

**A BETTER CHOICE? A CASE STUDY OF POLISH
MIGRANTS' EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND
SCHOOL CHOICE FOR THEIR CHILDREN**

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Abstract

Using a case study of Polish parents living in North London and Nottingham, this thesis analyses their interaction and strategies within two localised education markets. Drawing on qualitative research, perceptions of social divisions in British society are explored in an attempt to assess whether these influence their educational strategies and practices used in secondary school choice for their children. It is found that the Polish symbolisation of Catholicism as representing their national cultural “morals” and “values” becomes a guiding influence in school choice. It also offers them a support network in gathering information about the education market. “Whiteness” and the stigmatising of disadvantaged sections of society also becomes a channel for some of the Polish participants to position themselves against others and within a perceived “hierarchy” which ultimately impacts upon their strategies used in parental school choice. A Bourdieusian framework, exploring the influence of reciprocal “importing” and “exporting” societal structures, is used to analyse the findings.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Rationale and Justification

A number of years before I started my PhD, my interest in Eastern European history and Bourdieu's capitals had resulted in me hypothesising that Eastern European migrants would bring with them a certain type of educational and cultural capital, which would most likely make their children more educationally successful than would be expected based on the socio-economic position they occupied in the UK. This curiosity about the perceived possession of certain types of cultural capital held by highly skilled Eastern European migrants – which may be drawn upon in new environments – resulted in the pursuit of an MA in 2009. For my MA dissertation, I investigated Central and Eastern European migration from accession states to England and explored how migration has been affected by global-level socio-economic and political transformations that have occurred as part of wider global integration. The study explored narratives of Central and Eastern European migrants' experiences of globalisation at a micro level, as well as their perceptions of social divisions in post-communist countries and in Britain. Several of the people interviewed for that project were parents and would often make comparisons between their childhood and that of their children living in the UK with particular reference to schooling. In conclusion, the argument in the MA project conceptualised East to West migration as a structuration process: using the analytical categories of social structure and human agency, and applying the structuration model to explain the reciprocal influence of migrants' home and host societal structures in shaping their activities and goals (Morawska, 2001, p. 50). The literature review carried out for this previous project, along with the many interviews, guided me towards exploring the structure and agency relationship and that of Bourdieu's structural constructivist approach – specifically in regards to Polish parents' interactions with their children's education.

Much research has been conducted on how the A8 accession in May 2004 gave way to an unprecedented and unexpected movement of migrants to the UK (Burrell, 2009; Drinkwater et al., 2010; Düvell and Garapich, 2011; Eade et al., 2007; Garapich, 2008; Ryan, 2010;

White, 2011). The projections for post-enlargement immigration from A8 countries to the UK (e.g. Dustmann et al., 2003) were often based on data from previous EU accession states, such as Spain, which had not experienced a substantial migration, nor was this migration predicted to be long-term. However, the 2011 census data reveals that 41 per cent (1.1 million) of residents from other EU countries living in England and Wales were from countries that joined the EU from 2004 and onwards. Of these residents, those born in Poland made up the largest group with 579,121 residents (Vargas-Silva, 2013, p. 2). ONS reported in 2011 (p. 1) that since Poland joined the EU, an estimated 66 per cent of all A8 citizens migrating to the UK were Polish. Moreover, the census data from 2011 provides an opportunity to build a demographic profile of a representative Polish migrant residing in the UK and their potential patterns of service requirements. The 2011 census revealed a 25-year low birth rate at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, between 2001 and 2011, the overall number of births to non-UK born women residing in England and Wales nearly doubled – from around 98,000 in 2001 to around 185,000 in 2011 (Dormon, 2014, p. 8). Furthermore, ‘Poland was the most common non-UK country of birth for mothers’ (Dormon, 2014, p. 9) with 20,500 births (*ibid.*, p. 2).

The above-data (Dormon, 2014) provides an opportunity to build a profile of the potential patterns of service requirements for Polish migrants and their children residing in the UK, such as interaction with the British education system. School choice practices have been extensively researched, particularly since the implementation of the 1988 Education Reform Act for England and Wales (see e.g. Bartlett, 1993; Walford, 2003). However, school choice practices of Polish migrant parents themselves have not been researched, as former research projects have tended to focus on the integration of Polish children into schools in England (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010; Sales et al., 2008; 2010). That research had focused on London. My research interest differs. Its main aim is to understand how a group who had been socialised under a different societal structure interacted with a marketised education system in a different country. I was intrigued by what approaches and practices this group of migrants might take with them and draw upon in their interaction with the English education system. One way I saw of examining this was by focusing on how they chose secondary schools for their children. It is important to acknowledge that, as argued by Ball (2003), the education market is local and specific. Therefore, during my fieldwork I would end up studying their school choices at two different research sites in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how these Polish parents navigated the education market.

The decision and rationale for selecting two different research sites – that of North London and Nottinghamshire – is outlined in section 4.6 in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4).

1.2 The Argument

The main argument of this thesis is that the greater the exposure of my Polish respondents to the marketised education system, the more consumerist their choices become. In the participants' pursuit of social mobility and status elevation in a new society, Polish parents tended to engage in an "individualistic" approach to their children's education, for the most part believing their own children could "overcome" any structural societal and educational obstacles they may encounter – as long as they worked "hard" enough and received supportive but strict parental guidance. However, in the majority of cases it should be noted that the participants maintained strong disapproval towards those who they saw as engaging in school choice practices that may have had detrimental consequences for others, such as keeping important information to oneself, or lying about being Catholic to obtain a place at a Catholic school. As will be discussed in the first analysis chapter, Chapter 5, the participants' stance on communalism and shared information may be partially explained by their early socialisation that occurred under the Polish communist regime. Many of the participants would recite the virtues of "communality" and "collectivism", and reflected on how this former regime produced an educational programme based on a so-called "socialist mantra" that was instilled in them during their formative years.

I argue that this case study provides significant and distinctive insights into habitus transition, from a group who experienced a double transition. The first transition occurred during the collapse of the communist regime, as Polish people underwent an abrupt and immediate shift from one cultural, political and socio-economic order to another. Throughout the participants' formative years, they had experienced rapid integration into the global market economy and encountered the associated ideological discourses of: individual "freedoms", entrepreneurialism, "liberation", property rights, free markets, and so on. This group was propelled into a society that was being redesigned by neo-liberalism. At the same time, their society remained haunted by the ghosts of communism and its ideas of "communality" and "collectivism" that lingered in the mind-sets of the general population. I argue that the doctrines of the communist regime appear to intensify as this section of the

population subsequently experiences their second transition when they migrate and settle in British society.

This group encounters a society shaped by the neo-liberal imperative. Fundamentally, the group is confronted with a marketised education system that they have never seen on such a scale before. This marketised education system also gives them “power” to engage in school choice practices. The education of their children now demands negotiation with a system that increasingly entrenches them within the neo-liberal doctrine of consumer choice. These theoretical and ideological issues influencing the choice of school for their children also interconnect and are interdependent with wider structural inequities of social class and “race” and ethnic divisions. The parents become increasingly aware of these divisions as they start to apply market indicators in their assessments of potential schools for their children. Moreover, so embedded were some participants within this marketised choice-based system that they even started to use their Catholicism as a “pawn in the game” to enhance their children’s opportunities of securing a place at a high-performing Catholic secondary school. This is not to deny that Catholicism played an important role in other aspects of the participants’ life, but rather to acknowledge the observation that was made during the fieldwork. When a participants’ school choices were limited, the more entitled they believed they were to a place at the local high-performing Catholic secondary school – especially in comparison to those participants who listed the Catholic secondary school as a “back-up” plan should they not manage to get a place at their preferred school.

By extension, I suggest that with the increasing neo-liberal climate that has permeated the world in the last 40 years, this case study of Polish parents and their educational aspirations for their children – as practiced through school choice – illustrates that cultural capital is reliant on economic capital more than ever before. Bourdieu’s concepts have always been relational, but different societal structures, such as under the former Soviet regime, allowed for the accumulation of cultural capital without dictating its dependency on economic capital. In today’s world, cultural capital cannot be independent from economic capital. Despite my participants’ counter-economic strategy in their pursuit of cultural capital, they could not overcome the real and often brutal social class divisions that exist in British society. The majority of the participants were parents who held a low socio-economic position (in contrast to that previously held in Poland prior to migration) in Britain and through their parental strategies were probably likely to see some type of upward mobility

for their children within British society. However, given the other structural obstacles their children were likely to face – low economic capital and the lack of transmission of the predominant cultural capital valued in the UK, for example – it is difficult at this stage to predict whether their children will fulfil the parents’ high expectations. As such, the parents may possibly end up disappointed, especially as the parents seem to associate their own status and trajectory with that of their children.

Careful examination of the parents’ backgrounds, including their life in Poland before they migrated, their education and working history, their own parents’ occupational position under communism as well as that of their grandparents before communism, illustrated their generational social reproduction. These strategies of social reproduction were also observable in their new settlement of Britain and were being transmitted generationally to their children. However, having experienced downward mobility themselves in terms of their lower socio-economic positions in British as opposed to Polish society, it remains to be seen whether their children will manage to take advantage of the educational capital acquired in a British setting, or whether they will face the same ethnic discrimination in the British labour market that their parents have endured. Part of the Polish parents’ social reproduction was knowing exactly how to use their cultural and educational capital in their quest for the accumulation of economic capital for their children. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital, parents needed a sufficient level of economic capital to engage in extracurricular activities for their children such as holidays, day trips and private tuition and music lessons, as well as predominantly mothers having enough free time to be involved in their children’s educational progress and schooling. Families would particularly need sufficient income to pay for private tuition in order to assist their children’s educational career, as their own lack of knowledge of the British education system, in addition to cultural and language barriers, would place their children at a disadvantage in comparison to a native-born parent who had been educated to the same level as the majority of Polish parents.

1.3 Development of Research Objectives and Questions

The main research objectives and questions underwent several stages of development. I will outline the final objectives and questions that were developed, as well as discussing their development. My original aim has always remained the same, to:

Investigate the extent to which the analytical categories of social structure and human agency can account for the reciprocal influences of Polish migrants' "exporting" and "importing" societal structures, in shaping their practices and aspirations for their children's educational success.

In the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), I discuss the underpinning inspiration for the main aim stated above. It is important to acknowledge that this was the original aim and the final aim. It was also one that went through several stages of development, but then was returned to in its entirety. During my first year of the PhD, it was suggested that the incorporation of South African migrant parents and their school choice practices would make a fascinating and interesting comparison to that of Polish migrant parents. I thoroughly agree that it is a significant and worthwhile comparison, particularly in regard to Bourdieu's theoretical propositions and his concept of habitus. A comparison between South African migrants and Polish migrants provides insights into their experiences of political transformation within their own society – be that of the collapse of apartheid and communism – as well as their experiences of migration and transition. Moreover, the idea was to focus on white South African migrants and white Polish migrants, facilitating the exploration of “whiteness”, education and migration. Although I decided to abandon this comparison for the PhD thesis, I nonetheless collaborated with another researcher who had investigated white South African migration to the UK in order to publish a book chapter on the topic (see Thatcher and Halvorsrud, 2015). However, the decision to discontinue this comparison for my thesis after the first year occurred after I started my field work in a Polish Saturday school. After conducting the first eleven interviews with Polish participants, I realised the scale and complexity of trying to understand the historical, political and socio-economic structures of two societies – Poland and South Africa – that had undergone such enormous and rapid transformations in the last 70 years. As such, I felt my full attention needed to be given to one set of migrants. Therefore, I went back to my original proposal and the one that had inspired me to do a PhD in the first place – Polish migration and education. I felt that it was such a fascinating case study in itself that I decided to explore this issue over two different

research sites – North London and Nottinghamshire – rather than looking at school choice over two different sets of migrants.

1.4 Research Objectives

My first stage of developing my research objectives was to identify what I wanted to research and then narrow the topic down sufficiently in order to conduct research within the limits of the project requirements. This necessitated that I limited the orientation of one of my original objectives. Initially, one of my aims was to:

Assess whether the trajectory of children is the manifestation of the trajectory of the parents and at what point does the trajectory of children become their own life-course via two temporal points: the temporal point which is in the life career of the parents which coincides with the life career of the child.

After conducting my preliminary interviews, I realised that it would be very difficult and far too complicated to attempt to assess the temporal point at which the life career of the parents collided with the life career of their child, particularly as the children were aged 10-12 years of age. Such an objective could only be addressed through a longitudinal study. Aside from this, the rest of my research objectives stayed the same:

- Conduct a case study of Polish migrants with children aged between 10-12 years old in London and Nottingham to investigate how the migrants' current socio-economic and socio-cultural status affect their practices, goals and strategies in a local quasi-market education system. In doing so, I will explore the reciprocal influence of migrants' home and host societal structures.

- Explore the role that religion plays in motivating their choice of school and examine whether this is a decisive influence on their choice in the context of two different local quasi-education markets.

- Explore what perceptions Polish migrants with children have regarding issues of "race", ethnicity, "whiteness" and social class within the host society, in particular the school

system, to assess whether their understanding affects their interaction with the quasi-market education system in London and Nottingham.

- Carry out a case study of Polish migrants to explore whether Bourdieu's concept of habitus helps to account for the way in which previous structures from the “exporting” societies are embodied so as to affect strategies of adaptation in the “importing” society.

1.5 Research Questions

My research design, including the development of the research questions, was guided firstly by personal interest, but also by Bourdieu’s theoretical propositions. Outlined below are the three research questions I ultimately worked with, and which guided my analysis presented in the three analytical chapters of my thesis. Each question therefore corresponds with a respective analytical chapter – although there is inevitably some overlap and intersection between these analytical themes.

The final research questions used in this thesis are:

- 1) What strategies, skills and knowledge do the Polish migrant parents bring with them upon migration and/or develop in the host society with regards to secondary school choice for their children, and how is this negotiated in a marketised education system?
- 2) What perceptions do Polish migrant parents have of social divisions within British society and to what extent, if any, do these perceptions influence their school choice for their children?
- 3) How do a set of “white” minority migrant parents negotiate their school choice practices within multiracial/multicultural urban settings?

As I mentioned, these research questions were finalised as the research progressed. These are questions that were condensed and narrowed down, and which facilitated my focus

particularly in regards to the analysis stage of this research project. Initially, I had a much longer list of research questions – some of which differed in orientation.

Initial questions were:

- 1) In what ways might Polish migrants' transfer between two different socio-economic, socio-cultural and historical-political systems affect their parental interaction with the British school system?
- 2) To what extent can the interactions and strategies of a “white” minority migrant group within the educational market be analysed in terms of socio-economic status and ethnicity? Furthermore, does the “white” ethnicity of Polish migrants (either as similar to the native population's ethnicity or, conversely, as the immigrant “other”) affect their and their children's assimilation into British society, particularly in terms of adaptation to the British schooling system?
- 3) What strategies, skills and knowledge do the Polish minority migrant group have or develop in the host society with regards to the educational planning of their children's schooling?
- 4) What perceptions do Polish migrants hold regarding issues of “race”, ethnicity and social class within British society? More specifically, what effect, if any, do they perceive these characteristics to have on educational achievement, and do these understandings influence their interaction with the quasi-market educational system in London?
- 5) In what ways are the trajectory of children the manifestation of the trajectory of their Polish parents, and at what point did the trajectory of the Polish parent become the child's own life-course.

Overall, these questions were very open-ended and ran the risk of collecting too much data. Their breadth also made it difficult to focus. Furthermore, they were relatively poorly formulated research questions although they had all the elements of what I later would address. Through clearer formulation and the narrowing down of the focus, these questions facilitated the production of the final three research questions that I worked with as outlined above.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This research has taken the methodological decision to use the analytical categories of social structure and human agency by applying Bourdieu's theoretical propositions to explore Polish migrant parents' secondary school choices for their children in Britain. It utilises Bourdieu's theoretical concepts – habitus and capitals – as a set of “thinking tools” to illustrate the reciprocal influence of the migrants' home and host societal structures in shaping their strategies of school choice in a marketised British educational system. Bourdieu's conceptual framework has been widely applied to British educational research for many years (Ball, 2003; Grenfell and James, 1998; Reay, 1998; 1999; Reay et al., 2011; Robbins, 2006). More recently it has also become a popular conceptual framework in migration studies, as it offers a valuable understanding of post-migration lives and life trajectories of migrants. Bourdieu's methodological approach as well as his concepts, provide a suitable method for exploring and outlining the continued relevance of social class in a different society as social positions become renegotiated and the migrant's habitus is reproduced or reinvented (Benson, 2011; Erel, 2010; Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010). Furthermore, Bourdieu's theoretical concepts prove useful in exploring the relationship between “whiteness”, class and education, particularly in multicultural societies. Bourdieu's theoretical concepts offer new understandings of the intersectional interactions of multiple social relations and the production of new representations of “whiteness(es)” – particularly for the working classes (Reay et al., 2011; Preston, 2007) and for “white” migrants that I would argue have experienced a process of de-skilling upon migration (Eade et al., 2007; Fox et al., 2012; Garapich, 2008; McDowell, 2009; Ryan, 2010).

Bourdieu wanted his theoretical concepts – capitals, fields, habitus – to be applied and extended to empirical research in order to produce new social understandings. The methodological relationalism that typifies Bourdieu's approach argues that emphasis should not be placed on either: ‘structure *or* agent, system *or* actor, the collective *or* the individual’ (Wacquant, 1992, p. 15, emphasis in original). Bourdieu asserted the ‘*primacy of relations*’ (Wacquant, 1992, p. 15, emphasis in original) and rejected methodological individualism and holism. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field characterise this relational model as ‘they function fully *only in relation to one another*’ (Wacquant, 1992, p. 19, emphasis in original). When Bourdieu talks about field or social space he is referring to society. Habitus

describes the historical relational structures that are rooted within the agent's mind and body (Wacquant, 1992).

Applying Bourdieu's methodological relationalism to my own study, I begin with the assumption that the experiences of indigenous Polish migrants and the prior situation (both historical and recent) are the internalisations of structuring mechanisms which will be drawn upon by the migrants in their present situations and environments. Derek Robbins (2005a; 2005b) argues that Bourdieu's methodological approach and his theoretical concepts must be embarked upon reflexively by acknowledging the origins of their development. The terminology of habitus is first introduced by Bourdieu in *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie* (1963) when he is discussing 'The peasant and his body' (Robbins, 1991, p. 35). He wanted to show the process of internalisation not just as a mental process, but a bodily one – a body/mind dualism (Robbins, 1991, p. 36). The internalisation of prior external structures for the Kabyle tribe in Algeria, became even more visible through Bourdieu's study of the Kabyle's social organisation. In particular, Bourdieu observed the destruction of the Kabyle's traditional social values brought about by their society's abrupt and rapid transition from agricultural to a modern, which resulted in the migration of the Kabyle from a rural environment to towns. I argue that Bourdieu's development of his conceptual framework was constructed during a study which displays many associations to my own investigation – one which explores the processes of adaptation of a set of minority migrants who have experienced an abrupt and rapid transition of their political socio-economic and social-cultural system to a capitalist one, and also engaged in a process of migration.

Using the concept of habitus offers a way of assessing the empirical research and makes a useful explanatory tool for framing the data. However, there are some concerns that should be raised with taking this approach, particularly in regards to looking at Polish/post-communist migrants. As Maton points out, 'empirically, one does not "see" a habitus but rather the effects of a habitus in the practices and beliefs to which it gives rise' (2008, p. 62, inverted commas in original). Therefore, using habitus as a research tool for Polish migrants requires an understanding of the possible boundaries of the concept of habitus. I will also need to assess what other aspects of habitus could potentially come into play and identify how a migrant's habitus has changed and/or adapted (Maton, 2008, p. 62). There is also a weakness in the historical dimension of Bourdieu's model. The whole model presupposes that the aspiration to upward social mobility is something that everybody strives for and this

may not be the case at all. Some people may wish to have the means to maintain their current position within a hierarchical social structure (Robbins, 2009).

Another concern to take into consideration is that in *Les héritiers* Bourdieu and Passeron (1964) based their methodological approach on the assumption that the habitus was transmitted mainly through the primary socialisation of a ‘traditional nuclear family’ (Robbins, 2009, p. 4), and that the family was decisive in social reproduction. Later, Bourdieu became consciously aware that things were changing all around him in such a way that the conceptual apparatus which he developed in the 1960s of habitus, field and capital, was all predicated upon intergenerational meaning and trans-cultural transmission of values – which was no longer happening in a way that it previously had been (Robbins, 2008). *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984) was an attempt to move away from intergenerational dualism and the idea of habitus being intergenerationally transmitted, towards habitus being something that developed and modified in contemporary exchange. Bourdieu was trying to acknowledge a postmodern market of tastes and ideas. However, at the same time Bourdieu argued that the market we buy into is affected and conditioned by our prior habitus. Perhaps Bourdieu was trying to reconcile the postmodern field of exchange, tastes and ideas by somehow delimiting the reference to a modernist habitus (Robbins, 2008). Therefore, by using Bourdieu’s theoretical framework for this PhD project, the question is whether or not that framework might be somewhat “imposed” upon a contemporary issue – which was also a dilemma for Bourdieu in the 1960s-1970s.

