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FROM NOWHERE TO NOW-HERE:

online and offline belonging identity negotiations

of millennial Poles in Glasgow, Scotland

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To 'the Others'

Abstract

This thesis addresses a combination of offline and online factors influencing negotiations of a belonging identity among millennials. Born between mid-1980s and 1990s, the millennials constitute the first generation to negotiate their belonging identity amidst local and internet mediated social interactions (Howe & Strauss 2000: 4). Drawing on the experiences of 46 millennial Poles located in Glasgow, Scotland, and using a mixture of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979), symbolic interactionism (Cooley 2005; Mead 1982; 1967; Goffman 1959) and postmodern interpretations (Bauman 2011; 2007; 2004a; 2004b), I examine the millennials' experiences in negotiating their belonging identity across virtual and real-life locations by applying a qualitative and culturally tailored methodology, including semi-structured, open-ended interviews. The key research questions address the nature, process, and challenges inherent in negotiations of belonging identity, including the manner millennial Poles in Glasgow experience the contemporary multicultural and multilocal environments. The data is analyzed according to the emerging themes, such as the role of family and education system in Poland, as well as the impact of online interactions that enhance and broaden the belonging identity negotiation. Particularly, the digital (hyperlocal) dimension points to the emergence of a novel type of time-bound belonging, a *now-here* identity, which stands in a stark contrast to the previous, spatially-based conceptualizations, including that of the *nowhere* belonging of Bauman (2007; 2004b). Additionally, the thesis challenges the dominant metanarrative of 'migrant', it being the omnipresent stigmatizing moniker for non-citizen residents. Applying an intersectional perspective (Crenshaw 1989; 1991; Collins 2015; 1990; 1986), the research exposes in particular the ethnic and class discrimination encoded into the word 'migrant', with its connotations of a lesser-value identity (Klekowski von Koppenfels 2014) and non-belonging. The research also enhances transnational, networks and mobilities theories by applying social identity theory and symbolic interactionism into analyses of experiences of migration, and thereby challenges the prevalent citizenship identity discourse by highlighting instead the diversity of multicultural and multilocal affiliations. In regards to methodological contributions, the research emphasizes the significance of culturally sensitive and individually tailored methodology that acknowledges cultural subjectivity and is aware of a variety of interpretations. The research advocates a development of non-discriminatory theoretical and methodological approaches that recognize ongoing social and cultural changes brought by digitalization of information and the emergence of multilocalities.

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Acknowledgements

Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work, and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Research background

This research originated in my personal frustration when witnessing countless examples of the Polish 'migrant' headlines dominating the UK-wide political, media and academic discourses throughout my last 12 years in Scotland. The word 'migrant' is in quotation marks on purpose, to highlight the implicit exclusion encoded into its meaning; as 'migrants' are never considered from 'here', regardless of the amount of time spent living within a society that generally perceives them as 'others' (Bauman 2000: 55). Apart from its segregating connotation and implied non-belonging, the word 'migrant', as it will be discussed later, is also used to ascribe a lower-class identity. This particular undertone can be traced to the turn of the XIX and XX centuries, when a mass movement of European peasants occurred to North America and Australia (Ravenstein 1889; 1885; Thomas & Znaniecki 1967; Zubrzycki 1988; 1956). Later, with the democratic changes taking place across the European, American and Australian continents, particularly in the second half of the XX century, the concept of a European peasant abroad got gradually replaced by the word 'migrant' (as in publications of that time, e.g. by Todaro 1969; Petersen 1958); a trend, as this research will show, that has been continuing till the present.

1.1.1   Local circumstances

It is important to consider the implication of the 'migrant' narrative, particularly when contemporary mass and social media are full of 'migrant' crisis headlines, with the European Union [EU hereafter] institutions being called to assist. The significance of this challenge finds full expression on the 23 of June 2016, when in the UK referendum, in which 'migrants' were identified as the root cause of the UK's current economic and social problems (BBC 2017), the UK citizens ended its 43 years of EU membership. This explicit stigmatization of 'migrants' prompted scholars, such as Phipps (2017) and Sime et al. (2017), to raise their concerns about the UK's hostile political and mass media approach, while NGOs, including the Global Justice Now (2017), called for a public inquiry into the UK press xenophobia.

It is worth noting that up till that point academia stays principally uninterested in examining the 'migrant' narrative, with terms such as 'migrants', 'expats', and 'Brexpats' (Society Now 2017: 5) commonly adopted to capture experiences of different social class of citizens abroad (Klekowski von Koppenfels 2014). Furthermore, the majority of the current academic debate around migration is concerned not with 'expats' and 'Brexpats', but rather solely with 'migrants', their networks, capitals, family lives, their transnational social spaces, activities and identities (Appadurai 1996; Glick-Shiller et al. 1992; Portes 1996; Ryan et al. 2015; Massey 1998; Smith & Guarnizo 1998; Verovec 2008; Wessendorf 2016). This approach particularly dominates the contemporary research on Poles in Europe, with 'Polish migrant diasporas', 'Polish migrant families' (White 2009), 'Polish migrant children' (Sime & McArthur 2009), 'Polish migrant identities' (White 2016) being the prime focus. One notable exception is the classification of 'international students' (Moskal & Schweisfurth 2018; Gu & Schweisfurth 2015; Guo & Chase 2011), which denotes different social class belonging of those relocating for educational purposes. Yet, this label, just like the 'migrant' denotation, implicitly infers non-belonging of 'overseas students' by the generally used designation of 'Home Student' for the UK and EU citizens (the latter up till 2016), and a posteriori that the 'overseas students' do not belong 'here'.

Furthermore, there has been a significant upsurge in Hate Crimes towards EU 'migrant' citizens. This worrying trend has intensified following Brexit, including a distribution of the 'Polish Vermin Go Home' fliers, as well as other signs and posters (see: Figure 1.1 below).

Figure 1.1: The 2013 UK government led 'Go Home' billboard van campaign (left), and the 2017 public signs in Launton, Oxfordshire, England (right). Both accessed at BBC News (2013; 2017)

The number of Hate Crimes towards the EU 'migrant' citizens has gradually escalated, particularly in England, to the point that it began to be socially acceptable to aggressively challenge people for speaking 'migrant' languages in public. This included a murder of a Polish citizen in an unprovoked attack for speaking Polish language to his brother on the streets of Harlem, Essex, England (Quinn 2016).

It is notable that there has been no such upsurge in Hate Crimes towards the EU 'migrants' citizens in Scotland and Northern Ireland. This testifies to a challenging cultural environment, particularly within England, impacting the people's perceptions of themselves and of others (Tajfel & Turner 1979; Maslow 1943).

1.1.2   Multilocal context

To research the experiences of the millennial Poles in Scotland, it is also necessary to consider the multilocal and multicultural factors, such as the culture of contemporary Poland. Like most of the European states, the culture of Poland is rooted within the Latin and Christian heritage. But unlike the majority of the European population, Poles still consider themselves as principally Catholic; indeed, almost 90 percent identify themselves as such (GUS 2011: 99). Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to perceive Poles as strictly religious, since only one half admits attending the requisite weekly celebration of the Sunday Mass, while the majority rarely follows in any type of Catholic teachings (Łucyk 2014).

That said, Christianity, and especially its Catholic branch, is of fundamental importance when considering the belonging identity of contemporary Poles. Indeed, Christianity has been entangled within the Polish sense of selfhood for over a millennium now (Ihnatowicz et al. 1996), when a symbolic *Chrzest Polski/* Baptism of Poland marked the beginning of the Polish nationhood in 966 (Bardach et al. 1987; Replewicz 2016). Since then, the close relation between the religious and the local identity has been tightening, resulting in a gradual incorporation of the Christian symbols and rituals into the state's values, norms and the language. This include integration of the Christian referrals, such as the credo *Bóg, Honor, Ojczyzna/* God, Honor, Fatherland, into the state's insignia, military equipment, and decorating orders (Zdrot 2012: 94).

Christianity is also deeply interwoven within the local public education system in Poland. Dating to the XIV century, the idea of public education was promoted by the 'King' *Jadwiga/* Hedwig of Poland, the first female monarch of the state. A devoted Catholic,

Hedwig funded Kraków's Jagiellonian University in 1364; an action that prompted a gradual mushrooming of public schooling around the country (Ihnatowicz et al. 1996). By the XV century, records show (Ihnatowicz et al. 1996: 210), 'talented and stubborn' youth, regardless of their social class, were able to access education and pursue academic careers (see also: Ziomek 1999: 179). In spite of the Roman Catholic background of the education system, local scholars stayed critical of the Vatican's invasive meddling into the state's affairs (Lukowski & Zawadzki 2006). In 1573 the 'Freedom of Religious Practice' is adopted, it being the first legal act of modern Europe to guarantee an equal status to all free persons regardless of their faith[1]. Nevertheless, the XVII century brings an emergence of the 'Catholic Pole' stereotype, as mocked by its Protestant neighbors, mostly due to the state-led victory in the 1683 Battle of Vienna, that terminated the centuries long Ottoman threat to Europe, and made Poles to perceive themselves as the 'defenders of the Christian faith' on the continent (Prizel 1998: 43).

This strong self-identity of Poles, fueled by vivid national literature (Mickiewicz 2015; 1968; Słowacki 2016), a relatively large population, as well as the impact of the industrial revolution sweeping across the continent (Herman 2003), brings preservation of the distinguished selfhood throught the 123 years of the state's partitions. One particularly potent idea that assures the maintenance of the local identity is the personification of the partitioned country as the Christ of the Nations/ *Chrystus Narodów*, and 'the Messiah' suffering for the Europe's sins[2]. Establishing the vivid Messianic message (see also: Wyspiański 2012; Sienkiewicz 2012), as well as the country-wide grass-roots educational campaigns, result not only in regaining the state's independence in 1918, but also in sanctioning the tight relations with the Vatican by signing the Concordat Agreement in 1925. The 1939 simultaneous invasions of Poland by its German and Russian neighbors bring calculated and systematic annihilation of one fifth of the country's population, predominantly the scholars and educated professionals (including many of the world's famous scientists, e.g. of the Polish School of Mathematics), as well as the clergy of various faiths (Bajer 1996: 10-13; see also: Łuczak 1993: 683). The subsequent Cold War

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[1] As a result, the Renaissance in Poland brought a substantial influx of Europeans, including hundreds of thousands of Scots, and others, fleeing their turmoil homelands torn by religious zealotry. This made Poland the 'asylum for heretics', as mocked by the European aristocracy of that time (Davis 2005; Gierowski 1986).

[2] For example, Mickiewicz (*The Polish Nation and the Pilgrimage*, 1832, cf. Davis 2005: 202) states:

> 'And Poland said, "Whosoever will come to me shall be free and equal for I am FREEDOM". But the Kings, when they heard it, were frightened in their hearts, and they crucified the Polish Nation and laid it in its grave, crying out: "We have slain and buried Freedom". But they cried out foolishly. For the Polish Nation did not die. Its body lieth in the grave; but its spirit has descended into the abyss (…) For the Third Day, the Soul shall return to the Body; and the Nation shall arise and free all the peoples of Europe from Slavery'.

provokes the surviving population to tighten their local identity with the religious one; the process that becomes sealed by the unexpected election of Karol Wojtyła, a Kraków's priest, to be the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II in 1978.

This event brings a rather rapid institutionalization of the Vatican's presence in Poland at the end of the Cold War (1989-1991), commencing with re-signing of the Concordat (1993, ratified in 1998) and subsequent spread of solely Roman Catholic symbolism all over a public space of the constitutionally secular state (Konstytucja RP 1997). Examples include incorporations of the Polish state's symbols, such as the white and red national flag, and the white eagle with a golden crown, beak and claws, the epitome of Poland, into e.g. churches' displays during the religious celebrations of Easter and Christmas.

Figure 1.2: The Easter displays in Roman Catholic churches in Poland (from Polityka 2013)

Examples include both religious displays depictured above (see: Figure 1.2). The Easter church display on the left refers to the 1795-1918 Partitions, used as an allegory for the Poland's European Union membership. The top of the display reads: '*Polska Tak, Unia Europejska Nie*'/ 'Poland Yes, European Union No'. Also, the language used along the display is worth noting, as defines the belonging identity of Poles, namely: '*Tylko pod krzyżem, tylko pod tym znakiem/ Polska jest Polską, a Polak Polakiem*'/'only through the Crucifix, only through this Sign/ Poland is (the real) Poland, and a Pole is the (real) Pole'. The other Easter display refers to a national tragedy of the 10 April 2010. That day, at 8.41 am (CET), the Polish Presidential Plane carrying the sitting President of Poland and the First Lady, the former President of Poland in exile, the *Solidarność*/Solidarity co-creator Anna Walentynowicz, the Polish NATO chief generals and political parties senior members, the families and friends of the officers murdered in the 1940 Katyń massacre,

among 96 distinguished people, crashed in Russia with no survivors. The 'model' of the Presidential Plane in the church's Easter display above depictures the Grave of the Lord.

Furthermore, the state's celebrations of national holidays, such as the Independence Day [11 Nov], occur currently solely within the Roman Catholic paradigm. These include the participation of the Polish President, the Prime Minister and the members of Government in the Catholic Mass for Poland, broadcasted live on a public television channel, *Telewizja Polska* [TVP hereafter]. It is worth noting that as of the 2000s many such festivities have been accompanied by displays of cultural exclusion, including signs such as 'Poland for Poles, Poles for Poland', 'God, Honor, Poland', and 'Great Catholic Poland', as well as anti-Muslim banners on a backdrop of the Polish national flags (see: Figure 1.3 below).

Figure 1.3: The TVP INFO (2015) live reporting of the 2015 Independence Day celebrations: Inaugurational Holy Mass for Fatherland (left); and subsequent parades in Warsaw (right)

Also, the Polish politicians, for example Lech Wałęsa, a former President of Poland, a former leader of *Solidarność*, and a self-proclaimed 'symbol of democratic changes' in this part of Europe, carefully craft their political image to local cultural circumstances by utilizing religious symbols for political gains (Grabowski 2014; Heart 1995). This includes the image of the 'Black Madonna' icon, being the millennium old portrait of a dark-skin-tone Virgin Mary of *Jasna Góra*/ Bright Mountain in Częstochowa, the Queen of Poland, that Wałęsa attaches to the lapel of all his blazers (Stefoff 2010; Moses 1990). The image of the Virgin Mary is also used by a radio-station, *Radio Maryja*/ Radio of Virgin Mary. Established in the early 1990s in Toruń to 'promote the Catholic voice at your home' (Radio Maryja 2017), *Radio Maryja* has become currently the third most politically influential radio broadcaster in Poland, reaching the twelfth position among the Polish

mass-media (Instytut Monitorowania Mediów 2011: 3, 6, 9). It is important to highlight this radio station, as it is described as the essence of 'Catholic nationalism' (Poland Human Rights Report 2016: 23;) and as 'the cause of the ills of the Church in Poland' (Economist 2007: 15-17; see also: Wiśniewska 2010; Fr Wiśniewski 2013; Easton 2007). According to the Anti-Defamation League Report (Balser & Foxman 2006: 17) 'since its inception *Radio Maryja* has promoted a narrative based on nationalist extremism, anti-Semitism and conspiracy theory, both coded and open', impacting significantly the concept of belonging identity in Poland. Other Roman Catholic symbols, such as the Crucifix, are also used for political gains and placed in the majority of public (and therefore secular, Konstytucja RP 1997) spaces, such as primary and secondary schools, local and national government's offices, including the Main Hall of the Parliament of the Polish Republic, *Sejm/*Seym, where all legal acts are discussed and passed (see: Figure 1.4 below, left).

Figure 1.4: Left: the Main Hall of the Polish Parliament, Seym (from Sejm RP website 2017); and right: a front view of a public elementary school classroom (by Chalimoniuk 2015)

As a result, the social pressure to carry the specific religious identity is significant (Dziewulska & Ostrowska 2012), regardless of local settings. Examples of such Roman Catholic acculturations include the lifelong (as socially enforced) participation in celebrations of Roman Catholic Sacraments, such as the Baptism of newborns, the First Communion at the age of 8, Confirmation at 15, Marriage, the Last Rights, and a burial. Additionally, a formerly pagan ritual of *Kolęda* occurs annually, with a local Roman Catholic priest visiting his parishioners at their homes each winter. According to statistical data, 75 to 90 percent of Poles in Warsaw, being the capital and described as the most secular of all Polish cities, participate in *Kolęda* (Instytut Statystyki Koscioła Katolickiego 2010).

The merging of the state and religious identities in Poland brings progressively aggressive exclusions of any cultural symbolism that challenges the dominant local outlook. Examples include open violence towards people speaking different languages, having different than local skin tone, dress code, fashion and image, as well as vandalism towards monuments denoting any idea that would challenge the local status quo. Illustrations of the latter include repeated and premeditated vandalism and burning of a *Tęcza/* Rainbow monument at the Savior's Square in the heart of the capital city of Poland, Warsaw. The Rainbow, designed by Julita Wójcik (2012) and erected out of thousands of artificial flowers, was to symbolize 'joy and tolerance' (Cultura.pl 2015). Nevertheless, the monument is soon openly labelled as the '*pedalska tęcza*'/ fagotty rainbow (The Economist 2013), and burnt down repeatedly, often during the Polish national holidays (including the Independence Day) amidst cheering of crowds (see: Figure 1.5 below, on the right).

Figure 1.5: Left: *Warszawska Tęcza* surrounded by coffee shops and a Roman Catholic parade of the Corpus Christi Octave (by Szymczuk 2011); and right: the 2013 Independence Day riots and burning down of the Rainbow (by Wziantek 2013)

It is worth noting that by 2015 the Rainbow monument is permanently dismantled, while the homophobic, xenophobic behaviors and aggression towards otherness in Poland, the UK, Europe, and around the world are on the rise. Again.

1.2   Research problem

This research addresses the complex processes behind negotiations of the belonging identities in the time of global interconnectivities 'overcoming restrictions of space and time' (Campbell & Park 2008: 375). Identifying the variables that come into play in the construction of concepts, such as sameness and otherness, locality and multilocality, among the millennial Poles in Glasgow is the key first step to understand what factors are

likely to impact community cohesion, and ultimately people's experiences of each other. Three research questions guide the study, namely:

- how do the millennial Poles identify themselves and what is the nature of these affiliations?
- what are the factors that influence how they negotiate their belonging identity? Why? How? When and where did they learn to construct these particular identities?
- how these identities shape their experiences of the contemporary multicultural and multilocal environment of social interactions?

The subsequent empirical chapters address these three questions in relation to different stages of participants' lives, particularly highlighting the childhood experiences as significant for the manner their future associations are experienced. The analysis is juxtaposed against a variety of online and offline factors, including mass and social media, as well as those impacts stemming from actual geographical relocations.

1.3 Theoretical outline

The research draws on symbolic interactionism (Cooley 2005; Mead 1982; 1967; Blumer 1992; Goffman 1959) and social identity theory (Tajfel &Turner 1979) to analyse contemporary negotiations of belonging identity of the Polish millennials. This is supplemented in an essential way by postmodern interpretations, especially those of Bauman (2004a; 2011). Quantum concepts are utilised not only to serve as useful metaphors to depict the nature and characteristics of digital localities and current mobilities of information (Penrose 1959; Greene 2004; 1999), but also to emphasise the conceptual revolution that this new scientific reality might bring into social sciences.

My theoretical approach originates from the calls of many contemporary scholars, such as Castles (2012: 16), who highlights the 'rather atheoretical nature' of contemporary 'migration studies and its failure to connect with a social theory', resulting in 'a narrow empiricism that does little to explain social action'. Additionally, Castles (2012: 21) emphasizes the need for a 'holistic and interdisciplinary theoretical approach' that would reflect the current individual experiences 'within broader studies of social transformation and its relevance to global trends'. Nevertheless, the current migration debate is most frequently framed within a single perspective, most often, transnationalism, focusing on 'migrants' embedded within 'transnational social spaces linking their countries of origin and settlement' by a variety of social links (Glick Schiller et al. 1992: ix), or within

mobilities. It is worth noting that the transnational theorizations deny the emergence of novel socio-cultural forms, while the mobilities approach stays rather vague on characteristics and nature of the multilocal social interactions. As a result, the proposed theoretical approach combines social, psychological and philosophical conceptualizations to investigate these multifaceted and complex processes behind migration and negotiation of belonging within the multilocal realm of the contemporary social relations.

1.4   Methodological considerations

This research asserts that when and how people socially interact depends on the personal meanings a social situation holds for them, which results in profound methodological implications. Hence, in order to comprehend the wider social phenomenon brought by migration and belonging challenges, it is necessary to understand the symbolic meanings encoded into the languages and cultures of the participants (Blumer 1992). The methodological approach of this study is built upon seeking an in-depth understanding of processes responsible for negotiating belonging identities of the millennial Poles. The data is collected by applying semi-structured, qualitative interviewing as the main research method, which allows one to ascertain in-depth 'inner views' (Kvale 1996). According to Rubin and Rubin (1995: 1) this method holds a potential for 'finding out what others feel and think about their worlds', and thereby 'to understand and to reconstruct events'. The latter aspect, in particular, has pivotal implications for the data analysis stage of the study, as the interviews take place in the Polish language. Establishing a culturally faithful English-language narrative and representation of the stories and experiences shared by the participants in Polish, and from the different cultural perspective that that encoded into English, is both the key challenge and a necessary methodological step.

It needs to be highlighted that such a methodological approach implies that the version of social reality presented in the study is doubly subjective, as the interpretations of participants, conveyed through their individual stories, are then interpreted by a researcher. Findings need to be viewed, therefore, as a particular version of social reality. Conscious of this, I follow Eisner (1991: 58) stressing that 'good' qualitative research allows one to 'understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing'. Hence, highlighting the multiple methodological implications is not to undermine this study's findings, but rather to contribute to a wider debate upon the levels of relevance and applicability of findings generated through social research.

1.5   Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters, with Chapter 1 aiming at the introduction of the study, including providing multilocal and multicultural backgrounds, a brief theoretical context and methodological implications, as well as a wee overview of the empirical findings.

Chapter 2 addresses theoretical contextualization for this study, starting with an in-depth review of perceptions and labels ascribed to people participating in historic migration flows, and its subsequent legacy for contemporary conceptualization of the Poles abroad. This is followed by addressing two of the currently most prevalent theories within migration studies, namely: transnationalism and mobilities, highlighting both their commonalities and differences, as well as emphasizing challenges stemming from considering either of them for researching negotiations of belonging identities of the millennial Poles in Glasgow. The next section emphasizes the importance of a more holistic approach that includes the analysis of how people create their belonging identities, the (multi) cultural implications of symbolic interactions among people of the same and different backgrounds, as well as the contemplation on the contemporary multilocal social realm where these social interactions occur. The study does so by interweaving three theories, namely: social identity theory, symbolic interactionism and postmodern interpretations to both capture and reflect upon the cultural phenomena brought by the emergence of multilocalities.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodological approach underpinning the research process. It commences with presenting the research design, including its ontological, epistemological and axiological positionality. This is followed by a description and justification of the methods chosen. The specific chronology of the data gathering process is then presented, while also stressing the importance of the pilot research for developing a preliminary understanding of challenges to come. These challenges are itemized in two parts of the chapter, one that follows the descriptions of the pilot study, and the other following the main fieldwork. Additionally, the Chapter consists reflection over the transcription process, and highlights the challenges of thematic analysis and its subsequent translation from Polish to English, the latter dotted with hurdles of multicultural interpretations.

Chapter 4 and 5 are the first two out of the three empirical chapters that address the origins of contemporary belonging identities of millennial Poles in Glasgow. Based upon data gathered from 46 in-depth interviews, the Chapters provide deep and comprehensive insights into the participants' socio-cultural experiences and feelings associated with multilocal movement and multicultural information exchange. While Chapter 4 centers on a specific, geographically dependent factors, including home, local culture and education environments in Poland, Chapter 5 focuses on multilocal features, such as mass and social media, as well as actual geographical relocations, all affecting negotiations of their belonging identity.

Chapter 6, being the last empirical section, explores the impact of these contemporary aspects on the manner by which individuals negotiate their belonging identities, and the significance multicultural and multilocal affiliations among individuals for a society cohesion. These include highlighting an emergence of the *now-here* belonging identities, as the response to the high speed of information access and exchange among variety of online and offline locations.

The thesis concludes by summarizing the research's goals and findings, highlights its originality, theoretical and methodological contributions, provides brief policies recommendations, as well as includes a reflection on this personally transformative research journey.

Chapter 2: Conceptual framework

2.1   Overview

There are numbers of theoretical approaches to the concepts of *identity* and *migration*, yet the two phenomena remain rather challenging to define precisely. As far back as in the 1970s, while addressing the geographical movement of people, Willis (1974: 4) highlights that 'even among sociologists, there is no general agreement on the meaning of migration'. Two decades later the observation is restated by Massey et al. (1993: 432), pointing that such a definitional absence prolongs the quite intense 'academic controversy on the nature, causes and consequences of the migration' phenomenon. It is worth noting that this challenge only intensifies with the turn of the XX and XXI centuries, when new terminology, such as 'transnational migration' (Glick Schiller et al. 1992) and 'mobility' (Urry 2000) is introduced to reflect contemporary developments around the international movement of people and digital technology of information exchange.

The concept of identity also stays equally challenging, varying in its theoretical ramifications across disciplines (e.g. Tajfel & Turner 1979; Vertovec 2008) and the millennia (e.g. Aristotle 2008; Plato 2000; Locke 1853; James 1980). In its most fundamental conceptualization, it refers to the characteristics and roles an individual occupies within its local society (Burke & Stets 2009). Yet, the manner by which these roles are acquired, interpreted and ascribed varies, depending on the theoretical lenses applied. This is particularly visible within migration studies, where the concepts of identity has been predominantly limited to label those participating as 'migrants' and 'international students', and more recently in highlighting their potential to carry 'transnational identities' stretching across borders (Gu & Schweisfurth 2015; Moskal 2014; White 2014).

Additionally, with the contemporary omnipresence of digital technologies of communication (Schmidt & Cohen 2013), the concept of *locality* also undergoes definitional challenges (Larsen et al. 2016). What qualities allow one to be perceived as a local today? Questions like this significantly affect any research design aiming to capture

and reflect the contemporary experiences in online and offline identity negotiations, and in particular this one concerning millennial Poles in Glasgow.

Subsequently, this Chapter provides those theoretical ramifications that frame the study addressing multilocal negotiations of identity of the millennial Poles in Glasgow. It starts with analyzing perceptions and labels ascribed to people participating in historic migration flows, and their legacy regarding the contemporary conceptualization of the geographical movement of Poles. This is followed by addressing two of the currently most prevalent theories within migration studies, that is: transnationalism and mobilities, highlighting their commonalities and differences, as well as emphasizing challenges stemming from considering either of them for researching negotiations of belonging identities of the millennial Poles in Glasgow. As a result, the last section looks into approaches to identity and formation of difference within offline and online locations by applying the social identity theory and symbolic interactionism, both supported with postmodern interpretations to capture cultural phenomena brought by emergence of multilocality.

2.2   Identity within Migration Studies

Migration studies is a challenging discipline stretching across a variety of social sciences. Though such interdisciplinarity offers much-needed flexibility, it also poses the risk of ambiguities in regard to the interpretation of terminology. This is especially so when even individual disciplines cannot agree on common definitions of fundamental terms, such as already highlighted by Willis (1974: 4) in relation to the use of the word 'migration' in Sociology. A further challenge is to discern those variables that effectively characterize migration, including the identity of its participants. This research emphasizes that identity, and more specifically, the belonging identity, is one of the most significant factors, which affects not only the individual's imagination of themselves, but also the manner by which others perceive and understand them; an important aspect that structures the experiences of social interaction (Cooley 2005; Mead 1982; 1967).

2.2.1   Polish peasant abroad

Migration studies began with the geographical movement of peasants outwith the feudal and capitalist class societies of Europe (Ravenstein 1889; 1885), which predominantly takes place at the end of the XIX century. Anchored in Scotland's technological revolution that resulted in affordable means of intercontinental transport and communication, by 1910, according to Putnam (2000), 24 million Europeans relocated from Europe to the US.

The unprecedented scale and intensity of this human movement makes Castles and Miller (2009: 2) to famously name that particular era 'the age of mass migration'.

One of the first to academically appraise these migration flows is Ravenstein (1889; 1885), who utilizing the UK and US census data of the time, provides a detailed characterization of migration flows from continental Europe to the UK and US. According to Ravenstein (1885: 199) 'the economically motivated peasant youth' are the most likely to migrate. A couple of decades later a biographical study of Thomas and Znaniecki (1967; see also: Znaniecki 1971, 1952) substitutes this perspective with detailed stories of European peasantry living in the early XX century USA. According to Arango (2000: 284), the volumes by Thomas and Znaniecki (1967) are 'probably the most impressive work ever to be written on the subject of migration', as they document in detail the biographical narratives of Poles abroad, highlighting their commitment to cultivate native cultural heritage and identity abroad.

Examples include organizing Polish societies, which according to Thomas and Znaniecki (1967), in 1910 alone add up to 47 in a neighborhood of a single parish of Chicago, Illinois. Znaniecka-Łopata (1996), a daughter of Znaniecki, highlights that the remarkable duplication of these societies is related to a social-structure vacuum that emerged among a peasant class unfamiliar with the autonomy and freedoms afforded to them while abroad. Znaniecka-Łopata (1996) argues that in Poland a neighborhood/*okolica* historically provided a system of social stratification, wherein one's social position was contained and recognized; a factor missing upon arriving to the US[3]. Similar observations are made by Putnam (2000: 360), who also emphasizes the determination of Poles to 'very quickly organize mutual aid societies, free-loan and burial societies, social, sport and recreation clubs, foreign-language newspapers, churches and synagogues'; thereby re-creating a system of native social-relations in which to cultivate the Polish culture for future generations.

Also Zubrzycki (1988; 1956), referred to as the 'Father of Australian Multiculturalism' (ABC Radio National 2003), emphasizes that whole villages, such the USA's most ancient Polish town of *Panna Maria*/Virgin Mary in Texas, and the Polish Hill in Pittsburgh,

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[3] According to Zubrzycka-Łopata (1996) and Zaretsky (1996), back in Poland the nobility/ *szlachta* provided the peasantry with their cultural and symbolic capitals, including the national identity. Hence, while abroad, according to Zubrzycka-Łopata (1996: 43) the peasantry was determined to preserve their nationality for future generations. This comes in a contradiction to Zaretsky (1996), who argues the crucial role of the Polish nobility in cultivating Polish belonging while abroad.

Pennsylvania, were literally uprooted and transplanted villages from the XIX century Poland into the new locations abroad (see: Figure 2.1 below).

Figure 2.1: The Polish Hill Village welcoming signpost in 2016, Pittsburgh, PA, USA
(by courtesy of Dr SJ Watson)

In the context of the UK, Zubrzycki (1988; 1954) introduces new terminology to describe experiences of Poles abroad. For example, while studying lives of Poles in the post-IIWW UK, Zubrzycki (1956: 154) refers not to peasants, but to 'the Polish soldiers', noting that:

> 'there is no "melting pot" in Great Britain and the ingrained xenophobia of the British people is so powerful that [even] a Polish soldier who has mastered the language and shown that he can "get on in the country" may not be considered assimilated'.

Zubrzycki (1956: 154) emphasizes that the native social structure of the UK 'does not give the Polish soldiers any opportunity to seek a membership of the British group'. The author (1956: 156) notes that in the long-run the Poles in the UK abandoned seeking acceptance, forming instead their own 'parishes and Polish factory teams' (see also: Sword et al. 1989), constituting a stark contrast to the treatment of Poles in the US.

2.2.2   Migrant capital

It is worth noting that the new migration flows that take place to, within and from Europe post-1945, are prompted by the significant political, social and economic changes that follow the WW2. This phenomenon particularly draws the attention of economists of that time, including Petersen (1958), Lee (1966), Todaro (1969), and Wallerstein (2004; 1980; 1974). The scholars propose a diversity of macro and micro economic models of migration

to analyze such flows through the prism of the supply-and-demand theory of Adam Smith (2012; 1999), the University-of-Glasgow-based founding-father of Economic Theory. Nevertheless, placed within a global context of developed centers and underdeveloped peripheries, such quantitative approaches to migration are rather short-lived in their applicability. Indeed, the number of deficiencies that these approaches suffer from is vast, including insufficiencies in representing complexities of the migration process (Sen 1999; Massey et al. 1998; Skeldon 1997), alleged ignorance of 'heterogeneity and internal stratification of societies' (King & Schneider 1991: 67), as well as inability to address simultaneous occurrences of opposite migration flows (Brettell & Hollifield 2000).

Despite these wide-ranging criticisms, such economic approaches to the international mobility of people continue to impact the discipline of migration studies in subtle ways, as exemplified by the economists introducing, rather unnoticeably, a new terminology, namely, that of the 'migrant' (Fowler & Fowler 1990; see: Figure 2.2 below).
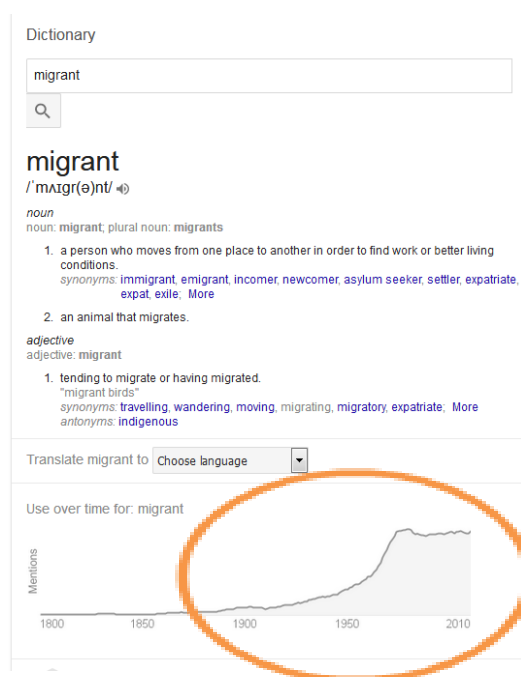
Figure 2.2: A Google Dictionary (2017) definition of a word 'migrant', indicating the word's frequency of application over time (open access)

One observes thereafter the gradual replacement and consolidation of the terms peasants, merchants and soldiers in migration narratives into the single monolithic category of 'migrant', particularly so, in network approaches to migration. The interest in network approaches resurfaces around the 1970s, when a popularization of means of international transport and telecommunication allows for the cultivation of internationally stretched

cultural ties among people (Castle & Miller 2009). This technological development prompts migration scholars, including Halfacree and Boyle (1993: 343), to propose focusing on 'in-depth investigations of the biographies of migrants', as opposed to economical calculations stemming from their geographical movement.

As this research will show, such a change is of pivotal importance, as it affects the identities of generations of people to come, impacting their everyday experiences of themselves and of others. Examples are provided by Klekowski von Koppenfels (2014: 130) emphasizing that the concept of a 'migrant' has come to denote a poorly educated, working class status (see: Figure 2.3 below).

Figure 2.3: Satirical representation of Polish 'migrants' perceptions abroad (by Zalepa c. 2010; from my research journal 2010/2011)

Klekowski von Koppenfels (2014: 133) also observes that 'the job-seeking Americans in Europe are not perceived as 'migrants', neither within the public and academic discourses, nor among themselves. According to her research (2014: 134), the UK and US citizens abroad enjoy the privileged status of the 'expat' instead. The author (2014: 24) emphasizes that especially within the UK discourse, the concept of an 'expat' has a particular connotation, referring to 'the sort of gin-swilling red-faced Telegraph-reading [person]'. The 'expat' terminology is especially prevalent within contemporary English-based mass-media discourses, and even within the UK-wide research funding institutions, preoccupied with the post-Brexit implications for the 'Brexpats' (ESRC Society Now 2017: 3) as opposed to 'migrants'. It needs to be highlighted that the 'UK expatriates in Europe' (Brodbeck 2017) terminology stands in marked contrast to the 'Polish migrants in the UK' (BBC News 2017) language. Similar observations are made by Koutonin (2015) who emphasizes the existence of implicit racism encoded into the 'migrant' and 'expat' duality.

In her article titled 'Why are White people expats when the rest of us are immigrants?', Koutonin (2015) states that within the UK population, the skin tone of newcomers determines their categorization either as an 'expats', or as 'a migrant'. This research shows that the skin tone is not the only variable in this post-colonial, racist and class-based categorization of geographically relocating people.

Nevertheless, academia remains largely oblivious to this fact, and continues to investigate 'migrants' experiences around the world. Examples include Portes (1996), who by the end of the XX century highlights the 'migrant' networks as crucial for a critical analysis of migration, naming them as fundamental in providing a variety of capitals for those relocating. Soon thereafter networks become the most popular approach in migration studies, with Glick-Schiller and Fouron (2001), Massey et al. (1998; 1993), Bash et al. (1994), Kritz et al. (1992), Portes et al. (1999) applying it to their studies of the Central and South Americans and Filipino experiences in the US. Describing the migration networks' characteristics, Castells (1996: 171; author's emphasis) observes that:

> 'the components of the network are both autonomous and dependent vis-à-vis the network, and may be a part of other networks, and therefore of other systems of means aimed at other goals. The performance of a given network will then depend on two fundamental attributes of the network: its *connectedness*, that is its structural ability to facilitate noise-free communication between its components; its *consistency*, that is the extent to which there is sharing of interests between the network's goals and the goals of its components'.

Both components emphasized above by Castells (1996), namely *connectedness* among people and *consistency* of their interactions, are also present in the 'migrant' network descriptions applied by Ryan (2010) and Erlick (2007), enriched in their research with the additional concept of the *'migrant' capital*. Deriving from the 'capitals' of Bourdieu (1986), the concept of the 'migrant' capital encompasses a combination of social and cultural assets, observed already in past research. For example, according to the definition provided by Putnam (2007: 390) 'migrant' capital is a type of 'social capital, that accommodates chain migration, as people from the same location in the old country settle near one another in their new homeland; a pattern facilitating further migration'. More recently the same approach is utilized to conceptualizations of the post-2004 intra-EU migration. Examples include Ryan et al. (2015:16) highlighting that the 'migrant' capital, consisting of a web of interpersonal ties, 'reduces costs and risks of migration, finding employment, housing, and gaining social recognition within localities where migrants live'. Also, Erlick and Lewandowska (2008) apply the 'migrant' capital concept to

research experiences of the Polish 'migrants' in contemporary Germany. According to the authors (2008: 718), the 'migrant' capital provides 'resources of information and assistance through their social ties from prior migrants'. Just like Putnam (2007) researching historical migration movements, Ryan et al. (2015: 21) also emphasize the 'migrant' capital's potential to evolve into complex systems facilitating 'chain migration', leading in the long-term to the emergence of the 'culture of migration', and 'migration industry' (see also: White 2011; Garapich 2009; Erlick 2008). This terminology and the overall approach is also dominating the contemporary migration studies in the UK and Poland, centered predominantly on lives of the Polish 'migrants' abroad. Shortly after the 'Polish Migration Conference' organized by White (2007) at the University of Bath, a new field of study emerged, devoted to the post-2004 Polish migration to the UK and Europe (The Polish Migration website, UCL 2017).

2.2.3 Migrant transnational social space

The late XX century, however, brings further developments in technologies of communication, particular of the cellular, mobile and digital types. Juxtaposed with the mushrooming of affordable means of international transport, this leads to the appearance of multicultural belongings that stretch beyond the remit of a single geographical location (Glick- Schiller et al. 1992). This point is also observed by Vertovec (2009: 2), who notes that 'improvements in transportation, technology and telecommunication' affect the 'velocity and impact of global interconnectedness across a broad range of human domains'. Referred to as the 'migrant' transnationalism, it soon becomes the in-vogue theory to frame migration research. Defining the concept Vertovec (2009: 3) emphasizes that:

> 'despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the laws, regulations and national narratives they represent) certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common – however virtual – area of activity'.

According to Vertovec (2009), it is the creation of novel technologies of communication that enabled 'migrants' to maintain daily long-distance social and cultural connections despite great distances. Additionally, Faist (2000: 199) highlights the emergence of multilocal connections, noting that the 'migrant networks of connections now generally spread over two or more countries simultaneously'. Also, a group of US anthropologists, namely Basch et al. (1994) and Glick-Schiller et al. (1992: ix) name this 'field, that crosses geographic, cultural, and political borders' as the 'migrant transnational social space'.

According to Pries (2001: 5-8), these transnationally located spaces are characterized by 'pluri-local frames, existing above and beyond a social context of a singular national society and embed migrants into multiplicity of relations' (see also: Basch et al. 1994; Castles & Miller 2009; Portes et al. 1999; Smith & Guarnizo 1998).

Seeking to understand these 'migrant' transnational social spaces, Vertovec (2009) identifies three aspects that are necessary for the spaces' emergence and maintenance, namely: the 'migrant' social networks, 'migrant' agency and social capital, as well as 'migrant' embeddedness (see also: Faist 2000). Vertovec (2009: 7) defines 'migrant' transnational networks to be the 'complex structure, or a system, of relationships among migrants (…) spanning across borders'. Composed of 'nodes' and 'hubs' the 'migrant' transnational networks, according to the author (2009: 3-5), are to provide 'systems of ties, interconnections, exchange, [support] and mobility [that] functions intensively and in a real time while being spread throughout the world; (…) home away from home, here and there' (see also: Glick-Schiller et al. 1992). According to Vertovec (2004: 975), the 'transnational networks fulfill the migrants' desires to connect themselves with others who share the same routs and roots'. Also Portes et al. (1999: 217) emphasize that it is the (trans)migrant agency that allows tranationalism to flourish, as the 'transmigrants live dual lives, speak two languages, have homes in two countries, and make a living through continuous regular contact across national borders'.

The second of the characteristics of the 'migrant' transnational social spaces, as identified by Vertovec (2009), is the 'migrant' capital and agency. According to Portes et al. (1999: 219), a 'migrant' agency is 'a regular and significant commitment of the migrants to develop and maintain transnational exchanges between home and host countries'. In his earlier work Portes (1995: 12) refers to it as 'the migrant's ability to mobilize [the resources] on demand'. Echoing Bourdieu (1986), Vertovec (2009: 36) emphasizes that 'migrant social capital is not a property inherent to an individual, but rather it exists in, and is drawn from a migrants' web of relationships'. The commitment of 'migrants', according to Portes et al. (1999: 219), is crucial for the development of the 'migrant' transnational social spaces, as it requires 'a regular and significant commitment of the migrants to develop and maintain transnational exchanges' (see also: Smith & Guarnizo 1998). In her study of the experience of Polish families in England, White (2014: 73) itemizes such actions, pointing to 'organizing collective ethnic activities' abroad, purchasing ethnic food

in the 'host countries, as well as keeping in touch with the homeland' as expressions of the 'migrant' agency.

The last of the three characteristics of the 'migrant' transnational social spaces, according to Vertovec (2009: 37), is that of embeddedness, where the author emphasizes the 'significance of dyadic relationships among migrants'. Yet, the existence of embeddedness within migration practices is not a novel phenomenon, but, as noted by Cohen (2008), it also characterizes migration flows of the past. Cohen (2008: 160) observes that within historical movements of people:

> 'traders place orders with cousins, siblings and kin "back home"; nieces and nephews from "the old country" stay with uncles and aunts while acquiring their education. (…) loans are advanced and credit is extended to trusted intimates; and jobs and economically advantageous marriages are found for family members'.

Nevertheless, the contemporary researchers, such as Portes and Bach (1985: 10), insist that the 'migrant embededness' is equally important for the analysis of the late XX century migration, as it 'reinforces a particular type of social relations across the space'. This aspect is also highlighted by Bash et al. (1994: 7), defining the contemporary embeddedness of 'migrants' as:

> 'forging and sustaining multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement (…). Migrants take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nations'.

It is also worth noting that researchers, such as Castles (2002: 1159) highlight the existence of a 'diaspora consciousness', a type of particular belonging identity, which allows 'migrants to constantly negotiate [their] choices with regard to participation in host societies, the relationships with their homelands, and their links to co-ethnics'. It is a type of 'migrant' identity that, as noted by Vertovec (2009: 13), encompasses 'a broad range of practices and institutions linking migrants, people [sic!] and organization in their homelands, or elsewhere in a diaspora'.

Vertovec's (2009) conceptualization of the 'migrant' transnationalism, and its bi-focality, being 'a migrant dual frame of reference' (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001: 114), is applied further by White (2014; 2011), Moskal (2016), and many others researching the Polish migration in the UK. White (2014: 73-74) in particular uses 'the two-way embeddedness', or 'bi-focality', to study 'the connections migrants keep with their countries of origin'. In her studies on the experiences of Poles in England, White (2014:

74) looks at the 'migrants' transnational practices and transnational identities, that she locates within their 'bi-focality', a type of 'migrant' embeddedness, that according to the author, allows the cultivation of relations that are stretched between the two: home- and host- country. This approach is replicated in the study by Moskal (2015: 5-6), who defines the transnational 'bi-focal migrant embeddedness as the transnational social spaces, connecting migrants with the home country, while the migrants learn to acquire the lifestyle and the culture of the new society'. The 'translocal' manner of these activities, as labelled by Moskal (2015: 5-6) 'emplaces and extends migrant communities via the geographical mobility of their inhabitants, across particular sending and destination contexts'. According to Moskal (2015: 6):

> 'hometown or village move to the specific places abroad where they have friends and family. When abroad they maintain emotional and financial ties with specific places in Poland, to which they frequently return to visit on holiday, and if return to Poland to live and work, they are likely to settle again in their places of origin'.

