along the way, in recognition that 'biographies of things can make salient what might otherwise remain obscure' (Kopytoff, 1986: 67). Rather than using developed snapshots or footage as future 'evidence' for data dissemination or as a topic of conversation for later interviews, my focus was on the process of photography. I found that by asking participants to select what they wished to photograph in the home tour process, conversation was directed and inspired in the direction chosen by participants. This method of photography elicitation, rather than photograph elicitation, gave purpose to the home tour while providing in-the-moment access to new topics of conversation. The physicality of the method also made it easily accessible and engaging for children and adults.

As well as being valuable for its participant-led nature, accessibility and ability to elicit topics of discussion and an atmosphere for conversation that cannot be obtained in a traditional face-to-face sit-down interview, there were also benefits associated with data triangulation. Combining the techniques of diagraming, photography, tours and interviews provided a more complex picture of the experience of belonging that may have been missed if interviews used in isolation. For example, ten-year-old Nikolai Lamiński claimed to belong to Britain and no longer to identify with Poland in his interviews. This shift was also identified by his parents in interviews and supported by Nikolai's diagrams which centred around his day-to-day interests of playing on his computer and spending time with his parents and school friends in Manchester. However, during the home tour, in Nikolai's bedroom were displayed numerous symbols of his attachment to Poland, including a Polish flag, Polish eagle badges, gifts from Polish family and friends, and

treasured items brought from Poland, in particular a suitcase filled with toy cars that Nikolai claims was his sole luggage upon arrival in Britain for the first time (see Figure 5). Upon discussion Nikolai's attachment to Poland was found to be steeped in personal childhood memories, rather than an association with a nationalist culture. No longer identifying with Poland, did not mean that items that clearly demonstrate a transnational attachment were not present or meaningful in Nikolai's life. However, for Nikolai, such items symbolised his childhood, rather than a 'banal nationalism' (Billig, 1995) that may have been interpreted from photographs in isolation of direct interview.

Figure 4: Photographs taken of items in Nikolai's bedroom
From left to right: a Polish flag made from cutting up an old French flag; a Polish eagle badge; and some of the cars Nikolai brought with him from Poland.



Data from the home tour data was primarily captured using a digital Dictaphone. However, while listening to the audio recording and looking at the photographs from a home tour during the analysis process provided some sense of the embodied experience of the tour, I also chose to draw a diagram as soon as possible after the tour had taken place that mapped the route of the tour and detailed the moments or aspects I found significant (see Figure 4 for an example of a home tour diagram). Using this combination of data in analysis provided a greater insight into the home as both a sensory, lived experience and a site of materiality and meaning, reflecting the multiple meanings of home explored in the previous chapter. Analysis techniques are explored further later in the chapter.

Figure 5: Example of a home tour diagram (Lamiński family)
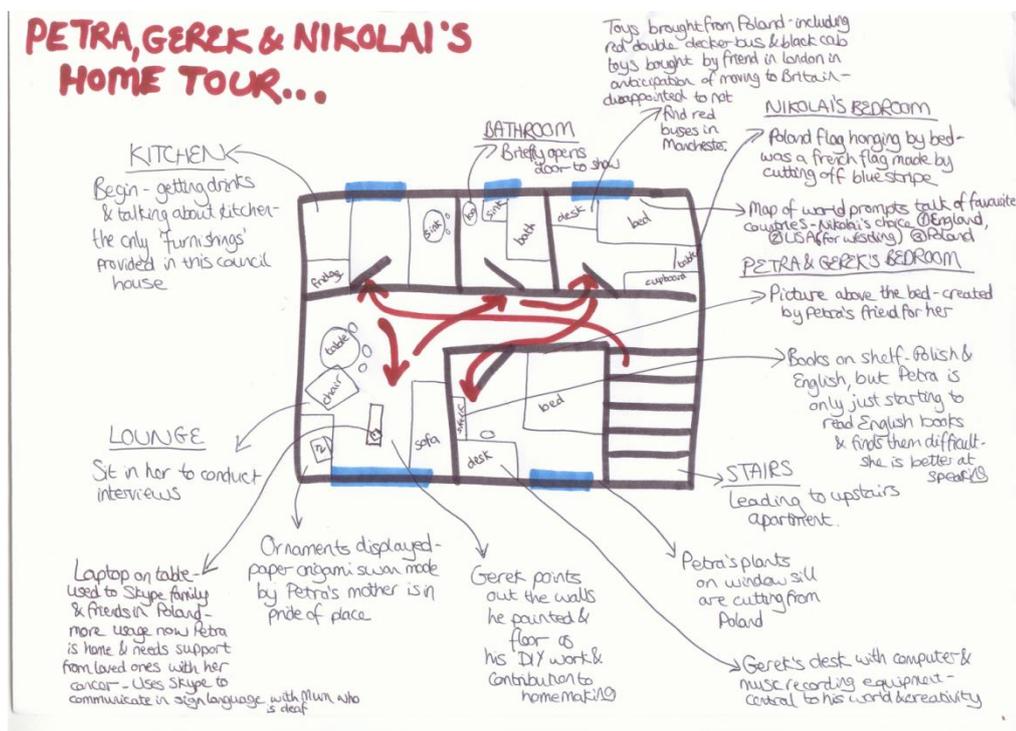


### 3.5.3 Visiting the home

As alluded to in this section's description of the methods employed, the research involved spending significant time in the homes of the families in my study. While in the family homes, I was able to partake in activities beyond scheduled interviews and home tours, such as cooking, preparing and sharing meals, watching television, looking at family photographs, helping with gardening, playing with children, and listening to music. In doing so, the research gained an ethnographic element, allowing further insight into participants' experiences and perceptions of belonging. Partaking in sensory activities by invitation of the participants is known to forge a sense of rapport between the researcher and researched, and places the participant in control of the research experience (Longhurst et al, 2009). The following table outlines the frequency, nature and length of my visits to each family's home in order to provide an insight into the research experience.

| Family | Visit number and date | Nature of visit | Time spent in home |
|---|---|---|---|
| Markowska | 1st visit Sep 2010 | -Introduction to project (including signing of consent forms) <br> -Initial whole family interview | 3 hours |
| | 2nd visit Sep 2010 | -Whole family interview <br> -Individual interview with Basia (Mum) <br> -Observation of/participation in cooking preparations and lunch | 3 hours |
| | 3rd visit Dec 2010 | -Individual interview with Maria (Daughter) | 1 hour |
| | 4th visit Mar 2011 | -Whole family interview <br> -Observation of/participation in cooking preparations and lunch | 2 hours |
| | 5th visit June 2011 | -Home tour <br> -Participation in gardening <br> -Individual interview with Basia | 2.5 hours |
| Kowalski | 1st visit Oct 2010 | -Introduction to project (inc. consent forms) <br> -Initial whole family interview | 2 hours |
| | 2nd visit Jan 2011 | -Individual interviews with all family members <br> -Reading a story with Florentyna | 3 hours |
| | 3rd visit Mar 2011 | -Whole family interview <br> -Home tour | 2 hours |
| Nowak | 1st visit Jan 2011 | -Introduction to project (inc. consent forms) | 1 hour |
| | 2nd visit Jan 2011 | -Initial whole family interview <br> -Individual interviews with all family members <br> -Observation of/participation in cooking preparations and lunch | 4 hours |
| | 3rd visit Mar 2011 | -Whole family interview <br> -Home tour | 2 hours |
| | 4th 'visit' July 2011 | -Telephone interview with all family members from Australia (following move in June 2011) | 1 hour |
| Wilk | 1st visit Oct 2010 | -Introduction to project (inc. consent forms) <br> -Initial whole family interview with interpreter | 2 hours |
| | 2nd visit Jan 2011 | -Individual interviews with Sylwia (Mum), Edward (Dad) and Asia (visiting from Poland) with interpreter <br> -Looking at Asia's photographs and design website <br> -Observation of/participation in cooking preparations and lunch | 4 hours |
| | 3rd visit | -Whole family interview with | 2.5 |

| | Mar 2011 | -Group then individual interviews with Oliwia, Zofia and Simeon<br>-Helping Oliwia with homework<br>-Participation in lunch | hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 4<sup>th</sup> visit<br>June 2011 | -Home tour | 1 hour |
| Zieliński | 1<sup>st</sup> visit<br>Jan 2011 | -Introduction to project (inc. consent forms)<br>-Pair then individual interviews with Agata and Monika (including bedroom tour) | 2 hours |
| | 2<sup>nd</sup> visit<br>Feb 2011 | -Whole family interview with interpreter<br>-Individual interviews with Kristina (Mum) and Bogdan (Dad) with interpreter | 2 hours |
| | 3<sup>rd</sup> visit<br>May 2011 | -Whole family interview and home tour with interpreter<br>-Looking at family photographs<br>-Pair then individual interviews with Agata and Monika (including bedroom tour) | 2.5 hours |
| Kaczmarek | 1<sup>st</sup> visit<br>Feb 2011 | -Introduction to project (inc. consent forms)<br>-Initial whole family interview<br>-Individual interviews with all family members | 2.5 hours |
| | 2<sup>nd</sup> visit<br>Apr 2011 | -Whole family interview | 1.5 hours |
| | 3<sup>rd</sup> visit<br>June 2011 | -Whole family interview<br>-Home tour | 2 hours |
| Lamiński | 1<sup>st</sup> visit<br>Dec 2010 | -Introduction to project (inc. consent forms)<br>-Initial whole family interview<br>-Individual interview with Petra (Mum) | 2 hours |
| | 2<sup>nd</sup> visit<br>Feb 2011 | -Whole family interview<br>-Individual interview with Petra (Mum) and Gerek (Dad) | 1.5 hours |
| | 3<sup>rd</sup> visit<br>Apr 2011 | -Pair interview with Petra and Gerek<br>-Individual interview with Nikolai and playing with him in his room<br>-Home tour | 3 hours |
| | 4<sup>th</sup> visit<br>June 2011 | -Home tour following move to new home<br>-Listening to Gerek play piano and playing with Nikolai | 2.5 hours |
| Grabowska | 1<sup>st</sup> visit<br>Mar 2011 | -Introduction to project (inc. consent forms)<br>-Initial whole family interview | 1.5 hours |
| | 2<sup>nd</sup> visit<br>Apr 2011 | -Whole family interview<br>-Individual interviews with Luisa (Mum) and Klara (daughter)<br>-Meeting the family's visitors from Poland and practising Polish/English | 1.5 hours |

| | 3rd visit June 2011 | -Home tour | 1 hour |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lewandowski | 1st visit Feb 2011 | -Introduction to project (inc. consent forms) -Initial whole family interview | 2 hours |
| | 2nd visit Apr 2011 | -Whole family interview -Individual interviews with Andrzej (Dad) and Brigitta (Mum) | 1.5 hours |
| | 3rd visit July 2011 | -Home tour -Individual interviews with sons -Participation in family BBQ lunch | 3 hours |
| Jankowski | 1st visit Sep 2010 | -Introduction to project (inc. consent forms) -Initial whole family interview | 1.5 hours |
| | 2nd visit Nov 2010 | -Whole family interview -Individual interview with Kazik (Dad) -Watching Polish television with Wiktor | 1.5 hours |
| | 3rd visit July 2011 | -Home tour -Individual interview with Ruta (Mum) -Participation in dinner and sharing of family photographs | 4 hours |
| | 4th visit Aug 2011 | -Whole family interview -Individual interview with Wiktor (son) -Participation in family lunch | 3 hours |

### 3.5.3 Seeking a transnational perspective: the failed method

As discussed within the previous chapter, the homeland left behind can continue to play a significant role with a migrant's sense of belonging. While researchers have considered homeland connections, both virtual and actual, that migrants engage with, there is criticism that understanding such transnationality cannot be achieved without an incorporation of both (or all) homeland sites within the research methodology (Vertovec, 1999; Pratt and Yeoh, 2003; Favell, 2008; Mazzucato and Schans, 2011). While my participant families are more imaginatively and virtually transnational than physically divided between nation-states, they do engage in temporary physical transnationalism during return visits to Poland. Most families identified annual trips back to their towns or cities of origin as being a connection with their homeland, usually occurring during the school summer holidays and lasting between two and four weeks. In order to explore how such transnationality impacts on families' sense of belonging, I planned to accompany some of my participant families on their annual return trips. However, as the summer arrived, almost none of my participant families embarked on such a trip, choosing instead either to remain at home in Manchester or to holiday elsewhere within Britain or abroad.

While initially disappointed that my planned method could no longer be enacted, I took encouragement from the opportunity for gains that can be made in the wake of a failed method. England (1994) asserts that neopositivist empiricism hides the process behind research and ignores any failings along the way, citing Burawoy's observation that

> 'The false paths, the endless labors, the turns now this way and now that, the theories abandoned, and the data collected but never presented –all lie concealed in the finished product.' (Burawoy, 1991: 8)

England's interest in the benefits that can be gained from drawing attention to the research process and reflecting upon failings that may occur along the way stem from her own 'failed research'. Seeking to study lesbian communities in Toronto, England underwent several dilemmas, ranging from her fears of 'academic voyeurism' and 'festishizing 'the other'' as a heterosexual female researcher to concerns of making lesbian communities vulnerable to attack by 'out[ing]' them in naming the place of study, which eventually lead her to abandoning the research (England, 1994: 84). England concludes that by reflecting upon the experience behind such 'failed research' we can produce better informed methodologies which recognise the researcher's positionality and journey in the research process. Recognising the confusions and 'sense of failure' in qualitative research has been embraced by other academics determined to improve and render the research process more transparent by writing the researcher into the research (see Rose, 1997; Horton, 2008). Such reflectivity is inherent in my own methodology and the reason why I include this section within my thesis, rather than concealing my failed method.

While England's acknowledgement of a research project unable to be realised led her to reflect on the potential implications for future research, my failed method occurred within an already established research project, allowing me the opportunity to uncover the reasons behind the failings with my participants. On the one hand, my participants not spending summer holidays in Poland caused my multi-sited methodology to fail; on the other hand, the fact that so few families had gone on such a trip represented an interesting trend to investigate further. In follow-up interviews with families after the summer holidays, exploring the topic of spending holidays in Manchester or elsewhere revealed further insights into the way in which belonging is constructed over time which involved a shifting relationship with the original homeland.

The choice not to spend the summer holidays in Poland reflected both a declining sense of attachment to Poland as a homely space and the desire to enact a 'normal' family life by experiencing family togetherness on holiday elsewhere or in Manchester. This is evident in the following vignette in which *Family I* reflect upon their decision not to make a return visit to Poland:

> *Having initially told me that they return to Poland every summer to stay in the house which they still own in Warsaw and visit family and friends, I am surprised to find that the family are planning a two week vacation in Italy instead this summer. The boys express their excitement of going on a 'real summer holiday', complaining that in Poland they are forced to trail around visiting family members they only see once a year. Andrzej and Brigitta reflect that while returning to Poland used to have a strong emotional pull and 'felt like going home', now they long for the comfort of their beds in their 'real home' in Manchester when staying in Poland. Brigitta is also keen for the family to spend time together without the presence of the extended family they feel obliged centre their return visits to Poland around. The family frequently refer to their plans for a 'normal family holiday', making clear that returning to Poland for the summer did not fulfil this description because of its location as a previous homeland, the activities that being in Poland entail, and the length of time they usually spent in Poland –up to a month. Brigitta hopes by only spending a fortnight away on holiday that the rest of the school summer holiday can provide time in which to 'finish doing up the kitchen' following the extension which has transformed their galley kitchen in 'the hub of the home'. (Lewandowski family)*

It is important to view the decision not to return to Poland as temporally contextual. While the family previously felt an emotional need to return to their homeland, having lived in another country for so long, they now feel a stronger sense of comfort and emotional attachment in their home in Manchester. By not returning to Poland this family are prioritising their desires for family togetherness, the normality of going on a 'real summer holiday', and their investment in their British home. These are themes that arise not only in explorations of the failed method, but throughout the research process. By combining methods and reflecting on how some methods have been experienced –or unrealised in the case of the failed method- a richer understanding of the family migrant experience is revealed.

## 3.6 Telling the migrant story

This chapter has already revealed some of the ways in which data has been recorded, analysed and is presented in this study. The length of home visits, the multiple research

encounters involved in working with families, and the longitudinal nature of the study, amounted to a significant amount of data collected. This data took the form of audio recordings, interview transcriptions, participant-made diagrams, journal accounts of research experiences, home tour diagrams and photographs. The variety and multi-modal nature of this research data led me to decide to avoid using digital software associated with interview data analysis, such as Nvivo. In order to represent the ethnographic approach to my research, I analysed the different data sources in conjunction with one another, coding interviews and notes accordingly. Themes that were then revealed were further investigated.

Given that my study took place through repeated visits over the course of a year, data analysis was an ongoing process. By tracking emerging themes, which are revealed in subsequent chapters, I could then develop interview schedules and techniques to address such areas. For example, as time and the home began to emerge as important themes in relation to belonging, a new visual elicitation method and interview topic was introduced: participants were asked to draw or represent with photographs or other sources their homes of the past and future. Photographs of childhood homes, drawing of future aspirations and other representations provided access to explore this element of belonging in a more in-depth manner, resulting in further supporting data for analysis. This method of ongoing or evolutionary saturation, by incorporating themes as they emerge in the data collection process to produce further insight or clarification, has proved an innovative and effective way of considering saturation in the research process.

The choice of data representation has already featured in this chapter, in the form of direct quotations, observations and vignettes. Given the in-depth and ethnographic nature of the data collection process, vignettes were deemed an ideal way to represent findings to evidence the themes and observations apparent in analysis. Vignettes are also suited to the narrative nature of the research approach and involve an element of reflectivity in line with my methodological stance (Humphreys, 2005).

## 3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the issues involved in my research process, as factors such as the Polish experience of research, the family context, the home setting, and the focus on belonging intersect to produce a complex research environment. By revealing the challenges faced in this process and methodological adaptations made in response, I have sought to present a self-reflective and accurate portrayal of the research experience.

Alongside other researchers, I have observed the family home to be a context requiring many ethical considerations. However, the rich data produced in the experiences, interactions and multiple interpretations in this space have proved it to be a fitting space for researching belonging.

Multiple methods designed to maximise the routes to different topics of conversation in relation to belonging have been compiled to create a research process which my participants have reported to be enjoyable and engaging. I have found taking a flexible and evolutionary approach to data collection and analysis has allowed the experiences and perceptions of the families in my study to be fully explored and themes arising from their stories given priority. The methodology outlined in this chapter has produced some original insights into how their migration and settlement have impacted on my participants' senses of belonging. These findings are reported and analysed in depth in the following chapters.

# Chapter Four: Migrating in Search of Normality

## 4.1 Introduction

The reasons for migrating are an investigative theme on which much migration research centres. The legacy of the long-established push/pull model of migration has been an interest in the balance of motives for leaving the home country and purposes for moving to the host country, with a focus on the economic dimensions of the migration decision making (Lawson, 2000; Herman, 2006; Cooke, 2008). Various migration studies have noted the way in which Polish migrants to Britain explain their move as driven by the need for 'normality' with a special issue of the journal 'Social Identities' dedicated to this theme (2010) (Galasińska and Kozłolska, 2009; White, 2009; Galasińska, 2010b). The 'normal life' sought tends to be described as beyond 'basic needs' but far from 'excessive luxury' (Galasińska and Kozłolska, 2009: 100).

The families in my research support these findings as they too subscribe to the notion that their movement is economically situated between the indulgence of desired migration and the survival driving the migration of economic need. They seek a level of financial security that enables them to pay the rent or mortgage, keep up to date with household bills, and afford to shop for basics, such as food and clothing. Moving to Britain is seen as the route to employment that can provide this financial normality of a balance between incomings and outgoings. However, the 'normal life' is not only economically located on a balance sheet. This chapter introduces the central role that time plays in creating the sense of normality and the implications this has for establishing a sense of belonging. This chapter begins with a discussion of the concepts of normality and the temporal dimension of progress before moving onto exploring the role they play in the stories of migration and settlement for the families in my study.

## 4.2 Defining normality

This chapter introduces a central theme that emerged throughout the research and that is integral to understanding the way in which belonging is conceptualised, created and negotiated throughout the migration process. This is the notion of normality and its strong association with feelings of homeliness and belonging. While the question of 'what is normal?' is age-old and contextually specific, a dictionary definition conveys the general condition of normality as 'the state of being usual, typical, or expected' (The Oxford Dictionary of English, 2005: 1299). The concept of normality and the purpose and function

the term serves has long been theorised by philosophical and social scientists. The prominent philosopher, Durkheim, established some of the early theories of normality, emphasising its role in establishing societal mores and rules and a sense of solidarity for those who subscribed to them. He argued that that normality and the subscription to it plays an essential organising and controlling function in society, positively serving its members (Durkheim, 1892, 1895). While much of Durkheim's work has since faced criticism for its seemingly conservative promotion of the status quo (Giddens, 1992), his emphasis on the socio-psychological impact of 'normality' remains a significant contribution to the field. In his influential theorisations of normality, Goffman (1983) recognises the protective powers of normality as a governing force in society capable of providing a comforting sense of order, familiarity and predictability for those who subscribed to it. Giddens (1992) too notes that a sense of normality can provide a feeling of ontological security inherent in stable identity formation. These descriptions and connotations of normality, although not without nuance and critique, do present some notable associations with the sense of homeliness and belonging explored in Chapter Two, making normality a potentially useful conduit through which to access such issues.

Before utilising the term 'normal', it first is necessary to acknowledge that normality is a contentious concept, heavily criticiqued in academic literature for its associated value judgements and powers of exclusion (see Seale, 1998; Creadick, 2010). This controversy stemmed from a growing recognition that the term normal has historically 'masquerade[d] as merely descriptive' Dupré (1998: 245). Seale (1998) tracks the origins of the term in statistics and medical domains in which 'normal' referred to the statistical average or majority population. He notes that the term found its purpose -and arguably its danger- in its inherent identification of an 'abnormal' outside or beyond the numerically designated 'normal'. Historically such abnormality was deemed 'something regrettable, deplorable, and even, in some cases, punishable' (Seale, 1998: 221).

The term 'normal' (and its implied counterpart, 'abnormal') tends to be avoided in academic literature because of its controversial history and implied value judgements. However, it has come to the fore in recent research regarding post-accession migration, as noted in the introduction to this chapter (see Galasińska and Kozłolska, 2009; White, 2009; Galasińska, 2010b; Rabikowska, 2010a; Ryan, 2010). The majority of this research tends to apply the term in predominantly economic terms, considering the financial implications of migration for a 'normal life'. However, it is important to note that the

prescriptive judgement inherent in the use of this term comes not from the researchers, but from their participants who express their migration journeys as the routes to the 'normal life' they covet. It is for this reason that I too use the term 'normal', and, as I explore in the following section, its dichotomous counterpart of 'abnormal', in order to reflect the perspectives of the participants in my study the value they attach to the terms.[8]

The term 'normal' is inherently value-laden and 'substantive hungry'; prompting the questions, 'a normal what?' and 'according to whom?' (Austin, 1962: 68), a question worthy or greater consideration in the migration context. My research findings presented in this and subsequent chapters reveal an understanding of 'normality' that goes beyond the 'normal life' in terms of income from potential employment in the host country, to consider the holistic emotional experience of 'normality' within the context of the migrant life story. The concept plays an integral role in the storytelling process of the participant families in my study through the way in which it is constructed and the impact they feel it has on their lives with significant implications for belonging. The data presented in this chapter illustrates the strong emotional command that the concept of normality has in the rationalising of life decisions and the interpretation of experiences. It is a highly desired state, and one by which experiences are judged. This comes largely from the positive association of 'normality' with feelings of comfort and homeliness.