Using Bourdieu’s theoretical propositions to look at the school choice of a sample of Polish migrant parents who are predominantly Catholic and frequently selecting Catholic secondary schools, has nevertheless proved useful. Religion is a field that prescribes particular values and has its own regulative norms. Within the socially structured space of the Polish Catholic Saturday school (where I conducted the majority of my field work), these principles can define, to some extent, the struggle and competition in which participants engage in order to preserve its boundaries and establish their authority to occupy that space. Furthermore, this authorising claim on the space can maintain or produce hierarchy. In a broader respect, religion may act in two ways for Polish migrants. It may maintain the already-existing system of social domination, as people accept their position in society as natural (Rey, 2007). However, it may also function as a type of acculturated capital in which the Polish migrant parents adopt religious positions strategically in order to achieve certain kinds of social

positions. Pugh and Telhaj (2008), who have written on the subject of social capital and the “Catholic school effect”, argue that as well as Catholic school attendance having a positive effect on attainment levels of its pupils, attendance at a Catholic school may endow the student with a form of social capital which creates networks, community relationships and may be employed as an available resource when needed. Therefore, Polish migrant parents possess an opportunity to transfer the capital that they have acquired in one context to another context, and use this capital to obtain status in a different field. This raises interesting questions as to whether or not the Polish migrant parents see Catholic school choice as a means of reproducing Catholic values in their children and/or introducing them to a particular social network. Is attendance at Polish Saturday and/or Catholic school a means to the end of more general assimilation to society at large? And/or is it a way of enclosing their children within a safe and self-validating community?

It will be argued that many of the practices that are engaged with by the Polish migrant parents in this study, show similarities to research on the middle classes and school choice in Britain (Ball, 2003; 2006; Butler and van Zanten, 2007; Hamnett and Butler, 2011; Hamnett et al., 2007; Reay et al., 2011). In the anxiety surrounding admission to “good” schools, the middle classes have become more reflexive in their social reproduction with regard to educational institutions. The expansion of the middle class in conjunction with prevailing state policies of “meritocracy” and market has resulted in a middle class that has become more active in the relationships between social class and educational policy, and through regimes of closure the middle class has created new strategies in order to maintain their social reproduction (Ball, 2003). In this atmosphere, it will be interesting to explore how Polish migrants think about and understand their position within the education market. What perceptions do “white” Polish migrants hold regarding issues of “race”, ethnicity and social class within British society, and how do their understandings of these issues influence their interaction with the quasi-market educational system within London and Nottingham?

1.7 Overview of Thesis

The seven following chapters in this thesis are set out to illustrate the reciprocal influence of the home and host societal structures which shape the Polish migrant parents’ secondary school choice and the broader structural conditions (both historical and present) that

influence this practice. Chapter 2 situates recent Polish migration within the wider history of Polish migratory movements, showing that Poland has been a “migrating” society long before EU accession. The chapter therefore argues that the Accession 8 policy, which was implemented in May 2004, simply provided regulative means to continue an already-existing migration pattern. Although this is a thesis in which the main focus centres on school choice for Polish migrant parents, it is important to acknowledge the migratory history of Polish people. It was this history that resulted in some of the first sociological studies of migration, disorganisation and integration into a new society, which produced subsequent research on generational assimilation and social mobility with regard to Polish migration. Chapter 2 will also outline the societal structures (both historical and present) within Poland, in order to identify a set of prospective historical relations inculcated within the migrants’ mental and corporeal schemata of perception and their possible influence on the migrants’ current school choice practices within Britain. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the increasing marketisation of the British education system by outlining the various post-war education policies in England and Wales that have implemented choice and defined parents as “choosers” and “consumers” of education. The local education markets of North London and Nottinghamshire are also outlined and located within this national system. The chapter argues that choice policy is influenced by other broader political agendas. Choice is a neo-liberal imperative promoted by policy advocates and politicians as a way to raise “standards of achievement” and “performance”. The chapter illustrates the ways in which global ideals are embedded within local level realities and practices through previous case studies of different Western countries – United States of America, New Zealand and Sweden – showing how school choice is a global movement. Faith schools are then located within this choice-based system. Furthermore, it argues that the consequences of this marketisation produce a competitive system of schooling that feeds the anxieties of parents. Choice policy is enacted by parents, resulting in strategic individualism that negatively affects the working class, as middle class families enthusiastically use choice as a micro-practice of social reproduction. Moving on to the topic of social reproduction and educational inequalities, the chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature on ethnic minority and second generation educational attainment, assimilation and aspirations. Lastly, it gives a summary of how educational research that uses Bourdieu’s theoretical framework can prove useful for understanding the marketisation of education and school choice as a means of social reproduction. Chapter 4 outlines how the research for this project was conducted and what it entailed through detailing the choice of research strategy, design, methodology, methods

and sampling procedure implemented to answer the specific research questions. It situates the social research in the context of sociology and characterises the link between theory and data by arguing that Bourdieu's theoretical propositions guided and influences the research interest, research questions and aim, the design, the collection of empirical evidence and the analyses. It summarises practical considerations such as the issue of the research sites chosen. Finally, it reflects on the impact of values and personal beliefs upon the research and the ethical procedure put into place. Chapter 5, the first analytical chapter, addresses the first research question contextualising the strategies, skills and knowledge the Polish migrant parents bring with them upon migration and/or develop in Britain with regards to secondary school choice for their children within two localised education markets – North London and Nottinghamshire. Specifically, it describes how my participants located faith schools within a marketised education system and their local market. It explores how different markets and available choices impact on the parents' school choices, despite the majority of participants' assertion of their devotion to Catholicism. Chapter 6, the second analytical chapter, addresses the second research question exploring Polish migrant parents' understandings and perceptions of social divisions within British society. It determines to what extent, if any, these perceptions influence their school choice for their children. Furthermore, it illustrates how the participants' habitus, as a structuring mechanism formed in a time of transmission between communism and capitalism, enabled them to draw on their past experiences as a way to navigate in changing environments and deal with unforeseen situations. Significantly, it demonstrates how the participants' internalisation of previous external structures produces a positioning of themselves within the British class system and how their discourses on social class divisions in Britain are influenced by both right-wing rhetoric and the so-called non-existence of class stratification during communism. This, in turn, impacts upon their rejection of certain social networks and schools. Secondary school choice is placed within a hierarchy very much determined in their minds by the schools' student intake. Chapter 7, the third analytical chapter, addresses the last research question by describing how a set of "white" minority migrant parents negotiate their school choice practices within multiracial/multicultural urban settings. It will argue that the Polish migrant parents position themselves within a perceived "racial hierarchy" in Britain. However, for the majority of the participants, "whiteness" intersected with social class, and social class ended up becoming "racialised". The Polish migrants had a tendency to counteract the discrimination they faced in Britain by juxtaposing themselves both against ethnic minorities and other migrants as well as the "white" working classes. The "white" working classes were often negatively

represented as “chavs”, “workless” and “lazy” by the majority of participants – particularly so in Nottingham. “Racialised” discourses were drawn upon by some to define what makes a “good” and “bad” school in their opinion. This produced in many cases a process of choice-based racial segregation as those schools which tended to be more racially diverse were not perceived to be as “good” as those schools that enrolled the most privileged students – “white” middle class students – which were perceived to be the “best” schools. Importantly, the significance of the intersection of social class and ethnicity became noticeable. Not all ethnic minority and migrant groups were perceived negatively. The Irish were respected for their devotion to Catholicism and ethnic minority/migrant groups perceived to be middle class were distinguished because of the seemingly high value that was placed on the educational achievement of their children.

Chapter 2

Poland: Past and Present

This chapter situates recent Polish migration within the wider historical Polish migratory movements, showing that Poland has been a historically “migrating” society long before EU accession. It will argue that the Accession 8 policy implemented in May 2004 simply provided regulative means to continue an already-existing migration pattern. It is important to acknowledge this migratory history. It was this history that resulted in some of the first sociological studies of migration, disorganisation and integration into a new society – that of William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki’s (1918-1920) *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. This research inspired subsequent research on generational assimilation and social mobility of Polish migrants as well as other migrant groups. This chapter will also outline the societal structures (both historical and present) within Poland, in order to identify a set of prospective historical relations inculcated within the migrants’ mental and corporeal schemata of perception.

2.1 The Migration Experience

2.1.1 Polish Migration from the Nineteenth Century

Kathy Burrell (2003; 2006; 2009) has widely documented the history of Polish emigration. She reports that emigration from Poland has been an imperative element of the country’s development. Generally, Polish emigration before Soviet occupation can be divided into two categories; political refugees from the mid-eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century, to economic migrants from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century (Cyrus, 2006).

Burrell states that ‘[b]y 1914, over 3.5 million people had left the Polish lands’ (2009, p. 2), amounting to nearly 10 percent of the population, and of which 2.25 million went to the USA (Cyrus, 2006, p. 31). Migratory movements and patterns are regulated and defined by various structural forces. The great industrialisation was a cause of both emigration and immigration,

which resulted in the era of mass migration from Europe to North America between 1850 and 1914. Eastern European migration in general, and Polish migration in particular, have most notably been associated with the “great transatlantic migration”. At its peak between 1861 and 1920, an estimated 30 million people settled to start a new life in America (Castle and Miller, 2009, p. 84). The two most noteworthy migratory flows from Poland were to the US and Germany.

During the same period, many Polish peasants engaged in seasonal emigration. With the industrial revolution in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century and the resulting labour shortage by 1890, “foreign Poles” were regularly recruited as temporary seasonal workers in Germany. However, they were often not allowed to bring their dependants with them and were forced to leave Germany when the work opportunities decreased. By 1913, an estimated 164,000 of the 410,000 Ruhr miners were of Polish background (Zubrzycki, 1956, p. 89). The peak for seasonal workers was in 1913, when 345,000 Polish labourers left to work in Germany. Estimates put overall seasonal migration to all destinations for the period 1900-1913 at 3 million (*ibid.*, p. 24).

Between 1874 and 1905, those who adhered to the Uniat¹ or Greek Catholic Church were persecuted by the Russian government. This produced a mass flow of peasants from villages to central Poland. Historical evidence suggests that the majority of these refugees became the greater part of the 1,250,000 Polish migrants who left Russian Poland at the beginning of the twentieth century (Zubrzycki, 1956, p. 15).

The mass wave of transatlantic Polish migration resulted in one of the pre-eminent and pioneering migration studies, William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki (1918-1920), *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. This study shaped the early Chicago School’s analytical preoccupation with the social disorganisation produced by processes of immigration and increased industrialisation and urbanisation, and the impact it had on social

¹ The Uniat church dates back to 1483 in which Orthodox bishops and clergies in the territories of South-Eastern Poland agreed to a union with Rome and adopted the Roman Catholic doctrine, while preserving their Greek traditions. The practice of the Uniat religion was prohibited (for more information, see Zubrzycki, 1956, p. 15).

life and agents' actions. It was considered as a ground-breaking theoretical study that analysed the process of modernisation. Published in 1920, the classic five-volume study represented the influx of so-called "new" immigrants, such as the case of Poles. It was realised that this topic required critical scholarly investigation, particularly from the position of the host society. The study depicted a process of disorganisation within the Polish-American community as members of *Polonia* became involved in complex internal as well as external struggles of "status competition". It argued that Polish migrants developed adaptive social organisations from religious to ethnic institutions, which served as an integrative function, aiding acculturation and assimilation into the receiving society (Bukowczyk, 1996). The impact of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* on the field of migration studies cannot be underestimated. Through their use of life-course narratives, Thomas and Znaniecki (1918-1920) established a focus on both the subjective personal experience of the immigrant, the objective influence of external institutions and group identity. These became instruments of acculturation. They offered a method of inquiry that would go on to inspire successive scholarly studies on immigration, such as Oscar Handlin's works: *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation* (1941) and *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of Great Migration That Made the American People* (1951).

In Britain there was little evidence of any other large-scale migration of Poles prior to the nineteenth century (Zubrzycki 1956). However, Zubrzycki (1956) points out that any study of Polish immigration before 1918 would be difficult. The challenge of documenting Polish immigration to the UK prior to 1918 was that – apart from the exception of the USA – Polish nationals were registered as: Russians, Germans or Austrians. Evidence also suggests that many immigrants from Poland did not consider Britain as their final destination during the "great transatlantic migration" period of 1850 and 1914. It was, in fact, seen as a place to work and save for their passage to New York. However, some did end up settling permanently in Britain.

One of the largest first waves of Polish migration to Britain can be dated back to the 1830s. 500 Prussian Poles came to England in exile from tsarist rule, later increasing to 1,500 in 1870 (Sword, 1996, p. 21). This is known as the phase of "great emigration" which saw the collapse of the Polish insurrection. During this period, many of those in exile were political and intellectual leaders who believed in national independence for Poland. Many of these migrants lived in London's East End and worked in white-collar occupations (*ibid.*, p. 23).

This migratory settlement helped the establishment of the Society of Poles in London in 1868. Other principal organisations founded in this period included: The Society of Polish Workers in Great Britain in 1886 and The Polish Catholic Mission in London in 1894. The latter organisation established one of the first Polish Catholic Churches in Britain. This was opened on Devonia Road, Islington and is still functioning as a Polish church. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were three strong centres for Polish immigrants in Britain: London, Manchester and Lanarkshire in Scotland (Zubrzycki, 1956, p. 39).

Statistics show that 2.1 million people left Poland to move to America and Europe during the inter-war period (Koryś, 2004, p. 8). The 1930s saw Poland hit by the Great Depression, which brought an end to relative prosperity. The consequences of this were the rise of radical nationalism and increased xenophobia towards Poland's minorities. Poland's strong anti-communist, anti-Russian and anti-Semitism meant that Poland became an attractive asset to Hitler. However, after years of independence, Poland declined Hitler's offer of a German "alliance", which they knew meant German domination and control over Poland. At the same time, Poland became suspicious of the USSR and, in particular, Stalin's request to station Soviet troops in Eastern Poland (Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006).

On September the 1st 1939, Germany invaded Poland from the north, and two weeks later, the Soviets invaded it from the east (Erdmans, 1998). Between 1940 and 1941, an estimated half a million people from a variety of backgrounds, but consisting mainly of Poles and Jews, were extradited from the areas occupied by the Soviet government and sent to Soviet Central-Asia. The Nazi occupation also left a mark on Poland. By the end of 1944, nearly 90 per cent of Poland's three million Jewish population had been massacred (Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006, pp. 256-261). By June 1945, nearly 3,500,000 Poles had been deported to Germany to work as slave labour (Zubrzycki, 1956, p. 53). The invasion of Poland in 1939 resulted in mass movements of Poles, both "voluntary" movements of refugees and involuntary mass forced removals.

1945 to 1950 saw a significant migratory movement of Poles to Britain. This consisted of ex-members of the Polish armed forces and their families after the British government gave resident rights to Poles who had served under British command during the Second World War. An estimated 114,000 of these members sought domicile in the UK (Zubrzycki, 1956, p. 62). In addition, some formerly displaced persons came to Britain under the European

Volunteer Workers' scheme (*ibid.* p. 58). In 1947, the Polish Resettlement Act was also passed in Britain. Several government departments were assigned with meeting the specific needs of Poles in order to facilitate the immigration of certain civilian Poles (Zubrzycki, 1956). As a result of this new settlement of Poles in the UK, Jerzy Zubrzycki (1956) did one of the first major studies of Polish immigrants in Britain entitled *Polish Immigrants in Britain: A Study of Adjustment*. He argued that this re-settlement of Poles was of profound sociological significance, as the arrival of servicemen's dependants and spouses considerably changed the social fabric of the Polish community in Britain. Zubrzycki also stressed the significance of the societal "institutional role" in policy and administrative procedures in influencing migratory flows:

The immigrants are not left to their own efforts, but from the moment of their arrival come under the influence of a British institution, which through the medium of its Polish officials, hostels, and rehabilitation centres prepares them for ultimate economic independence. Sociological consequences of this process of "institutional resettlement" can hardly be overestimated and its influence on the rate and nature of the process of assimilation (1956, p. 60, inverted commas in original).

2.1.2 Migration during Communism

Genocide and displacements reduced Poland's population by one quarter by the time of the end of the Second World War (Prażmowska, 2011, p. 182). Poland's borders also changed once more. The Soviet Union acquired the Ukrainian and Byelorussian areas, whereas Poland gained Western Prussia, Danzig and the majority of Eastern Prussia. The result of this was the absorption of ethnic German territories by Poland. In these newly obtained territories, the Soviet Union would only allow ethnic Poles and Jews who were able to prove they had Polish citizenship before 1939 to move from the new Soviet-occupied eastern area. Four million ethnic Germans resided in Poland's newly acquired territory, of which, one million of these had already fled before Soviet occupation. Poles quickly moved in to the new territory which previously belonged to Germany. The desire to create an ethnically homogenous Polish state resulted in the rapid expulsion of the indigenous German population from the new territories. Prażmowska (2011, p. 195) has called this a phase of "ethnic cleansing".

By 1946, Poland had a predominantly ethnic Polish population. The new Polish state was also tightly under Soviet control. Despite anti-communist struggles in Poland, by February 1947 a new pro-communist government reigned. Poland was now one of Moscow's satellite states and by 1948 was considered part of the Soviet bloc (Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006, p. 285). After 1950 the Cold War intensified, reducing migration flows from Eastern to Western Europe. The only migration flow from the East consisted of political refugees fleeing communism, although this number was small. The desire to emigrate from the Polish People's Republic was widespread during the Soviet period, as a result of political repression and economic turmoil. However, as with all communist states, the Polish government tightened up the borders and restricted migration (Okólski, 1998). In 1959, the Polish Passport Law was passed. This restricted passport to those who could provide evidence of the means to afford the transportation fee, proof of an invitation as well as obtain a visa to the country of destination prior to their journey (Cyrus, 2006, p. 33). As a result of Polish emigration history, a number of Polish citizens drew on their networks and were able to obtain invitations. Permanent emigration remained low. Cyrus (2006) argues that official data reveals the decrease in permanent emigration, making it falling to its lowest levels in which only 22,000 citizens emigrated in the 1960s and 70s. However, short-term circular migration in the form of tourist-traders and tourist-workers meant that during the 1970s nearly 3.5 million journeys took place (Slany and Malek 2005, cited in Cyrus, 2006, pp. 34-35). As Poland neared the 1980s, temporary emigration increased. Yet, it would be the collapse of the Soviet Union that would once again facilitate mass emigration from Poland.

2.1.3 Migration Post-Communism and before EU Accession: 1989 – 2004

Towards the end of the Soviet Union, former President Gorbachev started to loosen emigration restrictions throughout the USSR. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 saw the era of Soviet control over Eastern Europe dismantle. The 1980s witnessed an increasing debt crisis and successions of industrial strikes throughout Poland. During this period, the Solidarity movement also intensified.² A Solidarity-led coalition government was formally

² Solidarity is considered as the first non-communist party-controlled trade union in Poland. In late 1982, Solidarity was officially abolished and martial law was introduced (Swain and Swain, 2003).

elected in 1989, just before the fall of the Berlin Wall. The internationally renowned politician Lech Wałęsa was elected President of Poland in 1990 (Swain and Swain, 2003).

On the 1st of January 1990, “shock therapy” was introduced. This comprised of a package of micro-economic policies which advanced a more neo-liberal orientation in Poland. This package included financial restructuring agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which included: the privatisation of local authority properties; introduction of foreign ownership; privatisation of public services; emphasis on entrepreneurship; and abolishment of barriers to the free market and price controls (Hardy, 2009, p. 33). The impact of market penetration and the sudden exposure to the forces of the international capitalist market occurred not only in Poland, but throughout the whole of the former Soviet Bloc. Full employment and universal benefits associated with the communist regime came to an abrupt end. As a result, poverty deepened and inequalities widened as wages polarised and unemployment rose sharply, particularly during the early 1990s. Hardy (2009, p. 199) tells us that by 2003, the unemployment rate in Poland was 20 per cent. The rapid integration into the global capitalist market-economy witnessed immediate increase in emigration. Douglas Massey et al. state that ‘[i]n general, the more integrated a country is into Western markets, the higher the rate of out-migration’ (1998, p. 129). The collapse of communism not only produced economic push-factors to emigrate, but also ended restrictive emigration laws. It should also be noted that scholars such as Burrell (2009), Cyrus (2006) and Wallace (2002) point out that the early years after the fall of communism saw a notable increase in short-term circular migration. Open borders and the introduction of visa-free entry for Polish citizens to EU’s member states in 1991 reduced permanent emigration, partly because movement was now less inhibited and Polish people were enabled to go back and forth from their destination countries as they wished. Polish citizens were no longer defined as refugees and asylum seekers by destination countries. Although circular migration fell, migratory plans are often unpredictable and those who had intended to return to their home country often changed their migration strategies. These migration strategies became more flexible and adaptable and, in some cases, Polish migrants stayed longer than intended and resulted in permanent migration, particularly when spouses and dependants became involved.