This definition, reminiscent of the descriptions of historical chain migration flows addressed in detail by Putnam (2007), Tarrow (2005), Thomas and Znaniecki (1967), Zubrzycki (1988; 1954), and even by Ravenstein (1889; 1885), highlights also a distinction between conceptualizations of a 'place' and a 'geographical space'. According to Moskal (2015: 6) the emotions and experiences of 'the migrants' create a sense of a place and a home. This constitutes, as noted by Moskal (2015; 2014), the contemporary sense of 'migrant belonging' and 'migrant identity'; an observation already made by Parutis (2010: 339), highlighting that the 'feeling of home among the recent [Polish and Lithuanian] migrants [in London] are embedded in their social capital, and is [therefore] understood in terms of social networks, rather than a geographical space'. Also, Dahinden (2009: 1367), in her study of different forms of transnationalism in a small Swiss village of the French-speaking part of Switzerland, emphasizes the emergence of 'transnational subjectivity', it being an identity, or 'a mode of belonging, thinking, feeling that is based on acting and performing between the home and host countries'.

At this point it is worth observing that the contemporary migration studies strongly rely on this 'dual frame of [geographical] reference' (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001: 114). For example, Dzieglewski's (2012: 15) emphasizes this when he stated that the majority of scholars 'rejects the "national paradigm" in favor of transnationalism', to centre on 'double belonging of migrants living simultaneously "here" and "there"'. Furthermore, the characteristics of the current Polish 'migrants' are represented through emphasizing the

importance of this duality, for example by highlighting the importance of the current and historic ethic migration routes for Poles relocating in the XXI century (Moskal 2015; White 2014; White & Ryan 2008; Garapich 2009; Eade et al. 2006). Specifically, White and Ryan (2008: 1468) highlight the significance of Polish 'migrants' networks of friends and family, that are highly trusted, while the state institutions and officials are not'. According to the authors (2008: 1469) 'the Polish migrants tend to trust and rely on networks consisting of relatives' solely. In a more recent work, Ryan et al. (2015) re-emphasize the importance of this 'migrant' capital and 'migrant' networks in assisting the newly arrived with accommodation of their needs in a new location (see also: Portes & DeWind 2009).

However, this 'dual frame of reference' approach may obscure important observed characteristics of the contemporary Polish 'migrants', such as the disassociation of Poles while abroad. Examples of this are provided by Siara (2009) and Grzymala-Kazlowska (2005), who highlight an unhealthy competition among members of the historically established networks of Polish 'migrants' in the UK. Blaming the lack of cooperation on the 'post-communist era', Ryan et al. (2008) emphasize that the newly arrived Poles in England tend to avoid interactions with this previously settled generations of Poles. The essence of the challenge is captured by one of the participants of the studies by Ryan et al. (2008: 680), stating 'if I go out somewhere, even with Poles, we don't go to typically Polish places. I have heard a lot of bad things about them'. Similar observations are made in a recent study by Pustułka and Bell (2017), who while investigating constructions of self-narratives within the Polish communities in the UK, observe a tendency of Poles to disassociate themselves from other fellow citizens. Earlier research, including that by Okólski (2007) and Garapich (2009), has also highlighted a low 'migrant' embeddedness among the contemporary young Polish 'migrants'. Additionally, research by Garapich (2009) and Eade et al. (2006) emphasize that many of the newly arrived Poles in the UK tend to organize their own Polish societies, reminiscent of the phenomena previously noted occurring among Poles abroad in the XIX century US, UK and Australia, yet subtly and importantly different due to these dissociation effects.

Other characteristics of the contemporary Polish 'migrants', as noted by Garapich (2009; 2008) and Eade et al. (2006), relate to the issue of race and class status. According to their research, the Polish 'migrants', being of a white skin colour, perceive themselves as of a higher social class status, than many UK citizens of darker skin shades. Also, Cook et al.

(2010: 69) observe that 'migrants are challenged about the previously accepted views about roles ascribed to themselves and others' upon arriving into a multicultural society. Ironically, in the research on the nature of whiteness, Brander Rasmussen et al. (2001) highlight, that the other (than so-called Western) Europeans are ironically not considered as 'white' by many in the countries of the formally known as 'Western' part of Europe.

Moreover, while researching experiences of bilingual Polish children in Scottish education, Moskal and Sime (2016) point to a lack of recognition by the local education systems of their Polish cultural and linguistic heritage, which preventing a fuller recognition of their belonging (see also: Sime & McArthur 2008). Yet, the issue of bilingualism of the 'migrant' children born in Scotland comes in a stark contrast to their Polish parents relatively poor English language skills, preventing the latter from acquiring their desired social recognition and status (Osipovic 2010; Garapich 2009; 2008; Eade et al. 2006). This lack of the English language skills by 'migrants', as well as lack of value recognition of the Polish-English bilingualism of 'migrants children, breeds frustration, and results often in feelings of 'loss of confidence, lack of belonging, depression and homesickness' (Dzięglewski 2012: 17).

The subject of transnational social spaces of the Polish 'migrants' and their families has also been researched by Cieślińska (2010, 2008). First, Cieślińska (2008) observed an actual breakage of the traditional division of roles away from that based on a patriarchal model within a family unit in Poland. Both, Złotnik (2003) and Cieślińska (2010; 2008) note a progressive emancipation of 'migrant' women, brought by them acquiring their financial independence, and taking on roles of the household bread winners (see also: de Beauvoir 1997). 'De-homing', as noted by Cieślińska (2010: 9), is another phenomenon affecting the 'migrants and their families' sense of belonging. It refers to 'migrant families', and particularly, 'migrant mothers', abandoning their children in Poland, the latter soon labelled as *Eurosieroty*/Euro-orphans (Cieślińska 2010: 9-10), being the children left in Poland by the 'migrant parents' (see also: Kiełtyk-Zaborowska 2013; Urbańska 2010).

It is also worth noting that the Polish 'migrant' transnational social space is also used to conceptualize experiences of the LGTBQT Polish 'migrants' (Stella et al. 2016). Boston (2015) emphasizes that these networks are responsible for making a positive impact on the nature and practice of the LGBQT communities in Poland (see also: Graff 2010).

2.3   Identity within Mobilities

Mobilities, as defined by Urry (2000:1), is an approach that centers on 'the complex independencies' among 'networks and flows'. Originating in mass-connectivity, which has become the herald of contemporary social relations, mobilities 'of peoples, objects, images, information and wastes' pose the 'difficulty (…) of defining what is meant by the term society'(Radcliffe-Brown 1952; c.f. Urry 2000:1). This is, indeed, a pivotal challenge, observable also by Schmidt and Cohen (2013: 6) of Google, who state that 'the scale of the spread of connectivity, particularly through Internet-enabled mobile phones, is certainly the most common and perhaps the most profound example of the current shift'.

These complex and interdependent mobilities are also emphasised within migration studies. For example, Castles (2002: 1159) highlights that now 'migrants negotiate their choices between host and home societies' on an 'unprecedented scale'. This novel intensity of cross-border social interactions is also raised by Vertovec (2017), Tarrow (2005), Glick Schiller et al. (1992), while additionally stressing that the mobilities and connectivity among historical cohorts of 'migrants' is expressed through travelling, mail correspondence, sending remittances, as well as by establishing societies to cultivate their native culture abroad (such as the Polish Sikorski Club in Glasgow).

To illustrate this fact Tarrow (2005) brings a story of Moszke, who in the early 1920's travels back and forth between Poland and the US, raising money for a hospital in his former hometown through an establishment of the American-Jewish associations. Such activities, according to Kivisto (2001: 549-577), characterised particularly the 'Polish, Ukrainian and Italians at the dawn of the XX century', with Benton (2003: 348-350, see also: Benton 2007) emphasising international mobilities of the Chinese 'migrants' of the same era as well (see also: Hsu 2000). Summarising the intensity and determination of the historical 'migrants' to maintain the cross-border relations, Roberts (2010: 74) refers to Thomas and Znaniecki's (1967), naming the work of the latter authors as 'pioneering' in highlighting the multicultural impacts of the international mobility of people.

Summarizing, the mobilities approach focuses on a broader perspective than many other contemporary conceptualisations, contemplating the much-needed 'reformulation of sociology' for the 'post-societal phase' (Urry 2000: 1).

2.3.1 Mobilities vs. migrant transnationalism

According to Urry (2000) the mobilities approach originates in the complexity of the contemporary interconnectness brought by social interactions and information exchange among people regardless of their geographical location. It is worth noting that the intensification of social interactions to qualitatively levels has historically occurred in bursts driven by technological revolutions. For example, the invention of the printing press marks a major step change in one's ability to transmit and receive information, which itself is now surpassed by the instantaneous digital exchange of information on a global scale (Schmidt & Cohen 2013).

It is also worth noting that through the centuries, from town criers, to today's mass-media, the states' have readily utilised the technological developments to broadcast preferred information that effected the manner by which people construct their own identity, and that of others, especially those driven by fear. According to Pratkanis and Aronson (2001: 355-356) 'by appealing to people's emotions of deepest fears and most irrational hopes the mass-media creates the distorted vision of the world we live in'. An interesting example of such tactics based on the emotion of fear was recently presented in relation to the 2014 Independence Referendum in Scotland. Namely, in the data analysis by Roberston (2014) of the transcripts of the BBC's principle evening news program, 'Reporting Scotland', of that time. The data-analysis of transcripts obtained from one year's output revealed that a significant majority of the words used carried negative connotations towards the notion of Scotland's independence. The impact of such fearful emotional appeals delivered by the mass media to the social imaginary and democratic processes is described in depth by Pratkanis and Aronson (2001) above. In relation to the Scotland's 2014 Independence Referendum, Mullan (2015: online) states that it was a 'disgrace of using the BBC as a political cudgel against a legitimate democratic process'[4]. It is additionally noteworthy that Robertson's (2014) research findings were clearly newsworthy[5], and arguably, in the public interest, yet no major mass-media outlets, be they newspapers or broadcast media, saw fit to cover it. However, Robertson's (2014) work is widely discussed on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook. Ironically, the omission by the mass media only

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[4] Mullan (2015: online) also points to 'horrendous bias' towards the pro-UK outcome, while another high-profile journalist and a scholar, Manson (in: Brooks 2014: online) states four days before the 2014 Referendum that 'not since Iraq have I seen BBC News working at propaganda strength like this'.

[5] It is not that the study went unnoticed, for indeed, the BBC went so far as to actively undermine Robertson's academic status, by sending a letter to his university claiming that he brings 'the university into disrepute' (Robertson 2015: online).

fuelled the exchanges among those gleaning there information from social-media platforms, thereby surmounting institutional barriers (see also: Robinson & Huitson 2014). This example resonates with Cavanagh (2007: 3), who states that the Internet has 'overcome institutional barriers to cooperation and dispersion of information'. Also, Schmidt and Cohen (2013: 3) famously note that what started as 'a mere project on a room-sized computer to room-size computer data transmission' has turned into 'an omnipresent and endlessly multifaceted outlet of human energy and expression'. The Internet aspect is additionally highlighted by Kaku (2007), pointing to a departure from broadcasting information at people, to interchanging information worldwide amongst people (see also: Schmidt & Cohen 2013). 'Today', Kaku notes (2007: 10.00–10.13 min.), 'with the Internet and ubiquitous computing, [Big Data and Machine Learning] we are at the verge of even greater revolution than the one brought on by the invention of the printing press. [Today's revolution] is global, [inclusive], and interactive'. According to Kaku (2007) and to Schwab (2016), the Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, humanity is making a historic transition, global and interactive, entering the Forth Industrial Revolution, where the use of the Internet transforms rapidly and radically every aspect of social experiences, including negotiations of a post-societal belonging identity.

The recent technological revolution is also noted among researchers conducting migration studies, with Vertovec (2008: 15) placing Internet communication:

> 'at the heart of migrant transnationalism, as it powerfully affects the extent, intensity and speed at which migrants can do [things], allowing for continuous and real time communication within global migrant networks (…); the speed and intensity of communication between home and away makes migrants abroad to feel close to what is happening in the sending context and vice-versa'.

Such observed intensification of connectivity is also stated by Portes et al. (1999: 217), pointing to an emergence of the 'critical transmigrant mass'. This intensity of mass-communication, according to Portes and DeWind (2009: 9-10), 'qualitatively transformed the character of immigrant transnationalism, turning it into a far more dynamic exchange than anything that would have been possible in earlier times'. It is worth noting that this distinction between the historical and present types of social connectivity observed among 'migrants', according to Portes and DeWind (2009: 11), 'do not create new social patterns themselves, but reinforce the existing ones changing the character of migration into a far

more dynamic cross-border exchange'; the very point re-stated by Vertovec (2008), and present in the Castells' conceptualisation of the contemporary migration movements.

This distinction makes one of the fundamental points where 'migrant' transnationalism differs from other ramifications of current social relations, and particularly – the mobilities. For example, according to Gane (2005: 475) 'the Internet-related technologies have directly altered the patterning of everyday life, including the way we access and exchange information, shop, and maintain and organise existing social ties'. Understood as such, Gane (2005: 475) observes, the Internet is not a 'mere "add-on" to the existing social arrangements', but instead the author calls for 'a qualitatively new field of sociological analysis'.

A similar theoretical departure from transnationalism is stated by Urry (2000), who highlights the significance to examine '[not only] the mobilities of peoples, [but also] images, information and wastes; and the complex interdependencies between, and social consequences of, these diverse mobilities'. A half a decade later, in a paper co-authored with Sheller (2006: 209), the authors provide countless implications of such mobilities, ranging from 'the local public spaces and opportunities, formation of gendered subjectivities, familial and social networks, spatially segregated urban neighborhoods, national images (…), to global relations including transnational migration, terrorism and oil wars'. The mobilities approach becomes soon recognized and utilized by other scholars, including Cresswell (2011: 551), emphasizing its central role 'at constellations of power, impacting the creation of identities and micro-geographies of everyday life'.

It is worth noting, that some of the main characteristics of the mobilities paradigm emphasize the weaknesses of ties among those participating within networks, low consideration for 'migrant' capital, and an emphasis on 'placelessness' (Creswell 2002: 34; Larsen et al. 2016). Particularly, the significance of the placelessness, the Baumanian nowhere, becomes the core interest for the mobilities paradigm, often addressed in a dedicated academic journal, 'Mobilities' (Hannam et al. 2006).

2.3.2 Mobilities vs. hyperlocalities

The mobilities approach derives from mass-accessibility and affordability of the modern forms of transport and communications, allowing for more frequent social interactions among people located in different geographical areas. In parallel, physicists such as Kaku (1999: vii), highlight the profound effects of the *theory of hyperspace*, which states that

'dimensions exist beyond the commonly accepted' ones. In social sciences these refer to the three dimensions of space, the individual's geographical locality, where is commonly accepted that all socialisations and social interactions occur. Yet, with the popularisation of the digital means of interactions, the geographically understood and defined space suddenly is not enough to capture and explain cultural phenomena stemming from internet mediated social interactions, occurring *hyperlocally*. A helpful depiction of the internet's impact on information access and social interaction is provided by an artist called *Na emigracji/* While migrating (Instagram 2016). In her picture, available publicly on Instagram (see: Figure 2.4 below), she portrays a moment in a Skype conversation with her mother, based in Poland, while she is located abroad. The artist asks her parent about a storm that has affected her native town in Poland, to which her mother expresses a surprise that the daughter knows about it, and then the artist replies that she saw it on Facebook. Regardless of the substantial geographical distance separating both women physically, there is no time delay for such information to reach one another.

Figure 2.4: *Na emigracji/* While migrating; accessed at: https://instagram.com/naemigracji/, accessed on 30 April 2016 (open access)

According to Cairnccross (1997: 11), we are witnessing the 'death of distance'. In this research, it is referred to as *hyperlocality*. Describing the characteristics of hyperlocality, Shapira (2013: online) explains that it is:

> 'the annihilation of the distance between the two points. You get a kind of a wormhole. And the internet is a network of space-time wormholes connecting every human being, of basic IT skills and with an internet connection, on the planet. If you want to chat to someone face-to-face, you just stare into your mobile phone and they stare into theirs and you can't tell if they are thousand miles away or in the next room'.

Also Larsen et al. (2016: 2-3) highlight that many such 'everyday, face-to-face and significant interactions' occur now virtually, resulting in questioning one's actual 'locality' and its understanding. It is worth noting that aspects of this challenge are present in the work of Bauman and Yaklmova (2002: 3), who by applying a fluid allegory depicted the nature of contemporary social interactions. Emphasizing the fluid's 'intrinsic abilities to hold its shape while being subjected to continuous, irreversible changes within the parts' positions', Bauman and Yaklmova (2002: 3) highlight the fragility of contemporary social bonds, that might faint 'by the weakest of stress'. As a present-day metaphor, according to Bauman and Yaklmova (2002: 3-4), the liquidity captures 'the silent brittleness, breakability, [and] ad hoc modality' of social affiliations that last 'as long as both parties find it satisfactory'. The once solid world of social relations, according to Bauman (2005: 8) has turned into the 'one of the players', constantly syncretising, hybridising, altering, separating, marginalising identities; everlastingly changing 'to stop what one is and to turn into something one is not in an ongoing game that changes its rules as it goes'.

Further helpful analogies to understand this new type of locality and its impact on negotiations of belonging identity might come from laws of physics, the branch of science concerned with the nature and properties of matter and energy. Consisting of many modern sub-branches, such as quantum mechanics, general and special relativity, emergence or fluid dynamics, it governs successively certain aspects of the observed universe. The analogies between the world of social science and that of physics are not new, and examples include Penrose (1999) who in his book titled 'Emperor's New Mind: Concerning Computers, Minds and the Laws of Physics' investigated the possibility of quantum laws underlining human consciousness. More recently, Žižek (2006: 77) uses such metaphors (to explain Lacan 2005; 1968), and referring to Einstein's theories of relativity (1905, 1916 [in:] 2003) he notes that:

> '[t]oday's physics is caught in a strange duality: the theory[ies] of relativity gives the best account of how the nature functions at the macroscopic (cosmic) level, and quantum physics the best account of how it functions at the microscopic (subatomic) level'.

Though appearing to be irreconcilable, there are ongoing quests to unite these two theories with other laws of physics, into what Žižek (2006: 77) calls the Theory of Everything[6]. One of the more recent ideas here is the superstring theory, also known as the *M-theory*,

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[6] *The Grand Unified Field Theory* currently named also as the *String Theory*, conforming to the modernist scientific spirit of reducing everything to the smallest bits.

which purports to explain the behavior of sub-atomic particles by depicting matter and gravity in a form of vibrating tiny strings. And Žižek (2006: 78) applies the string allegory to explain the ideas behind Lacanian 'sinthome' (see also: Lacan 2007), 'a kind of atom of enjoyment' which is portrayed as reconciling the two facades of the Freudian Unconscious (whose formations are to be interpreted) and the Id (the site where the unconscious emerges)'.

For this study, however, most helpful might be the allegory of a particle, that just like an individual, is restricted to specific location at each instant in time. But the *particle-wave duality* of modern quantum physics dispels with the purely local view and attaches to a particle a co-existing non-local aspect (Bohm's guiding *Pilot Wave)*, thereby permitting interactions beyond the particles location. Bauman's (2016) liquid world of horizontally spread social relations capturing at each instant of time particular types of an individual's set of connections, which being global, may be figuratively thought of as the Pilot Wave of the individual.

Another helpful allegory comes from complex systems. Composed of interconnected parts, they exhibit properties as a whole, an emergent behavior guided by emergent laws that are not obvious from observable properties of the specific individual. It is difficult, however, to determinate a priori, what type of observables could be identified; or what property can be predictable.

Moreover, in the world frequently described as liquid (most famously in the work of Bauman), fluid mechanics, the study of fluids and the forces behind them, might be of help. Examples include Navier-Stokes equations, either in full or simplified versions, which describe precisely motions of fluids and are vastly utilized not only in math and physics, but also in various branches of economy, weather forecasting and architecture. One the least understood properties of these equations relates to a particular type of apparently chaotic behavior of a fluid flow known as turbulence. Opposite to the processes of emergence, turbulence remains 'the last great unsolved problem of classical physics' (Feynman, cf. Lesieur et al. 2001: 5).

The detail itemizing and usage of scientific metaphors and allegories above and in this research serves not only to depict the nature and characteristics of virtual localities, the digital here, but to emphasize the need for theoretical revolutions to comprehend what the notion of digital locality brings into migration studies.

2.3.3 Post-societal identities

It is worth noting that more than two decades ago Appadurai (1995: 231) highlights the growing intensity of global social interactions as of significant importance for perceptions of their belonging identity, since 'the force and form of electronic mediation between spatial and virtual neighbourhoods steadily disjoins affiliations of individuals from a territory'. Also, Pries (2001: 5-8) highlights the gradual 'disembedding of geographical and social spaces' into, what Faist (2000: 1999) calls 'combinations of symbolic ties' stretching beyond borders of states. According to Bauman and Yaklmova (2002: 4) a new form of an individual 'exterritorial territory' is now accessible from any place in the world; the fact highlighted also in research of Nedelcu (2012), Deursen and Dijk (2014) on digital habitus, as well as of Robinson (2007) on cyber-selfing.

Subsequently, the emergence of hyperlocality, being the online locality(-ies) available to an individual through digital means of communication, has significant implications for migration studies, since it impacts the principle assumptions that such studies hold about the location, where cultural affiliations of people are formulated. For example, researchers such as Kivisto (2010), point to a number of inconsistencies within the contemporary theories, including transnationalism, particularly regarding its understanding. This includes the strength of the impact of the phenomena on future generations. Writing about the cultural implications of the past Zubrzycki (1988: 7) highlights that:

> 'there are still places called *Polish Hill*, *Dabrowka Wielka* and *Babimost* (…), yet the descendants of those who settled in the 1850s, the contemporary Kozlowskis, Wsniewskis, Bocians, are indistinguishable from the Anglo-Celtic majority of Australian and American people'.

Yet, the contemporary researchers stay rather divided on the cultural impact of the contemporary mobilities. For example, Waters and Jimenez (2005), as well as of Nowicka (2006), locate transnational identities not within 'migrants', but rather within their children, due to the children's assumed exposure and fluency in 'both' cultures. Such observation is also reflected in research by Choudhry (2010), noting the appearance of a transnational 'chameleon identity' among mixed race children of Asian 'migrants'. Choudhry (2010: 4) notes that 'interethnic individuals have a greater ability to adopt a situational/chameleon identity than migrants because of their dual ethnic backgrounds'. But, it must be remembered that the contemporary 'migrant' children are born into societies that might be multicultural and globally multiconnected, hence their definition

and construction of a belonging identity is therefore different than that of their parents, and does not necessarily reflect any of the parents' cultures.

Additionally, it is worth highlighting that the identity construction of the 'migrants' within the contemporary paradigms stays mostly anchored in their geographically defined citizenships, with little description of what the contemporary identity of people actually involves. A similar observation can be found in Dzięglewski (2012: 15), challenging the rather 'homogenous' approach towards 'Polish' migration. He notes (2012: 15) that the ongoing 'Polish migration' research tend to 'talk about individuals, whose positioning in the social structure varies, as do aspirations, migratory strategies, lifestyles, and the process of adaptation to the new cultural environment'. The author (2015: 15) considers that a two-axis division of Polish migration is more appropriate. The first points to factors, such as the 'anonymous crowd motivated by nothing else but economic reasons' of post-EU accession, and the *Polonia*, that is the post-IIWW Polish refugees abroad (Dzięglewski 2012: 15, see also: Garapich 2011). The other 'axis' is the gender division as 'the nature of female migration is a totally different kind of experience than male migratory process' (Dzięglewski 2012: 15; see also: Bell & Pustułka 2017). Additionally, the scholar (2012: 12) makes several distinctions between 'transnational migrants', who he believes to be individuals 'focused on the development of their social and cultural capital', and 'the circular migrants, who leave their country to achieve a real, mainly economic goal'.

The category of a 'migrant' is also raised by Cook et al. (2010: 55-56), who, while analysing experiences of the post-2004 accession EU-intra 'migrants', acknowledge that the word 'migrant' reveals a number of commonalities, yet the authors question its overall 'usefulness'. Additionally, Cook et al. (2010: 57) highlight that the term 'migrant workers' stems from the accepted EU discourse, dominated by 'mobility and rights of workers, rather than those of citizens'. The scholars (2010: 58) also emphasise that 'whilst economic motivations and the search for paid work were important to many A8 migrants, a more complex terminology is needed to capture their experiences of migration'. Margheritis (2015: 3) importantly highlights that the 'migrants' are often perceived as a separate category from 'people'. Examples include the already quoted Vertovec (2008: 13), who while providing characteristics of transnational embeddedness refers to 'a broad range of practices and institutions linking migrants, people [sic!] and organization in their homelands, or elsewhere in a diaspora'. Further examples relate to rather de-humanising terminology, as noted by Porrters and DeWind (2009). This might be observed in the

terminology introduced by Vertovec (2008: 32; 3) referring to people as 'nodes and hubs (…) and human domains (…) linking with others to form a network'. Also, Castlles (1996: 171) tends to refer to 'migrants' as 'the components of networks'.

2.4   Identity within Multilocalities

This research seeks to encompass some of the complexities of the contemporary social relations occurring locally and multilocally. Inspired by a statement of Larsen et al. (2016: 6), which notes noting that the 'social sciences fail to examine how social life presupposes both the actual and the imagined movement', this thesis proposes to take into consideration the implications of the spatial and the temporal dimensions currently impacting social life. The theoretical conceptualization proposed offers to combine a number of factors affecting the negotiation of belonging identity, such as the manner by which contemporary individuals acquire their notion of belonging, the characteristic of the processes of social interactions, the impact of social structures affecting those experiences, as well as the time needed for interactions to occur.

This research proposes the concept of *multilocality* to capture the spatial and temporal positioning of an individual within the geographical and virtual realms of contemporary social relations. The term is derived from the concept of *locality*, historically referring to a geographical nearness and vicinity accessible to an individual with its five senses, where all social interactions occurred (Larsen et al. 2016). However, nowadays many forms of social interaction occur virtually (that is, hyperlocally), through digital means of communication. This additional, digital or - hyperlocal dimension, combined with a geographically specific cultural aspects, results in the appearance of multilocalities (depicted in Figure 2.6 in next section, 'Multilocal positionality').

Subsequently, to comprehend the social and cultural implications of miltilocal interactions, I propose to analyze fours aspects, namely: a formulation of predispositions, those being (1) the agentic perspective; (2) the multilocal interactions, (3) the contemporary social structures, regulating social interactions; and lastly, (4) the time needed for the interactions to occur. These four aspects are illustrated in Figure 2.5 below. Commencing with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979), this study investigates how the contemporary millennials acquire their identity and a sense of belonging and how they diversify between 'us' and 'others' (1). Then, by using the theory of symbolic intreractionism (Cooley 2005; Mead 1982; 1967; Goffman 1959), I investigate the meanings of the signs and symbols used by the millennial Poles in Glasgow for daily social interactions (2).
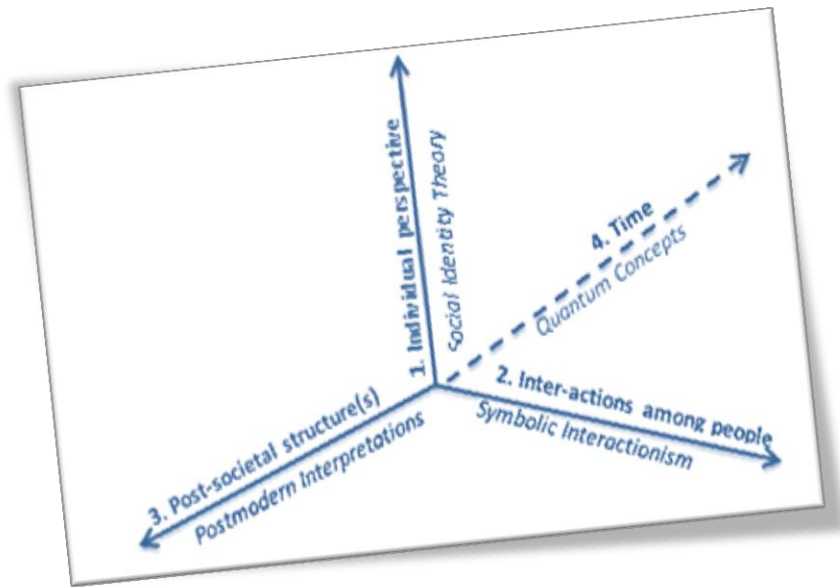
Figure 2.5: *Multilocal approach* with its three dimensions of space and one dimension of time
my own depiction (2018)

The postmodern interpretations (Bauman 2011; 2007; 2004a; 2004b) are used to capture the kaleidoscopic character of contemporary social structures (3). Lastly, the quantum analogies are employed to highlight the urgent need to change social sciences conceptualizations of social and cultural phenomena stemming from migration and mobility of information (4).

2.4.1   Multilocal positionality

According to Berger and Lukemann (1990: 43) 'the reality of our everyday life is shared with others'. Such social reality, as the authors note (1990: 47), 'is thus apprehended in a continuum of typifications'. Understood as such, one's belonging identity thereby derives from participation and attachment in a variety of group-affiliations. This conceptualization has an extended tradition, which can be traced to Ancient Greece, when a breaking down of the Aristotelian *philia*, being a state of a friendly predisposition towards fellow countrymen, brings the end to the comprehension of identity as located within a *polis* (Aristotle 2008; 1992). Contemporary scholars are rather divided on the origins and meanings of identities. According to Bauman (2004), one might observe the appearance of non-committed identities, identity homelessness, disconnectedness and unattachment. This is consonant with Baudrillard (1994), who observes that strength and clearness of identities decrease dramatically with the increase of modern forms of communication technologies providing information that undermines accepted existing norms, standards and beliefs; and

indeed, results in the crumbling of many of the familiar social structures. According to Urry (2000) modern societies enter the 'post-societal' stage.

To depict these contemporary circumstances, I develop a pictorial model of the duopoly of offline and online locations, being the multilocal positionality of individuals, which is truly today's *locale* for social interactions (Figure 2.6 below). It consists of the traditional geographically determined *states*, depicted by the three *culture cones*. The vertex of the cones denote the tabula-rasa identity of a new born, who as they grow older begin to occupy (at each time) specific identities among a range of possibilities that are encoded by the width of the cone at that time. Historically, all social interactions within each of the three states (culture cones) would be geographically (spatially) constrained (see also: Kramsch 2011; Berger & Luckmann 1991; Goffman 1959; Mead 1982; 1967; Cooley 2005), being limited by the geographical mobility of people, it being rather costly and time consuming, hence predominantly one-directional and permanent (Ravenstein 1885).
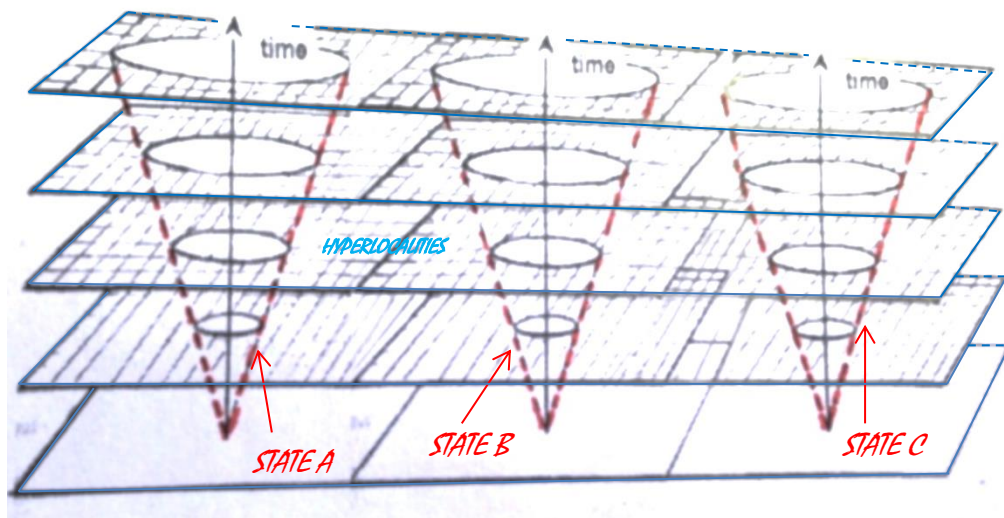
Figure 2.6: *Multilocalities*, consisting of geographical and hyperlocal (digital/virtual/online) locations; a depiction developed following years of conversations with Dr SJ Watson (see also: Appendix 8 for earlier versions)

The twentieth century witnesses a radical transformation of societies of these three hypothetical states, not least through the creation of advanced modes of international transportation and communication (Castles & Miller 2012; Tarrow 2005; Zubrzycki 1956; Thomas & Znaniecki 1967), allowing for a more frequent information exchange among people occupying different geographical locations (culture cones). This growing penchant for long-distance travel generates a truly unprecedented era in human history of cross-

cultural exchange of information (Basch et al. 1994; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Massey et al. 1998).

Nevertheless, it is only with the beginning of the twenty first century, through the now near universal adoption of *smartphone* and *social media*, the flux of information exchange between people regardless of their geographical locations (culture cones), undergoes a revolutionary change (both in the scale and nature, showing no signs of abating). Depicted as the horizontally distributed *hyperlocalities* brought by digital information access and exchange (preceded by telegraph and telephone) that transcend geographical distance (and the structures of *cones/states*), bring a gradual crumbling and erosion of traditional cultures (a process foreseen by Appadurai 1996; Pries 2001; Faist 2000). This includes crumbling and confusion over meanings and symbols encoded into local languages. To describe the on-going phenomenon, Kramsch (2011: 359) used a metaphor of 'a sphere of interculturality', while Castells (1996: 357) observes that people are submerged into 'a space of flows that substitutes space of places'.

It is worth noting that the unprecedented scale of online cross-cultural exchanges results in receding of offline exchanges, needing physical proximity. The shift from vertical (space-bound) into horizontal (hyperlocal) brings an observable multiplicity of interpretations, leading to confusions, and often, the disconnection of people and cultures from their traditional geographical locations. This new cultural reality, as already highlighted by Bauman and Yaklmova (2002: 3), is indeed 'unlike the old familiar one', that was rather 'solid and fixed', but of a fluid character to capture 'the breakability [and] ad hoc modality of inter human bonds'. Useful analogies to depict the specific characteristic of *hyperlocalities* might come from further work of Bauman. The author's (2004: 7) *liquidity* might serve as the prime metaphor to portray the idea. Being an endless web of social relations formed by attracting factors, the liquidity resists chronology and traditional forms of ordering, preferring a nomadic state instead, effortlessly filling any spaces available. As the present-day metaphor of *hyperlocalities*, the liquidity captures their fragility and changeability of contemporary social relations that tend to last 'as long as both parties find them satisfactory' (Bauman & Yaklmova 2002: 4). According to the scholar (ibid.), the modern day culture becomes 'confluent', requiring constant adjustments and updating of identities.

2.4.2 Cultural kaleidoscopes

Culture, as Stryker (1980; see also: Stryker & Owens 2010) notes is of pivotal importance, as according to the author, humans come into a world that is already constructed and are taught about how to comprehend it through a prism of particular localities (social realities). In a later paper with Vryan (2003:22) the author argues that a culture:

> 'in general provides boundaries, making it likely that those within them will or will not have relations with particular kinds of others and interact with those others over particular kind of issues with particular kind of resources. It will also affect the likelihood that persons will or will not develop particular kinds of selves, learn particular kinds of motivations, and have particular symbolic resources defining situations they enter.'

Cultures are organized, as many scholars note, through real-life social connections, mediated by a variety of mass and social media, as well as formal education systems, to provide symbolic frames of references that enable new generations to de-code the social situations encountered. For example, Linton (1961: 39) highlights that such a process, to which the author refers as 'enculturation', commences within a close network of acquaintances where new generations acquire language, identities, values and beliefs native to their group. The significance of such a structural impact is additionally emphasized in the work of Wray (2014), who highlights that people's behaviors are of well-defined social origins. The author (2014: xxiv-xxxii) stresses the importance of a variety of aspects that affect persons' situational recognitions and comprehensions, which he defines as 'building blocks of culture'. According to Wray (2014) the process commences with the acquiring of a set of particular attitudes by an individual that together create symbolic norms and points of references. As the result, the new generations are able to reconstruct symbolic rituals, such as a marriage, access cultural capitals, repeat discourse, and recreate identities and belongings.

The structural character of culture is additionally emphasized in the UNESCO definition (Renteln 2005: 10-11), which describes it as 'the dynamic value system of learned elements, with assumptions, conventions, beliefs and rules permitting members of a group to relate to each other and to the world, to communicate and to develop their creative potential'. The recent definitions originate in the XIX century conceptualizations, highlighted in the work of Tylor (1974: 1), who defines culture as 'the complex whole, including knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'. This conceptualization, however, can be traced

to Antiquity, when Aristotle, for example, addresses it in a variety of his writings, most notably in Politics (1992) and Nicomachean Ethics (2008). The author argues that local origins of the virtue of *philia*, being a civic and emotional bond uniting members of a community. Aristotle (1992: 59) particularly emphasizes the pivotal significance of achieving a-*ffilia*-tions among citizens of a (city-) state, for social cohesion the place.

Additionally, the role of the language and power relations encoded the language and associated culture, needs to be highlighted. Across the millennia, language appears as the necessary pre-cursor to cultural affiliations. Common language, according to Giles (1977), is of fundamental importance to enable social interactions. Harley (2001: 5) defines a language as 'a system of symbols, including words, and socially determined rules'. The author highlights that it constitutes a major tool for assuring replication of power-relations within society, and is a medium by which traditional representations, beliefs and customs are negotiated through a variety of positive and negative discourses. This stance is common with Saussure (2011: 71-72) emphasizing that 'languages are an inheritance of [cultures, customs and beliefs] from the past, and as its current users we have no other choice than to accept it'. For Mead (1982; 1967) language provides sources for meanings, attitudes and norms. Also Vygotsky (2012) highlights that the words and their social connotations mold individuals' perceptions, and define cognition practices and processes. This is also restated by Stryker (1980: 53-54; see also: 2003) stressing language's significance for one's social conduct, as the peoples':

> 'behavior is premised on a named or classified world. The names or the class terms attached to the specific environment, both physical and social, carry meaning in the form of shared behavioral expectations that grow out of social interaction. For interaction with others, one learns how to classify objects one comes into contact with, and it that process also learns how one is expected to behave with reference to these objects'.

The labels attached to objects and behaviors encoded in a language, according to Stryker (1980), carry expectations and meanings specific for social activities. Subsequently, the patterning of a language, as noted by Burke and Stets (2009: 16), involves 'really a patterning of symbols and meanings that produce and reproduce the structure of a society'. Burke and Stets (2009: 15-16) observed that language, being a set of cultural 'symbols, provides a shared view of the world, as well as a shared meaning of a situation', setting 'expectations to behave in a certain manner' (see also: Hall 1997). Sturrock (2003) highlights that there are no two languages that categorize reality in the same manner. 'Languages differ', Sturrock (2003: 17; 79) writes, 'by differencing differently'.

Furthermore, historically, as noted by Houghton (2012), languages are limited geographically, capturing and reflecting predominantly local cultures. According to Bauman (2011: 6-7), this occurred through local acculturation processes, applying culture as:

> 'an agent for change, carrying the "beam of enlightenment", reaching "under the eaves" of country and town dwellings, into the dark recesses of prejudice and superstition which, like so many vampires (it was believed), would not survive exposure to the light of day'.

Nevertheless, the new technologies of communication bring a shift that allows for the exchange of a variety of cultural meanings and signs at the same time. Baudrillard (1998; 1994) notes that contemporarily everything is cultural, as according to the author, cultural signs produce and reproduce reality. This stance additionally reflects some other poststructuralist and postmodernist accounts of cultural processes, describing them to be socially constructed, pluralistic and 'constantly in making forged in a network of relationships in which they are embedded' (Hunt &West 2009: 71)

At present, according to Bauman (2011: 12-13), the meaning and role of the contemporary cultural exchanges has transformed from the educational into 'fashioned to fit', becoming an open-ended and never-ending activity. 'Currently, there is no "populace" to enlighten', Bauman (2011: 13, 17) observes, as the contemporary societies, according to the author, constitute 'clients to tempt, seduce, and attract', but not to enlighten. Bauman (2011: 24-25) observes an emergence of 'all-encompassing' culture, where 'people are dippy about all things digital and still read books; they go to opera, watch a cricket match and apply for Led Zeppelin tickets without splitting themselves asunder'. Bauman (2011: 24-25) refers to it as the 'personal model of one's search for identity', into 'that of chameleon', requiring individuals to stay alert to relevant cultural code-switching and adapt their identity (or, at least its public manifestation) as often, as fast and as efficiently as they change their shirt or socks'. Explaining the idea Bauman (2011: 25) referred to an Ancient Greek myth of Prometheus, shape shifting at will. Almost two decades earlier Hall et al. (1996: 598) observe an emergence of a 'moveable self' that undergoes a continuous transformation.

2.4.3 Multilocal identities

How then to comprehend the contemporary identities? In order to answer such question it is worth highlighting the origins of modern conceptualizations of identity. This is provided by James (1890: 342-373), who emphasizes a few accounts, including the associationist

and transcendentalist ones. The latter, associated with the work of Kant, conceptualizes identity as 'a passing subjective Thought recognized as continuing in time' (James 1890: 371). The associationist explanation, on the other hand, highlights the role of others and the importance of emotions, as well as of emotional feedback, for creating a set of individual predispositions. Accredited to Aristotle (2008; 1992), Locke (1853) and Hume (1898), it becomes central for symbolic interactionists, particularly Cooley (2005), Mead (1982; 1967), Blumer (1969) and Goffman (1959), whose work is addressed further in this chapter.

Apart from symbolic interactionists, the associationist approach might be also found at the roots of social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; 1978; 1974; Tajfel & Turner 1979). The social identity theory asserts that one's identity derives from group affiliations, and as such, has implications for our behaviour. According to Turner et al. (1987), identities depend on social contexts and structures, and are determined by in-group/positive and out-group/negative perceptions. The authors highlight people's tendency to categorize themselves when presented with a difference, mostly via an exaggerated favorism of the in-group members, as contrasted with the out-group discrimination. Tajfel (1978) emphasizes that individuals develop emotional attachments within a group(s) they feel they belong to, acquiring the group's perceptions, norms and meanings' system, and therefore – the identities.

An example portraying the in-group/out-group behavior is the Oklahoma's Robber Cave experiment (Appiah 2005). Dated to 1953, it takes place in a heavily wooded and isolated area, with two camps of eleven year olds from a moderately homogenous social background (all described as Protestant, White, and middle-class). The two groups are initially unaware of each other, nevertheless within a few days, upon discovering the others' presence, the initial competition turns into violence, with staff members forced to intervene and separate the now openly hostile groups. As the result, plenty of subsequent research focus on ways of overcoming such hostilities by highlighting the necessity of open interaction and goal-oriented cooperation among members of different social groups.

One particular aspect worth noting when considering social identity, it is the process of socialization through role-taking. Examples include McCall and Simmons (1978: 66) who highlight the conceptualization of identity as a role, which they define as '[our] imaginative view of [ourselves] as [we] like to think of [ourselves] being and acting as occupants of particular social positions'. Additionally, the authors emphasize the existence

of the cultural embeddedness that guides interpretation of that identity by the performer. In this context, the authors also point to the identities' salience that reflects their order and hierarchy acquired over time. Such identity chronology is researched by numerous scholars, including Erikson (1995; 1994) and Linton (1961), identifying separate phases in identity development, for example unexamined (mirroring) stage, followed by the searching one, to cumulate in the identity achievement phase. Nevertheless, a question arises, as how to comprehend negotiations of belonging identities within the multilocally organized realm of contemporary social relations. Answering such a challenge might require a consideration of signs and symbols originated locally, as well as beyond the geographical limitations of the three dimensional space, that is: multilocally (see Figure 2.7 below, as well as Figure 2.6 in Section 2.4.1).

Figure 2.7: Cultural symbols distributed multilocally; a public poster, Valentia, Spain
(my own picture for my research journal, 2015)

A helpful approach might come from the work of Blumer (1992: 2), who aimed to explain the main aspects of individuals' social behavior. By interpreting Mead (1967; Additionally, Blumer (1992) observes that meanings people use to communicate come originate in a social symbolic exchange, made of subjective meanings of objects, symbols and behaviors relevant to people and a situation. Addressing the process, Blumer (1992) identifies a set of premises, which affect the meaning-making, interpretation and re-interpretation. Blumer (1992: 2) states that the process commences with a subjective understanding of a situation, that is then subsequently confronted and re-negotiated by each of the individuals involved

in the situation, before being succeeded by subjective, individual interpretations the participants ascribe to the emerged meanings.