Comfort is a powerful motivating force that can give meaning to people's lives and represents 'a virtually transhistorical feature of human nature' (Crowley, 1999: 753). The original definition of the word 'comfort' (a word that shares its origins and associations with the Polish *komfort*) reveals some commonalities with homeliness:

> ''Comfort' from the Latin verb 'comfortare', was first adopted in Middle English with the meaning of mental or physical strength, encouragement or consolation.' (Heijs, 1994: 43, quoted in Shove, 2003)

The association of the term with both physical and mental characteristics evokes the definition of home featured in Chapter Two:

> 'Put most simply, home is: a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relations between the two' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006: 2)

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[8] The terms normal and abnormal feature in inverted commas throughout the thesis in order to reinforce that the origins of such value judgements are in the stories of the participant families.

Homeliness and comfort also tend to be interpreted as broadly positive and emotionally evocative qualities that are defined and informed by perspectives and experiences of individuals. This link between a physically and emotionally comfortable space and a sense of homeliness has been made by other researchers in relation to the nation-state and the physical dwelling (see Noble, 2002). Billig (1995) notably coined the term 'banal nationalism' to describe the ways in which symbols of the nation-state were physically present in the homes and everyday lives of its citizens, evoking what Hage (1998: 38) terms the 'homely imaginary': a national identity in which one feels a sense of familiarity, comfort, security and control. Comfort, homeliness and normality clearly play an important role in revealing the intricacies of identity and belonging in relation to the space at a range of scales.

However, it is important to recognise that these concepts are constructed not just in space, but in time. The earlier quoted dictionary definition hints at the temporal nature of normality with the words 'usual' and 'expected' suggesting a sense of temporal familiarity, routine and anticipated prospects. The relationship between time and normality is more explicitly evoked by Misztal in the following extract:

> 'when...times are disrupted we seem to miss the appearance of normality and worry about the uncertain shape of the future. Normality is associated with the existence of both a feeling of continuity and a sense of prospect for the future.' (Misztal, 2001: 313)

Misztal highlights that an awareness of normality becomes more apparent in its absence. For migrants having left behind everything they know to live a new life of uncertainties, this sense of seeking normality and looking to the future is of particular pertinence.

This chapter focuses on the temporal notion of progress, its association with normality, and its role as the rationale for migration in both the contexts of Europe and the individual biography. Defined as 'forward or onward movement towards a destination…development towards an improved or more advanced condition' (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2005: 1406), progress encompasses the 'prospect for the future' described in Misztal's description of normality. I argue that the notion of progress is integral to an understanding of the way in which East-West European migration is constructed as the foundation for normality for the families in my study. Through an exploration of the narratives of my participants, I demonstrate the central role played by

the notion of progress in two key contexts: firstly, considering their understandings of migration within the setting of Europe; and secondly, within the structure of their migrant biographies.

## 4.3 Normality and the construction of progress

Economic motivation is central to the construction of migration as 'progress.' Most international migration is economically driven, and the migrants in my study conform to this trend. However, the way in which economic motivation is framed within the migrant imagination and narrative has important implications for settlement and belonging. Other aforementioned studies which have highlighted the Polish migration to Britain as a search for the 'normal life' have neglected the temporal dimension of this journey towards normality. In the mind of migrants, Poland is constructed not only as an economic opposite to the 'normal life' of Britain, but also as temporally distanced from Britain in terms of development. The narratives of the migrant families in my study are permeated with the rhetoric of the 'new Europe' being less developed than the rest of the established EU (see Eder, 2004). Having joined the EU decades after Britain and with hopes to join to Eurozone continually deferred with economic development targets yet to be met, Poland is seen as symbolically 'behind' Britain within European time-space. In this context, Poland is interpreted by my participants as a place which cannot provide the 'normal life' they seek due to its temporal location 'behind' Britain. The notion of a 'two speed Europe' is not new to academia or popular debate with the EU enlargement process drawing attention to the differences in 'development' between Eastern and Western Europe (see Meinhof, 2003; Eder, 2004). However, this thesis seeks to consider the role of such a temporal conceptualisation in the decisions and lives of those located within these time-spaces.

In contrast to the 'normal life' in Britain, Poland is constructed as the 'abnormal' counterpart: a place where a good education, good qualifications and a good job do not amount to a good wage. Further economic development is deemed necessary in order for Poland to exist in the same time-space as Britain, in which wages are seen to equate to the 'normal life' of financial security. The parents in my study, like the majority of Polish adults working in Britain, are relatively well-educated. Most have university degrees and worked in skilled, usually office-based jobs before moving to Manchester, with almost all experiencing some form of de-skilling typical for Polish migrants upon arrival in Britain. Most have come to Britain anticipating that they will be able to earn money that was

unobtainable for them in Poland, despite their level of qualification. In order to see their new jobs as 'progress', they must focus on financial security as central to normality, as many have left professions which they enjoyed in Poland for far less desirable jobs in Britain. Urzula Kaczmarek's tale of leaving her job as a qualified schoolteacher to work as a hospital care assistant in Manchester is typical of those in my study:

*Before moving to Manchester, Urzula Kaczmarek worked as a teacher in a Warsaw primary school: 'I had my dream job, my kids; I loved my work…But not the salary.' She describes the impossible struggle to keep herself and her sons, Wladimir and Ryszard, adequately fed and clothed and to pay for Wladimir's childcare while she was at work. She often had to sacrifice her own needs –eating leftovers and wearing clothes donated by friends- so as to provide for her family. Now Urzula works as a care worker in a hospital in Manchester she is amazed at how financially comfortable her life is despite being on minimum wage, remarking that, 'In Poland if you have this job, you can't afford to have a normal life.' Urzula misses her 'dream job' and hopes that as her level of English language improves, she may be able to work again as a teacher in Britain. (Kaczmarek family)*

Like Urzula, many of the migrants in my study compare the wages that they are earning in Britain to what they would be earning in Poland for the same job. The 'normal life' that Urzula's care assistant position provides her and her family is used to justify why she left her 'dream job' in Poland. While taking a job that requires more experience and/or better qualifications would usually be seen as 'progress', by framing 'progress' in terms of salary, migrating becomes the only way through which to achieve this sense of normality through moving forward. Urzula's association between progress and English language acquisition is echoed by many of the migrants in my study, supporting the conclusion of other studies that language learning goes beyond an instrumental need for communication and can reveal 'wider concerns of self and other identification' (Temple, 2010). Moving between the different time-spaces of Poland and Britain provides a sense of progress and rationale to the migration story as the search for a 'normal life'.

While the parents in the study view their migration in terms of employment opportunities, their children have different markers of 'progress'. While some note that in Manchester their parents are less stressed and worried over 'bills and stuff', they primarily recognise Poland as being a separate time-space to Britain through materiality. They see their own lives as more normal in Britain where they are able to purchase the

'normal stuff' that they could not afford in Poland, including clothes, books, toys, computer games and leisure activities. In discussing the differences between Poland and Britain, many of the children also talk about pop culture in Poland as being 'behind' in comparison to Britain. While some prefer British and American television programmes and films –perceiving Polish media as old-fashioned, others note how long music and fashion trends take to reach Poland. This is overtly evident in 15-year-old Zofia's account of Polish fashion:

> *Zofia Wilk lives with her parents and three siblings in Manchester, while her sister Asia (aged 18) remains in Poland to complete her art college course. Asia comes to stay with her family for a few weeks every summer. Zofia loves spending time with Asia as the two have a shared passion for art, jewellery-making and fashion. However, she laughingly refers to Asia as being 'stuck in the Polish fashion', explaining that fashion trends in Britain take several years to become the current fashion trends in Poland by which time they are outdated in Britain. Seeing Zofia's clothes reminds her of how 'completely out of fashion' she embarrassedly realised she was when she first moved to Manchester. She lends Asia clothes while she is in Manchester, so she 'fits in better'. (Wilk family)*

For Zofia the temporal distance between Poland and Britain is embodied by her sister's choice of fashion. In helping Asia to 'fit in' to her time-space in Manchester by creating a 'normal' appearance for her, Zofia constructs herself as belonging to Britain and Poland as a time-space in which she no longer belongs.

The ability to remain in contact with those 'left behind' in Poland makes an awareness of the different time-spaces of Britain and Poland more apparent. Almost all of the children are in contact with friends back in Poland, usually via the internet. 13-year-old Monika's online communication with friends reveals the typical way in which Poland and Britain are viewed differently through the notion of progress:

> *Monika Zieliński points out her laptop whilst showing me around her bedroom. She tells me how she always has two internet windows open whilst online: one for 'Nasza Klasa' ('Our Class' –a Polish version of 'Friends Reunited'), and the other for 'Facebook'. She uses both of these social networking sites to chat with friends on a daily basis, but the presence of the two separate windows represent a time-space distinction between her Polish friends –with whom she communicates with via*

> *'Nasza Klasa'- and her British friends on 'Facebook'. This is not a choice*
> *differentiation, but one borne out of practicalities: as Monika says disparagingly,*
> *'They haven't even got Facebook over there [in Poland] yet'*

The two separate internet browser windows on Monika's computer clearly mark the time-space divide between Poland and Britain. While 'Facebook' is available in Poland, just as fashion trends are remarked as taking time to become popular in Poland, so too are social networking sites. Whether or not 'Facebook' will become popular in Poland is irrelevant, Monika's remark that it is not 'over there yet' succinctly places Poland as a time-space outside and 'behind' Britain. In doing so, she subsequently portrays Britain as the time-space of progress and therefore the normality in which she belongs.

Constructing Poland as an alternative time-space can cause problems when attempting to return to that time-space through visits back to the homeland. This is because those who remain in Poland also perceive Britain as a land of progress and anticipate that those who have migrated will have a disposable income to spend on those left behind. The following conversation with 18-year-old Maria reveals the reaction she faced from her old friends in Poland as she moved from one time-space to another:

> 'Interviewer: What's the view in Poland of people leaving?
>
> Maria Markowska: Oh my God [puts hands over her face]. I told you that there was that time in went to Poland for two weeks- I went there and they thought I was going to come rich, beautiful, and like from Hollywood…It's like they thought I was Queen because I was coming back from England. I didn't feel like this, but they were treating me like, "Oooh, you're coming from England, you can buy me a beer." or something…Everyone just came to me because they think you've got money, they think you think you're cool because you're coming back from England. That's why I didn't like it. When I was coming to Poland and I just let my friends know and they were like, "Oh, what did you bring for me?" [pulls an exaggerated frown]'

Maria was disappointed on return visits to Poland by her friends' expectations of gifts and treats based on assumptions that Maria must be rich from living in Britain. Fed up of always being asked to buy drinks in the bar or quizzed on what extravagances she had purchased in Manchester, Maria gradually lost contact with her friendship circle in Poland. This experience is typical amongst children and parents in my study who find that they no

longer 'fit' in the Polish time-space in which they were once situated. While social network theorists consider the way in which social networks change over linear time, this study reveals that a subjective conceptualisation of time may provide an alternative account. In this case it is the notion that those who migrate and those who remain therefore occupy different time-spaces in terms of a subjective notion of 'progress' that played the most prominent role in the break-down of transnational social groups.

This section has revealed the way in which progress provides a rationale for intra-European migration amongst the families in my study, as they relocate from 'abnormal' Poland to 'normal' Britain. The following section considers the way in which notions of normality and abnormality must also be situated as time-spaces within the biography in order to create a sense of progress. As noted in the introduction to this section, notions of 'normality' and 'abnormality' face heavy critique in academic literature, particularly in the field of disability studies (Kelly and Norwich, 2004). This is largely due to the negative and exclusionary implications of the 'abnormal' label and its evocation of a 'normal' counterpart. As such, it is a term regarded as controversial and largely defunct in both academic and policy literature. However, the negative and comparative implications made by the participants in relation to 'abnormal' time-spaces make the term fitting for use in this context. In a sociological and philosophical exploration of the role of 'normal' in society, Wagner (1995: 183) notes that the 'abnormal' tends to provoke the desire for 'renormalization'. In the case of those in my study, the rationalisation of an 'abnormal' Poland serves as the motivation and rationalisation of their movement from Poland to Britain. The terms therefore purposely feature throughout this discussion in order to evoke the negatively perceived counter to the 'normal' time-space of belonging sought by my participant families. In the following section, the way in which normality plays a role in constructing a sense of progress and belonging is explored within the context of the individual biography.

## 4.4 Situating migration within the biography of the 'normal life'

The migrant story is essentially a narrative located within the all-encompassing biographical narrative; therefore, like all narratives, it contains some contradictions (Baynham, 2003).  While the previous section stressed the negative perception of Poland as abnormal in contrast to Britain, Poland is also at times described fondly as a site of normality. It is through an exploration of this incongruity that we can gain a greater understanding of the way in which belonging operates through time. The apparent

contradiction of Poland as both normal and abnormal gains significance and coherence through the temporal framework of biography. While Poland is constructed as unable to provide the financial basis for a 'normal life' for the families in my study, the majority of the parents emphasise their more distant past lives in Poland as 'normal'. Childhood is frequently portrayed as an idyllic time characterised by the freedom to play outside in green spaces with friends. Childhood provides an important foundation for belonging –not just in terms of formative experiences, but as a bank of memories. In the story of the self, it is not the realities of childhood that matter, but the remembered 'realities' of childhood, as the past is constructed within the narrative of the present (Mead, 1932).

Childhood is known to be romantically reconstructed by adults with common motifs of playing outside, freedom from danger, and a greater connection to nature (Jones, 2005); however, in the case of migrants, it is the construction of their childhood as normal that plays an important part of their narrative of migration and belonging. The normality of their childhood serves to root them biographically without contradicting their rationale for leaving an 'abnormal' Poland as adults. This rooting is an inherent component of migrant belonging: the need for both 'roots' and 'routes' (Clifford, 1997). While theorists have criticised the discrete categorisation of childhood and adulthood (see te Riele, 2004; Hopkins and Pain, 2007; Worth, 2009), the role of childhood as separate time-space to adulthood in this case serves a purpose as a narrative device in the construction of a sense of belonging. The following quotation from single mother, Basia Markowska, typifies the attitude towards Poland amongst the adults in my study:

> 'I spend a long time there, and Poland will be always good sentiment, place of my childhood, place when I finished university, where I play with my friends, where I drink wine somewhere in the morning [laughs]. Good memories. But now I don't feels it's my country, because Poland gave me very good education, Poland gave me very good knowledge, Poland gave me good point of view, and many else, but didn't gave me good life condition for my progress. They gave me a pen, then teach me to write, but didn't give me a paper. Yes? I have tools in my hand, but I could not use them there. Poland has very good people potential -very good, well-educated people, very hardworking, but what for it- they have only pen, not paper.' (Basia Markowska)

Poland is constructed as a time-space of an enjoyable and fulfilling childhood and youth – providing happy memories, friendships and a fulfilling education. However, in the time of

life which requires employment that can support an adult life and dependent children, Poland becomes a deficient, abnormal space that must be escaped. 'Progress' is key in this construction of Poland as abnormal and the consequent rationalisation of migration to Britain. The progression from a good education in childhood to a good job in adulthood – or in the words of Basia, from 'pen' to 'paper'- is perceived as impossible in Poland. The absence of such a succession creates a sense of lack of progression rationalising the search for normality elsewhere.

The following diagram (Figure 6) represents the progression of the 'normal life' described by Basia and others in my study. Blue marks the 'normal' time-spaces of childhood in Poland and of adulthood in Britain; while red illustrates the abnormal time-space of adulthood in Poland. The arrows demonstrate the sense of progression associated with normality and the circle represents the absence of progression associated with an abnormal time-space.

Figure 6: Diagram of progression from childhood to adulthood through the lens of normality
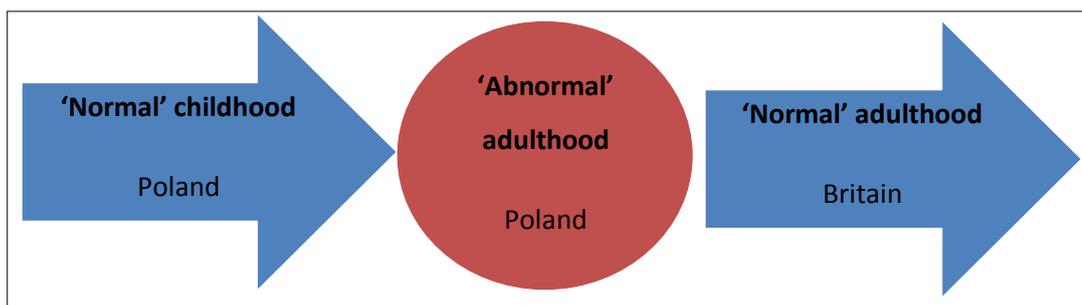


This diagram is not intended to place an artificial linear frame onto the life experiences of my participants, but to reflect the way in which they portray their own life stories: 'chronicle as well as chronology' (Fabian, 1983: 13). The beginning, middle, end structure inherent in story telling is often a feature of narratives of self; however, as the story is told from the point of the present, the sense of linearity can be retrospectively constructed (Lahire, 1998). In the telling of stories, people construct their sense of selves and their lives as they wish to see them (Ricoeur, 1991; Stanley, 1993; Kelly and Dickinson, 1997; Anthias, 2002). Narratives serve to help individuals manage emotions (Svašek, 2010), and in this case a sense of belonging and positivity is created by telling the migration story through the lens of progress. Progress is a personal journey constructed within a national time-space context. The correspondence between moving from a normal childhood to a normal adulthood with the movement from Poland to Britain creates a cohesive narrative of progression. By conceptualising childhood and adulthood as discrete time-spaces the

parents in my study are able to express a rational sense of belonging to both the past memories of Poland and their present lives in Britain.

The separation of childhood from adulthood allows the dichotomy of normal and abnormal Poland without conflict within the temporal narrative. Descriptions of childhood and youth in Poland are almost deliberately constructed as temporally distant, so as to rationalise the impossibility of belonging in Poland today as that Poland does not exist today. This is particularly evident in discussions of childhood homes, as this extract about Kazik Jankowski testifies:

> *When I ask Kazik Jankowski to talk to me about a home of his past, he sends his son, Wiktor, upstairs to fetch a photograph of Zakopane –a mountain town in the Tatry mountains which form Poland's southern border. Kazik grew up near Zakopane in a wooden house typical of the region. He smiles as he recounts memories of summers spent rolling down the lush green hillsides and winters devoted to sledging and skiing on wooden skis through the thick snow. But he says, 'That was another time… I came down from the mountains.' He took Wiktor and his wife, Ruta, who had grown up in Warsaw, back to visit Zakopane a few summers ago, and while they enjoyed their trip, he felt 'it was not the same place' –tourists and tarmacked tracks now characterised the landscape he had known as empty and wild, concluding that 'time brings change –some good, some bad' (Jankowski family)*

In remembering the Zakopane of his childhood, Kazik experiences a sense of nostalgia, identified by Rubenstein as characteristic of childhood homes:

> 'While homesickness refers to a spatial/geographical separation, nostalgia more accurately refers to a temporal one...one can never truly return to the original home of childhood, since it exists mostly as a place in the imagination.' (2001: 4)

The Zakopane of Kazik's childhood nostalgia exists in a different time-space. While the mountains are still present as a physical space, the way in which they were experienced for Kazik as a child can never be revisited. While homesickness can lead migrants to return to their homeland, nostalgia for the homeland can play an important role in creating a sense of belonging in the present time-space of the host country. By feeling that they belonged in their childhood Poland, but that this time-space no longer exists, reinforces the idea of progression as both a biographical and physical journey forward.

Although childhood Poland remains a nostalgic, unobtainable time-space for the parents in my study, some of them consciously try to (re)create this 'normal' time-space for their own children in Britain by introducing elements of their own childhood into their children's lives. Zarek Kowalski, the father of nine-year-old Florentyna, is very aware of the influence of his own memories of his childhood on the 'normal' childhood he wishes for his daughter:

> *Zarek Kowalski speaks disparagingly of the children living on his street:*
>> *'They don't do anything, sitting on the street, playing computer, but they don't do anything. Spending too much time on computer. The knowledge from computer is not real world.'*
>
> *He contrasts this 'British childhood' with his own childhood spent playing in the forests and fields surrounding his Polish hometown. He tries to recreate these aspects within Florentyna's childhood with the family frequently travelling to the Peak District and countryside surrounding Manchester to take long walks, swim in lakes, learn the names of plants, and plant trees as Zarek did in his own 'typical' childhood.*

Zarek portrays the 'British childhood' he sees embodied in the neighbourhood children as 'abnormal' –'not the real world'- in contrast to the 'typical' Polish childhood of his memories. While the interpretation of a parent's childhood as a 'normal' time-space serves to ground their sense of belonging, it is important to recognise that it can also impact on the childhoods of their own children.

While the 'normality' of a Polish childhood is enjoyed by some of the children in my study, for others the contrast between their perceptions of normality and that of their parents can lead to conflict. Such clashes tend to occur when parents attempt to enforce their ideas of normality based on their own childhoods while their children's behaviour is based on the 'normality' they witness amongst children of their age in the host country (Pawliuk *et al*, 1996; Zhou, 1997). 13-year-old Monika's arguments with her parents about staying the night at her school friends' houses typify this type of conflict, as this quotation from an interview with Monika illustrates:

> 'In Poland, parents are more strict, so yeah, so the way you grow up is different. Like, I've never been to a sleepover 'coz my mum and dad are always like, "You've got your own bed, sleep in your own bed, you don't have to go and interrupt

other families." And I'm like, "Mum [whines], I'm not going to interrupt, they

invited me themselves and that means they're all right with it.", But, they're just

like, "No, just sleep in your own bed." It's so unfair. Everyone else has sleepovers

here.' (Monika Zieliński)

With 'sleepovers' out of the norm of Monika's parents' childhood, they view their
daughter's pleas to be like 'everyone else…here' as unreasonable. The childhood time-
spaces of the Polish parents and their children are not shared. Reports of conflict as the
cultures of host and home cultures are negotiated by parents and children are not new to
migration studies (see Sluzki, 1979), however, a temporal perspective offers an alternative
insight into the origins of such clashes.

## 4.4 Conclusion

In the first half of the chapter I demonstrated the important role that progress plays in
conceptualising the migrant journey as the movement from 'abnormality' to 'normality.'
Unlike previous studies of East-West European migration, I situate the population
movement within a temporal framework, showing that the construction of Poland as an
'abnormal' time-space that is 'behind' Britain is integral in framing a move to the 'normal'
time-space of Britain as progress. Poland was located as 'behind' Britain differently
amongst the parents and children in the study, with the parents focused on employment
opportunities, while the children noted time-space distances in material and pop cultures.
Amongst both parents and children an awareness that the 'abnormal' Poland had been
'left behind' by migrating, was expressed as a means of instilling a sense of progress.

This sense of progress was also evident in the biographical narratives of migration, with
adulthood in Poland constructed as an abnormal time-space in which progression is
prevented, while childhood in Poland was remembered as a normal time-space in which a
sense of belonging can be found. The separation of adulthood and childhood into two
discrete time periods in the biographical narrative provided a sense of progressing from
one life stage to another which corresponded with the progression from one national
space to another. This, as the diagram (Figure 6) illustrated, created a sense of time-space
progress from a 'normal' childhood in Poland to a 'normal' adulthood in Britain, with
nostalgic memories of childhood Poland providing the roots for belonging. Attempts by
some of the parents in my study to 'normalise' the British childhoods of their children by
making them more like their own childhoods in Poland revealed the powerful driving

force of normality and the way in which it is conceptualised differently depending on the time-space in which one is located.

While time is not always experienced in a regular, linear way, it is through linearity that lives tend to be interpreted and therefore how narratives are created, as Adam notes: 'When we observe the world around us it appears as a progression from past to future' (2004: 54). The notion of progress provides a means of understanding the way in which the relocating from one time-space to another is rationalised as both an international and biographical movement. The pursuit of belonging through normality explored in this chapter has so far been based on financial stability as the facet of progress which drives migration. However, it has become clear that family is the context in which this 'normal life' is situated, as single mother of two, Urzula Kaczmarek, summarises: 'Money predicts your future, and families of course, but you have to feed them, have to clothe them.' This chapter has introduced the role of family in creation of the migration story, but it is a theme that becomes ever more dominant as the migration story unfolds. The strong associations between homeliness and family are explored in more depth in the following chapter. Having made the journey from 'abnormal' Poland to 'normal' Britain, a sense of unhomeliness pervades without the state of family togetherness. The following chapter reveals that this family togetherness goes beyond occupying a dwelling, as another dimension comes to the fore in the establishment of the homely home in which a sense of belonging can develop.