2.1.4 Migration after EU Accession in 2004

The eastward enlargement of the European Union (EU) in May 2004 has inevitably changed migration patterns in the UK. This expansion gave EU citizenship to eight Eastern European countries (The A8 countries include: Poland; Czech Republic; Estonia; Latvia; Lithuania; Hungary; Slovakia; and Slovenia). In 2007 this was extended to include two other countries: Romania and Bulgaria (the A2 countries). The UK excluded A2 citizens from the same labour rights granted to A8 citizens – until the restrictions were required to end in 2014 (Garapich, 2008). EU membership entitles EU citizens to free movement within the European Union and, as such, EU citizens do not face the same barriers to migration as non-EU nationals. However, only Ireland, Sweden and the UK allowed A8 migrants unrestricted access to their labour markets in 2004. Other existing EU member states imposed restrictions on immigration from the new member countries for the maximum of seven years, ending in 2011.

The A8 accession in May 2004 gave way to an unprecedented and unexpected movement of migrants to the UK. The projections for post-enlargement immigration from A8 countries to the UK were based on data from previous EU accession states, such as Spain, which had not experienced a substantial migration. Dustmann et al. (2003), for example, suggested that migration movements would be much smaller. This prediction proved false. Sumption and Somerville (2009) looked at the allocation of National Insurance numbers (NINo) and estimated that between May 2004 and September 2009 1.5 million A8 workers came to the UK. Polish migrants made up nearly two-thirds of this immigration, making them the largest recipients of NINo (p. 13) – a trend that has continued ever since. Not all of these migrants stayed. A8 migration to the UK reached its peak in 2007, but the recession of 2008 saw the numbers of A8 nationals registering on the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) drop 36 per cent from March 2008 (207,000) to March 2009 (133,000) (ONS, 2009, p. 2). However, numbers started increasing again after 2010. The 2011 census data reveals that 41 per cent (1.1 million) of residents from other EU countries living in England and Wales were from countries that joined the EU from 2004 and onwards. Of these residents, those born in Poland made up the largest group with 579,121 residents (Vargas-Silva, 2013, p. 2). ONS reported in 2011 (p. 1) that since Poland joined the EU, an estimated 66 per cent of all A8 citizens migrating to the UK were Polish. As argued by Kahanec and Zimmermann (2008), the main incentive for A8 migration, despite the recession, may be the income gap that still exists

between A8 countries and the UK. Figures for the year ending in September 2013 from the ONS show that overall immigration has increased, with three quarters of immigrants to the UK coming for work or study (ONS, 2014, pp. 8-10).

It is important to note that there was a statistically significant decrease in immigration of non-EU citizens in the period September 2012 (269,000) to September 2013 (244,000) (ONS, 2014, p. 2). This is in comparison to a statistically significant increase in EU immigration for the same period, which rose from 149,000 to 209,000 (*ibid.*, p. 2). Breaking the numbers on EU immigration down further reveals that migration of A8 citizens increased in that same period from 59,000 to 74,000 (*ibid.*, p. 14). The changes in migration patterns between EU and non-EU citizens to the UK are a reflection of the changes to immigration rights. Since EU enlargement in 2004, immigration of non-EU citizens has been in a steady decline (*ibid.*, p. 7). The points-based migration system and intensified restrictions and regulations on international students appear to have resulted in a smaller number of New Commonwealth citizens immigrating to the UK to study (Kandiko Howson, 2014), while EU accession has facilitated the free movement of EU citizens.

The allocation of NINOs to EU accession nationals from the 15 accession countries in the year ending December 2013 illustrates the considerable proportion of Polish nationals in the UK for work. More than half (111,000) of the total (208,000) NINOs allocated to accession nationals were allotted to Polish nationals. This is an increase from the previous year, and Poland was the accession country with the highest increase in the registration of overseas adults entering the UK (ONS, 2014, p. 9). However, restrictions on non-EU immigration have presumably resulted in an increase in unregistered migration from non-EU countries in particular. Nonetheless, the above-cited numbers highlight the significance of Polish immigration to the UK.

As well as the miscalculation of projected migration flows from A8 countries to the UK, it was also underestimated how much of this migration may be long-term. It is important to distinguish between long-term and short-term migration. Long-term migration refers to a person who moves to a country for at least a year. Long-term migrants will most likely need to draw on different services at certain points in time. It therefore becomes essential to understand the demographics of these new migrants in order to plan for the accommodation of their needs (Eade et al., 2007). Early literature (e.g. Anderson et al., 2006) on post-2004

A8 migration revealed that A8 immigrants coming to the UK tended to be young, highly educated and work in low-waged, unskilled occupations while residing in the UK. Drinkwater et al. (2010) stated that in 2008 ‘the age distribution of recent Polish and other A8 migrants is noticeably younger, with the 18-34 percentage being around ten percentage points higher than it is for non-A8 migrants’ (2010, p. 81). The age demographic becomes particularly significant in estimating the future potential services that these long-term migrants may need to draw on.

The census data from 2011 provides an opportunity to build a demographic profile of a representative Polish migrant residing in the UK and their potential pattern of service requirements. The 2011 census revealed a 25-year low birth rate at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Between 2001 and 2011, the overall number of births to non-UK born women residing in England and Wales nearly doubled – from around 98,000 in 2001 to around 185,000 in 2011 (Dormon, 2014, p. 8). Furthermore, ‘Poland was the most common non-UK country of birth for mothers’ (Dormon, 2014, p. 9) with 20,500 births (*ibid.*, p. 2; see figures below).

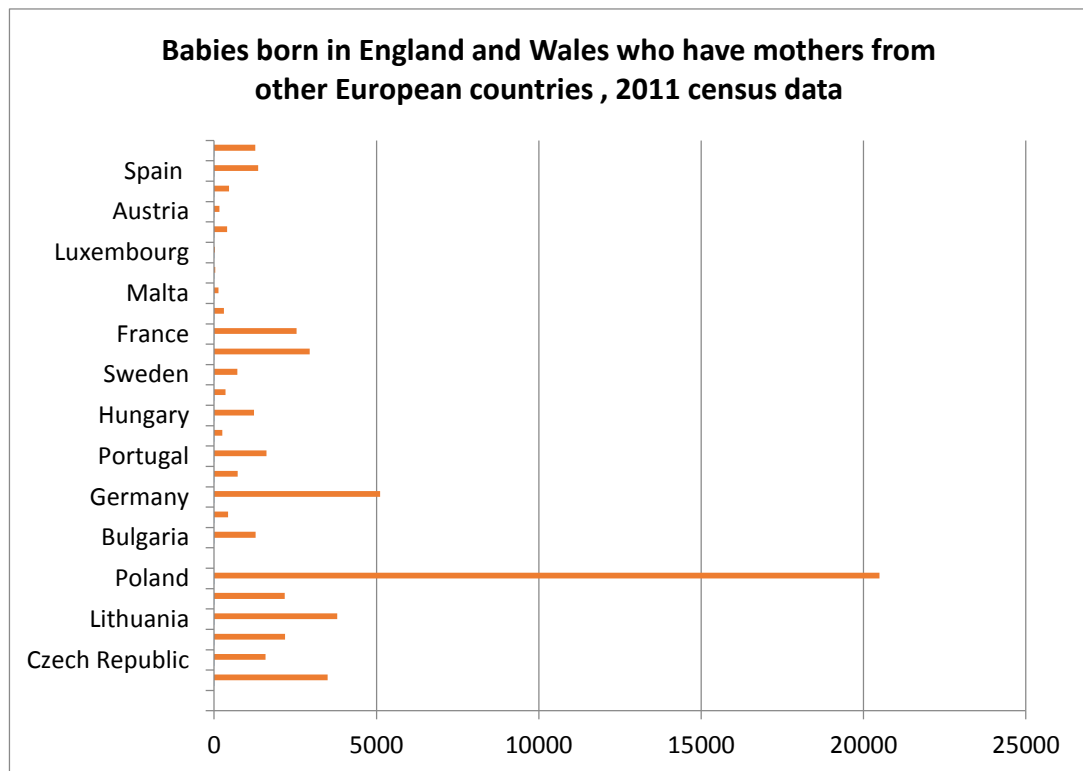


Figure 1: Adapted from Dormon, 2014, p. 2



Figure 2: Adapted from ONS, 2013, p. 10

Sociological research (e.g. Blanchflower and Lawton, 2010; Düvell and Garapich, 2011) has documented how the characteristics of A8 migrants are “distinct”. A8 migrants tend to be younger in comparison to the UK-born population, and even other immigrants. Düvell and Garapich’s (2011) report on A8 immigrants, conducted in 2008, revealed that 70 per cent of A8 migrants were aged between 18-35. For the UK’s native-born population, it was less than a quarter, and one third for all other immigrants (p. 35). This would explain the high birth rate for Polish mothers.

The unexpected “baby boom” at the start of the twenty-first century has resulted in a shortage of school places, particularly at the secondary school level. In 2014, the BBC reported that London would need to create 15,000 more school places than expected to meet the demand of this “baby boom” (BBC, 2014). Such findings support the rationale for this research. As these children turn 11 years of age, their parents will need to find a secondary school place for them. Research (e.g. Sales et al., 2008; 2010) has already been conducted on Polish children in primary schools, which has established the lack of adequate resources in place for what was an unanticipated number of Polish migrants. Secondary schools will now need to cater for the children of those migrants who decided to settle permanently. Polish parents will be faced with a situation of increased competition for school places in what was already a highly competitive parental choice system.

2.2 Polish Society

This section will help situate the internalised external historical structures. Although it is 25 years since communism collapsed in Poland, all the participants were born under the regime, as were their parents. Bourdieu (1958) argued that when there is a sudden rupture in the social organisation of a social unit (in the Polish case meaning societal structures), the habitus can often take time to readjust and “catch up” with these changes.

Burawoy (1999) argues that communism profoundly shaped the lives of those who lived under it. As a nation, Poland has a collective consciousness in which communism has been deeply embedded. Burawoy and Verdery (1999) have pointed out how the culture – or as it is sometimes referred to - “socialist legacies” – may continue into a new system, particularly in the early years of transition. As Bourdieu’s theoretical concept of habitus suggests that ‘...structured and structuring dispositions [are] acquired in practice and constantly aimed at practical functions’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 121), those people living through the transition from communism to capitalism would draw on symbols and language already formed and known to them from the previous order in a new series of changing events. The collapse of the political and administrative economies in state socialist societies creates a new space for the everyday practices and micro-world of the people, yet the previous system continues to influence the emerging new structures as well as that of people’s everyday lives. In such a situation, the “rules of the game” change within actors’ everyday routines and practices. Socialism continues to have a lingering effect on culture: ‘When we speak of transition, we think of a process connecting the past to the future. What we discover, however, are theories of transition often committed to some pre-given future or rooted in an unyielding past’ (Burawoy and Verdery, 1999, p. 4). Burawoy and Verdery (1999) argue that the collapse of communism did not eliminate the various legacies inherited from the Socialist regime, the main legacy of which was a cultural persistence of the elites. Drawing on Bourdieu and Weber, Burawoy (1999) tells us that during communism, strategic actors occupied a social space possessing different convertible capitals – such as economic, social and cultural – which produced a cultural bourgeoisie intelligentsia. In a post-communist capitalist society, it is this cultural bourgeoisie who have used their culture for entrepreneurship to monopolise the creation of economic capital. Lass (1999) looks at how the restructuring of institutions’ organisational structures after the collapse of communism evoked a strong sense of habitus – informed and reinforced in the present. These old habits

interfered with the management of the organisations of daily activities, particularly within institutions and/or circumstances where the “rules” had not been historically mediated by tradition.

2.2.1 Early Communism and Changes in the Structure of Occupation

By 1946, Poland was under Soviet military and political control. All industrial enterprises with over 50 workers were nationalised. However, much economic trade still remained outside direct governmental controls as political power struggles and civil war would continue until the end of 1947. In 1948, Stalin eliminated the nationalist fringe groups within the Communist party of the Soviet Bloc. In Stalinist Poland, these transformations meant that the Soviet-backed Polish United Workers’ Party would soon control all state institutions. In 1952, a new constitution checked personally by Stalin declared that industrial workers were to be the principal class in Polish society in the newly-established Polish People’s Republic. Poland was required to undergo a post-war reconstruction and a Soviet-planned economy was imposed. In 1950, a six-year plan of rapid heavy industrialisation was commissioned (Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006). The Soviet Union’s aim was to create an independent economy for its satellite states. Heavy industry, steel and coal productions were prioritised. All forms of private production and retail were terminated (Prażmowska, 2011). The industrial expansion in Poland was facilitated by the Korean War, in which weaponry was a main commodity of production. Yet, real wages remained non-existent and this was accompanied by low consumption (Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006). Production quotas were increased, but pay fell. The power of the trade unions had been reduced and Polish workers were unable to negotiate better working conditions. The economic industrialisation plan included the building of a new “socialist town” – Nowa Huta – which was to become an ideal communist town and, in the process, was intended to surpass Kraków in this regard. An opera house was to dominate the town centre and churches were to be non-existent (Prażmowska, 2011).

Industrialisation produced mass internal migration within Poland, from rural to industrial sites. Most of these internal migrants were peasants. This created two types of workers: peasant-workers and worker-peasants. The peasant-workers migrated to the industrial cities, while worker-peasants were left behind for farm labour (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987). A

basic state welfare was provided for the industrial sector and the pre-war unemployment disappeared. The new economic and administrative structures saw growing support for the communist regime. However, the agricultural sector consequently suffered and this was accompanied by food shortages and rationing (Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006).

Stalin's model of "primitive socialist accumulation" meant that a programme of forcible appropriation of land was undertaken throughout the Eastern European Bloc. However, Poland was the exception, primarily because most agricultural land was from very small land holdings usually managed by single families. It was not possible to have the large, collective estates that were present in the rest of the satellite states. Collectivisation in Poland was heavily resisted by the Polish peasantry, and by the mid-1950s the government abandoned the implementation of collectivisation in Poland (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987).

At the beginning of the 1950s the majority of workers in Eastern Europe were peasants. However, because of large-scale industrialisation, by the 1980s the majority of the workforce ended up employed in industrialised urban areas. Rapid industrialisation was also accompanied by massive population growth. Poland – one of the largest satellite states – had a population estimated at 37 million by the mid-1980s. The increase in labour mobility – as defined by transfer from agriculture to industry – saw traditional patterns of life change. The family structure altered as women were obligated to undertake paid work outside of the home.

2.2.2 Social Class under Communism

In order to explore my participants' perceptions of stratification and social class divisions, it is important to recognise what forms of stratification existed during the period of state socialism in Poland. First I need to understand the relations between political privileges, economic inequality and social hierarchies during the communist regime. Next, I will identify what happened to these hierarchies and social stratification during the transition from state socialism to capitalism. In comparison to other industrial systems; was social inequality lessened under a state socialist regime and did labour social mobility correlate with social stratification?

Significantly for Eastern Europe, a privileged stratum of leaders ruled and dominated the working classes (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987). Konrad and Szelenyi (1979) have pointed out the unequal pattern of power and distribution facilitated by the Communist party and bureaucracies' justification of social exploitation under the name of "state socialism". Konrad and Szelenyi (1979) argued that state socialism was controlled by a group of educated professionals with elite ambitions and those who possess distinguishable cultural capital. Other scholars, such as Fehér et al. (1983), have also argued that the ruling group in state socialist societies used a bureaucratic apparatus in social institutions. They had the power to dictate the needs of the masses. State socialism under Soviet communism was totalitarian, exploitative and promoted a lack of security in society. Yet, it could be argued that these theories on state socialism offer very little in understanding more complex details of social stratification in Eastern Europe, such as the class nature of bureaucracy and the Intelligentsia. Official Soviet Sociology acknowledged four areas of inequality forming the basis for social stratification in the USSR:

- (1) Class distinctions such as that between collective peasant and worker,
- (2) distinctions between rural and urban populations,
- (3) distinctions between manual and non-manual labour and
- (4) distinctions associated with various skills, trades and incomes. (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987, p. 135)

Notably, these Soviet sociologists did not see ethnicity as a social marker of division.

Contrary to communist rhetoric, egalitarianism was not the goal of Polish state socialism which took on a much more "meritocratic" approach to inequalities. Polish state socialism supported social, political and material elevation for the masses, whilst at the same time advocating equality of opportunities for the manual working classes. After Soviet communism took hold in Poland, former elites were removed from their positions. Combined with the rapid industrialisation programme, job opportunities were provided. Poland saw the creation of new social groups with new statuses which experienced upward social mobility as the number of job positions increased and as peasants moved to the city filling different positions in the class strata as a result of industrialisation. Yet, Lovenduski and Woodall (1987) tell us that evidence reveals those in the leadership positions during the communist period tended to be those with the highest qualifications and from non-manual backgrounds, which demonstrates that traditional patterns of privilege continued. Connor (1979) argues that exchange mobility – in which the social origins of the people filling those

job positions changed – was actually lower under state socialism than in other types of industrial societies. Another reason for the continuation of privileges in Eastern European societies under state socialism was the unequal distribution of cultural resources. Social reproduction in families continued along traditional lines. Despite the education system advancing upward mobility, it did not eradicate traditional social reproduction of the non-manual strata.

In contrast to Soviet sociologists, other Eastern European sociologists acknowledged that state socialist societies (under Soviet control) had interest in differentiation as represented by the social division of labour. Wesolowski (1979) argues that the nature of work and income produced social differentiation despite the abolishment of private property and efforts to reduce income inequalities. It is important to recognise that unlike industrial capitalist societies, income did not hold the same status. Furthermore, because of the rapid rate of collective social mobility, people in state socialist societies considered themselves more fortunate than in pre-state socialist times. Yet, as the social structure became more stable, social mobility declined and only exchange mobility became possible. Combined with rising expectations and an increasingly educated population, tensions started to arise such as the 1980s Solidarity movement in Poland. The 1970s had witnessed increasing inequality and frustration because of the lack of material goods in Poland. Crucially, Poland was the exception when it came to the socialist regime maintaining high levels of working class conformism. This was because the Polish manual working class, under state socialism, reproduced family labour traditions across generations (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987). Lovenduski and Woodall (1987) argue that the Polish case offered a classic example of a decelerated intergenerational mobility model. White-collar workers began to fill job positions that were traditionally occupied by manual workers, while highly educated working class individuals could not move out of the manual worker stratum.

Szelenyi (1982) also argues that the Solidarity movement was an important indicator of class antagonisms under state socialism. It was a sign that the Polish working class had developed a class consciousness. Unlike the opposition movements in Czechoslovakia in the late 60s and Hungary in the mid-50s, Poland's Solidarity movement emerged directly from the working classes:

Unlike 1970 and 1976 [in Poland], in 1980 the Polish workers were no longer willing to restrict their struggles to bread-and-butter issues; they moved beyond conflict consciousness, and one can identify elements of class consciousness in their actions. In this sense Poland in 1980-81 represents an important further stage in the unfolding of the new class structure of state socialism. (Szelenyi, 1982, p. 323)

In Poland during the nineteenth century, it was the children of the gentry who became the Intelligentsia. Under Soviet rule, the role of the Intelligentsia was more limited, usually consisting of highly qualified executives and technicians. In Poland, the Intelligentsia comprised of six major sub-divisions:

(1) the technical intelligentsia, (2) managers and directors of enterprises, (3) the legal and economic experts, (4) teachers and school inspectors, (5) the humanistic professionals and (6) others with higher education. (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987, p. 154)

Although it appears that higher education is the criterion for belonging under Soviet rule, cultural capital was also an important component of belonging. Yet, such wide fragmentation in the Intelligentsia makes it difficult to characterise the exact cultural capital this stratum actually possessed. It is quite interesting to look at how the different strata spent their income. In Hungary, for example, the top stratum consumed more books and went to the theatre eight times more than the average person. The middle stratum used their income for better food and household appliances in comparison with the working classes. Similar patterns were also found in Poland. Crucially, distinctions between the manual workers and the Intelligentsia persisted – despite the efforts of wage equalisation (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987). Wedel (1986) argues that under state socialism a cultural elite operated, often belonging to the traditional gentry Intelligentsia. They held a particular ethos, had a heritage of education, as well as a type of cultural competence. Part of their distinction was their genealogy and the reproduction of their status over generations.

In 1967, a respondent questionnaire of 3,000 Polish children's career aspirations revealed that non-manual work was perceived as higher status and more rewarding (cited in Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987, p. 167). David Lane's (1976) research on Soviet societies in the mid-1970s found that privileges continued to be reproduced through the institutional control of wealth. Lane (1982) also found that parents transmitted cultural advantages and disadvantages to their children. Further research by Bunce (1983) argued that by the mid-1960s, equality was not achievable in Soviet state socialist societies. This resulted in over-

institutionalised elites protecting their advantages and refusing to put through reforms that would threaten their advantages.