It is worth noting that this particular perspective stems from the work of Cooley (2005: 17), defining the appearance of meanings as a reflection of the 'generalized others' judgment. The author specifically highlights the role of imagination, where the individuals contemplate how they are perceived and judged by their societies. To explain this reflective process, the author uses the metaphor of a mirror, highlighting that the manner in which the mirror is held, juxtaposed with ones imagined responses of others to that reflection, results in formulations of subjective meanings and self-images, that is: identity. Subsequently, emotions and sentiments that appear as the direct result of contemplating the imagined and the real judgment by others, are of crucial importance. Ranging over a spectrum of positive to negative, these judgments, according to Cooley (2005), generate feelings of acceptance or rejection, thereby influencing people's sense of belonging.

The appearance of emotions for Cooley (2005: 15) is rather 'instinctive', but this is not the case for Mead (1982). According to Mead (1982: 1) 'the human thought, experience and conduct are essentially social', allowing to obtain their nature and character through and from social interactions. The author (1982: 139) argues the process of generating an individual identity as arising socially, 'where the response of his own becomes a part of his conduct, where he not only hear himself but responds to himself'. Nevertheless, just like Cooley (2005), Mead (1982: 138-40) assumes that self-viewing is highly reflexive/reflective, as 'individuals do not directly experience themselves as an object, but rather only indirectly though the particular standpoints of other members of the same social group'. Similarly to Cooley (2005), Mead (1982: 242-47) portrays the process through a dual reflexive and subjective relation between an individual and society. Referred to through the subject-object duality as 'I vs. me', it marks the experiencing part, 'I', embodying the already mentioned feelings, emotions, habits and activities, subjectively interacting; while 'me' stands for the manner by which one is experienced and judged by others. According to Mead (1982; 1967), the type and scale of one's reactions to the external social stimuli depends greatly on the already acquired set of predispositions, modified by one's experiences over time. The interaction, according to Mead (1982; 1967), occurs through the exchange of common meanings, particularly through language, necessary to enable meaningful social interactions.

To address the process of negotiating one's identity, Goffman (2010; 1959) adopts a type of dramaturgical metaphor, where the production of self-views is framed by a situation and staged by the expectations of others. The theater allegory of Goffman (1959; see also: Burke 1945) wherein social encounters are reminiscent of a play, of course echoes Shakespeare, who famously wrote (1926: 2/7) of people 'having their exits and their entrances,/ And one man in his time plays many parts' (Shakespeare 1926: 2/7) by changing identities like masks (see also: Linstead & Thomas 2002). It is worth noting that the word *persona* is derived from the Latin word for a theatre 'mask'[7] (Bishop 2007: 157). The choice of masks, just like the choice of the identities, according to Goffman (2010) occurs within parameters of a 'stage', where an individual's performance is set within well-defined 'frames' of norms, values, and beliefs (see also: Wray 2014). The idea resembles Hume (1898: 534), echoed strongly in the later work of Bauman (2004), observing that identities are 'nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity and are in perpetual flux and movement'. Similarly to James (1890), Goffman (1959) highlights that people carry multiple identities reflecting complexity of social interactions and situations.

The performative nature of negotiating belonging identity is also highlighted in the work of Butler (2007: 25), stressing that 'there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender. (…) Identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its result'. Being the product of social interaction and construction, the contemporary identities and belongings are not stable and set, but rather shifting and in-flux. The reflexive and fluid nature of the process is also addressed in the work of Becker and Andrews (2004: 283), noting that 'people create culture continuously since no set of established cultural understandings provides a perfectly applicable solution to any actual problem, causing constant reconstructions in the light what is different about it'. This is consonant with Potter (1996: 98), observing that the meanings and cultural environments are destined to evolve, as 'people talk it, write it and argue it' constantly[8]. According to

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[7] According to Deleuze and Guattari (2004: 33), such masks are non-spatio-temporal (as time and space for the authors, as well as for Kant (2007) and Einstein (1905) do not exist outside of a human consciousness), but are rather essential. Resembling Plato's (2000) forms and Kant's (2007) ideas of pure reason, such 'masks' might be the embodiment of many of individual's belonging identities. This is consonant with Castells (2000: 83), who stated that identity is constructed around certain shared cultural characteristics creating 'a stable core within a context of change'. Referring to Gidden's (1990) high modernity, Castells (1997) highlights the contemporary presence of a high degree of self-consciousness (reflexivity).

[8] A helpful analogy comes with the second law of thermodynamics (of classical physics). It states that the matter and energy tend towards their least organized state. As a result, the organization of a solar system, or a society, implies a temporary state, with a constant change being the fundamental aspect of the experience (Planck 2013: 78-120).

Bauman (2011: 2), the contemporary social reality is proliferated with the 'omnivorousness' of meanings, enforcing contextual examination of locations where the concepts are produced, operate, and interact.

2.4.4 Multilocalities vs. local identities

Traditionally, an acquisition and negotiation of the belonging identity in Poland occur within the intimacy of home and education environments. Yet, both of these spheres have been recently significantly proliferated by the Internet enabled information exchanges, as well as by migration. Also, the educational system in Poland, despite a series of reforms, struggles with fostering identity related abilities, such as critical thinking and problem solving skills, as well as team work and cooperation (OECD 2015; UNESCO Report 2012). As a result, an actual inclusion and social embracement of any form of 'difference' within the Polish education environment is scarce. Examples vary from a single-perspective based testing (humanities, arts and history), to social ostracism of 'otherness', often with an approval of teachers. These include derogatory name-calling and bullying (Majak 2014), resulting in depression and suicide among children and youth (Szyłło 2015; Deja 2015). Such verbal and physical bullying at schools in Poland has sadly become a norm, rather than an exemption, as noted by Przewłodzka (2015). According to the author (2015: 31-32) abuse and aggression are omnipresent at all levels of formal schooling, with 40 to 47 percent of pupils declaring experiencing aggression, while up to 15 percent were tormented, particularly at junior high. This aspect is also emphasized by Komendant-Borkowska (2011: 2; 9) highlighting that 'presence of aggression at [Polish] schools is a cultural norm', with 9 percent of interviewed children being systematically abused with multiple forms of torment at their schools.

It is worth noting that this data might strike as apparent contradiction with many leading international reviews, such as the UNESCO (2012) and the PISA Reports (2015; 2012), praising achievements of the Polish pupils. Indeed, at a close read of the UNESCO Report (2012: 20), the pupils in Poland did relatively well in tests related to mathematical skills, achieving 490 points (out of the OECD average of 500 points). Yet the same students 'did not do very well in tests involving independent, analytical or creative thinking', with 'no significant improvement' occurring between the 2000s and 2010s. Furthermore, the challenge of lacking critical thinking and problem solving abilities relates to the teaching staff as well. According to the OECD Report (2015: 4-5), 'only 53 percent of Polish teachers demonstrated moderate to good problem solving skills; as compared to 83 percent

average for participating countries'; it is also worth noting that 'only 15 percent of adults [age 25-64] in Poland possess good problem solving (and ICT) skills, constituting the lowest result among the OECD countries taking part in the OECD Survey of Adult Skills'. Such absence of critical thinking and problem solving abilities, among pupils and the teaching staff, might be identified as pivotal for the Polish education system. This is also highlighted by the two most recent PISA Reports (2015: online; 2012: 34), emphasizing the importance of problem solving skills and critical thinking abilities for confronting 'problems encountered almost daily in the XXI century'. Both PISA Reports (2015: online; 2012: 23) urge schools in Poland to 'initiate solutions prioritizing teaching methods allowing for development of opportunities to exercise traits related to curiosity, perseverance and creativity'. Nevertheless, in spite of such recommendations, the Polish education system keeps rather reproducing the existing socio-cultural patterns. According to the OECD Report (2015: 5) this resistance might stem from structural challenges relating to teachers' assessment in Poland, being 'the only OECD state where the teacher appraisal is preformed solely by the school principal'. Nevertheless, without a change in teaching critical thinking skills, problem solving abilities and team collaboration, the Polish education system might be doomed to continue producing a society, where verbal and physical abuse and aggression are accepted forms of responding to social and cultural difference; an example already observed at the University of Białystok, advising 'non-Polish' students 'to stay at home for their own safety' when gatherings of the 'Polish' Poles occur on the University of Białystok campus (Polskie Radio 2016).

2.5   Summary

This Chapter presented theoretical framing and conceptualization of the study on negotiating belonging identity of millennial Poles in Glasgow. It commenced with discussing historical approaches to geographical mobility of people to locate perceptions on the subject of such mobilities. The Chapter highlighted the evolution of these perceptions, commencing from peasants and soldiers, to 'migrants' and 'transmigrants'. The Chapter also emphasized the distinction between transnational conceptualizations of migration and mobilities, the latter being one of many theoretical responses to recent calls of a paradigm shift within the field of migration studies. The Chapter ended with outlining the importance of such paradigm change, pointing out the pivotal need for understanding negotiations of belonging identities (and differences) across contemporary multilocalities.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Overview

This Chapter addresses methodology and methods used to conduct the research on experiences in negotiating belonging identity among millennial Poles in Glasgow. Following Wilson (2002: 6), the methodology section presents a researcher's 'view on the nature of reality'. Understood as such, the research is framed by the constructivist worldview and interpretivistic epistemological stance, as I 'observe [and analyse] the complexities of human relations in well-defined settings that give meanings' to participants' description of themselves and of the world around (Marvasti 2004: 41). Additionally, it is worth noting that the research setting is multilocal, set in online and offline contexts, tearing apart the 'pre-modern idea of space and place as coincided' (Giddens 1990: 18), and detaching the processes of meaning-making from a geographical territory into a combination of online and offline locations (see also: Gallner 2001).

The study is also of a qualitative character, as according to Polkinghorne (2005: 137), 'qualitative research [helps] describing and clarifying human experience as it appears in people's lives'. Semi-structured individual interviews are the main research method to collect participants' narratives of experiences. I choose the method for two main reasons, namely: its flexibility in tailoring a conversation, and its confidentiality-guaranteeing feature. All the interviews are conducted by applying a feminist and emotive approach underlining a non-hierarchical way of data collection to empower my participants (Oakley 1981; Furlong 2012). As empowering and care are at the centre of this study's design, underpinning its axiological considerations. In the last stage, the collected data is transcribed, analysed, interpreted to English and written up.

The Chapter commences with addressing the ontological and epistemological positioning of the study and its implications. This is followed by a section on research design, highlighting the choice and characteristics of participants, places the research took place, as well as the ethical considerations. Characteristics of the fieldwork process, including the pilot and the main studies, is a subject of the next section, to be followed by reflections on data analysis, transcription, interpretation, translation and writing experiences. The Chapter

concludes with a summary of methodological contributions, as well as challenges encountered during the process of the study.

3.2   Research design

The research design is tailored to capture and reflect the processes behind negotiations of belonging identity of millennial Poles in Glasgow, Scotland. Inspired by the work of Collins (2015; 1990) and Crenshaw (1991, 1989), I utilise their intersectional perspective that allows one to overcome single-identification approaches, such as that of 'migrant'. Intersectionality as a concept emerges from the work of Crenshaw (1989, 1991), who in a pair of articles addresses the representation of women of colour within civil rights law and civil rights movement in the US. In her study of domestic violence and rape cases suffered by Black women, Crenshaw (1989: 139) highlighted that race and gender were conceptualized as 'mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis'. Crenshaw (1989: 139) referred to it as a 'single-axis framework set against the backdrop of the multidimensionality of Black women's experiences' that 'erases the Black women in the conceptualization, identification and remediation of race and sex discrimination by limiting the inquiry to the experiences of otherwise privileged members of the group'. In her subsequent work, Crenshaw (1991: 1245) restated the 'need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed' and identifies intersectional aspects contributing to marginalization and an obscuring of real-life experiences. By identifying structural, political and representational types of intersectionality, Crenshaw (1991: 1246) demonstrated multiple forms of marginalization and misrepresentation. Also, Collins (1990: 42) adopted the intersectional perspective to discover the existence of 'vectors of oppression and privilege' which interlock bias and oppression into existing discourses on race and gender. The construct of the 'interlocked matrix of oppression' was, according to Collins (1990: 42), centred upon the highlighting of a difference, and not the similarities.

This research applies intersectionality in a twofold way, namely: to the fieldwork design and the data analysis stage, since, as stated by Crenshaw (1989: 140), 'the intersectional perspective is greater than the sum total of single categories, (…) while any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account distorts the representation'. Subsequently, the research design is sensitive to the processes of identities' negotiations, paying particular attention to the meaning-making encoded into a language and culture that are used currently to communicate multilocally (Appadurai 1996). In order to observe such cultural

phenomena stemming from these novel ways of interactions, I apply a constructivist ontological perspective and interpretivist epistemological stance.

3.2.1 Ontological and epistemological positioning

I chose social constructivism, since as noted by Hume (1898: Sec 4 &165), 'human nature cannot by any means subsist, without the association of individuals'. Also, according to Thomas (2013: 238) 'the way we think about ourselves is inextricably tied to the way in which others think of us'. The particular theory defines a social setting as a place where groups and individuals construct their knowledge for one another through continuous exchange of shared symbolic meanings (see also: Vygotsky 1978). It specifically emphasizes the role of interactions with others as the basis for acquiring shared meanings and perceptions of realities (Vygotsky 1978; see also: Piaget 2006). While describing this stance, Schutz (1962: 59) highlights its importance by stating that 'by a series of common-sense constructs [individuals] tend to pre-select and pre-interpret the world they experience as the reality of their daily lives'. Similarly, Taylor et al. (2016) underline the constructionist and interpretive nature of human behaviour that develops out of shared cultural discourses, originating, as noted by Weber (2009: 101), locally 'to understand the world around'. Conceptualized as such, the socially constructed reality of everyday lives is therefore subjective and undergoes constant dynamic re-interpretation, since the shared meanings are negotiated and decoded according to the situations experienced (Berger & Luckmann 1991).

It is impotant to highlight that meanings and patterns of behaviours that individuals' acquire from their direct enviroments are directly encoded into the language they use. Such an observation is noted by Stryker and Owens (2010), as well as Plutchnik (2001), each underlining the crucial role of language for the processes of reality construction, interpretation and reinterpretation. Kramsch (2011) is of the view that the whole culture is encoded into words, and hence translating words without being aware of cultural implications might not be sufficient to establish a meaningful interaction. The identities encoded within languages are particularly important to uncover, as according to Bhabha (1994: 140), the concepts of cultures are socially constructed 'discursive narrations about imagined communities that provide meanings, system of identification and representation' (see also: Hall 1997). Hence, adopting the social constructivist perspective for the study of the negotiations of belonging identities implies questioning the considered as natural and given constructs (Weber 2009), and defamiliarizing the familiar (Fenner 2016). This

includes the cross-examining of learning environments (such as occur at home or in formal education), where shared symbolic meanings for social interactions are negotiated and approved (Filmer et al. 1973: 19). The call to adopt the constructivist perspectives is particularly relevant nowadays, as according to Schmidt and Cohen (2013: 5), the virtual and 'augmented realities come closer to reality' and the manner in which individuals interact with each other, as well as how they perceive themselves, are affected not by a unitary source, but rather a diverse multiplicity of online and offline locations.

3.2.2 Locations and participants

The study was designed to take place in Glasgow, Scotland. The choice of Glasgow was mainly practical, as I am a Glasgow local. Indeed, by the start 2015, when this fieldwork commences, I will have lived in Glasgow for more than a decade, hence am fairly well versed in its cultural relations and social implications to balance my research expectations. Additionally, being the established academic and economic hub, Glasgow offers relatively easy access to a substantial number of Europeans (at least before the 2016 Brexit Referendum), reflecting Scotland's longstanding Europhile history: from the Auld Alliance to the 62% vote to remain in the EU on June 23, 2016. The Scottish Government has also played an active role in supporting EU migration to Scotland. This included the decade long Scottish Government's (2004) 'Fresh Talent Initiative', this being the country's national framework to encourage and assist newcomers with settling down here. As a result of the culturally inclusive and pro-Europe Scottish policies, many Europeans, including Poles, who live in Scotland praise the local culture as particularly welcoming (The Scotsman 2016). According to Ichijo (2004: x) the presence of a 'secular polycentric idea of the local nationalism in Scotland, that is a nationalism that embraces outside influences that feed into the sense of a local national identity' makes many 'to fall in love with Scotland and although Poland is getting better, those who come here do tend to stay'.

Yet, Scotland and Glasgow are not the only locations that contribute to this study. Various places in Poland, particularly those identified by the participants as their childhood environments, require attention, as according to Erikson (1995; 1994), Burke and Stets (2009), du Gay et al. (2014), Hall and du Gay (1996), they hold the key to the participants' acquiring their norms, values and beliefs, that many still hold to this day. Apart from Poland, there is also another location, or rather, virtual locations that constitute an integral part of the participants' life, namely the digital 'extraterritorial territory' of Bauman (2010), multilocality.

The importance of virtual spaces constitutes, according to Kitchin (1998: 387), 'a new, spaceless, placeless' geography that challenges the traditional understandings of established concepts, such as 'a place'. Detailed characteristics and theoretical implications of such spaces were discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, yet it is worth reiterating that the 'places in-between places, that make cultures into intense and immediate contact with each "Other"' upon one's wish (Robinson 2007: 29) should not be neglected. For the intense symbolical interacting between varieties of places, as noted by Hall et al. (1996), transforms and greatly diversifies the individual's affiliations and, subsequently, the meaning-making. Developing a 'moveable self' (Hall et al. 1996: 598), that undergoes continuous, and mostly reflexive morphing while interacting, permits individuals to encompass various, sometimes contradictory positions, each reflecting the demands of a moment. And this study is sourced out of 46 such stories. It is based on narratives of millennials, all born and raised in Poland at the dawn of the digital era.

Figure 3.1: Millennials, the 'new i-generation' (from Tesco Magazine 2015)

This age group is of particular interest to me as the participants constitute the first generation whose lives have been embedded in social media, which shapes their sense of identity and belonging as strongly, if not more so, than the home environment, geographical relocation and mass media did in for past generations. According to Veen and Wrakking (2006), this generation's experiences in formatting identities are drastically different from any previous generations.

Nevertheless, the choice of the ethnicity of the participants turns out to be the most contested issue of the whole research design, since I am reluctant to consider Poles for a variety of reasons. First, as already stated in the previous Chapter, I was strongly opposed to applying 'migrant' terminology in my own research, yet did not perceive any natural alternative at that time, since the majority of the research concerning Poles abroad blithely

applied it. Second, being of a Polish heritage myself, I was afraid that my cultural bias, and its counterpoint, 'cultural blindness', might interfere with impartial observations and the fresh-eye necessary to detect emerging phenomena within the overly familiar. Last, I was desperate to check if some of my post-pilot study observations were applicable for other cultures, and if so – to what degree. As a result, a multinational sample is considered, yet dropped subsequently due to methodological dilemmas, such as justifications for choices of specific cultures as well as implications for designing sample sizes for each culture. Given this reality, I began this study by grudgingly accepting a Polish sample.
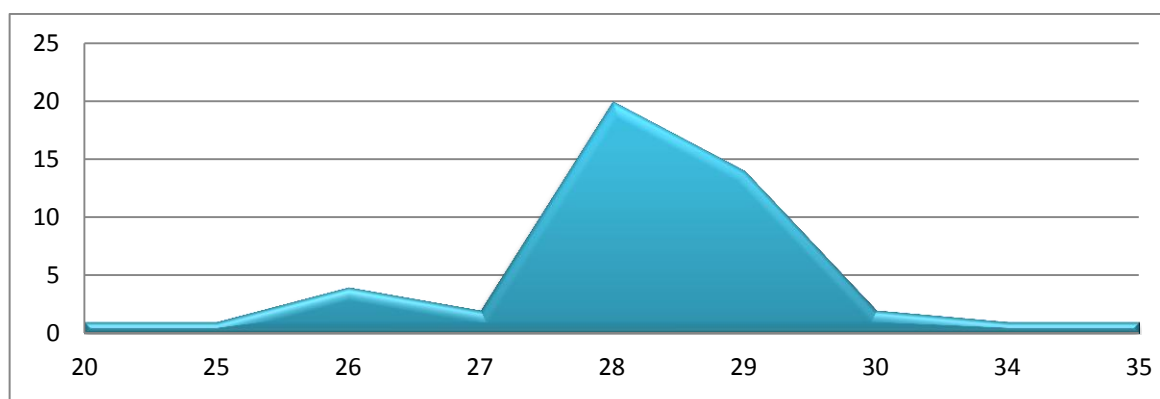
Figure 3.2: Number of participants (Y) and their age (X) distribution

As presented in Figure 3.2 above, the majority of participants are in their late twenties, with a few in their thirties. They are all Caucasian and have been brought up predominantly within Polish Roman-Catholic and heterosexual cultural paradigms. The fluency in English is not considered, but it turns that all participants exercise close to native English language skills, with many being multilingual (see Appendix 7). For convenience, their background characteristics are also presented below, Figure 3.3).

No	Pseudonym, Gender, Age	Background
1	Marlena, F, 29	From a small village in the SE of Poland; deeply Catholic family background; parents university educated; mom retired while dad still works in a local police office. Coffee shop manager.
2	Zdzisława, F, 28	From SE of Poland, family lives in woody suburbs of a major agglomeration. Both university educated parents are retired now. Asked to describe what her parents currently do, Zdzisława explains that 'mom enjoys picking mushrooms, and dad shoots boars'. In Glasgow Zdzisława started her employment in local coffee shops, currently a senior manager for international company in Scotland.
3	Barbara, F, 29	Comes from a deeply Catholic family, from the South of Poland. Both parents university educated are retired now. Works as a web designer.
4	Anna, F, 26	From a small village in Northern Poland. The family and social circle is deeply Catholic of strong patriotic Polish traditions, preserved mostly through oral history. Parents are college educated, worked in accounting, and retired by now.
5	Bartłomiej, M, 28	From a major city in central Poland; parents with university degrees, self-employed, run a family business. Parents are Catholic, and of Polish patriotic values, especially the father. Bartłomiej is agnostic.
6	Kazimierz, M, 34	From Częstochowa, both parents with university degrees occupied senior management positions, now retired. Deeply Catholic and Polish patriotic family background, with family traditions of taking active part in the Polish independence struggle, the WWI and WWII efforts.
7	Joanna, F, 26	From Opole. Brought up in a strictly Catholic social environment. Both parents college educated, dad retired by now, while mom works in Germany as a care provider. Together with

		her partner (as they are not married, and does highlight that they reject the ritual of marriage) they longed to become parents, and underwent an in-vitro procedure (in Scotland) to fulfil their dream of parenthood.
8	Fabian, M, 28	From Śląsk [Eng. Silesia], SW of Poland. In Glasgow since high school. Arrived to Scotland with his siblings, grandmother, and mom, as parents divorced. Successful businessman.
9	Elżbieta, F, 28	From a major city in central West Poland. Both parents university educated. Spent 5 years studying in Italy before coming to Glasgow with her Italian partner.
10	Monika, F, 28	From a town in the North of Poland. Arrived to Glasgow as recruited by a local company to work for them here. Family deeply religious (Catholic), high school educated, preoccupied with keeping up appearances and unhappy with many of Monika's choices while in Scotland (e.g. Monika is in a partnership relation, and refuses to get married).
11	Maurycy, M, 23	From a major town in the West of Poland. Both parents educated, dad travelled a lot, while mom stayed in Poland raising a family. Describing his parents, Maurycy notes that according to his dad, 'it is great to travel, but Poland is the only place to call home', while his mom, on the other hand, frequently complained 'what sins she committed in her previous life to be punished by living in this hell of the country [Poland]'. Mom is also deeply Catholic, and stated that if (non-practicing) Maurycy leaves ever the Catholic church, 'he will break her heart'.
12	Eligiusz, M, 28	From a major town in the North of Poland. Both parents university educated. When asked to describe himself, he highlights that he is a human being and is tied not so much to a single country, but rather to the whole planet. Yet, he is the only one among participants highlighting that manifestations of the LGBTQ movements are 'very irritating'; that 'he does not have anything against the LGBTQ, *but* it would be better if they did not manifest their differences'. Asked, why LGBTQ is not considered 'normal', but 'different', Eligiusz explains that 'it is not scientifically proven that homosexuality is not an illness'.
13	Eustachy, M, 29	Structural engineer from a large city in the NW of Poland. Married locally to a Glaswegian of Pakistani origins (brought up by her White Scottish mum, as dad passed away when she was a tiny baby). They are parents to a most delightful, few month old baby girl. Eustachy explains that he was faced with a local (Poland) family and social backlash when decided to convert to Islam (coincidentally at the same time when he met his future wife). This also strained his current friendships with other Poles (formerly very close) in Glasgow. With time the family came to terms with his choice of religious affiliations, but many of the former and current acquaintances of Polish origin stay 'lukewarm' at best, as he describes it. Self-employed and committed to his family, identifying himself as the first and foremost 'a husband and father'.
14	Euzebiusz, M, 29	From a major city in the SW of Poland. Describing history of a place where he grew up, Euzebiusz highlights the 'Austrian, German, Prussian and Eastern Borderlands influence', juxtaposed with the 'the superior cleanness of the Polish language'. Euzebiusz explains the latter by comparing the Polish language spoken by people form Małopolska and Kraków, and other parts of Poland, to the one spoken at the place he is from. In Glasgow, after spending a year in England. A graduate of the UofG and UofStrathclyde; active member of the Polish society, making it very popular with international students. Business owner. From a Catholic and Protestant background. Both parents university educated.
15	Roksana, F, 28	Asked how to describe her identity for the purpose of the research, Roksana says, laughing, that she is 'a beautiful lawyer from Glasgow'. Born in South of Poland. Daughter of a cleaning lady and a policeman; both retired now. Married locally to a Scotsman and actively involved in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum.
16	Anna-Maria, F, 28	From a small village in the West of Poland. Family of international (German, Lithuanian, Eastern Borderlands) origins. Both parents and grandparents university educated (grandparents used to be a faculty at the major university in the central West of Poland). Moved away from that city to a local village where they built a multigenerational family house, the central point of life for the family and their friends.
17	Gerfryda, F, 28	From a city in the central South of Poland. Both parents from the West, but moved eastwards. Deeply Catholic and conservative background of strong patriotic Polish values (yet, Gerfryda notes that her father used to be a hippy in his youth, and as such he was marked as a 'black sheep' of his family). Gerfryda spent a couple of years living in Canada.
18	Tadeusz, M, 26	From a major city in the West of Poland. Bicycles and guitars hobbyist. From a Catholic and patriotic family, as he explains, where mom 'taught him that Polish products are good; German - sometimes; and Chinese are to be avoided'. According to Tadeusz his first experience of foreignness was through his family, as his uncle left for Germany and gave up his Polish citizenship. As a result, the Polish family considered the uncle 'a fool, who believes that everything German is better'. Also, whenever the uncle's German and Polish fluent children visited Poland, Tadeusz explained, they often refused to speak Polish, so Tadeusz 'kept them locked in a room till they spoke Polish', and so they did.
19	Izaura, F, 28	From a small village outside of the central West of Poland. Both parents university educated, self-employed, running prosperous businesses and divorced. Wealthy paternal grandparents living close-by. Mom non practicing Catholic, but insisted Izaura stays involve in the Catholic activities, so they 'fit-in' in their local neighborhood. 'Being divorced for my mom was bad enough [socially]', Izaura explains, 'so I attended the Church'.
20	Dorota, F, 27	From a major city in central Poland. Both parents are financially very well off, university educated and self-employed. Non-practicing Catholics family background, but parents insisted Dorota attends weekly mass services, and other religious activities organized by her school. While growing up, Dorota highlights, she travelled extensively with her family around the world
21	Małgorzata, F, 27	Comes from the North of Poland, from a deeply Catholic family with traditionally gendered family roles. Went to France upon graduating from high school to work, but within a year secured a place at a major university. Married to a Frenchman (of Jamaican origin and dark skin-tone), they both came to Glasgow so Małgorzata could continue her studies. By 2015, they both considered Glasgow their home and wanted to stay here.

22	Marek, M, 20	Comes from a major city in central Poland and moved to Scotland with his mom when he was only 10, as parents divorced. Brought up within the Catholic and patriotic narrative while in Poland, but these changed when relocated. By now, he holds dual citizenship, but describes himself as 'Polish in Scotland'.
23	Aneta, F, 28	Aneta comes from a family with strong art traditions, both in music and visual arts, for whom the question of nationality was not significant when a child. She is a professional piano player (performs concerts), dancer (modern dance), and works with local theatres in Glasgow. She describes herself as 'Polish', but highlights that misses the joy that comes with expression of nationality that other countries have ('apart from Scotland', as she highlights, 'where people are just lost with who they are'). She notes that 'in Poland we express our belonging in a very depressing way; through commemoration of national tragedies, and through cemeteries, but there is little space for expressing the joy of what we have, who we are; here and now'.
24	Krzysztof, M, 29	Comes from a major town in the East of Poland. Married in Glasgow to a Pole, father of two small children, currently undergoing a divorce. Brought up as Catholic and with deep patriotic Polish values, he is determined to pass these values and Polish language to his two sons. His wife, as Krzysztof explains, is determined that children assimilate within the local social and linguistic environment with no traces to their Polish heritage ('yet', as Krzysztof observes, 'the children learn French at school, so why they cannot learn Polish).
25	Augusta, F, 29	Augusta and Michał both come from a small town in central West Poland. Childhood sweethearts, they married before coming to Scotland. Both graduated with university degrees in Poland in architecture. They came to Scotland, as Michał was offered to work in Glasgow, and Augusta found employment instantly upon arrival.
26	Michał, M, 29	
27	Adrian, M, 29	Brought up in a major city in the South of Poland; from a deeply Catholic social background where, as Adrian notes, 'was 'unthinkable not to attend a church'. College educated parents own a small and well prospering business. Married to Alicja, and a father to a baby boy.
28	Alicja, F, 29	Wife of Adrian and a mom; from a major city in the West of Poland. Catholic and Polish patriotic background. Both parents university educated, now retired.
29	Natalia, F, 29	Natalia is the only one among participants who graduated from high school in Poland with the International Baccalaureate diploma. Natalia comes from a deeply Catholic social background, yet open and culturally inclusive family. Born in a major city in the East of Poland, upon arriving to Scotland and commencing her studies here, she run a Polish society very successfully, making it hugely popular among international students.
30	Apolina, F, 29	A manager at a major airline; single; recently bought her own house and a car without any financial help, as she explains. Converted to Islam while studying in Poland. From a deeply Catholic family in a major city in central South Poland. Parents run a small business. Apolina gave up her Polish citizenship upon receiving a UK passport.
31	Basia, F, 28	From Toruń, a major city in central West Poland, 'formerly associated with a birthplace of Copernicus, but now recognized as the *Radio Maryja* HQ', Basia explains. Deeply Catholic background. Describing racial relations in Poland Basia gives example of her mother's partner, unable to accept his daughter's dark skin husband and a child, he pretends that he does not know them, when they visit. Basia is a manager for a major building company in Glasgow.
32	Iwona, F, 28	From a major city in central Poland; Catholic background. Both parents university educated. Iwona learnt English and German in a local public kindergarten. Highlights the existence of 'mono-culture in Poland, of its White and Catholic characteristics'. Explains that realized the purpose of learning languages only while visiting Belgium with her parents as a child and noting that 'these languages made her able to communicate with other people there and she really liked it'.
33	Loreta, F, 29	From a major city in central Poland, place of the celebrated Catholic Shrine dedicated to Holy Mary, *Jasna Góra*. Both parents, university educated, run a small business. Upon retiring moved to the woody suburbs, away from major agglomerations. Parents also own properties abroad and travel globally frequently. Loreta, due to her research commitments, and her passion for travelling, is a globetrotter as well.
34	Marysia, F, 28	Born in a major city in central South Poland. Dad run a small business and mom worked in a kindergarten. Both parents retired now. Of a Catholic and Polish patriotic upbringing. Never considered a question of nationality and culture, while in Poland, but only after moving to other countries. Work experience (as an architect) for companies in Spain, Holland, and Switzerland.
35	Robert, M, 25	Born in a major city in the North of Poland. Both parents college educated, run small business. Of Catholic and patriotic Polish background.
36	Krzysztof, M, 26	From a village in the East South of Poland. Both parents work in agriculture, college educated, run an eco-farm. Grown up in a Catholic neighborhood of patriotic Polish heritage.
37	Karolina, F, 28	From a village in South of Poland. Both parents college educated, now retired, dad run a small business and mom raised the family. From a deeply Catholic background with Polish patriotic traditions. Married to a non-Pole.
38	Joachim, M, 28	Born in a major town at the Baltic Sea. Both parents run a family business. Catholic and Polish patriotic neighborhood.
39	Kuba, M, 29	From a major town in the West of Poland. From a Catholic and patriotic Polish background. Brought up by a single mom, an accountant. Mom insisted he attends Church and is involved in the Catholic activities at school.
40	Patryk, M, 28	From a town in the North of Poland. Parents university educated, both GPs. Of Catholic and Polish patriotic background. Patryk travelled the world as a child; and considers international movement as an integral part of his life.
41	Kacper, M, 28	From a town in central North Poland (Mazury). Parents college educated, run a local hotel. Catholic and patriotic Polish heritage. Kacper traveled extensively before coming to Scotland, and is still a passionate globetrotter.

42	Tomasz, M, 29	From the capital of Poland. Both parents university educated, used to work for the Polish government institutions, now retired. Culturally Catholic, but not practicing. Of Polish patriotic cultural heritage.
43	Kinga, F, 30	From a major city in central Poland. Both parents retired by now, used to run a family business. Brought up in a multi-generational house of Catholic and Polish patriotic heritage. Not practicing. Globetrotter.
44	Mateusz, M, 28	Parents live in a small town in the North of Poland. Of Polish and Russian cultural heritages. Parents run a family business. Mateusz explains that he travels a lot while a child, developing 'hunger of knowledge for other cultures and languages'.
45	Danusia, F, 35	Born in a small village in the SW Poland to deeply Catholic family of Polish patriotic cultural heritage. A hairdresser and stylist in Glasgow, internationally recognised.
46	Piotr, M, 30	From a town in central East Poland. Both parents college educated, mom is an accountant for their local city-chambers and dad runs a small family business. Of deeply Polish patriotic and Catholic family background. However, parents are not practicing and quite critical of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, as Piotr explains.

Figure 3.3: The main characteristics of the 46 participants of this study

It is worth noting that by 2015, at the time when the fieldwork takes place, they have all resided in Scotland for an extended period of time. By then only nine declare actively practicing religious affiliations with four staying Roman-Catholics and five converting to Islam. Additionally, two undergo a change of their sexual orientation. Also five participants report holding multiple citizenships, with two rescinding their Polish citizenship and adopting the UK. All participants convey growing up surrounded by an easy access to information, resulting in practicing English and other languages on a daily basis. For them, using a multiplicity of languages is a life-integrated activity, while for previous generations other languages are taught in the cultural and geographical isolation of a classroom in Poland. As a result, this cohort reports fostering virtual belonging affiliations; a new phenomena relative to the lives of previous generations who were limited by geography and politics from forging and sustaining transnational affiliations. Yet, there is also another participant in this study, as highlighted by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), namely: the researcher. Despite my being only an average a decade older than the participants of the study, our experiences in negotiating our belonging identities are so vastly different, it might as well be another era. I grew up under the state-controlled mass media of Poland in the 1980s, a place which was also culturally locked behind the so-called *Iron Curtain* for another decade. I was exposed to languages other than Polish, such as Russian, English, German and French, but in the isolation of a classroom, and with limited opportunities to practice, I achieved only varying degrees of proficiency outside of Russian. This exceptional fluency in Russian stemmed from my having to write letters in Russian, as a part of my primary school's activities, to children in participating institutions within the Soviet Union. The letters' exchange, however, did not allow for the development of meaningful relationships, as the letters took a long time to be delivered. Nevertheless, this activity did build awareness of children growing up in different and beautiful cultures, away from mine in the South of Poland, resulting in developing deep affection, appreciation and curiosity for other cultures.

3.2.3 Research method

The question of how to collect the data presents challenges regarding the choice of method and specific approach to data gathering. According to Appadurai (1988) and Gallner (2001), to capture potentially novel empirical experiences requires rethinking established approaches and techniques to data collection. As the study is located within a constructivist and interpretivist perspectives, it required a rather tailored and sensitive research technique to allow the gathering of individual's views and opinions (Trochim 2006). Interviews, as noted by Berger (1997), are the most suitable method for collecting narratives. Also, Weiss (1994: 1) highlights their appropriateness since they 'inform about the nature of social life', and enable, as observed by Arksey and Knight (1999: 11), to 'uncover the meanings that underpin understanding'. Additionally, Horrocks et al. (2002) note that the method is particularly useful when collecting experiences of change, as it allows, according to Kvale (1996) to gather personal narratives, ranging from feelings of joy to grief.

A wide variety of interview types have been designed, as Silverman (2004) observes, to satisfy demands and needs of generations of researchers. As this research aims to gather personal narratives in negotiations of belonging identity, I chose an individually tailored approach to interviewing. This interview format, as highlighted by Sanches-Ayala (2012: 123), is sensitive to 'every word to find out about others feelings and thinking'. Rubin and Rubin (1995: 1) underline that they also 'open windows into others' stories and experiences', and they therefore consider it to be the most powerful research tool for acquiring information. The possibility of adopting and tuning into the individually tailored approach is significant, as emotions are at the heart of negotiating identity belonging. Undertaking such an approach, however, requires adopting a special type of practice. According to Thomson (2000: 9) it is important to do:

> 'whatever is possible to avoid interrupting the story. If you stop a story because you think is irrelevant, you will cut off not just that one, but a whole series of subsequent offers of information which will be relevant'.

As a result, the interviews are semi-structured to assure sequence and flow (see: Appendix 2 for the Interview Schedule). According to Shotter and Gergen (1989), a well-prepared interview guide increases reliability of data, assuring similarity of topics discussed with every participant of the study.

Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting that emotional acknowledgment, care and engagement in interview situations are considered by some researchers as potentially

problematic (Creswell 2007; Walliman 2006; Duncombe & Jessop 2002, Silverman 2004). The authors advise emotionally detaching oneself to avoid potential data- validity flaws. This research, however, acknowledges emotions as central to human experience, and as such, the approach is inseparable from the research design (Lichtman 2014; 2013; Ezzy 2010; Oakley 1981).

Additionally, adopting this approach shifts power relations within the interview situation. According to Gubrium and Holstein (1997), the power sensitive approach recognizes emotional aspects of the research process and narrative production. The authors (1995) underline that narratives are only produced voluntarily, and therefore participants need to be empowered to share them. Addressing the issue of power relations, Reason and Rowan (1981: 205) propose implementing an approach where 'interviewee and interviewer become peers or even companions'.

Subsequently, the power sharing approach is reflected throughout the design of this study, with a particular attention to avoiding emotional manipulation, referred by Duncombe and Jessop (2002: 120-121) as pretending, or 'fake friendship'. Describing such unethical tactics, the authors (2002) highlight the possible risk of exploitation of participants' emotions in order to collect research data. Being aware of the potential challenge, I adopt a variety of ethical stances, all considered before the fieldwork commences.

3.2.4 Ethical considerations

Axiological considerations in this research process are not a mere add on, but are located at the centre of this research process and my conduct. As conducting an emotive narrative interviewing requires a carefully thought ethics and personal sensitivity (Holloway & Biley 2011) to create an emotionally secure, trustworthy, and power-balanced space. Addressing the basic characteristics of such a stance, Lichtman (2014: 56) urges a focus on 'doing good and avoiding evil'. Yet, more detailed ethical parameters of the research fieldwork are required to be communicated to potential participants to explain and assure them about the specific nature of this particular interview process. I find the information statement, required by the University of Glasgow's research ethics policies, quite helpful, not only for the sake of participants' knowledge about my research, but also for myself, as a researcher of cultural and mental experience (see: Appendix 1 for the Plain Language Statement). Though such ethic statements, together with the University's ethics form and other documentation, are pre-requisites for commencing actual fieldwork, I found them to be of

fundamental value and a cornerstone of the research related activities I undertook. The ethics paperwork serves as a contract that sets out specific rules and standards of engagement, binding by obligations all the parties involved. For the purpose of this research the University of Glasgow's ethical code of practice highlights four major sections for consideration, namely: the informed consent, duty of care, voluntary participation and confidentiality of the information obtained[9]. Yet, for a novice researcher predicting implications of such profound ethical categories is full of challenges. Entering the field for the first time is dotted with unknown situations, and even with best intentions one is unable to foresee many of the actual outcomes.

This includes the issue of informed consent. According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008: 34), the 'informed consent entails informing participants about the overall purpose of the study and the main features of the design'. Yet, Eisner (1991: 215) notes that 'thus we all like the idea of informed consent, we are less sure who is to provide that consent, just how much consent is needed, and how we can inform others so as to obtain consent when we have such a hard time predicting what we need to get consent about'. Also Lincoln et al. (2003: 286) propose to embrace such challenges, and replace the idea of an informed consent 'with a dialogue that runs throughout the investigation (…) so that there is a mutual shaping of the research results'. In the case of this research, the intention is to inform the participants about parameters of the study. I do so through the already mentioned Plain Language Statement, which addresses the nature and aim of the project. Also, I inform my participants about the study and the interview process in an initial preparatory meeting, and repeat this outline for the second time just before commencing the actual interview.

My initial lack of research experience is clearly reflected in other considerations of the research process, surfacing particularly when I was required to provide a coherent description of the study before the actual fieldwork began. Coming up with detailed implications of the research becomes the greatest challenge of all, as, upon reflection, the subject matter of the study morphs substantially. Here, the study originates in a concept of the 'current Polish migration to the UK', only to be deconstructed and re-defined throughout the research process to the 'offline and online experiences in identity-making and belonging location of young Poles'. According to Glass (2001), the shifting and narrowing of research topic studied is a fairly common practice. In his recount of research

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[9] The University of Glasgow College of Social Science Research Ethics website
http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/#d.en.365098

on families with autistic children the author (2001) recalls refining a topic after conducting, analysing and reviewing data obtained from first interviews. In a similar vein Lichtman (2014) encourages one to commence fieldwork only having a vague idea about the study, as according to the author the details will follow subsequently from the fieldwork and analysis conducted.

The research inexperience, however, does not affect the principle of a duty of care for participants. The duty of care, according to Frankfort-Nachmias (2008) is among the most important ethical principles. Other authors, such as Sanches-Ayala (2012: 117), urge for extra sensitivity while conducting a fieldwork with people of other cultural backgrounds, or as the author states 'while interviewing the migrants'. Now, I fully endorse the need for extra care and sensitivity while using an emotive approach, in particular with vulnerable individuals regardless of their social and cultural backgrounds, I strongly disagree with Sanches-Ayala's implicitly considering every 'migrant' as vulnerable. Such stance is, in my view, discriminatory, as it not only categorises people according to their class and ethnicity, but also implies that there is some underlying helplessness and weakness. I therefore reject this view, and in my interviews with participants, I not only treat them with dignity and respect, but I aim to empower them by highlighting their pivotal role in the research process, and promoting a sense of shared ownership of the outcome.

The last, but not least, of the ethical principles is the issue of confidentiality of participants' identity. According to Kimmel (1998: 112), research confidentiality states that 'private data, identifying the interviewees, are not reported'. Kvale (1996: 114) proposes protecting the participants' privacy by changing their names when reporting the findings to prevent participants being identified. This confidentiality caution was initially incorporated into the research design by referring to participants by interview number at first. However, within the course of the study this evolved to my using pseudonyms in order to ease the reading flow. Another issue to related to confidentiality is the suitability of the choice of research method to gather sensitive data. For example, the focus groups of my pilot study reveal that this method not only naturally restricts participants discussing intimate personal matters, but more importantly, it cannon ensure full confidentiality of the disclosed information due to presence of third parties. This experience is subsequently reflected in the main fieldwork research design.

3.3   Data collection

The fieldwork process for the study evolved cyclically, driven by an interaction between the data to-date and theoretical and personal reflection, with each adopted iteration taking place with the explicit approval by the Ethics Committee for the College of Social Science of the University of Glasgow. The aim of this cyclic process is the necessary practice for me to detangle my own assumptions about culture and ways to study it, or put simply, to 'defamiliarise the familiar' (Fenner 2016). Divided into two main stages, namely: the pilot and the main data gathering phases, the overall fieldwork yields an abundance of methodological, theoretical and ethical insights, which, in turn, inform the final outcome.