# Chapter Five: Waiting for Family Togetherness

## 5.1 Introduction

A 'normal life' is more than financial security. For the families in my research, moving to Britain for work was perceived as a way out of both financial and temporal paucity –with the aspiration for greater time together as a family central to their pursuit of the 'normal life'. Most of the parents in my study were working overtime or multiple jobs in Poland in order to earn enough to support their families. This meant that they were able to spend very little family time together, contributing to a sense of life in Poland as 'abnormal'. Being able to afford to work less hours and therefore having more disposable time to spend with family is a prime motivation of migration that has not been noted amongst other studies of Polish migration to Britain. This omission may be explained by the current research focus on migrants as individual workers rather than family units. Such studies into Polish migration mainly represent young single migrants or those who had left families behind, finding that most worked long hours in order to maximise their earnings and the amount of money that they could send as remittances to family back home (Anderson *et al*, 2006; Spencer *et al*, 2007; Drinkwater *et al*, 2009). Although some of the parents in my study continue to work long hours, particularly in the first few years of living in Manchester, migrating as a whole family to a context in which they could afford to work less hours was driven by the need for the normality of family togetherness.

Family togetherness is a 'doing' rather than a state (Charles and Kerr 1988; Gillis, 1996), and the experience of this aspect of normality takes time to achieve. While some of my participants relocated to Manchester as a whole family, for most a parent was a pioneer migrant –moving to Manchester alone initially before being joined by the rest of the family having ensured the financial foundations for the 'normal life' were in place. While current literature on the transnational family offers an account of the way in which family togetherness is lived at a distance, my study provides an insight into the way in which the 'doing' of family is established, valued and evaluated in a situation in which the normal time-spaces of family togetherness have been abandoned and then (re)created anew in a new context.

In this chapter I discuss another temporal aspect of normality which Misztal identifies as the 'feeling of continuity.' I argue that this feeling of continuity can be created through the day-to-day synchronicity of family togetherness. The 'simultaneous action' which

defines synchronicity according to the Oxford Dictionary of English (2005: 1789), is expressed in the family home through a shared routine. Certain daily practices that occur within family homes, such as sleeping and eating, can be synchronised to create shared 'circadian rhythms' (Parkes and Thrift, 1975: 661). Creating this so-called 'collective beat' (Adam, 2004: 99) can provide a sense of family togetherness and 'normality' that many migrants seek in settlement. I argue that without this synchronicity, migrant families can struggle to feel that they belong and that periods of waiting for families to occupy the same space and time are inherently unhomely. Recognising that many of the families in my study have undergone periods of separation before being reunited in Britain, I consider the experience of waiting to live together as a family on those in Britain and Poland. I also explore the way in which adjusting to a new life together as a migrant family in the host country can take time to feel 'normal' as synchronicity is established. Finally, I consider the impact of a lack of synchronicity amongst those in my study when family members do not share an established routine in time and space and the implications this has for perceptions of normality and belonging.

## 5.2 Waiting for the normality of family togetherness

For those who did not arrive as a whole family, a sense of abnormality and unhomeliness for both those left behind in Poland and the lone pioneer migrant of the family characterised their interval of separation. Reunification then incurred a period of adjustment, as family members learned to belong within the shared family home together again. These times of separation and adjustment were felt to be periods of discomfort: times endured rather than lived, as the normality of synchronicity was awaited. In waiting the migrants did not belong to their present time-space but to a future time-space. This lack of belonging led to a sense of unhomeliness that could only be transformed through family reunification, as this account of Bogdan Zieliński's pioneer migrant experience reveals:

> *Having been selected in a recruitment drive by a British bus company in 2005, Bogdan Zieliński left his wife, Kristina, and daughters, Agata and Monika, in their small Polish hometown of Oswiecim to move to Manchester. Arriving with a group of other Polish men who were recruited alongside him, he was provided with a welcome ceremony, basic language classes and administrative services as well as a house for the group of bus drivers to share. Living in this shared house with other men –most of whom had also left behind family in Poland- Bogdan recalls feeling*

*'not at all at home'. Although he got along with the other men he lived with, he viewed the house as simply a space to recharge after long hours at work. Feeling no motivation to make this place his home, Bogdan's only personalisation of his room was a photograph of Kristina, Agata and Monika. He felt he was waiting to be reunited with 'his girls' before he could create a 'proper home'. Remembering this unhomely time, he affectionately puts his arm around Kristina and nuzzles into her shoulder, grinning and turning to look at her he says, 'I was waiting for this one.' (Zieliński family)*

Living in the shared house, waiting for a year for his family to join him in Manchester was portrayed as an abnormal and unhomely time-space in which Bogdan could find no sense of belonging. Bogdan's lack of the motivation and ability to create a more homely space - beyond sticking a family photograph to the wall- reveals the powerful impact of family togetherness as a shared time-space in providing a sense of homeliness and belonging. Rose (2003: 12) notes the capacity of family photographs to 'bring near those far away'; however, there is evidently a limit to the level of presence that can be established through materiality. This example is typical of those who had to spend time apart and reflects the strong conceptual association with family, with the absence of family members associated with a sense of unhomeliness (Douglas, 1991).

The period of family separation is constructed as a necessary part of the migration story, but one that is nonetheless seen as 'abnormal.' There is a sense of time dragging in the countdown to reunification, a period that varied from a few months in the case of the Grabowska family to several years in the case of the Wilk family. The length of the separation period was never specified prior to migration, and reunification in Manchester was seen as conditional on the acquisition of the practical grounds for a 'normal' family life –namely employment opportunities and affordable accommodation. The impact of this 'abnormal' time-space of waiting for family togetherness is illustrated in Luisa Grabowska's account of the intense few months she spent trying to secure employment that would afford her the accommodation needed for her children to join her:

*When Luisa Grabowska first moved to Britain, she stayed on her brother's sofa in the house he shared with his family on the outskirts of Manchester. Desperately missing her children back in Poland, but recognising the need to sort out accommodation suitable for her family and a job that would support them, Luisa rushed to get these practical bases in place as soon as possible. She scorns those*

*who live on benefits, and the day after she arrived, she set out to find 'any job that is permanent'. She made job-hunting her 'full-time nine-to-five job', taking the bus to Manchester city centre every day and calling at employment agencies and handing out CVs until she secured a position as a cleaner in a care home. She continues to work at the same care home, but now as a care worker. While she acknowledges her work is difficult and tiring, she claims her period of job hunting was far more arduous. She recalls returning –often after dark- every night to her brother's house, physically and emotionally exhausted in the knowledge that the open-ended waiting for her children would continue.*

Luisa's conscious striving to create the foundations of 'normality' in the 'abnormality' of being away from home is accompanied by a conscious sense of time moving slowly and arduously, reflecting the notion that we only notice the passing of time when it does not feel normal (Schweizer, 2008). Luisa was seeking to belong in a future time-space of a family home that did not yet exist, leading to a sense of emotional strain and fatigue. Waiting for practical assurances to be in place was seen as something beyond control that had to be endured, as Luisa expresses, 'It is no one's fault. It's just these things take time.' Luisa is experiencing an absence of 'temporal sovereignty' (Geißler, 2002: 136) and the associated feeling of a lack of control further adds to the unhomely nature of this 'abnormal time-space.' This element of control as a basis for homeliness is explored further in the following chapter.

Conlon (2011: 355) identifies waiting as 'a distinct spatial and temporal dimension of stasis for migrants' worthy of study. She and others emphasise that waiting is not a solely passive state, and that waiting also should be understood as an active experience (Gray, 2011; Bissell, 2007). This notion echoes the work of Jeffrey (2010) who refers to the active practice of waiting as 'doing 'timepass'', a phenomenon he observes amongst unemployed men in India. He notes that actively passing time or partaking in 'timepass' is a means of marking one's social identity and 'suffering' (Jeffrey, 2010: 477). The above vignette arguably portrays Luisa's experiences of 'timepass' and exemplifies the way in which her identity as migrant mother attempting to establish a life for herself and her children is embodied in her 'timepass' activities. Migration studies have a tendency to focus on the life experiences either side of the waiting, however, it is important to consider the experience of waiting itself as it can 'be experienced as an extended or suspended present, thus significantly shaping the lived life' (Gray, 2011: 421).

The unhomely time-space of waiting is experienced, not only by the pioneer migrant, but also often by the partner left behind in Poland. For those in my study, the length of separation depended not only on the success of the pioneer in Manchester, but also on the 'sorting out' of obligations back in Poland. This 'sorting out' involved the fulfilment of responsibilities that were inherently temporal –including the payment of outstanding loans and bills, or the completion of schooling. In waiting to join the pioneer migrant, the remaining family often strive to create a sense of synchronicity through the virtual time-space of internet conversations, but these are not deemed sufficient time-spaces for a sense of normality to emerge, as Kristina recollects in her time spent away from Bogdan:

> *In the year in which Kristina and Bogdan Zieliński spent apart, Kristina notes how frequently they were in contact. At times when she knew he was off-duty from his bus-driving, she awaited his Skype calls, keeping her laptop close by –usually propped up on the kitchen work surface as she prepared the children's meals or next to her on the sofa or bed while she watched television. She recalls the sense of excitement she felt when his call popped up on the screen. Their conversations varied in length and nature, although Kristina notes that as she had previously been responsible for all of the cooking, cleaning and laundry, Bogdan often called her for advice on the chores which he was faced with performing for the first time. Bogdan's 'quick questions', such as how to cook an egg or whether he needed to peel potatoes before or after boiling them, often turned into conversations lasting hours as the couple found it hard to say goodbye. Although Skype allowed the couple to see and hear each other multiple times on a daily basis, both acknowledged that the experience was 'not the same' as living together and longed for the touch of real, rather than virtual, interaction. (Zieliński family)*

Saying 'goodbye' marked the end of the shared time-space created through the synchronicity of both interacting together online at the same time. However, they acknowledge the common conclusion that virtual synchronicity is an insufficient condition for 'normality.' As software such as 'Skype' –the online communication tool of preference for the majority of my participant families- has come to provide a relatively inexpensive and accessible means of interaction, mobility theorists have come to question whether 'virtual co-presence' can supersede the need for 'physical proximity' in maintaining social relationships (Urry, 2002). My study reflects the findings of other researchers in the field, who assert that virtual communication is unable to provide the same experience as

physical contact, often leaving a greater sense of longing for the intimacy of physical proximity (Baldassar, 2008; Bacigalupe and Lambe, 2011). This conclusion is particularly evident in the case of family connections and the care giving associated with parent-child relationships. The limits to feeling synchronicity through a virtual time-space explain why all the families in my study felt compelled to live together in Manchester in order to achieve their normality.

Some time theorists have portrayed waiting as a potentially enjoyable experience, a positive anticipation of things to come in which the individual waiting is 'entirely fulfilled by what he expects' (Frey, 1996: 57). Gray describes this phenomenon as the 'stabilising effect of the promise' (2011: 425) in which the expectation of future prospects creates a sense of satisfaction and resolution. However, considering the impact of waiting and the experiences of what Jeffrey (2010) terms 'timepass' on the participants in my study, my research reflects the contrary. Thus waiting can be a negative pressure on everyday life as time becomes 'felt and consciously endured [seeming] slow, thick, opaque' (Schweizer, 2008: 16). Chapter Two noted the detrimental impact that waiting had on asylum seekers' wellbeing as they were held indefinitely in detention centres (Vitus, 2010). My study reveals this to be a negative, temporally-rooted experience that migrant families awaiting reunification also undergo. Waiting induces an 'acute awareness of time' (Dewsbury, 2002: 151) in which the length of time passed in weeks, months or years does not correspond with the subjective lengthy sense of lived time experienced.  This discord between the subjective and objective time frames and the sense of being out of control that is associated with such waiting has important implications for migrant wellbeing and belonging.

Until this point I have focussed predominantly on waiting from the perspective of the parents in my study. Considering the period between the departure of the pioneer migrant and the reunification of the families in Manchester from the viewpoint of the children reveals a completely different perspective. While the adults speak frequently of the 'waiting' they endured during this time, this concept is largely absent from the stories of their children. While the children talk about missing their absent parent, being told that they would be coming to Manchester, and preparing for and being on the journey, these experiences are described as discrete events. There is no sense of awaiting the next step or sequence of events. This difference can be explained by the contrasting temporal perspectives of adults and children: while children live predominantly in the present,

adults tend to be more future-oriented, as the awareness of different aspects and dimensions of time is developed in the process of maturation (Montangero, 1993; 1996; Edwards, 2002).

Children's tales of leaving Poland and coming to Britain are told without a sense of anticipation. Few report having any expectations of what life in Britain would be like, leading many to react to important and inevitable changes, such as having to communicate in a new language and missing friends and family back in Poland, with a sense of shock and extreme emotion. While for some this time is associated with adventure and excitement, most of the children recall more negative extreme emotions in their recollections of the migration journey, such as in the case of 18-year-old Maria Markowska:

> *Basia wanted Maria to complete her school year in Poland before moving to join her in Manchester. Having lived without her daughter for a few years, Basia eagerly anticipated Maria's arrival. However, in a private interview, Maria recalls the distress and anger towards her mother that she felt upon migration. Despite knowing that she would always eventually join Basia in Manchester, Maria recalls that it was only during the journey to Britain that she 'really realised this is the last time I am in Poland and I am living in a new country.' This sudden realisation left her sobbing throughout her train journey to Berlin, her flight to Liverpool and her coach connection to Manchester where her mother was waiting 'smiling [she sneers]'. She claims her crying lasted 'every night' for two months as she realised how much she missed her friends, family and life in Poland. Despite planning a future career as a prison officer in Britain and generally expressing how happy she is to have left Poland, Maria's recollection of the migration journey remains vivid and emotional. Her description of the time ends with a heavy sigh as she comments, 'That was hard.' –seeming to refer to both the lived experience and the experience of remembering it. (Markowska family)*

Just as the lack of control over the period of waiting experienced by parents in my study led to a sense of unhomeliness and lack of belonging, the feeling of lack of control expressed by the children in relation to migration decisions is associated with similar emotional responses. However, while the adults viewed this lack of control as inevitable and 'no one's fault', the children tended to blame their parents for the distress they felt at being in a situation that was beyond their control. While a few of the children felt excited

at the prospect of a new 'adventure' in Britain, most were loath to leave the lives they knew in Poland and face the difficulties of (re)creating normality in an new place. Maria's story reveals the way in which the distress incurred in migration can be expressed as anger and resentment directed towards the parent(s).

The objects children choose to bring with them on their journeys to Britain reflect their present time-orientation. Refusing to acknowledge her move to Manchester as permanent, Maria recounts how she brought with her 'just a few books, few clothes, just to have something to change into –no plans to stay'. Nikolai's mother, Petra also laughingly recalls how her son filled his little suitcase full of toy cars, rejecting her requests to pack clothes. Beyond the objects in their suitcases, the different time-orientations of children and their parents greatly impact on how they experience the migration process. While without a sense of waiting, children avoid the undesirable monotony of time dragging or a sense of mounting dread reported by adults, they also avoid the benefits that waiting can extol. I would argue that waiting is a necessary preparatory phase to migration. The slowing of time provides the occasion to imagine the future and thus prepare oneself emotionally for possible outcomes. For children, living in the present and unprepared emotionally for what is to come, the migration journey is more likely to become the event of extreme emotions. Children's seeking to place blame for the distress of migration can lead to difficult relationships between parents and children which can impact on the experience of family togetherness and delay the establishment of 'normality' and belonging.

## 5.3 Establishing normality in synchronicity

While all families recognised the need to be together as a family in order to feel at home and create a sense of belonging in the host country, 'normality' is not instantaneously achieved by being together under one roof. Once families have been reunited a period of adjustment occurs as normality is established, as the Wilk family's experiences illustrate:

> *Edward Wilk lived in a mortgaged four-bedroom house, renting out the unoccupied rooms to other Poles for three years, before being reunited with his wife, Sylwia, and three of their children. Edward admits to have lived a 'not proper life' away from his family, working 'twenty-six hours a day' in multiple jobs and drinking heavily with his Polish friends and tenants. While the family were all very pleased to be reunited, they admit that adjusting to life together again took time. Sylwia had grown used to looking after both the practical and financial running of*

*the house in Poland and was surprised at how difficult she found the return to the usual divide in household duties. While she took satisfaction in what she calls giving the house the 'feminine touch' through cooking and cleaning duties, she found giving her husband control over the finances difficult, leading to rows in the first few months of the family living together again. Edward was appreciative of Sylwia's 'feminine touch' declaring it made 'the house feel like a home' for the first time, however, it took him a while to adjust to the noise and bustle of a house full of children –'I lost the TV remote' he jokes gesturing to ten-year-old Simeon who is sat in front of the television watching Polish cartoons. The children also note how they are now much closer to their father than when they were first reunited with him, having grown used to relying solely on their mother for parental guidance, affection and help with homework. (Wilk family)*

The (re)assertion of family and gender roles is viewed as a necessary, although not necessarily comfortable, part of the period of transition in the wake of reunification. Atherton (2009) observes a similar experience of 're-domestication' in the case of men in the British Army returning from service. He asserts that different home spheres are associated with specific forms of masculinity, with the 'military masculinity' associated with regimented order not necessarily compatible with the civilian domesticities encountered upon return to the family home. In my study, Edward Wilk's masculinity constructed through drinking and excessive work hours in the absence of his family, clearly too has undergone a period of transition to incorporate the expectations of a 'family man' once again.

Even for those who migrated as a whole family, it takes time to achieve a sense of normality in family togetherness following arrival. The 'normal' time-space of the family home in Poland is not the same as in Britain. Routines take time to develop and the opportunity to create 'normality' through a shared family routine can be challenged by the circumstances faced by migrants. While the families in my study have chosen to move to Britain in order to work fewer hours for more money, enabling them to spend more family time together, long and irregular working hours remained a common complaint, particularly in the early years of migration amongst those working in unskilled professions. Work schedules impact on the family routine, as is evident in the case of the Kowalski family:

> *When I first visit the family, Zarek Kowalski is studying for the examinations that*
> *he needs to take in order to become an electrician. In order to make enough*
> *money to support the family, both Zarek and Gizela juggle looking after Florentyna*
> *with working as cleaners. Zarek works during the daytime, allowing Gizela to do*
> *the school run; then Gizela works a nightshift, catching up on sleep while*
> *Florentyna is at school. The family all talk about how much they value the few*
> *hours they have together as a family between Zarek coming home from work and*
> *Gizela leaving for her nightshift. They use the time to eat dinner together and sit*
> *around the dining table talking about their days –all identifying the dining table as*
> *a significant part of the home. Gizela jokes at how she's always in the mood for*
> *breakfast rather than dinner having only been up for a few hours, but she thinks*
> *it's important for the family to share a family meal together every evening.*
> *(Kowalski family)*

While Zarek has since qualified as an electrician affording Gizela to work a shorter daytime shift, this vignette illustrates that even in difficult circumstances families strive to create a sense of normality through the time-space of a family home routine. The 'normality' of a family routine creates a time-space in which my participants note a sense of homeliness which makes them feel they belong. This role of synchronicity is succinctly captured in Kristina Zieliński's description of what makes a house a home:

> 'It has to be somewhere where family can be together to sit and talk… just spend
> time together. That makes the atmosphere of home.' *(Kristina Zieliński)*

This sense of performing tasks simultaneously and in synchronicity with one another evokes what can be described as a domestic 'choreography' (Hand et al, 2007: 668). The tendency towards a shared daily cyclical time has been noted by some of the earliest time geographers, who denoted 'sleep and mealtimes' as 'pacemakers' in the 'circadian rhythm' of the family (Parkes and Thrift, 1975, 661-2). This study emphasises the sense of homeliness that such a rhythm can create through its role in the establishment of a family time-space in which every member belongs.

Once again, deviating from this 'normality' is constructed as having a negative impact. A sense of unease and unhomeliness is prevalent in cases in which the norm of family synchronicity is broken. This is evident in the case of the Lamiński family when Gerek's experiences of remaining at home while his wife, Petra, and son, Nikolai, are away:

*On a tour of their apartment, Petra points out the corner of the master bedroom that is dominated by Gerek's desk, shelves and boxes overflowing with electrical engineering equipment, complaining that Gerek currently uses a corner of his and Petra's bedroom to practise his hobbies, which causes tensions over the mess of wires and the smell of soldering. When Petra and Nikolai take a return trip to Poland Gerek remains behind to look after the dog and indulges in his hobbies. However, he reflects that without his partner and son, his days become erratic. He often misses mealtimes or eats inappropriately for the time of day –laughing as he recalls consuming nothing but bread and jam for three consecutive days and standing over the stove eating soup straight from the saucepan for breakfast- and his sleep patterns become irregular –often staying up late and falling asleep on the sofa in front of the TV. He says that he initially enjoys the freedom, but soon misses what he calls 'an order in the day', longing for Petra and Nikolai to return and the routine of family meals and bedtimes to resume. (Lamiński family)*

However, the time-space of the family home is not necessarily the same as it was in Poland. Not only are working practices often different, but changes to childcare can create new routines through which new time-spaces of synchronicity can be created. This is the case for the mothers of the Wilk family and the Kaczmarek family who both care for children with disabilities: Zofia Wilk, who has Down's Syndrome, and Ryszard Kaczmarek, who is autistic. With little acceptance and support for disability available in Poland, Zofia's mother, Slywia, and Ryszard's mother, Urzula, spent much of their day caring for their children. In Manchester, both children attend specialist schools and colleges and receive support from care workers. With Ryszard at college full-time and spending free time with a strong network of college friends, Urzula has been able to take up employment as a hospital care assistant. While Slywia feels she must improve her English before seeking employment, she finds she has more time to spend on housework and with her other children since Zofia is at school during the day. Both note that their relationships with their children have improved in these circumstances. Even though the time in which these mothers spend with their disabled children has decreased, family togetherness is emphasised as more prominent in Britain than it was in Poland. This highlights the sense of 'quality time' inherent in shared time and space of synchronicity (Kremer-Sadlik and Paugh, 2007).

## 5.4 Outside of the time-space of family normality

Conceptualisations of family can vary from one family member to another. Some feel stronger connections to extended family members than others, and some 'family members' remain in Poland. Whether or not someone is viewed as a family member that needs to be present in the home in order to create a sense of family togetherness depends on a range of factors and can vary from person to person. Reaching an age of maturity and level of independence has the most significant implications for whether or not someone is regarded as a child in the family or not, with being 'grown up' associated with leaving the family home. In the case of the Wilk family and the Grabowska family, the eldest children, Asia Wilk and Damien Grabowska, have remained in Poland to complete their education whilst their parents and siblings relocated to Britain. In both cases, the decision to leave the children in Poland centred on the facts that they were coming to the end of their education and that they could remain in a family home: Asia continued to live with her grandmother in the family home, and Damien moved in with his father –his mother's ex-husband- whom he would previously visit at weekends. His mother, Luisa, hoped that both Damien and his younger sister, Klara, would move to Manchester to live with her but, while neither child wanted to leave Poland, Klara was told by her mother that she 'had to', while Damien's decision to remain was accepted. Luisa's remark about her son living in Poland reveals the importance of dependency in conceptualising the family:

> 'I miss Damien, but I know he is happy. I don't need to worry about him because I know he's being looked after, and he's an adult and he will make his own decisions.' *(Luisa Grabowska)*

Luisa feels comfortable that Damien is 'looked after' by his father and extended family in Poland. As 'an adult' Luisa does not view Damien in the same way as Klara in terms of needing to live together dependently with her. Luisa has recreated a changed sense of family togetherness with Klara in Manchester.