According to Lovenduski and Woodall (1987), it was the political bureaucracy that became the ruling class, whereas the Intelligentsia became the middle class because of their domination over manual workers. The ruling strata governed state socialist societies in a way that retained and reproduced the power structure, protecting elite rule (“nomenklatura”³). The twentieth century saw an expansion in managerial and white-collar work in capitalist societies. Comparative mobility patterns of state socialist societies showed the importance of cultural and political differentiation in social class compositions. There is no denying that a “hierarchy” of stratifications existed under state socialism. However, it should be remembered that class inequalities were significantly reduced in state socialist societies. State socialist societies guaranteed people the right to work and provided benefits for those unable to. It could generally be claimed that Poland had a good welfare system under state socialism and improved the living conditions of people living in the Polish People’s Republic. In Poland, it is therefore important to acknowledge that state socialism was successful in reducing some social inequalities (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987). However, poverty and inequality still existed and there were differences particularly within the working class, such as the level of welfare they could access. Hardy (2009) argues that the biggest inequality gap existed between the working classes and the top echelons of the Intelligentsia. Those who worked in industry and agriculture existed on low wages, and polarisation between them and the Intelligentsia sharpened in the 1980s. However, although the work was badly paid, it was still relatively secure.

The proletariat was also encouraged to pursue cultural activities. Theatre, music and cinema as well as books were heavily subsidised, but available culture was strictly censored and controlled and religious practices were suppressed. All academic research was heavily censored – even theories of genetics, which Stalin saw as bourgeois, had to be monitored

³ Consisting of people who held key administrative positions in all of the important aspects of the respective countries’ political and socio-economic activities, the “nomenklatura” was a class of people in the Soviet Union as well as its communist satellite states in Eastern Europe such as Poland that were only granted their positions with the blessing of the ruling Communist party of the respective countries (Lass, 1999).

(Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006). Summer holidays for workers and their families, as well as some leisure activities, were also subsidised by the government. A vast amount of money was used to rebuild the Polish health system in order to improve the health of the industrial classes.

2.2.3 Religion

The Roman Catholic Church was the only autonomous institution that remained in Poland, and this was only because the Catholic hierarchy had agreed their “loyalty” to the state after an individual priest had been arrested and accused of spying. Importantly, religion was banned from schools. The weekly Catholic paper of Kraków was banned in 1953. By 1961, the building of new churches was strictly limited. Tension between the state and the church continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Religious symbols were removed from public areas. The state set out on a programme aimed at young people, discouraging them from participating in church activities (Prażmowska, 2011). However, illegal publications were able to reach Poland, and with the relaxation on foreign travel in the 1970s foreign-controlled radio stations and television programmes also increased in popularity. The Catholic Church also supported a human rights movement. The mass Polish working classes – which had been created by the early communist programme of industrialisation – had begun to rebel by the early 1980s, and this helped produce the Solidarity movement (Lukowski and Zawadzki, 2006).

In 1979, the Vatican announced that the Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyła had been elected as Pope, bringing mass jublations to Polish Catholics. For many Polish Catholics, this was taken as recognition of the Polish national commitment to Catholicism. In 1979 – the same year as he was elected Pope – Pope John Paul II also visited Poland, and the Soviet regime was powerless to interfere. The church offered sanctuary to political activists during the era of martial law. One of the priests heading the political sanctuary was Father Popiełuszko – who was murdered by a policeman, causing mass outrage (Prażmowska, 2011).

2.2.4 Education in Poland: Past and Present

By the beginning of the Second World War, higher and secondary education was still very limited – although of a very good standard and many Polish academics and scholars were internationally renowned. For the communist regime, education was essential to Marxist indoctrination. They commenced a programme of social engineering in which a new Intelligentsia would be created. An emphasis was placed on primary education, which saw a larger proportion of children benefiting from free education. A generation of peasants was encouraged to pursue higher education. The peasants and working classes were favoured as scholarships, subsidises and accommodation were offered in order to support their studies. However, education was ideologically inculcated. A new syllabus was created in which Soviet-Polish textbooks provided an essential component of the classroom equipment. Russian language was compulsory. Even at degree level, the teaching of Marxism was mandatory. Technical schools and evening schools were also established to facilitate the education of the workforce. Adult illiteracy was eliminated. However, the old Polish aristocracy mocked and criticised the “uncultured manners” of this newly-educated mass population (Prazmowska, 2011).

For Soviet communist parties, education was an important instrument of political socialisation. The “Sovietisation” of the education system was seen as central to creating the “socialist man” (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987). Education also acted as a process of acculturation in which the population was indoctrinated with the values of the political system (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987). The problem for the Soviet regimes was the continuation of institutional values and norms which usually survived political changeovers:

Thus in People’s Poland the individual finds him/herself cross-pressured by conflicting demands and expectations from the formal agencies of socialisation, and from the formal and informal institutions representing the community and/or traditional culture (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987, p. 356).

In Poland prior to communist rule, the Christian Church had been the major provider of education. However, a large percentage of the population had been excluded. In 1939, only 25 per cent of the population were educated (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987, p. 357). By the 1980s, illiteracy had almost been eradicated. Another purpose of the education system

was to produce upward mobility. As such, education went from being a selective system to a mass education system (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987).

Figure 3 below shows a model of the typical education system in Eastern Europe. The Polish education system followed this model.

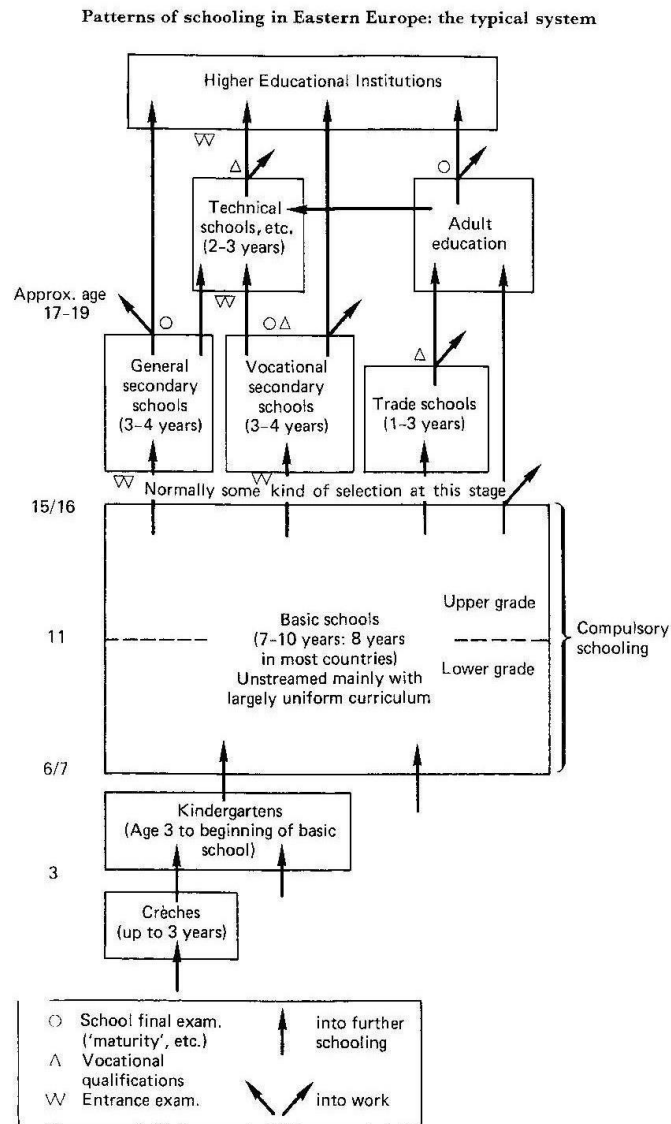


Figure 3: Taken from Lovenduski and Woodall (1987, p. 359).

In principle, freedom of choice supposedly influenced the education model in which children at the age of 15 and 16 could decide what route to take, influencing possible future career paths. Poland, in particular, had a work-based learning approach, such as apprenticeship

schemes at secondary level. However, the general secondary school, which was the main direct approach to higher education institutions, had prestige attached to it. In Poland, this type of secondary school operated with a form of social closure and the political and social elites would fill the intake of these schools. In terms of higher education, a person's chances of getting a place at university very much depended upon the subject they chose and what year they went to university. Available university places would be decided by the estimated labour market demands.

A system of positive discrimination operated in which the children of peasants or manual workers were "favoured" over the Intelligentsia. Positive discrimination in Poland was introduced in 1963, some 15 years after communism was introduced in the country. Yet, despite a policy of positive discrimination, the children of the Intelligentsia were overrepresented in higher education. Even when a student from a peasant or a working class background got to university, they were on average 20 per cent more likely to drop out in comparison to a student from the Intelligentsia (Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987, p. 367). Lovenduski and Woodall (1987) argued that it is important not to see *higher* education as the main mechanism of inequalities. These inequalities were set at a much earlier stage. Firstly, because of the variations in school quality that existed between rural and urban schools, for example. Secondly, these authors point out that a system of cultural capital transmission operated in the same way that it operates in Western societies. This was a form of inheritance that was very difficult for the education system to tackle.

2.2.5 Post-Communist Education

Since the collapse of communism, the Polish education system has undergone two major periods of restructuring; in 1989 and 1999. In 1989, a new Polish government reformed the entire school system to be more in line with Western Europe. Importantly, for this PhD project, it should be noted that the participants received the first half, or even the majority of their education, in the 1980s. Bartz and Kullas (1993) tell us that children that were in the Polish education system during the 1980s received a political education, one that frequently contradicted the values being taught at home and in church. Parents had become increasingly disgruntled with this ideological education, and even before the collapse of communism there had been calls to reform the Polish education system. The political changes in 1989

gave the opportunity to make the reforms that were being called for. In the 1980s, Poland had one of the highest birth-rates throughout Europe. As such, class sizes were high and teaching facilities were low, making teachers overworked. In 1989, the Minister of Public Education developed a new model used to establish the Polish education system. During the early 90s, the education reform went about stripping the ideological contents of the old Soviet curriculum from the education system. In 1990, the Schools of Higher Education Act was passed. This allowed for private colleges and universities to be set up. 1990 also saw the (re)introduction of religious teaching in primary and secondary school. This comprised of religious classes in which no grade would be awarded. Institutions were also allowed to have more control over their curriculum. The Education System Act of 1991 meant that church or private schools could now be established. These schools were allowed to have their own curricula, as long as they were approved by the Minister of Education. They were funded entirely from school fees (Janowski, 2007).

The 1999 Education Act approved deeper structural changes to the Polish education system. The age until which children stayed in junior high or gymnasium was increased by an extra year. As such, children now make decisions about higher education or vocational training at the age of 16 – rather than 15 as they had done under the Soviet system. The idea was to increase the number of young people graduating from secondary school. The Act also reduced primary school attendance from eight years to six years. Children enrol at lower secondary schools for three years, after which they go to a specialised upper secondary school for three years or for two years at a vocational school. This is promoted as a means of producing more “equal” educational opportunities for all children, regardless of parents’ economic status (Janowski, 2007).

The education reforms also introduced a system of parental choice. Parents were no longer obligated to send their child to the nearest school. They now had the opportunity to choose a school for their child (Janowski, 2007). Janowski (2007) argues that this has deepened socio-economic inequalities, producing a division between those schools perceived as “bad”, “good” and “elite”. The collapse of communism in 1989 opened up Poland to a competitive global market. A package of reforms was implemented in order to “Westernise” the Polish education system. This occurred at the same time as a general worldwide institutionalising of education which promoted the “choice” agenda. It is important here to point out that by

the time of the 1999 Education Act, the participants in my study would have already completed their education at school level.

Changes in education policy were part of the larger socio-economic, political and socio-cultural transformations that occurred in Poland during the immediate post-communist period. As with structural transformation processes, the implementation of a new education system was complicated by the hastiness in which changes were applied as Poland attempted to transform itself from a communist to a post-communist country. It must be remembered that the “overhaul” from communism to post-communism in the domain of education policy – as with regard to other policy domains – has remained incomplete, even up to the present date. Moreover, changes in education policy have rarely been implemented without some profound discussions as to the ways in which they should be executed in a society that was shaped by communist ideology for so many years. This can be exemplified by the debates that initially occupied policymakers in terms of the decentralisation of the Polish education system in the aftermath of the communist era. It was suggested by certain prominent political voices that civil society had been destroyed during communist rule and that the re-building of a “civil society” should be given the main priority. One way to initiate this endeavour, these political voices suggested, was to decentralise the education system and, in the process, give citizens more control over their schools. Other politicians, however, stressed that it was more imperative to prolong national governmental control over the education system rather than to decentralise it to the local level. This would be the best strategy, it was argued, in order to ensure that confidence was restored in the national government and that a national and post-communist sense of identity could be fostered through education. Yet, this latter strand of argument did not gain much leeway, as it was decided that prolonging full national control over the education system could generate rather unfortunate associations with the tightly-controlled national governments of the previous communist regime. Consequently, although the national government has not lost its control completely and still has the final word on many school-related issues across Poland, power over most schools in Poland has been delegated to local government. The result of this decentralisation process has been mixed.

Although it could be argued that many things have “improved” since the fall of communism – in terms of opening-up for more democratic adjustments and fruitful involvement of the local community in important school-related decisions – there are also indications that the

Polish education system has undergone a marketisation process similar to that of many Western European societies such as the UK. With local governmental control, it seems that the quality of educational services will increasingly differ across local governments and schools in Poland. In relation to this, Levitas and Herczyński (2002) have shown that by creating many local educational authorities (or “powiats”), policy-makers have paved the way for more “school choice” in that parents are now, to a much greater extent than before, encouraged to compete for the limited places for their children at the more socio-economic affluent and “attractive” schools in Poland.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has situated recent Polish migration to the UK within the wider historical Polish migratory movements, showing that Poland has been a historically “migrating” society long before EU accession. It has argued that Accession 8 policy implemented in May 2004 simply provided regulative means to continue an already-existing migration pattern. Official statistics were outlined to show that since EU accession in 2004, an estimated 66 per cent of all A8 citizens migrating to the UK have been Polish. Although Polish migration has been spread across the UK, some locations have attracted more Polish migrants for work-related reasons as well as due to social networks from previous Polish migration. London has one of the largest concentration of Polish-born residents, with an estimated 23 per cent of the total UK Polish migrant population (ONS, 2011a, p. 2). It has also been shown that the East Midlands has attracted one of the highest rates of Polish migration. Of particular importance to this thesis are the socio-demographic characteristics of Polish migrants in the UK. It has been shown in this chapter that the overwhelming majority of Polish migrants that came to the UK since EU accession are young, with 60 per cent aged between 24-35 years of age and disproportionately male. As migration strategies changed and Polish migrants began to settle, many were joined by their dependants, including children. Furthermore, the age characteristics of Polish migrants has resulted in an increase in children born to mothers of Polish nationality. As such, Polish migrant parents have had to engage with educational services. Notably, Polish migrants are more likely to be highly educated, yet working in low-skilled and low-paid employment in the UK. By 2011, statistics showed that 36.1 per cent of 25-29-year-old Polish migrants and 32.9 per cent of 30-34-year-old Polish migrants in the UK held a university degree (Okolski and Salt, 2014, p. 22). This high level of education

and low socio-economic position in the UK raises very interesting questions about possession of cultural capital and educational practices for Polish migrant parents.

Crucial aspects of Polish society – economic, political, cultural and religious – during the Soviet communist rule of 1945-1989, have been outlined. The implementation of a nationalised and centrally planned economy has been charted, in which Poland rapidly transformed from a rural economy to one that focused on heavy industry. This process of urbanisation resulted in a massive social transformation as peasants migrated to newly created cities. This transformation occurred simultaneously with the expansion of extensive welfare rights and an education system accessible for everyone. However, this mass education system was used as a form of indoctrination of the Soviet communist ideology in which the system set out to produce the ideal “socialist man”. We have seen how positive discrimination initiatives have been an attempt to increase the social mobility of working class students. However, mobility stagnated after the 1960s and those students from families with higher levels of cultural capital mobilised their employment opportunities in jobs that required more qualifications, by drawing on different education strategies such as pursuing academic routes at secondary school level. Despite the reduction of economic inequalities, extensive welfare provision and subsidised leisure activities, a type of status hierarchy operated in communist Poland as education and cultural capital produced distinctions. Importantly, regardless of the Soviet communist regime’s disapproval and persecution of Catholic Church officials, Poland remained a deeply Catholic society. This was further strengthened in 1978 with the election of the Polish Pope John Paul II. The early 1980s saw mass protests by the Solidarity movement. This social movement was supported by the Catholic Church in Poland. The late 1980s witnessed the final years of Soviet communist control over Poland. In 1989 the Berlin Wall was torn down and by 1991 the communist system had collapsed, ending 40 years of Soviet communist domination over Poland. The collapse of communism in Poland produced rapid transformation in its socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural systems. During the 1990s, Poland experienced a transition from communism to capitalism in which it was abruptly integrated into the global economy. The influx of neo-liberal ideology stimulated “shock therapy”. As state-owned enterprises were privatised and the welfare state was dismantled, job insecurity and unemployment increased and social inequality widened. Simultaneously, the education system was restructured and choice-based policies were implemented. The intensification of economic and social inequalities produced by Poland’s rapid integration into the global economy gave

rise to emigration. As mentioned above, EU accession simply legitimatised an already-existing flow of migration to the UK, which had been underway historically for hundreds of years, reduced during the communist period and increased again after the collapse of communism in the 1990s. This chapter has outlined these societal structures (both historical and present) within Poland, in order to identify a set of prospective historical relations inculcated within the migrants' mental and corporeal schemata of perception.

Chapter 3

Education, Markets and Ethnicity

This chapter will contextualise the education market internationally, nationally and in the two case study sites of North London and Nottinghamshire. By doing this, a foundation is provided to understand exactly the contexts in which the Polish parents are executing their practices, goals and strategies in a local quasi-market education system, and the influence that a broader political ideological agenda has on these locales. Furthermore, the chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature on parental choice, ethnic minority and second generation educational attainment, assimilation and aspirations. It also outlines the theoretical framework that this thesis draws upon – in particular the influence of Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts in inspiring the proposal of researching the issues of main concern to this thesis.

3.1 Education Market in the UK

The terms “market” and “competition” are frequently applied to the delivery of education in England. Ball (2006, chapter 8)⁴ argues that the dynamics of the market and its effect still remain poorly understood and unexamined. He suggests that any study of the English education market needs to explore competition, consumer behaviour, values and ethics. It is important to understand the market indicators that are used to “inform” parents, allowing them to monitor and “compare” schools. Increasing marketisation of education is motivated by ideological commitments, with successive governments – both Labour and Conservative – pursuing the commodification of education over the last 35 years. This is often disguised through the discourse of “transparency” and “greater choice” in which competition in a “quasi-market” system is promoted as “raising standards” and fostering efficiency in the interests of the choosers. Ball (2006) points out that this market-form of education increases

⁴ The chapter has been referenced here as it is a re-edited version of three papers (see Ball, 2006, p. 115 for details).

social polarisation in which choice becomes an individualistic conception of “doing the best” for your own children with the consequence of selecting over-subscribed institutions. Choice becomes dictated by self-interest, fear and concern at the expense of former efforts to pursue progressive educational pedagogies. Thus, self-interest over community values means the market contributes to exclusion. The introduction of the market in education has resulted in changes in the experience of education (Ball, 2006, chapter 8).

It is important to contextualise this marketisation of the British education system and the promotion of parental school choice within the larger rhetoric of global markets and competition. The move to expand school choice is not unique to British education. The increase in policies on parental school choice has been spanning the globe for several decades. This expansion must be interpreted within the ideological shifts that have occurred since the 1970s. Since the mid-1970s onwards, Keynesianism has been replaced by neo-liberalism and accompanied by claims that the market, and the competition it generates, can act as an instrument for reducing social problems and improving cost-effective services. At the forefront of advocates for the de-centralisation and marketisation of education policies has been the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The emergence of transnational agencies and networks helped to drive the promotion of a global model of schooling. The narrative of global competition and competing in a global market place is used to justify the standardisation of education systems around the world (Plank and Sykes, 2003).

Plank and Sykes (2003) argue that a market-oriented approach to education has two sides. One is the demand side, in which parents want more choice in the schools they send their children to. The other is the supply side, in which schools compete with one another for students and revenue. It is important to remember that by the 1980s there was a commonly held belief amongst many middle class parents that they were being in some way “forced” to send their children to “inadequate” and “unsuccessful” schools because of state-centred bureaucratic regulations (Plank and Sykes, 2003, p. xi). This placed political pressure on governments to improve their education systems. As such, promoting choice and competition in the education system was proposed as a way of doing this, whilst giving the parents the right to choose a school placed the responsibility of being a “good” school in both the hands of the parents and the school itself. It is important to point out that choice in itself is not the issue and that people should have the freedom to choose – the real concern

is the consumerist-orientation underlying choice-based policy. It is an inherent feature of a market-oriented policy that both “winners” and “losers” will be a result because of the way in which this system is operating. As Ladd (2003) points out, overall international evidence shows that the middle and upper classes are the ones who are able to take advantage of the opportunities to choose schools. Hence, choice-based policies tend to be favoured by the middle and upper classes. Furthermore, this socio-economic strata of the population also tend to be advantaged in a school choice system as students from this background are, in turn, favoured by “good”/higher-ranking schools. The current expansion of market-based education policies shows no signs of abating. It seems clear that school choice is here to stay (Plank and Sykes, 2003). The current debate for educational sociologists is then, perhaps, how to manage a choice-based education system so as to prevent the further escalation of educational inequalities and disadvantage, and instead promote the equalisation of opportunities. For the majority of educational sociologists, the ideal would be complete equality in education. However, it will be seen below that this does not seem realisable in the way in which education policy has been and is implemented in Britain and throughout the rest of the Western world.