3.3.1   Preliminary study

According to Baxter et al (1996: 121) a pilot fieldwork offers a secure space where research methods are tested and 'reassessed without tears' before commencing on the actual fieldwork. Additionally, Welman et al. (2006: 146) highlight its important role in language testing, allowing one to check for ambiguity of terms and emotional reactions. Despite these vast benefits, a decision to conduct a pilot study for this research is preceded by hesitation, stemming from what Baker (1994: 182-3) refers to as the 'knowing-well-what-needs-to-be-done' attitude. However, further reflection on the benefits of methods' testing, combined with the fervour to 'defamiliarise the familiar', made me to proceed. The pilot lasts about a month and is based in Scotland and Poland, to test a variety of research methods, including individual and group interviews, as well as focus groups. The participants vary and include millennial Poles currently living in Scotland, as well as returnees, and also certain public service providers for returnees in Poland.

The pilot commences in Glasgow with the running of two focus groups in Glasgow. Each of the planned groups was to accommodate 4-5 millennial Poles to discuss meanings and experiences of *migration*: a term I use rather uncritically at this stage of the research. Both focus groups yield a variety of profits, but also – challenges. For example, the first of the two focus groups ends up with nine individuals, not all of Polish origin, but rather a multinational cohort, as almost each of invited participants brought a colleague to keep them company. Faced with a choice of either cancelling the focus group, or not, I chose the latter and run the pre-focus group ethical activities with all present. Nevertheless, upon commencing the facilitation of the actual focus group, it becomes clear that my adopting the common language of English, due to the presence of non-Polish speakers, will have

methodological drawbacks, some serious. First I realise I am neither prepared, nor comfortable to do so at this stage. Second, the English language constrain makes many Poles to struggle in capturing effectively their feelings and emotions, often using the phrase: 'you know what I mean'. This particular finding constitutes a significant methodological insight, namely the choice of language for the main fieldwork needs to be Polish. Additionally, apart from the methodological practicalities of data gathering, this focus group also yields a theoretical reappraisal, since the non-Polish participants stress their non-identity with the term 'migrant' when expressing their views. This is a significant finding that makes me question the 'migrant' discourse, and more generally the language and discourse applied to Polish citizens abroad, as well as the origins of this phenomenon.

The second focus group is also run in Glasgow and consists of four young Polish women. None of the challenges experienced while facilitating the previous group repeats, yet a new one occurs. Namely, when participants discuss a particular topic, one of them becomes emotionally upset while recalling her story. Upon noticing, I immediately stop the research process, we all hug each other (Lichtman 2014), and decide not to continue further. Yet, this experience contributes another significant methodological insight, namely focus groups and group interviews are not suitable for gathering sensitive data as it is impossible to assure confidentiality of the information shared. Also, it raises an ethical question over suitability of interviews for collecting data on painful experiences.

The rest of the pilot study occurs in Poland, where I individually interview 19 people, many of whom returned to Poland after an extended period of living abroad. I locate all the participants by chatting to people at airports while travelling, and then following through on those interested in a subsequent connection. While in Poland I also interview public service providers, such as government officials in Warsaw and city council workers tasked with assisting returning Poles. This part of the pilot study confirms the final choice of research method and design for the main data collection. Additionally, it again highlights the theoretical challenge that stems from perceiving geographically mobile Poles through the discourse and narrative of 'migrants'. I note that this perception operates not only within academia and media, but also among the Poles in Poland and abroad, constituting a prime example of the reverse discourse. Finding this resonance of the 'migrants' concept within this feedback, and also that of the international participants of the first focus group causes me to pause. Taken together with Cooley's (2009: 152) observation 'I am, who you think, that I am', which emphasises the role of others in imposing a belonging identity (see

also: Shaffer et al. 2005), I discern that this finding constitutes the proverbial tipping point for the study's theoretical ramifications.

Summarizing, the pilot study provides invaluable information allowing for necessary methodological and theoretical adjustments before the main fieldwork commences[10]. This includes the exclusion of focus groups and group interviews from the research design, while identifying narrative, individual, semi-structured interviews as the main method. I choose this method for dual reasons, first and foremost being that confidentiality of any information shared is guaranteed, and second, for the flexibility to tailor an approach suited to the individual. Such elasticity is particularly necessary when gathering sensitive and personal data on matters such as identity-making and a place of belonging searching. The pilot study also contributes to the reconsideration of the theoretical approach, as it raises serious doubts about the appropriateness of the term 'migrant' within the theoretical discourse and conceptualisation.

3.3.2 Main fieldwork

The main fieldwork starts in April 2015, shortly after gaining a research ethics clearance from the University of Glasgow's College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee (see Appendix 4). Yet before this occurs, my interview schedule needs reconsideration reflecting the pilot findings. This moment constitutes another milestone of the research process, as predominantly rejecting theoretical conceptualisations stemming from contemporary migration studies, other ramifications are necessary to frame the project.

As a result, I start with preparing questions on deconstructing the *national* in the trans*national*. I also depart from the 'migrant' label and conceptualization to a human being, individual and a member of a variety of societies. I pose instead questions about processes of becoming members of online and offline contexts, and what are their consequences for the individuals and their geographically based societies. Inspired by Thomas (1912), Zaniecki (1910), and their joint 'Polish Peasant (…)' (1967) seminal publication, I am concerned with exploring changes stemming from (multilocal) mobility told in their own words. Particularly, I derive from, what became the biggest critique of the Thomas and Znaniecki's (1967) book, by Blumer (1992) highlighting the necessary acknowledgment of human beings as interacting individuals, acting towards the world

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[10] A pilot fieldwork report was written, yet the pilot data, apart from the implications identified above, was not used further.

based on their subjective knowledge attributed to different objects. Subsequently, the interview schedule aims at discovering potential phenomena through the participants' subjective interpretations of themselves and others. Nevertheless, theoretically I am only able to start with what Ravetz (1996: 135) refers as, 'a less than a problem (…), but with awareness that there is a question to be asked, without anyone being able to frame the question'. At that stage I am aware that there might be a theoretical challenge, however I am unable to ramify it; I am at loss. But this only motivates me to enthusiastically embrace the field and to find out what is there to be seen and known.

Geographically, the field is located in Glasgow. Being the recognised academic and economic hub, Glasgow offers home to many Europeans, yet the challenge is to find them. Members of family volunteer as the first of contribute to the study. Then, I utilize their contacts, as well as my personal connections through the Glasgow University Polish Society. This effort brings the initial 21 participants. Another method utilized is 'research talking'. As chatting about my research is an activity I contribute voluntarily since commencing the study, yet now, apart from expressions of encouragement, people convey their will to contribute. As a result, I carry the Plain Language Statement with my contact details wherever I go, and recruit further 7 participants this way.

Additionally, upon gaining (research) confidence, I start initiating conversations upon hearing randomly the Polish language. Yet, identifying participants only based upon hearing their English language pronunciation turns tricky, and unless they state 'hey, I am from Poland, too', I do not take a chance of asking. The method contributes further 5 participants.

As the fieldwork progresses, many of the initial participants keep contacting their friends and family to contribute to the study as well. This turns to be a successful tool, resulting in a staggering result of 17 new interviews. But, there are also a few exceptions as well, stemming from the already highlighted perception associated with the field of Polish migration studies. This issue arises when initial participants need to describe the study to potential interviewees, with many referring to it as 'Polish identity'. It turns out that some of the young people associate the 'Polish identity' phrase with 'Polish migrant', and they refuse to be identified as such. Particularly one, convinced that this is another 'migrant research' did categorically decline to speak to me. 'She said that she is not what you are looking for', I hear from Anna-Maria, relating to me asking her friend to participate in the research.

> 'She said no', Anna-Maria continues, 'despite the fact that I told her that she will enjoy the interview, that it is very interesting, and exactly about what is going on, but she would not be convinced. There was literally nothing I was able to say to make her to see that this research is different. The idea of being associated with a migrant Polish community is something she cannot stand'.

The reaction of Anna-Maria's friend is not an isolated example. Another participant, Natalia, who does in the end participate in the study, explains to me after our interview how positively surprised she was.

> 'I must tell you', Natalia says, 'I did not look forward to this meeting. To be honest, I did it only because my good friend asked me to help you. I thought that we are going to talk about these stereotypical Polish things, migrants and so on. But, it turned to be very interesting, thank you', she said as she walked me out.

The description of these two situations, according to Miller and Glassner (1997: 101), testify to how 'familiar narrative constructs make many to accept them', rather than to engage in challenging the concepts through providing own perspectives. This particular reflection stays with me for the rest of the study.

The last method of acquiring participants that is worth noting relates to 'eavesdropping'. It occurs on a couple of occasions, when conducting interviews in coffee-shops. To my surprise, upon finishing interviews, I would get ask by a serving staff, who turned to be Polish as well, if they can contribute too. On one occasion, while having a post-interview chat with a participant over a cup of ice-tea, we are approached by our waiter, who reviles himself as Polish, asking us if he can join in, as he could not avoid overhearing our conversation, and being a student and a parent of young children gives him an interesting perspective which he states that is impatient to share.

In the end 52 interviews are conducted, but only 46 are used due to technical problems with my recording equipment. The majority of interviews take place in coffee-shops around Glasgow. All the interviews are carried in Polish. Yet, despite Polish being the native language of the participants and of the researcher, frequently the interviewees would support their narratives with English words, particularly when referring to the contemporary experiences. I would not make a point of highlighting the issue, as according to McCracken (1988: 34), a researcher should allow interviewees to tell their stories in their own language and on their own terms to assure creation of their stories. And if the story of the contemporary Polish born young people is narrated bilingually and across languages, this constitutes a research finding, and not a linguistic error.

Every interview commences with biographical information, asking participants to reflect upon origins of their cultural backgrounds and their relevance in influencing their identity construction, followed by targeted querying about the recent influences. The later aspect is explored by Gubrium and Holstein (1997), noting its importance of stimulating the narrative production. Despite the determination for interviews not to last longer than 45 minutes, the average interview lasted between an hour and two hours. This is due to majority of participants opening up and volunteering with information about their life stories and experiences that as a researcher I am hesitant to cut short. This stance is guided by a number of studies, particularly by that of Thomson (2000), arguing the non-interrupting approach. According to the author (2000: 9) even the seemingly irrelevant narratives should be allowed to continue, as might lead to stories of experiences significant to the research inquiry.

Additionally, I adopt the individually attentive approach to interviewing due to deep care for participant's wellbeing during the research process, as speaking about personal issues, such as belonging identity can be emotionally demanding. As a result, this requires tuning into the emotional signs encoded into language, including participants' body language. According to Gubrium and Holstein (1997: 116) such an approach is necessary to obtain 'authentic accounts of experiences' told. Additionally, the individually attentive approach, according to Ary et al. (2006), links symbolic forms (and the approach) operating within the researched society with characteristic emotions expressed by their group members. Therefore, staying alerted to the way participants express their emotions on a particular topic provides additional insides into cultural patterns distinguishing societies they belong to, and link the study into a tradition of that of Mead (1967).

Summarising, the manner by which the fieldwork is constructed allows for a relatively swift data collection. This would not be feasible, however, without conducting the preliminary study first. Also, choosing the particular type of the research sample results in surprisingly revelatory data about the culture I assumed to know the proverbial 'all' before the fieldwork took place.

3.3.3 Post-fieldwork reflections

The most profound challenges when entering the field are variety of expectations posed by variety of actors. Predicting what to expect and how to manage these expectations is dotted with stressful situations that retrospectively, are avoidable. One of them relates to the linear research progress expected (Bryman 2015; Ausband 2006). In reality, as noted by Lichtman (2014) research experience is cyclical rather than linear, with answers appearing at variety of stages of the research endeavour.

The state of researcher's personal feelings while conducting a fieldwork is also worth highlighting. This challenge appeared upon hearing participants' statements that might be of discriminatory nature. Faced with such a situation, it takes advanced acting skills to hide personal outrage, making in my case to shake my hands involuntarily.

Apart from the surprising emotional reactions, there are plenty of practical challenges experienced during the course of the fieldwork as well, including a case of faulty recording equipment. For example, the awareness that my voice recorder is relatively out of order comes only after conducting the first 10 interviews. This happens due to checking the equipment only initially, which went fine, and since the first sets of fieldwork activities are intense, with 2 to 3 meetings occurring per day, the next inspection occurs only a week later, as running out of space on my recording device. Then I note, with a sinking heart, that the quality of some of the recordings is substandard. This is an easily avoidable challenge, should I keep checking the equipment before and after every interview.

Another technological glitch occurs upon replacing the vintage recording device with my then recently purchased iPhone 5c. The sound quality, which I check extensively before conducting any fieldwork, is just perfect. But the device, or rather, a recording application, turns to be 'unstable'. That is: on two separate occasions the application switches off unexpectedly during my interview, deleting all the content recorded. This time, however, I am prepared short-handing interviews where possible, yet such challenges are hardly desirable in the process of the fieldwork and might be omitted investing in stable applications and professional recording equipment.

Also, upon reflection, the location for the interviews raises practical and ethical questions. Coffee shops, neutrally as they are, tend to be polluted with noisy music, omnipresent loud conversations, and grinding sounds of coffee machines that often overpower the actual voice of a participant sitting next to a voice recorder. Also ethically, the conversations turn

to be easily overheard by random staff and passers-byes, putting in jeopardy confidentiality of sometimes sensitive information shared by participants. Yet, the coffee shops are the most convenient locations, as explained by participants, when highlighting their reluctance in coming to the University's grounds for an interview. Nevertheless, upon discovering the challenge, the last couple of interviews are conducted at participants' homes, and at my own apartment. Yet, this raises security concerns, and as such is not advisable.

Apart from the situations outlined above, the overall fieldwork conduct is successful and highly enjoyable, for the researcher and as conveyed by the participants. The main fieldwork concludes relatively quickly, as by mid-August 2015 all the 46 interviews are transcribed and ready for the analysis. The research process however is far from over.

3.4   Working with data

According to MacIntosh et al. (2016) qualitative fieldwork can be a 'messy business', yet for this study the particular quote aptly summarises the data analysis stage as well. The research data arrives at a variety of times, shapes and sizes. This includes recordings of narratives, Polish transcripts, English interpretations, my Polish-English field-notes (see Figures 3.4 below), multiplicity of my research journals, as well as whole range of my emotions associated with the research process (Braun & Clarke 2006; Rubin & Rubin 1995).
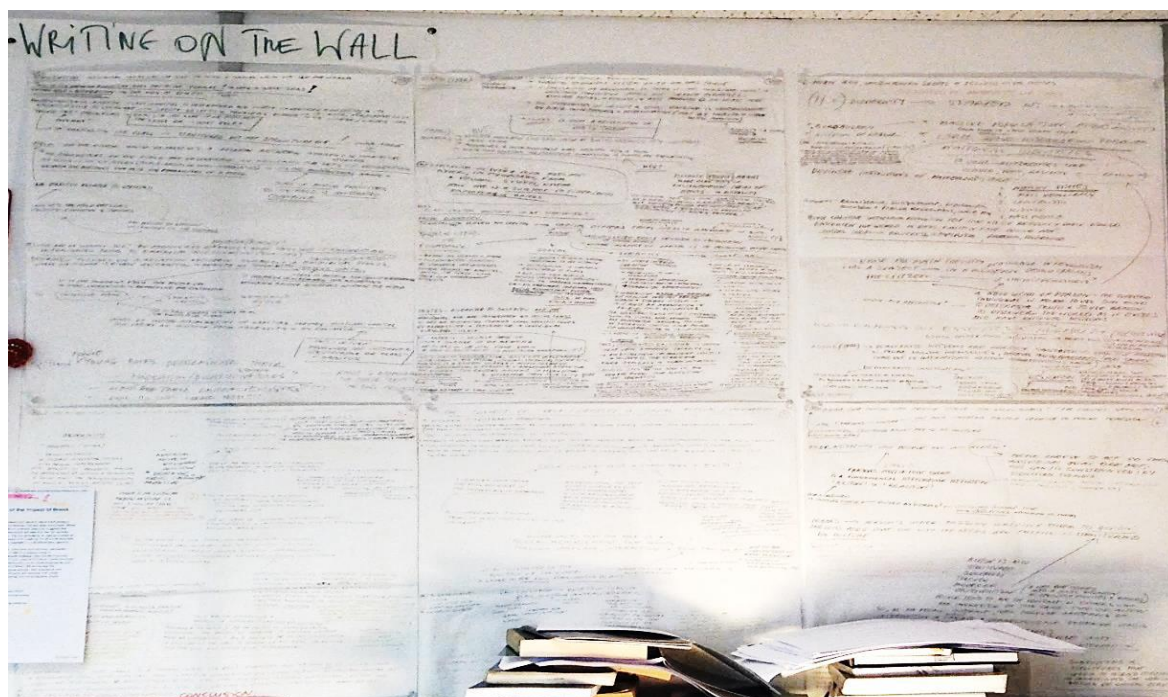

Figure 3.4: An extract from my research notes (2014-2018)

Specifically, the research design adds additional cultural and research entanglements, as decisions need to be made about translation, including the most suitable time for flipping the Polish data and analysis into English text of the thesis, the latter being the formal requirement of the University of Glasgow. Subsequently, the next three segments address the process of working with the data, starting with Polish transcriptions, followed by Polish thematic analysis, and concluding by English interpretation of the emerged Polish themes for the thesis writing process.

3.4.1 Transcription

The transcription of the 46 recorded interviews commences during the fieldwork, in the late Spring of 2015, due to its expected time consumption and lengthiness of the process. I transcribe all the interviews personally, spending approximately a day of typing per interview. The interviews vary in length, with the majority being approximately 4,000 words long. The decision to transcribe them myself, as opposed of hiring assistance, is guided by my curiosity, as well as by Bailey (2008) stressing that the transcription process provides the first step into data analysis.

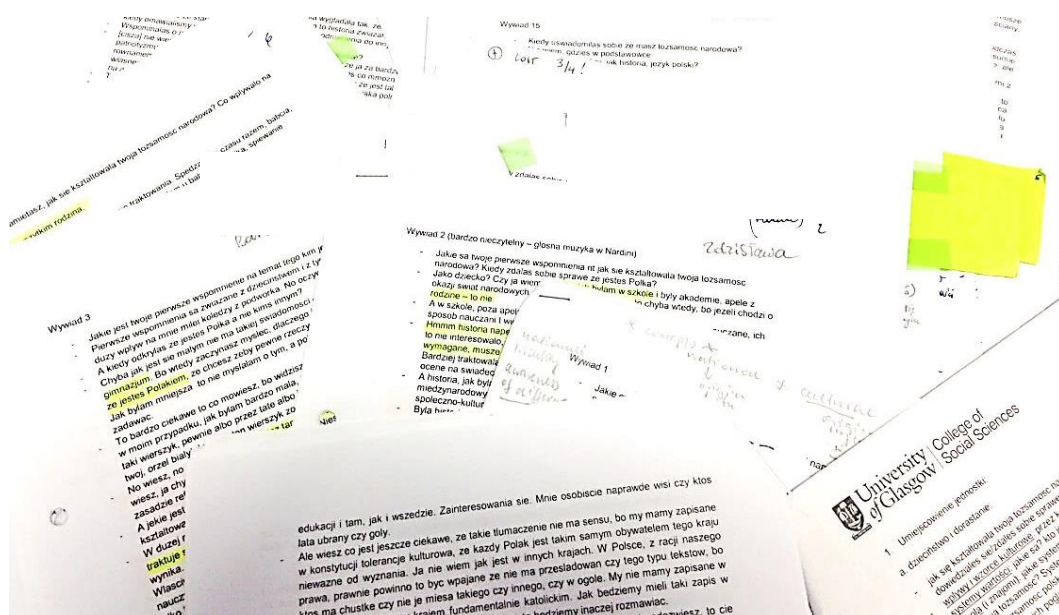Figure 3.5: The Polish language transcripts of interviews (Summer 2015)

Additionally, as all the interviews are collected in Polish, the transcription implies applying the same language to assure capturing the exact meaning of the narratives and their environmental and cultural contexts, the latter supported with my notes (and drawings) addressing observations, such as participants' body language or meeting places.

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3.4.2   Thematic analysis

By the autumn of 2015 all of the 46 interviews are transcribed and the analysis stage commences. Diesing (1979) notes that the best of qualitative analysis is practiced though pattern-making exercises. This idea is also highlighted by Boyatzis (1998), and more recently by Brown and Clarke (2006: 86), the latter stating that the thematic analysis 'is not wed in any pre-existing theoretical framework', and as such offers flexibility in theme identifying. This is particularly significant for the research conducted in an inductive, or mixed inductive-deductive manner, as allows for observing ideas emerging out of the vastness of the data.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the emerged topics might vary depending on a researcher's social and cultural background. This is specifically stressed by Brown and Clarke (2013), as well as Charmaz (2008), highlighting that for the honesty of the process and the validity of the results, the central role of the researcher needs to be stated. Following my emphasis, my socio-cultural background has already been outlined in an earlier part of this Chapter, while my role for the Polish data analysis and subsequent English interpretation of findings is addressed below.
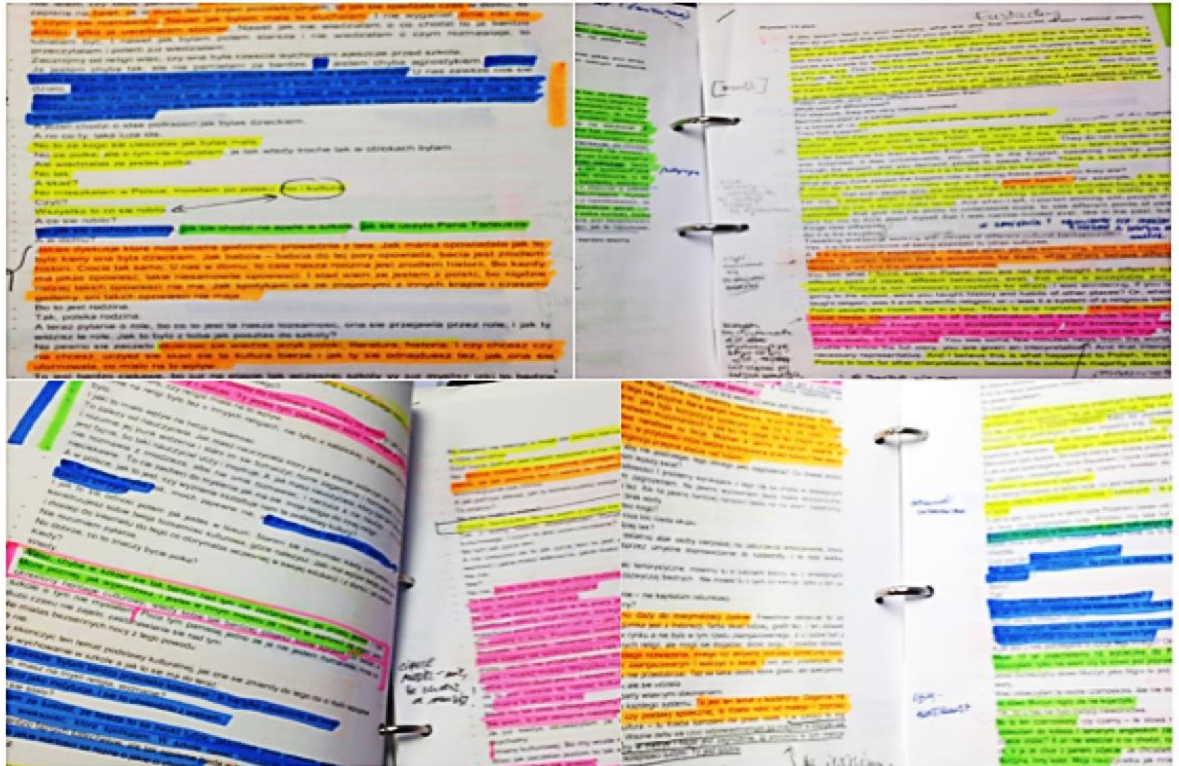

Figure 3.6: Pattern searching: extracts of my color-coded transcripts (2016-2017)

The thematic analysis for this study commences with listening and transcribing the narratives of participants, providing the first insight into the data. Upon completing transcription, repeated reading and simultaneous colour marking and coding takes place, allowing for a visual demarcation of the emerging themes. The colour patterned themes are subsequently cut off and organised into themed piles, including 'childhood home', 'school', 'religion', 'grandparents', 'internet', 'need for educational change in Poland' and 'need for developing lifelong learning predisposition'. In identifying the themes I not only look for the surface meaning, but also am determined to uncover the hidden ideas and preconceptions participants might hold. As the result, 'why?' becomes my most asked question not only during the fieldwork, but also during the data analysis stage. The identification and coding of the data is done by hand, without using a software. This is influenced by the specific way the transcripts are written up, as transcribing them in Polish I still use an English keyboard and letters, insensitive to some of Polish signs. Furthermore, some participants switch between Polish and English during interviews, or express themselves by creating words out of both languages, known as 'Ponglish' (Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak 2008). Hence, while writing up I follow their exact narrative, not always recognisable for software.

Furthermore, the decision to keep the analysis stage in the language of the participants is particularly important for the honesty and validity of the research process. This aspect is stressed specifically by Blumer (1992: 188) highlighting that the data interpretation needs to occur from a standpoint of the participants as 'it requires the researcher to catch the processes of interpretation by which the participants construct their actions'. Using the participants' narratives for the analysis process, instead of my own English language interpretations and representations of their stories, enhances the honesty, and therefore, the validity of the research process and outcome.

3.4.3 Writing-up process

It is worth noting that there is no other beginning and end to the writing of this research, apart from the dates indicating the time of the study. The writing is conducted in a strategically open and cyclical manner. Commencing it, I free myself from preconceptions I might hold about the nature of the outcomes, and stay sensitive to data to capture and represent variety of phenomena identified by participants as faithfully as possible. This approach is also reflected in the overall thesis construction, with cyclical approach to theory and methodology chapters as well. It might be argued that imposed chaos and lack

of linear, box-ticking progress poses a risk for a timely completion, yet this study proves it otherwise. As long as the non-linear strategy is clear and executed strategically, allowing and being comfortable with feelings like being lost with the process and/or with the data, the progress is achievable.
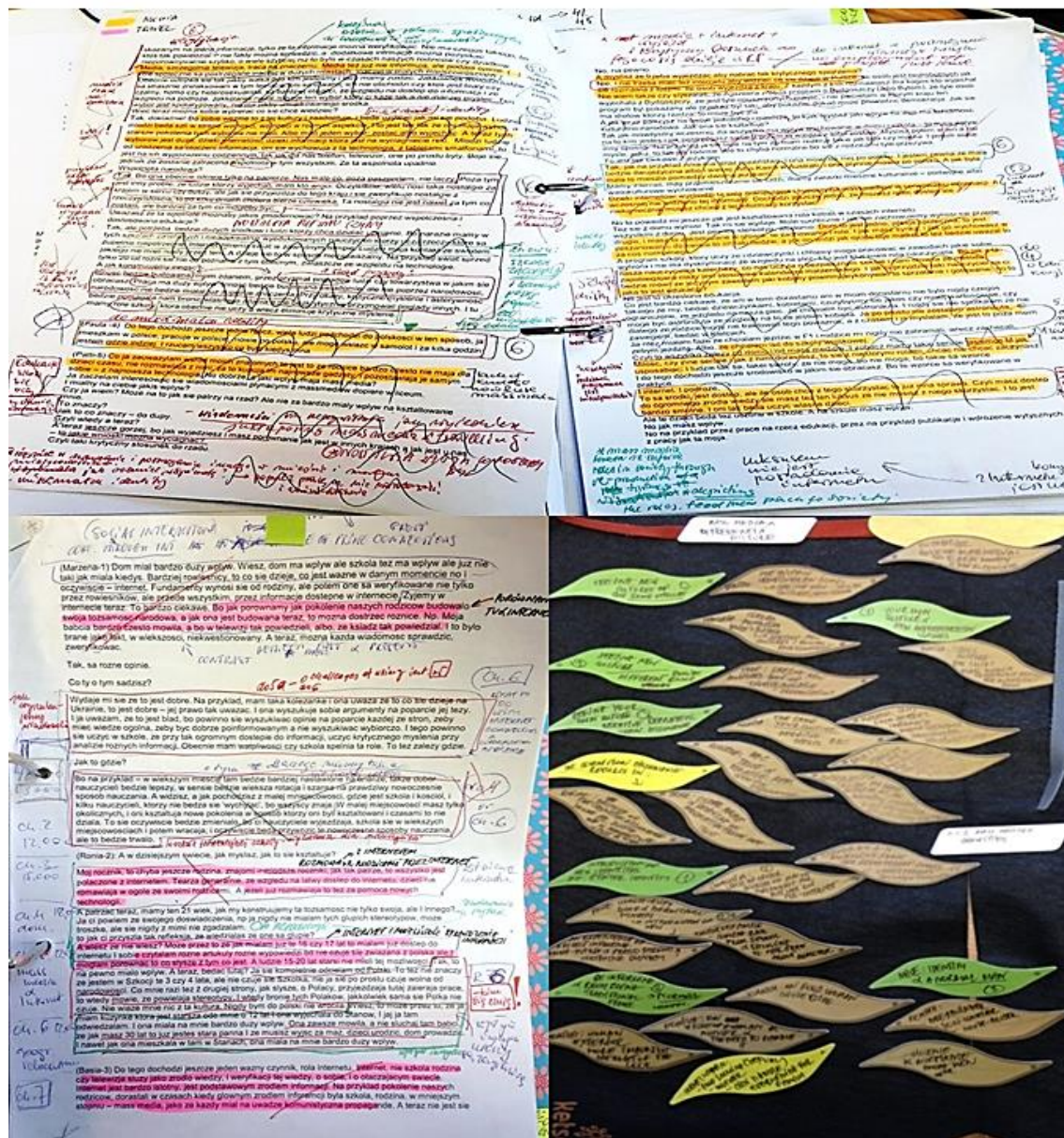
Figure 3.7: Organising and structuring chapters and paragraphs (May 2017)

The role of the Ketso set for writing process is also worth highlighting. Ketso is a creative engagement tool developed by Tippet (Ketso 2016) during her research fieldwork in Lesotho. Developed predominantly to gather data in offline contexts, Ketso also allows to overcome social and cultural challenges that might be encountered in the field, such as class and gender discrimination in information sharing. Constituting of a large felt, Velcro attached set of branches and coloured 'leaves', it allows for deconstruction and detailed

mapping of topics and ideas. It follows a concept of a tree, with a trunk at the centre depicturing the main issue of interest, with branches symbolizing emerging themes, specified with help of coloured leaves. Ketso is used predominantly to gather information, particularly within focus group contexts. It is also applied in a classroom environment with students to deconstruct complex ideas.

Yet, for the purpose of this study Ketso is used to help in structuring chapters of the thesis. Namely, I would write each individual interview's extract (accompanied by a participant's pseudonym on it) on a separate leaf, and group them by a topic (for example: the impact of mass-media, as pictured in the Figure 3.7 above). I discovered Ketso to be not only an invaluable tool to identify and organise emerging themes, in what otherwise would have been a post-fieldwork data avalanche, but also one which enhanced the discovery of patterns, and helped the writing process itself. Used as a structuring tool, Ketso provides invaluable help in organising paragraphs and chapters, saving time and enhancing efficiency of the writing process.
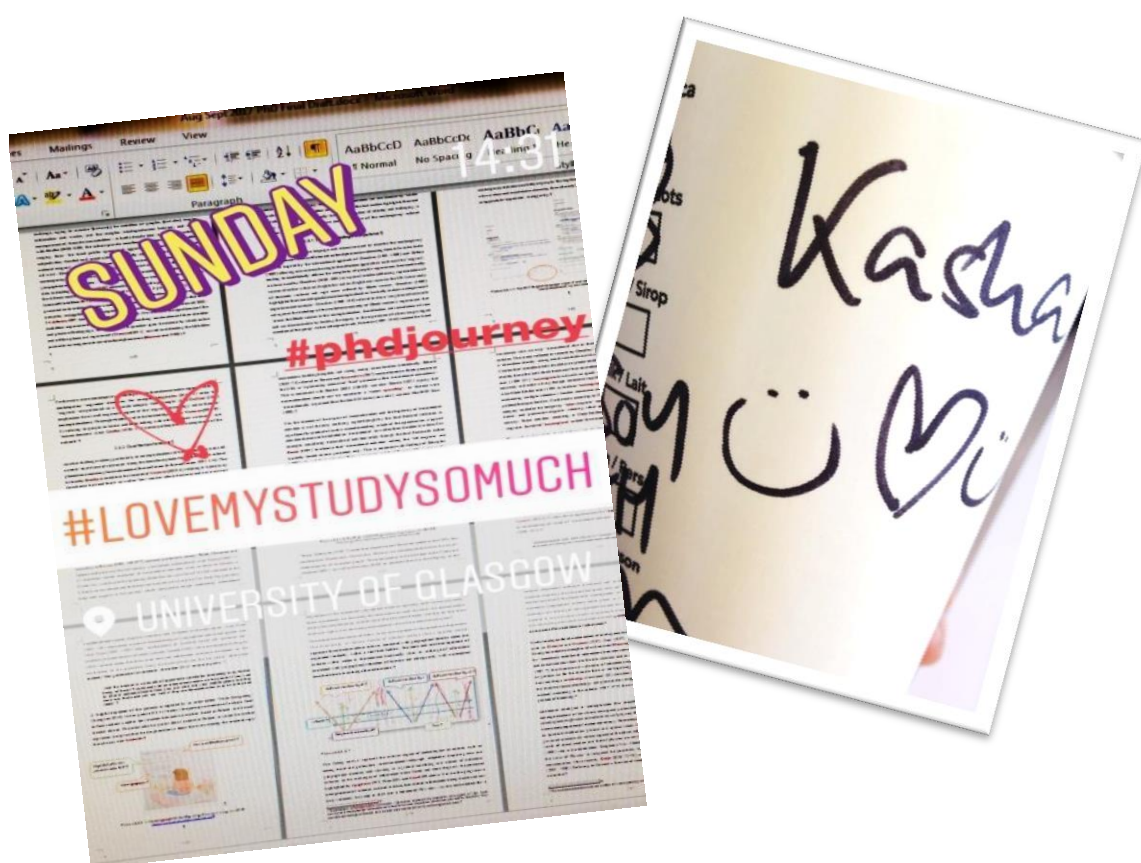

Figure 3.8: Examples of a multilocal community support: sharing my research journey across online and offline locations (from my research journal 2017/2018)

The last thing worth mentioning is the sharing the experience of writing up with others. Placing oneself at the centre of supporting communities of fellow researchers and

enthusiastic friends is of crucial importance for keeping generating passion and motivation, often in demand at final stages of writing up. I do so through my Instagram account where I gain plenty of support from graduate students worldwide, particularly through exchanging our daily progress and ways of overcoming challenges. I also develop local support in Glasgow, with coffee shops staff daily smile and kindness being an important factor on this socially isolating journey.

3.5   Summary

This Chapter addressed methodology and research methods adopted for the study on the manner millennial Poles make their identities and belongings across online and offline spaces. Particularly, it looked at a research design, highlighting the importance of a pilot study for testing methods, as well as theoretical paradigms before the main fieldwork takes place. It started with outlining the ontological and epistemological ramifications of the research, emphasizing constructivist and interpretivist outlook. There was also a substantial emphasis stressed on the role of emotions in tailoring data gathering strategies. It was noted that ethical emotional acuteness, sensitivity and care needs to be considered to assure participants feeling comfortable in sharing their stories of often personal character. Additionally, it provided a summary of advantages and limitations stemming adopting an emotive and tailored approach. This was followed by reflections on conducting bilingual fieldwork and data analysis, and concluded by a summary on the English writing up process.

Chapter 4: Local factors in identity negotiations

4.1   Overview

This Chapter constitutes the first one addressing the empirical data. It focuses on the childhood experiences of the millennial Poles that relate to negotiating their belonging identities, including sources of norms, values and beliefs systems that affect their worldview. The Chapter comprises of three sections; it commences with a discussion on the social environments participants are born into, including analyzing the impact of these networks on variety of identities, such as gender, class, and ethnicity. The next section examines the role of religion for ensuring norms, values, beliefs, rituals, and identities, while the last section considers the formal education system in Poland, which was reported by participants as significant in certifying their belonging identity. Inspired by Burke and Stets (2009), I have designed this Chapter to stress the importance of researching early childhood locations, seen as significant for meanings-making that participants are most likely to hold fast to as adults, and use daily in their social interactions spread across online and offline locations.

4.2   Impact of home

The highly emotionally charged socio-cultural environment of the local family and community members is identified by participants as the primary factor in negotiating their belonging identity. This is consonant with Burke and Stets (2009) and Appiah (2005) noting that the so-called home environment, characterized by its strong emotional bonds among individuals, constitutes the major source of identities. This perspective stems from Cooley (2005: 24), who emphasizes that 'the most important spheres of this intimate association and cooperation (…) are the family, the play-group of children, and the neighborhood or community of elders'. Such relations, as also noted by Nikitorowicz (1995), are characterized by an intentional and long-term relation between individuals, thereby furnishing next generations with specific norms, values and beliefs systems that are principally determined by historical and social contexts.

The participants of the study commence with highlighting the importance of significant people in their lives, but also the act of activity, as jointly instilling feelings of belonging. This includes Joanna (F/26) noting that the concepts of a 'family' and 'home' are far more inclusive than 'a mother and father'. In her description of home, she shifts her perspective from the blood-ties into the importance of active involvement. She explains that:

> 'family and home are not so much about the blood relations, but about spending time together, having fun together, like playing instruments together and learning together'.

According to Joanna, this might take place with 'my grandma and grandpa, but also with other children'. Such an understanding of the idea of home and belonging is also highlighted by other participants, including Euzebiusz (M/29), Fabian (M/28) and Kinga (F/30). They focus in their description on highly dynamic connections and intense emotional bonds, rather than on any particular type of associations. Such a perspective is consonant with a study by Carrington (1999: 5) defining the concepts of home and belonging as 'people loving and caring for one another'. According to Carrington (1999), the togetherness in time-sharing constitutes the essence of the concept of belonging, which should not be understood as static and given, but rather, as a dynamic and creative activity. Also Znaniecki (1971) highlights that the various identities and the sense of an individuals' belonging stems from commonly performing joint activities and thereby creating a shared reality.

The active networks of early childhood constitute the first source for meanings that individuals hold in later life as adults. This is noted by Joachim (M/28), stating that the meanings, including meanings of 'good behavior' comes as an aftermath of these interactions. Also Marlena (F/29) concurs, and goes further by hinting at the role of acceptance when she stated:

> 'one's culture and behaviors are the result of the way they were brought up at home; we just mirror behaviors of others, when growing up, seeking acceptance, so we try to reflect them well'.

Also Patryk (M/28) notes 'should my family was different, so would be I'. Such observations are also reached by Bandura (2001; 1986) highlighting that people tend to acquire knowledge and information through the observation of others that are either emotionally significant or have authority over them. Turner (1968) underlines the importance of the sum of all significant forms of interactions for creating the sense of identity and belonging.

According to Bandura (2001) the desire to replicate the behavior of others acquired through interactions within early childhood's highly emotional and active networks occurs consciously and unconsciously. The reason for that, according to the author, is their emotional association, which triggers feelings of belonging. Anna-Maria's (F/28) story illustrates Bandura's (2001) observation by highlighting the importance of the particular tastes and fragrances of meals prepared by her grandmother when she contemplates her concept of belonging:

> '(…) my grandmother came from the Eastern Borderlands [Pol. *Kresy*, including parts of contemporary Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine; an integral part of pre-WWII Poland] and nobody made a Ukrainian broth, or Lithuanian cold borscht [Pol. *chlodnik litewski*], like she did. Their fragrance always makes me feel at home'.

Additionally, Anna-Maria stresses the importance of a specific dress-code that evokes belonging and a sense of her identity, namely:

> 'my grandpa worked as a gardener, yet every day he wore a suit blazer and a white shirt, while attending his gardening duties. His dress code reflected not so much the practical aspects of his work, but rather was a sign of respect for others he worked with. Now, as an adult, I pay a lot of attention to my dress-code. I always try to convey through my dress-code my respect for others. However, such a consideration might be now considered *vintage*' [it is worth noting that Anna-Maria does not use the Polish word *staroświeckie* here, but speaking in Polish she substitutes it without blink of an eye with the English counterpart].

It is worth noting that all participants stress the significance of the emotionally charged and active networks present in their childhood for the type of identities and sense of belonging they hold as important in their later life. The next two sections, subsequently look into more detailed characteristics of these networks, as well as address types of identities and belongings they produce. This is a particularly noteworthy step, since the meanings, identities and belongings acquired in the childhood still linger, as reported by the participants, when contemporarily interacting across online and offline multicultural spaces.

4.2.1 Norms, values and the War

Burke (1991), as well as Burke and Stets (2009) note that the meanings for values and norms, including these of care and of justice, are the reflection of the feelings individuals experience in situations that evoke these in the first place. According to the majority of

participants, the meanings for values and norms are sourced from interactions with the generation of their grandparents.

Due to the demographic characteristics, many of the grandparents of the participants belong to the so-called 'War generation'. Ihanowicz et al. (1996) and Davis (2005) highlight that 'the War' [Pol. *wojna*] is a popular phrase denoting the events of the World War II (WWII) in Poland. Hence, the 'War generation' refers to those whose early adulthood and childhood is marked and transformed by the horrors of the WWII (Klimaszewski 1984). These included finding ways to cope with the tragic life circumstances brought about by the German and Russian invasion of 1939. Over the 6 years of war, one third of population perishes (Davis 2005), while the rest undergoes forced displacement, physical and mental abuse, as well as torture. At the same time this generation of Poles was able to display extraordinary acts of kindness, love and care.

Anna (F/26) explicitly highlights the significance of interactions with her War generation grandparents for her worldview, sense of identity and belonging. In particular, she recalls being brought up by her grandparents who:

> 'came from the East of Poland, Eastern Borderlands, now Ukraine, and growing up with them was a life lesson (…). My grandpa, who raised me, remembered well the effects of the Holodomor. He taught me to be respectful and grateful for everything I have, and especially – for food. Do you know that he always welcomed me with a slice of bread whenever I visited him? He did. He also taught me to be altruistic and selfless, to share and help others when they are in need. And to be thankful that I live in times of peace. I cherish these lessons till today'.

The collective memories of the horrors of this War also impact the norms and values held by Kazimierz (M/34). He particularly highlights their importance for his contemporary worldview and identity, recalling:

> 'the great-grandparents had almost a worship status in our family. (…) They lived through the [both World] Wars (…). Personal sacrifice and standing up for what you believe in were not empty statements in my family (…) Hence, what type of values you develop when growing up in a home like this? To love and respect others, to cherish freedom, but also not to be afraid to give up your own life, if that freedom and people you love are under threat'.

Another of the participants who linked grandparents and WWII for their current worldviews, and particularly, the importance of civic engagement, is Barbara (F/29). She highlights that:

'My grandparents, who participated in the War, always underlined the importance of the social and civic engagement, as they fought for this freedom personally and many of their friends were killed so we could live free and vote in our own country. And this is why I participate in every election'.

When questioning if Barbara participates in elections outside of Poland as well, she is slightly taken aback and states that she never thought about the significance of her grandparents' generation sacrifice in the wider social context, particularly outside of Poland. She states that her cultural identity is so strongly tied to Poland that she does not consider Scotland to currently be her home, nor even as a place she belongs to. 'Maybe I have not spend here enough time', Barbara ponders, 'and also, don't have many friend here. Hence no, I do not vote in Scotland as I believe it is not my place to do so'.

Nevertheless, Barbara is convinced about the reasons the young people of her generation might feel so strongly about the War generation's role in the Polish history. She highlights that:

'it's my duty [to be involved with the civic and social issues of my country], and the least I can do to show respect for the actions of my grandparents' generation'.

Barbara's intense emotions about the War generation is consonant with that of Anna-Maria, the latter explaining how her grandmother life-story had a 'huge influence' on her identity today. Anna-Maria stresses that:

'my grandmother's stories were very German [Pol. *są bardzo niemieckie*]. She was fluent in German, as it was the language of this part of Poland then. And I asked her, if she hated Germans for all what they did, and she said that absolutely not. That Poles together with German neighbors were equally victims and scared during the War, and often helped each other and shared food (…). My grandparents taught me so much, especially the empathy, tolerance and love, and to be thankful for every moment I have'.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the act of story sharing across generations is frequently highlighted as one of the most significant for constructing their sense of belonging for all participants. This is particularly highlighted by Danusia (F/35) stressing the importance of storytelling in developing her sense of identity and belonging. For her, the most significant was a ritual surrounding Sunday dinners, when, she tells me, her whole family and their friends meet up and share stories. Danusia recalls, that:

'they would tell plenty of anecdotes of the War and post-War times; beautiful stories of love, friendships and loyalty, sometimes very funny, many times, horribly sad. It was through these stories we learnt about ourselves, the War, and

unimaginable sacrifices these generations had to pay, and such stories stay with you, forever'.