However, moving from a state of dependence to independence is known to be a gradated, non-linear process, rather than a discrete stage of transition in the life course (Maguire *et al*, 2001; te Riele, 2004). Luisa continues to offer Damien support through virtual contact and visits. This support has varied in intensity and nature according to Damien's circumstances:

*Having rarely spoken about Damien in previous interviews, I am surprised at how frequently he is mentioned during my third visit to Luisa's house. She tells me how Damien will soon receive the results of his final school exams (matura) which he hopes will enable him to train as a fire-fighter in Warsaw. Luisa is pleased with his choice of career and determined to support him in achieving his plans. She has increased her weekly Skype conversations with him to near-daily discussions which centre on the fire-fighter application processes and training, saving up to move out from his father's, and flat-hunting in Warsaw. She explains her increased contact as linked to this particular time of change in Damien's life: 'He needs my help for this stage, for me to be there for him.' (Grabowska family)*

While Luisa was comfortable with leaving Damien to continue his 'normal life' in Poland, remaining in his hometown in his established routine, Damien's plan to move to Warsaw to become a fire-fighter represents a temporal and spatial shift to this 'normality' that provoke a change to the established mother-son communication pattern. This reflects the heightened desire for family togetherness in times of 'abnormality' or change (Coe, 2010).

Different conceptualisation of family togetherness can exist within one family when the definition of the family is not shared. As is the case in the Grabowska family:

*When Luisa Grabowska was joined by her daughter Klara in the summer of 2006 having lived in Manchester for several months on her own, Luisa felt her family home complete. Klara had been living with her father –Luisa's ex-husband- and her older brother, Damien, in her hometown in northern Poland. Despite enjoying college and a wide circle of friends in Manchester and with plans to go to university in Britain, Klara expresses that nowhere in Britain can be considered as her real home while her father, brother and wider family remain in Poland and therefore her 'balance [of belonging] is towards Poland.'*

In Luisa's perspective being with Klara provides her with the sufficient basis through which to construct the family home in Manchester. Her divorce from her husband and her view of Damien as 'an adult' position them outside of the familial home. However, for Klara, particularly having lived with her father and brother for some time while her mother lived in Manchester, her family home is incomplete without their presence.

With extended family left behind, 'normal' relationships cannot be spatially maintained, and instead a new 'normality' must be established over distance. Time and routine play an

important role in the creating this sense of normality in familial transnational relationships. While all of the families in my study maintained a routine of contact with family and friends back in Poland, these communications varied in frequency and intensity from person to person. Most chose Skype as their preferred mode of contact, however, mediums were also dependant on with whom the contact took place. Studies tend to represent the mediums through which migrants contact those back in the homeland as based on their personal preference (Moore, 2008); however, my study revealed that practicalities and preferences of those back in the homeland also impact on migrants' homeland contact, such as the distinction between communication with Polish friends and British friends through the online social network sites of 'Nasza Klasa' and 'Facebook' respectively.

The regularity of contact also depended on the impact that it had on those involved. Communicating with those left behind can create a sense of emotional upheaval that cannot be sustained on a regular basis, as Edward's contact routine with his mother back in Poland illustrates:

> *Edward Wilk calls his mother on the telephone every other week. Describing himself as a 'mummy's boy', he says that he would like to speak to her more regularly, but minimises contact as he is aware of the emotional impact contact has on her: 'When I call her it makes her cry because she misses me so much.' He recalls times when he wants to make a quick call to his mother to ask for advice on cooking for example, but knows it will upset her too much, so must stick to his routine of fortnightly contact.*

Previous studies have shown that contact with family members and friends left behind in the original homeland can serve to maintain a sense of comfort and belonging in the host country (Moran-Taylor and Menjívar, 2005; Moore, 2008). However, my study emphasised the important temporal dimension to these interactions. It is the presence of a routine in such communication practices that establishes a sense of normality necessary to feel one belongs.

When this established 'normality' changes, a sense of discomfort occurs. This is evident in Ruta Jankowski's account of her mother's visit to Manchester:

> *Ruta Jankowski lived close to her mother in Poland and has maintained a close relationship with her through daily internet conversations since living in*

*Manchester. Ruta identified her laptop as being her most significant object with sitting on the sofa 'Skyping' with her mother forming an integral part of her daily routine, situated between coming home from work and making dinner. During an initial interview, Ruta expressed her excitement that her mother would be coming to stay with the family in Manchester for a few weeks. However, following the visit, she reveals that having her mother in the house had been difficult to cope with as she disapproved of the family's weekend lie-ins and rearranged the kitchen cupboards. "It is better when she is sitting at her home and I am here on my sofa with the Skype to talk with her" Ruta laughs.*

Ruta's discomfort comes from the shift from sharing a virtual time-space to an actual time-space with her mother: moving from 'normality' to 'abnormality.' The 'normality' of the time-space of daily virtual contact comes from its associated sense of routine. Ruta's break from 'normality' is associated with an unhomely unease identified by others in the study when their routine of contacting those back in Poland is broken, in cases such as moving to a house without an internet connection or working shifts which mean available time for communication does not correlate with the other person.

This section has shown family togetherness to be a 'normality' that is created through synchronicity. In sharing time and space together through an established home routine in Britain, the Polish families in my study feel that they can belong. In order to do so fully requires an actual, not just virtual, presence of all of the members seen as necessary in the creation of family togetherness. The process of creating family togetherness through synchronicity takes time to establish, and some must wait years for it, but there is a strong motivation to achieve the normality and sense of belonging it can provide.

## 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter I explored the concept of normality as synchronicity, recognising the significance that the families in my study placed on sharing a space and time as a family in order to feel a sense of belonging. Interpersonal connections are known to provide a strong sense of belonging, but require regular social interaction and an absence of conflict in order to provide a positive impact on wellbeing (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). The families in my study reflect the historically accepted norm that the family represents the most significant social sphere and that home is the space in which social interactions between family members are predominantly performed (Hareven, 1991). While transnational studies portray technology as the means through which simultaneity can be

sustained across borders (see Huang et al, 2008), my research emphasises the need for a common time-space located in the shared routines of the family home.

Family togetherness was identified as a central motivation for migration that could be overlooked by studies which see normality solely through the lens of financial security. However, it is important to recognise that family togetherness is a process that occurs over time, often involving a period of waiting for whole families to be reunited in the host country and then for sense of normality to be re-established through the creation of a routine in the new home. The families in my study sought to create this normality through the synchronisation of activities such as eating, sleeping and socialising in order to feel a lived sense of family togetherness. Again, this 'normality' was constructed in opposition to 'abnormality.' Exploration of situations in which family synchronicity was not present, such as in the absence of family members or during breaks with routine, revealed a lack of 'normality' which felt unhomely and a time-space not conducive to belonging.

This chapter and the preceding chapter have demonstrated that progress and synchronicity are necessary temporal elements in creating a time-space of belonging through migration. It is the search for a 'normal life' of financial security that initially drives their migration, and the need for the 'normality' of family togetherness that necessitates that the migration and settlement process includes the whole family. Achieving this sense of normality is consistently apparent as a condition for belonging and associated with feelings of settlement, familiarity and stability. In his research into Palestinian families, Harker (2012) notes that partaking in 'normal' family life serves as a way of creating a sense of comfort in the precarious situation of political uncertainty. I argue that for the families in my study who face the unhomely situation of leaving the familiar and often endure periods of separation and adjustment, their 'normality' of financial stability and family togetherness comes through the realisation of the temporal aspects of progress and synchronicity.

To some extent, this chapter contrasts with the previous chapter, by the attention it draws to 'everyday time' rather than 'life time' (Alheit, 1994). Alheit defines this 'everyday time' as cyclical in nature and composed of 'all the things people take for granted' (1994: 308). He notes that when the daily routine of 'everyday time' is disrupted -as is the case for the families in my study- a sense of loss of security and discomfort can occur. My research supports this assertion, and reflects the importance of considering multiple dimensions of time in order to fully explore the migration experience. In the following

chapters, I explore the way in which, having established the foundations for the 'normal life' through the progress of migration and the synchronicity of family togetherness, normality continues to play an important role as a sense of continuity is established and the migrant story reaches the realisation of permanency in settlement.

# Chapter Six: Seeking Continuity

## 6.1 Introduction

A further temporal quality was identified by participants as integral in creating a homely time-space and associated sense of belonging in their migration: continuity. This chapter portrays continuity as a sense of familiarity that extends to incorporate a particular time-space providing a sense of permanency and stability that stretches from the past, through to the present and into the future. Encountering the unfamiliar through the process of migration- is known to be a stressful experience with negative impact on a migrant's sense of belonging and wellbeing (Berry, 2003; Mirsky *et al*, 2007). This chapter demonstrates how a sense of continuity can be imagined in order to counteract the negative effects of the unfamiliar and contribute to a sense of homeliness and belonging.

The notion of continuity is explored in two different contexts which my participants identify as impacting on their perceptions of normality and belonging in the migration and settlement experience. Firstly, the location of Poland within the European Union is considered as a time-space which engenders a sense of continuity which functions to normalise migration and also to normalise the Polish presence in Britain. In the second part of the chapter, the context shifts to the material home and its role in creating and maintaining a sense of continuity by providing a familiar setting and a connection between meaningful elements of time-spaces of past, present and future in order to construct a continuous narrative of self.

## 6.2 The continuity of a shared European time-space

While Chapter Four focussed on a construction of Poland and Britain as distinct time-spaces separated by the temporal notion of progress, this chapter emphasises the role played by the countries' shared location within the European Union in contributing to a temporal sense of belonging. Imagining Poland and Britain as being part of the shared time-space of the European Union allows a sense of continuity to pervade, contributing to feelings of normality and belonging. By considering the European Union as a single time-space the participants in my study construct their movement from Poland to Britain as an internal move which does not therefore challenge their overall sense of belonging by marking them out as outsiders.

This section explores the way in which Europe is constructed as a common time-space and its impact on the way in which my participants perceive their journey and presence in Britain. It goes on to consider the ways in which their sense of continuity is challenged and the strategies employed in response.

### 6.2.1 Migration as moving

During interviews it soon became apparent that many of the participants in my study felt uncomfortable with the label of 'migrant' and felt the term 'migration' did not describe their journey from Poland to Britain. Labels have the power to mark people out as different from the 'normal' –as noted in disabilities studies (Seale, 1998; Creadick, 2010). The label of 'migrant' or 'immigrant' is seen to have similar associations and stigmas attached (Killian and Johnson, 2006), making it problematic in the construction of a 'normal' time-space. Those in my study see both themselves and British people as being European and therefore sharing a common time-space and associated identity which do not mark them as out of place or separate when in Britain. This construction is not compatible with their definitions of 'migration', therefore leading them to reject both the notion of their journey from Poland to Britain as 'migration' and themselves as 'migrants' in Britain. These following quotations are typical of comments which arose during the discussion of the appropriateness of these terms:

> "We are not migrants because we didn't need a visa or work permit to come here…Like when moved from the mountains to Oswiecim! I also have to learn the new dialect! The same as moving to Manchester! [Laughs]" (Bogdan Zieliński)

> "I'm not a migrant, I just moved here. Not migrating –Poland to Britain- it's just moving. I didn't need a visa, I just changed the place I lived." (Zarek Kowalski)

In the first quotation Bogdan compares moving to Manchester to his relocation to the Polish town of Oswiecim from the Tatra Mountains of Poland's southern border where he spent his childhood. This comparison of moving from Poland to Britain with an internal move within Poland is common amongst participants and forms a basis for their rejection of the idea of their journey as 'migration' and favouring of the term 'moving' instead. The lack of differentiation between internal and international migration is largely due to their construction of both movements as being within a continuous time-space. While the crossing of national borders has traditionally defined the status of 'migrant' in contrast to 'resident', this study emphasises the important role of shifting borders and the perception of the supranational in defining a sense of belonging.

Those in my study adhere to the assertion of EU scholar, Favell, that 'Eastern European migrants are in fact 'region free movers' *not* migrants' (2008: 703). As the quotations from Bogdan and Zarek demonstrate, the justification given for the sense of moving rather than migrating is often based on the lack of need for a visa. Prior to Poland's accession to the European Union in May 2004, Polish citizens wishing to come to Britain had to apply for visas alongside other non-EU nationals. While Britain, Ireland, Denmark and Sweden were first to allow citizens of Poland and the other new EU member states free and unlimited entry in 2004, all EU member states now extend the same principles of freedom of movement to the A8 countries. This political and legal freedom to move internally within the supranational body of the EU represents a core value of the organisation and facilitates a sense of continuity for the families in my study as they relocate within a unified geographical entity.

Previous chapters have emphasised the way in which the normal time-space is constructed in juxtaposition to the so-called 'abnormal.' The sense of continuity which contributes to the construction of the normal time-space is also constructed relative to an alternative time-space in which Britain and Poland could not be viewed as part of a continuous geography. For some participants, the current time-space is constructed in contrast to Poland's pre-accession situation. In this case EU membership marks the border between the previous time-space in which Poland was separate from Britain and the current time-space in which the two countries are part of a continuous supranational time-space. For many, as well as an imagined frontier, the border between Poland and Britain was a real barrier experienced either personally or recounted by those they knew, as Kazik Jankowski recalls:

> "The result of Poland joining the European Union is why we are able to be here without a visa. In the USA people from my country need a visa to be in the USA and the same was true in the UK before 1st of May 2004. Even just for a trip you needed a visa- not even for life, for work. The situation was different. It was difficult because some Polish people that went to England before Poland joined the European Union –they just had a visa to visit, but the people at the border – the passport person- wouldn't let them in. It was difficult to get a visa and difficult to get in with a visa. The person at the border decided, yes or no. It was very difficult just to visit Britain. A coach could go full of Polish tourists to Britain with visas, documents, everything, but still at the border they could say no."

Kazik depicts a time-space in which the possibility of entering Britain was not only 'different' but 'difficult' –an impression emphasised by the word's repetition throughout the course of this short extract. He portrays a situation in which Britain held the power to grant entry or not -to say 'yes or no'- clearly situating Poland and Britain –and by consequence Polish and British citizens- as differentiated and separate. For Kazik and others in my study, becoming a citizen of the EU through Poland's membership established a sense of entitlement and commonality by diminishing the importance of internal national borders within the supranational entity. The legal entitlements enshrined in the European Union clearly play an integral role in creating a sense of continuity derived from moving freely within a shared time-space.

Other participants contrasted the current continuous time-space with a Europe previously restricted and divided by Poland's communist period which came to an end in 1989. During this time-space, as part of the 'Eastern bloc' Poland was separated from Western Europe by governmental constraints on interaction with 'the West' ranging from media censorship to travel restrictions. In the following extract Urzula Kaczmarek provides her account of the prospect of migration in the Polish pre-1989 time-space:

> "I think after the border came down in 1989 Polish people felt European because before it was East and West, and everything that was West was wrong and worse, but we never saw this West…it was just propaganda. Before 1989 when Polish people wanted to go West they would have to apply for a new passport, just for one visit and the government would decide whether you get the passport. And you could keep the passport, not for one or two years, but just for seven days or something, and only few people visited another country in the West. Never the whole family, just husband or wife. Never together." (Urzula Kaczmarek)

Urzula's description establishes migration in this time-space as being 'abnormal' in its absence of the temporal qualities outlined in previous chapters. Assumptions courted by propaganda that the west was 'wrong and worse' prevented migration at that time from being viewed through a lens of progress. There is also an emphasis on a lack of permanency (a theme explored in the following chapter), Urzula's repetition of the word 'just' stressing the temporariness of both the frequency of visits and the opportunity to travel: 'just for one visit'; 'you could only keep the passport…just for seven days or something.' Finally she highlights the association of this time-space with a lack of family togetherness as migration meant that family members were 'never together', preventing

the sought-after sense of synchronicity also required for a sense of normality. Urzula's family migration within the European Union, like all of the families within my study, is constructed in contrast to this time-space as being one in which a sense of progress, permanency and synchronicity could be realised due to its location within the continuous time-space of the European Union.

Whether it be the European Union's limits of 'Fortress Europe' or the 'Iron Curtain' of the Cold War, borders clearly play both a practically and discursively important role in defining a time-space in which a divided Europe made travelling to Britain difficult and out of the ordinary. The notion of development clearly plays a role in this construction of 'normality', demonstrating the links between seeking belonging within the temporal dimensions of both progress and continuity, with participants keen to share a common time-space associated with progress. Constructing a common European time-space has its origins in both Poland's recent accession to the EU and in the country's historical emergence from socialism. Other studies have noted the way in which people construct socialist times as 'abnormal' in contrast to the 'normality' perceived as present beyond the 'Iron Curtain' (see Fehérváry, 2002). My research confirms that such discourses continue in the wake of an enlarged EU, and that these metanarratives can be absorbed into the individual narratives of those living within such contexts. 'Normality' is constructed in contrast to this as the current time-space in which Poland and Britain are perceived to be part of a continuous entity due to their location within a politically and legally defined 'new Europe.' While migration studies tend to categorise and conceptualise through the lens of national boundaries, this case demonstrates the important role that shifting supranational borders and rethinking notions of scale can play in defining a sense of belonging (Marston *et al*, 2005; Bond, 2006; Gill, 2010).

### 6.2.2 Defining oneself as non-migrant

The opportunity to locate from one country to another without a visa is not the only aspect of living within the time-space of the European Union that creates a sense of continuity amongst the families in my study. The idea of Europe as a cohesive entity is also reinforced through observations and perceptions of a common culture across Europe. As Zarek recounts the car journey he, his wife and daughter made to Britain as the whole family relocated to Manchester four years ago, this sense of continuity pervades:

"Europe is everywhere similar –Germany, France, Poland too…We came here and saw that it is similar like other parts of Europe…the life is similar here to other places, so why not [stay in Britain]" (Zarek Kowalski)

When asked to elaborate on these alleged similarities, Zarek reported a sense of common European culture whereby certain behaviour, attitudes, and customs prevailed across the continent, citing the presence of churches across the European landscape as an example which he believes evidences this. This perception of a common European culture is often mentioned by my participants and, alongside the aforementioned legal freedoms, is at the heart of their construction of a continuous European time-space. Being a citizen of a shared supranational time-space is therefore often depicted as engendering a sense of cultural as well as legal entitlement to relocate from one European country to another contributing to the view of their journey as a move rather than a migration, and therefore implying that they remain residents rather than migrants.

Just as the normality found in the continuous time-space of the enlarged 'new Europe' was constructed in contrast to previous situations in which migration was a very different, 'abnormal' experience, my participants' self-perception as 'non-migrant' is constructed in contrast to the 'migrant'. Indeed, perhaps the most revealing explanation as to why their relocation does not constitute a migration lies in their understandings and definitions of what a migrant is. This label is used by many of those in my study to refer to other migrant groups viewed as separate from them as they come from a time-space constructed as beyond the European Union. Such definitions of who is and who is not a migrant in Britain are formed within the context of the country's multicultural nature and the legacy of colonialism in British migration history. All of the families in my study comment on the unanticipated presence of different visible ethnicities upon arrival in Britain. This surprise is not interpreted negatively, and many comment positively about Britain's tolerance for diversity. However, ethnicity does play a role in the way in which the Poles in my study view their sense of belonging in Britain through the lens of continuity. Ethnic groups identified as originating from former British colonies are perceived to be located in an alternative time-space marked by a colonial past and location outside of Europe and therefore defined as migrants in contrast to those travelling within today's European Union.

It is perhaps useful to consider this differentiation made between migrant and non-migrant within the discourse of whiteness, with Poles viewing themselves as 'whiter' –

more visibly and culturally akin to 'British people.' Other studies have noted that Central and Eastern European migrants are publicly perceived and politically constructed as more 'acceptable' migrants than others in Britain (Favell, 2008; Ford, 2009). This is based on their European origins and associated symbols of 'whiteness', including religion and skin colour. According to such theories, those moving within Europe are deemed more 'culturally proximate' and therefore more likely and able to integrate (*ibid*). This is a controversial notion which this study does not seek to assess in any way; however, it is important to acknowledge the role that such conceptualisations play in creating a sense of continuity and belonging for those in my study. The following excerpt from an interview with Basia demonstrates the way in which whiteness plays a role in constructing this sense of continuity as a relational construct:

> '...you [British people] do not see a difference between Polish immigration and, for example, Pakistani immigration. We are absolutely different culture...it's like we are on the same trolley –like, we are immigrant, they are immigrant. But different culture, different behaviour. We are open for English culture. They are closed...I think faster we will be the same as English than they will be the same.' (Basia Markowska)

As this quotation demonstrates, the self-definition of non-migrant is constructed in opposition to understandings and definitions of what a 'migrant' is. Basia, like many of my participants, constructs a stereotype of the 'migrant' against which she then constructs her own 'non-migrant' identity. The process she describes herself capable of –that of becoming 'same as English'- tends to be associated with the acquisition of cultural markers of assimilation, such as language, behaviour and social interaction, that migrants are constructed as unable or unwilling to do. In similar juxtaposed statements, a range of reasons are proffered by my participants for not identifying with the label of migrant, including having learned English, enjoying living in Britain and having made an effort to integrate.

Basia's comment also emphasises the importance of understanding identity as relational - created at the boundary of self and other (see Mead, 1934). While she does not label herself as a migrant, like many others in my study, she has come to realise that others may perceive her in this way. The negotiation of contradictions such as this in the construction of continuity is the focus of the following section.

### 6.2.3 Facing challenges to the construct of continuity

The construction of a continuous European time-space called upon to normalise the migration of those in my study and their presence in Britain is not without challenge from others. The notion of a collective and cohesive Europe contained within the supranational borders of the EU is often contrary to the way in which 'Europe' features in British press, politics and public discussion, as some of my participants note:

> "And they say, England and Europe. Even though England is *in* Europe. England is not its own continent!" (Klara Grabowska)

Klara's confusion and slight indignation at references to Europe as separate to Britain is expressed by others in my study with some calling on me to explain why they have heard British people refer to Europe as a separate entity to Britain. My explanations that 'Europe' is commonly used to refer to continental Europe placing Britain outside of the term's rhetorical borders stemming from a British 'island mentality' seem to be accepted. This linguistic confusion is treated as a curiosity and does not seem to impact on the sense of continuity derived from the view of Europe as a shared time-space. However, some experiences and encounters which directly challenge the sense of continuity *can* impact significantly on a sense of belonging.

As previously expressed, identity is created at the boundary of self and other, formed in between how one views oneself and how one is viewed by others (Mead, 1934). This can lead to tensions in encounters in which Poland is constructed by others as being in a different time-space to Britain, as 'behind' Britain. This extract from an interview with Basia demonstrates the way in which such a challenge is interpreted:

> Basia Markowska: Sometimes you are like alien for them. They not understanding. It's strange. Sometimes it's like you are worse, worser because you are immigrant. [sticks out bottom lip pulling an exaggerated sad face]
>
> Interviewer: Is that how you feel?
>
> Basia: Sometimes. Maybe not that deeply inside, but I think he want me to feel like that. You know, "Are every Polish white or are some green?" "Do you every one have two legs" "Do you have red blood or blue or…"[sighs exaggeratedly] It make me tired to explain to everybody. If I start a joke, like I said, "We have computer, but only president has." They start to, you know, "Only president has a computer" [whispers behind her hand as if passing on a rumour and we laugh].

> Now British knows more about Poland because there's more Polish and they go for a weekend for a holiday, for a weekend, to Krakow, Warsaw, Zakopane- they know, so it's a little better. But in the beginning, "What is it?" "Where are you from?" "In this galaxy?" [pulls a shocked face and laughs] Do you have electricity?" You know? [Laughs] "Oh, is it very cold in your country?" "Is Warsaw in Africa?" [Laughs]

Basia's account of the questioning she faces demonstrates the way in which Poland is at times perceived and expressed by others as being in a separate time-space to Britain. The notion that Poland may not yet have electricity or computers places it 'behind' Britain in terms of technological development. Through Basia's joking exaggeration that some may assume Poland to be in a different galaxy she emphasises that Poland is simultaneously constructed as geographically distant. While Basia rejects the label of 'migrant', her use of the term 'alien' and 'immigrant' in this context demonstrates the way in which others' perceptions can impede on self-perception. Her use of colour is interesting in this case in terms of evoking the discourse of whiteness through the implication that colour would mark someone as different.