3.2 Choice-Based Education Policy in Britain

At the beginning of the post-war period, there was a clearly defined division between home and school. Since the advent of post-1970s economic liberalism, this separation has become gradually blurred with the increasing expectations that parents should become involved in their children’s schooling. Parental school choice is one of the practises that has been driven by neo-liberal individualism (Reay, 2008). Parental choice underpins current education policy in the UK, whereas prior to the 1980s, parents had limited choice about which school they could send their child to – although they could state their preference for either single sex or co-educational schools, as well as denominational or non-denominational schools. Parents had to send their children to a school within their catchment area unless they were willing to pay the school fees for an independent school. By the late 1970s, the education system in England and Wales had moved away from a bipartite system⁵ towards a

⁵ The bipartite education system of grammar schools and secondary modern schools gradually succeeded the tripartite setting system, a selective system of secondary schooling that was introduced under the 1944 Education Act. Under the tripartite setting system, pupils were placed into one of three types of schools:

comprehensive school system that fell under the control of Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Walford (2003) points out that by 1979, the year of the election of a Thatcher-led Conservative government, ‘about 90% of secondary school age children in the state-maintained sector were in comprehensive schools’ (p. 70). Walford also argues that the UK experienced an important demographic change with an increase in the percentage of 10-year-olds. This rise in the percentage of prospective secondary school pupils partially helps to explain the increased attention on school choice (p. 71).

One of the first aspects of education policy for the newly-elected Conservative government of 1979, was to implement a greater level of choice of schools through the 1980 Education Act. With this Act, the responsibility of planning for comprehensive education was removed from LEAs. However, LEAs were still given powers to manage the overall provision of school places in their boroughs. The Act also introduced an Assisted Places Scheme in which parents of those children deemed “talented” could choose fee-paying schools for their children (Alcock et al., 2004). By 1982, parents were given the power to state a preference for particular schools. However, the extent to which parental preferences were acted upon varied between different LEAs, and LEAs still possessed the power to refuse parents’ preferences (Walford, 2003). The 1985 White Paper *Better Schools* placed an emphasis on the home-school relationship. It also stipulated that schools would have to inform parents of its policies and objectives (Reay, 2008).

By 1986, City Technology Colleges (CTCs) were introduced. CTCs were to provide education for eleven to 18 year-olds of mixed ability in inner-city areas. They were to be run by educational trusts with connections to industry and commerce. The curriculum was designed to be highly technological. The principle underpinning the introduction of CTCs was to encourage parental choice whilst creating a competitive environment in which other local schools would need to raise their standards to compete for pupils. The reality, however, was that the idea of CTCs was not successful and nearby schools were detrimentally affected by the loss of highly motivated pupils (Walford, 2003).

grammar, technical or secondary modern schools. Allocation to these schools was based on the exam results from the eleven-plus examination (Alcock et al., 2004).

The most significant changes in the post-war British education system came with the 1988 Education Reform Act for England and Wales, of which “parental choice” was the cornerstone. Before the passing of this Act, the majority of the children were sent to their local school as noted above. However, the 1988 Education Reform Act meant that school places no longer needed to be allocated to children in a catchment area. This legislation gave parents the “right” to choose schools outside their LEA. The opportunity for parents to express their preference for a school did not guarantee the right of admission to the school of their choice. It was open enrolment insofar as a school was filled to its physical capacity, but not heavily oversubscribed (Bartlett, 1993).

The 1988 Education Reform Act not only introduced measures to increase parental choice and weaken LEAs’ power over assigning pupils to different schools, it also provided other significant changes in the provision of education. The Act introduced Grant Maintained Schools (GMS). These schools permitted de-centralisation in school management as they could opt out of LEAs’ control. Funded by the Department of Education, GMS were allowed to set their own policies – including entry and selection requirements. Those schools that did not choose to opt out of LEAs’ control also became locally managed schools. The idea was that an internal market in education would be created as schools competed for pupils and, therefore, would be encouraged to provide a higher standard of education. As such, parents needed a mechanism with which to measure and compare schools. This was provided by the introduction of school league tables in which the performance of schools was ranked by a number of indicators, including the examination results from the standardised testing (SATs) of children aged seven, eleven, 14 and 16. The SATs would test children on the contents of a nationally subscribed curriculum dictated by the Secretary of State. One aim of the measures was that it provided parents with a wider range of information about educational provision and performance, giving parents greater market indicators on which to base their decision about school choice (Alcock et al., 2004).

The introduction of school inspections by The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) in 1992, produced other mechanisms with which to measure the educational performance and standards of individual schools. Funding for each school was now determined by pupil numbers. Open enrollment created a market where parents could choose which school they would send their child to. However, once a school had become oversubscribed, the school possessed the power to select which children it would enroll

(Walford, 2003). The 1993 Education Act introduced a measure that allowed schools to select up to 10 per cent of pupils based on ability, particularly in terms of specialisation of subjects. These schools no longer needed to get official approval for selection. GMS were also encouraged to seek sponsors. In turn, independent sponsors were allowed to put in proposals to the Secretary of State to establish GMS (Walford, 2003, p. 76). Reay (2008) argues that the 1990s were typified by a 'growing consumer-oriented perspective' towards educational policy (p. 620). Of particular significance was the shift from ensuring educational equality towards promising parental rights and responsibilities (Reay, 2008). Brown (1990) has characterised this as the move away from "meritocracy" to what he coined as 'the rise of educational parentocracy' (pp. 66-67).

1997 saw the election of a new Labour government. At the heart of Labour's manifesto was Tony Blair's famous quote: 'Education, Education, Education' (cited in Alcock et al., 2004, p. 185). Rather than any attempts to reverse the marketisation of education, New Labour continued to further advance the quasi-market education system. Reay (2008) argues that the legacy of the Conservatives' administrative consolidation of 'parental rights' was clearly visible in New Labour's approach towards education policy, in which, again parental choice was at the centre. As Reay (2008) states, '[t]he New Labour aspiration was that parents could, to a much greater extent than was possible in the past, exercise significant choice in the type of school they preferred for their children' (p. 641). Labour's policy focus on disadvantage and exclusion resulted in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, establishing Education Action Zones. Inner city schools in particular areas of deprivation were targeted, especially those which did not do well in competitive league tables. Under this scheme, action plans were produced to "raise the standards" of the schools, which included awarding performance-related salaries to teachers and, in particular, head-teachers. The Act gave powers to ministers to tackle so-called "failing schools" by sending in an "improvement team". In addition, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 implemented parental ballots on decisions about admission policies for selective schools. The Secretary of State was also given the authority to determine codes of practice of admission policies. Schools were prohibited from having selective ability-based admissions (School Standards and Framework Act 1998). The Act introduced statutory requirements for LEAs to raise the standard of literacy and numeracy through the production of Education Development Plans. Schools that were categorised as "failing" were given warning notices to improve. Those schools that showed insufficient evidence of improvement were faced

either with permanent closure, or take-over. Previous GMS were to become either foundation, voluntary or community schools.

Walford (2008) has argued that Labour policies on specialist schools expanded the Conservative government's establishment of CTCs. Moreover, Labour accelerated the relationship between the neo-liberal agenda and education policy by creating partnerships between all specialist schools and private sector sponsors. As Walford points out, Labour's legacy has meant that '[n]early all of secondary schools in England now have Specialist School status' (2008, p. 100). The 2002 Education Act saw the legislation of The Academies programme. Again continuing the Conservatives' CTC model, the establishment of this type of independent school was dependent upon non-state sponsorships. The idea very much behind this was that this type of school would raise education standards by expanding choice of school for parents (Walford, 2008). By March 2010, there were 203 academy schools (Gillie and Bolton, 2010, p. 2).

Parental power was the cornerstone of the 2005 White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* (Reay, 2008). The Education and Inspections Act 2006 further aimed to expand parental power in the choice of schools. The pretext of this legislation was that parents' "rights" and concerns were at the center of the Act. Under this Act, the school system would be supposedly shaped by parents with parents "driving" improvements. LEAs had to take into consideration parents' views about school provision in the area. School admission laws were changed, banning admission interviewing. School discipline was also a main focus of this Act. Greater power was given to schools and teachers to discipline pupils. Parents also had to sign contracts that required them to take responsibility for excluded pupils (Education and Inspections Act, 2006). In an environment of competitive market-based school policy, this Act essentially increased powers of schools to remove those students who might be seen to "threaten" its position on the league table.

The general election in May 2010 saw the establishment of a coalition government consisting of the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats. One of their first moves was to abolish the *Building Schools for the Future* project, an investment programme established under the preceding Labour government. Among the first legislation they enacted was the Academies Act 2010. This Act allowed all maintained schools in England to apply to the Secretary of State to convert to an academy. This act continued the academy programme, which had been

a major focus for the former Labour government. The Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, wrote to all schools inviting them to open up an academy programme. This also included primary schools (Gillie and Bolton, 2010).

In the Conservatives' election manifesto, David Cameron had proposed a "school revolution" in which he advocated drawing on the charter school movement seen in the US, and the Swedish model of "free schools" (Gillie and Bolton, 2010). Free schools would differ from academies by being brand new schools established by communities, faith groups, charities and, of course, parents, where there was seen to be sufficient local parental demand. Establishing a new school also meant that the schools did not take over either previous school buildings or inherit their pupils. Whereas all existing schools could not become free schools but could apply to convert to academies, independent schools were allowed to become free schools and gain state funding. Free schools would also possess the same freedoms as academies, which included freedom from LEAs' control, freedom from following the national curriculum, as well as being able to set the wages and conditions of their staff. It was stated on the Department for Education's (DfE) free schools' website that the policy aimed to increase parental choice (Gillie and Bolton, 2010, p. 13). A report by the National Audit Office on the establishment of free schools stated that 'by September 2013 it [the DfE] had opened 174 Schools ... Over a third of Schools opened so far are in London' (2013, p. 7).

The general election of May 2015 saw the end of the Coalition government and a majority Conservative government coming to power. One of its first proposed bills for education was the Education and Adoption Bill 2015-16, which had its first reading in June 2015. In terms of education, the Bill focused on "underperforming" schools. It proposed that all schools judged "inadequate" by Ofsted would be converted into a sponsored academy. The Secretary of State would be able to intervene in schools deemed to be "underperforming", whilst LEAs would be inhibited from doing so. The categorisation of 'eligible for intervention' has also been expanded to include 'coasting schools'⁶ (Roberts and Jarrett, 2015, p. 5). A major feature of the Bill is to accelerate the conversion of schools into academies. Schools and

⁶ There is general disagreement about what the categorisation of a 'coasting school' actually means. Under the Conservatives, 'coasting schools' would generally mean those schools which are not deemed 'outstanding' and have failed to improve and/or those that have been seen to regress in terms of Ofsted ratings (Jopling, 2015).

LEAs are to be responsible for identifying possible sponsors for the potential conversion of schools into academies. These measures have been proposed as a response to the demand of parental choice. Education Secretary Nicky Morgan stated, in a Department for Education press release regarding the Bill on the 3rd of June 2015, that ‘no parent should have to be content with their child spending a single day in a failing school’ (DfE, 2015, para. 9).

England has experienced an array of changes in education policy over the last 70 years since the implementation of the Education Act of 1944. It is clear that since the 1980s, these changes have resulted in increased parental choice and greater competition between schools. The workings of the quasi-market have created an environment in which the rhetoric of “improved standards”, “efficiency”, “freedom” and “greater power of choice” has thrived. Many parents have been empowered by the larger scale of choice of schools and have been able to take advantage of the new system; however, the school admissions system is now one of the most divisive areas of education policy.

It is important to remember that the drive towards parental choice and school competition is not unique to the United Kingdom. This has not happened in a vacuum but has been part of wider socio-economic structural transformations occurring throughout the western world. During the 20th century, there has been a world-wide institutionalisation of education. Below, I will briefly outline the development of parental school choice in selected countries in order to demonstrate the internationalisation of this phenomenon.

3.3 Parental Choice Policies in other Contexts

My own case study looks at Polish migrant parents’ school choice in two locales in the UK, demonstrating how national education policy is practised within local realities. It shows that the mechanisms of national and regional education policy cannot be understood without acknowledging the specific local environments in which they are embedded. In turn, it is important to recognise how wider socio-economic structures, in particular theoretical and ideological discourses of neo-liberalism, impinge upon national and local education markets. Now, I will outline how global neo-liberal ideology and choice-based policies operate across and within different nations.

Starting with parental choice-based policies in the United States, Forsey et al. (2008) tell us that a programme of school market-based reforms that occurred throughout the 1980s and 1990s was inspired by the UK Thatcher-regime's approach towards education policy (p. 15). The United States is now one of the main proponents of a neo-liberal, market-driven education system embedded within an array of choice reforms, including charter schools and voucher programmes (Lubienski, 2008). Lubienski argues that parental school choice in the US 'represents one of the most celebrated and contested examples of the use of market mechanisms for organizing public services' (2008, p. 29). So great is the popularity of choice programmes in the US that political economic research production supporting the role of school choice is encouraged in policymaking agendas and funding (Lubienski, 2008). In the US, parents can choose to send their children to either the assigned public school within their district, or another public school within the same district and, in some circumstances, a public school in another district. In the latter case, the district has to voluntarily subscribe to this policy. This is in order to retain students within districts, whilst "safeguarding" their own schools from becoming oversubscribed by students from outside their district borders (Lubienski, 2008, p. 30).

Roda and Wells (2013) point out that this popular choice-based policy has increased "racial" and ethnic segregation in public schools. Stratification and segregation has been exacerbated by school-choice policies, as a higher percentage of African American students attend the assigned public school within their districts (Lubienski, 2008). Within this regime of choice come policies such as charter schools and voucher programmes. The latter policy involves parents claiming reductions in tuition to private schools. The former, and the most rapidly popular choice of public schools, has been the charter school. Charter schools are publicly funded; however, they are independently managed by non-profit organisations outside of direct state administration and autonomous from local education authorities. The administration policies are usually a combination of "first-come-first-served" and/or places assigned through a lottery process (Lubienski, 2008). The overarching characteristic of charter schools is that they are schools of choice. Interestingly, research by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2005) found that charter schools did not have an academic advantage over traditional public schools, as pupils were underperforming in mathematics and reading in comparison to public schools. In spite of this, charter schools have remained a centrepiece of educational policy initiatives; first under the Bush administration and now under Obama's administration. In 'Race to the Top' (RttT) – a

funding initiative introduced as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 – the expansion of charter schools was promoted (Rotberg, 2014). When research evidence (Bifulco and Ladd, 2007; Cobb and Glass, 2003; Roda and Wells, 2013) is showing that charter schools are leading to increased segregation across different states, the question may be why are they promoted? Research by Roda and Wells (2013) on white middle class parents' school choice in New York showed how the parents were reflective about the benefits a “racially” diverse school could offer for their children in a global market place. However, the competitive market-oriented choice-based policies that created “good” and “bad” hierarchies of schools, combined with the individualistic nature of school-choice and “doing the best for their child”, fed into the anxieties of these parents. They did not set out to reproduce educational inequalities and segregation, but through their exclusion of certain schools, which consequently tended to have a more diverse “racial” and ethnic student body, they ended up exacerbating segregation (Roda and Wells, 2013).

New Zealand has also been at the frontline of the global movement towards a market-orientated distribution of schooling. In fact, New Zealand is one nation that has gone further and more rapidly towards developing a nationwide school-choice system (Fiske and Ladd, 2003). In 1989, New Zealand abolished its nationwide centralised system of school governance. It proposed to restructure the state-education system so that parents would be able to elect school boards locally. A newly-elected right-wing national government in 1991 went further in promoting and implementing a consumer approach towards education through the introduction of a policy known as the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms (Fiske and Ladd, 2003). Through the abolition of enrolment zones, parents now had the “right” to enrol their child in any public school of their choice. Similar to Britain and the US, the neo-liberal orthodoxy of parental choice policies comes in a package of “competition”, “devolution”, “performativity” and, of course, “choice” (Ball, 2000). A consequence of the introduction of these reform packages, which create new structures, opportunities and enticements to engage with choice, is the production of new forms of social relationships (Ball, 2003). Part of New Zealand's educational reforms since 1991 has been what can be described as a “quasi-voucher system” (Fiske and Ladd, 2003). This means that a school's revenue is correlated with the number of pupils it has. The more attractive the school, the more revenue it would secure. What is interesting in the case of New Zealand, is that it possessed an education system that has worked well previous to market-based reforms. Although the perceived negative effects of bureaucratic methods of organisation were discussed and exemplified by

the cases of Britain and the US prior to its implementation, *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms arose out of the idea that New Zealand could make an already-effective education system work even better. This played into the hands of those who advocated a market approach towards state education. As Fiske and Ladd state, '[o]ver time, democratic/populist ideas were gradually pushed out, and the ideological balance of New Zealand's state education system shifted to a combination of managerial/business and new-right/market concepts' (2003, p. 49).

The consequences of the abolition of geographical school zones and the promotion of parental choice in New Zealand, are comparable to that of the UK and the US. Student number decreased in low-decile schools – those with the majority of ethnic minority and disadvantaged students – as middle class parents moved towards higher-decile schools, taking revenue with them. Fiske and Ladd (2003) argue that shifts in enrolment patterns tend to suggest that quality of school was measured by the socio-economic backgrounds of the student intake. As they state, 'parents tended to view schools with more White and more advantaged students as "superior" schools to those with more minority and disadvantaged students' (Fiske and Ladd, 2003, p. 56, inverted commas in original). Whereas charter schools in America operate a so-called "first-come-first-serve" administration system, New Zealand's public schools were allowed to set their own criteria for selecting students. Ironically, parental choice of school led to school choice of students. The overarching experience of parental choice and competition in New Zealand is one that serves segregation along ethnic and socio-economic lines (Fiske and Ladd, 2003).

Even in Sweden – a country traditionally celebrated as a bastion of welfare and equal opportunities – school choice has become a prominent feature of education policy. Daun (2003) argues that school choice policies may have threatened the principle of "equivalent education" – a long-standing hallmark of the Swedish education system. Market-based parental school choice was virtually non-existent before 1991 in Sweden. Prior to 1991, each public school was required to accept all students living within their catchment area. This was a system that, by and large, seemed to generate significant support and resulted in Sweden being highly ranked in international assessments of education standards. It therefore came as a surprise to many when school choice policies, coinciding with larger market forces and decentralisation, were introduced in 1991 with limited, if any, consultation with key stakeholders such as educational researchers and schools themselves. The introduction of

school choice policies permitted public schools to enrol students living outside of the school's catchment area – as long as the school in question had sufficient resources in terms of space and teaching facilities. In conjunction with this development, was an expectation that schools should “market” themselves in order to attract more students (Daun, 2003).

By 1995, it was reported that as a consequence of this policy change, two-thirds of all Swedish municipalities were offering ‘some sort of choice option within the public education sector’ (Daun, 2003, p. 97). This enabled a pattern of a distinct movement of students of white middle class backgrounds away from geographical catchment areas serving higher proportions of disadvantaged and ethnic minority students, and towards less socioculturally diverse areas. Schools in these areas were perceived as “better”. This has resulted in increased segregation in the form of ‘decreasing diversity of students within individual schools and increasing diversity between schools’ (Daun, 2003, p. 93). The correlation between student numbers and school revenue meant that those schools that attracted higher numbers of students accumulated surplus revenues, whilst those that saw a decrease in its student numbers experienced budget cuts and staff reductions (Daun, 2003).

The introduction of school choice-based policies also resulted in an increased number of students enrolling in independent schools in Sweden, whilst the structure and governance of independent schools changed. Prior to 1991, the majority of independent schools were run by voluntary organisations. However, by 1998, the percentage of companies running independent schools had increased by 30 per cent (Skolverket, 1999). The requirements to establish independent schools also altered. This coincided with the closure of a number of smaller public schools. These were then re-opened as independent schools and run by parents and teachers. Research by Daun (1998) has revealed that school-based employment that was formerly done on a paid basis, is now performed as voluntarily and unpaid work performed by parents. It was the industrial areas, particularly within big cities, that saw a significant increase in student enrolment into these types of schools. Interestingly, in a consumer-led marketised education system, these schools have chosen not to actively market themselves. Their main recruitment strategy is establishing and maintaining their “positive reputation” (Daun, 2003). As there are no restrictions on the number of students a school can enrol and funding reflects pupil numbers, these types of schools are permitted to make a profit (Gillie and Bolton, 2010).

What is significant about the Swedish example for Britain, is that Prime Minister Cameron has admitted that his idea for the establishment of free schools in Britain was inspired by Swedish independent schools run by parents. In contrast with Sweden, the British Conservative government has stated that free schools should be established on a non-profit basis. However, research (Institute of Education, 2010) suggests that because Sweden has lower levels of income and skill inequality, using the same model in Britain would possibly produce greater levels of school stratification.