The importance of the story-sharing is also highlighted by Anna-Maria, emphasizing the multicultural aspect of her home environment and its consequences. 'My family', Anna-Maria explains:

> 'comes from different places, from the Eastern Borderlands [currently, Lithuania] and Germany, all mostly Catholic, but also Jewish. But, they all considered themselves Polish. We all lived together in a large house, when I was growing up. My grandmother came from *Wilno* [Vilnius, currently Lithuania], and her Polish was quite distinct, to the point that many of my class-mates thought my grandmother was a foreigner! She was Catholic, but practicing Catholicism in Vilnius was problematic; it was also problematic to speak Polish in public in Vilnius at that time. Interestingly, shortly before passing away, she spoke to us only in Russian. (…) Our house was full of stories! The stories were everywhere, and because of these stories I know who I am.'

Similar observations are additionally made by Gerfryda (F/28), who locates her sense of belonging in storytelling as well. Explaining the idea, Gerfryda emphasizes that:

> 'everybody has stories, relating to past and present. The stories are everywhere! Granny is the major source of stories at our home, but also my sister and my dad, passionately discussing politics, and my aunt and uncle, they all have stories. This is why how I know where I came from. (…) When I speak to my friends [of different countries], they rarely have such stories. If you do not have these stories, how do you know who you are?'

This question is also raised by Anna-Maria, wondering about:

> 'who does share time with children today? Who teaches the children about who they are and where they came from, and tells them all the precious stories that would be a part of their life?'

Anna-Maria leaves me with this question unanswered, but subsequently underlines that the time sharing and storytelling not only affect the values and norms she holds for life, but also influence her construction of gender identities.

4.2.2 Gender struggle

According to Turner (1990; 1968) and Mead (1967), identities reflect the various functions individuals assume while socially interacting. Their characteristics, according to these authors, originate from within the context of a primary environment, such as the highly emotionally charged and active networks alluded to above, where new generations reflect behaviors of the emotionally significant others. Berger et al. (1995) highlight that this includes gender roles, which are a product of the interplay between emotional and social

factors, or – contextual factors, such as nationality, sexuality, and class. The performative character of gender identities is particularly stressed by Butler (1995: 21), noting that gender roles 'unfold as a series of operations that render of complex meanings about normative standards that we cannot escape, the choices we can make and the means by which we represent both'. The author (ibid.) observes that meanings encoded and passed through language are of significant importance for gender construction, as the characteristics of masculinity and femininity are 'ingrained in the language, that is the way by which categories of the masculine and the feminine are defined by and engrained in a language, most often produces a rigid and fictive construction of reality'. Butler's ideas here are amply supported by the participants of this study, who highlight the role of the emotionally tight and active networks of their childhood in this regard.

One of the frequently quoted examples of gender constructs is that of *Matka Polka*/the Polish Mother, since it is the principle archetype of what is expected of a woman, and especially, of a mother, and therefore provides a frame of reference for later life (Wray 2014). This architype of Polish Mother is explored by Kinga (F/30) who, in order to illustrate her point, takes out her mobile phone to display a visual graphic which is displayed below in a Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Drawing by H Sawka (25 April 2015). 'The most important values in Poland, *Newsweek Poland* accessed at: http://polska.newsweek.pl/wstawki-sawki-najwazniejsze-wartosci-w-polsce-wideo-,film,361519.html (accessed on 27 July 2015)

It is a sketch by a well-known Polish artist, publishing weekly for the *Newsweek Poland*. The picture is titled 'The most important values in Poland' and captures a kneeling, scruffy

looking woman with a visible signs of physical violence. It implies that the woman is of a Catholic faith, and holds the identities of wife and a mother, both inscribed into identity of a woman in Poland. The scruffiness of her looks and her buttered face suggest that she undergoes significant mental and physical health costs and sacrifices to fulfil her expected identities. She is depicted undergoing a ritual of a confession, being the Catholic symbolic custom of stating to a local priest a list of personal failings, or sins, but also sufferings, in exchange for a symbolical act of forgiveness and acceptance. After stating her sufferings the clearly mistreated woman hears that it is not her, but the concept of 'Family that is the most important'. 'Here', Kinga states, clearly agitated:

> 'you have the construction of role models in Poland in a nutshell! Why a woman, or anybody, should be pressured to *gracefully* [Kinga's emphasis] accept her role in a dysfunctional environment? Indeed, this is observed by her children and then the violent behavior, clear pathology, is adopted as *normal* [she emphasizes again] and acceptable by the new generations. This is a vicious cycle'.

According to Mead (2011) the crux of roles is located among the emotions associated with performing the activity, depending greatly on the feelings of social pressure and acceptance of others. Just like Kinga, other participants of this study commonly highlight the aspect of social pressure as the most significant one in accepting particular scripts for social identities, particularly these related to gender. The social pressure includes feelings of guilt, rejection, implied anxiety and public stigma. As a result, even the most draconian characteristics, if they are socially acceptable, are expected from individuals. This is particularly highlighted by Alicja (F/29), in her noting that:

> 'a female is expected to take a lot in Poland. I remember overhearing my mother speaking to my grandmother, that she wants a divorce from my dad. Their marriage was tragic, full of fights and violence (…). And you know what did my grandmother say in response? That if my mom divorces she will bring shame to the whole family (…). So she did not divorce. Ironically, as a child I was desperate for my parents to divorce, so there was peace at home'.

Alicja highlights that if her mom had a social support and acceptance, she would have made different choices. 'Ironically, she not only stayed deeply unhappy, yet accepted by family, but also passed such a role model to me and my sister, that apparently a woman is expected to make sacrifices, particularly in the family context'. Also Marlena (F/29) complements Alicja's view by highlighting the encoded 'messianic notion' of a woman identity in Poland. Marlena specifically refers to this identity as 'the Polish Mother' and explains that despite the fact that both of her parents pursued professional careers, 'it was mom who was the soul and spirit of home, and this is how I know that the central role of a

woman is to do with a family'. A similar observation is made by Zdzisława (F/28), noting that regardless of her fairly gender-equal household, where 'both, mom and dad' were evenly involved in children's upbringing:

> 'it is common in Poland to expect of a woman to become the stereotypical Polish Mother. I believe that these stereotypes are transmitted generationally and reinforced locally by social pressure. This includes mass media, broadcasting this stereotype *en masse*, particularly through soap operas, normalizing it. But the worst amongst them is [Roman-Catholic] religion that has been reinforcing the stereotypical role of a woman and her place in the society for centuries.'

The role of the acceptance by the members of the emotionally connected network in acquiring gender identity is pivotal according to Zdzisława, stating that:

> 'if you are born into such a society, you experience these models, and your parents teach you this way, then you are forced to attend a church and priest says how it is, so in the end these are the believes and behaviors you will hold and exercise in your life. And all society next to you will hold them as well'.

Zdzisława's observation is reflected in the research by Burke and Stets (2009), emphasizing that experiences of undertaking role performances transform in time into identities. According to Stryker (1980: 81) the role identities are built upon premises of 'extensiveness' and 'intensiveness', and as highlighted by Cooley (2005), the relations between the individual and their primary group environment are by far the most intense. This is also highlighted by Joanna (F/26), a mother of a one year old son. She tells me that despite the fact that her own system of values, norms and beliefs differs greatly from that of her childhood environment, she finds herself 'judged' with disapproval by that circle whenever they interact. 'Despite living in Scotland, we keep in touch with Poland frequently, for my son to develop relations with his grandparents', Joanna explains:

> 'yet almost every time we talk I am repeatedly asked "when are you getting married?"; "you know you have a child", and so on. Nobody asks my partner if he is going to get married as he also has a child; the idea of an unmarried father seems to be acceptable unlike that of unmarried mother'.

The challenge of holding different norms in later life other than those engendered by ones direct primary group is also highlighted by Kinga (F/30). As a result, Kinga's life-choices are highly contested by her close childhood connections back in Poland, particularly by the important females in her life, who express their disapproval for her 'horrible mistakes' at almost every opportunity.

Just like the role of a female, the role of a man within the society in Poland, according to the participants, is also well defined. 'A man is expected to be, hmmm… manly?' Michał (M/29) observes. Unlike the female's, he explains, the male identity is defined in Poland by contrast, as:

> 'it is not acceptable for a man, or a boy, to be like a girl. This shows weakness and signals that a person is a wimp and weenie, a softie, you know. I remember, that when I was a boy and started crying I was frequently told "stop being a girl (Pol. *baba*), you are a man". So you do not want to be considered "not-a-boy", or, some-worst-sort-of-boys; you want to be "the boy" and "the man". As a result, boys tend to stop expressing their emotions, as they would do otherwise'.

The lack of social space for expression of emotions within the construction of a male identity in Poland is also made by Piotr (M/30). 'I am very annoyed', he says,

> 'as in Poland, or when talking to Poles abroad, if a man admits that he is [emotionally] struggling, particularly with stress or pressure, he is automatically considered to be a weak person, a faggot, not-a-man. "The man", apparently, has to be tough and not allowed to display and share his emotional struggles. This is so unfair! If a girl emotionally struggles she is provided with social support of friends, but a male is expected just to get a grip and deal with it. That's why so many start drinking, as cannot cope. It is better not to express suffering socially, so you at least stay accepted and you are still considered the man'.

Similarly Eustachy (M/28) highlights the pressure to perform the male identity according to not always healthy standards cultivated within his family. He recalls that:

> 'my grandfather liked to have a[n alcoholic] drink. My father, on the other hand, does not drink alcohol at all. Only because of this reason my grandfather would not consider my father to be *the man* [Eustachy's emphasis], only some silly softie [Pol. '*głupek i ciota*']'.

The challenge to enforce and correct identity performance is also highlighted by Karolina (F/28). Married to a non-Pole, she is frequently told by her own father that her husband is 'not-the-man'. Karolina explains that there are a variety of reasons for this, most frequently underlining that:

> 'my husband is not able to fix a car, or a sink. As apparently my father is capable of these things and cannot understand how any man would be unable to do so'.

Another example of her husband failing to be perceived as 'the male' according to the Polish definition, relates to Karolina's chat with her childhood friends, all at this point married with small children. Karolina explains how her conscious decision of not having children was commented by her friends as her husband's lack of 'manly' credibility. 'And you know what I was told?' Karolina asks me, 'that obviously my husband is *not-the-man*

[her emphasis], as if I were a wife of any of them [males] I would have been pregnant with children long ago.' I ask Karolina if she said anything to this, to which she replies that she did not, as 'they would not understand [that there are other definitions of manhood], and I still want to have friends'.

4.2.3 Keeping-up appearances

Being accepted and recognized by people of relatively high emotional significance is emphasized by participants as an important driver in '*keeping-up appearances*' [Pol. '*bo co ludzie powiedzą?*']. According to participants, one's appearance is central to the process of performing identities. This aspect is highlighted by Elżbieta (F/28), who at first struggles to describe the concept in Polish. 'Wait, how do you say it in Polish?' Elżbieta struggles, 'it is *imposed* on you [she strongly emphasis the verb content within the phrase]; it is not that is negotiable – it is expected that you must hold this particular set of beliefs, you must perform in certain way, you must attend the church, as otherwise, there is this pressure of "what others might think". So, you just keep up appearances'.

The challenge to indifference to 'what others might think' stems from the general human need for acceptance, resulting in the creation of a place of belonging. Eustachy (M/28) notes that 'you behave the way your society expects you to behave, as you learn that other behavior will not be approved', and subsequently, will result in an exclusion. He gives an example of his grandfather claiming that Eustachy's father is clearly 'not Polish, as one is a *normal* Pole if one drinks vodka', Eustachy explains, 'and if you do not, you are different, not good enough, not one of us'. Similar experiences are highlighted by Kazimierz (M/34), who upon arriving to Scotland worked first in a local factory with other Poles. 'I was totally excluded by the Polish folks, as I would not drink alcohol. I was considered not Polish, as Poles drink, and I preferred to go to a museum after work, or – to study. This was quite painful experience'.

The levels of social pressure and subsequent stigma vary, as noted by Eustachy, highlighting his close network of acquaintances socially excluding him, and his young family, upon his decision to change his faith. He stresses that:

> 'you feel even worse, if you are not a Catholic. I give you an example: we recently visited Poland and while in our home-town, with our [a few months old] daughter, we bumped into a former close friend of mine. I was so happy to see him, but when he noted us he decided to ignore us. He terminated all contacts with us, since I changed faith [to Islam]'.

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It is worth noting that within the Polish context changing faith might be considered as act of treason, participants, such as Eustachy note. This is also observed by Fabian and Izaura (F/28), with Isaura emphasizing that:

> 'I come from a small town, yet my family was not Catholic at all. However, my mom, always repeated that we live here and need to fit into the neighborhood (Pol. *wyglądać dobrze przed sąsiadami*), so a priest won't name us during a sermon (Pol. *nie wyklnie nas z ambony*), literally. Also, this was the only reason why a priest was accepted in our house for *Kolęda*'.

An actual act of rejection by a close community is described by Marysia (F/28). To depict the situation she recalls the experience of her grandmother; coming from a small village, where she divorces at the age of 27 and leaves her family house taking her two small children. 'She worked three jobs a day to support her family, yet,' Marysia highlights, 'she, and her two adorable daughters were condemned by a local priest and the villagers, because she left her alcoholic husband. They were the outcasts, while the husband's behavior was considered acceptable'. Recalling more recent events Dorota (F/27) shares her experience when confronted with social rejection upon failing to perform her identity as a student. She refers to an event of attending a Catholic religion class at her local school and being forced to listen to a priest lecturing about the 'sin of the divorce. He talked about how parents need to stay together, despite anything' Dorota recalls:

> 'I am, however, a child of divorced parents. I come from a happy family, despite my parents' divorce, and will not allow to consider my family as "sinful" and of lesser value, only because my parents were unable to stay together. I voiced my opinion, but this was not welcomed. The priest called my mother to school, and I also failed the *religia* subject. Failing the subject was particularly problematic, as it lowered my overall annual performance scores (Pol. *średnia*)'.

Dorota also reflects how in order to fit in and keeping the appearances, at least in front of her parents, she needed to learn how to be deceitful:

> 'Despite being divorced [implies being excluded from the Church's community], both my parents were determined and insisted I attend a weekly mass. I, however, even as a child, disliked the activity deeply, so if I spent Sunday with my dad, I would say that I have already attended the service in a morning with mom. It felt really bad being deceitful to parents, but it was impossible to function otherwise.'

She expresses the belief that the major reason for people continuing to keep up appearances is their fear of social rejection. 'As a result, voicing an opinion that differs from the norm, or trying to discuss a controversial subject in public, rarely finds acceptance. A potential discussion will generally be quickly shut down, as only a single,

approved narrative is locally accepted in Poland'. The participants note that this is changing, however. According to Fabian (M/28) people find support and acceptance through online connections. This is also highlighted by others shifting the manner in which a variety of identities are performed.

Despite the observed changes, participants highlight that in Poland there still exist a profound tendency for keeping up appearances, reinforced by not allowing a public space for making a mistake. The social pathology is highlighted by Izaura (F/28) noting that:

> 'training of not being allowed to make mistakes starts early in life and is present both at your home and at school. At home if you make an honest mistake, you will be called "stupid", while later at school you will be named similar names and also laugh at, both by teachers and fellow pupils. This frequently happens if one says something that is original, different and non-standard'.

The observation is also made by Danusia (F/30), who as a child would not only be called names if did something in her own way, but also physically smacked, if did not meet expectations. According to Danusia, physical violence and shouting was considered a 'normal behavior'. Other participants, such as Joanna (F/26) and Gerfryda (F/28), recall being 'punished' with no access to favorite toys or activities, unless they behaved in the expected manner. Fabian (M/28) and Egiliusz (M/28), highlight also the omnipresent threat of being laugh at, particularly at school, by teachers and other fellow pupils. This was also accomplished by a threat of a physical abuse from other children if a person was identified as 'different'. For example, Dorota (F/27) points, that:

> 'in order to reward creative thinking and pro-active approach, the Polish educational system punishes pupils instead. How one is able to show off the critical thinking skills, if the only thing that is requited is memorizing a single interpretation, dismissing other views with laughing at, regardless of possible argumentations'.

Izaura (F/28) provides another example when recalling her final high school exam (Pol. *Matura*).

> 'It is a test with only one, the accepted one, interpretation allowed. As I agree with such a method of examination for science subjects, it does not work for any of social sciences, art and literature. As a result, adult Poles are trapped in only one interpretation of reality, and in order to fit into this reality, everybody has to keep appearances, so will not be considered different and other and laughed at'.

Additionally, Fabian (M/28) stresses that it was not until he left Poland when he felt truly himself and accepted. He emphasizes that:

'Here, in Scotland, there is absence of this ongoing criticism and emphasis on behaving "right" [Pol. *zachowywać sie właściwie*] to fit in, to keep the appearances; here everyone encourages you to be yourself and to capitalize on your potential'.

According to Izaura (F/28), there is an institution in Poland that is particularly active in prolonging the 'single right reality' narrative, and, it is the Catholic Church in Poland. 'In Poland it is still problematic to speak against this church. And since people want to belong somewhere, so they keep attending masses, welcome priests to their homes, and send their children to religion classes, because everyone else does so. It is scary to think about how great power in identity making this church has!', Izaura ponders.

4.3   Impact of beliefs

Belonging originates among people sharing similar values and norms (hooks 2008). As outlined in the Polish Context Section, contemporary Polish values and norms are still predominantly influenced by the institution of the Polish Catholic Church. Juxtaposed with the centuries long Catholic tradition of the Polish state, the contemporary Polish Catholic Church plays a key cultural role in constituting 'Polish' belonging and identity. This aspect is heavily highlighted by the participants of the study. For example, Izaura observes that:

'when you think about the Polish identity and belonging, it is impossible to escape the cult of the Virgin Mary/ *Maryja*. It is a specific cult, adopting plenty of local folklore, customs and believes, hence the tight local connection to identity'.

Isaura is not the only one who emphatically believes in the profound impact on the belonging identity of Poles that the proliferation of the public imaginary and language by the typically Polish Catholic symbols and meanings has. This belief is expressed in one manner or another by all the participants without exception, being neatly encoded in the notion one cannot be a Pole if one is not Catholic and White.

4.3.1   Beliefs and belonging

Burke and Stets (2009) note that people learn to perform particular roles associated with their identities by observing others performing that role, and that the resonance and impact of such role modeling occurs to greatest effect among closely tied societies. This aspect is observed by Marlena, noting that:

'my family has been very religious [meaning in Poland: Catholic]. When I was a kid I didn't understand what religion involves, however now, I am maybe not so religious as my mom, but I attend a service every Sunday.'

For Zdzisława, attending mass as a child was a 'forced activity' which she grudgingly did only due to the social pressure of her parents. According to Burke and Stets (2009) applying various types of pressures by the intimate group forces an individual to obey. Zdzisława notes that upon becoming older, her parents' pressure relaxed and she abandoned attending church services all together. She notes, however, that 'due to pressure imposed particularly by her family members, Catholicism becomes the central point in construction of the Polish cultural identity for many'.

This observation is also noted by Barbara (F/29), who additionally observed that social pressure leaves no space for the verification of beliefs, or a critical discussion. Such social pressure is described as fear appeal by Pratkanis and Aronson (2007). The threat of dire social consequences will result from failing to follow norms, the fear appeal, according to the authors, constitutes a relatively successful tactic in achieving certain desired collective behaviors. The fear appeal aspect is additionally discussed by Eustachy, highlighting that:

> 'many young people follow what is expected of them. For example, they get married [in the Catholic Church], as the parents and family wants it; then they Baptize their children, not because this is particularly important to them, but because their family insists. Now this is changing a bit, as many left Poland, and even in Poland, they tend to oppose (…). Yet, it is true to say that for the majority the pressure to follow the Catholic tradition is real'.

Barbara notes, in a similar manner, that 'many people I know got married [in a church] only because families expected it, with the same going for the baptism of new-borns. Since everybody does it, you are expected to do this as well'. Also Anna (F/26) emphasizes that for her 'it was unthinkable not to be a Catholic and not to attend the weekly [mass] service'. This is consonant with Euzebiusz (M/29), recalling that:

> 'despite that my parents were non-religious I needed to attend the Mass, as not being involved with the church was publicly shamed and ostracized. My mother was the one who particularly insisted I went, despite the fact she did not go. There was severe public pressure. You felt when among children. As if you did not go to Church, they would run after you and call you names. So, I just followed.'

A similar experience is related by Maurycy (M/23) as well:

> 'When I was a child I needed to attend Church, I hated it, but it was non-discussable. It was especially important for my mother. If it was up to me, I would sign out of the Church now, as I do not believe and do not practice. But, my mother said that if I do so it will break her heart, so I will not do it.'

The aspect of 'normality' of the Catholic belonging is also noted by Mateusz (M/28), stating – that 'it just is'. This is echoed by Bartłomiej (M/28) who observes that his

becoming an atheist as an adult, was not a choice he had heard of or could even have imagined as a child. 'It was obvious that everybody was Catholic and attended a mass. And I even liked it; the services for children were interesting, plenty of singing and other fun activities', Bartłomiej recalls.

The Polish Catholic Church's cultural influence begins at birth and lasts till death, and is reinforced through public pressure to attend rituals of Baptism, Marriage, Last-Rights, Burial, Eater, Christmas and many others. One of these customs, *Kolęda*, is particularly worth noting, since it serves to tighten local social bonds with the Church. The custom stems from a pre-Christian tradition involving a Winter festival of singing and spending time together. However, its meaning in Poland refers to an annual home visit of a local priest to symbolically bless a household, and to collect funds for the church. The degree to which *Kolęda*, serves its purpose is reflected by statistical data on 'the most secular of the Polish cities', Warsaw, where 75 to 90 percent of its inhabitants participate in *Kolęda* (Instytut Statystyki Koscioła Katolickiego, 2010). This aspect is particularly emphasized by Kazimierz (M/34), who recalls that the priests and other Catholic officials were close family acquaintances and

> 'when we were children, Catholicism was as obvious as breathing air. If you are a Pole, you are Catholic. All my siblings and I were involved in church's activities, like serving at the altar. I remember my sisters being particularly fond of the Corpus Christi processions, when they would dress up and scatter flowers' petals'.

The intensity and expressiveness of the religious factor for creating their local identity and sense of belonging is also highlighted by Apolina (F/29) noticing that 'Catholicism and being Polish are synonymous and interchangeable'. Tadeusz (M/26), when asked what is the meaning of Polish identity, stated 'it is the Catholicism, I mean – all these publicly celebrated Church holidays, Christmas, Easter, *Kolęda*, Lent'. Also Marlena (F/29) observes that 'Catholicism is deeply engraved into Polish identity, as even the creed of the Polishness has referral to 'the Lord', as in "the Lord, the Honor, the Fatherland" [Pol. *Bóg, Honor, Ojczyzna*]'. According to Elżbieta, Catholicism has the most profound influence on Poland's system of moral values and code of ethics. She gives an example of her 'deeply religious family and other Poles' and observes, that for them 'the Decalogue sets moral and ethical parameters. There is no other source of ethics in Poland; I have not heard about any', Elżbieta ponders for a moment, visibly intrigued by her own statement.

4.3.2 Beliefs and exclusion

According to the participants of this study, the prominent role played by the institution of the Polish Catholic Church in determining a sense of local identity and belonging is additionally reflected in the Polish language and discourse. Language, as already discussed in Chapter 2, refers to a structured system of symbols reflecting local power relations, and its role is to enable communication through shared patterns of understanding (Harley 2004: 5). An example of such a local shared understanding is highlighted by Fabian (M/28) highlighting the word 'religion'/*religia*. Fabian notes that:

> 'in English the word denotes a variety of spiritual systems, while in Polish the word refers solely to the Roman Catholicism, to be precise – to the Polish Catholicism. This interpretation is present on the certificates issued by primary and high schools, using the word *religia* exclusively to denote the strictly Catholic instruction class.'

The observations of Fabian are consonant with those by Krzysztof (M/29), emphasizing that 'in Poland the words "religion" and "a church" refer only to one particular religion that is Catholicism'. Also Izaura (F/28) notes that:

> 'here [in Scotland] "religious studies" are a type of secular discussions focused on comparing different belief systems, while in Poland, since the early childhood you have *religia*, being this Catholic instruction class. And now, you have a final high-school exam in *religia* as well!' Izaura stresses with dismay.

According to Hall (1997: 224) the language affects individuals' choices and structures traditions; 'our way of life, and who we are – our identities' are set and expressed through language. This profound power of language in identity and belonging construction is highlighted by Krzysztof, noting that as the result of:

> 'hijacking the meaning of the word *religia* by Polish Catholic Church, other denominations simply do not function in the Polish understanding as religions'.

Also Basia (F/28) underlines this fact, by observing that:

> 'Other religious systems present within the Polish territory are whipped out from the public imaginary, and as such less valuable. Polish Catholicism achieved the position of the one and only *truth* there (…). Jehovah's Witnesses are commonly called in Poland as the 'cat's faith' [Pol. *kocia wiara*], how disrespectful is that?'

The lack of acknowledgment for other religions is also noted by Izaura (F/28), who describes challenges for many Poles when confronted with others of different beliefs. According to Izaura:

'this is socially problematic as for many Poles in places like Scotland, they keep considering others of different faiths as less culturally accomplished and socially backwards'.

It is worth noting the dynamic aspect of the insensitivity and expressiveness of the Polish Catholic worldview impacting the public imaginary in Poland. An example is provided by Basia. The Toruń native, she explains how the city used to be associated with Copernicus, being the birthplace of the astronomer, and with the famously delicious gingerbread cookies. 'Currently, this is not the case', Basia observes. She tells me her story of hosting a visitor, and while planning a sightseeing plan among her family members, she recalls being urged to show him 'the most important place in Toruń, *Radio Maryja*. *Radio Maryja* sadly took over the legacy of Copernicus in peoples' imagination', Basia notes.

Discussing the possible causes for language and meaning changes, the participants point to the legacy of the pontificate of John Paul the Second. For example, Gerfryda (F/28) notes that:

> 'a word *the Pope* [Pol. *Papież*] in the Polish language signifies the Polish Pope solely, while when referring to the current pontiffs, people tend to use expressions like *the current Pope*, *Pope Francis*, or simply *Francis*. Yet, if you say *the Pope* in Polish, it will be commonly understood that you mean John Paul Second'.

As the result, according to Michał (M/29), 'being a Catholic in Poland is so important; it is tied to who you are. This is not the same, for example for the French, because we had the Pope'. Additionally, as Anna-Maria (F/28) notes, the intensity of the Catholic symbols and meanings interwoven within the Polish language resulted in leading her to belief that:

> 'the Lord itself is Polish. Seriously. This was my understanding. That we [Polish] are very special. And the Pope was Polish as well, and this was so natural, that we are better, meaning – we have the Lord on our side. (…) and everybody in Poland was crazy about the Pope, as for that generation, the War generation, to see the Polish Pope was extraordinary.(…) The Pope was Polish and the God was Polish, we are the special nation'.

This consideration of the Polish nation as special and unique is highlighted frequently by other participants, including Euzebiusz (M/29). 'The majority Polish people have been considering themselves the special, chosen, better nation, than others. Many still believe they are', Euzebiusz observes.

The reactions among participants to the dominant Catholic discourse in Poland are various, with majority pointing to the slowly progressing process of searching for other than Catholic values and beliefs systems. 'This is slow, particularly in smaller towns and a

countryside, however, inevitable', Zdzisława (F/28) notes, 'mostly due the ongoing process of knowledge digitalization'. 'A majority has a mobile or a laptop now, with internet access, there is no question about it', Fabian (M/28) observes. Roksana (F/28) points to European travel being a basic activity, instead of 'special, as unaffordable. Visiting Milan or Athens is as common as going to Gdańsk or Warsaw', she explains. Patryk (M/28) points that for many, their local circle of friends consists of people of different cultural backgrounds, 'often living in different European cities, or even in other continents'. Zdzisława (F/28) notes that when compare with the local pressure imposed in Poland, many young people 'shut down, and reject [the Polish Catholicism], when finally provided with a much needed space to develop their own perspective'. Egiliusz (M/28) also notes that 'things are changing, as many young people also left [Poland] and became anonymous for their new communities, allowing for a verification of their beliefs and identities.' An example is given by Joanna (F/26). Now a mother of a few months old toddler, she strongly rejected imposing a particular belief system on her adorable son. 'For me', she explains:

> 'he might love Jesus in the morning, while praising Allah in the evening and meditating over the weekends. For me, the most important is so he grows up to an emphatic, ethical and wise individual. When I was a child I always had to explain myself of my choices, as when I missed a *religia* class, or a mass. I do not want this for him. He is a free being.'

4.4   Impact of education

According to participants the last of the major offline factors influencing the formulation of identity and belonging is the formal education system. It is worth noting that according to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (1997), unless stated otherwise, the education system in Poland is secular. This idea is reiterated in the Education Bill (1991: Preamble) which states that:

> 'teaching and socialization in Poland takes place according to the universal code of ethics, with the respect for the Christian values. Every school is obliged to provide its pupils with conditions necessary for their development in values of solidarity, democracy, tolerance, justice and freedom'.

Additionally, the Education Bill (1991: Preamble) sets the core aims of formal education curricula for all levels of formal education, stating that it serves to:

> 'develop among young people the sense of responsibility, admiration of the Fatherland and respect for the Polish cultural heritage, while being open, at the same time to values of European and world's cultures'.

That the education policy of a state is not solely determined by scholarly considerations is also noted in research by Forrester and Garratt (2016: 1), who underline that such policies of a state originates 'in a range of competing influences, (…) broadly categorized as social, political, economic, technological, religious and cultural factors'. Also, Trowler (2003: 95) observes that education policy is designed to 'bring about specific goals'. These, according to Ball (1993), are achieved through a text and through a discourse. And it is the presence of a particular type of discourse within formal education in Poland that is highlighted by all participants of this study.

4.4.1 Educating to belong

The cultural curriculum of Polish, namely: Polish language/*jezyk polski*, covering Polish literature and grammar, history/*historia* and *religia*. The history classes are particularly worth noting, as they are frequently identified by participants as one of the major factors in identity making. Despite being referred as 'history', the meaning is rather specific and relates to the Polish history exclusively. This is noted by Marlena (F/29), describing the subject as 'the Polish-centered, *obviously* [her emphasis]'. The apparent fact of the Polish-centrism is reflected by others as well, including Anna (F/26), who explains that

> '*of course*, the history was that of Poland, and even in primary 1 to 3 [where there are no history classes] we were taught about the sacrifice of the Gray Brigades [Pol. *Szare Szeregi*, children's brigades during WW2] and others, and that because of their heroism and determination we speak Polish today and have our own country we can call home'.

Anna also recalls that history lessons was conducted in a variety of forms, including enacting roles in schools' performances. 'Suddenly, I was not me, having a carefree life in the twenty first century', Anna reflects:

> 'but was transformed into the [1944 Warsaw] uprising partisan, desperate to protect and preserve the Polish heritage and our freedom for future generations. It was a very powerful experience'.

For Aneta (F/28), whose parents are internationally renowned artists, it was only during her primary school experience when she was introduced to a concept of nationality. 'Before that', Aneta notes, 'I did not consider myself or others, as different or unique'. She described her experience of acquiring her national identity as the 'remembrance project dedicated to those who fought in *the war*, and national uprisings of the last 250 years'. Similarly, Iwona (F/28) notes that a concept of a national belonging was not an idea she was concerned with as a child, but rather she mirrored others around her. She remembers

being taught a nursery rhyme about being 'little Poles', making her realize the importance of her belonging. As 'a kid you take everything literally and rarely question the information', Iwona explains. Also Adrian (M/29) highlights the characteristics of the Polish national identity and refers to it as 'the Polish Messianism, suffering and being the constant victim'. This is also noted by Anna (F/26), adding that the Polish educational curriculum does not include the quite extensive positive and celebratory cultural heritage of Poland:

> 'there is no word about the world famous Polish School of Mathematics with Banach and others, meeting at the Scottish Café in Lwów. There is very little about the importance of the Polish Constitution, the first in the modern Europe, and about the international effort and consultation leading to it; no word about the fascinating history of the Polish School of Pilots started by four Americans having a debt of honor towards all the Poles fighting for the American Independence (…). There is no joyful celebration of the amazing achievements of Skłodowska-Curie, two times the Nobel Prize winner. Instead there is this constant focus on danger, war, and being a victim. And this feeling of the victim becomes *us* and our heritage that we need to protect'.

As the result, the participants frequently highlighted the importance of 'moral victories and the past military greatness of Poland', as noted by Michał (M/29), 'and the duty of being a good patriot. If you are not a patriot, you are rather not Polish' he observes. 'The emphasis on the traumatic history of Poland contributes to our feelings of specialness and the uniqueness as a nation', Małgorzata (F/27) explains:

> 'as a nation we are taught and demanded to be proud and respectful towards the horrific sacrifice of former generations. That if something happens again, *we need* to behave the same. This is expected of us, particularly in the school context. We are taught the importance of being Polish, and nobody else, from a nursery level. We become predictable manufactured products of this system', Małgorzata concludes.

Participants underline that the specific narrative and discourse is also present and supported by the *religia* classes. Augusta (F/29) notes that 'the formal education in Poland is strictly Catholic', with no space for other interpretations. 'It is not like you have a choice', Natalia (F/28) laughs:

> 'of course not. Catholic religion, branded as the religion classes, *religia*, is the only thing that is on offer, and you need to attend regardless of your thoughts and beliefs. There were a couple of children who did not attend, but it took some courage to stand up [among their local community]. Also, there is another challenge, as if you do not attend, you have a spare hour within a day and you do not exactly know what to do with yourself in this time. (…) It is quite scary to think how deeply [culturally] Catholic views infiltrated our lives'.

According to Monika (F/28), the construction formal education system to include the religious component results in one assuming and displaying superiority towards other religions and forms of cultural otherness. 'There is no space for other religion, other national identity, or any other form of otherness, in the formal education curriculum', Monika notes.

The interweaving of religious and national belonging and identity within the formal education curriculum, as reported by participants, is also present in schools' activities. This includes the annual inauguration of the academic year, and also celebration of commencing the formal education for the 6 year old children, which both take place at a local church and at school. There is also an incorporation of religious activities, such as the Lent retreats [Pol. *rekolekcje wielkopostne*] into the formal education core curricula. The Lent retreats are particularly worth noting, as according to Portal Oświata (2011), at the time of retreats the schools suspend classes for the three consecutive days, with pupils required to attend a church instead, where their attendance is marked and reported back to their schools. This fact is reported by participants of this study as well, with Tadeusz (M/26) recalling that 'every year around Lent time we would need to get to church to get our attendance marked; it was really a nuisance, as some priests would not mark your attendance unless you participated in a mass'. Also, recalling his initiation into the formal education as a little boy, Tadeusz notes that:

> 'it took place in a church, and there was a mass, and all the children had to be dressed in white and dark blue, and look to the right saluting when our school banner and the Polish flag was brought in, and then we all sang the national anthem, *Poland has not perished, till we are alive* [Pol. *Jeszcze Polska nie zgineła*]. And it was that national anthem sang together that made me feel that I am a member of this entity called Poland.'

Recalling her own experience, Loreta (F/29) refers to this ceremony as one 'with flags, banners, crosses and the national anthem'. This particular educational discourse is reflected in pictures and other symbols displayed in a prominent places at schools and classrooms. These include pictures of the White Eagle, being the Polish national emblem, next to a figure of a Catholic Cross with crucified Jesus, often accompanied by a picture of Holy Mary, and also by a picture of the Saint Pope John Paul the Second, all being displayed together in the majority of classrooms and other public spaces, implying their unity within the sense of belonging. As the result participants, including Joachim (M/28), note that 'it is not that I have a choice, or, could contemplate my options of belonging; no, you are just

ascribed here, and if you are Polish, your sign is the white eagle, you better be a Catholic as well. As these symbols are you'.

Additionally, Anna-Maria (F/28) observes that at her school lessons would commence with a Catholic morning prayer, regardless if the first lesson was Mathematics or Biology. 'We always started with *Our Father* and *Holy Mary* prayers', Anna-Maria recalls, 'therefore the children simply do not encounter a cultural difference at school, as there is no place for it'. Anna-Maria's observations are similar to these of Paulina, observing that 'at school we all started classes with a common prayer, there was lunchtime Catholic singing and prayers [Pol. *oaza*]. Therefore, we did not have contact with pupils of other national or cultural backgrounds, as if they were, they did not make it public'.

Furthermore, Augusta (F/29) extends the religious worldview influencing subjects beyond history, to include also biology and 'family life instruction classes'/*przystosowanie do zycia w rodzinie*. 'While at school', Augusta observes:

> 'nobody speaks to the you about dangers of sexually transmitted diseases, nobody talks to you about severe psychological consequences of random sex encounters, this a taboo subject in the Polish school, in many household, as learning about your sexuality and sexual life is done in a context of the Catechism'.

These observations are also reported by an in-depth independent study by the Foundation for Multiculturality 'Polisfera' (2012: 156-160), highlighting that Catholicism is the only source of the system of values, social norms and ethical behaviour, at all levels of the public education in Poland, contradicting the mission stated in the Polish Constitution and the Educational Bill. The 'ethics' classes, *etyka*, a subject integrating variety of ethical, moral and philosophical practices, as well as providing a substitute for *religia* class, is not reflected in practice (2012: 13; 32-34). It is also noted (2012: 138-156) that the personal, that is Catholic beliefs of teachers, as well as the local social pressure, influence contents of curricula for subjects such as 'Polish [literature], history and biology classes', influencing, among others, the perceptions of gender roles in a society. It is also states that subjects, such as the already mentioned 'family life instruction classes', are frequently taught by the *religia* instructors (2012: 156).

4.4.2 Sanctioning exclusion

According to Kellner (1998: 141) the concept of identity in modern societies tends to be still 'circumscribed, fixed and limited', although the possibilities for expansion of

identities has broadened. There are two ways of expanding identities, as noted by the author (1998), one by gaining a distance from tradition, and the other by a reflective analysis of circumstances. According to participants of this study, both these conditions are hardly feasible within the Polish cultural context. Reflecting on the latter Kacper (M/28) observes that 'we are not taught critical thinking skills at school. Instead we are expected to suppress any critical instincts to memorize requited information, and in many cases – forget it shortly after'. Kacper's reflection is consonant with that of Gerfryda (F/28), observing that:

> 'your independent opinion, regardless of argumentation and creativity displayed, does not matter if does not reflect the agreed narrative. And if you keep insisting, you will be punished with bad grades, so you learn not to do it again'.

Loreta describes the process of learning in Poland as 'rather passive that critical, uploading of data. I was simply stuck, as there was no place for a critical appraisal or analysis of the historical or cultural information other than the official and accepted one'. Also Kinga (F/30) highlights the intolerance of independent thinking at school. 'I remember' Kinga recalls:

> 'a mock test for a final exam in Polish. For this exam we had to write an essay about Polish values that should be preserved for future generations. I was quite proud of my essay as considered it creative and original, cited plenty of literature to back ideas. A week later we got the results, ordered from best to worst, accompanied by a public feedback from a teacher. And my name was called last. It was quite a shock as I did not have problems with writing essays before. "Fascinating essay, full of original ideas, well written and argued", I hear, "however, does not correlate with answers set by the exam commission; failed." At the moment of hearing this something broke inside of me. Later, I passed each exam with As, but only because I would memorize and repeat the ideas exactly the way they were taught. Overall, it was very disheartening experience, muting creativity and independent thinking in me for a long time'.

Marlena (F/29) is another of the participants reflecting on a way she acquired knowledge at school and the possible consequences of this educational method. According to her:

> 'the approach of imposing a single approved narrative is highly destructive, as makes children afraid to express, or even create independent opinions. As a result, many wait to be told what to do, instead of thinking and making decisions independently'.

The aspect of rigidness and lack of space for negotiating knowledge and understanding is reflected in the Zdzisława's (F/28) observations as well. 'This leads to situations where

children, often with approval of teachers, are ostracized by being or doing things differently', Zdzisława notes:

> 'and this leads to tragedies, like the suicide of 14 years old Dominik, who was branded "a gay" based on pictures on his Facebook page, where he, with stylized hair poses in yellow jeans next to a tree in a forest. Because of these pictures he is bullied at his school, done with a silent approval of teachers, and in the end leads to his suicide. The chronic judging and criticism by the school environment annihilates individuality and creativity reproducing instead parochial and narrow-minded individuals, rather than creative, confident and independent thinkers'.

Eustachy (M/28) remembers well experiencing exclusion while at school:

> 'I got excluded for asking questions during lessons, as the "facts" presented simply did not add up. Yet, I would be branded as the one who asks "silly" questions, and soon I would get a label of being "stupid" by a teacher in front of the class. As the result other children would laugh at me at and after school. So you just stop asking questions as you learn that this is associated with public humiliation'.

Roksana (F/28) observes, that a by-product of the rigors of a single narrative and discourse, is that one is expected to 'obey. We obey while listening in a church, as one cannot say anything back; the same happens at school, and of course you are expected to obey at home'. According to Tadeusz (M/26), this often leads to appearance of pack mentality 'where more powerful take advantage of the reset, as the aspect of obeying, comes deep anxiety of rejection'. The need to belong is 'huge, particularly when you are at school', Joanna notes (F/26). She gives an example of how young girls end up prostituting themselves, to purchase branded items in order to get acceptance at school. 'At some point there was in Poland a phenomenon of *galerianki/*'shopping-mall girls', including the very young teenagers, predominantly girls, but also boys, hanging around shopping malls to prostitute themselves for branded accessories and gadgets. As, if you did not demonstrate that you have these items at school, you were rejected' Joanna explains. The subject of the display of branded items as symbols and tokens of belonging is analyzed by Bauman (2010) highlighting their importance for communicating one's identity and a sense of belonging.

Nevertheless, Kellner (1998: 142) notes that 'the modern self is aware of the constructed nature of the identity, and that one can always change and modify one's identity at will'. Yet, as Tadeusz (M/26) notes:

> 'in Poland there is no place for a dialogue or a discussion if you hold views that are considered as other. No, at Polish school there is a place only for a one narrative, and either you accept it, or – too bad'.

Subsequently, the structure of the 'other' is predominantly influenced by the construction received and validated through the education. An example is provided by Maurycy (M/23), noting that 'we built a society that finds it acceptable to attack homosexuals, to burn houses of Armenians or Gipsy, like in Białystok, and more recently – those coming from Middle East, since they are all of different skin color and culture, they look and do things slightly differently'. Also Kinga (F/30) notes that anything that is commonly considered 'different' is perceived as a 'danger'. She gives her experience of dangerous results of these socially accepted approaches. While visiting Poland with her dark skin relative she recalls that:

> 'his appearance in our small city was treated as an event, with many shouting "go back to Africa", or "fancy a banana". Urban areas are not any better. Also, travelling on a public transport was associated with constant verbal insults and abuse'.

Similar experiences were also a part of Fabian's (M/28) recent visit to Poland. Travelling with his partner and a heterosexual couple, all of olive toned skin, they visited Wrocław and Kraków, two major Polish cities. Fabian, the only Polish speaking of the group, recalls them receiving a string of verbal abuse and insult experienced while sightseeing and also travelling on public transport:

> 'This was horrible! We were shouted after "f***ing b**ches" [Pol. *k***wy jeb**e*] and "f***ing faggots" [Pol. *p***dolone cioty*], "go back to Africa" while sightseeing the Wrocław's Main Square. Also, while we walked though Planty [Kraków's centrally located park] a group of hooded youth started following us, shouting "faggots" and "N****s back on trees" [Pol. *Murzyni na drzewo*]. I was never so scared for our lives and so ashamed of my country. And that time I said – never again. I will never visit Poland again. Never'.

I asked Fabian about reasons of this pathological social behavior among people and Fabian ties it to education. 'It has to be education system in Poland', that according to Fabian:

> 'is not set within an open, friendly, multicultural and mutually respectful narrative. Even if the family would held such views, the education would at least challenge them. This is not happening. Instead, we have an education set within the one and only true perspective, rooted in some White racial supremacy and cultural supremacy of the Polish Catholicism above any other culture'.

The challenge facing the contemporary Polish socio-cultural education is also brought up by Joanna (F/26). Pondering why the system places no emphasis on acceptance of a difference, Joanna notes that 'we only can educate to the level we are educated. And as the Polish school is ideologically traditional, it results in producing this kind of a society'.

Maurycy (M/23) additionally notes absence of randomness in the process of constructing socio-cultural identity of Poles. 'Today, from my adult perspective', he observes:

> 'I believe that the school curriculum is set to manipulate our affiliations, establishing artificial [cultural] differences between people. And then it is expected that if you know a culture you need to identify with it, with those people. For me it is artificial. I do not understand this. I do not understand how I am expected to have something in common with another Pole abroad? I have more common with people of other countries, than with many Poles here [Glasgow]. It is a misleading to categorize people based on their country of origin, yet – this is how we are taught at school; and the education produces and reproduces these closed categories and worldviews. It is a vicious circle.'

Also, according to Marlena (F/29):

> 'the whole compulsory education system in Poland, as currently configured, fails its role, damages individual creativity and sanctions social and cultural exclusion. Teachers are lost in their role: stuck in the past and are confused about today's demands. I sincerely wonder, what is the current role of the education in Poland?'