A sense of feeling not fully 'white' –as whiteness academics would describe it (see van Riemsdijk, 2010)- has implications for this group's sense of feeling at home. While my participants may not describe themselves as migrants, many recount experiences in which interpretations of them as such has resulted in perceived inferior treatment and discrimination. This sense of being treated differently if identified as a Polish migrant often comes from experiences of encounters with others. Even when not directly involved in exchanges with others on the basis of national identity, the assumed perspectives of others and awareness of Central and Eastern European migrant stereotypes can impede on the sense of living within a common European time-space. This is evident in this extract from an interview with Edward during which he describes his experiences of reporting vandalism and a racialised attack on his teenage daughter to the police:

> "The police don't care about Polish people as much as they care about English people. For example, when English call for the police, it's about five police cars in five minutes, but when Oliwia was attacked, or something happened to the car, they came the next day, or in two or three days. It's not the same when English are calling as when immigrants are calling."                    (*Edward Wilk*)

Edward connects his perception of inferior treatment and discrimination to his nationality and migrant status, contrasting the treatment of 'Polish people' with 'English people.' Just as Basia rejects the term 'migrant' and then later uses it in reference to the way in which she has been perceived by others, Edward too categorises himself by placing his negative experience within the context of 'when immigrants are calling' despite having previously told me that he does not associate himself with such a label. This again demonstrates the way in which encounters can challenge the notion of continuity which rests on the notion of Poles as being from a shared time-space and therefore 'non-migrants' in Britain.

Participants also note the challenges they feel they face when entering a time-space which publicly marks them out to be migrants. This is exemplified in Magda Nowak's discomfort in claiming job seekers' allowance benefits during a period of unemployment in Britain, despite having done so in Poland:

> "I didn't sign up for anything. I felt like I didn't want anybody to tell me off. I found it too difficult to go through this procedure, I mean, to go to the job centre and someone to say, "Oh , OK, you're from Poland and you can't get a job and you want us to pay." It was just for me, no, I'm not going through this...In my country I probably wouldn't have a problem with it, but here it's a sign of...You know, like I said, at some points we feel like we really belong –to some extent- here, but on the other side, still not. Not entitled to things. Spongers, you say?"
>
> (Magda Nowak)

Magda's discomfort stems from her view that migrants are stereotyped as 'spongers' freeloading by claiming benefits and not contributing to the economy through employment. In doing so she evokes some of the discourses of citizenship previously explored in the introductory chapter to this thesis. Citizenship is thought to be defined by particular rights and responsibilities and for those in my study the most important of these, having been granted the right of entry, is the responsibility to contribute to the economy. Not only is having a job important in providing financial stability, representing a chance for progress, family togetherness and permanency, it also grants a sense of belonging through its association with being a 'good citizen' (France, 1998).

This construction of the 'good citizen' is expressed passionately in the following quotation from 18-year-old Maria Markowska:

"Some people come and just live off the benefits. Because this country is very good. It's about government, because they will give you the money, you just need to know how to apply. You don't need a job to live good. That pissed me off. Because I come here, I want to work, because I want to be a good citizen, you know? And immigrants just come here and just do nothing, because, "England will give me money." And that pisses me off, because I work, I study, I've got something in my life, and people who don't study, don't work, they want the same as I do." (Maria Markowska)

Maria's contrast of the working 'good citizen' and the 'immigrants' who 'just live off benefits' is a common theme expressed amongst those in my study and forms a strong basis for their desire to find and remain in employment. Decisions about how to define and label oneself are integral to an individual's sense of identity and belonging, and are not formulated in a vacuum (Temple, 2001). The identity of the 'good citizen' is embedded in recent British political history. Through policies and documentation such as the 'New Contract for Welfare' (1998), the Labour government echoed popular sentiments that citizenship is centred on the responsibility to sustain oneself, with those relying on, rather than contributing to, the state welfare system negatively positioned in juxtaposition to the 'good citizen'. By claiming benefits Magda would cross the boundary from 'good citizen' to 'migrant' challenging her self-perceived 'non-migrant' status. While she expresses this to not be problematic in Poland where her citizenship entitles her to do so, in Britain the fragility of her European citizenship as a firm basis for belonging is exposed.

Theorists of national identity have asserted that the European Union represents the opportunity for a post-national citizenship to usurp the traditional national citizenship model (Soysal, 1994). However, my research supports criticisms that experiences of citizenship are more complex as citizenship goes beyond legal rights and responsibilities (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2006). While legally Magda and Maria share the intra-EU migrant label of many, they differentiate themselves through their practices of citizenship. By participating in the workforce and refusing to rely on the benefits system, Magda and Maria are subscribing to the 'good citizen' model enshrined in government discourse and legislation. As discussed in Chapter One, the Labour government established an overt correlation between citizenship and the responsibility to support oneself through employment. While current legislation does not exclude EU migrants from claiming

Jobseekers' Allowances, the powerful rhetoric of the 'good citizen' serves to prevent many from doing so through the process of governmentality, as people come to 'govern' themselves through the state's 'mentality' (Brown and Boyle, 2000: 89). This process can be summarised as the way in which:

> 'individual behaviours…can be elicited by the state, not through any legal or forceful activities, but by engendering within subjects to conduct themselves in one way or another.' (Gill, 2010: 637)

In promoting a rhetoric, which is also articulated in the media and popular opinion, that being a 'good citizen' means being in employment and not claiming benefits, the government establishes an environment in which members of society can increase their moral and social status by fulfilling this role.

The negative financial impact of not claiming benefits for families in need demonstrates the importance placed on prioritising an image of being 'good citizen' and counteracting the migrant stereotype. Not fully feeling a sense of belonging and therefore entitlement in Britain can clearly impact on experiences of settlement as Magda's case, and the others in this section, demonstrates. While it is legally possible hold dual British and Polish citizenship status, none of the participants in my study held or intended to seek British citizenship through the processes of passing the citizenship test, attending the citizenship ceremony and/or acquiring a British passport. However, this section reveals the importance they place on being regarded as a 'good citizen'. Hage (1998) asserts that a sense of belonging can be established through both the 'official citizenship' of a state-certified national identity status and a 'practical citizenship' acquired through a sense of acceptance in the dominant national community. It is clearly the latter form of citizenship through which these Polish migrants living in Britain are seeking to belong. People can actively 'make' or 'perform' citizenship in order to belong in a way that is different, and arguably more powerful, than traditional citizenship status (Anderson, 2010; Ellison, 2013). Securing a job plays a role not only in establishing a sense of belonging through providing a sense of progress, but also in facilitating access to a shared time-space of 'good citizen' in Britain. By asserting a sense of belonging through the 'practical citizenship' acquired through workforce participation, migrants can transcend their official migrant status and feel part of a continuous national time-space. The following section considers the way in which this time-space is negotiated in the face of challenges in order to maintain a sense of continuity and belonging.

### 6.2.4 Reasserting a sense of continuity

Certain strategies are adopted as a means of (re)asserting and/or heightening the sense of continuity experienced in settlement. One of these strategies has already been alluded to in the extract from the interview with Basia Markowska which featured earlier in the chapter. She reports a reduction in her negative encounters which construct Poland as a separate time-space to Britain since the Polish population in Britain has increased and more British people are choosing to holiday in Poland. The resultant situation that '[n]ow British knows more about Poland' demonstrates the role that educating people about Poland is thought to play in constructing the notion of continuous time-space that is shared by both Polish and British people. The assumption of others that Poland is in a different time-space to Britain which challenges the notion of continuity is often excused as an ignorance of Poland and its place in Europe. Complaints of this perceived ignorance are expressed by both parents and children in the study. However, the technique for addressing the objections to others' images of Poland differs between the two generations: while adults tend to choose to disregard the discrepancies between their knowledge of Poland and that of others in the hope that it will improve over time as Basia has noted; children tend to associate the discrepancy between their own experiences and others' perceptions of Poland as due to a lack of education and therefore some attempt to address the professed ignorance of others in the classroom. One such example of this is Simeon Wilk's choice to bring his knowledge of Polish history to the attention of his classmates and teachers:

> *Ten-year-old Simeon Wilk shares his father's passion for military history, and is keen to be involved in showing me the large collection of war medals, photographs and other memorabilia that is housed in a pile of boxes in the corner of the family's dining room. With albums and various paraphernalia spread across the dining room table, Simeon recounts his surprise at how few British people are aware of the role of Polish soldiers fighting alongside British forces in World War Two. Alongside access to his father's collection of artefacts and extensive knowledge on the topic, Simeon has accompanied him on various outings to memorials and parades to mark the Polish war effort. When the topic of World War Two arose at school Simeon's initial excitement that 'finally they are doing stuff that I like and I know about' was dispelled when Poland did not feature in the video the class watched. Simeon recalls the way in which after the video he felt he 'had to' tell his teacher and classmates about Poland's involvement alongside*

*Britain, that 'our soldiers were fighting too in the British air force and that and no one even knew that 'til I put my hand up and told the teacher and everybody.'*

Simeon's act is an effort not only to educate others about Polish history, but to place it within British history. This creates a sense of continuity which can generate a greater sense of belonging in Britain as part of a common European time-space in which its member countries have encountered one another and operated as a single unit before. In terms of educating others about Poland, other children report similar experiences, such as correcting teachers and telling classmates and teachers about their country of origin and pointing out Poland on maps.

However, not all children opt for such an overt and confrontational strategy; alternatively, some choose to maintain a sense of living within the same time-space as others by remaining unidentifiable as Polish. This option is viewed as only available to those who have arrived in Britain at a young enough age and lived in the country for long enough to have gained fluency in English and a local accent, as is the case for Alex:

> Alex Nowak: I used to be shy, but now I'm talking lots. My English is normal now. I remember once at school I answered a wrong question and I sounded funny to everyone and everyone laughed and I felt embarrassed just because I sounded different. So I just kept my mouth shut then. And so everyone was always just thinking I was shy.
>
> Interviewer: Do people know when they meet you that you're Polish?
>
> Alex: Only if I tell them.
>
> Interviewer: So, do you like to tell them that you're Polish?
>
> Alex: No, because then they'll treat me more different. I want them to treat me the same as everyone else. Because if they know I'm Polish they'll try to like, I don't know, like…with jokes, they'll tell the more boring ones, not the more funny ones just to make sure I understand. I've got this friend in school and I only told him two weeks ago I'm Polish. In our first Geography class the teacher wanted to know our name and a fact about us, so I just said that I was from Poland. And my friend was surprised and he said that if he knew I was he wouldn't speak the same way –he wouldn't be able to speak as fast as he does.

Having lived in Manchester since the age of five, 11-year-old Alex speaks fluent English and has a Mancunian accent. He is able to, and chooses to, remain unidentifiable as Polish in order to avoid being seen as or treated as 'different.' In this extract he reveals that this option has not always been available to him as when he first arrived he 'sounded different.' His tactic then was to keep his 'mouth shut' cultivating a shy persona as a consequence. This so-called 'strategic silence' is noted in amongst other white migrant children who fear audible rather than visible identification as migrants and choose to avoid being marked out as different (Mas Giralt, 2011). In the vein of my study's findings, I interpret this silence as his means of avoiding being detected as occupying an alternative time-space.

Another strategy used to place oneself within a non-migrant time-space is to emphasise or increase a sense of shared culture between Britain and Poland, or in cases where culture is evidently different, to demonstrate an ability to become culturally similar by embracing elements of 'Britishness'. The following quotations highlight the ways in which doing so represents a rejection of a migrant identity:

Interviewer: Do you feel like a migrant?

Luisa Grabowska: No, because I very much like this place, so no. For me, no. Maybe when I first came, yes, but for me now, no I don't feel like immigrant. I couldn't speak English before, but now I can, so no.

"I'm not an immigrant. I try to be close with English people. I try to have good relations with my neighbours. Here people smile every day. In Poland they don't - maybe because people don't have money, maybe, this is the problem, more stress. Here people have everything and they smile every day, everywhere, in shops, everywhere. So now I too am smiling at people –at neighbours, in shops, to people on the street." (Urzula Kaczmarek)

"My colleague from work, he was saying, "All immigrants are bad."…Sometimes I understand this now because some immigrants are very closed and they don't want to meet with English people and they are thinking everything English is bad. And I've met people like that and now I am more understanding why he is saying like that. I think if you are living in this country you should know little more about English food, about English history even. Nikolai is saying to me now about Henry

VIII, some stuff, and I was watching Henry VIII movie because I wanted to know more about that. And people should know, really. I think it's good that Nikolai knows." (Petra Lamiński)

The final quotation illustrates the role that children often play as the conduits through which knowledge of 'Britishness' is passed. As well as exposing their parents to the English language, many children also report the way in which dishes they perceive to be British have been adopted by their families through their requests for their mothers to recreate meals they have eaten at school or friends' houses for the family at home, including chilli-con-carne, cheese pie and curry. Food is an overt and relatively accessible means of embracing British culture which can be aided by seeking the advice of others or by obtaining recipes from books or online. However, as Luisa alludes to in the first quotation, other markers of 'Britishness', in particular language, can take significantly more time and effort to obtain. The structural barriers to language learning, such as lack of knowledge about English language classes, being unable to afford them and working long hours, noted in my study and others (Anderson *et al*, 2006; Spencer *et al*, 2007; Drinkwater *et al*, 2009; Cook *et al*, 2011), therefore needs to recognised as impacting on belonging by their prevention of access to 'non-migrant' time-space.

In order to understand the adoption of British cultural markers as playing a role in the construction of continuity, it is important to understand the way in which my participants have constructed their identity as non-migrants in contrast to those from outside the EU whom they associate with the label of migrant. As these quotations demonstrate, migrants are constructed as culturally distinct, and unwilling or unable to assimilate. In contrast, those in my study construct themselves as able and willing to embrace various elements of 'Britishness' from language to customs to food to history. Their assimilation is perceived both as an innate function of their European location and enforced by their efforts to fit in. Assimilation is by definition the adoption of a new culture and therefore may initially seem at odds with the concept of continuity. However, assimilation in this case is constructed as serving the purpose of reinforcing a sense of shared European time-space and European identity compatible with British culture due to Poland and Britain's European location.

This section has emphasised the way in which my participants have sought to establish themselves as 'good citizens' and successfully integrated migrants. The welfare reforms and 'managed migration' system of recent decades has created a hierarchy which values

those who are viewed as culturally proximate and employable. EU migrants fulfil this role for the UK government, with the welcoming migratory approach towards the A-8 countries reflecting anticipations that nationals from these EU members would 'fill gaps' in the UK labour market (Jordan and Brown, 2007: 256). In contrast, asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants from outside of the EU have faced further exclusion and assumed a place at the bottom of the hierarchy deemed unlikely to contribute economically and/or less 'white' according to cultural, ethnic and religious national markers (Sales, 2002). By virtue of their location within the borders of the EU, the migrants in my study have an elevated status and expectation of being a 'good citizen' which they seek to fulfil. As discussed in Chapter Two, migration studies tend to focus on the nation-state as a reference for belonging. However, my data demonstrates the role that supranational bodies may play in terms of migrant identification and sense of belonging. While the first part of this chapter has focussed on the role of a perceived European time-space in creating a sense of living in a 'normal' time-space, the following second part considers the way in continuity continues to play a role in belonging at the level of the material home.

## 6.3 Continuity in the material home

The previous section focussed on the way in which Poland's common location in the EU with Britain facilitated a sense of continuity for the families in my study. However, while a sense of homeliness can be drawn from this unchanging supranational location, any kind of migration involves the inevitable leaving of one home and the establishment of another. In order to sustain a sense of belonging in this context, material objects are used to maintain a thread of continuity from one home to another. In the second analysis chapter, the role of (re)establishing a familiar routine on producing a synchronised homely time-space was explored. Materiality is another means of creating a feeling of homeliness by evoking a sense of continuity in the home space. Despite Poland's relative geographical proximity to Britain and availability of transport links, most making this migration are forced to leave the majority of their possessions behind. The selection process that must be undergone in packing for the journey and the home-making practices which then begin at the other end are experiences which compel migrants to reflect perhaps more deeply than most about their material home and its role in their sense of belonging (Mehta and Belk, 1991). The home tour method prompted a focus on this material dimension and what emerged was the powerful role of the aesthetic and experienced home environment in creating a sense of continuity in which one could

belong. Objects can function to create a sense of continuity on a number of levels and temporal realms which this section is designed to unpack and explore.

### 6.3.1 The comfort of the familiar

Objects taken from the homeland are known to provide a sense of comfort (Parkin, 1999; Noble, 2004; Warin and Dennis, 2005). For many of my participants, the sense of having familiar things around created a superficial sense of continuity that provided a sense of normality and belonging. This was made particularly evident in the occasion of families moving house, as the familiarity of the previous home was positioned in stark and direct contrast to the unfamiliarity of the new home. This is evident in the case of the Kowalski family who moved house during the research period, as the following vignette reveals:

> *When I visit Zarek and Gizela, and their daughter, Florentyna, a few weeks after they have moved from the two-bedroom apartment in which I first met them to their new three-bedroom house, I remark at how quickly they have unpacked the boxes, completed all of the decorating they wished to do, and even hung their large collection of pictures on the wall. To me it seems as though they have lived here for years. However, the family say that this house "still doesn't quite feel like home" in comparison to their previous apartment, "not yet". When I return a few months later, despite the aesthetic of the house not changing, the family now feel that the house has become their home, as Gizela explains, "It takes time to get used to a new place, but now I know it and I know when I come home that I am really coming home." (Kowalski family)*

This vignette depicts the way in which the familiarity which grows over time can create a comforting sense of continuity. The family's house has become homely through the accumulating sense of continuity, as Gizela articulates, "It takes time." Coming home every day to the same unchanged and familiar space creates a comforting sense of continuity that enables this family, and the others in my study, to feel comfortable. The way in which a sense of belonging can change over time and in relation to one's perception of time is illustrated by the transformation I witnessed in the family's feelings of homeliness over the course of the research. The fact that the material situation remained largely unaltered in the course of this transformation demonstrates the way in which the meanings of the material need to be uncovered through the lens of time.

This sense of normality is often only marked by its absence, as the Kowalski family's experience and the following case testify:

*Sisters Agata and Monika shared a room when they first moved to Manchester – an arrangement borne out of necessity rather than choice as the house they lived in was far smaller than their current three-bedroom house. Both girls refer to this period with disdain for the struggle they faced in sharing control over the space, particularly as Monika is a self-confessed "neat freak" while Agata is known for being more messy. Now with separate bedrooms, Monika reflects on the satisfaction of being able to have her own bedroom the way she wants in comparison to her previous shared room:*

"I like that when I come home and go up to my room it will be just like it was when I left it –not Agata's clothes all over the place or like when she moves stuff around."

Monika's sense of discomfort seems to have been based on the uncertainty that sharing a bedroom with Agata involved. Her desire for the room to "be just like it was" reflects the need for continuity that a familiar material environment can provide. However, the sense of control is an important factor to note. As alluded to in the previous chapter, a lack of control is associated with a sense of unhomeliness. Indeed, home theorists have long asserted the importance of establishing a sense of control in creating the homely home associated with a degree of ontological security (Saunders, 1984; 1986; Dupuis and Thorns, 1996; Easthope, 2004).

While the sense of continuity associated with the familiar tends to be established over time, the awareness of the need for it can also prompt its deliberate creation. Tuan (1980) describes this 'conscious effort' to establish a sense of belonging, in contrast to the sense of 'rootedness' that comes from 'the result of familiarity through long residence.' This distinction is particularly relevant in the case of recent migrants who inherently lack the 'rooted' relationship with the host country. Having undergone the experience of migration from Poland and often subsequent house moves within Britain, many parents are keen to minimise the sense of change their children feel in moving from one house to another. This strategy involves various different endeavours, for example: Petra Lamiński painted her son, ten-year-old Nikolai's, room in the same pale yellow colour of his previous bedroom; Urzula Kaczmarek shipped box-loads of model planes belonging to her 18-year-old son, Ryszard, from Poland to Britain; and Edward Wilk installed a satellite dish that would provide his children with the same Polish cartoon channels they favoured when in Poland. There is a sense of a responsibility to their children for continuity borne

by the parents amongst my participant families. Such efforts are independently pointed out by their children during home tours and their resultant impact on the aesthetic is recognised as comforting. As Massey notes, 'we actively *make* place' (1995: 48) and this is particularly evident in the realm of the migrant material home.

### 6.3.2 The connecting thread from home to home

While a sense of continuity can be established in maintaining a sense of familiarity from home to home, such familiarity is often considered beyond the aesthetic as objects are ascribed with particular meanings or associations. Often objects used to perform the role of connecting previous homes with present homes demonstrate the overwhelming importance of people in creating a home. With many loved ones associated with homeliness remaining in the previous homeland, objects operate to transport a sense of their presence to the new home (Parkin, 1999; van der Klis and Karsten, 2008). Family togetherness has already been noted to be an integral role in creating a sense of normality and belonging through the synchronicity of everyday family life. However, the family extends beyond the family home to include many family members who have been left behind in Poland. Chapter Four discussed the way in which my study and others reveal the need for physical intimacy that virtual contact cannot bestow (Baldassar, 2008; Bacigalupe and Lambe, 2011). While the homeliness derived from communication with a loved one can be facilitated via telephone, internet or post, many turn to material objects to satisfy the longing for a physical closeness with loved ones far away. In her seminal work on family photographs in the home, Rose (2003) notes the way in which photographs can create a sense of someone's presence in their absence.

In the case of the families in my study, many objects, not just photographs, were found to be valued for their capacity to embody an absent presence. These absent presences were almost exclusively family and friends back in Poland. Items fabricated or gifted by Polish loved ones, and objects which aroused memories of special occasions with family and friends in Poland were those which participants more frequently pointed out on home tours, and most often cited when asked during interviews what they first unpacked upon moving in and what they would save if their house were on fire. The association of person with object went beyond the symbolic to create a strong sense of comfort, as is poignantly illustrated in the following extract which comes from a conversation with Ruta Jankowski during our home tour, about the small porcelain figurine which her mother gave to her as a child:

Ruta Jankowski: [pauses thoughtfully looking at the figurine in her hand] She is always here with me.

Interviewer: Your mum or the ornament?

Ruta: Both. Yes, both. Because this is here, then she is here with me.

Ruta's mother now lives in America and while they talk during regular weekly Skype conversations the two rarely see one another. The fact that Ruta feels such a strong sense of her mother's presence in the presence of the figurine highlights that a material object can create a sense of continuity between people who may be geographically distant or have forged a relationship in a different time-space.

Most of the families in my study had made return journeys and received visitors from Poland, with objects brought or sent from Poland gaining significance in their new settings in Manchester. Petra Lamiński has transported plant cuttings and seedlings from Poland to grow on her bedroom window ledge in her flat in Manchester, enjoying watching them grow and reminding her of the courtyard in which she played as a child in Poland. Having recently been diagnosed with cancer, objects which trigger such memories are taking on increased significance for Petra, particularly those associated with family and friends who are supporting her at a distance:

> "I have put flowers on my window sill -I think it is more common in Poland than here… these flowers are from Poland, but they were very small, they have grown here…all my flowers are from Poland. [Gently strokes the leaves of one of the plants] I left there many flowers and because of that I was trying to bring a little bit back, little bit of Poland, living Poland…[turns to point to picture hanging above the bed] and this picture my friend made it for me from leather. It's nice to have things from friends in Poland, and I have much more time than I had before to talk with them now. It's important for me, this support. To have these things from them around me, it's nice comfort for me." (Petra Lamiński)

The objects which Petra values represent a visceral connection both with the people far away with whom she is in present contact and her memories of a previous time-space. These material evocations provide an emotional support to Petra during this difficult time in her life when her previous life world of Poland seems distant. The associations she makes with the objects she points out demonstrate the comfort she derives from past memories and present connections with a time-space in which she felt at home.