Through the examples of America, New Zealand and Sweden, we have seen how parental choice of schools creates a dual system that impacts negatively on public schools. As with much research on global indicators of school choice effects (Ball, 2003), the commonality is that parental school choice advantages middle class parents and increases polarisation. The negative consequences of the expansion of school choice include funding and redistribution that disadvantage the working class students who are left behind. The three examples also showed the impact of choice-based policies on multiracial/multicultural urban areas. In the UK, “parental choice” – or as Tough and Brooks (2007, p. 4) prefer to call it; “parental preference” – has resulted in certain schools becoming so popular and in such high demand that they have been unable to allocate places to all of their applicants – a process which has been especially noticeable in certain areas of London. Tomlinson argues that the operation of market choice ‘encourages parents to become vigilantes ... cripp[ing] some school by rumor and innuendo’ (2005, p. 56). Indeed, admission-appeals increase every year. Schools that have been able to produce high attainment results have experienced increased budgets and oversubscription in which procedures have been employed to screen out pupils with special educational needs or those students who have a lower chance of attaining academic success (Maclure, 1998).

Ball (2003) argues that choice-based policies are favoured most by the middle classes who are usually unable or unwilling to pay for private education. The competitive schooling system encourages and legitimates the strategic actions that work in the interest of middle class families. The increasing individualisation and the regime of choice in education produces a number of anxieties, particularly in regard to middle class social reproduction. Butler and van Zanten (2007) state that choice in different localities is determined by “supply” and “demand” (p. 2). Bourdieu and Boltanski (1978) argued that when there is a change in the structure of the education system, it produces an adjustment in the system of

strategies of social class reproduction. In Britain, parental choice has intensified the relationship between the structure of the education system and the structure of class reproduction, as middle class reproduction is no longer assured unless accompanied by careful planning and consideration. To ensure reproduction, parents must collect as much information as possible through league tables, publications, Ofsted reports and through social networks (Ball, 2006).

3.4 Catholic Schools and the Market

Since the early nineteenth century, the church has been involved in education provision in the UK. Following mass Irish migration to the industrial cities in the mid-nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church started to build a network of Catholic schools in an attempt to provide education to Catholic children. By 1870, there was also an expansion of non-religious state-maintained schools. The 1902 Education Act saw church and state-based schools unify in order to provide free education (Oldfield et al., 2013). The 1944 Education Act created a free, universal and compulsory education system, which included secondary education. Church schools were given the option to become either voluntary-aided schools or voluntary-controlled schools. All Roman Catholic schools chose to become voluntary-aided. This initially meant that the church was required to make a capital contribution towards the school. However, they retained more control over school admissions (Allen and West, 2011). The 1959 Education Act saw the government increase financial support for church secondary schools. Between 1950 and 2000, the Roman Catholic Church continued to build and expand secondary schools. As such, it has the largest proportion of faith secondary schools in England at 58 per cent. The majority of faith secondary schools are Christian (including Church of England and Roman Catholic) at 98 per cent (p. 694).

Under Tony Blair's leadership, New Labour increased the possibility for state funding to an increased number of faith schools. This was a continuation on the Conservatives' push towards the privatisation of schooling in which the Education Reform Act of 1988 gave schools the opportunity to "opt out" of LEA control by becoming grant-maintained schools. Under this policy, many religious sponsors proposed the establishment of new schools founded on a religious ethos. Although this was not widely taken up at the time, a number of schools that did pursue the policy had been private Roman Catholic secondary schools.

When New Labour came to power in 1997, Blair made a commitment to expand the range of schools for religious minorities (Walford, 2008, p. 691). In 2001, New Labour published their White Paper *Schools: Building on Success* (DfEE, 2001) which supported the establishment of a hundred new faith schools (cited in Pratt-Adams et al., 2010). Blair's support for faith schools had been influenced by his belief that schools with particular ethos encouraged academic "success" as well as promoted a particular type of "morality".

There is no denying that many parents choose a faith school because they wish their children to receive a religious education that promotes the values and ethos of their own religion (Walford, 2008; 2010). But research (e.g. Allen and West, 2009; 2011) suggests that faith schools have an advantaged intake, attracting middle class parents in which selectivity may be occurring. Dench et al.'s (2006) research also found that in urban areas such as Tower Hamlets in East London – which have a high concentration of ethnic minority residents – Christian schools may be chosen by white residents in order to ensure their children are not the "minority" – further increasing segregation. Pratt-Adams et al. (2010) suggest that there is often a complex relationship between cultural diversity and the provision of faith schools in an urban setting. Often, school intake in urban areas reflects the patterns of settlement. As patterns of settlement vary and change over time, so too do these different communities' expectations of schooling. Faith schools may be seen as central in maintaining these communities' cultural identity. Take for example the Roman Catholic Churches that provided education to Irish immigrants from rural working class backgrounds. Now, as shown in my own research, Catholic schools are predominantly the first choices for Polish migrants. Recent data from the UK Church Statistics conducted in 2013 reveals that church membership has increased due to recent migration. The Roman Catholic Church saw a significant increase due to the mass arrival of Roman Catholics from countries such as Poland and Lithuania (cited in Gledhill, 2014).

3.5 The Catholic School Effect

On average, Roman Catholic schools in England achieve higher test scores in comparison to non-denominational schools. In the UK, this means that Roman Catholic schools often feature in the top brackets of the annual published league tables on educational performance, both at a primary and a secondary school level (Morris, 2005). This finding is also common

in the US, in which Catholics have been upwardly mobile partly due to their educational attainment (see e.g. Keister, 2007). Morris (2005) has argued that high-pupil attainment at Catholic schools may be explained by the fact that on average they tend to have more middle class and “aspirational” parents, in addition to teachers and the institutions themselves being more likely to share the culture and ethos of the children attending.

Keister argues that ‘religious background can shape both school quality and years of schooling completed’ (2007, p. 1198). As well as better test scores from Catholic school attendance, there are also other benefits associated with a Catholic education. These include a more disciplined approach taken by the institution and an increase in social capital produced through various networks and activities associated with the Catholic Church and school relationship (p. 5). Morris (2005) points out that Catholic schools possess particular values that are attractive to Catholic parents. These include a spiritual and moral curriculum based on Catholicism, out-of-school activities rooted in the Catholic tradition and a spiritual ideology based on shared beliefs and norms of the institution (p. 85). Hence, it could be argued that Catholic schools possess a particular type of “institutional habitus” (Burke et al., 2013).

3.6 The Changing Urban Environment

3.6.1 Parental Engagement with “Choice”

Much of the literature on “parental choice” in the UK education market tends to focus on urban or suburban areas. Research on different local education markets has been conducted (e.g. Reay et al., 2011). As my case study has been conducted in different urban areas, I have drawn on literature that has looked particularly at urban educational choice. There seemed to be a paucity of research on parental choice in Nottinghamshire. However, as I have contextualised Nottinghamshire’s local education market, I will be able to explore the wider choice literature and relate this to my findings.

The gentrification of London has been well documented (see e.g. Butler, 2003; Devadason, 2010; McDowell et al., 2006). I will draw on the elements of this gentrification and

production of social polarisation that are relevant for my own case study. McDowell et al. (2006), in their research on middle class reproduction and childcare in London, investigate some of the same boroughs as myself. Their research highlights the impact of gentrification in North London and the impact marginalisation and exclusion have on diverse communities as the middle classes move into these localities. The primary focus of their research has been to understand the extent to which occupational position and place-based factors, such as access to, and choice of, childcare, influence the sense of belonging and attachment middle class residents felt towards their locality.

McDowell et al. (2006) argue that in an era of increasing uncertainty and ontological insecurity, attachment to locality is strengthened, particularly for the middle classes. Locality has become a connection between class-position, choices and identity. Investment and protection of locality are important strategies in the safeguarding of interests for the middle classes and, therefore, in ensuring their reproduction. Drawing on Skeggs (2004), McDowell et al. (2006) discuss how this middle class strategic behaviour increases socio-spatial polarisation and divisions between the middle classes and residents from lower socio-economic statuses. Geographical references to locality are now a form of class distinction.

Of particular importance in influencing the middle classes' sense of belonging to a particular locality, are the choices the locality offers for family-practices and, especially, school choices. Educational provision is crucial to the middle classes when making decisions about their residential location. Having children is also a significant factor in deciding whether to move out of a gentrifying area. However, many wealthy middle class people are now simply sending their children to private schools outside their gentrified area, further increasing social polarisation. Take for example the case of Islington – one of the boroughs in which my research participants were living, who often had no choice but to send their child to a state school in Islington or a nearby borough. A report by the Cripplegate Foundation (2013), entitled *Distant Neighbours: Poverty and Inequality in Islington*, draws attention to the tendency of high earner professionals living in Islington to send their children to schools out of the borough and predominantly to private schools – even though secondary schools in Islington have made significant improvements. One of the most serious problems – the foundation stressed – was that this reproduces and deepens inequalities in Islington.

Islington was a borough used in Butler's (2003) research comparing different gentrified areas of London as he investigated the notion of a geographically subdivided metropolitan habitus. Butler illustrated how middle class respondents – those who are categorised as highly-paid professionals – lived apart from non-middle class residents in Islington. Of particular interest were the educational strategies these middle class residents employed. He argued that Islington has undergone a process of re-gentrification, particularly in Barnsbury – one of London's longest standing areas of gentrification. The re-gentrifiers are now using different educational strategies to the original gentrifiers in the 1960s and 70s. The initial gentrifiers took a much more community-based approach to the area, investing in it through organisations and would send their children to the local schools. However, the more recent re-gentrifiers live very separate lives from the local communities. Butler showed that not one single respondent sent their child to a secondary school in Islington. This has been of concern for the local authority for some time. An intake of middle class pupils to schools often raises the standards of schools and the attainment of the students. This finding also supports research by the Cripplegate Foundation (2013), mentioned above, reporting the rejection of schools in Islington by middle class professionals. McDowell et al. (2006) also compared different gentrified areas to explore middle class parents' educational strategies. Islington was one of the areas studied. McDowell et al. (2006) used the term "ethical bricolage" employed by Ball (2003, p. 114) to explain middle class moral justification for their decision to pay for education. The decision to educate their children in the neighbouring borough of Camden or pay privately was "rationalised" in various ways, including observing the "unruly" behaviour of local school children. This shows similarities with the defensive stance that middle class professionals took towards their education strategies in Butler's (2003) research, particularly in relation to secondary school choice. Justifications would include almost a "victimised" and "powerless" narrative. In their opinion the state schooling was so bad in Islington that they had "no choice" but to not send their children there. They claimed that Islington's local educational authority "refuses" to do "anything" about improving Islington's schools. Yet, when residents did send their children to a local primary school in the borough, these schools became middle class enclaves.

3.6.2 London and Social Polarisation

Islington is an appealing case study for sociologists looking at parents' practices of school choice. Like the other gentrifying boroughs in the London section of my research, Islington

has seen an intensification of poverty and an increase in people earning very high incomes, whilst at the same time even some of the middle-income families have been priced out. The Cripplegate Foundation states that: '28.7 per cent of families in Islington have incomes of less than £20,000; while 11.4 per cent of families have incomes of over £75,000' (2013, p. 31). The foundation also points to the myth of the advantage of "social mixing" for everyone. While Islington benefits from cultural richness and diversity, very little social mixing between the lower socio-economic groups and richer residents occurs. In fact, the parallel lives each group lead have profound social consequences affecting the self-esteem and sense of security and belonging of the low-income residents:

Two of the lower-income residents spoke of how they feel uneasy because 'rich people's' flats overlooked their homes. It made them feel as though they were always 'being looked down on'. Others felt the same way when encountering wealthier people at school or in nursery. (Cripplegate Foundation, 2013, p. 41, inverted commas in original)

I would argue that researching the marginalised and displaced sections in these localities is often forgotten – yet this is equally, if not more, important to study, as those are the ones who are restricted in their choice of residence and often powerless to move elsewhere. Tom Slater (2006) makes this very point when he argues that there has been an "eviction" of critical perspectives in the field of gentrification. He is troubled by a recent trend in gentrification research to focus on the often-perceived "positive" aspects of gentrification, in particular the cultural and physical imprints on the area that seek to accommodate the middle class consumer. Slater calls for a reinstatement of research on the low-income and working class residents in these neighbourhoods. These residents are negatively affected by gentrification through the process of the erosion of affordable housing, the displacement of working class communities and the sense of isolation and discomfort these communities feel towards the middle class practices that saturate the area. This particular trend in gentrification literature is especially a problem in the British context, and Butler's (2003) research – for one – comes under criticism from Slater (2006). On Butler's (2003) research into gentrification in Islington, Slater outlines the perceived lack of critical perspective on Butler's part:

first, to portray the inner city as a 'natural habitat' for the new middle classes; second, to portray this same group as 'embattled settlers' when the structural constraints on their own lifestyle preferences is a far less worrying problem than being priced out

of a city altogether, as has happened to so many worse-off Londoners in the last 20 years; and third, to argue from a study which did not set out to study displacement in London that gentrification ‘has not so much displaced the working class’? (Slater, 2006, p. 743, inverted commas in original)

Slater (2006) does, however, point out that his aim is not to criticise researchers whose purpose is to explore the practices of more advantaged groups, nor does he want to unfairly target the gentrifiers who make a choice to live in an urban and mixed environment. He simply seeks to bring the gentrification debate into a working class perspective. Slater’s criticism on the “social mix discourse” used in gentrification is also shared by Ranji Devadason (2010). Devadason aims to examine local residents’ willingness to engage with difference and their attitudes and values towards their neighbours and neighbourhoods. In breaking with the tradition of gentrification researchers who study privileged groups, Devadason aims to give a voice to the perspectives of minority and marginalised groups. She is critical of what she believes has been the absence of the perspectives of minority groups. As such, her research is based on a comparative study of ethnic minority and majority residents in North London. The four boroughs she looks at are Camden, Islington, Hackney and Haringey – again, three of the same boroughs that constitute my London sample selection. She focuses on three minority groups – Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Indian – as well as ethnic majority white British respondents. Devadason asserts that in considering the sense of belonging and identification – or lack thereof – that different groups feel towards their locality, “whiteness” within a multiethnic city is often treated by researchers as the exception to be studied, whereas ethnic minorities, especially when making up an actual or perceived numerical majority in the city, are treated as more “problematic”. For example, consider the wording of the following report commissioned by the Enfield borough on the release of the 2011 British Census data: ‘Ethnically, Enfield stands out in having a greater *loss* of White British than in London and England’ (Enfield Council, 2014, p. 7, emphasis added), whereas ‘[t]he Polish increase was *a massive* 1011% [in Enfield], far higher than London [in total] (612%)’ (p. 7, emphasis added).

Butler (2003) argues that London polarisation impacts upon migrants living in the city. London’s occupational hierarchy with the influx of corporate businesses and professional residents has seen the expansion of a “servicing class” with migrants filling these socially and economically marginalised jobs. In comparison to the rest of England and Wales, London has a larger proportion of people in the top two socio-economic classifications as

well as in the bottom socio-economic classification (Butler et al., 2008, pp. 71-72). Although most of London's poorest and wealthiest migrants tend to be concentrated in the inner city, London's outer boroughs have also been experiencing an increase of residents born outside of the UK. In a study of immigration and social cohesion, Hickman et al. (2008) highlight how these demographic changes have produced negative reactions from both white and "non-white" long-term settled working class people. Their research showed that these groups felt threatened by the possibility of "displacement" and increased competition over scarce resources. Since the 1960s, London has experienced restructuring of former sites of manufacturing, which have been inhabited for other purposes. Land values have risen as the new highly-educated workers have re-inhabited the city producing gentrification (Zukin, 1992).

Any considerations of the educational and schooling system within London must account for the socio-spatial diversity and the potential for "fierce competition" over essential resources – such as school places. A report by the Audit Commission in 2007 stated that no specific provision for resource allocations had been put in place to deal with the new wave of A8 migration, and that this led to an increased strain on local services such as schools, housing and health (Audit Commission, 2007). Statistics for London revealed that 66 per cent of parents secured a place at their highest preferred school in 2010, but in boroughs where competition was seen to be particularly fierce this number could fall below 60 per cent (cited in Hamnett and Butler, 2013, p. 323).

3.6.3 The Local Education Market in London

It is important to give a general overview of the demographic and socio-economic make-up of London, in order to understand the educational dynamics within the city and how this may influence parents' interaction with the local education market. First and foremost, it must be stressed that London has, for a considerable time, exerted a pull factor on people from all over the UK and the world. The city has a long history of immigration dating back many hundred years, which has been further sustained by post-colonial migration from Britain's previous colonies in the post-Second World War era. The post-Second World War period is also known as the "Windrush" era, when in 1948 migrants from former colonies such as those in the West Indies came over to work in London and eventually settled. The 1980s saw

migration particularly in the form of refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK. More recently, London became a major destination for European migrants such as A8 migrants, which fostered a marked increase in migration from countries with no previous historical/colonial connection to Britain (Gidley, 2011). Census data from 2011 showed that London ‘had both the largest proportion of residents born outside the UK (37%) and non-UK nationals (24%)’ (BBC, 2012, para. 3, brackets in original). In addition, ‘[n]early a half of the UK’s migrants live in London’ (Gidley, 2011, p. 2). The increase of migrants has facilitated a multicultural setting in London, or a *lived* multiculturalism of people from many different backgrounds living in close proximity to each other (Vertovec, 2007). Statistics show that approximately 3.3 million of London’s total population can be classified as “Black and Minority Ethnic” (BAME), while 4.9 million are classified as “White” (London Councils, 2014). However, the diversity of London should not only be measured in “black” and “white” terms, as it is noteworthy that Britain in general and London in particular ‘[are] now home – temporary, permanent or one among many – to people from practically every country in the world’ (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1029). An illustration of this reality is how many policymakers representing the city of London pride themselves on the fact that over 300 languages are spoken in London’s schools (London Councils, 2014).

Ethnic diversity in large cities is a result of intensified economic globalisation in recent decades. One of the main reasons explaining the pull factor that London has exerted, is that London constituted the epicentre of the “British Empire”. The city is now entangled in global networks. Global economic networks have created a polarised city with deep socio-economic divides as the richest and the poorest of British society often find themselves living in close proximity, yet their residences are juxtaposed spatially. Saskia Sassen (2005) argues that economic globalisation and the proliferation of information technology have reconfigured the spatial organisation of the economy – factors which have had a damaging effect on local communities in the city. Cities such as London have now become centres of global operations and control. As multinational firms establish their manufacturing overseas, centrally-located high-rise corporate headquarters proliferate. The economic and political power of these institutions becomes imprinted upon the landscape. The new employment regimes in the global city consist of highly-educated, high-income workers and low-skilled, low-waged workers. As such, the new urban economy produces urban marginality and polarisation. At the top echelon of the urban global economy is a new transnational professional class, while the bottom strata are usually occupied by migrants and ethnic

minority workers (Sassen, 2005). Willis et al. (2009) have described this as “London’s Migrant Division of Labour”. London’s need for both highly-qualified and high-paid professionals and low-wage workers in service employment means that some of the most deprived migrants in the country live in London, as well as some of the most privileged groups. This changing nature of the socio-economic and income structure of London has particular implications for the housing market, education and segregation of different communities. Over recent decades, London has seen large-scale transformation in housing tenure. Rising house rents also mean that over half of the children living in the inner cities are living below the poverty line (see e.g. Marshall, 2015).

The participants in my research resided predominantly in five boroughs of London. These were areas within the radius of the Polish Saturday School where I obtained the majority of my London sample. The five boroughs were: Islington, Camden, Haringey, Barnet and Enfield. Yet, the Polish Saturday School’s long historical links to the Polish Catholic Church in England meant that a few participants came as far as from East London to attend every Saturday. However, the overwhelming majority resided in the five boroughs mentioned above, and the radius of the Polish Saturday school has been circled in the map below. The different boroughs’ demographics have also been briefly outlined.



Figure 4: The London Research Site

Barnet

The 2011 British census reveals that out of the 356,386 surveyed people from Barnet, 162,117 reported that they are “White British”, while 57,600 reported that they are “White Other” (ONS, 2012). In terms of the predicted demographic changes between 2011-2016, a report from the Barnet Insight Unit estimated that the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population would increase from 33.1 per cent to 35 per cent of Barnet’s total population (Barnet Insight Unit, 2011, p. 4). The report also projected that the fastest growing ethnic group in Barnet is that of “Other” – including Arab, Iranian and Afghan people – with a predicted population growth of 19 per cent as opposed to the average growth rate of 5.5 per cent that is predicted for all ethnic groups between 2011-2016 (p. 4). However, it is worth noting that Barnet ranks only 25th out of 33 local authorities in London in regards to levels of deprivation according to 2010 numbers (Barnet Insight Unit, 2012, p. 1).

Camden

Camden borough has a significant presence of non-UK born residents. Non-UK born residents account for 42.5 per cent of Camden’s population according to the 2011 British census (cited in London Borough of Camden, 2012, p. 16). The borough’s “White Other” group, into which most Polish migrants would typically fall, is the fifth largest in England and Wales as of 2011 (p. 13). It is also noteworthy that there has been an increase in the “White Other” group from 15.8 per cent to 19.0 per cent between 2001 and 2011 (p. 13). In terms of English language proficiency in Camden, the 2011 census data showed that in 14.4 per cent of households there were no people with English as their primary language (p. 22). The census data also showed that the unemployment rate of “economically active” residents in the borough amounted to 6.5 per cent (p. 31), making Camden a borough with ‘the 7th highest percentage of households with no adult in employment and no dependent children in Greater London’ (p. 10). 23 per cent of Camden’s population, it should be added, rented their accommodation from the council (p. 27).