A century ago, Cooley (2005) happened to be preoccupied with a similar set of questions and highlighted the significance of experiences with intimate members of one's society, as these hold the imaginary mirror in which the person comes to see themselves and correct their behavior accordingly to gain approval. Subsequently, as noted by Egiliusz (M/28), 'the experience at school and at home, the stuff you learn, makes you to behave and think in a certain way, it tells you who you are'.

4.5   Summary

This Chapter provided a detailed account of the three major local factors identified by participants as important for negotiating their belonging identity. These included the family home environment, and two institutional factors, namely the Polish Roman Catholic Church and the formal education system in Poland. The Chapter also highlighted the role of the local language and discourses, as well as the importance of local perceptions for acquiring and maintaining belonging identity in Poland.

Chapter 5: Multilocal aspects in identity negotiations

5.1. Overview

According to Mead (1967) the social processes behind the construction of identity and belonging depended greatly on a mutual recognition of practices among people sharing the same culture. The main characteristics of the native culture and their influence on the construction of the belonging identity of the young Poles taking part in this study were outlined in the last chapter. Nevertheless, apart from the fixed, spatio-temporally determined features, such as the Polish formal education system, home environment and the influence of the Polish Catholic Church, the participants identified a variety of mobile factors as equally significant. Such observations were also reflected in recent research of Marino (2015: 1) noting that the geographically fixed cultures 'have been losing their roots'. Also Browne (2017: 90) underlined that 'the contemporary phase (…) has extended social interconnections beyond the geographically fixed national frame'. By the end of the twentieth century, according to Kellner (1998: 141), the 'identity becomes progressively mobile, and as such is a subject to perpetual change and innovation'.

The mobility of information itself is not a novel phenomenon, as people have been mobile since the dawn of time. Yet, its present intensity and speed of information exchange, is. According to Keller (1998), as well as raised by the participants, the significance of mobile factors, such as the mass and social media, as well as geographical relocation, are of equal importance for the processes of negotiation of identity. Subsequently, in this Chapter I present the participants' perspectives on the impact of these mobile features for their belonging identity formation and reconstruction. The Chapter commences with the participants' reflections on the role of mass-media for introducing, reinforcing and discrediting types of belonging identities. This is followed by the role of the social media in negotiating and verifying of such identities. I conclude the Chapter with the participants' reflections upon the impact of geographical relocation for negotiating of their contemporary affiliations.

5.2   Impact of mass media

The majority of participants emphasis that traditional mass media, such as radio, television and newspapers, influence the manner by which they identify with the social reality around, especially so during their childhood. The participants stress the belief that the forms of reality presented by the media subconsciously influence their perceptions of acceptable, which subtly becomes a factor in constituting their belonging identity. This aspect is also highlighted by Stevenson (2002), as well as Lash and Lury (2007), who emphasise that the mass media are of pivotal significance in maintaining social cohesion. According to Pratkanis and Aronson (2002: 4) 'almost a half of our waking hours are spent with the mass-media', resulting in one acquiring forms of identifications that are mediated through the mass media lenses.

5.2.1 Mediating belongings

According to participants the traditional mass-media plays an important role for constructing their affiliations, particularly so in their childhood, and not only through reinforcing the traditional forms, but also by introducing means to novel concepts of identification. Such an observation was also reflected in the work of Lash and Lury (2007). The authors stressed the mass-media capabilities to represent other cultures by bypassing national superstructures, thereby deregulating and diluting local meanings. The participants identified distinct ways by which the mass media did so, namely: by reinforcing the credibility of established forms of identities, as well as by providing credibility to novel aspects of affiliations.

An example of the role of mass media in enhancing already acquired belonging identities is brought up by Bartłomiej (M/28). He underlines that for the generations of his parents and grandparents the mass media were of crucial importance in familiarising and developing in them a sense of affiliation with those who occupy distant geographical locations. He particularly highlights the popularity of the South American soap operas, aired by the openly accessed television channels from the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's. Bartłomiej tells me that:

> 'My grandma, mom and all aunts loved watching Mexican, Venezuelan or Brazilian soap-operas; I believe that at some point my father enjoyed watching them as well! (…) There was also this awesome documentary by the *TVP* [Eng. the Polish Public Broadcaster] called *Pieprz i Wanilia* [Eng. 'Pepper and Vanilla'] where a Polish couple filmed their travels around the globe, giving viewers a

chance to see the exotic cultures of far places – I remember my parents watched it a lot, and I also saw a repeat of a couple of episodes. This sounds almost unbelievable now, but then it was the only way to see lives in these far places'.

The importance of such TV productions addressing aspects of everyday lives in societies occupying distant, and otherwise out-of-reach locations for many in Poland is also noted by Danusia (F/35). She recalls particularly that:

'the South-American cultural frenzy, with everybody watching soap operas! Do you remember *Niewolnica Isaura* [Eng. Slave/Escarva Isaura]? [Danusia laughs] or *Dynastia* [Eng. 'The Dynasty']? When 'The Dynasty' was on, my whole family sat together and watched it! There was also *Bliżej Świata* [Eng. 'Closer to the World']? My mom loved this programme! We would tune into the show every Sunday, as it was the only program about the world of [French/high] fashion then, I think'.

Also Roksana (F/28) comments on the role of television in introducing not only other places, but also experiences of people of other cultures, particularly those off other skin colour to the common social (and White) imaginary in Poland. Roksana observes that:

'back in the late 1990s the only way to see how others live was on television or by travelling. You were not taught at school about it (…). There was this family show "Bill Cosby", and they were all Black, but otherwise, the same type of family like everybody else, just a normal family. But this is all.'

It is worth noticing that such shows as the one mentioned by Roksana have a crucial social and cultural role within the pre-internet Poland that is 99 per cent Caucasian (Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2012). Namely, it introduces and familiarises Poles with those of other skin tones and shades. As the shows, like 'Bill Cosby', portray the everyday life of people who appear to the Polish imaginary as alien, by situating them within a familiar context (e.g. middle-class social status), and so engendered a positive identification. This is summarised by Roksana, stating that indeed 'they are Black, but otherwise they are just like everybody else, a normal family'.

Nevertheless, apart from mediating positive affiliations to positive forms of being, the mass media, according to participants, actively engaged in providing credibility for rather questionable social stances. An example is highlighted by Augusta (F/29), who notes the media's role in mediating the meaning of a statement of acceptance, such as 'being cool'. She notes that 'now it is the luxury brand of your mobile, your cloths, and carefree luxury lifestyle that created the cool factor, regardless of what type of human being you are'. This income based form of social status and capital is also highlighted by Krzysztof (M/26), expressing his dismissal of it. 'You know it and I know it', Krzysztof tells me:

'but many of my colleagues perceive their affiliations through the amount of money they earn in relation to others. As it is all over the media that if you have a house in posh neighbourhood, top car, the newest iPhone, branded garments and shoes, you are cool and successful. (…) As otherwise you are not so readily accepted by others'.

Another form of the mass-media mediation, as noted by participants, is to discredit particular forms of belonging. This particular aspect was quite significant for a negotiation of a sense of belonging identity, as the negative narratives discourage one from developing such forms of affiliation and belonging (Tajfel & Turner 1979). An example of a negative reflection by the mass media of non-native cultures in distant geographical locations is noted by Gerfryda (F/28). Gerfryda reflects upon how a major television station, Aljazeera, portrayed life in contemporary Poland, namely:

'This documentary was about Bytom or Bydgoszcz [both places affected by a relatively high unemployment rates] and it showed grey, empty streets and abandoned houses, with a concluding generalisation that this is representative for Poland, with poverty and unemployment brought by a democratic regime change. If this is your only information about Poland, you would neither like to visit Poland, nor to take a chance on democratic changes, I tell you.'

Another example, but this time reflecting a negative representation within a native cultural context, is provided by Euzebiusz (M/29). Euzebiusz refers in his example to the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, and the discrediting media coverage in Scotland. Although he decided not to participate, by justifying that 'he was not born in Scotland', he recalled that:

'around the time of the Referendum the [mass-]media reporting on issues important to people here, and particularly, the BBC, aimed to scare people off of self-governing, and to discourage any engagement in a discussion about their life as an independent state'.

Euzebiusz's observations are also reflected in academic research and media coverage that time (Robertson 2014; 2015). This aspect is also elaborated by Kinga (F/30) noting that:

'the information presented through the local mass-media during the [2014] Referendum instilled fear, particularly when aiming at discouraging action'.

According to Pratkanis and Aronson (2002: 21) the 'fear can be a powerful motivating psychological force, challenging all our thoughts bad energies towards removing the threat so that we don't think about much else'. Particularly, as stressed by the scholars, if the fearful information is disseminated by an institution that enjoys public trust and is

considered as credible. Such a conclusion is also reflected in observations of Basia (F/28), who also contrasts it with the Polish reality:

> 'my parents grew up [in Poland] in times when the major source of information was the mass media, but everybody knew that this was a state-run propaganda. Now, I think, it is more difficult. People tend to trust information presented in newspapers and on television, as they cannot think of any reason of why not to trust them'.

Izaura (F/28) also highlights the issue of trust in information presented via mass media. According to Izaura, the BBC constitutes a noteworthy example of this trust at work, as it had an appeal not only to the older generations, but also – to the newcomers to the British Isles. Izaura speaks to this coverage having an opposite effect on her, and erosion of trust, when she states:

> 'in Poland the BBC is perceived as the pinnacle of journalistic craftsmanship, and therefore of high public trust. (…) But, what surprised me the most was the type of narrative during the [2014 Scottish Independence] Referendum. (…) My disappointment could not be greater with the mass-media negative coverage, so I just switched off and checked for the news online. However, I know other Poles [in Scotland] took the information on BBC face value. Also, the older generations will not necessary be able to search on-line for news, so they continue to trust blindly the word stated on TV'.

The issue of the generational division in information access for negotiating belonging identities is highlighted by the majority of participants. They emphasize how the older generations trust information presented on TV, while for them it is rarely a trustworthy source, as Marysia (F/28) states:

> 'not many young people watch television these days, even online. We hardly ever follow [traditional] media. But, this is different for parents and grandparents; they still watch it a lot'.

Such observations are also consonant with Marlena (F/29) who observes that:

> 'the generation of our parents and grandparents built their identity and affiliations through mass-media, particularly television. My grandmother always says "this is how it is, because I heard it on television". Even more, this information is taken as a credible fact. (…) and now, in the internet era any information can be easily checked, but people like my grandma, are not digital natives (…) they often do not know how to use it'.

The lack of internet competence is additionally highlighted by Tadeusz (M/26), noting that:

> 'older generations rely heavily on the information provided through mass media, still trusting the information, as unable to use online'.

Also Aneta (F/28) emphasises the 'familiarity' of the different media across generations. Aneta stresses that:

> 'we grow up with internet access, read a lot from a variety of media outlets, in Poland and abroad, in Polish and other languages, this is natural for us. While our parents and grandparents this is not; they were brought up without such an access, even if they knew other languages. As a result, many still stick to and trust only in the mass-media, as this is natural for them'.

According to Pratkanis and Aronson (2002: xi), the 'War' generation has a tendency to 'fervently believe just about everything [they] were exposed to in the media (…). [They] have a childlike trust in media'. Also Robinson et al. (2015: 572) pointed to the appearance of 'senior digital divide'. This significant impact of the mass media in formulating common imaginary for older generations, particularly in relation to constructing ideas about others is highlighted by Małgorzata (F/27). She recalls her experience of visiting Poland with her French-born husband and his family, all of dark shade of skin. Małgorzata tells me how while walking through a local market in her hometown, she was pulled by one of the ladies inquiring where 'these people', pointing at her husband and his family, were from. 'They are from France', Małgorzata replied, only to hear back that 'it is impossible, as on television the French people are not Black'. Such a strong influence of the traditional media for accrediting belonging identities is also highlighted in the seminal study of Gerbner (1987), emphasising a robust correlation between television-watching and developing affiliations and predispositions that duplicate those seen on TV. And once accepted, the author (1987) concludes, they guide real life affiliations. Consonant with this, the participants report the emergence of a cognitive dissonance by the reality and local social imaginary created by the mass media. This is particularly addressed by Robert (M/25), who observes that:

> 'because of misrepresentation, the mass-media do not have an appeal to many of young people. If a young person detects that TV makes up information, they automatically switch off to other sources – and there is plenty to choose from online! But, I do believe that the older generations don't have such a choice, so they seek supporting information through other [traditional mass] media to get a better understanding. But, often there is not too much diversity of information [on traditional media], hence they frequently do not know about what's really going on'.

Such aspects are also investigated by Festinger (1962), who concluded that experiencing contradicting messages between the reality experienced and the social imaginary creates a cognitive dissonance, generally characterised by emotions of fear and uncomfortableness. More recently Tsang (2017), while researching cognitive dissonance and its impact on

information searching trends, noted that the experienced negative feelings make people seek information that supports their prior understanding while also being reluctant to engage with counter argumentation.

5.2.2 Portraying identities

According to the participants, the traditional mass media in Poland play a significant role in introducing identities that were absent from the public imaginary. This is highlighted by Adrian (M/29), noting that

> 'back in the 1990s *Jedynka* [Eng. the main public television broadcaster in Poland, TVP1] showed massively popular US soap operas, such as 'The Dynasty' and 'The Bold and Beautiful'. Millions watched. And these two soap-operas are quite interesting, as they were, I believe, the first to openly introduce the homosexual motif and stories, and treat it as any other story [of the heterosexual characters]. Up till then nobody publically discussed issues related to homosexuality in Poland, including: having homosexual family members, friends, and so on. This was a taboo subject; and for many – still is.'

Such an observation is also consonant with the experiences of Anna-Maria (F/28), recalling that the LGBTQ identities were 'simply' absent from the public imaginary. She tells me a story of her grandparents, both retired university professors at a major university in Poland, and their two lesbian friends, also university academics. 'And these two ladies', Anna-Maria commences her story:

> 'were both unmarried, lived together pretending for the outside world that they are two old-maids living together to cut-down their costs of living. But, whenever they visited us [at the grandparents' home], they always shared a room together, and nobody asked any questions. This was *so normal* [Pol. *takie normalne*, my emphasis] to me, as anything else. Now, reflecting upon this story, I admire my grandparents, especially since both were devoted Catholics, with no access to alternative sources of information on matters related to LGBTQ than their education and the Catholic Church'.

The ongoing absence of alternative sources of information about gender and sexuality identities negotiations is highlighted by Anna-Maria in another part of our interview, when she recalls her childhood experiences of overhearing her grandparents while watching 'The Dynasty' episode. She particularly remembers her grandparents sharing relief while watching a scene addressing the social and cultural implications of homosexual identity of one of the main characters. 'Look', Anna-Maria said while recalling overhearing her grandparents whispering:

'what a relief to see that THIS [homosexuality] *is everywhere* [Pol. *że TO jest wszędzie*; Anna-Maria's emphasis] and that people do not need to hide and suffer [social] prosecution anymore'.

This aspect of the role of the mass media, and particularly of television, for introducing novel ways of constructing the gender and sexuality identities is also highlighted by Joachim (M/28). He notes that generations of his parents and grandparents grew up with no other sources of information on the construction of such identities. 'If not for public television [in Poland]', Joachim observed that:

> 'the subject of homosexuality would have been absent for the [social imaginary] of the post-War-but-pre-Internet generations. Even now, for people of my parents' and grandparents' generations the issues related to the gender identity construction are absent and rather foreign'.

It is worth noting that the mass-media programs addressing the issues of gender and sexuality identities served also as the starting point for further discussions on the topic of affiliations. For example, Anna-Maria recalls how her grandmother used the excuse of a radio-programme to bring up the subject of a variety of ways available for a gender construction to a teenage Anna-Maria. 'This is particularly important', Anna-Maria notes, 'as when I was growing up, there was a daunting informational vacuum regarding gender and sexuality identities. These subjects were just non-existing', she states a couple of times. 'As the result I remember well', Anna-Maria observes that:

> 'when I was about 14, returned home from school, grandma, as usual, was cooking a dinner and listening to a [public] radio station. This time a programme she listened to was about homosexuality, and we finished listening together. She then switched off the radio, posed, looked at me and asked about my opinion on the subject. And I remember how red and quiet I went, as this subject was totally new to me, and also referred to issues of sexuality, that then, unlike now, was a very uncomfortable subject to talk about with your family. Seeing my confusion, my grandma said quickly that sexuality is something natural and normal. She also said that it is all right whatever choices I make, which made my cheeks ruby at this point. But then, we chatted for hours (…). If not for this radio-audition, I am not sure if we would have ever had such a great discussion'.

According to Stella et al. (2016) the negotiations of gender and sexuality identifications are rather poorly addressed in Poland, with the main discourse about gender and sexuality being predominantly constructed within heterosexual and patriarchal paradigms (see also: Commissioner for Human Rights 2011). Therefore the role of the mass media in constructing 'pictures in our heads' is particularly significant in such social contexts, as highlighted by Pratkanis and Aronson (2002: 80). This aspect is further explored by Joanna (F/26), highlighting not only the heterosexual gender identity narrative emphasised by

mass media in Poland, but also ascribing particular characteristics to each of the two genders. According to Joanna:

> 'a traditional role of a Polish woman, whose traits are based around children, a kitchen and a church'.

She illustrates her example by providing a story of her own reaction when watching a television commercial as a child. 'I do not recall what the advertisement was about', Joanna tells me:

> 'but I remember the rush of quite strong feelings associated with watching this advertisement over and over again, and imagining that it will be me one day. I remember that there was this beautiful woman, a housewife, dottily taking care of her household and children, waiting for a husband to come back home from work. She was dress up in this 1960s cute outfit, and an apron, and was setting a table for a family dinner. This was the image of what constitutes a woman for me. (…) Not too empowering, when I think about it now' Joanna ponders with a sigh.

The story of Joanna is similar to that told by Monika (F/28), highlighting that:

> 'women are portrayed through mass-media chiefly as mothers-super-beings, effortlessly handling roles of professionals, housewives, mothers, wives and mistresses. As the result it is considered appropriate to state: *oh, you can handle it, you are a woman* [Pol. '*dasz radę, w końcu jesteś kobietą*']. Of course, such opinions are not the sole result of the mass-media projection, and are deeply rooted in our [Polish] culture portraying women as these who give birth, care for households and raise children, all done with a pleasure, as these activities obviously are not considered work, only as your womanly characteristics [she laughs]. If this was not enough, women are expected to have professional carriers as well, as otherwise they might be viewed as lazy by their family and neighbours, as being a housewife at this day and age is not enough (…). The main stream media play a role, mostly through reproducing these stereotypes as a definition of a *normal woman*. And every woman wants to be considered *normal*, so she feels accepted'.

The particular narrative is consonant with research by Gal and Kligman (2000: 163), describing the construction of a heterosexual woman's identity in Poland upon a narrative of the 'brave victim'. Additionally, Monika highlights the aspect of the omnipresent sexual objectification of young women that is present in mass media, addressed to those in their early teens. According to Monika:

> 'the main television stations in Poland produce plenty of programs portraying [heterosexual] pre-motherhood women as skinny, full-make-up, sexual objects. Not as feeling and thinking human beings, but as objects. Growing up with such representations of what womanhood involves might lead to many problems with perceiving and accepting your own identity as a woman'.

Apart from mediating qualities of a heterosexual woman identity, the mass media also provides and reinforces the characteristics for meanings of a heterosexual male. This is particularly noted by Karolina (F/28). According to her:

> 'the Polish [social imaginary] around the male identity is based within a pressure for a visible financial success. Male identity is based as a breadwinner and I know male colleagues who struggle mentally if this is not the case. They also need to conceive children, as being married without children in Poland raises questions about sexual abilities, particularly of a male. (…) Mass-media only reinforce these traits, as males are represented predominantly as financially well-off, owning expensive cars, gadgets, exotic travels and gorgeous chicks, the latter being, of course, another object, more precisely, a sexual object, on *his* side [Karolina's emphasis]. At the same time the mass-media are guilty of excluding male roles and traits based on gentleness, and sensitivity, re-producing instead the male identities as aggressive and dominant. As a result, it is generally acceptable [in Poland] to consider gentle men, or homosexual men as *not-men*, as *cioty* [Eng. faggots], as *not-men* per-se, as a male identity [in Poland] is reserved for heterosexual dominant males only'.

Some of the aspects mentioned by Karolina are reflected in the recent research of Suwada (2017), noting that the Polish discourse on masculinity excludes male involvement in various activities, including parenthood. Addressing the issue of the role of the mass media, Suwada (2017: 200), citing one of her interviewees, a 35 years old male parent, who notes that 'only women are present in the [mass] media [on issues related to parenthood] (…), and men do not have any support, (…) you'd like to do something, but the [mass] media don't say anything about that, so [you do nothing, as] maybe this [would be considered] stupid'.

5.3   Impact of social media

Yet, the omnipresence of the internet and its crucial significance for negotiating their belonging identity is highlighted by all the participants of this study. This includes Zdzisława (F/28) stating that:

> 'now internet became an integral part of life, just like watching television was in the past. This is true definitely for my generation, maybe for my parents, sometimes, but the younger generations – they are born with internet. They even communicate with parents through internet'

This omnipresence is also linked to mobile communication, as is seen by Iwona (F/28) observing that:

'young people are born surrounded by diversity of information [Pol. *od urodzenia otoczeni informacja*]; they are brought up with mobile phones and tablets; these items are so common, as television and telephone previously was. They just are.'

This is consonant with Tadeusz (M/26) stating that 'My family and friends' he counts, 'younger generations, but also some grandparents, everybody uses internet'. Also Patryk (M/28) highlights the crucial role of the internet for enabling social interaction and through that, its ability to format and renegotiate forms of identifications and sense of belonging, namely:

'Currently, it is the internet, and not the school, family or television [mass-media] that are the source of information about yourself and about the world. You also verify that information. For example, the generation of our parents and grandparents grew up when the major source of information was the school, home and television. We are so different, as we have social media'.

Michał (M/25) additionally highlights that even if his friends live locally, the most common form of communication is not face-to-face, but rather through online messaging. The omnipresence of the internet is also reflected in the statistical data, including the Internet World Statistic Report (2017), which emphasises that almost the half of the global population (49.7 per cent) is on-line, with the African continent's populations (including some of the world's poorest economies) catching up at a staggering speed in the last 17 years. As a result, authors such as Boyd (2014), as well as Veen and Wrakking (2006) emphasise the significant impact of the internet for social interactions among people, transforming the manner they construct their identities and belongings, particularly the youngest generations. According to the authors, the internet provides new means for active communication, rarely even imaginable for the previous generations.

5.3.1 Unbounding social interactions

The participants highlight the important ability of the internet to enable the communication among between people regardless of their actual geographical location. This is highlighted by Dorota (F/27) noting that 'now we can be anywhere and connect with our friends abroad, at any moment'. Also Marek (M/20) notes that now 'we can access and participate in lectures from universities around the world, interacting with teachers and students from around the globe'. The present day reality of instantaneous mobile exchange of information between people regardless of distance, be that geographical or cultural, is also emphasised by Kacper (M/28) stressing its influence on the manner he perceives his identity and positions his belonging. According to Kacper:

'it is just normal for us to communicate online. It is just like a different form of talking in person (…) yes, many of my friends are from abroad [not from Scotland], but this hardly matters. Does it affect my identity? Now, when you ask I believe it does in some way, as I don't perceive myself as any different from my friends from Spain or Greece'.

Also Tomasz (M/29) emphasises the significance of online communication for his identity, stating that:

'I was in my early teens when the internet came around so, it's just so natural to me to have friends from different countries (…) no, we do not see each other as different, we might like different food and celebrate different holidays, but we share the same interest'.

These statements are consonant with Elżbieta (F/28) noting that currently:

'online communication revolutionised the way we [millennials] divide ourselves and others. These categories are simply different that they were for the generations of our parents and grandparents. Many of us do not categorise people depending on their nationality, this hardly matters. I mean, it matters to the point you cherish were you come from, you love your family. But this does not make me to think that my friends from France, Argentina or Canada are any different than me, only because they were born abroad – they are just like friends from different cities used to be in the past'.

The commonality of interests among young people of different cultural background is also highlighted by Basia (F/28) stressing that:

'we are different but in many ways we are the same, I mean, we have the same goals and interests, we enjoy our company and sharing time together. The nationality hardly matters among friends' [Basia added laughing].

According to Robinson (2007: 94) the 'cyber-selfing is formed and negotiated as the offline self'. The author highlighted how online users 'develop a sense of self through the eyes with whom [they] interact'. Additionally, Cetina (2009: 64) points to some attributes of online interactions that unlike the rather passive TV-watching, often made participants of online engagements renegotiate 'new meanings to situations' often within intercultural contexts. Also Stevenson (2009: 155) highlights the significance of the frequently multicultural interaction process, where meanings needed to be decoded and coded again, to suit demands of the current online exchange. An example of a particular manner of decoding and coding information that was considered inter-culturally accessible was the use of pictures. An example of this is brought by Marysia (F/28) noting that 'online is an integral part of our lifestyle, where often a picture, such as emoji, replaces words to describe our feelings in a situation'.

Figure 5.1: From The Conversation (2017), accessed at https://theconversation.com/uk

The significance of pictures, and particularly of emojis and pictographs for online communication is reflected as well by the Oxford Dictionaries (2015) naming '😂', that is: the face with tears of joy, the Word of the Year. Also, a Facebook advertisement, presented in my picture below (see: Figure 5.2), emphasises the significance of icons and pictograms for online communication. According to Collister (2015) the pictures, unlike the words, allows one to convey complex feelings and emotions in a quick and efficient manner.
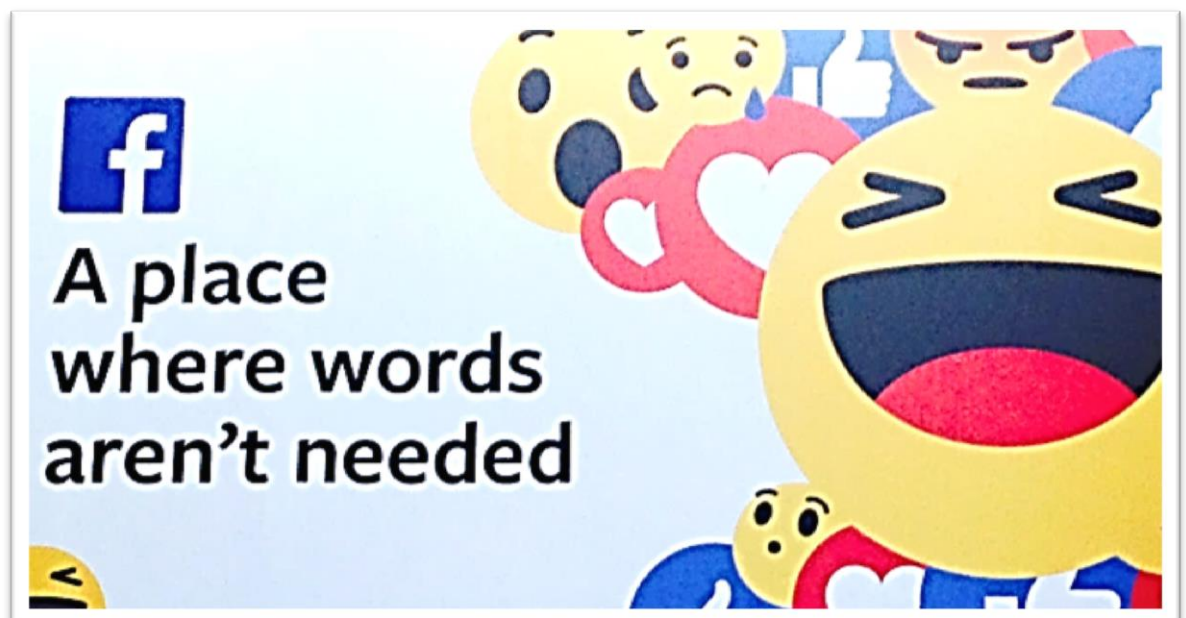

Figure 5.2: My photograph of a Facebook advertisement in the Glasgow Central Station
(form my research journal, 5 June 2015)

These observed impacts of new technologies on the individual's common imaginary and forms of identifications is also consonant with research by Burnett and Marshall (2007), who when observing in 1982 that *Time Magazine* named a microcomputer the 'Person of the year', are highlighting the impact on remote access and sharing of information. The authors also noted the effects of the new technologies on the role and nature of language with students predominantly choosing computer programming languages, for example Python, over the more traditionally popular (colonial) languages, such as French and Spanish. 'We live in internet now' Marlena also states, 'so we better know how to communicate there'.

5.3.2 Digital othering

Othering, according to participants, just like selfing, plays an integral part in creating affiliations and belonging identities. For example, Gerfryda (F/28) notes that she has 'less common with her sister than with [her] friends from other countries'. According to Gerfryda:

> 'with my friends we share similar interests, now I think about it – indeed, we are all engineers. (…) We use a different language when we talk. We have our own language.'

Robert (M/25) also remarks that othering plays a significant role in online interaction, and is particularly visible through the bullying of any form of otherness. To depict his statement, he brings my attention to a then recent story of Dominik, a 14 years old boy from Poland who committed suicide due to online othering through branded 'a puff' and 'nobody' [Pol. *zero*] for wearing colourful jeans and posting fashion pictures online (Szyllo 2015). According to Robert:

> 'the cyber-hate ridiculing Dominik was huge. And even worse, it continued even after his death. There were posts like "thank goodness he died as he brought shame to the White race"; just sick stuff. Police got involved as a member of public gathered hundreds of pages long document containing insults against Dominik, but after a brief investigation they concluded that nothing can be done. This is so wrong'.

Such stories unfortunately are not isolated. Further examples of aggressive forms of othering were provided by Basia (F/28), who shares a story of her friend receiving negative messages, including 'fat swine' to her selfies posted online. Another example was brought up by Izaura (F/28) telling me how she experienced 'sick comments' to her online profile. The negative aspects of othering and exclusion in social interactions were addressed by

Goffman (1963). More recently Link and Phelan (2001) pointed out that stigma and feelings of shame of identities discredited by others, leads to alienation. And in drastic cases leads to suicide. It is also, according to the authors the root cause of stereotyping and discrimination. Developing stigma, according to the authors (2001), comes from the humans' intrinsic need to categorise (see also: Goffman 1990; Brown 2000). Such online negative categorisation and labelling, is observed by participants of the study, to occur through the reinforcing of stances and opinions that are already known and comfortable. Researching online exclusion, Robinson et al. (2015: 570) emphasised the necessity of analysing 'cultural contexts of digital engagement' juxtaposed against offline social structures 'of individuals and groups'. The authors (ibid.) empathised 'crystallisation of distinctively digital disparities cutting across pre-existing offline divisions such as participation and type of engagement'.

Furthermore, according to the participants of the study, some young people tend to stick to the commonly functioning popular opinions and stances of their offline culture, rarely seeking other information. For example, Joanna (F/26) expresses a belief that such self-reinforcing tendency is also correlated with language skills when she states 'particularly those speaking only one language, instinctively search for information' supporting their original, offline stance. This is also observed by Eustachy (M/29) highlighting that:

> 'even with online abundance of information some people, mostly those who can't communicate with others of different cultures, are stuck in one narrative. This is a challenge, as many are unable to imagine, to identify with other points of views, to see from a different perspective'.

The tendency to search for information feeding into the already known and accepted worldviews is additionally emphasised by Egiliusz (M/28) observing that 'some people don't search for information to examine their point of view, but rather to strengthen it'. The trend was already discussed in the context of traditional media, where within offline settings people were predisposed, as noted by Tsang (2017), to funnel information that is consistent with their attitudes.

Participants were also keen to identify reasons for such a state. Beyond the single-culture and language paradigm, Eustachy (M/29) felt 'people are not taught to consider other cultures, or to think for themselves. Many expect others to tell them what to think'. Also Augusta (F/29) notes that 'even the young people don't have critical thinking skills, so they hardly know how to search online to diversify their opinions'. Participants emphasise the pivotal role of the formal education in enforcing memorisation, instead of creativity

and debate. This aspect is particularly highlighted by Egiliusz and Apolina, stressing the lack of 'debate culture in Poland'. Furthermore, Gerfryda (F/28) highlights the daunting lack of knowledge about other cultures. 'Thank goodness the school still teaches languages so we can at least communicate with others and find out for ourselves', she emphasised with a sigh.

Nevertheless, according to Roksana (F/28) many young people with knowledge of languages tend to leave Poland, and those who stay are not always able to access the online content available abroad. This is clearly stated by Michał (M/29), who notes that not all information available online in one geographical location is automatically available in another. 'It is a mistake to think about things on internet as universally available', he highlights,

> 'as we noted ourselves, when watching YouTube: some content is available here in Scotland, or in France, but not in Poland. It was very surprising to discover it'.

Such factors, according to many participants, tend to support the reproduction of monoculture. For example, Maurycy (M/23) notes that the origins of digital othering in Poland stems from the daunting lack of knowledge and access to that knowledge of other cultures, as:

> 'in the past there was no stress on cultural tolerance, or any type of tolerance (…) I give you an example: when I was 9 we went to a football game, and there was this Black player, and people laughed at him. We all laughed, adults and children (…) This was *normal*. Now we are online, but many, some young, people who mostly stayed in Poland, and some of older generations who actually use internet, continue displaying similar views and prejudices online'.

According to Hochschild's (1979), research on emotions culture, people's everyday behaviour tends to reflect the norms and standards expected from them by significant others, particularly those located in their offline culture.

5.3.3 Multilocal belonging

All the participants refer to their ability to utilise the vast amount of information outlets available to them to triangulate any given message received, and through that, to overcome stigmatised affiliations and forms of identification. Some participants, such as Basia (F/28) illustrate cross-checking ability this by providing specific examples, such as Basia's on religious identity:

'there is generally no information in Poland on other belief systems than Polish Roman Catholic. It is almost impossible to learn about other faiths at school, on Polish TV, or at home. As the result other faith systems are totally foreign to many. I remember as a kid asking my father about other faiths only to hear back that such knowledge is not necessary for me (…). And now I have not only the choice to find out on-line about it, but also have plenty of friends of other faiths'.

The novel aspect of this variety of choices for overcoming isolated identities is also highlighted by Izaura (F/28) noting that 'the online changed the way we perceive otherness'. According to Izaura:

'young people, across borders, have similar interests and passions, and because of we are able to share our experiences (…) Suddenly, you are able to see their room, that their also have a cat and the same interests. And despite the fact that they are so far away, they are almost the same like you'.

This is additionally consonant with an observation by Tadeusz (M/26), highlighting the impact of online access on the expansion of his social imaginary. He explains it by providing an example of his online connections with friends in Azerbaijan. 'Where, back in the 1990s, you would be able to access anybody in Azerbaijan???' he asks, to answer:

'only on a map, and even if – you do not have a clue about this place. And suddenly, with the internet, everything is accessible for you at your fingertips. Suddenly, you are there, you see how it looks like, you can walk the streets without leaving your room – this changes your whole perspective about how you see yourself and others and you note that there are no others – or, that they are, but not how you expected them to be'.

Basia (F/28) is another of the participants to emphasise the significance of online inter-connectness for overcoming othering based on cultural differences. According to Basia, her current workplace is mostly 'virtual. I work mostly online with people around the world', Basia explains, 'this is quite culturally diverse set [of people], but we have our own culture'. The aspect of online affiliations is also brought by Aneta (F/28) stressing that 'with internet we are not limited by our geographical location anymore (…) we are citizens of the world'. And according to Dorota (F/27):

'we have internet now, and we travel a lot, and the information access could not be easier to see what is going on in other countries, and suddenly this our cultural capital, I mean our knowledge about others makes us to question who are we?'

The vastness of the implications for cultural practices stemming from the gradual incorporation of online spaces within offline locations were also stressed by authors, including Portes (1996), who also emphasised the emergence of novel subjectivities.

5.4 Impact of geographical relocations

Novel subjectivity is however not new concept, but was indeed traditionally associated with geographical relocations of individuals that necessitate them to socially interact within the newly adopted cultural context. The existence of this traditional modality on forms of affiliations is also noted to exist for the participants, but assuming not so much novel forms, but rather, referring like Monika (F/28) to 'fine tuning' of affiliations known to them through the previous online exposures.

5.4.1 Cultural reflexivity

The participants highlight that geographical re-location still remains an important factor when reconsidering one's forms of identifications. However, unlike in previous decades, it does not comprise the only condition under which knowledge of other cultures is gained. For example, Alicja (F/29) observes that she 'did not get a cultural shock upon leaving Poland'. Rather, according to her, she became aware of 'secondary issues', as she calls them, such as being less impatient, and not raising her voice when speaking. She told me how she came to be perceived as 'aggressive' by pointing out to a colleague that he is loafing, instead of working on a group project. 'In Poland you are just told "get to work" and this is normal, and over here [in Scotland], particularly among international students, such directness is not common and often comes over as aggressive'.

Additionally, Fabian (M/28) points to discovering a greater generosity among people. 'This is particularly visible', Fabian explains, 'in small, everyday matters, such as offers of support and encouragement. In Poland, we are taught to be highly critical of ourselves and others'. This aspect is also highlighted by Loreta (F/29) noting that moving away from Poland made her 'calmer', as:

> 'Poland is a very stressful place – you have to do things, people shout a lot and are constantly angry. This stress and anger is a part of the Polish culture [Pol. '*polskiej kultury*'], of who we are there'.

Additionally Gerfryda (F/28) notes that:

> 'I remember when I first went to Germany, as a teenager, and there for the first time in my life I saw a gay couple holding hands. They walk together, just like this, on a street. Not, that I ever had anything against people of different sexual orientation, and so on – no, but it was so new to me to actually see it. In Poland, there are of course gay couples, but nobody walks on streets holding hands – and here – this was so normal.'

Also, Małgorzata (F/27) observes how she underwent revision of her beliefs upon relocating to France. She reflects how the act of geographical location makes her reconsider the manner by which Catholicism was practised in Poland and abroad. She pointed to the 'shock' she got, when noting that fellow Catholics in France:

> 'ate meat on Friday! (…) I believed so much that you are not allowed to eat meat on Friday, as this was the knowledge of my parents, school, religion classes and masses (…). Experiencing in person that other Catholics do things differently was life-changing'.

5.4.2   Language matters

All participants highlight the importance of language skills when geographically relocating, in part to reduce the tension stemming from experiencing previously little known cultures. According to Roksana (F/28) many, particularly with limited language skills, experience:

> '*cultural crash and clash* [said in English]. When everything you know, the way you understand the world is rather not translatable to others. And then you start thinking, and re-valuating, all the views you hold and your habits, are they true and necessary? (…) It is a shame that they experience this only after leaving Poland. It would be much easier to gain this knowledge [about diversity of perspectives] while at school there'.

Also, Zdzisława (F/28) emphasizes the importance of knowledge of the local language. According to her:

> 'it is a tool to interact, to exchange ideas, to learn about others, because the knowledge of a language is the most important to make sense of people, places, and cultures, and when we know it we can try to make sense of what is important to others, about their ideas and views of the world'.

This is consonant with Fabian (M/28) noting that:

> 'a language is the key, the key to open yourself, to connect and to relate to others. If you do not know languages, you surround yourself with the same people, e.g. Poles, regardless where you live, in Poland, online, or abroad.

This aspect is also highlighted by Michał (M/29) emphasising that many monolingual people underwent a type of 'cultural dissonance' when geographically relocating. He noted that 'for many it is difficult to accept that things can be perceived differently in other locations'. Additionally, Adrian (M/29) explains that people who grew up in rather isolated cultures, with limited secondary language skills, experience significant 'cultural confusion, superiority and discrimination towards others of different cultural worldview'.

5.4.3. Offline vs. online negotiations

The existence of online connectivity and instantaneous exchange on social media is beginning to transform classical meanings of *locality* according to the participants. However, the *geographically comprehended locality* does not succumb entirely to it digital counterparts according to Fabian, who notes that the actual experience of interacting with people in Scotland is what made him to want to stay here. He observes that:

> 'internet, yes, it affected to some degree what I know about Scotland and Glasgow (…) But, it was when I first came to Glasgow during summer holidays [to visit his mom as a teenager] and by the end I was begging my mom not to send me back to Poland. I wanted to stay here'.

Loreta (F/29) explains the concept more specifically, emphasising the importance of experiences of places with other senses than sight and sound. According to Loreta:

> 'when you taste it, touch it, the cuisine, the fragrances, when you meet personally the people, you gain a new perspective and a distance to who you thought you are and what these places mean to you'.

In a similar vein, Natalia (F/29) describes her experience of acquiring knowledge about other cultures. In her story she depicts a group of students from Sweden, many of different skin tones and ethnicities (than Caucasian and Christian), visiting her high school back in Poland. Natalia explains that:

> 'I knew many things from internet, of course, but it was actually spending whole days together, participating in classes together, speaking in English the whole time, laughing, studying and partying together, with girls wearing scarves, and boys of different skin colour.

According to Cooley (2005), Mead (1982; 1967) and Blumer (1969) such social interactions are a key component in the creation of belonging identities.

5.5. Summary

It was customary to assume that the act of undertaking geographical relocation from one geographical location to another induces changes to cultural identities and modifies belonging. In this Chapter the participants described how this might not be the case anymore. The Chapter provided examples of participants' stories that highlight the emergence of developing cultural awareness, regardless of one's specific geographical location. The progressing irrelevance of actual offline mobility to experience other cultures

stems, as the participants highlighted, from the presence of mass media and social media enabled interactions. The participants explained how the mass media and then, the social media, transformed their perceptions when developing their own sense of identifications and belonging, located beyond the traditional borders of geographically bound states. At the same time, they emphasised the ongoing importance of offline social interactions with people of other cultures. These served, according to the participants, to enhance the knowledge and experience of other cultures, rather than merely to introduce them as in the past. The participants emphasised the significance of cultural as well as linguistic fluencies for developing a sense of belonging identity. They emphasised that the higher the correlation between the cultural and linguistic fluencies, then the lower was the possibility of experiencing identity fragmentarisation and feelings of dis- and non-belonging.

Chapter 6: Now-here identities of Multilocalities

6.1   Overview

In the last two Chapters I addressed the factors and features highlighted by the participants as significant for the negotiation of their contemporary belonging identities. The participants believe that the omnipresent global web of digital communication and information access made these negotiation processes far more complex for them than the generations of their parents and grandparents experienced. As well as believing the practice still remains rater locally situated, the participants report it was now simultaneously compound, multifaceted, and fluid. According to the participants, their negotiations of such identity are subjected to constant dynamic changes, including fragmentations and unifications of various meanings and hence, interpretations and representations of their selves and others undergo continuous evolutions.

Subsequently, in this Chapter I present the participants' reflections on constructions of their contemporary belonging identities. First, I report on the confusions of participants that stem from the progressive inadequacy of those characteristics comprising the traditional notions of belonging as acquired in Poland. This is followed by a section on the participants' considerations on the nature of their contemporary forms of belonging identity that are simultaneously locally fitted and yet fluid. Using a mixture of symbolic interactionists' perspective and social identity theory, framed within postmodern accounts on social structure, I argue why this might be the case. The Chapter concludes with the participants' emphasis on the growing irrelevance of cultural (in-)competences obtained through the education system in Poland for negotiation of their belonging identities within the multicultural and multilocal reality of daily social interactions.

6.2   Multilocal millennials

The post-2000s mass affordability of digitalized means of communication resulted, as already emphasized by the participants, in the appearance of mixed online-offline, as well as solely hyperlocal networked and individual connections. This is also noted by Robinson (2007: 98), who observes that the progressing intensification of such multilocal social interactions have been presenting 'the selection of [affiliations] to the user'. As the result,

the significance of exclusively offline, face-to-face social interactions, considered traditionally the only source of belonging, has been questioned. This aspect is highlighted by all participants of this study, noting that their belonging identity has become now 'complex' (Mateusz, M/28), 'rather temporary' (Natalia, F/28), 'environment dependable' (Izaura, F/28), 'kaleidoscopic' (Krzysztof, F/28), 'not fixed' (Fabian, M/28), and 'often negotiable' (Barbara, F/29), to name the few. According to Mitchell (2003: 143), the appearance of the hyperlocal networking allows them to 'occupy different spaces simultaneously – both here and elsewhere'. This quantum-like superpositioning within familiar and unfamiliar cultures at the same time, as noted Bauman (2016: 3), generates belonging identity confusion, fragmentation, doubt, or even, alienation, as meanings of situations might be interpreted differently, as do occur 'here and also elsewhere'.

The participants emphasized the emergence of a progressing depreciation of meanings behind their own belonging identity. This constitutes an important finding, since the shared understanding of meanings, as noted by Cooley (2005), Mead (1982), Blumer (1969), provide identity's essentials when interpreting any social interaction. Participants observe that unlike their experience of the belonging identity in Scotland, which they described as 'civic', 'contemporary' (Zdzislawa, F/28), 'valid' (Tomasz, M/29), 'open' (Apolina, F/29), and 'inclusive' (Maurycy, M/23), the Polish one was rather puzzling to them. As apart from qualities centered on skin tone and belief system, they note that it has become rather empty. And this 'has become an issue', as Marek (M/20) stresses, since it posed questions about the manner by which the belonging identity is being constructed today. This re-entering into identity-crisis mode, brought in the past by the processes of industrialization and urbanization of social structure (Marx 1885; Adorno & Horkheimer 1992; Reid 1997), is now experiencing similar existential and definitional dilemmas due to digitalization of those structures within which such identity resides (Bauman 2016).