Friends as well as family can create a sense of continuity and connection between homes and life worlds of past and present. The following example demonstrates the way in which objects can create such a connection through both their material presence, and the processes of their accumulation and their usage:

> *Kazik Jankowski's favourite possession is his large DVD, CD and record collection which fill the shelves lining one wall of the family's spare room. He tells me how he left behind a similarly large film and music compendium which now sits boxed up in his parents' loft in Warsaw. Since living in Manchester Kazik has built up the collection –with both replica and new choices- in weekly online purchase sessions on Amazon in which he buys up to five CDs or DVDs a time. His choices are influenced by recommendations from his friends back in Warsaw –a group he met on an online forum for music lovers of his preferred genre: rock. He explains how the group compile monthly lists of albums and films to buy based on their individual readings of online reviews, dividing the purchases between them and then making copies to share out with the group so that every member is able to own all the items on the list. Amassing and watching and listening to his collection puts him in touch with his Warsaw friends through its sense of collaborative creation and power to evoke memories past times spent and future times anticipated enjoying the films and music at gatherings together. He notes, "Always music and films have been our shared passion and I have kept it here in Manchester also and whenever we see each other together in Warsaw or when they are coming to visit me here –it's simply great, something I had to carry on even though Ruta sometimes is complaining about all the room they take up."(Jankowski family)*

Kazik's pleasure in his collection is derived from the connection it represents between him and his friends. This connection spans time-spaces: to evoke his memories of the formation of his friendship group and the times they have spent together indulging in their shared hobby; to encompass the presence of the collection and its active accumulation in his everyday life; and to imagine the role they will play in future gatherings. The placing of objects within the memories demonstrates the need for a material manifestation of the continuous thread of personal biography, as the following section explores further.

### 6.3.2 The thread of continuity in the life course

Materiality can be used as a means of evoking other temporal realms and therefore creating a sense of continuity within the life story. The home has the potential and tendency to become its inhabitants' 'theatre of memory' (Samuel, 1994) –a space in which the objects of meaning accumulated throughout the life course are stored, displayed and treasured. In an extension of this theatrical metaphor, while the previous chapter focused on the actors, this section highlights the important role played by the sets and props. All of these so-called sets and props have a history –described by some as the 'biography' of the object (Kopytoff, 1986) - and when such a story coincides with a significant part of the life course, the object gains meaning and the capacity to evoke associated memories creating a sense of visceral continuity between the past and present.

Homes in both Britain and Poland are evoked in the construction of continuity, with the former providing a home location for a larger proportion of memorable life than the latter for some of the younger children in my study. This is the case for ten-year-old Nikolai Lamiński who, having moved to Manchester at the age of six, attaches significance to the objects which have maintained a continuous presence in his childhood having undergone the migration from Poland to Britain and three subsequent relocations within Manchester; his desk is one such item:

> *Nikolai Lamiński has a small brightly coloured child's desk which he pointed out to me on our first home tour. He explained that Gerek had bought the desk for him when he first moved from Poland to join him and his mum in Manchester. At the time of his arrival the family were living in a small bedroom in a student accommodation block and the desk sat in the corner of their crowded living space. When they moved to their first council house, Nikolai had his own bedroom for the first time in which the desk was placed. Before the family moved, Petra explained to me that she wanted Nikolai to throw away his old desk as he no longer used it, instead using a newer, larger desk on which to do his homework. When on the home tour in the family's new home I am surprised to see that the small desk remains in Nikolai's new room. Petra explains that she could not persuade Nikolai to part with the desk and he insisted it be part of his new room. Nikolai feels justified in keeping the desk, explaining, "I've had it since I was really small, so I've always had it, I couldn't just chuck it out. I like having it in here, even if I don't use it." (*Lamiński family*)*

The above demonstrates the power of an object to evoke a sense of importance due to the lengthy duration of its presence in a person's life. However, justification for keeping the desk reveals that its presence goes beyond the continuity associated with the familiarity of an unchanged aesthetic. The desk represents a significant part of Nikolai's childhood: having previously lived with mother and grandmother, Gerek's gift of the desk coincides with the commencement of the family's life together in Manchester. The desk marks a sense of Nikolai's own personal space and therefore control –making its continued existence desirable beyond its practical usage: "I like having it in here, even if I don't use it."

As Nikolai's case alludes to, childhood is not a singular time-space –it can be conceptually segmented into different phases associated with different places in order to serve the particular construction of reality sought. Objects can be valued for their capacity to chart the process of growing up as their presence serve to create a continuous sense of self, as the following example of Monika Zieliński's trophy collection demonstrates:

> *13-year-old Monika Zieliński has played football as a member of school teams since her primary school. Her many trophies are exhibited on the window ledge next to her bed –notably the only objects on display in her bedroom. She proudly picks up, shows me and tells me about each one, before placing them back in their chronological order –noting "It's funny how, like, they get bigger." She tells me how she should have returned her primary school trophies to the school after leaving for secondary school, but she "just couldn't do it" justifying her action as "they feel like mine now, my life, you know?" Later Monika's mother, Kristina, jokes that the only cleaning that either of her daughters do around the house is when Monika borrows her duster and polish to buff her "treasured trophies".*

Monika clearly treasures her football trophies, displaying them with prominence and looking after them with care. The way in which she displays her trophies in chronological order reflects the way in which they mark the continuous presence of football in her life – growing in size as she grows in age.

While seemingly paradoxical, continuity can also refer to change. In many cases home-making choices were made as a means of marking a difference between past and present homes. While the outcome evidently demonstrates a break from a previous time-space, the reason behind the choice for a new object's deliberate placement in a new home

remain part of the object's biography and therefore represents a thread of continuity from past to present. In Chapter Three, the case of Gerek Lamiński's piano purchase was presented as an example of the way in which the home tour can reveal stories that may not emerge in interviews alone. In that vignette the focus was on the impact of the piano on family relations and the emerging importance placed on family togetherness. However, the piano also plays a significant role in Gerek's individual biography, illustrating the way in which continuity is present in an apparent change. While the piano was evidently not present in Gerek's previous home, it represents a dream which he has held since a child:

> *When discussing the purchase of the piano, Gerek explains how his family could not afford, nor had room to house, a piano in his childhood home, leading him instead to learn to play the guitar. Despite enjoying playing the guitar, Gerek continued to "dream about one day having this house where I could fit a piano – my dream home". Being able to afford a piano and having room to display and play it contributed significantly to Gerek's sense of homeliness in his new house. (Lamiński family)*

Despite not always being in material existence Gerek's piano has acted as a continuous presence throughout his life course: as a longed-for object of his past dreams and as an attribute in his now real 'dream home.' The piano connects his childhood to his present situation through the realisation of his aspirations.

### 6.3.3 Investing in the present for the future

The life course extends not only into the past, but also into the future. The material home can function as a means of imagining one's settlement and future life in Britain. Financial investment can reflect a parallel emotional investment in a home, as is clear in the case of the Lewandowski family's kitchen/dining room:

> *During the home tour, the Lewandowski family are particularly keen to show me their recently completed large kitchen/dining room that they have created over the past couple of years by significantly extending the ground floor of the back of their house. All family members have had an input in creating the space which Brigitta calls "the heart of the family home": she designed the layout of the cupboards and breakfast bar; while her husband, Andrzej completed a lot of the construction work with the help of their sons. Andrzej explains that he selected to lay high quality oak floor boards that would "last a long time because this will be our home for a long time –not for anyone else, to sell, but us because we like this*

*and we are staying here so frankly it is worth spending for this good floor". The*
*marble worktops, glass tiles and sliding PVC doors that form the back wall are all*
*described similarly as "expensive but worth it" given that the family plan to use*
*the room for many years to come. (Lewandowski family)*

The choice of 'the heart of the family home' as the space for expansion, development and investment is significant as it echoes the theme of the centrality of the family in creating homeliness.

Living objects are often used to demonstrate a sense of continuity between present and future, evoking a similar rhetoric of investment. In the previous section, Petra's window sill cultivation of seedlings from Poland introduced the role that plants can play in creating a sense of homeliness. In the following vignette, the Kowalski family's experiences further this notion of living objects as facilitating a sense of continuity as symbols of investment:

*Despite living in a ground floor apartment with no private land, during the home*
*tour we venture outside for Gizela and Zarek Kowalski to show me the communal*
*grassy space within the apartment block's gated car park. As keen gardeners and*
*missing the green space prevalent in Poland, the couple requested some money*
*from their landlord to buy shrubs and trees with which to regenerate the space.*
*After initially refusing, the landlord eventually agreed to give the family a small*
*amount of money to buy some seeds. Having cleared the long grass and cultivated*
*the seeds, the landlord was very pleased with the family's efforts and has invested*
*more money in the gardening project. Gizela views the development of the garden*
*patch as symbolic of "the roots" she is setting down in Manchester and the life she*
*is "growing" as she obtains language skills and meets new people. Zarek talks*
*about extending their passion for gardening into the wider geography of the area*
*by planting trees in the nearby Peak District to create the forests he misses in*
*Poland. (Kowalski family)*

Despite the fact that shortly after the interview on which this vignette is based, this family moved from this apartment block to another area of Manchester as a council house became available, they clearly felt the need to demonstrate the roots that they felt in this home at this time. The family's garden project represented a living connection with their home and created a sense of continuity as they imagined themselves remaining to nurture and witness the growing plot. As other studies have also noted, the garden is an

important part of the material home and can provide an insight into belonging and other aspects of identity (Brook, 2003; Morgan *et al*, 2005). In this case, change is also an integral element to this sense of continuity; there is a shifting familiarity as the plants remain present but their growth changes the nature of their presence.

## 6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the role of continuity in creating both an imagined and material home at a range of scales. While migration challenges the very notion of continuity through its correlated relocation of my participant families in the context of both their national homeland and home dwelling, the way in which such uprooting has been (re)imagined and constructed in the light of continuity demonstrates the important role of subjective time in asserting a sense of belonging. Encountering the unfamiliar is associated with the potential for psychological distress and finding a sense of familiarity is a technique that can be used to address this emotional risk (Mirsky et al, 2007). The tendency amongst my participants to adopt strategies which reinforce a sense of continuity or (re)assert the notion of continuous time-space in the face of contradictions and challenges highlights the importance ascribed to this temporal quality. The sense of having remained with a shared and familiar time-space and the feeling of connection between homes and life worlds across the temporal realms of past, present and future is associated with a feeling of comfort and homeliness. Whether connecting nation-states, people, and/or life worlds, my participants have demonstrated the role of continuity, alongside the other temporal qualities explored in previous chapters, in constructing the normal time-space in which belonging is founded.

# Chapter Seven: Considering Permanency

## 7.1 Introduction

Having established the 'normality' of financial security and family togetherness, the families in my study identify a sense of permanency as necessary to feel belonging in settlement. Permanency is a temporal state that evokes the emotions of stability in a present that extends into a consistently stable future. As Ho notes, permanent or long-term stays are more likely to be associated with a sense of homeliness, unlike short-term stays in which the physical dwelling is imagined more as a 'hotel' than a 'home' (2006: 391). However, migrants are often unsure of their length of stay and initial plans for short or long-term settlement are often subject to change: a factor noted by numerous scholars of the recent Polish migration movement (Garapich, 2008; White and Ryan, 2008; Burrell, 2010). For my participant families, their migration to Britain was not initially seen as permanent, but a return to Poland came to be seen as impossible as children become socially, culturally and emotionally embedded in the host country. This chapter reveals the way in which permanency is constructed and its impact on the lives of migrant families.

## 7.2 No turning back

While most of the families in my study tell me that they did not plan to move to Britain on a permanent basis, all now refer to their settlement as permanent. Their continued residence in Britain depended on the procurement of certain symbols of permanency which have changed over time as priorities and perspectives have shifted in the migration process. While employment was the driving motivation for the relocation of all of my participant families from Poland to Manchester, it was their children's education that accounts for the permanency of their settlement in Britain. To some extent early migration experiences were characterised by the typical migrant 'myth of return' (Al-Rasheed, 1994). Retaining houses in Poland and, in some cases, staggering whole family migration with partners and children moving later generated a sense that returning to the Polish homeland was a possibility if settlement in Britain did not prove successful. However, there was a prevailing sense that in order to justify relocating the whole family certain practical assurances needed to be in place in order to ensure the move could be potentially permanent.

Particularly in the families who did not travel as a whole family, the decision as to whether a family relocation to Britain would be permanent or not depended on the success of early settlement experiences. An emphasis was placed on the procurement of two particular symbols of permanency common to all of the families in my study: stable employment and suitable, long-term accommodation. The value placed on stability and the long-term is significant, demonstrating that these practical procurements go beyond the requirement to find any job and any place to stay to evoke a sense of permanency. Temporary jobs and short-term contracts were dismissed alongside multi-occupancy or sub-standard accommodation with both regarded as unsuitable for supporting a family in the long term. Just as the Chapter Five illustrated the need for family togetherness in order to create a normal time-space; a normal time-space was seen as necessary for relocating as a family. The presence of these symbols of financial security and a family home were perceived as essential qualities of a normal time-space necessary for whole family migration. In some cases the process of putting these elements in place incurred an uncomfortable period of waiting and separation that we have already explored in Chapter Five. For those who relocated as a whole family, employment contracts and knowledge of accommodation were usually already in place prior to migration.

While accommodation and employment was viewed as necessary for settlement, the decision to remain permanently is founded primarily on the parents' prioritisation of their children's education. This is a factor that many parents admit was not anticipated when originally deciding to migrate. This is evident, for example, in the delays between children arriving in Manchester and commencing schooling, particularly amongst children who had not yet started school in Poland where compulsory schooling begins at the age of seven – two years later than in Britain. Magda and Greg Nowak's realisation of their son Stan's schooling requirements reveal the haphazard way in which many parents learned about the differences between Polish and British school systems having already arrived:

> Magda Nowak: It was actually quite funny because when we moved here we didn't even realise that we had to send a child to school here.

> Greg: Because in Poland they start at the age of seven.

> Magda: And then at work they told me, "Listen, you may be fined if you do not send him [Stan] to school." And we moved in June, and I was like, "Oh my God! I need to start to find a school!" And he [Stan] went not knowing any English

whatsoever. He went to school…Staying for three weeks and then it was holidays and he started properly in September.

As well as an unawareness of different school starting ages, families also reported not anticipating different school holiday schedules and the requirement of children to wear school uniforms. The resultant experiences such as beginning school mid-term and being dressed inappropriately added to feelings of discomfort that many children recollected when recalling their early arrival experiences. While Agata's first day of school was particularly unfortunate, her multitude of uncomfortable occurrences reflect many of the experiences the children in my study recalled as contributing to a distressing arrival in Britain:

> When I ask Agata Zieliński what moving to Britain was like she brings the conversation to her first day at school. She remembers the day vividly recounting the confusion of everyone crowding around her asking her questions in a language she didn't understand. Although she had learned some English at her school in Poland it did not go beyond "just, like, colours, animals, like what my name and age is, just basic stuff like that." Turning up mid-term and unaware that she needed to wear a school uniform she immediately felt marked out as different and in trying to fit in she found herself accepting and responding to mispronunciations of her name, and even other pupil's assumptions that she was a boy due to her short haircut and tomboy style. She remembers the excruciating embarrassment of being directed by some girls who mistook her for a boy to leave the girls' toilets and use the boys' toilets instead. Being unable to communicate with them she felt forced to use the boy's toilets until a teacher noticed and resolved the situation. While she felt more comfortable in the subsequent weeks as she got a school uniform and people began to pronounce her name correctly, she was aware that her lack of English language was preventing her from fully participating in the classroom for at least half a year: "I was just sitting at the back staring at the teacher or staring at the board, like, "I don't get what you're saying." But if you didn't look at the teacher she would have just told you off, so I just stared at the teacher and didn't do nothing all day."

Agata's early experiences of school provoked a strong sense of not belonging. Her lack of school uniform and unexpected presence in the school marked her out as different and she felt unable to assert her own identity, allowing others to ascribe their own

interpretations of her name and gender. However, the prevailing factor in feeling a lack of belonging as a migrant child in a new school, recounted by Agata and all of the children in my study, was the inability to communicate and understand others. The role of language in creating a sense of normal time-space and permanency is an important theme explored in greater depth later in this section.

Alongside certain functional differences already discussed, such as different start ages and holiday periods, my participant families identified an unexpected and contrasting ideology between the two school systems. While Poland was seen as having a strict and disciplined attitude to learning with a focus on gaining knowledge through long hours at school, lots of homework and tests every year; the British system is seen as having a more holistic approach with less stress for children and more time for extra-curricular activities. These interpretations reflect the findings of other studies into Polish parents' experiences of the British school system (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010). While some such studies found this contrasting ideology to be unsatisfactory amongst some Polish parents, even provoking some of them to return to Poland, in my study both children and parents expressed a positive view of the British school system. Children celebrate their British school experience in contrast to the Polish standards of more homework, focus on knowledge and compulsory yearly examination that they have either experienced themselves or heard about from family and friends:

> "School in Poland is very hard, like eight hours a day, then homework, always doing homework. You don't even have free weekend because of homework. Here it's much easier. And you've got only one subject, but in Poland you've got more than ten. I talk to my brother about it and there [in Poland] he's got homework every day, and here we don't have it every day." (Klara Grabowska)

> "We could go back to Poland, but the school would be the worsest thing, because in Poland they learn loads more than they do here, so there just wouldn't be any point in going back to Poland right now. It's way easier here! Like, in Poland they keep you a year behind if you don't pass an exam." (Monika Zieliński)

Although parents often describe Polish schools as 'better' than British schools in terms of academic standards, they focus on the positive impact that their perceptions of a more relaxed British school system has on their children's lives. This quotation from ten-year-old Florentyna's father is typical of many of the parents in my study:

"She goes to school in here, we see everything is alright. I know what I can expect in Polish school, but I was wondering here. Here there is no stress for children from school. In Poland you learn much, much more, longer. But there's lots of things one learns in Poland which is useless. Yes, I see now. In here, she learn only basic maths and it's enough, absolutely, for this short life, it's absolutely enough. You don't need lots of, for example, statistic or this probably, what you call it, probably? [Probability]" (Zarek Kowalski)

In the case of both the children and the parents, their assessments of British schooling in contrast to Polish education imply a return to Poland would be difficult and construct their settlement in Britain as permanent. While the contrasting ideologies of British and Polish schools make a return seem undesirable, it is the language which determines an ultimate sense of permanency.

Although the parents acknowledge the difficulties and distress many of their children experienced upon first starting school, they claim that they knew their children would settle in time. This privileging of parental expectations over children's perspectives reflects a strong sense of 'parents know best' which is commonly asserted in migrant family decision-making (Bushin, 2009). While parents worry that a return to Poland would disrupt their children's present situations, much of their rationale for remaining in Britain is based on their aspirations for their children's futures. The parents in the study claim that they always knew that their children's distress would subside and they rationalised the present by envisioning future in which the children would benefit by knowing the English language and having been educated in Britain. These perceived advantages for their children are not constructed in isolation of their parents' experiences and sense of self. While previous studies have revealed many different indicators of whiteness, including language ability, knowledge of local customs, and the adoption of appropriate behaviour (Garner, 2007), my study reveals that migrants also construct their whiteness through the whiteness of their children. For parents their children's proficiency in English is viewed as a sign of success and a true marker of permanency. My remarks on a child's fluency in English or Mancunian accent were always greeted with great pleasure and pride. Having the ability to speak English, particularly without a Polish accent, is viewed as desirable and beneficial for future success in the job market. This assumption is often based on parents' own experiences in which language has impacted on their own sense of 'whiteness' and belonging.

While Poles and other white migrant groups are often described as an 'invisible' migrant group (Alibhai-Brown, 2001), many in my study remark that while the way they look does not mark them out as migrants, the way they sound does. Even having learned English to a high level, it is their accents which continue to identify them as different. Some of my participants claim that this has had a detrimental effect on employment opportunities and experiences of interaction. This excerpt from an interview with Ruta Jankowski, who works for a logistics company, reflects the impact some of my participants feel their language ability has:

> Ruta Jankowski: I think whatever we will do, we will always be immigrants to them, because for me, I stay with the Polish accent forever. If my boss recommends me I can call from my company to another company, but if I call, "Oh hello, I'm calling from..." someone hears my Polish accent and [mimes putting the phone down]

> Interviewer: They judge you?

> Ruta: Yes. One person from ten maybe is OK usually, and this person probably has contact with Polish people and so knows better. English simply are very stubborn –they're not open for a new, even don't try to know... "English is the best at it."

> Interviewer: How has that made you feel?

> Ruta: Closed the door in front of my face, you know? I feel like that. Coz I can do nothing, I do my best, but what can I do if they don't want to know. [sounds tearful]

Despite speaking English fluently having used it daily in her job in Poland and now in her company's Manchester branch, Ruta feels her Polish accent differentiates her and results in a lack of acceptance from others in Britain. Her metaphor of feeling a door is closed in her face reflects the negative impact this has on her sense of belonging, marking her out as an outsider even when she is doing 'her best.' By remaining in Britain so as their children can achieve the fluency in English deemed necessary to belong, parents are prioritising their children's futures and to some extent gaining belonging through their success.

As well as contributing to negative experiences in the work place, differences in language ability can also impact on experiences at home where parents and children have varying

proficiencies in different languages. In my study, having lived in Britain for a large proportion of their lives, most of the children preferred to communicate in English, while their parents favoured, or were perhaps only able to use, Polish. This meant that some members of the family were to some extent occupying contrasting time-spaces, which could lead to communication issues and a sense of division in the family home. While this was most evident between parents and children, in families with multiple siblings of significant age gaps, this sense of disunion also occurred between children, as is the case in the Lewandowski family:

> *Fil Lewandowski feels strongly that there is a divide between him and his two younger brothers and suggests it is because the age at which they moved to Britain marks them as having "grown up in different cultures". Fil was 13 years old when the family moved to Manchester together in 2006. His brothers were aged just six and seven and had not therefore begun attending school in Poland. While all three brothers speak English fluently, their alternative styles of speech reflect their exposure to English according to how early they arrived in Britain. Antoni and Tobiasz speak with strong Mancunian accents, their speech is fast-paced and frequently punctuated with local slang and colloquialisms. They describe Fil as "speaking funny and kinda posh" –his speech is slower and clearly enunciated in a mixture of a Polish and generic southern-English accent. Fil often feels left out when in the house with his brothers and while he recognises that his brothers are closer in age and have different interests to him, he ascribes a significance to their different styles of speaking English as both grounds for and representative of further division. (Lewandowski family)*

This case reflects the important impact that viewing language as a marker of time-space can have on family relations.

For the children in my study, language also plays an important role in their sense of permanency. However, rather than connected to their future imaginings of self as it is amongst their parents, it is their awareness of the way in which language plays a role in their everyday lives which orients their sense of where they belong. As established research and the previous chapter have shown, children tend to focus on the present, rather than the future (see Montangero, 1993; 1996; Edwards, 2002. The experiences of the children in my study exemplify this temporal orientation, with their sense of belonging

shifting from the homeland to the host country as the focus of their daily lives transferred from Poland to Britain.

> *Tobiasz Lewandowski recalls feeling very unhappy when he first moved to Manchester with his mother and father at the age of eight. He recalls starting school mid-term and joining a class in which he knew no one and understood nothing –contrasting this experience to the life he had left behind in Warsaw where he had lots of friends and often came top of the class in exams. Tobiasz points out that now everything is different because, "My English is better than my Polish –I have forgotten so much Polish…And I have more English friends than Polish friends."*

Even though most of the children in the study speak Polish at home with their parents and some continue to study the language at Polish Saturday school, many, like Tobiasz, note that the ease in which they previously spoke Polish becomes associated instead with the English language. Language plays an important role in marking time-space, with speaking in a different language associated with feelings of discomfort and frustration at not being able to express oneself at the necessary pace. Parents' and children's awareness that their level of Polish would leave them struggling if they were to return to Poland further enforces the impossibility of return and their sense of permanency in Britain.