Enfield

What is notable about Enfield is the fact that this borough experienced an increase of 60 per cent of its non-UK born resident population from 2001 to 2011 – a number slightly above the average increase of 54 per cent for London in general within the same period (cited in Enfield Council, 2014, p. 6). The increase of residents from five national groups can explain this trend, as people born in Poland, Turkey, Nigeria, Ghana and Somalia accounted for about half of the increase of the non-UK born population in Enfield (p. 1). Enfield appears to have had a slightly higher increase of residents born in Eastern Europe when compared to the London average (p. 7). The unemployment rate for the “economically active” in Enfield in 2011 was 8.6 per cent, up from 6.3 per cent in 2001 (p. 13).

Haringey

The 2011 British census revealed that 65 per cent of Haringey’s population do not classify themselves as “White British” – 10 per cent higher than the average London figure of 55 per cent (cited in Haringey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2013, p. 7). The “White Other” category stood at 23 per cent in the 2011 British census (p. 8) and this group is – at 29.2 per cent of pupils attending Haringey Schools – the largest ethnic category amongst school pupils in the borough (p. 9). The Polish population in Haringey is significant; for the number of new National Insurance number (NINo) allocations between 2010-2012, Poland ranked as the third highest (p. 24). Haringey ‘ranks as one of the most deprived [boroughs] in the country [England] with pockets of extreme deprivation in the east. Haringey is the 13th most deprived borough in England and the 4th most deprived in London’ (Haringey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2013, p. 3).

Islington

Whereas 57 per cent of residents in Islington were “White British” in 2001, the number of people within this category had fallen to 48 per cent as of 2011 (cited in Islington Council, 2012, p. 3). Thus, it can be concluded that Islington has become more ethnically diverse – even though the percentage of “White British” people in Islington is 3 per cent higher than

the London average (p. 3). About half of Islington's residents in 2011 who were classified as non-UK born arrived in the relatively short time span between 2001-2011 – a number mirroring the average trend in England (p. 39). The “White Other” group makes up 20 per cent of Islington's residents (p. 13). The gentrification processes witnessed in Islington, which have been discussed in greater detail in other parts of this thesis, are perhaps best reflected in the housing situation in Islington: ‘Private renting has increased by 85% in Islington between 2001 and 2011, while outright ownership has increased by 19%. In contrast, social renting and mortgage-owned housing have decreased by 17% and 9% respectively’ (Islington Council, 2012, p. 23).

3.6.4 The Local Education Market in Nottinghamshire

Nottinghamshire county and city combined have a mixture of comprehensive secondary schools (65) and independent schools (16) (Nottinghamshire County Council, 2013). In terms of the education market in Nottingham, it was reported in 2013 that as many as six of 14 secondary schools were placed in “special measures” (Garner, 2013). This was labelled as ‘one of the harshest verdicts that Ofsted has made on an education authority's schools’ (*ibid.*). Graham Allen, the MP for Nottingham North, publically announced his condemnation of the Ofsted's verdict. Allen argued that the standard of Nottingham schools – which had underperformed for a significant number of years when compared to other schools in East Midlands and on a national level – had recently showed some signs of improvement. Allen stated that ‘[i]t is demoralising for incredibly hard-working staff and pupils who deserve better. My schools take pupils well below the national average on entry but are expected to be measured and compete on a level playing field with schools in leafy suburbs nationwide’ (*ibid.*). In response, a spokesperson for Ofsted acknowledged ‘the challenges the city faces stating that the Unseen Children report, published in June 2013, identifies clearly the need for greater support for disadvantaged children to ensure all children regardless of their background receive a good education’ (*ibid.*).

A description of the demographic characteristics of Nottinghamshire is also necessary in order to contextualise this research site in comparison to my London research site. It is first noteworthy that Nottingham has status as a provincial centre in the East Midlands – rather than a global status of London's dimensions. Nottingham is a smaller city of about 300,000

inhabitants and, as a consequence, can be regarded as less diverse in its “racial” and ethnic make-up (Nottingham Insight, 2014). However, estimates revealed that as of 2011, 34.6 per cent of Nottingham’s population were from groups other than “White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British” (Nottingham City Council, 2016). Statistics on NINo allocations to overseas nationals who entered the UK in 2011/12, showed that people from 76 different countries were represented in these numbers (Nottinghamshire County Council, 2013, p. 2). As with the rest of the UK, Nottingham has also seen an increase in migration in the last decade and particularly since EU accession in 2004. Indicative of the presence of A8 migrants in Nottingham is the increase of the “White Other” group, as this group has increased its figures from 2 per cent in 2001 to 5.1 per cent in 2011 (Nottingham City Council, 2016). In 2011/12, the majority – or 63 per cent – of NINo allocations to overseas nationals was allocated to migrants from A8 countries (Nottinghamshire County Council, 2013, p. 1). Despite A8 migrants accounting for the largest share of migrants being allocated NINOs in Nottinghamshire, an annual decrease in the number of NINo allocations to A8 migrants can be observed after the peak of 4,120 annual allocations to A8 migrants in 2006/07 (pp. 1-2). In 2011/12, the annual allocations of NINOs to A8 migrants had decreased to 1,820 (p. 1).

In particular, Nottinghamshire has seen an increase in the number of Polish residents in the last decade, who, according to recent numbers, make up the largest group of overseas nationals in the borough. Polish migrants account for 33 per cent of NINo registrations, which was the largest share of NINo allocations to overseas nationals in 2011/12 (Nottinghamshire County Council, 2013, p. 2). Polish migration has made a significant impact on the demographic landscape of Nottingham in the last decade in particular. There are indications that Poles in Nottingham have been hit by the recent economic downturn in the UK. Scullion et al. (2009) interviewed 235 A8 and A2 migrant workers who originated from a total of eight countries – including Poland – living in Nottingham in 2008/9 (Scullion et al., 2009). The study found that 19 per cent of the interviewees were unemployed at the time of the interview (p. 5), while eleven of the 235 interviewees reported earning incomes below the national minimum wage in the UK – with one participants earning as little as between £1.68 and £2.94 per hour (p. 6). The study also revealed that 59 per cent of the interviewees reported having experienced downward mobility from their occupational status in their home society (p. 6). This number should perhaps be seen in relation to the fact that many of the interviewees can be considered well-educated, but might have encountered

barriers to getting their education properly recognised in the UK. In fact, more than one third of the participants held degree level qualifications and had previously been employed in the top three occupational groups in their respective Eastern European societies, including ‘managers and senior officials; professional occupations; and associated professional and technical occupations’ (Scullion et al., 2009, p. 5). Yet, it is notable that many of the respondents in Scullion et al.’s (2009) study still seemed reluctant to refer to themselves as living in “poor conditions” in the UK. This finding indicates, perhaps, that the migrants were willing to accept these conditions as a trade-off for the “opportunities” they see in the UK as, for example, through their children’s education.

The Nottinghamshire research site in general has been contextualised in terms of its education market, socio-economic characteristics and Polish migrant population. Figure 5 is a map of Nottinghamshire illustrating the research site where the respondents were making their school choices. The Polish Saturday school’s radius has been circled on the map below. However, all participants either resided in the City of Nottingham or the district of Rushcliffe, on the outskirts of the city. A brief outline of these districts’ demographics has been provided below.

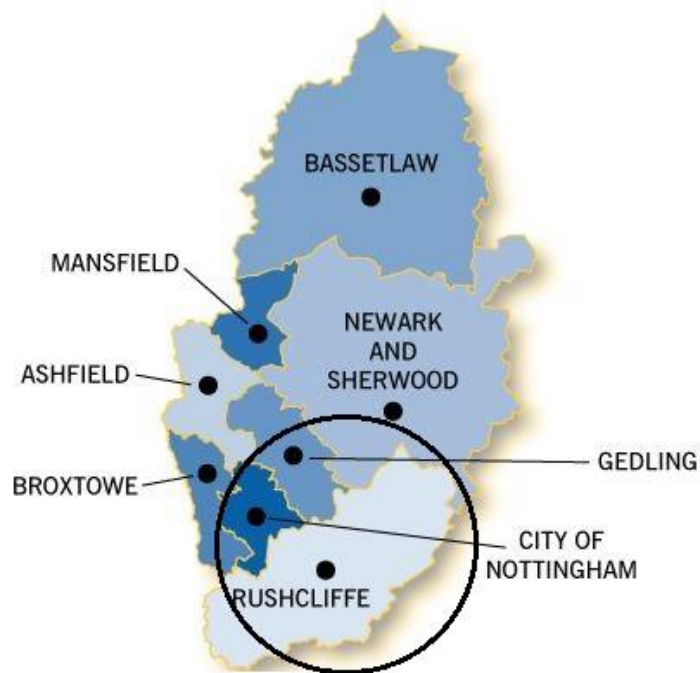


Figure 5: The Nottinghamshire Research Site

There is a stark contrast between the social demographics of the City of Nottingham in comparison with Rushcliffe. Rushcliffe has been placed as the 7th “best” place to live in the UK by the Halifax Quality of Life Survey (2013). Its schools hold the highest positions in Nottinghamshire’s league tables and throughout the East Midlands. 92.1 per cent of its ethnic population is “white” (ONS, 2011b). It also has one of the highest life expectancies in Nottinghamshire (see Halifax Quality of Life Survey, 2013). Compare this to the City of Nottingham, whose Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population is 34.7 per cent (cited in Nottingham Insight, 2014). Nottingham has one of highest teen pregnancy rates in the country (Watts, 2008). One of its largest residential areas – St Ann’s – has one of the lowest life expectancies for men in the whole of Nottinghamshire at just 67 years old (Parsons, 2008). The City of Nottingham is also one of three areas in the whole of the UK where armed police walk the beat. It also has one of the cheapest prices for class A street drugs in the country (Dandeniya et al., 2003).

3.7 Education of Ethnic Minority and (Im)migrant Children

In order to understand the parental educational aspirations of Polish migrant parents for their children – as an aspect that may influence school choice – it is essential to contextualise this within the current and broader debate on ethnicity and social class attainment in education, as well as situating it in the wider framework of (im)migrant educational aspirations.

When looking at educational attainment rates for different ethnic groups, it is important not to make any broad generalisations. The situation is complex due to the intersectional relationship between ethnicity, “race”, class and gender. Gender differences will not be explored here, because the purpose of this thesis is to look at parental school choice for children. A finding in itself was that there was no or very little distinction in the school choice practices as well as the aspirations the participants had for a son or a daughter. A possible explanation for this may be that it is deemed more important on the part of the participants – in facing discrimination – due to their status as migrants – to advance their own and their children’s mobility in the perceived host society’s “hierarchy” of ethnic and class relations, rather than being preoccupied with internal gender differences within their own group. This is not to dismiss the importance that gender has in producing differential rates of attainment in education, particularly within different ethnic groups (Archer and

Francis, 2005; 2007; Farkas et al., 1990). It is simply outside of the scope of my main research questions, and the data analysis produced no viable reason for the literature on gender and education to be debated. There was, however, a differentiation in the expectation of how to conduct oneself morally as a “female”. Yet, this was normally outside the realm of education. As such, this section will concentrate on ethnicity (particularly “whiteness”) and education, and social class and education, as well as the education and assimilation of second generation migrants.

GCSE results are a common measure of ethnicity and educational attainment, commonly measured at an achievement rate of five GCSEs A*-C grades including maths and English. A summary report from a Westminster Hall Debate in 2012, drawing on data from 2010 and 2011, revealed that the achievement gap between some ethnic groups has been narrowing. Figure 6 below illustrates the achievement rate of five GCSEs A*-C grades including maths and English by ethnic group. Briefly, the report showed that 58 per cent of white British pupils achieved five GCSEs A*-C grades including maths and English, while Chinese pupils were the highest attaining group, with 78.5 per cent achieving five GCSEs A*-C grades including maths and English. In second place, with 74.4 per cent, were Indian pupils, while Bangladeshi pupils achieved higher than white pupils with 59.7 per cent. Just behind white British pupils, were Black African pupils at 57.9 per cent. Thereafter, 52.6 per cent of Pakistanis achieved five GCSEs A*-C grades including maths and English and Black Caribbeans stood at 48.6 per cent. The lowest achieving groups were Irish Travellers (17.5 per cent) and Gypsies and Roma (10.8 per cent) (Westminster Hall Debate, 2012).

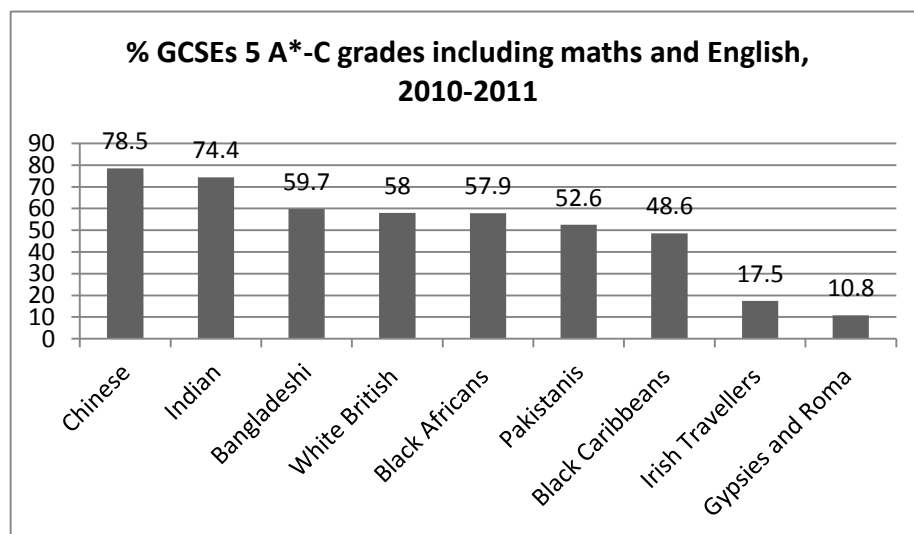


Figure 6: Adapted from Westminster Hall Debate (2012)

Educational achievement continues to be systematically linked to social class background. Minority ethnic groups are more likely to come from lower socio-economic groups and live in areas of deprivation. One measure that has been used to examine the impact of socio-economic factors on achievement by ethnic group is eligibility for free school meals (FSM). Figure 7 and 8 below illustrate the different attainment rates by ethnic group for those eligible for FSM and for those who are not. Looking at Figure 7, we see the different achievement rates of eleven-year-old pupils. White British have the widest achievement gap between those eligible for FSM and those who are not. There is a larger proportion of white British pupils who are eligible for FSM who do not reach level 4 at key stage 2 in comparison to other ethnic minority groups. The narrowest gap in attainment between those pupils who are eligible for FSM and those who are not within a single ethnic group, is for Bangladeshis (The Poverty Site, 2011a). This may be explained by the economic disadvantage within the Bangladeshi community living in Britain. Research reveals that Pakistani and Bangladeshi households have a higher than average dependency on means-tested benefits (Strand, 2007). In a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of 15,000 Year 9 pupils, Strand (2007) investigated the differences in educational attainment between ethnic groups in England. Strand found that once he statistically controlled for the variables of social class, FSM, home ownership and maternal education, the attainment gap for Bangladeshi pupils relative to white pupils was significantly reduced. It is important to note, however, that the income gap between those Bangladeshis in working households and in non-working households is far narrower in comparison to white British households. As such, the small educational attainment gap between those pupils on FSM and those who are not is a reflection of the Bangladeshi minority group's overall economic disadvantages in society (Strand, 2007).

The second graph (Figure 8) shows the attainment of five GCSEs (at age 16) by ethnic group between those eligible for FSM and those who are not. Again, white British pupils eligible for FSM have a much higher proportion not achieving five GCSEs in comparison to all other groups. The white British group also has the largest gap in attainment of five GCSEs between those who are and who are not eligible for FSM (The Poverty Site, 2011b). It is important to note that at the time of this data collection, FSM were restricted to families out of work rather than on low income.

Differences in achievement between 11-year old pupils by ethnic group and eligibility for free school meals

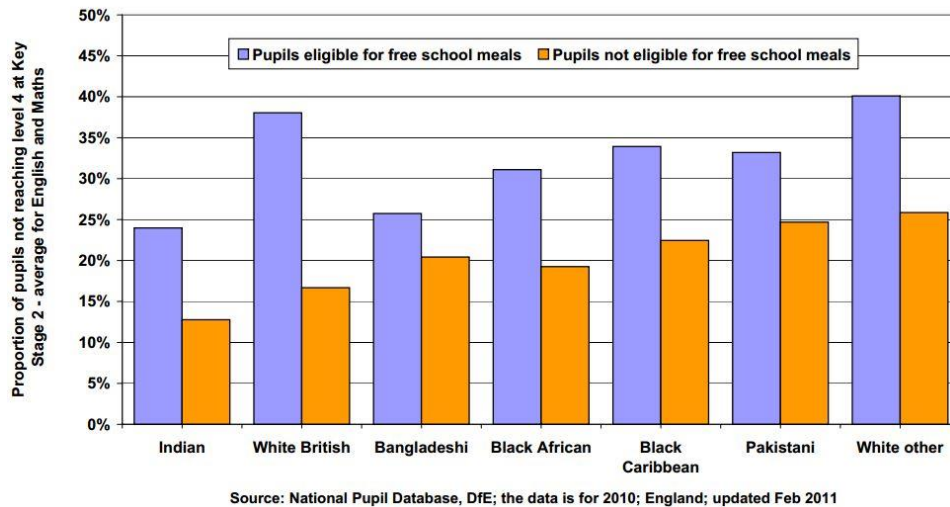


Figure 7: Cited in The Poverty Site, 2011a

Differences in achievement between 16-year old pupils by ethnic group and eligibility for free school meals

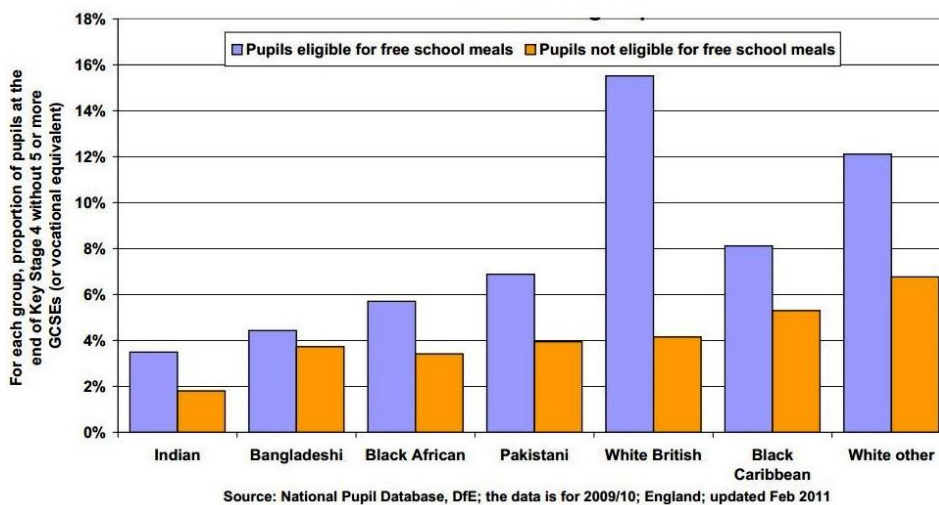


Figure 8: Cited in The Poverty Site, 2011b

The attainment gap between ethnic minority groups is complex, but its explanations may fall into two general categories: on the one hand a theoretical argument about the cultural orientation of ethnic groups and, on the other hand, the claim that the structural position of ethnic groups primarily explains their educational attainment (see Kao and Thompson, 2003 for an overview). The latter argues that parental social class has a significant influence on

the child's educational performance. The parents' socio-economic status is a result of the education and skills they obtained in their host country and brought with them upon migration, which are now manifest in parental practices in relation to schooling. The cultural orientation perspective goes beyond parental socio-economic status and argues that regardless of parental education they possess a positive cultural belief about the benefits of education. This approach has particularly been associated with the Asian-American population in the American context, in particular South-East Asian children from refugee families who maintain a high level of academic achievement (Kao and Thompson, 2003). As such, Kao and Thompson (2003) suggest that for some immigrant and ethnic minority groups, regardless of their socio-economic position, the parents are able to translate their educational aspirations into achievement and attainment in their children.