6.2.1 Multilocal tensions of local identities

The meaning of belonging identity in Poland has been undergoing a debate recently. The main reasons for the debate are hardly surprising, as highlighted by the participants of this study, due to widening of access to multilocally sourced information. The participants observe that as the result, differences between their understanding of belonging identity and that common to many of their peers, parents and grandparents started appearing. Reflecting on this aspect Marek (M/20) tells me that:

'frankly, I do not know what belonging in Poland means anymore. I believe my parents never faced up to this question – for them it was kind of obvious. Now, when I think about it, I am unable to come up with any other qualities that would qualify one being Polish, than being White and Catholic. And I find difficult to relate to such identity'.

Also Egiliusz (M/28) notes that 'overarching identities, such as that of belonging based solely on a place of birth, race and religion are rather obsolete (…). I do not know what it means to be Polish today'. The confusion of Marek and Egiliusz is also consonant with the feelings of Robert (M/25), when he says that 'honestly do not understand what being Polish means today. (…) So no, I do not feel Polish. I feel myself'.

The progressive insufficiency of traditional forms of association and affiliation encoded in the statehood is reflected in the responses of other participants as well. It includes Barbara (F/29), who observes that 'national belonging identity understood not through ideas but defined by a place of birth, is irrelevant today. We need something more than this'. Also Zdzisława (F/28) states that she does 'not feel Polish', as she 'struggles to understand what being Polish means today'. This is consonant with opinion of Maurycy (M/23). Maurycy emphasizes that he 'kept the Polish citizenship as a traveling document', nevertheless rather distanced himself from a 'belonging as synonymous to a place of birth. I do not judge people, like you are from Norway, so you are better than someone born in other places – this understanding of identity is such an outdated concept!' Other participants, such as Piotr (M/30), not only emphasize their dismay for any type of identity ascribed solely by a place of birth, but also provide their justification for their choices. For example, Piotr notes:

'I do not understand what being Polish stands for today. (…) I even do not feel at home in Poland. But, I do feel at home in Scotland. It's such a cozy-comfy feeling. I am accepted here, people smile and are open. I do not feel welcome and accepted in Poland'.

Also, Elżbieta (F/28) reflects on differences in her worldview, norms and behavior and some of her fellow citizens she met while living temporarily in England. Elżbieta tells me that for her:

'an identity, such as the Polish, is an empty category, as now there is no valid idea that would keep this concept together (…). We [Poles] believe in different things. I used to live in Birmingham, and there are plenty of Poles, mostly behaving hopelessly, like gangs of Poles, shouting and swearing in Polish on streets. Seriously, I would die [of shame] if someone associates me with them in anyway. I was so ashamed that we share the same citizenship. (…) I have nothing in common with them'.

The disconnection of norms and values with her fellow citizens is also highlighted by Kinga (F/30) who observes that:

'today our identity and sense of belonging is negotiated mostly through interaction with people from a variety of places, so you belong to communities that are much greater than the place where you were born into. So, we cannot speak of Poles as a unified group today, as we are so different! Frankly, I have more common with my friends of different countries, that with many Poles'.

The implications of the ongoing technological shift enabling long-distance and cross-cultural information (multilocal) access and social interactions, as emphasized by the participants, are also broadly theorized by scholars. For example, Vertovec (2008: 3) stresses the appearance of 'globally intensified certain kinds of relationships' occurring 'in a planet-spanning area of activity'. Vertovec (2017: 1043) refers to the phenomenon as 'super-diversity', emphasizing the complex and multifaceted reality of contemporary social networks. Describing the processes, Lash and Lury (2007: 181-183) note that currently culture(s) entered 'into flows', transcending 'artificial' borders of states. The processes mentioned by the participants were also a matter of interest to Bauman (2016; 2004), who highlights that the omnipresent accessibility to a variety of cultural contexts resulted in the mushrooming of emotional bonds between people located in different geographical locations. According to Slevin (2000: 5), such a super-diversity of connections brought together individuals that otherwise 'might never have met, let alone converse'.

Subsequently, many scholars, including the considered postmodern writers, such as Bauman (2004a; 2010; 2016) highlight that the ongoing phenomenon of progressing cultural hybridization does challenge the comprehension of an idea of a state. The study emphasize that roots of identities traditionally sourced from information and face-to-face interactions obtained within geographical boundaries of the same state, may now be supplied by other locations. Such observations are consonant with Parutis (2010), who while investigating recreations of identities among Poles and Lithuanians in London, emphasizes that not a geographical location, but emotional bonds among people located within variety of geographical places constitute the principle sources for their belonging identity.

It is necessary to highlight at this point that indeed, confusions and crises of belonging identities have been a long established phenomenon (see for example: Thomas & Znaniecki 1967; Park 1967; Park & Burgess 1921). Yet, contemporarily, as noted by Vertovec (2017), the unprecedented density and 'super-diversity' of cross-cultural

interactions, results in unique challenges to conceptualizations and understanding of the social belonging. Hence, faced with these rapid and radical transformations, present-day individuals, just as their late nineteenth century ancestors, might also experience uncertainty, fragmentation, and deep ambiguity (Bauman 2004a, 2004b) from the traditionally understood networks of support.

6.2.2 Multilocal natives and strangers

How then do the participants understand and construct their belonging identity nowadays? According to Kacper (M/28) the manner by which he does so did not vary from how that of older generations came about it. He explains that:

> 'my identity, when I think of it now, is made through actual connections with people, variety of people, from different cultures, races and countries and I do not see my identity as geographical belonging, but rather belonging to and through ideas'.

Also Gerfryda (F/28), while explaining the construction of her belonging identity, refers to meaningful connections built upon commonly shared ideas and interests.

> 'Of course, I love my family', she emphasizes, 'but their worldview and life outlook are rather foreign to mine (…). We occupy different worlds, we have different interests (…). Sometimes, I believe, we even speak a different [Polish] language', she added, laughing.

Similar observations are made by Fabian, when noting that while he visits Poland and speaks to people there, he 'feels rather as a foreigner'.

The aspect of being able to establish the same meanings of situations and experiences encoded within a language is frequently highlighted by the participants. For example, Iwona (F/28) stresses that:

> 'the other, or foreign, is the one who I cannot communicate with, I do not understand, has a language barrier. I, for example, do not feel foreign or different here [in Scotland], or anywhere where I can connect with people'.

Also Maurycy (M/23) highlights that for him:

> 'a foreigner is a person who does not speak a language other than the native one, particularly, when living abroad. And perceives the world only through single lenses of own culture. Yes, such a person is a foreigner to me.'

The disconnection brought by the lack of understanding among people sharing the same or other languages is additionally highlighted by Dorota (F/27). Dorota ties the concept of the 'other' and 'foreign' with a concept of the 'migrant'. Dorota defines it as:

> 'a person who despite arriving to another country does not seek, or is unable to connect and interact with the local inhabitants. The migrant stays foreign and other, that is – disconnected, but connects virtually and in the real life with those who share their culture, beliefs and values. (…) Yes, the migrant is the one who is culturally disconnected, and therefore – foreign'.

According to Wray (2014) and Saussure (2011) language comes with specific cultural values and norms attached. Hence, establishing social interactions among people sharing other, or even the same languages might be fraught with challenges, such as confusion over the description of commonly experienced situations. The significance of such cultural contextuality of meanings within a language is particularly addressed by Kramsch (2011), distinguishing between meanings stemming from a dictionary wording and actual intercultural fluency. According to Kramsch (2011), language learning is often focused on dictionary memorization, ignoring norms and values encoded into the words, as well as concepts that shape the worldviews of those using the language.

Such factors are also highlighted by the participants of the study, including Joanna (F/26), when emphasizing a particular challenge many encounter when arriving to a linguistically and culturally different location. In her example Joanna focuses on children, and their social vulnerability (and subsequent health implications) when faced with this drastic social, linguistic and cultural changes. Joanna illustrates her example by a story of a small boy, who like:

> 'many children, particularly the early teenage ones, was brought abroad against his will, with some, but rather insufficient knowledge of English. (…) He did not understand the culture here. And when in the end they arrived here [Scotland] he went into a severe depression, as was unable to communicate and connect to other children. He's still on medication.'

Theses aspects of the experiences of 'migrant families' abroad, particularly within the English and Scottish socio-cultural contexts have been extensively by a number of the contemporary scholars, particularly by White (2014; 2011), Sime (2016), Moskal (2016), Kay and Trevena (2017), to name a few. Particularly Moskal (2016: 143) in her recent paper on 'migrant children' highlights that a period of 'five to seven years' of time is usually required for them to develop what she referred as 'academic language', or – as noted by Kramsch (2011), the cultural fluency encoded into language.

Another aspect of acquiring cultural fluency encoded into language is highlighted by Natalia (F/29) observing that there is a progressive challenge of children left behind by their parents, who relocated (permanently or semi-permanently) for economic purposes. Natalia stresses that these children grow up mostly isolated from any form of family supervision, attaching values and norms acquired randomly through a variety, mostly online connections:

> 'fulfilling the parental vacuum. These children speak their own language. And despite the fact that it's still Polish, the values, but especially – the norms, are negotiated and specific within these like tribal groups'.

Apart from the lack of knowledge of another language and its cultural implications, the participants additionally observe that many Poles annihilate their native cultural heritage and language, particularly while geographically relocating. This aspect is especially stressed by Apolina (F/29), who notices that many Polish parents upon relocating abroad demand their children to:

> 'drop Polish. For them, the Polish language and cultural identity is rather a problem, than something of value to keep. (…) Local schools and the education system's set up is not helpful, as prevents recognition of Polish as a language to be taught locally [in Scotland], in the same manner as German and French is'.

Furthermore, the participants emphasize that language, and the cultural implications encoded within it, are of pivotal importance for maintaining a sense of local social cohesion and connection among people.

This referred particularly with developing identities that were geographically recognized and accepted. According to Goffman (1959: 22, 35, 41) 'all the activity of the individual which occurs during a period marked by a continuous presence before particular sets of observes' needs to be 'modeled and modified to fit into the understanding, expectations of the society in which it is presented'. Participants highlight that individuals who stay unaware of others' expectations and understandings, and display, through different forms of language, culture, norms and behaviors that are unrecognizable to their audience, are considered as alien, within both, the online and offline contexts.

6.3. From *Nowhere* to *Now-here*

The belonging identity, according to the participants, is gradually becoming a matter of choice, reflecting the cultural positioning of an individual and their needs, desires and understanding at a given moment in time. This includes Marlena (F/29) stating that:

'now we can pick and choose, mix and match ideas about our identity, belonging, values and so on. It is because we have a choice. (…) We have plethora of choices'.

This is consonant with Bauman's observations, as particularly presented in his interview with Yaklmova (2002, see also: Bauman 2016), where the scholar highlights the modality and fluidity of people's contemporary cultural attachments. Through this hyperlocal shift the author highlights disintegrations and disconnections of cultures from its traditional geographical locations, with symbols and meanings being exchanged and negotiated beyond the states' borders; they are mixed-and-matched to suit the individual's needs at a particular moment in time. This *now-here*, highly individual, reflexive, and personalised set of affiliations appear and disappear while staying multilocally mobile through time.

6.3.1 *Now-here* identities

All participants highlight that due to effortless accessibility brought by digital means of communication and information and emergence of hyperlocalities, they are able (and often required) to adapt or switch their identities according to the complexity of demands presented in front of them at a given moment in time. For example, according to Loreta (F/29):

'currently, we are able to access any number of communities, expressing our needs or wishes. I am in touch with people, globally, where I am a ballet dancer, an artist, a person who loves cooking. I discuss different, sometimes unrelated issues often at the same time. Nobody there looks at me as I am Polish, but rather expressing different, more relevant "me-s", changing them, sometimes within seconds, depending on the context I am in'.

The vastness of choices among social contexts available is also emphasized by Krzysztof, who highlights that:

'currently the type of identities available to us is much broader than to parents and grandparents. Frankly, these two [generations] are incomparable'.

Alicja (F/29) too, stresses that the contemporary speed and complexity of online and offline information exchange and vastness of social interactions occurring multilocally results in the breaking of a once (considered as) stable and fixed belonging identity, into one that is rather flexible and fluid, 'as now we live in many realities at the same time, so we adapt'. A similar point is brought up by Anna (F/26), providing an example that:

'while I speak Polish, I affiliate myself with that culture, particularly with a special context of it. But, the moment I switch to French or German, I relate to others,

immersing myself in the context I am in. (…) I mix and match, choosing what I am interested in'.

Additionally, Marek (M/20) highlights that since the digital technology became 'routinely available', it has resulted in a relatively unproblematic information sharing.

'I noted', Marek tells me, 'that many developed more meaningful connections with people from India to Brazil, than with their direct neighbors living next door'.

These observations by the participants are also reflected in the academic literature. Examples include Berger and Luckmann (1991: 43), who while researching daily social interactions almost a half a century ago observe that 'the reality of everyday life is shared with others', and therefore framed with the individual's 'experience' of these interactions. According to the authors (1991: 43) 'the most important experience of others takes place in face-to-face situations' (see also: Goffman 2010). Also, Larsen et al. (2016: 2) note that a focus on face-to-face social interactions led them to view geographically fitted nearness as 'the most significant, important, and therefore – meaningful' parameter to understand the formation of identity; an aspect, as the authors highlight, reflecting an obvious mid-twentieth century pre-internet constraint on what constitutes 'here', which in those times meant a common geographic 'here'. The authors note that a parallel existence of online communication revolutionised individuals' experiences and perceptions of *locality*. They note that the Berger and Luckmann's (1991: 43) understanding of the offline, geographically localised 'here and now, face-to-face social interaction' is currently supplanted by a complex, compound and multifaceted variety of online localities (hyperlocalities). The parallel existence of online and offline locations, this *multilocality*, is also conveyed in many contemporary studies (Verovec 2017; Larsen et al. 2016; Schmidt & Cohen 2013; Robertson 2007; Burret & Marshall 2005), as well as by the participants of this research.

As the impact of media, as emphasized by Pratkanis and Aronson (2001; see also: Mead 1967), re-interpreted individuals into a relation with somewhat abstract ideas of sameness and difference through developing sensitivity and reflexivity towards mixtures of cultural communities located nearby and offline. At present, according to the participants, the online communication and information access challenges their prior geographically acquired cultural symbols and meanings, which are now generally exchanged and negotiated beyond the states' borders, that is multilocally, constantly mixed-and-matched to reflect the individuals' needs at any given time. The resultant highly subjective, and often reflexive, identity that emerges tends to reflect the individuals' needs and desires of

the moment (the *now*), which themselves depend on the particular virtual cohort currently being engaged with (the *here*) as the participants negotiate their positionality. Out of the myriad online and offline (multilocal) social interactions of the participant emerges *now-here belonging identity.*

6.3.2 Significance of *now-here*

The emergence of hyperlocalities (virtual environments) for social interactions brings mushrooming of belonging identities that transcend geographical borders of the states. All the participants emphasize that they feel able to find themselves, to place their belonging, among the demands stemming from social interactions across constantly shifting online and offline locations. All the participants struck a note of concern for future generations abilities in this regard, when speaking of a growing gap between the skills derived from a public education in Poland, and the social demands placed by the daily cross-cultural and multicultural existence. Fabian (M/28) feels that:

> 'in Poland we are taught still to be culturally rather discriminatory. Upon reflection, I believe that we are taught a colonial narrative at school, with the cultural heritage of the White Christian Europeans being of value, while other cultures, norms and believes are taught as of secondary importance. As the result, even with knowledge of other languages, many Poles suffer complex identity challenges when confronted with other cultures, to treat them as equally valuable and beautiful. (…) as through our education we got culturally programmed to perceive the surrounding world in a specific way, that we were taught to consider as the right one. (…) and now it turns that there are many right ones, and this makes many people confuse'.

According to Karolina (F/28), a cognitive dissonance is arising in the 'vast gap' between the schools' curriculum in Poland and the reality of everyday social interactions of online and offline, multilocal spaces. Karolina notes that:

> 'the young generations now tend not to take the school seriously, in the sense that they realized that in order to progress they need to memorize certain facts, that they consider predominantly useless, like [Catholic] religion, or history of Poland and no broader context of international relations. These subjects, if not placed within the current reality are just not digestible. (…) It's like a game one needs to play to gain certification that allows progress to dream professions, but many take this so-called knowledge also seriously. On the other hand, we are not taught the legacy of the UK, France, Spain, Netherlands and later, the USA, particularly colonization and slavery, and the contemporary power play'.

This impact chimes with Blackledge and Creese (2010), who also emphasise the implications for belonging identity that arise from online, cross-cultural social interactions often challenging the indigenous norms and values of the individual. Other authors,

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including Castells (2001: 140), highlight that the large number of online social interactions produced a 'gap [between the society and] the vertically integrated organizations inherited from the industrial era'. According to Bauman (2011) contemporarily the processes of the construction of identities underwent fluidity and hybridity transformations. Also Robinson (2007: 28) highlights the appearance of 'a new, "placeless" geography'. According to the author (2007: 29) the 'new electronic cultural space makes cultures into intense and immediate contact with each "Other"'.

The phenomenon of now-here, brought by multilocalities and their digital technologies, is also addressed by Kramsch (2011). According to the author (2011: 356), one needs to acknowledge that 'our culture is now subjectivity and historicity, and is constructed and upheld by the stories we tell and the various discourses that give meaning to our lives'. This is additionally consonant with Greenhalgh-Spencer and Aiston (2017) highlighting the contemporary side-by-side existence of dominant colonial narratives, and the less known colonized realities. As stressed by Featherstone (1991), for decades now there has been an ongoing intensification of native and non-native signs and images interwoven into the fabric of everyday life that influences the particular manner by which the individuals position themselves in the world.

6.4 Local education and multilocal demands

Education system, as emphasized by Ward et al. (2001: 156), constitutes a microcosm of a local societal relations, culture and intercultural competence, reflecting the 'values, traditions and practices' of local communities. Nevertheless, as highlighted previously, the meaning of local and locality has shifted, from the geographically based, into a mix of online and offline places, multilocalities.

In Poland, as already stressed by participants, the formal education system faces challenges stemming from such a shift, as it is now confronted with a variety of multilocal stories, discourses and narratives. The vastness of culturally diversified information made the multilocal millennial participants question the relevance of the skills and the validity of the information they received through the education system in Poland. As in Poland, according to the Bill of Education (1991; online) the formal education is to 'develop (…) the sense of responsibility, admiration of the fatherland and respect for the Polish cultural heritage, while staying open to values of European and world's culture'. This aim remained unchanged through a string of structural reforms to the Polish educational system, which were introduced in 1999, 2009 and 2017 (Białecki et al. 2017), respectively. Despite the

structural alterations, all of the participants of this study emphasize that based on their experience, Polish education is lagging behind in providing contemporarily relevant cultural information and social skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving abilities.

Particularly, the participants highlight the 'Polish White and Catholic' centrism, and its failure to provide any type of transferable skills, such as thinking critically, team work and problem solving. Some of the participants also highlight the actual non-existence of life-long learning and life-long education culture in Poland. Its absence is also emphasized in the relatively recent assessments of the Polish education system, namely: the PISA (2015; 2012) and OECD (2015), underlining a lack of ability to teach critical thinking skills, problem solving and group work. The cultural competences of students in Poland are not the subject of this study, hence they were not measured, but if they were, according to the participants, they would be virtually non-existent. These type of skills, according to the PISA (2015: 34) report are marked as of particular significance, as they are aimed at preparing students to confront and solve 'the kind of problems that are encountered almost daily in the XXI century life', including handling of 'unexpected challenges'.

6.4.1 (Ir)relevance of mono-narrative education

One of the most frequently highlighted issues by all the participants of the study is related to the manner by which they were taught to approach interpretation of a narrative. All participants emphasize that one of the most significant challenges they faced at school was the enforcement of a single narrative, that was expected to be memorized and subsequently reproduced verbatim in exams. Any variation from the accepted narrative, according to participants, was structurally and culturally discredited via bad grades and social ostracism. Examples are provided by all participants, including Barbara (F/29) underlining that:

> 'the Polish school fails to teach critical thinking skills, but instead demands one to memorize only. And the ability to think critically is so important as allows to express and defend opinions, instead of uncritically repeat opinions of others. At the moment the Polish school eliminates any ability to think critically'.

Similar observations are reported by Bartłomiej (M/28), stating that:

> 'the Polish school does not teach one how to think and appraise information critically. And then we have people who even with social media are unable to search for information, taking tall the info face value, as the school, particularly, just does not teach you to think critically, but to memorize and to repeat'.

Also Eustachy (M/29) notes that:

'the school in Poland does not learn to think critically, to question, to search, no –
only to copy what already exists. If one shows initiative, one challenges with
questions, one is laugh at instead; called names, humiliated and socially alienated'.

This is additionally consonant with Elżbieta, underlining particularly:

'the mediocrity of the Polish school system; there is no *seriousness* [Elżbieta states
in English] there, as instead of teaching critical thinking skills, seeding the interests
in exploring and debating, teachers insist one memorizes texts, and, God forbid,
does not question them, as questioning is not allowed'.

Fabian (M/28), too, highlights that:

'the schools [formal education system] are at fault. They do not learn to think
critically, to question, to search, no, - only to copy what already exists. If you show
initiative to change, you challenge what is already here, you are laugh at and called
names'.

The participants stress that socio-psychological and cultural implications of this type of
education are profound, including the lack of abilities to critically appraise an information
provided, as well as a social anguish to present own independent ideas and solutions. One
of the particular reasons brought up by the participants for why, despite the string of
educational reforms, this continued to be the case, is pinned down to the inadequate
education and training of the teachers. As noted by Robert (M/25):

'we only teach others to the level we are educated ourselves; we cannot educate
others in skills we do not have idea about, or in something that is unknown to us'.

Robert's observations are consonant with that of Joanna (F/26), who notes that:

'we only can educate to the degree we know about the world. And the Polish
[formal public] education is culturally very outdated.

Also Barbara (F/29) notes that:

'at the moment in Poland we have badly [Pol. *nieadekwatnie*] educated and
backwards [Pol. *zacofanych*] teachers teaching unnecessary things of a museum
value.

Additionally, Maurycy (M/23) comments on the pedagogical preparation of the teachers,
referring to it as the prime example of:

'pedagogical un-readiness. In Poland this is a huge problem, as teachers are on
average closed minded [Pol. *tępy*] and ignorant. They are not role models, they
even do not aspire to be one. Also, there is no concept of lifelong learning, or
emphasis on development for teachers. There is no emphasis on critical thinking,
discussion, but instead the constant pressure to memorize according to the answers
provided; always being afraid that if you provide any wrong answer you will be

laugh at publicly. Such system and teachers are responsible for annihilating imagination, curiosity and creation in students, fostering instead the fear of exclusion'.

The conclusions of participants support the data provided by the OECD report (2015: 3) on education in Poland, underlining that only a half of teachers demonstrates 'moderate to good critical thinking and problem-solving skills, compared to an average of 83 percent for other countries participated in the survey'. As the result, according to the document (2015: 4), only '15 percent of adults [in Poland] age 25 to 64 possess good critical thinking and problem solving skills', constituting 'the lowest result among the OECD countries participating in the OECD Survey of Adults Skills'. The report (2015) also highlighted the daunting deficiencies in teaching skills necessary for safe online social interactions and qualitative information gathering. Hence, it was not surprising for the PISA (2015) report to conclude that the teachers in Poland are simply not able to teach critical thinking skills, among many other necessary transferable abilities as outlined by the European Commission 2020 guidance.

Furthermore, as participants highlight, there are severe disparities in the levels of education available to them depending on the type of agglomerations they lived. As Marlena notes (F/29), and all participants of the study concur, 'we experience education differently depending if we live in cities or small places'. Also Maurycy (M/23) emphasizes that:

> 'there are differences in a type of education available in large agglomerations and a countryside. If you attend a school in a small village where everybody knows each other, where there is a teacher, a [Catholic] priest, and a local councilor, so the teachers are not going to teach issues that are not locally approved by the priest, as they do want to keep their job'.

Such a point was additionally highlighted by Iwona (F/28) observing that:

> 'in a city there is a chance of better schooling, I mean, the staff is more qualified. But when you live in a small village, where is a school, a church, and a few teachers, where everybody knows each other, people will not 'stick out'. In small agglomerations you have local people teaching new generations not for the future, but in a way they were taught, and this not always work. This will change, I think, as people are now mobile, but it will take time.'

Similar observations are emphasized by the UNESCO report (2012: 21) stressing that rather than initiate changes and create a 'more equitable distribution of learning opportunities and outcomes', the Polish education system tends to reproduce the existing socio-cultural patterns. Such notions are also brought out by the participants, with Eustachy (M/29) noting that:

'things will not change, as teachers are not going to put their work at risk, and will educate according to the public pressure of the [Catholic] church'.

This fact, juxtaposed with the problematic manner by which teachers are appraised in Poland (that is highly challenging for teachers in small agglomerations, where social ties between the church officials, local councilors and schools' senior management are quite close, OECD Report 2015), brings degeneration of the social value of the teacher's profession for young generations; the fact highlighted also by the OECD report (2015: 5), emphasizing that the 'teaching workforce in Poland is aging, while the life-long learning opportunities in Poland are scant'.

6.4.2 Myth of inclusion

The participants report that the Catholic worldview within the schools curricula is noticeable at all levels of public education in Poland. The examples, according to participants, are observable in a variety of spheres, including the symbolic presence of the religious symbols across schools, students being subjected to religious activities while at schools, and having the Catholic instruction classes incorporated into the main curricula at all levels of learning. It is worth noting, that according to the Polish Constitution (1997), Poland is a secular state, open and welcoming to all belief systems. Furthermore, the Polish Education Bill (1991: Preamble) states that the Polish education system is secular and of 'the universal code of ethics, with the respect for the Christian values'.

Nevertheless, as already highlighted by the participants, the impact of the Catholic Church in Poland on the local educational system is substantial, resulting in blending of the single religious aspects into the belonging identity of those growing-up in Poland. This fact is reflected in all of the participants' stories, including that of Egiliusz (M/28), highlighting that:

> 'education in Poland is not secular, it is this Polish type of Catholicism, with its symbolism, including the clergy, and their viewpoints, omnipresent at every school'.

Also Zdzisława (F/28) observes that:

> 'at school the education was solely from the Polish Catholic perspective. (…) we did not learn about other belief systems [pause], are you kidding me with this question? of course we did not!'

This is consonant with Bartłomiej (M/28), noting that:

'in Poland there is only a Polish Catholic religion, so its very tricky to be of different faith, as then you become excluded; not one of us, but different'.

Furthermore, Dorota (F/27) highlights the challenge of the clergy being involved in teaching non-religious subjects, such us 'preparation for family life' [Pol. '*przystosowanie do zycia w rodzinie*']*,* addressing the issues of reproduction and sexual health. As the result, according to Dorota:

'we cannot speak of a secular [formal] education in Poland, if classes such as the 'family life' are taught by the Catholic clergy, since there is nobody else to teach it. From this class I learnt, for example, that the best type of contraception is calendar based [Pol. *kalendarzyk malzenski*]. This is a tragedy, as there is no other class that addresses issues around reproductive health, so what type of education we are talking about, if this is not an example of religious education?'

Similar experiences were also shared by Aneta (F/27), when recalling that:

'while at school we were often taught 'family life' classes by a secular Catholic clergy staff [Pol. *katechetka*], teaching about issues of sexual health, according to the Catholic doctrine, naturally'.

The observations reported by the participants of the study were also highlighted in a report by Balsamska et al (2012). The document (2012: 156) emphasized that the profound impact of the Catholic worldview, which affected curricula for classes, such as the already mentioned 'preparation for family life', ethics, but also 'Polish [literature], history and biology classes'. This in turn gradually imposed a correlation between the Catholic and a national identity, as highlighted by Apolina (F/29), with the meaning of being Polish defined as 'Catholic and White'. Also Kacper (M/28) highlights that:

'the Polish school [formal education system] teaches a particular type of belonging based within Catholic belief system and race'.

Additionally, all the participants of the study feel that such a constructed belonging identity disfranchised people of other beliefs, skin tones and ethnicities living in Poland.

6.4.3   Reproducing cultural (in)competence

According to Choi (2015: 241) language 'is a symbol and marker of identity'. Also, all the participants of the study highlight the crucial importance of languages when considering their identities and emotional affiliation across cultures. This included Zdzisława (F/28), noting that:

'language is a tool, to interact, to exchange ideas, to learn about others, because the knowledge of a language is the most important to make sense of people, places, and cultures, and when we know it we can try to make sense of what is important to others, about their ideas and views of the world'.

Also Fabian (M/28) stresses that:

'language is the key, the key to open oneself, to connect and to relate to others. If you do not know languages, you surround yourself with the same people, e.g. Poles, regardless where you interact, in Poland, online, or abroad'.

The importance of multicultural and multilinguistic fluency is also highlighted by the European Commission Report (2013). The Report (2013: online) identified that the 'education systems in a number of Member States are still not efficient enough to cope with these challenges'. According to the document (2013: online), 'in France only 14% of all pupils reach the level of an independent user of one foreign language at the end of lower secondary education, and in the UK this is only 9%'. Hence, a series of recommendations was proposed, including a call for 'new methodologies and technologies for teaching both the first and second foreign languages' (2013: online). Addressing the need for new methodologies and philosophies of other language acquisition, Kramsch (2011: 354) highlights that:

'the symbolic dimension of intercultural competence calls for an approach to research and teaching [languages] that is discourse based, historically sensitive, and that takes into account the actual, the imagined and the virtual worlds in which we live'.

According to the author (2011), in the space of the last few decades the intercultural awareness of people has been gradually emerging. As a result, the author (2011: 358) urges for the need to recognize the 'intertextualities of (…) words and images and their multiple timescales' and interpretations.

6.5   Summary

This Chapter addressed the manner by which the participants construct their belonging identities multilocally and often, multiculturally, within the parameters of their everyday social interactions across online and offline locations. It also highlighted the role of the obligatory education, as the significant factor in standardizing norms, values and behaviors that are culturally accepted, expected and experienced. The participants emphasized the vast dissonance between the values, norms and beliefs taught through education systems in Poland and the cultural demands stemming from their daily multilocal and multicultural interactions, emphasizing the urgency for change.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1   Overview

In this Chapter, I summarise the scope of the main empirical findings, my overall contributions to knowledge, as well as the limitations of the research conducted. The Chapter commences with revisiting the research questions posed at the beginning of the process. This is followed by a brief contextualisation of the findings within the existing research, highlighting the original contributions, both theoretical and methodological, of the work conducted. I also include a short personal reflection addressing changes in and challenges to my own belonging identity that arose while conducting the study. The Chapter concludes with some recommendation for further research and for policy makers.

7.2   Research summary

Belonging identity is classified as a one of the most fundamental human needs (Maslow 1943). Shared among all cultures, the need to belong guides human choices and their subsequent experiences. Understanding the negotiation of belonging identity is therefore a precursor to understanding people's life choices and experiences, including that of multilocal mobility. Such a premise entails the need to identify factors influencing the negotiation of one's belonging identity, and more specifically how such factors act and interact with one another. This thesis addressed a combination of offline and online factors that influence negotiations of belonging identity among a cohort of Poles born in the 1980s and 1990s. Such millennial cohorts reflect a unique characteristic, namely they constitute the first generation to negotiate their belonging identity not only amidst the face-to-face and more traditional forms of media, but also within internet mediated social interactions. Drawing upon the narratives of 46 millennial Poles in Glasgow, and using a mixture of social identity (Tajfel & Turner 1979), symbolic interactionism (Cooley 2005; Mead 1982; Goffman 1959), and postmodern interpretations (Bauman 2011; 2004), I examined the millennials' experiences in negotiating their belonging identities across multilocalities.

The key research questions addressed the factors that determine the origin and nature of belonging identities among millennial Poles in Glasgow in this time of global

interconnectivity. Researching how variables such as sameness and otherness, locality and multilocality, are interpreted by young people born into today's internet mediated reality is of pivotal importance, being key to understanding their experiences of themselves and others in Poland and abroad. The following research questions were posed:

- how do the millennial Poles in Glasgow identify themselves and what is the nature of these affiliations?
- what are the factors that influence how they negotiate their belonging identity? Why? How? When and where did they learn to construct these particular identities?
- how these identities shape their experiences of the contemporary multicultural and multilocal environment of social interactions?

The data were collected by applying a qualitative and culturally tailored methodology, with semi-structured, open-ended narrative interviews being the main data gathering tool. The first main finding, discussed in Chapter 4, highlighted the important role played by the values, norms and beliefs of the cohort which were instilled in the home and education environments of their birth place. Additionally, the role of the Catholic Church's worldview was emphasized, as it acts and transcends through these home and educational environments. The second main finding, addressed in Chapter 5, emphasized the equally pivotal roles played by the internet and social-media, as well as the migration experience itself, in the millennials' subsequent adult negotiations of their belonging identities, including verification and restructuring of values, norms and beliefs held. Lastly, Chapter 6 presented the reflections of participants upon the state of their contemporary belonging identities. The participants highlighted that growing up amongst online and offline social interactions shaped the manner by which they perceive themselves and others. The millennials emphasized that the mobile aspects, such as the online and migration factors, challenged their initial offline worldview acquired in Poland, resulting for some in a creation of a *now-here* belongingness, reflecting their multilocal cultural entanglement at a moment in time.

Further reflections included the participants' dissatisfaction with the type of cultural education received at home and in schools while in Poland. All participants emphasized the degree to which the values and norms of the Catholic belief system are embedded in a Polish culture, including the language (for example a single interpretation of the Polish word *religia*/religion, which denotes only the Catholic belief system). The millennial cohort highlighted that particularly the belonging identity in Poland was acquired within

principals of the Polish Catholic narrative, affecting the millennials' first impressions and perceptions of sexuality, gender role divisions, and ethnicity of themselves and others. This prompted some to explicitly change and manifest their new belonging identity, including a change of citizenship, or religious affiliations, while others disassociated themselves from certain, mono-narrative, values and norms that might be still acceptable for other Poles in Poland and abroad. Many participants reported experiencing cognitive dissonance arising when their previous indigenous identities met the newly negotiated ones. This principally occurred in social situations involving interactions within Poland where their identity choices run counter to the still locally accepted mono-narrative norms. A particularly troubling example involved others negating someone's citizenship based on their appearance (ethnicity) implicitly restricting Polish belonging identity by skin tone.

Many of participants stated that they do not currently feel 'at home' when interacting with other Poles in Poland and abroad, and even reported feeling like 'strangers at [that] home'. The participants emphasized that the meaning of 'home' itself evolved, as it does not point to a specific geographical location anymore, but to a set of feelings, values, norms and beliefs that are experienced multilocally.

7.3   Originality of the research

This research recognizes that the belonging identity of millennial Poles living in Glasgow is not well captured by the generic historical category of 'Polish migrant', which has been prevalent in migration studies to date. The findings highlight that the concept of 'locality', historically meaning geographic proximity, has been shifting in the digital age, where essentially 'local' encounters occur online on a global scale, challenging established definitions rooted in the concept of the geographical nearness, such as belonging identity.

By applying intersectional theory (Crenshaw 1989; Collins 2015; 1990) to uncover the diversity of factors affecting negotiation of belonging identity of millennial Poles across online and online spaces, the study departs from the prevalent 'home-host' framework of analysis. Instead, it uses social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979), symbolic interactionism (Cooley 2005; Mead 1982; 1967; Goffman 1959) and postmodern interpretations (Bauman 2011; 2004), to capture the experiences of belonging identities' negotiations when confronted with identity differences brought by multilocal social interactions.

7.3.1 Theoretical contributions

This thesis defines the experience of migration as those experiences of cultural difference that shape one's sense of belonging identity regardless of geographical location. It also argues that the nature of an individual's belonging identity depends greatly on the interplay between those factors that promote feelings of sameness or otherness. The research also enhances the transnational, networks and mobilities theories by supplementing a priori classifications of a study's participants (e.g. through their ethnicity and nationality), by investigating a meaning and role of belonging identity, specifically through a study of the experiences of 46 millennial Poles living in Glasgow. Additionally, it evidences the need to develop new categories and concepts beyond mere nationality or citizenship, to understand the belonging identity of those living abroad.

The empirical data highlighted that the studied cohort did not consider themselves 'migrants', but most reported being labeled as such by 'non migrants'. The 'migrant' label being applied in such contexts generated feelings of non-belonging, exclusion and lower-class identity, whether intentional or not, as 'migrants' are not 'from here'. Viewed as such, the study shows the need for a re-appraisal of and greater sensitivity in the use of certain non-belonging triggers, such as the use of the term 'migrant' within migration studies. This study finds that online interactions are a central player in the negotiation of belonging identities, as provide a new 'local' environment for people involved in international movement.

The thesis also complements the transnationalism (Vertovec 2008; 2017) and mobilities (Urry 2006) theories by also applying social identity theory, symbolic interactionism and postmodern interpretations in the analyses of the multilocal experiences of social interactions.

7.3.2 Methodological insights

The use of culturally tailored, individual, semi-structured interviews yielded relevant empirical data that seems inaccessible through quantitative methods and other qualitative methods, such as focus groups. The semi-structured format was incorporated by design to minimise the possibility of misunderstandings that might arise from differing interpretations of commonly used concepts, such as 'belonging', 'migrant' and 'identity', since this format allowed for sensitively probing why-what-how follow up questions. The methodological approach sought to remove any notion of power imbalance by

acknowledging and emphasizing the participants' expert role in the process. The use of the creative graph-based tools known as 'Ketso' permitted this researcher to thematically organize the data in a manner that was not accessible by more linear approaches.

7.3.3   Limitations

The fact that the sample was restricted to bilingual millennial Poles in Glasgow who are principally university educated restricts the applicability of the findings to other cohorts. It is unlikely to capture the negotiations of belonging identity among other millennial Polish cohorts, such as monolingual, or vocationally skilled Poles, the so-called 'Polish plumber', in Glasgow, other parts Scotland and anywhere else in the world.

It is worth noting, however, that generalizability was not a goal of this research, and my contributions to theory and the depth of my fieldwork and analysis helps to mitigate these limitations.

7.4   Personal journey

To understand the genesis of this research into negotiations of belonging identity, it is natural for me to go back to my first adult experience of such when I spent the summer of 2002 working in the Grand Canyon Village, Arizona.

For it was there that my rather proud view of my assumed multicultural and tolerant belonging identity was confronted with unflattering perceptions of that identity by random others. Labels, such as: 'uneducated', 'low status', 'kielbasa', 'bad English', 'migrant', 'prostitution', and 'Nazi collaborators responsible for the Holocaust', would get ascribed to me upon the introduction of my Polish identity. Over time this accumulation of negative stereotypes led me to feelings of shame about my identity, which continued after arriving in Scotland, when I realized that many had little knowledge or interest in my treasured belonging identity of Poland, while, in contrast to other countries and cultures, such as those of Italy, France, Germany and Russia, were afforded status and significance by those same people.

The proverbial nail in my belonging identity coffin was an offer to undertake 'migrant' doctoral study, since 'I am Polish, a migrant, and there are plenty of Polish migrants in Glasgow'.
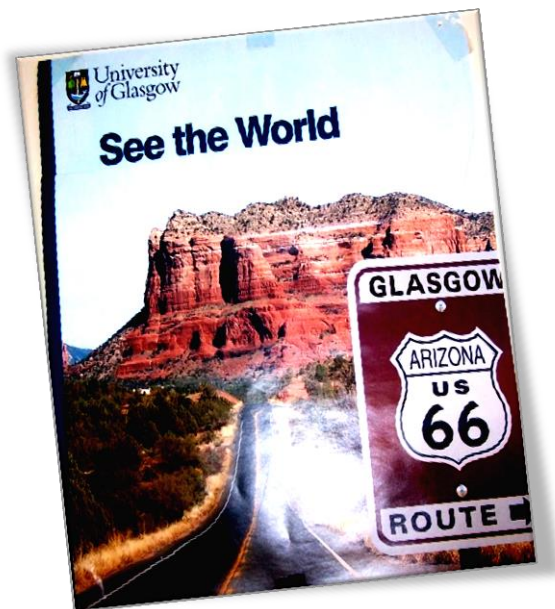
Figure 7.1: The University of Glasgow 'See the World' 2007 poster, accidentally capturing my very own route, from Arizona, USA to Glasgow, Scotland (from my research journal 2007)

Though the process initially led to my identity being burned to the ground, later it re-emerged like a mythical Phoenix rising from the ashes. Every struggle I experienced prompted me to seek understandings in areas seemingly unconnected to the research, such as art. An exceptional break-year spent at the Cardonald College, Glasgow reading Fashion Technology and Manufacturing brought out cubist and surrealist dimensions in me, with a particular fondness for Pop Art; an experience that deeply affected the manner by which I have been approaching theoretical conceptualisations ever since.

Figure 7.2: My mood-board assignment inspired by raw pasta (Cardonald College, 2013/2014)

Additionally, obtaining Leadership Qualifications from the University of Glasgow and the Chartered Management Institute, as well as applying them in running (and decorating) the Glasgow Maryhill Information Point for the 2014 Independence Referendum in Scotland, a so-called 'Yes Shop', developed a much needed self-confidence (in English, as opposed to my Polish identity), as well as made me particularly sensitive to variables impacting negotiation of belonging identity within my beloved neighbourhood of Maryhill (being one of the most deprived and impoverished areas in Glasgow and in Scotland).

Figure 7.3: Our Yes Scotland 'Shop', Maryhill Rd, Glasgow G20: the welcoming signs were made by a local artist, 2014 (top two pictures); we also made appearance in *Le Monde* (28 Aug 2014, accessed at: http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2014/08/28/ecosse-200-patrons-se-prononcent-pour-l-independance_4478285_3214.html; all from my research journal 2014).

There, creating together with the community a 'cosy' space (including a children's 'garden' with a beach umbrella and artificial grass and flowers on floors and walls; all out of borrowed artefacts from neighbouring charity shops and donations), and making a

welcoming atmosphere to include all regardless of predispositions, I witnessed people developing feelings of belonging and attachment. The unusualness of our approach in Maryhill made us present in local and international media, including *Le Monde* (see: Figure 7.3 above). The combined experiences of utilising art forms and civic centred leadership techniques impacted particularly the scope of issues addressed during the main fieldwork. It also allowed me to develop inclusive classroom teaching techniques, that I had a chance to practice while assisting with teaching two Master level courses, namely: International Issues in Adult Education, and Psychology of Adult Learning.

Figure 7.4: Educating for inclusion: alerting to importance of deconstruction (middle left); and to importance of visual research tools (e.g. Ketso; top). The last three pictures are artistic representations of my students' 2017 classroom experiences.

Additionally, it is important to highlight the impact of networking, particularly within the international area of research, as it contrasts one's own approaches to knowledge, including questioning the manner by which research results are communicated to societies (e.g. the European academic tradition and the African academic tradition). Particularly, visiting the welcoming University of Botswana, Department of Education (as a part of Sustainable Futures Africa project), and meeting inspiring local and international social leaders, academics and artists, resulted in a profound impact on a manner I approach and understand the importance of communicating academic studies back to societies.

Furthermore, it needs to be stated that conducting research work is exciting, yet profoundly socially isolating. Hence, building a supporting multilocal network is of crucial importance, so even in times of acute loneliness one is able to find comfort. One of the challenges I found particularly daunting when conducting this research was the absence of an audience to explain my ideas to on a daily basis. The significance of verbalising research thoughts is of pivotal significance for research progress, hence in absence of humans I found helpful to verbalise my thinking to, for example, cats.

Figure 7.5: Verbalising transnationalism to Leo and Jasmina, two cats of my friends
(from my research journal 2012)

Lastly, through this research I found that expressing myself through pictures provided a much needed vent, while creating my own multilocal community around my captures created home and a place of belonging, one of many. As finding a rewarding, yet no-time-consuming activity is important for maintaining a healthy mental state, as the stress stemming from conducting research work is real, vast and poses a mental health hazard if not addressed.

7.5 Policy recommendations

This study yields a number of findings that might contribute to social policy in Scotland, Poland, and perhaps more widely.

7.5.1 Scottish Government recommendations

The notion of 'migrant' has, in the era of globalization, been subject to a toxic narrative, with the term becoming the omnipresent stigmatizing moniker for non-citizen residents, especially so in the local context of Brexit. As this research shows, the term 'migrant' is being used to connote a lesser-value identity, and engenders a sense of non-belonging. However, Scotland democratically opposed Brexit, and thereby signaled a rejection of this 'othering' of those who chose to live and work in Scotland. I would recommend that the Scottish Government explicitly rejects this negative 'migrant' narrative, and 'take back control' by reifying the principle that belonging and rights derive from residency alone.