For the children in the study, permanency is grounded much more in the present than the future. This may be explained by the aforementioned tendency for children to experience time in a more present-oriented manner than future-oriented, compared with adults (Montangero, 1993; 1996; Edwards, 2002). This orientation towards the present means that they do not tend to interpret their experiences in relation to future plans or expectations as their parents would. This is reflected in the way in which talking about imagining the future or considering permanency often results in a sense of confusion. The following interview exchange with Antoni Lewandowski is typical of attempts to discuss future imaginings.

> Interviewer: And when you first came here, did you ever imagine that it would feel like home?
>
> Antoni Lewandowski: I don't know, I never really thought about it like that.

Despite this excerpt following Antoni's account of a distressing first year at school in Manchester during which he struggled to learn English and make friends, he does not connect that experience of a once present with any anticipation of a future.

One of the ways in which permanency was conceptualised by the children in my study is through materiality. The shifting of personal belongings from one home to another came to mark a sense of permanency. The lack of anticipation of future permanency is evident in the items they chose to bring with them from Poland to Britain. None of the children in my study had had any previous experience of migrating and recalled their perceptions of the move from Poland to Britain as synonymous with a holiday. This was epitomised in the packing of a suitcase before making their journey to Manchester. Most could recall vividly the items they chose to pack with their choices reflecting their conceptualisation of the move as located in the present. We have already noted in the previous chapter Nikolai's refusal to fill his suitcase with anything other than his toy cars, and the following quotation from Maria Markowska epitomises most of the children's attitudes to packing:

"I had just a few books, few clothes, just to have something to change into."

This material symbolism becomes translated into a sense of permanency as possessions are then accumulated in Manchester, as Maria goes on to recall:

"We went to the shops in the centre and bought so much stuff from the sales and that. So I got all my clothes and everything I needed like games and stuff over here. I didn't bring it with me –couldn't have fitted all that stuff in my suitcase! [smiles]"

It is important to note that while parents recognise the role of a sense of permanency in creating a normal time-space in which their family can belong, at times the prioritisation of children in this endeavour can be framed as a generational sacrifice when parents' views of what is best for their children contradict their own desires to return to Poland. This is particularly evident in the case of the Lamiński family:

*Petra Lamiński deeply values and misses her friends, family and landscape of Poland. During the home tour she points out many objects which remind her of Poland, particularly things which were made by friends and family. Despite having made some close acquaintances through the jobs she has held in Manchester, Petra feels her only true friends are those with whom she grew up with in Poland. She frequently refers to Poland as her heart and her roots, believing that only*

*those who have known her while growing up and through difficult times really understand her. Petra was diagnosed with cancer a year before her involvement in my project, she continues to undergo treatment and her prognosis remains uncertain. She longs to return to Poland to be surrounded by her close family and friends in this time of need, but feels she must remain in Manchester and create a home here for the sake of Nikolai, as she explains:*

*"I knew if he [Nikolai] starts school here I will have to be sure that we will stay here. I can't change my mind after one year, two years…At the beginning he had a tough time and now he's happy and he's OK and he likes his school and he speaks better English than Polish. He has his own room here, friends, the dog. It's not fair for me to change my mind and go back there.' "* (Lamiński family)

Petra's use of the words 'have to' enforce the sense of sacrifice she is making in obligation to her son. She emphasises certain symbols of permanency, such as school, friendship, language and the dog, which operate both as reasons why the family must remain and also factors which create a sense of normality and homeliness associated with belonging.

## 7.3 Negotiating the non-normal temporary

Having decided their settlement in Britain is permanent, certain conclusions are drawn amongst the migrants in my study which are constructed in juxtaposition to the notion of temporary time-space. Official statistics and academic and media discourses have established a representation of Central and Eastern European migration as temporary (see Wallace, 2002; Pollard *et al*, 2008). The families in my study were conscious of this impression and temporary migration was constructed as the 'abnormal' counterpart to their permanent settlement situation. This awareness and its impact of self-situation within permanent time-space is evident in the following excerpt from my initial interview with Basia Markowska:

Basia Markowska: I read on internet today that there are three types of people [Polish migrants]: first group going for money, but they don't know what to do, they send the money to Poland, but they don't know for what -of course there is some reason, but they don't really know- they work and then they're back and then they're back again. Second  group, they came for something, they aim for a new car, new house back in Poland, they come for something, for family, for

mortgage or something. Third group- who learn English, who go to university, who looking for a better job all the time and want to stay. Like us.

Interviewer: Does it make a difference what group you're in?

Basia: When you come here to live, you're not eating bread for 16p every day, not eating this rubbish food, you're not saving and not sending to Poland because this is your country and you want simple, normal life and you are sometimes looking at these people who eat this bread for 16p a day, this Chinese soup for 35p every day, saving, saving, saving, don't pay bills because they leave anyway -they don't care because they are coming back to Poland. But like us, we a looking for a better house…We're looking for a place with garden, garage, with place for my plants, my tomatoes growing in my garden. To feel not like a tourist. [sighs heavily]

It is clear that Basia's sense of normality relies on a sense of permanency which is constructed in contrast to the temporariness of other 'categories' of Polish migrants. Her disparagement of the way in which 'these people' live is attributed to the temporary nature of their settlement in Britain –a temporariness that prevents a 'normal life' as sacrifices are being made for a future elsewhere. While the families in my study are themselves making sacrifices –just as deskilling and remaining in Poland for the sake of their children- these sacrifices are rationalised as normal as they are viewed through the lens of progress or permanency. This affirms the significance I have already ascribed to considering the heterogeneity of migrant groups sharing a common homeland and the danger of using terms such as 'community' in such a context. While other researchers have highlighted the issues of intra-ethnic 'othering' (Salih, 2000; Svašek, 2010), my study demonstrates the significance of whether migrants perceive themselves as temporary or permanent –a differentiation made by migrants themselves that may change over time and according to changing circumstances.

Basia also expresses a connection between permanency and the material home that is made by all of the families in my study. For many, like Basia and her daughter, there is a need for the material home to reflect the sense of permanency they feel in settlement. This comes from creating a homely, personalised home over which one has control. This is hinted at in the previous excerpt from my interview with Basia through her repeated use of the word 'my' –"*my* plants, *my* tomatoes growing in *my* garden" (emphasis added). The

need for a sense of control and ownership is further emphasised in the succeeding extract as the conversation continues:

> Interviewer: Do you feel like a tourist?
>
> Basia: No,no, but it's still not my house, still not my place. I'm looking for place where I can buy furniture from Ikea for myself -not rubbish table [gestures disparagingly to the table we are sat at]. Paint walls, decorate how I want.  Now there's no reason to fix something or change something because it's not my house and my landlord never give me back what I invest. And if I ask about something, "Oh, do it yourself. I don't care. I need my rent, that's it."

Basia's tenancy situation has been experienced by most of the families in my study who felt over-bearing landlords and/or a lack of financial resources prevented the creation of a home which reflected the permanency of a normal time-space. The adaption of a home for both everyday practical needs and a sense of comfort, safety and familiarity demonstrates the desire to settle long-term. This making of a house into a home through renovation, decoration and the acquisition of objects represents a material settlement that reflects an emotional settlement. Basia's use of the word 'invest' is significant as it implies both a financial and emotional commitment to both a present and a future. Investment in a material home, through the purchase or refurbishment of a dwelling, tends to be seen as an indicator of settlement, hence its associations with permanency (Vono-de-Vilhena and Bayona-Carrasco, 2010).

Some families in my study have reached a stage in which they feel their present material home reflects their permanent settlement. For example, Kristina Zieliński describes the contrast between the house she first rented with her husband and children in Manchester with their current mortgaged home:

> "It was just rented, unfurnished, we knew we wouldn't stay long. We couldn't do anything with this flat –not even hang a picture on the wall because it would make a hole. It was missing this personal touch, to create a home. Here we are doing everything the way we want to and creating this atmosphere that you come back home and you feel at home. It is important, we were waiting for it for a long time and now we have it I feel much more comfortable. It has to be a cosy and warm place that we wanted to come back to…like an oasis of peace. Nobody can

come here and disturb you or say, "You can't do this" or "You can't hang a picture here"' (Kristina Zieliński)

Kristina's assurance that "we knew we wouldn't stay long" epitomises the way in which a sense of temporariness can help to engender an overall sense of permanency in settlement. Knowing that the unhomely situation that the circumstances of her family's tenancy produced was not going to last for the whole of their permanent settlement in Britain makes its inhabitation more tolerable. There is recognition that in order to maintain a sense of permanency in Britain, some temporary situations must be endured as an unhomely time-space characterised by the experience of waiting (Schweizer, 2008). Such situations are often rationalised as being stages within an overall permanent time-space. Being unable to have control over one's home and feeling a lack of motivation to invest in it can only be endured as a temporary period within the permanent time-space of belonging.

However, materiality is only one aspect of the unhomely that must be endured in the expectation that it will pass within the time-space of permanency. For others in my study, the lack of control and associated sense of temporariness stems from sharing accommodation with those seen as not belonging in the family home. Many Poles in Britain face living in shared accommodation, and this is often a situation encountered by the pioneer migrants from the families in my study. While this situation is endured by pioneer migrants as they await the arrival of their families, the presence of others within the time-space of the permanent, shared family home can create a greater sense of discomfort:

> *The first time I visit Luisa her lounge is piled high with boxes and so we sit at a small table in the corner. She explains that the boxes contain the belongings of her friend and her friend's family who have recently moved to Manchester and are awaiting repairs to be completed on their council house before they can move in. Luisa asks if we can wait until her friend has moved out and the boxes cleared before we conduct the home tour as she explains, "it's not really my home at the moment, full of other people, other people's stuff…but I will have my home back soon!"*

Luisa's situation reveals that the attainment of a 'normal' time-space is by no means a linear process, and a sense of home can be disrupted by the markers of temporariness.

The same sense of control and ownership is expressed by the children in my study, but their focus is on *their* space within the home, referring primarily to their bedrooms. This can prove difficult when children have to share bedrooms with their siblings or parents –a situation which is viewed as a temporary. While none of the children in my study shared a bedroom at the time of my research, some recalled their previous experiences of room-sharing upon first moving to Manchester.

> Monika Zieliński: In Poland me and my sister we never had to share a room, and then we had to share a room and it was half the size –we were like, "Nooooo!" [shouts with a pained expression]
>
> Interviewer: What was it like sharing a room for the first time?
>
> Agata: Not good.
>
> [Laughter from both girls]
>
> Agata: Like "That's mine, that's yours- clean it up!"…Like when I was vacuuming, I was like, "That's my side –you can vacuum your own side."

The sisters' recollection of a shared room reveals the need to create a sense of ownership within the shared family home. Without their own bedroom space demarcated by walls, they create imaginary boundaries with each having their own "side". Once again, the situation was justified and endured as temporary.

## 7.4 The horizon of permanency (and the future beyond)

Perhaps paradoxically, permanency does not mean forever in the case of the families in my study. Rather than referring to a lifetime, permanency is delimited within a particular time-space. This time-space encompasses an extension of the present up to the point of significant change. In the context of my participant families, such change encompasses the transition from the current stage of the family life cycle to the next. This transition tends to be associated with children becoming adults and leaving the family home, a change deemed as a significant marker of a new and different time-space. The following quotation from Urzula Kaczmarek demonstrates the way in which this future time-space is constructed as being beyond the horizon of the current time-space:

> "At the moment we will stay forever here, but what will be in the future we don't know."

While Urzula's comment may initially appear oxymoronic, by understanding it through the separation of objective and subjective time her statement becomes an eloquent summary of the way in which a sense of belonging can be constructed through time. While Urzula knows that in the objective future things may change, the subjective time-space she currently inhabits has a sense of permanency, a 'forever' feeling which extends to the horizon of her current time-space. 'The future' refers to the time-space beyond the horizon which is associated with uncertainty and the possibility of change. These two versions of the future either side of what I term the horizon, are distinguished by Mead (1938: 351) as the immediate and the hypothetical future. Jenkins (2002) observes that for a sense of stability and comfort in the present, a sense of continuity between the present and the immediate future are required.

Having constructed a sense of permanency within the limits of the horizon, a sense of discomfort is incurred when this horizon is neared or beyond the horizon is considered. As a sense of permanency relies so heavily on the prioritisation of children and their education, the end of compulsory education and the approach of adulthood can challenge the basis of permanency. The way in which people talk about this time-space beyond the horizon reveals the strategies that are in place for maintaining a sense of belonging and permanency within the current time-space. For most participants the discomfort of considering beyond the horizon is avoided in a way which is inherent in the term itself: by considering it as a time-space that is both distant and out of sight.

Most of the families in my study have children who will remain living at home and in full-time, compulsory education for many more years. Their only imaginings of moving elsewhere are located in the time-space of a retirement abroad –either returning to Poland or, more commonly, to somewhere with a warmer climate. Such a time-space is distant and disconnected from present time-space not only geographically, but temporally, located in a faraway period of the life course. Such retirement dreams do not therefore impede on current constructions of time-space and do not challenge the permanency of normal life in Britain, as is evident in the following extract:

> Interviewer: Would you ever consider moving somewhere else in the future?

> Ruta Jankowski: No, I don't think so now. Well, who knows where we will go when we don't need to be earning money anymore, no responsibilities…then we can just lie in the sun.

Kazik Jankowski: For this we will have to leave Manchester! [Gestures to the rain pouring down outside and everyone laughs]

Ruta: Yes we'll have to move somewhere hot, like Spain or Italy maybe. It's nice to dream! [Laughs]

Ruta and Kazik Jankowski's jovial imaginings of their retirement are constructed as being very different from their current situation in terms of priorities, responsibilities and even climate. This is a time-space so different from the present time-space that it comes to be thought of as a 'dream' –a fantasy distant in time and space that does not relate to –and therefore does not impact or impede on- their current time-space. Their settlement in Manchester remains a permanent feature of the time-space that is near enough to consider in reality rather than dreams.

For some of the parents in my study, their temporal horizon is far closer. As some of the children in my study reach adulthood and consider leaving the family home in order to begin their independent adult lives, attend university, and/or move in with partners, their parents' rationale for permanent settlement becomes challenged. Losing a connection to their children in this context can cause parents to question whether they continue to belong within a time-space in Britain. In this case, a refusal to look beyond the horizon allows them to retain a sense of permanency within their current time-space. This 'out of sight, out of mind' strategy is particularly evident when the topic of the future arises during interviews with parents of children who are reaching the age of adulthood, as we can see in the following conversation with Luisa Grabowska, the single mother of 17-year-old Klara:

Luisa Grabowska: Maybe I would have come here temporarily, but because I have Klara here now, it can't be temporary. I love my family, so I have stayed with my child, otherwise I couldn't have managed. I am staying to earn money and for the education of my child.

Interviewer: If you hadn't found somewhere where you felt at home like you say you feel here, would you have considered going back to Poland?

Luisa: I would have to stay even if I had bad feeling because it's for her education. But when my children start being independent from me, then if I don't feel comfortable then I could go back to Poland and manage a new life again from the

beginning. But at the moment I have to help my children, so I don't think about it. Maybe when she finishes her education, she will stay here, so I will stay here.

Interviewer: So you're waiting to decide?

Luisa: Hmm.

Interviewer: Are you thinking about the future?

Luisa: Not a lot...To be honest, I am happy here now. I'm not thinking too much about it, not worrying too much...I think at the moment I have reached the level of belonging.

Luisa's claims that she '[doesn't] think about' or is 'not worrying too much' about the time-space beyond the horizon epitomises the 'out of sight, out of mind' strategy of maintaining a sense of permanency by focussing on the current time-space.

For one family in my study, their sense of permanency in Britain is directly challenged as Magda Nowak receives an offer to work in Melbourne as a post-doctoral researcher and the family choose to relocate to Australia towards the end of my fieldwork period.

> *When I last meet with Greg and Magda Nowak before they leave for Australia they explain that their sons are spending a few weeks with their grandparents in Poland who are keen to spend as much time as possible with their grandsons before they move to "the other side of the world, so faraway". When I ask whether the family plan to make regular return trips to Poland from Australia I am surprised that the family are keener to make return trips to Britain than to Poland: "I think we will go always back to England, and then maybe go some days to Poland." They reaffirm how much they feel they belong in Britain and that they were keen to move to a country in which they could continue to use the English language and that was culturally similar to Britain, concluding that "We will always feel at home here. Our time here has been great and Britain will always have a place in our hearts."(Nowak family)*

Even as their 'permanent' settlement in Britain comes to an end, a sense of belonging and homeliness is maintained as a permanent relationship with this time-space remains through the continued assertion of cultural markers and return visits. Just as many migrants continue to emotionally inhabit their homeland, this family will continue to

inhabit this time-space. This case also emphasises the role that continuity plays in conjunction with negotiations of permanency in time-space.

The children in my study also express an understanding of their lives through the construction of a horizon. For them the horizon lies at the border of childhood and adulthood –a transition expected to bring about significant change and mark the entrance into a new time-space. The construction of permanency within a horizon perhaps comes more naturally to children as their orientation towards the present allows them to consider a future time-space in a more abstract way than adults (Montangero, 1993; 1996; Edwards, 2002). Just as Ruta and Kazik Jankowski's retirement plans evoked a dream-like time-space that was too distant to impact on their present sense of permanency, many of the children discuss their plans for 'when they grow up' in a similar abstract and fantastical way that does not challenge the permanency of their present time-space.

However, their settlement in Britain remains a permanent feature even beyond this horizon. 18-year-old Maria Markowska's longed-for career as a prison officer in Strangeways, 12-year-old Wiktor Jankowski's plans to be a soldier in the British army, and 17-year-old Klara's impending decision as to where in Britain she wants to go to university next year are all situated in Britain. While there are significant changes between the present time-space of childhood and the imagined future time-space of adulthood, these changes do not challenge the permanency of settlement in Britain. Even ten-year-old Nikolai's dreams of being a wrestler in America are rationalised by his assertion that, "I'd be OK over there coz they speak in English in America too." This continuity between, within and beyond the horizon reflects another strategy of maintaining a sense of permanency in time-space.

## 7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the way in which permanency is constructed through the prioritisation of children's present stability and imagined futures, the differentiation between permanent and temporary migration, and the delimitation of future horizons. While previous migration studies have acknowledged the 'anchoring' role played by children in migration (Ryan, 2009), the focus tends to be on the impact this has on employment paths of individual parents rather than on the impact on the family's sense of belonging and settlement. This chapter has highlighted the central role that children

play in settlement and the way in which permanency is constructed in the wake of the decision not to disrupt children's lives through dislocation.

Imagining Manchester as a permanent home creates normality within the lived time-space and enables a sense of belonging to develop. The need to reflect this permanency within a material home space of control and personalisation can at times be challenging and many families endure periods of temporariness as they wait to find and afford a dwelling which represents their location within an overarching permanent time-space. However, the commitment to a construction of permanency through imagining beyond periods of temporariness and within a horizon of certainty reflects the valued role that permanency plays in creating the sought-after normal time-space for the families in my study.

# Chapter Eight: Conclusion

## 8.1 Introduction

This thesis has sought to deepen our understanding of migration and belonging. The context of Polish migrant families has provided a space in which such themes can be explored. As fellow scholars in the field emphasise, migration is inherently time and place specific (Beyers *et al*, 2009; Coe, 2010). My study is based in a distinctive context which raises issues regarding the migration histories and current politico-economic situations of both Poland and the UK. Given the host country's recent financial downturn and associated high levels of unemployment, the economic emphasis placed on this movement has provoked controversy (Parutis, 2011). As the UK economy has declined into a state of recession, media interpretations of the migration movement have shifted from depictions of Polish migrants as 'harder grafters than British workers' (The Sun, 2007) to more negative headlines epitomised by The Daily Mail's 'Jobs dry up but Poles stay to reap the benefits' (Hickley, 2009). Poles have been labelled 'the perfect recession scapegoats' (Lojek-Magdziarz, 2009), evidencing the importance of context on the way in which migration flows are received and studied.

This movement and controversy is situated within the wider context of the European Union, at a time in which this supranational entity faces the large internal economic disparities brought about by enlargement eastwards. With UK restrictions on the entry of citizens from Romania and Bulgaria –two of the EU's newest member states- due to be lifted in January 2014, debates regarding the impact of EU internal migration are rife. An 'e-petition' in January 2013 led to a parliamentary debate on the issue of EU internal migration restrictions (HM Government, 2013), and discussions surrounding limiting social security benefits to new EU arrivals are in process in government and popular debate (Wintour, 2013). It is clear that migration in the EU context continues to be a controversial issue which requires more information on which such discussions can be based.

Much concern stems from a lack of knowledge as to the movement patterns and settlement plans of East-West EU migrants. Initial assumptions of 'short-term, circulatory commuting' (Wallace, 2002),have been questioned as subsequent research found that migrants' plans for short-term stays were often subject to revision (Spencer *et al*, 2007; Garapich, 2008; White and Ryan, 2008; Burrell, 2010). With EU migrants under no legal

obligation to register their movements into or out of the UK, the government has been left with a knowledge deficit on which to base future actions regarding EU migration. My thesis provides some insight into the way in which settlement is perceived and experienced by the Polish families in my study. It is important to note that the participant families involved in this research came from a range of educational and occupational backgrounds, working in a range of professions from care worker, supermarket assistant and bus driver receiving minimum wage to those in relatively well-paid office and academic positions. They lived in a variety of homes, from shared flats to detached houses in both the rental and private ownership markets. Their family structures included couples and single parents with children of a range of ages. However, despite this diversity, common themes did emerge in their stories of belonging and constructions of homeliness, which were revealed through the conceptualisations of time-space. The shared situation of being in families arguably provided the context within which such common perceptions and experiences came to the fore.

With much of the previous research into post-accession migrants in the UK focused on single, lone migrants, this study represents an analysis of a previously underrepresented, but significant group. The shared experiences and perceptions that unite the families featured in this thesis, despite their heterogeneous circumstances, reveals that seeking belonging in time plays a significant role in the migrant story and one which may be worthy of investigation in other contexts. The temporal framework through which these families' senses of belonging has been constructed and negotiated has provided the basis for my analysis of their migration and settlement processes. This chapter summarises the main findings which this temporal approach has illuminated and the implications of such observations for policy making in this complex and relevant field.

## 8.2 Understanding belonging through the lens of time

The overriding theme which has emerged from my research is the significant role that time plays in constructing a sense of belonging. The review of current literature in Chapter Two revealed the exclusion or simplification of time in migration studies. Assumptions that a sense of belonging accumulates over time in a steady linear fashion, failed to capture the complex and subjective way in which notions of time seemed to play a role for the migrant families in my study. Analysis of data revealed their sense of belonging to be inherently temporal, as their perceptions of the migration process intertwined with notions of life course, biographical narrative, daily rhythms, anticipated futures and global

developments over time. Four aspects of time emerged as playing an integral role in securing a sense of belonging: progress, synchronicity, continuity and permanency. This section summarises each of these in turn and outlines the way in which they have impacted on the lives of the families in my study.

### 8.2.1 Progress

The families in my study echoed the findings of other studies into Polish migration in their decision to migrate in order to live a 'normal life' in terms of financial stability (Galasińska and Kozłolska, 2009; White, 2009; Galasińska, 2010a). However, considering this motivation within the context of the EU's differentiated narratives of development and the temporal framework of the life course provided a more nuanced insight into this migration rationale with significant implications for future settlement plans. Progress accounted for the idea that a 'normal' life could only be pursued in the UK, with Poland constructed as the 'abnormal' national counterpart. The family context necessitated the need to provide financially for dependents –a situation purported to be unobtainable in Poland and rendered the journey to the UK with a perceived raise in salaries justified.