This research finds a form of dissociation that particularly arises between mono-cultural (and also often for monolingual) parents (care-givers) and their multicultural and multilingual children that adversely affects the family's sense of local belonging. As the language of instruction is not that of the home, as in the case for Scots language speakers in Scotland as for Poles, a notion of second-class status can subtly take hold. The Scottish Government should consider adopting measures which further enhance appreciation, recognition and even celebration of the cultures and languages of the children in Scotland's schools, and see beyond the mono-lithic.

7.5.2 Polish Government recommendation

This research shows that the vast majority of young Poles in this study (90%) dissociated from their mono-cultural identity obtained in Poland to varying degrees. Many expressed the view that the mono-cultural state education system they experienced in Poland did not provide them with a sufficient basis to do otherwise, and that they are now inclined to not return to live and work in Poland. The Polish Government would need to urgently reconsider the cultural framework provided within state education, and to seek ways that it may be adapted to counter such an aversion to return.

This thesis also highlights the urgent need for enhancing critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities among teachers and pupils within the Polish education system, as it affects an in-depth comprehension of complex social and cultural issues occurring

contemporarily, including negotiations of belonging identity among current and future generations. Without these pivotal developments it is likely to lead to the continuation of *aggression being the acceptable form of responding to any form of difference*; an example observed at one of the universities in Poland, that advises non-Polish (looking) students 'to stay at home for their own safety' when gatherings of the 'Polish Poles' occur on their campus (Polskie Radio 2016).

7.6   Further research

It is interesting to consider other areas that might benefit from being viewed through the lens of multilocal belonging identity. These might include:

- the negotiations of belonging identity amongst millennials originating from a different socio-economic strata than those considered here;

- the negotiations of belonging identity amongst the digital generation (born after 2000s) of Poles, and of others, in a variety of geographical locations;

- investigating to what extent the belonging identity operates within the wider British Isles, especially in the context of Brexit, which presumes the existence of a 'British' identity.

7.7   Summary

This Chapter provided an overview of the thesis's key findings regarding how millennial Poles negotiate their belonging identities, which includes the centrality of their local cultural belonging in that process, and its role in shaping contemporary online and offline, that is multilocal and multicultural social interactions. The Chapter also outlined the study's contributions to knowledge, as well as its limitations, brief policy recommendations, further research and author's personal journey.

Yet, this journey would not have occurred, if not for the unequivocal support of my beloved Family and the University of Glasgow (particularly, the College of Social Sciences), the Participants, the Supervisors and Examiners, Friends, and Coffee Shops Staff: your daily smile, love and deep care made this challenging Odyssey a successful reality. *Thank You wholeheartedly* for staying with me till the end.

~ The End ~

Appendix 1: Plain Language Statement

![University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences]

Plain Language Statement

The following is an explanation of the process and content of my doctoral research that I am undertaking at the University of Glasgow.

Study Title: Agency Unbound: the emergence of transnationalism and its implications for the identity (re-)construction of the contemporary young Poles in Scotland

Details of the Researcher:

Agnieszka Katarzyna Uflewska-Watson
School of Education
College of Social Science
Address: St. Andrew's Bldg, Office No. # 651
Glasgow, G3 6NH Scotland
E-mail: a.uflewska.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Invitation:
You are being invited to take part in my research. Before you decide, however, it is important for you to understand the implications of the research process, including: why the research is being conducted and what it involves. Please, take time to read the following information carefully and discuss with others, if you wish. Also, please do feel free to ask me any questions, if there is anything that is not clear, or if you require more information. Thank you for taking time to read this statement.

What is the purpose of this study?
This study explores the ways people, like yourself, negotiate their cultural identity in the digital age. Culture is a very important factor of our social existence. The way the local culture is constructed influences greatly how we identify with the world around us. Through the various institutions of a locally approved culture we are conditioned to hold certain codes of behaviour, set of beliefs and norms. These are recognised and understood locally among our direct societies. Nevertheless, since the invention and mass-availability of the Internet, the process of negotiating culture and identity has been undergoing revolutionising changes. Suddenly, the information about other cultures is only a 'click away', uncensored by the local media, education and religious systems. Consequently, I am interested how your cultural identity has been negotiated in the digital age. Do you feel that now you have a greater choice in negotiating your identity(ies) than previous generations? Has your sense of home, of what is 'local' and 'foreign' been affected in any way by these changes? Indeed, what does it mean to be a 'foreigner' in this interconnected world?

Why have I been chosen?
You have been invited to participate, as the study focuses on the experiences and perspectives of young Poles.

Do I have to take a part?
No. There is nothing in the design of this study that you 'have to' do. Your contributions are entirely voluntary, and it is you who decides, if you are interested and comfortable to share your information and perspectives with me, or not.

What will happen to me if I take a part?
An interview session will last up to an hour. The interview will be audio-recorded, then transcribed and analysed for the use in this research study. The guiding questions (topics) will lead the interview, as they are designed to collect information about your experiences and perspectives. We

will meet in a public, but relatively quiet place (i.e. a local coffee-shop, university office or a seminar room). Firstly, we will discuss any questions you might have regarding this study, issues of confidentiality, research methods involved, and any other challenges you wished to address before granting your consent (or not). Then, I will listen to your story, asking guiding, open-ended questions.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. All the data will be de-identified, making you unidentifiable for others. For example, recorded interviews will be labelled only with a number, and this method of non-identifiable labelling will be used in all future academic publications and doctoral thesis stemming from this research. Other data, in a form of recordings and research notes, will be securely saved on a multiple password protected computer. Transcripts of the data and any other printed notes will be stored separately from your consent form, and locked securely in my university's office cabinet. All the personalised notes and data will be destroyed upon a successful examination of this doctoral thesis. Then, the research data, at this point totally anonymised (as your personalised consent form will be destroyed), will be kept up to 3 years after successful examination of the doctoral thesis, for a purpose of a book writing.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The information provided kindly by you will form the basis of my research thesis, which, when successfully defended, will be available to the public from the University of Glasgow Library (in a paper and in a digital form). Additionally, aspects of this work will be used for a purpose of writing academic articles, book chapters and a book, reflecting on research outcomes and challenges of the research process.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed and is supervised by three academics, namely: Professor Michele Schweinsfurth, Professor Andy Furlong and Doctor Marta Moskal of the School of Education at the University of Glasgow.

Contact for further information:

Should any ethical issue arise regarding to the conduct of this research project, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Officer of the College of Social Sciences at the University of Glasgow, Dr Muir Houston at Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk.

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of Glasgow | Social Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project: Agency Unbound: the emergence of transnationalism and its implications for

the identity (re-)construction of the young Poles

Name of Researcher: Agnieszka Katarzyna Uflewska-Watson

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions;

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason;

3. I have been informed about and I consent to my input being audio-recorded;

4. I was made aware that the transcribed copy of the interview will be available to me for further comments and verification;

5. I have been assured that my confidentiality during and after the meeting will be maintained by the researcher's constant commitment to keep my information confidential and secure;

6. It has been explained to me that the data will be used for the purpose of this particular doctoral study and for the purpose of academic articles and other publications stemming out of this research. My anonymity will always stay intact.

7. I have been informed that should I want a copy of the finished thesis, this will be available to me from the University of Glasgow Library (in a paper and in a digital form).

I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

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1. Umiejscowienie jednostki:

a. dzieciństwo i dorastanie:

-   jak się kształtowała twoja tozsamosc narodowa? Kiedy/ przez jakie wydarzenie dowiedziales sie/zdales sobie sprawe, ze jestes Polakiem – co to wtedy znaczylo?
-   wplywy i wzorce kulturowe: przez kogo to sie stalo? Jak? Poprzez jakie zachowania?
-   systemy wartości: jakie sa? kto je przekazywal i jakie mialy znaczenie dla Ciebie?
-   szkola (i znajomi): jakie systemy wartosci uczono Cie w szkole? Jak to mialo wplyw na Twoja tozsamosc? Systemy wartosci: Szkola a swiat i tolerancja innych kultur; szkola a tozsamosc polska;
-   Twoi znajomi i ich poglady: czy mialy wplyw na poszerzenie/zmiane Twoich?

b. obecne srodowisko:

Jak wartosci, wierzenia, symbole ktore byly Ci wpajane w dziecinstwie maja sie do tych, ktore masz obecnie? Jak twoja obecna tozsamosc ma sie do tozsamosci Twoich zanojomych? Co Was laczy? Jaki masz na nich wplyw? Co bys chcial/a aby bylo zrobione inaczej jakbys jeszcze raz miala okaze aby nabyc Toja tozsamosc (wierzenia, wartosci, normy)

2. Rekonstrukcja tozsamosci:

Patrzac na innych, jak Ci sie wydaje, jak zachodzi obecnie, wedlug ciebie, konstrukcja tozsamosci – np. tozsamosci polskiej:

-   co sie na nia obecnie sklada? Patrzac z Twojego doswiadczenia, jakie sa skladniki tozsamosci? Co czyni Polaka Polakiem, a np. Greka Grekiem?
-   Jaka jest rola panstwa przy ksztaltowaniu tozsamosci kulturowo-narodowej?
-   Rola religii katolickiej? Rola innych religii? Rola wiary w ogole? Jaka powinna byc granica pomiedzy indoktrynacja religijna w ksztaltowaniu tozsamosci kulturowej jednostki (obywatela)?
-   Rola mass-mediow? Jaka jest rola lokalnej telewizji i prasy w ksztaltowaniu opinii, a przez to twojej tozsamosci kulturowej (mowienie co jest do zaaprobowania, a co nie)?
-   Jaka jest rola informacji zdobytej w internecie? Jaki ma wplyw latwosci dostepu do informacji indiwidualnego wyboru i ich wplyw na tozsamosc: co sie stalo kiedy informacje ktore wyszukujesz i dodbierasz w internecie sa sprzeczne z tymi ktore zostaly Ci wpojone (poprzez szkole/dom/wiare);
-   co sie dzieje obecnie z symbolami na ktorych sie wchowales, np. Bialo-czerwona flaga, krzyz, bialy orzel? Czy one maja jakies znaczenie? Jakie? A moze sa nowe symbole – jakie?
-   jaki jest Twoj stosunek do nabytych rytualow: i.e. katolickich, typu chrzest, bierzmowanie, malzenstwo koscielne?
-   Rowne prawa dla ludzi bez wzgledu na ich kolor skory, wiare, plec, wybory sexualne?
-   Co jest a co nie jest wazne/dobre/ akceptowane spolecznie? Kto o tym decyduje? Kto decyduje obecnie kto ma rowne prawa a kto ich nie ma?
-   Jak Ty sie czujesz wiedzac ze ktos nie ma rownych praw ze wzgledu na plec, czy rase? Co sadzisz o tym ze dziewczynki od wczesnego dziecistwa sa przyuczane do bycia poslusznymi, bawienia sie lalkami i ustepowania, a chlopcy maja byc „mescy", asertywni (nie wrazliwi, bo wrazliwy to jest uwazany za ciape), agresywni (no bo to chlopak), spece od wszystkiego.
-   podzial rol w spoleczenstwie, ktory jest ‚oczywisty spolecznie'. Jak to sie dzieje? Kto o tym decyduje? Czy to sie zmienia? Jak? Dlaczego?

3. Rekonstrukcja pojecia „obcego/Innego/zagranicznego", kto to jest ten inny? Kto jest migrantem?

- pytanie o wytlumaczenie pojecia co jest lokalne/swojskie w obecnym swiecie
- czy w swiecie polaczonym poprzez internet i latwosc podrozwania, co sie dzieje z nasza lokalna tozsamoscia kulturowa/narodowa?
- Co sie dzieje z naszymi wierzeniami, symbolami, rytualami, kapitalem, rolami w spoleczenstwie?
- Jakie jest to nasze obecne spoleczenstwo?
- Kto jest obcy a kto jest ‚lokalny'?

4. Tozsamosc indiwidualna a tozsamosc spolecznosci w ktorej jestesmy

- jak bys opisal/a swoje najblizsze otoczenie jezeli mialabys opisac je z kulturowgo punktu widzenia; czy jest to otoczenie lokalne geograficznie czy takze wirtualne – kontakty utrzymywane poprzez internet;
- co spowodowalo ze znajdujesz sie takim a nie innym spoleczenstwie/ grupie ludzi – jakie sa warunki bycia w waszej grupie? Dlaczego?

I dwa dodatkowe pytania o przyszlosc:

- Na podstawie naszej rozmowy, jak myslisz, jaka jest przyszlosc panstw narodowych, dzie narod jest rozumiany jako grupa ludzi dzielaca jedna i te sama kulture na jednym obszarze;
- Jaka jest wg Ciebie rada dla przyszlych pokolen jak osiagnac sukces w swiecie zaciesniajacym wiezi kulturowe (poprzez szybka wymiane informacji)? Co jest gwarantem sukcesu? Jak i czego uczyc przyszle jednostki aby osiagnely sukces w swiecie o szybkiej wymianie informacji kulturalnej?

Interview Guide: English Language Translation

The socio-cultural location of a person/ their background:

Tell me about yourself – who are you?

a. Childhood and youth:
- When did you realise your cultural belonging?
- And nationality? Are these connected? How did this happen/circumstances/ first memories; what did this mean to you? How did this make you feel?
- Cultural frames, references and cultural influences: What are these? How did you find out what is 'normal' in your culture and what is not? Who told you/taught you these? How?
- Systems of beliefs and values: What are these? Where do these come from? Their meaning and value to you?
- School (formal education) and school's social environment: What type of systems of values, norms and beliefs were you taught at school? Did these affect your home values, norms and beliefs in any way/ Your identity? If yes, then how? System of values at school/education: Your school/education and the knowledge of cultures of the world; tolerance of other cultures? School and the cultural identity and cultural belonging? How is the Polish national identity taught at school? Any other factors that affected your identity and belonging then? Your school and childhood friends/acquaintances and their cultural identity: did interactions with children of other cultures affect in any way your ideas of your culture and belonging? How?

b. Current environment:

Are the norms, values, beliefs, frames of cultural references and symbolic meanings, which you were taught at home and at school, relevant now? To what degree? How? Your cultural identity today? What changed? How? You and your contemporary friends, work environment: do they hold different norms, values, beliefs than you? Do these affect you? How?

1. <u>Your identity construction – identifying the relevant factors:</u>

How does it happen?
- What makes someone a Pole, a Greek, etc?
- What is a role of the state in fostering cultural and national belonging?
- The role of religion/ faith: does it have any influence? How much? Should the religious identity and belonging be tied to a state/national identity? How does this look like in Poland? Role of other than Catholic religions and the Polish national identity?
- The role of mass-media and a mass-media discourse in negotiating cultural belonging and identity?
- The role of internet, as a tool of information access, and negotiation of your identity and belonging; any influence? Please explain. Also, what happens if information triangulated through your own search comes as contradicting with narratives presented at home/school/Catholic church/ mass-media? Your reactions? Does it affect how your cultural identity and belonging? How?
- How do you perceive today the importance of the symbols commonly placed in Poland, including the Polish white and red flag, the white eagle, a cross? Are they still important to you today? Why? Are they any new symbols that are important to you? Why? What are their meanings?
- What is your take today on the [Catholic] cultural rituals in Poland you grew up with, such as the Baptism, the First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Christmas and Easter? Are these important/ significant in your life? How? Why?
- How do you see and understand the issue of equality among people of different skin colours, languages, nationality, gender, ethnicity? Do the differences matter? Why do they matter?
- What is and what is not: good/ important/ socially and culturally acceptable? Who makes these norms and beliefs? Where do they come from? Who decides that some people are equal while others not (socially/culturally acceptable)? How does make you feel witnessing that someone is treated unequally? Do you react? Why? Why do you obey norms and beliefs that would discriminate others?
- Gender roles and division in your society: Have you noted/experienced different treatment and expectations placed on you depending on your gender while growing up and now? How did it/ does it manifest? Why?

2. <u>The construction of the 'other/ different/ foreign'. Who is this person</u>? Please explain.
- How do you understand the concept of a migrant? What does it imply? Who are they? Why?
- How do you understand the concept of 'local' in the contemporary world?
- How do you construct the feelings of sameness and difference in the contemporary world? Has anything changed from the past? What changed? How does it affect the construction of your identity and belonging today?
- How the relatively simple way of accessing information through the internet changed the way you construct your cultural identity and belonging? Internet and cultural as well as national/Polish identity? Does internet affect how (the Polish/ other) identity(-ies) is constructed nowadays? Please explain.
- Who is local and who is foreign today?

3. <u>Individual identity and identity of your social group(s):</u>
- Please describe cultural characteristics of the social groups you belong to. What made you to join them? Are these groups bounded geographically or virtually? Does it matter? How?
- What made you to join them? What are the conditions of belonging to these groups? Why?

<u>Closing questions:</u>
- If given a chance to acquire knowledge about the world and your cultural identity and belonging again: would you change anything in the way this took place? Why?
- If you were to give an advice to future generations living in the world of tightening inter-cultural exchanges on the subject of constructing their cultural identity and belonging – what would this be?

Appendix 4: College of Social Sciences Ethics Approval (2015)

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Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Staff Research Ethics Application ☐   Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application ☒

Application Details

Application Number: 400140115

Applicant's Name: Uflewska-Watson

Project Title: Agency Unbound: The emergence of transnationalism and its implications for the identity (re-)construction of the contemporary Polish postgraduate students in Glasgow, Scotland

Application Status   Approved

Start Date of Approval *(d.m.yr)*   2.03.2015

(blank if Changes Required/ Rejected)

End Date of Approval of Research Project *(d.m.yr)*   31.12.2015

Only if the applicant has been given approval can they proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.

Recommendations (where Changes are Required)

- Where changes are required all applicants must respond in the relevant boxes to the recommendations of the Committee and upload this as the Resubmission Document online to explain the changes you have made to the application. All resubmitted application documents should then be uploaded.

- If application is Rejected a full new application must be submitted via the online system. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and this document uploaded as part of the new application. A new reference number will be generated.

(Shaded areas will expand as text is added)

MAJOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE   APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

MINOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE   APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plain Language statement is not written in an easy-to-read syntax. Also, considering some of the interviewees may not have English as a first language, the PLS should be re-written to ensure the concept of the study is clear

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REVIEWER COMMENTS   APPLICANT RESPONSE TO REVIEWER COMMENTS

(OTHER THAN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS)

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the College Ethics Administration, email address: socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk
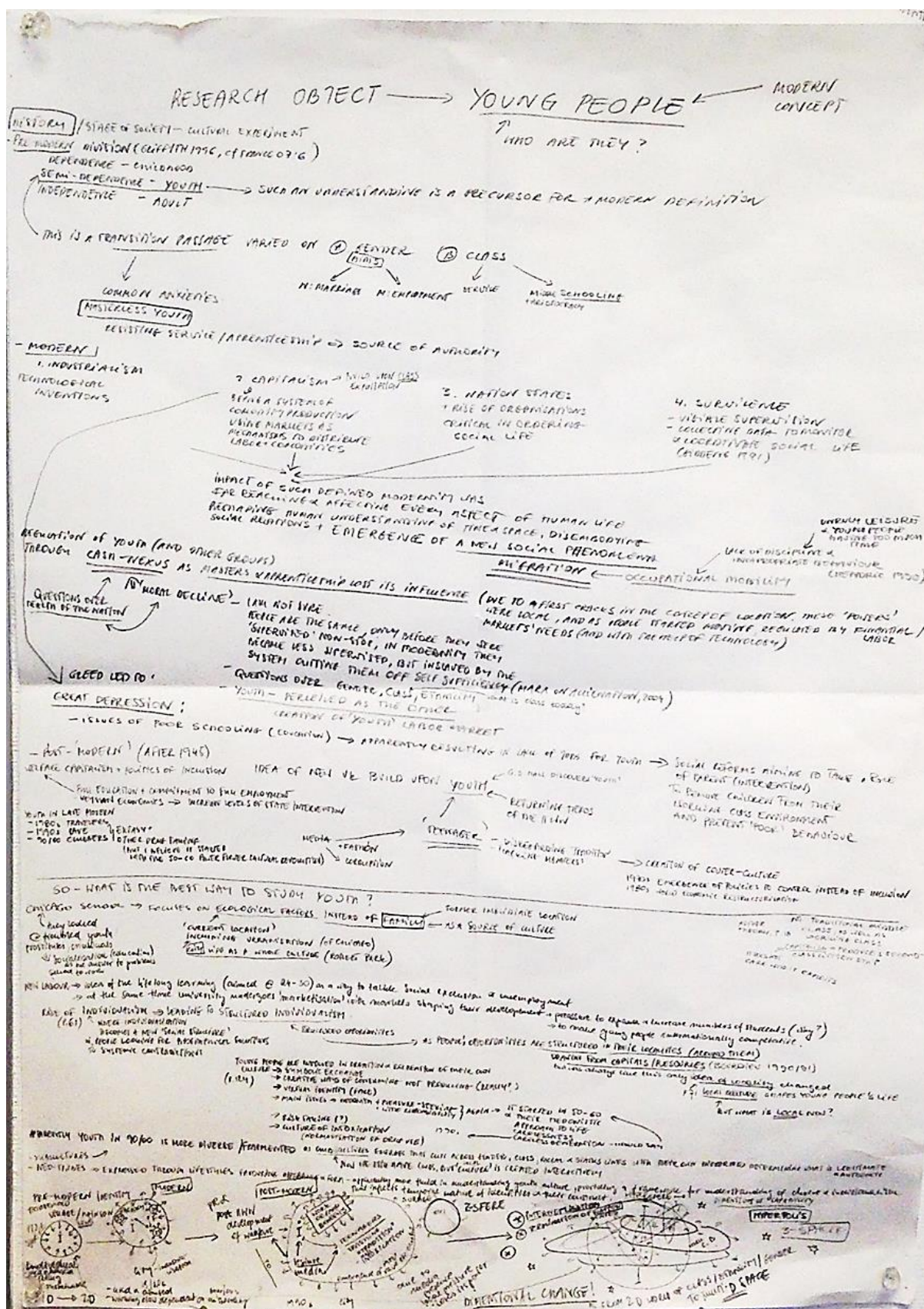
End of Notification.

Appendix 7: Main Characteristics of Participants (2015)

Table A7-1: The characteristics of the 46 participants of the study

No	Pseudonym	F/M	Age	Years Abroad	Additional Languages (fluent)	Education/ degree PL-Poland SCT-Scotland FR-France ITL-Italy HOL-Holland	Background
1	Marlena	F	29	3	English	Bachelor (PL)	From a small village in the SE of Poland; deeply Catholic family background; parents university educated; mom retired while dad still works in a local police office. Coffee shop manager.
2	Zdzisława	F	28	5	English	Masters (PL) + Masters (SCT)	From SE of Poland, family lives in woody suburbs of a major agglomeration. Both university educated parents are retired now. Asked to describe what her parents currently do, Zdzisława explains that 'mom enjoys picking mushrooms, and dad shoots boars'. In Glasgow Zdzisława currently occupies a senior managerial position in international company in Scotland.
3	Barbara	F	29	3	English French	Bachelor (PL) + Bachelor (SCT)	Comes from a deeply Catholic family, from the South of Poland. Both parents university educated are retired now. Works as a web designer.
4	Anna	F	26	5	English Arabic	Bachelor (PL)	From a small village in Northern Poland. The family and social circle is deeply Catholic of strong patriotic Polish traditions, preserved mostly through oral history. Parents are college educated, worked in accounting, and retired by now.
5	Bartłomiej	M	28	10	English French	Bachelor +Masters (SCT)	From a major city in central Poland; parents with university degrees, self-employed, run a family business. Parents are Catholic, and of Polish patriotic values, especially the father. Maternal grandmother deeply Catholic, yet married 5 times. Bartłomiej is agnostic.
6	Kazimierz	M	34	8	English	Bachelor (PL) +College NHD (SCT)	From Częstochowa, both parents with university degrees occupied senior management positions, now retired. Deeply Catholic and Polish patriotic family background, with family traditions of taking active part in the Polish independence struggle, the WWI and WWII efforts.
7	Joanna	F	26	8	English	Bachelor (PL) +College/HND (SCT)	From Opole. Brought up in a strictly Catholic social environment. Both parents college educated, dad retired by now, while mom works in Germany as a care taker. Together with her partner (as they are not married, and does highlight that they reject the ritual of marriage) are fulfilling their dreams of parenthood.
8	Fabian	M	28	11	English Arabic	College/HND (SCT) + Bachelor (SCT)	From Śląsk [Eng. Silesia], SW of Poland. In Glasgow since high school. Arrived to Scotland with his siblings, grandmother, and mom, as parents divorced. Self-employed, running a very successful family business in Glasgow.
9	Elżbieta	F	28	2	English Italian	Masters (ITL) + PhD (SCT)	From a major city in central West Poland. Both parents university educated. Spent 5 years studying in Italy before coming to Glasgow with her Italian partner.
10	Monika	F	28	3	English	Masters (PL) + Masters (SCT)	From a town in the North of Poland. Arrived to Glasgow as recruited by a local company to work for them here. Family deeply religious (Catholic), high school educated, preoccupied with keeping up appearances and unhappy with many of Monika's choices while in Scotland (e.g. Monika is in a partnership relation, and refuses to get married).

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11	Maurycy	M	23	9	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	From a major town in the West of Poland. Both parents educated, dad travelled a lot, while mom stayed in Poland raising a family. Describing his parents, Maurycy notes that according to his dad, 'it is great to travel, but Poland is the only place to call home', while his mom, on the other hand, frequently complained 'what sins she committed in her previous life to be punished by living in this hell of the country [Poland]'. Mom is also deeply Catholic, and stated that if (non-practicing) Maurycy leaves ever the Catholic church, 'he will break her heart'.
12	Eligiusz	M	28	2	English	Masters (PL) + (engineering accreditations SCT)	From a major town in the North of Poland. Both parents university educated. When asked to describe himself, he highlights that he is a human being and is tied not so much to a single country, but rather to the whole planet. Yet, he is the only one among participants highlighting that manifestations of the LGBTQ movements are 'very irritating'; that 'he does not have anything against the LGBTQ, *but* it would be better if they did not manifest their differences'. Asked, why LGBTQ is not considered 'normal', but 'different', Eligiusz explains that 'it is not scientifically proven that homosexuality is not an illness'.
13	Eustachy	M	29	5	English German	Masters (PL)+ College NHD (SCT)	Structural engineer from a large city in the NW of Poland. Married locally to a Glaswegian of Pakistani origins (brought up by her White Scottish mum, as dad passed away when she was a tiny baby). They are parents to a most delightful, few months old baby girl. Eustachy explains that he was faced with a local (Poland) family and social backlash when decided to convert to Islam (coincidently at the same time, when he met his future wife). This also strained his current friendships with other Poles (formerly very close) in Glasgow. With time the family in Poland came to terms with his choice of religious affiliations, but many of the former and current acquaintances of Polish origin stay 'lukewarm' at best, as he describes it. Self-employed and committed to his family, identifying himself as the first and foremost 'a husband and a father'.
14	Euzebiusz	M	29	10	English German	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	From a major city in the SW of Poland. Describing history of a place where he grew up, Euzebiusz highlights the 'Austrian, German, Prussian and Eastern Borderlands influence', juxtaposed with the 'the superior cleanness of the Polish language'. Euzebiusz explains the latter by comparing the Polish language spoken by people form Malopolska and Krakow, and other parts of Poland, to the one spoken at the place he is from. In Glasgow, after spending a year in England. A graduate of the UofG and UofStrathclyde, active member of the Polish Society at UofG, making it recognized among many international students. Funder of a Glasgow based legal translation services. From a Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. Both parents university educated.
15	Roksana	F	28	10	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	Asked how to describe her identity for the purpose of the research, Roksana says, laughing, that she is 'a beautiful lawyer from Glasgow'. Born in South of Poland. Daughter of a cleaning lady and a policeman; both retired now. Married locally to a Scotsman and actively involved in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum.
16	Anna-Maria	F	28	10	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	From a small village in the West of Poland. Family of international (German, Lithuanian, Eastern Borderlands) origins. Both parents and grandparents university educated (grandparents used to be a faculty at the major

						university in the central West of Poland). Moved away from that city to a local village where they built a multigenerational family house, the central point of life for the family and their friends.
17	Gerfryda	F	28	10	English French (European and Quebec)	Bachelor + Masters + PhD (SCT)	From a city in the central South of Poland. Both parents from the West of Poland, but moved eastwards. Deeply Catholic and conservative background of strong patriotic Polish values (yet, Gerfryda notes that her father used to be a hippy in his youth, and as such he was marked as a 'black sheep' of his family). Parents self-employed, now retired. Apart from studying in Glasgow, Gerfryda spent a couple of years living in Canada.
18	Tadeusz	M	26	5	English German	Bachelor (PL) + College NHD (SCT)	From a major city in the West of Poland. Bicycles and guitars hobbyist. From a Catholic and patriotic family, as he explains, where mom 'taught him that Polish products are good; German - sometimes; and Chinese are to be avoided'. According to Tadeusz his first experience of foreignness was through his family, as his uncle left for Germany and gave up his Polish citizenship. As the result, the Polish family considered the uncle 'a fool, who believes that everything German is better'. Also, whenever the uncle's German and Polish fluent children visited Poland, Tadeusz explained, they often refused to speak Polish, so Tadeusz 'kept them locked in a room till they spoke Polish', and so they did.
19	Izaura	F	28	10	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	From a small village outside of the central West of Poland. Both parents university educated, self-employed, running prosperous businesses and divorced. Wealthy paternal grandparents living close-by. Mom non practicing Catholic, but insisted Izaura stays involved in the Catholic activities, so they 'fit-in' in their local neighborhood. 'Being divorced for my mom was bad enough [socially]', Izaura explains, 'so I attended the Sunday Mass'.
20	Dorota	F	27	2	English French German Dutch	Bachelor (HOL) + Masters (SCT)	From a major city in central Poland. Both parents are financially very well off, university educated and self-employed. Non-practicing Catholics family background, but parents insisted Dorota attends weekly Mass services, and other religious activities organized by her school. While growing up, Dorota highlights, she travelled extensively with her family around the world.
21	Małgorzata	F	27	3	English French	Bachelor (FR) + Masters (SCT)	Comes from the North of Poland, from a deeply Catholic family with traditionally gendered family roles. Went to France upon graduating from high school to work, but within a year secured a place at Sorbonne. Married to a Frenchman (of Jamaican origin and dark skin tone), they both came to Glasgow so Małgorzata could continue her studies. By 2015, they both considered Glasgow their home and wanted to stay here.
22	Marek	M	20	10	English Spanish	High school + Bachelor (SCT)	Comes from a major city in central Poland and moved to Scotland with his mom when he was only 10, as parents divorced. Brought up within the Catholic and patriotic narrative while in Poland, but these changed when relocated. By now, he holds dual citizenship, but describes himself as 'Polish in Scotland'.
23	Aneta	F	28	4	English French	Masters in Music (PL) + Masters Glasgow School of Art (SCT)	Aneta comes from a family with strong art traditions, both in music and visual arts, for whom the question of nationality was not significant when a child. She is a professional piano player (performs concerts), dancer (modern dance), and works with local theatres in Glasgow. She describes herself as 'Polish', but highlights that misses the joy that comes with expression of nationality that other countries have ('apart from Scotland', as she

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						highlights, 'where people are just lost with who they are'). She notes that 'in Poland we express our belonging in a very depressing ways; through commemoration of national tragedies, and through cemeteries, but there is little space for expressing the joy of what we have, who we are; now and here'.
24	Krzysztof	M	29	7	English	Bachelor (PL) + College HND (SCT)	Comes from a major town in the East of Poland. Married in Glasgow to a Pole, father of two small children, currently undergoing a divorce. Brought up as Catholic and with deep patriotic Polish values, he is determined to pass these values and Polish language to his two sons. His wife, as Krzysztof explains, is determined that children assimilate within the local social and linguistic environment with no traces to their Polish heritage. Yet, as Krzysztof observes, 'the children learn French at school, so why they cannot learn Polish.
25	Augusta	F	29	3	English	Bachelor (PL) +(accreditation SCT)	Augusta and Michał both come from a small town in central West Poland. Childhood sweethearts, they married before coming to Scotland. Both graduated with university degrees in Poland in architecture. They came to Scotland, as Michał was offered to work in Glasgow, and Augusta found employment instantly upon arrival.
26	Michał	M	29	3	English	Bachelor (PL) +(accreditation SCT)	
27	Adrian	M	29	11	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	Adrian grew up in a major city in the South of Poland; from a deeply Catholic social background where, as Adrian notes, 'was 'unthinkable not to attend a church'. College educated parents own a small and well prospering business. Married to Alicja, and a father to a baby boy.
28	Alicja	F	29	11	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	Wife of Adrian and a mom; from a major city in the West of Poland. Catholic and Polish patriotic background. Both parents university educated, now retired.
29	Natalia	F	29	10	English Spanish French	International Baccalaureate program (PL) + Bachelor +PhD (SCT)	Natalia is the only one among participants who graduated from high school in Poland with the International Baccalaureate diploma. Natalia comes from a deeply Catholic social background, yet open and culturally inclusive family. Born in a major city in the East of Poland, upon arriving to Scotland and commencing studies here, she run Polish students society successfully, making it hugely popular among international students.
30	Apolina	F	29	5	English German Arabic	Masters in Languages (PL)	A manager at a major airline; single; recently bought her own house and a car without any financial help, as she explains. Converted to Islam while studying in Poland. From a deeply Catholic family in a major city in central South Poland. Parents run a small business. Apolina gave up her Polish citizenship upon receiving a UK passport.
31	Basia	F	28	4	English	Masters (PL)	From Toruń, a major city in central West Poland, 'formerly associated with a birthplace of Copernicus, but now recognized as the *Radio Maryja* HQ', Basia explains. Deeply Catholic l background. Describing racial relations in Poland Basia gives an example of her mother's partner, unable to accept his daughter's dark skin husband and a child, he pretends that he does not know them, when they visit. Basia is a manager for a major building company in Glasgow.
32	Iwona	F	28	10	English French German Portuguese	Bachelor + PhD (SCT)	From a major city in central Poland; Catholic background. Both parents university educated. Iwona learnt English and German while attending a local public kindergarten. Highlights the existence of 'mono-culture in Poland, of its White and Catholic characteristics'. Explains that realized the purpose of learning languages only while

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						visiting Belgium with her parents as a child and noting that 'these languages enabled her to communicate with other people there and she really liked it'.
33	Loreta	F	29	11	Polish English Spanish	Bachelor + Masters + PhD (SCT)	From a major city in central Poland, place of the celebrated Catholic Shrine dedicated to Holy Mary, *Jasna Góra*. Both parents, university educated, run a small business. Upon retiring moved to the woody suburbs, away from major agglomerations. Parents also own a property in Spain and travel globally frequently. Loreta due to her research commitments, and her passion for travelling, is a globetrotter as well.
34	Marysia	F	28	10	English Spanish French German	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	Born in a major city in central South Poland. Dad run a small business and mom worked in a kindergarten. Both parents retired now. Of Catholic and Polish patriotic upbringing. Never considered a question of nationality and culture, while in Poland, but only after moving to other countries. Internationally renowned architect.
35	Robert	M	25	6	English	Bachelor (SCT)	Born in a major city in the North of Poland. Both parents college educated, run small business. Of Catholic and patriotic Polish background.
36	Krzysztof	M	26	9	English	Bachelor + PhD (SCT)	From a village in the East South of Poland. Both parents work in agriculture, college educated, run an eco-farm. Grown up in a Catholic neighborhood of patriotic Polish heritage.
37	Karolina	F	28	10	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	From a village in South of Poland. Both parents college educated, now retired, dad run a small business and mom raised the family. From a deeply Catholic background with Polish patriotic traditions. Married to a non-Pole.
38	Joachim	M	28	10	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	Born in a major town at the Baltic Sea. Both parents run a family business. Catholic and Polish patriotic neighborhood.
39	Kuba	M	29	11	English German	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	From a major town in the West of Poland. From a Catholic and patriotic Polish background. Brought up by a single mom, an accountant. Mom insisted he attends Church and is involved in the Catholic activities at school.
40	Patryk	M	28	10	English	Bachelor + PhD (SCT)	From a town in the North of Poland. Parents university educated, both GPs. Of Catholic and Polish patriotic background. Patryk travelled the world as a child; and considers international movement as an integral part of his life.
41	Kacper	M	28	10	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	From a town in central North Poland (Mazury). Parents college educated, run a local hotel. Catholic and patriotic Polish heritage.
42	Tomasz	M	29	11	English Lithuanian	Bachelor+ Masters+ PhD (SCT)	From the capital of Poland. Both parents university educated, used to work for the Polish government institutions, now retired. Culturally Catholic, but not practicing. Of Polish patriotic cultural heritage.
43	Kinga	F	30	6	English/ Arabic	Masters (PL) + PhD (SCT)	From a major city in central Poland. Both parents retired by now, used to run a family business. Brought up in a multi-generational house of Catholic and Polish patriotic heritage. Not practicing. Globetrotter.
44	Mateusz	M	28	10	English Russian Arabic	Bachelor + PhD (SCT)	Parents live in a small town in the North of Poland. Of Polish and Russian cultural heritages. Parents run a family business. Mateusz explains that he travels a lot while a child, developing 'hunger of knowledge for other cultures and languages'.
45	Danusia	F	35	10	English French	Bachelor (PL) + College NHD (SCT)	Born in a small village in the SW Poland to deeply Catholic family of Polish patriotic cultural heritage. A hairdresser and stylist in Glasgow, internationally recognized.

No.	Pseudonym	M/F	Age	Abroad	Languages	Education	Technical problem
46	Piotr	M	30	6	English German	Masters (PL) + PhD (SCT)	From a town in central East Poland. Both parents college educated, mom is an accountant for their local city-chambers and dad runs a small family business. Of deeply Polish patriotic and Catholic family background (however, parents are not practicing and quite critical of the Catholic church in Poland, as Piotr explains).

Table A7-2: The characteristics of the 6 participants of the study whose interviews were not included due to technical issues

| No.	Pseudonym	M/F	Age	Abroad	Languages	Education	Technical problem
47	Adam	M	25	6	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	The interview did not record at all due to a voice recorder malfunction and I did not take sufficient notes.
48	Mariusz	M	29	6	English/ Ukrainian	Bachelor (PL) + Masters (SCT)	A bad quality of the recording as the interview took place in a coffee-shop, and I chose to sit next to a coffee machine (recording the interview with a voice recorder).No sufficient notes taken either.
49	Zofia	F	28	10	English	Bachelor + Masters + PhD (SCT)	The interview did not record at all as I did not properly switch on the iPhone voice recording application. No sufficient notes.
50	Krystian	M	25	6	English German	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	A bad quality of the recording: interview in a coffee-shop, loud music (recording the interview with a voice recorder).
51	Antonina	F	28	10	English	Bachelor + PhD (SCT)	The interview did not save, as the iPhone voice recording application crashed.
52	Bruno	M	29	11	English	Bachelor + Masters (SCT)	The interview did not save, as I mistakenly switched off my laptop without saving the interview on the voice recording application, located on the laptop.
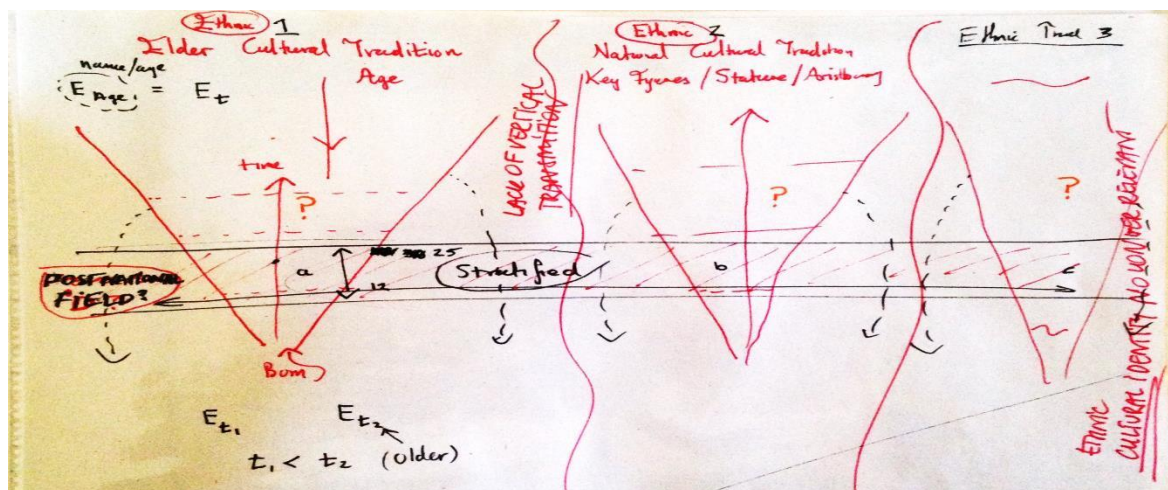
1. Feb 2011: Conversations with Dr Stephen J Watson about culture in liquid modernity
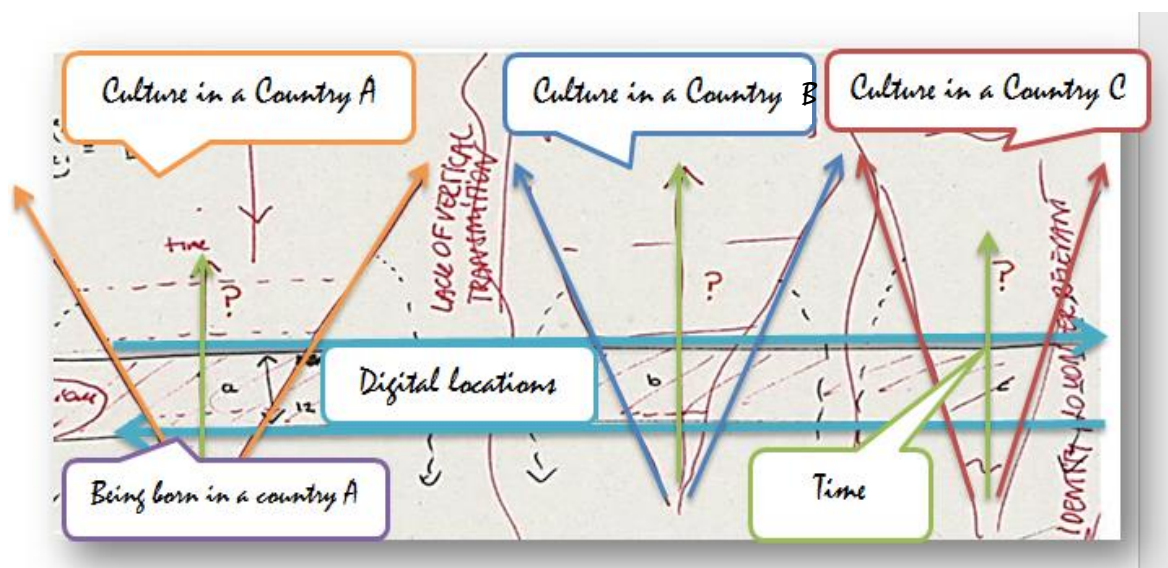
2. 01 Oct 2014-10 Jan 2017 version for the research
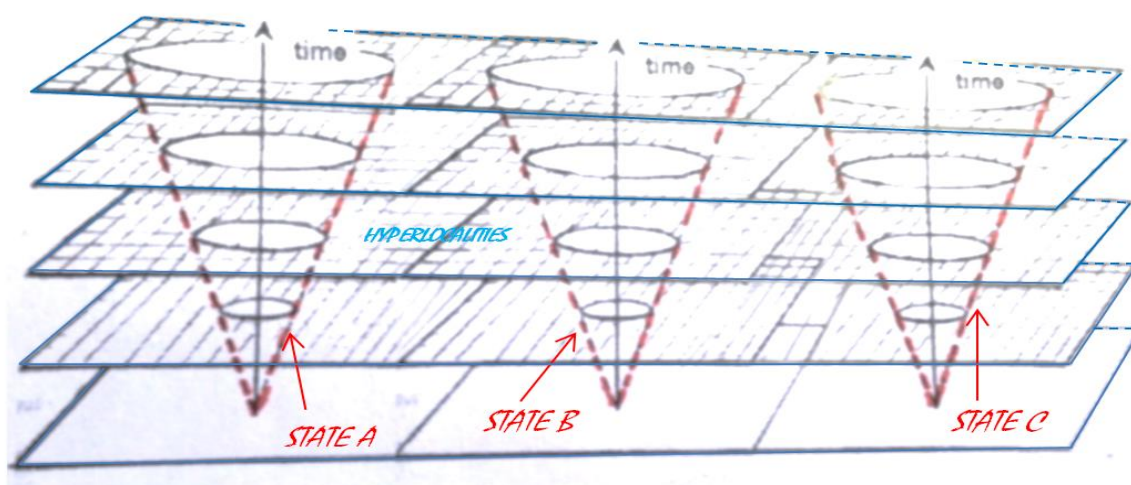
3. April 2018: Final version following the 23 March 2018 PhD Viva Examiners' feedback

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