For many, this entailed a degree of deskilling: a finding supported by other studies into Central and Eastern European migration to the UK (Anderson *et al*, 2006, Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009). This challenged the rationale of 'progress' in which the move from Poland to the UK was framed, as parents were forced to work in minimum wage service jobs, such as retail assistance and cleaning, in order to support their families financially. In order to combat this challenge to a sense of progress in the individual life course, which tends to be associated with accumulating qualifications and promotion within a chosen profession, participants utilised different strategies. All emphasised the economic implications of their decision to deskill, focusing on the importance of the financial stability that taking a lower status job that paid more than their higher status profession in Poland, and therefore representing progress in an economic sense. Many also referred to a deferred sense of progress that they anticipated would occur when the acquisition of English language skills would facilitate their entry back into their previous profession, or a higher status job requiring a level of fluency in English which they were working towards.

Children too made reference to their migratory journey in terms of progress, with many constructing Poland as a separate and temporally 'behind' space in which they did not belong. Markers such as outdated fashion and communication means encountered through contact with family members and/or friends remaining in Poland were offered as

evidence for Poland occupying such a location in their perceptions of the separate time-spaces of their current and original homes. This framing of Poland as 'behind' in terms of economic and cultural development played an important role in providing a sense of being in the place of 'progress' and therefore feeling belonging in the world and life story. However, when faced with similar such criticisms of Poland from non-nationals, or assumptions of a much-improved life in the UK from those remaining in Poland, many expressed discomfort. This reveals the complex way in which self-identification and positioning are negotiated and constructed within a wider imaginary of self and others, and the importance of understanding migration as a journey within the life course of an individual.

### 8.2.2 Synchronicity

Making the journey to Manchester represented the first step for the families in my study and was often conducted by a lone parent while the rest of the family remained in Poland. While this pattern of 'chain migration' has been noted by other studies (White and Ryan, 2008; Elrick and Brinkmeier, 2009; Moskal, 2009; White, 2009), my research has provided a more in-depth insight into the experience of this separation and the issues that can occur in the reunification process. This element of migration lends itself particularly well to a temporal approach, with the experience of time a prevalent aspect of family separation and togetherness. The 'normality' sought by migrating has been emphasised as a solely economic state by aforementioned previous studies; however, the participants in my study emphasised that for families normality cannot be achieved until family members occupy a common time-space. The interim period, in which families remain divided between Britain and Poland while a pioneer family member establishes employment and accommodation provisions to support the whole family, exemplifies the poignant difference between conventionally quantified and lived time. The waiting for reunification was described as an unhomely time-space in which belonging cannot be actualised.

The temporal approach also revealed that reunification is not an instantaneous status change able to bring about an immediate sense of belonging, but a challenging and gradual process. Family members who may have spent many months or even years in separate time-spaces with alternative routines and norms are faced with the challenge of establishing and negotiating a new time-space of togetherness. The seeking of such a synchronicity is based on understandings of what 'family' means, and reflects the theory that family is a 'doing' rather than a 'being' (Gillis, 1996). In addition to learning to live together again, many families also encounter the difficulties that working long hours in

order to earn sufficient money to support their families can have on finding family time. Again, my findings are best understood in conjunction with theories of family life which assert that a sense of family togetherness relies more on 'quality' than 'quantity' of time spent in one another's company (Kremer-Sadlik and Paugh, 2007). Such theories also go some way to explaining why my study, amongst others (Baldassar, 2008), has found that the time spent communicating in virtual space while families were awaiting reunification, failed to provide the sense of belonging they sought from synchronicity.

By combining understandings of family in the context of the disruption that migration can entail, my research has provided an insight into the way in which time plays a central role in creating a sense of homeliness. The synchronicity of a family routine within a shared physical space is a central driving force in the actions of the migrants in my study, and the comfort they secure from such a situation plays a significant part in creating a sense of belonging. In contrast, the absence of such synchronicity, which may be overlooked by researching families removed from the migration situation, results in an unhomely time-space that is endured rather than lived.

### 8.2.3 Continuity

Many migration studies focused on belonging have been based on the premise that continuity will provide a sense of belonging. Such studies focus on national cultural markers such as religious practices (Fortier, 1999; Tse, 2010), music (Elias *et al*, 2010), and particularly food (Petridou, 2001; Warin and Dennis, 2005; Longhurst, 2001; Rabikowska, 2010b; Sambajee, 2011); concluding that partaking in homeland rituals and creating a familiar cultural landscape evokes a sense of homeliness akin to belonging. These studies tend to be based in the realm of national culture, but neglect to consider the national beyond specific cultural markers, or to consider other elements of the national.

My study found the political aspect of the national –and supranational- to play a significant role in establishing a sense of homeliness: a sense of homeliness significant enough that the families in my study saw their journey as a move rather than a migration. As, the introduction to this chapter asserted, the EU is a specific context which provides a unique and increasingly relevant background in which to consider changing notions of belonging. The impact of the supranational location of the migration undertaken by the families in my study becomes illuminated when considered alongside the homeliness associated with the temporal aspect of continuity. Framing Poland and the UK as separate time-spaces served to provide a sense of progress for my participants as they rationalised

their migration as a necessary movement from an 'abnormal' to a 'normal' time-space. However, they also referred to Poland and the UK as occupying a shared time-space by being fellow members of the EU. This initially paradoxical observation becomes understood when we see these two contradictory conceptions as fulfilling two complementary temporal notions of belonging. Viewing Poland and Britain as separate time-spaces creates a sense of progress; while viewing them as within a coherent, shared time-space of the EU provides a sense of continuity. Imagining their migration as a regional move within a common time-space, provides a homely sense of continuity on which to base a sense of belonging.

Continuity was also found in the material dimension of the physical home. As noted, previous studies tend to associate migrants' possessions with national belonging. However, viewing the migration stories within the narrative of the life course illuminated material objects as providing a sense of continuity between different aspects of individual biography. Seminal theorists of materialism and the home have long asserted that the physical gains significance through the links it can make to unseen time-spaces by evoking absent family members, memories and future aspirations (Miller, 2001; 2010; Rose, 2003). For those in my study, a sense of continuity was provided in the display of objects which evoked past, present and future elements of their life story. Combining the 'walk-along' interview method with the photograph elicitation technique to create my so-called 'photography elicitation' method, provided a process in which the material home was explored through the eyes of the participant leading the conversation to aspects deemed significant by the research participant rather than the researcher. Separating the national from the cultural, and the material from the national, has provided a new insight into the way in which continuity creates a sense of belonging for migrants crossing national borders and embarking on new stages of their biographical journey.

### 8.2.4 Permanency
This thesis set out to better understand the settlement experiences of Polish migrant families. Decisions regarding whether to return to Poland or how long to stay in the UK are inherently temporal. As mentioned in the introduction, current studies have been unable to provide a definitive understanding into the length of stay of such migrants as their estimated lengths of stay change over time: a new approach is necessary to provide a greater insight into this fundamental aspect of migration. Rather than focusing on objective estimates or recordings of settlement periods in years, a subjective

understanding of the way in which time is perceived and experienced more accurately reflects the way in which settlement time is cognised by the migrant families in my study.

My research aimed to respond to calls to provide a more nuanced understanding of the temporary/permanent settlement dyad through which migration tends to be categorised (Bailey, 2001). However, I found such categories to play a significant role in providing a sense of comfort to my participants, with the two concepts playing different roles according to the migration and settlement stage. Initially many of my participants reported viewing their migration as temporary: subscribing to the 'you can always go back' comfort that the myth of return is known to provide (Kaczmarek-Day, 2010). However, the initial comfort derived from a sense of 'temporariness' tends to shift to discomfort as they long for the sense of feeling settled that comes from knowing a relocation is no longer imminent. This sense of permanency was often sought in the materiality of the physical home, reflecting the findings of other studies that financial investment tends to correlate with an emotional investment in the home (Miller, 2001; 2010; Dahinden, 2010). While financial investment was present in the home-making practices of my participant families, there were also many adornments and adjustments which did not require expenditure but had significant emotional impact in creating a sense of homeliness and belonging. The sought-after symbolic practices of permanency, such as hanging family photographs, painting walls or unpacking boxes of belongings, were often cited as being prevented by the temporariness of rented accommodation or the restrictions of landlords. The significance ascribed to such limitations to bringing space under control to create a sense of home, reveals that permanency in settlement is not simply a case of deciding whether or not to remain in the host country, but relies on structural and external factors inherent in the migration experience.

The shift from 'temporary' to 'permanent' tended to come with the gradual awareness that the children of the families in my study were no longer part of the Poland time-space, making return impossible. Language played a significant role in this realisation, as children's English acquisition and immersion in the British school system came to represent a sense of belonging. Children are at the forefront of migratory decision-making with parents initially relocated in order to financially support their families, and then remaining so as not to disrupt their sense of belonging. However, children in this function tend to be defined by their dependency on their parents, making settlement plans beyond the horizon of this stage of the family life course uncertain. This uncertainty is unhomely,

and therefore remains omitted from discussions of belonging, beyond joking speculations. This has led me to conclude that 'permanency' serves a comforting function that is formed within the horizon of the family home time-space. Considering 'permanency' as a subjective concept with homely associations, rather than an objective measurement of length of stay, has significant implications for understanding belonging. Doing so arguably provides a greater vision of settlement plans than objective predictions. As Jenkins (2002) states, 'we are inherently temporal beings', and I would argue that measurements and estimates within the objective temporal dimension need to be considered alongside explorations into subjective perceptions and experiences of the time-spaces we inhabit.

## 8.3 Policy implications in a post-accession Europe

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, policy debates are currently underway regarding immigration from the latest EU members. It is clear that population movement can prompt significant policy change as the government responds to the changing needs of new migrants and concerns of the host population. In this section, I outline some ways in which the findings of my study relate to public policy. These suggestions are apportioned according to the four temporal themes which they relate to: progress, synchronicity, continuity and permanency. My research has linked these four temporal subjectivities to a sense of belonging, and therefore my study suggests these aspects need to be supported and encouraged by policymakers in order to enhance wellbeing amongst migrants.

### 8.3.1 Progress

Progress has been proposed to be the motivation behind migratory movement and a primary foundation for a sense of belonging in the life story. The framing of moving from Poland to Britain as moving forward in time is based primarily on the perception that Poland cannot provide the job opportunities associated with a financial stability needed to support a family, while the UK can. This perception may face a challenge as Britain's financial crisis is positioned in contrast to Poland's rising, 'sustainable' economic development (The Economist, 2013). Just as reports of Britain's financial recovery require prudent framing in order to reassure the national public, the impact such commentaries have on the migrant sense of place and progress must also be considered. Progress, like all of the temporal elements identified in my study to be associated with sense of belonging, is subjective and constructed by migrants themselves, but influenced by the stories told by those who surround them.

Progress as an essential aspect of belonging is somewhat challenged by the deskilling that many Polish migrants undergo upon relocating to Britain. My study found this contradiction to the positive migration story and sense of belonging is rationalised by the language barrier encountered. Improving English language skills and the hope that this will eventually facilitate access to a higher position in the job market play a part in interpreting a degree of progress. While other studies have noted the role of acquiring English in order to interact locally and improve community cohesion (Cook *et al*, 2011; Lowther, 2009; Temple, 2010), my study demonstrates the central role of language to an individual sense of belonging through its association with progress. In light of this, language learning is a particularly important focus for policy making in relation to migrant belonging and wellbeing. My research recommends language learning be made more accessible and affordable for migrant arrivals with government funded or supplemented classes available in local settings at a range of times. Language has both an instrumental and emotional role to play in constructing a sense of belonging, and positively supporting a developing fluency in the host tongue is likely to have a significant impact on migrant wellbeing.

## 8.3.2 Synchronicity

Family togetherness has traditionally been promoted by government 'right to family union' policies designed to foster migrant wellbeing (Strasser *et al*, 2009). However, the focus on the Polish migration movement as characterised by the lone economic migrant, has led to a neglect in this area of policy discussion which my study intends to help address. While existing data has quantitatively demonstrated that Polish migrants are choosing to bring their children to the UK (Pollard *et al*, 2008: 27), my study highlights the important qualitative association between this phenomenon and belonging. The longing for family synchronicity is a significant driving force in migration that needs to be acknowledged in policy debates. The large numbers of new arrivals in primary and secondary schools associated with this family movement requires specialised provision in order to ensure the successful settlement of migrant children. My study and others (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010; Sime, 2010), have revealed that parents are often unprepared for the differences between Polish and British school systems. A lack of knowledge of practicalities such as the school starting age, the school term system and uniform requirements, was found to have discomforting implications for children's sense of belonging. Migration scholars have sought to collate an information booklet to distribute to new Polish parents in London in order to prepare them and alleviate the negative

impact of starting in a new school for Polish children (Ryan *et al*, 2010). Such information needs to be communicated nationally, particularly given the unusually widespread dispersal of Polish migrants beyond the capital city (Drinkwater *et al*, 2008). Teachers may require specialist training and need to be provided with an awareness of the Polish system on which parents' and children's expectations are based. Language provision again plays an important role in providing a sense of belonging, and Polish children may benefit from additional school or community-based English classes and Polish-language resources to access learning in the interim.

My study has shown that the relocation of the whole family can prove a challenging process as families face periods of waiting to live together and subsequent periods of adjustment as they acquire the sense of synchronicity desired in a shared location. This can lead to a strain on relationships within the family as roles, norms and routines are re-established. For families that have undergone the life-changing decision to migrate and see synchronicity as a central pillar in providing a sense of belonging, this period of adjustment can be particularly difficult to negotiate. Counselling and therapy services with a capacity to address such family tensions in the migration context could benefit migrant families in this situation and assist in a smoother transition to achieving synchronicity and associated wellbeing. By working with parents and children, my study has revealed the impact of migration on, not only individuals, but the intra-familial relationships on which the notion of family and belonging is based. These relationships are often placed under strain by the migration process as it is experienced differently by different members. Supporting migrants requires an understanding of the impact that migration has on belonging, and my research has emphasised the important role that family synchronicity plays in this situation. Considering migrants within their family units will enable policy-makers to provide support which more accurately reflects migrant priorities and concerns.

### 8.3.3 Continuity

 Visa regulations and entry restrictions have been found to have more than a practical impact on migrant belonging. The freedom of movement enshrined in the institution of the EU and the UK's open entry policy to A-8 migrants has led to the families in my study imagining their relocation as akin to a regional 'move' rather than an international migration. This sense of continuity secured through this framing has significant implications for their sense of belonging that have not been acknowledged in previous research on the subject. Upon joining the EU, Romania and Bulgaria have not had the

same immediate access to the UK that Poland and the other A-8 countries were afforded in 2004. Policy-makers need to be aware that this prologue to these new future migrants' stories may impact on their sense of belonging by challenging a sense of continuity imaginable across an open-access space. As alluded to in the introduction, the opening of the borders to these latest EU migrants has coincided with some anti-EU sentiments and proposals for referendum on the UK's membership of this long-standing supranational institution. A withdrawal of Britain from the EU and discussions which posit EU membership in a negative light, particularly when in reference to immigration, is likely to have a significant impact on Central and Eastern European migrants. Locating the host country outside of the shared time-space on which a sense of continuity is based is likely to have negative implications for current intra-EU migrants living in the UK: a factor worthy of consideration, and hitherto absent, in current debates.

Some of my participant families found the sense of continuity provided by a common supranational location challenged by the perceptions of others and hostility associated with the 'migrant' label. Negativity surrounding this label was heavily linked to a notion of dependency, with importance placed on the financial ability to support oneself and avoid claiming benefits. Given the current economic downturn and associated unemployment, migrants such as those in my study may find themselves in need of social security support that may challenge the self-identity they have established. Current debates and policy decisions surrounding an overhaul of the social security system and in particular migrants' entitlement to benefits has centred on the effects for Romanian and Bulgarian arrivals. However, there are also implications for other EU migrants for whom a comforting sense of continuity comes from the equal status afforded to them as fellow citizens of a shared supranational institution.

### 8.3.4 Permanency

Polish migration has been portrayed as a temporary movement, with government reports and newspaper articles broadcasting a picture of 'turnstile' migration with a significant number estimated to have returned to Poland (Pollard *et al*, 2008). However, my study found that all of my participant families described their stay as 'permanent' with the concept playing an important role in their sense of belonging. Permanency has been observed as created in and by the surroundings of the physical home. For many this was found to be restricted by the lack of control felt and experienced within the rental sector. Currently migrants face differentiated regulations regarding mortgages with decisions

over lending for homeownership partially based on length of residence in the UK (Nygaard, 2011). While other factors, particularly a lack of financial capital for a deposit, can limit access to the housing market, mortgage regulations may present an instrumental and emotional barrier to feeling permanent. Government recommendations could alleviate such barriers and facilitate this material route to potentially enriched wellbeing.

Exploring the 'horizon of permanency' has revealed the importance of the concept of family. Recognising that many of the migrant parents in my study consider retirement a stage of their lives beyond their current horizon of permanency has important implications for understanding future impact of the present migratory wave. The combination of the British 'baby boom' generation heading towards retirement age and a declining birth rate has left the country with a dependency issue. Fears that a working age population will not be sufficiently sizeable to support an expanding dependent elderly contingent are compounded by concerns of a permanently settled migrant population claiming additional pension benefits. Exploring what the idea of 'permanent' settlement means for the families in my study provides an insight into how accurate such reservations are. While the families in my study refer to their settlement as 'permanent', many in fact are considering spending retirement elsewhere, with Poland most frequently cited as a retirement destination. Acknowledging and investigating the meanings behind terms such as 'permanency' reveal the complexities inherent in migrant imaginings of belonging. By exploring how belonging is experienced and perceived through a temporal framework, my research has revealed new pathways to understanding the migration process and settlement predictions.

## 8.4 Final comment

This thesis has sought to provide a fresh insight into belonging. Migrants are thought to have a more acute sense of belonging, having challenged the assumptions that a person belongs in the place in which they are and have come from. Belonging is acknowledged to be a process rather than a state, indicating a temporal dimension to its actualisation and negotiation, yet this is rarely reflected in studies into belonging. My study found time to play a hugely significant role in the experiences and perceptions of belonging and sought to better represent the migrant experience by incorporating a temporal dimension into the analysis of my participants' experiences. The changing situation of global movement, and current debates regarding the freedom of movement enshrined in the EU, lead us to seek new ways on understanding migration and the implications it has for belonging. My

research has begun to suggest the blurring of the boundaries between migrant and regional mover as scales of belonging shift and conflate. Using a temporal approach to understanding belonging may not only provide an insight into the migrant settlement experience, but also into the identity formation processes of us all.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Recruitment poster

## Appendix 2: Recruitment leaflet for parents

This leaflet is designed to be folded into thirds. This is the front of the recruitment leaflet for parents:

This is the back of the recruitment leaflet for parents:



## About the project…
O projekcie …

My name is Jennifer Brown. I am a PhD student at the University of Leeds.
My PhD project is about Polish migrant families in Manchester…to find out more and become involved

**read on…**

Mam na imię Jennifer Brown. Jestem studentką Uniwersytetu w Leeds. Piszę doktorat na temat polskich rodzin imigrantów w Manchesterze … aby dowiedzieć się więcej i wziać udział …

**czytaj dalej…**

## 3 Questions…
3 Pytania…

**1**

Are you Polish?

Czy jesteś Polakiem/Polką?

**2**

Do you have a child/children aged 5-18?

Czy masz dzieci (5-18 lat)?

**3**

Did you arrive in Britain after 2004?

Czy przyjechałeś/przyjechalaś do Wielkiej Brytanii po 2004 roku?

**Is your answer 'Yes' to all 3 questions?**
**If so, I would like you to be involved in this project.**

Jeśli Twoja odpowiedź jest "Tak" na wszystkie 3 pytania, chciałabym, że byś wziął/wzięła udział w tym projekcie.

## Why do I want to talk to you…
Dlaczego chcę z Tobą porozmawiać?

By working with Polish migrants -such as you and members of your family- I hope to understand more about…

- your **decision to move to Britain**
- your **everyday life** here in Manchester
- your **life in Poland**
- your **plans** for the future

Dzięki współpracy z polskimi migrantami, takimy jak Ty i członkowie Twojej rodziny, mam nadzieję dowiedzieć więcej na temat…

- decyzji o przeprowadzce do Wielkiej Brytanii
- codziennego życia tutaj, w Manchesterze
- Twojego życia w Polsce
- Twoich planów na przyszłość

## Appendix 3: Recruitment leaflet for children

This leaflet is designed to be folded into thirds. This is the front of the recruitment leaflet for children:

This is the back of the recruitment leaflet for children:

## Appendix 4: Information sheet for participants

Below is the Information sheet given to participants showing an interest in the study prior to gaining consent for participation. It was described orally by an interpreter to those who did not feel confident in the English language.

# Polish Migrant Families in Manchester

### PhD research project

My name is Jennifer Brown and I am a PhD student at the University of Leeds (funded by the Economic and Social Research Council). My research aims to understand the experiences of Polish migrants and their families who have moved to Britain since Poland joined the European Union in 2004.

### Why do I want to talk to you...

By conducting interviews with Polish migrants -such as you and members of your family- I hope to understand more about your decision to move to Britain, your everyday life here in Manchester, your life in Poland, and your plans for the future.

Before you decide whether to take part in this project, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information sheet carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time (you do not have to give a reason).

### What do I want you to do...

If you decide to take part, I will interview you and your family at your home (or somewhere else if you prefer) at a convenient time. I hope to visit you around four times over the next year and a half to hear your story and see how your life changes in Manchester. Visits will probably last around two and a half hours. During the visit I will chat to you on your own and with the other members of your family. I hope the experience will be enjoyable and give you a chance to tell your story.

### What will I do with what you tell me...

Everything we talk about in the interview will be recorded and later written down. All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. I hope to use what you tell me to help others understand your experiences as a Polish migrant family. When I tell people what you have told me at conferences and in publications I will not use your real name or any information that will identify you.

### Any questions...

Please feel free to contact me: Email me at: geo4jb@leeds.ac.uk Call or text me on: 07988 242074

Thank-you very much for reading this information sheet.

Jennifer Brown, Department of Geography, University of Leeds.

## Appendix 5: Consent form for participants

Below is the consent from read and signed by participants prior to commencing the research process. It was also described orally by an interpreter to those who did not feel confident in the English language. Parents of children under 18 years of age partaking in the study signed on their behalf, as is legally required in such circumstances.

**Experiences of Polish Migrant Families in Manchester**

Jennifer Brown, University of Leeds

**Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated April 2010 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.

4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Any queries, please contact Jennifer Brown (email geo4jb@leeds.ac.uk or call 07988 242074)

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant                    Date                         Signature
(or legal representative)

_____   _____   _____
Researcher                                  Date                         Signature
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies: Once this has been signed by all parties the participant will receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form and the information sheet.

## Appendix 6: Interview schedule

Below is a list of the topics used to prompt conversation throughout interviews with family members, whole families and during different research methods. The conversation prompts are grouped according to theme.

**Migration story**

- Decision to migrate: whose decision; decision-making process; reasons

- Departure: context; process; whole family or separate

- Arrival: first impressions; early actions

- Differences between Britain and Poland

- Communication with Poland: nature/frequency/effect

- Settling in: Getting know people/places; learning the language

- Impressions: like/dislikes

- Community experiences: local neighbourhood; Polish community; other

- Impact of migrating with children: children; on migratory decisions; on experiences of settlement

- Impact of Poland being in the European Union

- Plans for future

**Home**

- Childhood home

- Choosing where to live: who makes the decision and how

- Possessions: items packed/first/unpacked/most value: why

- Homeliness: what makes a house a home; who plays what role in making a home

- Differences between houses in Poland and Britain

- Time spent at home: where/which rooms; doing what; how do you feel at home

- Relationships within the home: who do you spend time with; doing what

- Feeling comfortable at home: how long does it take; how; why

- Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with current home: plans/aspirations for change; suitable for current/future needs

- Tenancy situation: rented/mortgaged; impact

- Comparison of home with previous

**<u>Belonging</u>**

• Feeling a sense of belonging/feeling comfortable being oneself/fitting in: where/with whom/doing what/why

• Feeling a lack of belonging/feeling uncomfortable/feeling like an outsider:- where/with whom/doing what/why

• Identity: being Polish in Britain/Manchester

• Identity: on return to Poland; role of Poland in life

• Migrant status in Britain

• Change over time

• Plans for future