Similarly, UK British-Chinese pupils have predominantly stood out as "high achievers" within the British education system. Within the research on the assimilation of children of immigrants into Western nations, debate tends to focus around issues of differing cultural values, the significance of parents, ethnicity, institutional and societal racism, and inconsistent educational attainment between different ethnic groups. Francis and Archer (2005) have researched the parental effects as a contributory factor in the educational success of this minority group. In particular, they examined parents' values towards education and how these values are transmitted. Parental effects helped to explain why British-Chinese pupils are proportionally more likely to enter higher education than any other ethnic group, despite their socio-economic background and the parents' own educational trajectories. Francis' and Archer's research was conducted amongst the Chinese population living in London. 30 parents and 80 children were interviewed. The sample was highly diverse in terms of social class membership and included middle class Chinese pupils. However, almost one third of the pupils stated that their parents worked in catering and/or owned/managed a restaurant or a food take-away shop. Francis and Archer argued that such occupational backgrounds problematised conventional British understandings of the link between educational success and social class. The case study of British-Chinese pupils' high education attainment challenged the traditional categorisations of social class – Chinese migrant parents held educational aspirations and values that are associated with traditional white middle class parents. Although the Chinese migrant parents possessed status and power within their own community through business ownership (p. 92), they were mainly first generation Chinese (im)migrants who spoke little English and worked long hours in the

catering trade. Their economic situation meant that they were not always available to help their children with their homework or to take their children to extracurricular cultural activities as white middle class parents would normally do. The Chinese migrant parents were interviewed about the expectations they held for their children's educational achievement and future occupations, as well as their views on education. Despite a proportion of the parents having very little education, they still placed a high value on education for their children. Francis and Archer (2005) argue that this contradicts Bourdieu and Passeron's (1970) theory of the social reproduction of education as well as that of inequalities through generations. The Chinese migrant parents possessed what Francis and Archer (2005) termed a "migrant outlook". Their endurance and hardship in the search for a better life – and the consequent precarious economic and social positions they held within British society – increased their aspirations for their children's education and future occupations.

Importantly, Archer and Francis (2005) have raised concern that a positive stereotype of a particular ethnic group – in this case British-Chinese pupils – can actually be racist in itself. Their research found that teachers often held perceptions of the British-Chinese being conformist – almost "boring" – and linked their high educational achievements with excessive pressures from parents. These teachers' negative connotations were associated with the parental values transmitted to their children in terms of diligence, hard work and respect for authorities. The Chinese migrant parents' "surveillance" of their children's educational performance and their high aspirations for their children were associated by the teachers with an oppressive home culture – yet these are the same factors which are often used in the reproduction of educational success within white British middle class families and, in that context, valued by the teachers (Archer and Francis, 2005).

Other explanations for differences in educational attainment between ethnic minority groups include issues such as intra-school explanations ("streaming"), teachers' expectations and the "hidden" curriculum. Research has shown that Black pupils are often subject to negative stereotypes that can lead to low self-esteem. One explanation is the institutional and structural racism they may encounter daily in British society. I am not going to lay out the extensive debate on the educational experiences of ethnic minority pupils, but only to acknowledge that sociologists such as Gillborn (2005) have argued that racism in schools is a significant factor in the educational outcomes of different ethnic groups. A central concern

of this debate has been with the achievement of African-Caribbean pupils and particularly African-Caribbean boys. Research has shown that African-Caribbean pupils are often underrepresented in top streams and overrepresented in the bottom streams (Strand, 2007). It is important to note that “streaming” is often not based on ability, as pupils are placed in streams/sets sometimes before exams have been conducted (Pilkington, 1999). Strand’s (2007) research found that even when social class, maternal education, entitlement to FSM and home ownership had been statistically controlled for – as well as controlling for other variables including parental involvement in school, homework completion and parental aspirations for their children – this still did not account for the low attainment of Black Caribbean and Black African groups. As noted, we could therefore consider an inter-school account of a racist educational environment as a cause of the low attainment of Black Caribbean and Black African groups.

Other explanations suggest that particular teachers may have a substantial impact on the experience and treatment of different pupils. The pupils themselves may also possess a strategy in actively creating their own “racial” identity. For example, in comparison with African Caribbean boys, African Caribbean girls in the UK reach a high level of educational attainment. In Mirza’s (1992) study of African Caribbean girls in two inner-London comprehensives, it was found that female African Caribbean pupils did not allow themselves to be positioned by external discourses and structural circumstances, but made strategic calculations and choices *within* their structural circumstances on the basis of their long-term aspirations to gain economic independence and upward mobility. Despite the alienation African Caribbean girls experienced from school, they would conform as much as was required – but not necessarily more – in pursuit of their educational qualifications enabling them to progress to the next stage. Upon leaving school, many entered the caring sector of the labour market in which discrimination against black women was less noticeable than in other sectors. Mirza (1992) argued that this pursuit of economic independence is an endorsed cultural value within the African Caribbean community.

There are intersections between gender identities and educational attainment within the African Caribbean group that produce contrasting outcomes. Strand (2007) argues that there is a type of pressure experienced by African Caribbean boys to adopt an urban “street culture”. In the US, for example, low-income African Caribbean boys may be concerned with projecting an image of “toughness” and even potential violence. Mullins (2006), in his

study of masculinity and street life in the US, argues that to be a “proper” man on the street one must portray oneself through language, dress and interaction – giving the perception or the expectation of violence in order to survive on the street and to be accepted by their peer group. Against this view is the notion that success in school is achieved by “playing white” (Barker, 2005). Strand (2007) cites Fordham and Ogbu (1986) who argue that “playing white” and “playing black” are identified in opposition to one another. This then becomes inextricably linked to different forms of behaviour within the school. As such, educational success is being seen as a “white” value, whereas being non-conformist in school is seen as an “urban black” identity.

However, it is not just “excessive blackness” which is associated with non-compliance in the classroom. Working class “whiteness” may be stigmatised by negative stereotypes both within and outside the classroom. Reay et al. (2011) argue that the fear and paranoia of “excessive whiteness” – in particular white working class masculinity – also concerns the white middle classes. While many previous studies of educational inequalities focused on “racial”/ethnic minority students (Archer and Francis, 2007; Banks and Lynch, 1986; Hardy and Vieler-Porter, 1992), a growing number of scholars have started to examine the experiences of ethnic majority white students and the advantages that these students gain in an educational setting in the UK (Byrne, 2009; Reay et al., 2011). In *Whiteness and Class in Education*, Preston (2007) argues that educational research on “whiteness” has tended to focus on the advantages white middle class pupils experience within the education system, as well as on the underachievement of white working class pupils and/or the development of the “underclass”. This research on the interactions between class and “whiteness” creates new reifications of “whiteness”. However, “whiteness” is a practice and these practices of “whiteness” employed by the middle class must not be isolated from the operation of the wider system of white supremacy (Preston, 2007).

Most of the debates around “whiteness” in education fall into two categories. The first being that “whiteness” is “invisible” and “normalised” and that white students in general benefit from white privileges in an educational institution (e.g. Fine et al., 1997). Others, however, argue that we must explore how “whiteness” intersects with social class, gender and space/place to structure different educational experiences. Preston (2008) has argued that during the 1980s with the dismantling of the welfare state, introduction of pro-market policies, “moral panic” on immigration and descriptions of non-colour difference began to

appear in public discourse. As Preston states: ‘In this period [are] the beginnings of the re-racialisation of the white English working class as a ‘breed apart’ ... feckless, work-shy individuals (who needed to get ‘on their bikes’), lawless and feral.’ (Preston, 2008, p. 476, citation, inverted commas and brackets in original). This illustrates how “whiteness” is fragmented along class lines. It shows parallels with non-colour coded racism (Cole, 2009). In contemporary Britain there has been a rise in Islamophobia and xeno-racism. Xeno-racism is racism directed at displaced and disposed whites resident in Western Europe. Cole (2009) argues that xeno-racism has increased in the UK since the European Union’s Eastward extension in 2004 brought a surge of cheap labour. The research by Preston (2007; 2008) and Cole (2009) is important because they show that although “whiteness” can be a form of capital in British society, there has been an accompanying xeno-racialisation directed against people with white skin colour since the growth of neo-liberalist policies and the enlargement of the EU. Using “whiteness” as an analytical frame of reference helps to reveal the many contributing factors that can intersect to create a complex picture.

In this PhD project, I will incorporate insights from the position that white people must be “racially” seen and named. Refusing to acknowledge “whiteness” as an analytical category results in white people becoming the norm. When “whiteness” is “un-raced”, the assumption then becomes that their “race”/ethnicity has played no part in their practices, whilst supposing that they face the same structuring inequalities as everyone else and that any “success” they have achieved has been gained through “merit” alone. As Dyer (1997) argues, being defined as the norm gives you a powerful position in society and that, in fact, the invisibility of “whiteness” has already functioned to make this happen. The very fact that white people are seen as just people means that other “racial” groups are oppositional and defined as the “other”. In an institutionally racist society, politics, education and the media are governed by white people. They have the power to act for all people and have done this for hundreds of years as “white supremacy” has shaped most of political and economic systems throughout history. As in the case of education, Gillborn states that “white supremacy” includes ‘the routine assumptions that structure the system ... [and] encode a deep privileging of white students and, in particular, the legitimization, defence and extension of Black inequity’ (2005, p. 496). This quote has been used to illustrate the importance of using “whiteness” as a category to understand the privileges it brings in the education system. However, it should be noted that the term “white supremacy” might, if applied uncritically, harmonise all white people together as if they shared the same position

of power in society. As such, I also support an intersectional analysis of “whiteness” and, in this project, conceptualise theoretically how “whiteness” interrelates with social class, residential context and nationality in diminishing or enhancing white advantages and framing perceptions towards white and “non-white” people.

3.8 Educational Assimilation of (Im)migrant Children

Much of the literature on migrant parental aspirations for their children’s educational attainment originates from the US, as does the majority of literature on second generation migrant children and educational attainment. Below, I will lay out some of the relevant literature on second generation migrant children’s social mobility, educational attainment and (im)migrant parents’ educational aspirations for their children. Much of the literature on second generation migrant children from the US, as will be referred to below, incorporates assimilation theory. This thesis is not assessing the relevance of assimilation theory versus other theories of migrant incorporation into their host societies,⁷ but rather noting that this theory has been especially used to describe second generation integration and social mobility in the US context.

Zhou (1997) points out that current research on second generation children now commonly tends to refer to children of immigrants who were born in the US, as well as migrant children who arrived before they reached adulthood. It is important to understand that children who arrived at older age in comparison to those who arrived at a pre-school age are more likely to have similar linguistic and cultural experience to that of their parents. Zhou further points out that contemporary migrants come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and, therefore, their pathways to social mobility are differentiated. In America, for example, immigrants traditionally took a bottom-up route to social mobility. However, a substantial number of new immigrants to the US, according to Zhou, are moving directly into middle class communities and labour markets. As such, she argues that these migrant children’s life chances are connected to the socio-economic status of their parents. The assimilation of

⁷ For critical discussions on the concept of “assimilation”, see e.g. Alba and Nee (2007), Brubaker (2001), Glazer (1993).

migrants and their adaptation to a host society, has dominated sociological research for over a century. Of course, as outlined previously, Polish migration to America inspired the classic research by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918-1920) entitled *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, as well as other classic studies by Handlin (1941; 1951) and Herberg (1955). Acculturation and assimilation were notably associated with Gordon (1964) in his book *Assimilation in American Life*. According to Gordon, immigrants undergo several types of assimilation; cultural, structural and attitudinal or receptional assimilation, are just some of the types. The first step in assimilation for immigrants is acculturation. Gordon argued that ethnic groups passed through different stages of assimilation until they were considered to be fully integrated. However, the degree to which they assimilated would depend on their perceived acceptance by the host population. What is interesting about Gordon's (1964) assimilation approach, is that he argues for the importance of analysing the interaction between an ethnic group's social psychological senses with that of social structures; in other words, he proposes to understand the migrants' habitus. Zhou (1997) points out that at the time of Gordon's (1964) writing, America had managed to absorb great waves of immigration from the "great transatlantic migration" they experienced from 1890 to 1920. As such, by the 1960s interest turned towards intergenerational mobility. Research by Hirschman and Falcon (1985) found that children of highly-educated migrants were more likely to increase their social mobility, while Gans (1992) found that children from "non-white" and low economic migrant backgrounds were more likely to experience stagnated low mobility. Zhou (1997) argues that the adaptation of migrant children is usually measured by educational attainment and performance, as educational attainment, performance and aspirations are a common denominator of economic mobility in the US. However, one must consider how different aspects of social class, "race", ethnicity, community, language skills and social capital influence the educational attainment of second generation immigrant children. In terms of assessing the relevance of current American theories of assimilation and educational attainment of migrant children, it is important to bear in mind that much of the immigration and the composition of migrants in the US consist of migrants from non-European backgrounds – the largest category being that of Latino Americans and Asian Americans (Zhou, 1997, p. 76).

Thomson and Crul (2007) look at second generation immigrant children in Europe and pose the question as to how relevant US-developed theories are in explaining these migrant children's integrations into European societies. Unlike America, whose second generation

groups mainly consist of children of Mexican and Asian migrants, second generation groups in Europe have until recently tended to be migrants from ex-colonies. Thomson and Crul (2007) argue that theories such as Portes and Zhou's (1993) and Gans' (1992), which proposed a downward assimilation of immigrant groups into an urban underclass, are plausible in that "racial" and ethnic discrimination is more marked against darker-skinned people in the US in comparison to the "white wave" of migration America experienced in the earlier nineteenth century. Combined with the decline in middle class occupations, and the increased marginalisation and polarisation of traditional working class areas, the finding of downward mobility in the US is not surprising. However, Portes and Zhou (1993) also illustrated the case of upward mobility in a Punjabi Sikh community in California. This upward mobility was partly explained by tight ethnic cohesion and educational success, in which parents "stamped out" any anti-school counterculture. This is a theory of "segmented assimilation" (Thomson and Crul, 2007, p. 1029) in which upward mobility is possible whilst still maintaining the traditions and values of their immigrant community.

Thomson and Crul (2007) then go on to debate whether these types of US theories can be translated into a European context. Theories of "segmented assimilation" have been used in this context; for example, in the case of British-Chinese and British-Indian children who educationally outperform white middle class children as discussed earlier (see e.g. Archer and Francis, 2005; Francis and Archer, 2005). "Downward assimilation" has also been used in a British context by Enneli et al. (2005) in their research on poor educational attainment and high drop-out rates amongst Kurdish and Turkish children. Yet, Thomson and Crul (2007) are critical of the American concept of "downward assimilation" as those children who may perform poorly educationally in comparison to other ethnic minority or migrant groups may still, however, experience some upward mobility in comparison to their parents. Thomson and Crul conclude that research on second generation children in Europe offers insightful comparisons and contrasts with research in the US. The comparison between the two contexts also illustrates that second generation immigrants in Europe have different patterns of social mobility compared to those in the US. The most important point to take from Thomson and Crul (2007) is that there so far seem to be limited examples of second generation upward mobility through social cohesion in Europe. Thomson and Crul's (2007) paper was an introduction to a special issue in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* on debates around assimilation and integration for second generation immigrants in Europe. This was published in 2007 and it was disappointing – when considering that its focus was

on the European context – that there was no paper specifically on migration from the post-Soviet Bloc or on EU accession, nor was this issue acknowledged in the introductory paper by Thomson and Crul.

Another useful approach from the US to the study of second generation migrant children and social mobility is the historical comparison between earlier and later waves of migration. Perlmann and Waldinger (1997) explore this in order to illustrate the similarities and differences between past and present second generation mobility. Perlmann and Waldinger (1997) were interested in whether current and recent migrant children are likely to adapt in the same ways as second generation predecessors – in particular the wave of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe who migrated to the US between 1890 to 1920. The majority of people that migrated to the US during this period tended to be at the bottom of the economic and class structure. Studies on social mobility conducted in the 1960s and 1970s in the US show that social mobility of these migrants had been considerable. By and large, socio-economic assimilation had been “accomplished”. Perlmann and Waldinger (1997), however, point out that this past wave of European migration was “white” and that their struggles for status and occupational security in the US tended to result in these immigrants distancing themselves from the native-born African-Americans. As such, conflict was drawn along “racial” lines. Certainly, current research on Polish migration to the UK (Anderson et al., 2006; Eade et al., 2007; Fox, 2012) has shown that Polish migrants are following a similar pattern of distinguishing themselves. In order to understand these processes, what is important to remember is that the gap between aspirations and opportunity is widening. Portes and Zhou (1993) argue that the emergence of an “hourglass-economy” – many highly-skilled, high-waged jobs at the top and low-skilled, low-waged jobs at the bottom – creates “segmented assimilation”. In order for second generation upward mobility of immigrant children, education has arguably become more important than ever before. These highly-skilled jobs require highly-educated workers (Perlmann and Waldinger, 1997). As such, understanding the migrants’ social class becomes even more imperative. Perlmann and Waldinger point out how children of second generation migrants who fall into an oppositional culture – effectively blocking parental aspirations for intergenerational mobility – often experience the educational symbolic violence of the “native” working classes (1997, p. 193). The question, then, is what section of the segmented assimilation category will children of Polish migrants to the UK fall into?

3.9 Educational Aspirations

As mentioned previously in the literature on educational attainment and ethnicity, some ethnic minority groups are seen to possess what has been termed an “aspirational habitus” (Baker and Brown, 2008). “Aspirations” have become a central focus of educational policy for successive UK governments in recent years. Raising “aspirations” has been proposed as a way of improving educational attainment and increasing the number of young people who continue in education and training after compulsory education. At the end of 2008, the UK Labour government announced plans to “lift the aspirations” of 2.4 million children in Britain. Specifically, they wanted to target white working class boys living in deprived neighbourhoods in Northern England. This built on a number of earlier educational policies that had aimed to increase aspirations. These included the *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All White Paper* in 2005, the *Educations and Skills White Paper* in 2005 and the *Youth Matters Green Paper on Young People* in 2005 (St Clair and Benjamin, 2011, p. 501). There were no signs of relinquishing the emphasis on educational aspirations with the election of the Coalition government in 2010. A narrative of “increasing young people’s opportunities” to help them “achieve their potential”, was central to the preceding Coalition government (2010-2015). The Coalition government’s focus was therefore on “increasing opportunities” targeted towards young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

St Clair and Benjamin state that, ‘[i]ncreasing aspirations is at the heart of educational policy, as shown by the recent *Higher Standards, better schools for all White Paper*’ (2011, p. 501). It is a widely held perception amongst politicians and policymakers that they can improve the educational outcomes for disadvantaged children by focusing on “increasing” aspirations and altering attitudes towards education and schooling. In a 2014 education committee’s hearing into the underachievement of white working class children, the Schools’ Minister David Laws told the committee that he thought a culture of low aspirations was responsible for underachievement:

It's frustrating to hear that some of those low aspirations and tolerance of failure are still around in 2013 and 2014 when they should have been extinguished many years ago ... I think that many of the problems with low attainment in school are due to factors that are outside the school gate: parental support or lack of support, parental aspirations, poverty in the home environment, poor housing, lack of experience of life (quoted in Adams, 2014).

Laws goes on to praise what has been termed the “sharp-elbowed middle class” – by dismissing concerns of their overrepresentation in “good schools” – and suggests that they possess the type of “values” that should be emulated (cited in Adams, 2014).

In a recent Department of Education research report by Thornton et al. (2014), it was acknowledged that the focus on aspirations somehow suggests that more disadvantaged groups hold low aspirations. Also, research by St Clair and Benjamin (2011) has shown that “low aspirations” are really not the issue. St Clair and Benjamin point out that the government’s focus on “increasing” aspirations tends to frame aspirations as a personal attribute and as individual motivation. They point out that the way the aspirations-debate informs policy can be broken down into three sub-categories:

1. Low aspirations lead to low achievement (defined in a variety of ways).
2. Some people from poorer backgrounds have depressed aspirations, affecting their ultimate job prospects.
3. Raising aspirations will break this cycle and lead to improved social and economic outcomes for youth from deprived backgrounds. (2011, p. 503)

However, these assumptions fail to recognise the complex nature of the inequalities that impact upon educational outcomes. The crude simplification of the aspiration-debate that informs policy, positions the “aspirations” of the middle class and its occupational hierarchy as the only acceptable approach to education. Importantly, aspirations are significantly influenced by opportunities. Aspirations in themselves cannot combat the real effects of material and cultural disadvantages.

As St Clair and Benjamin state, ‘[t]here is a reciprocal relationship between what people want and what they see as stopping them’ (2011, p. 505). Influencing factors on aspirations include family, place, school and the individual. These factors are interrelated and have a diverse impact at different times. Interestingly, an individual’s faith community has been seen as having a significant influence on aspirations. St Clair and Benjamin’s (2011) research investigated how the above listed factors that influence aspiration intersect with available resources. In particular, they looked at how economic, social and demographic circumstances impacted upon the influencing factors. Their sample included a range of different social class and ethnic backgrounds. The schools selected were in catchment areas of deprivation and the sample consisted of young people were between 12 and 13 years old.

The areas chosen were East London, Nottingham and Glasgow. St Clair and Benjamin's research found that the young people across all three: cities, social classes and ethnicities, expressed high aspirations. They also found that the resources available to the young people impacted upon the aspirations they expressed. For example, young people would speak about a particular job rather than what they wanted to be. Family resources shaped the way a child viewed and engaged with school resources as a way to pursue their aspirations (St Clair and Benjamin, 2011). Alienation can also influence young people's aspirations. When a person feels something is out of their reach, for example, they might be less likely to express it as an aspiration.

Menzies argues, 'the real challenge for disadvantaged young people is *achieving* their aspirations' (2013, p. 1, emphasis added). Disadvantaged pupils and parents often have high aspirations. However, parents from low socio-economic backgrounds often feel alienated by the culture of the school (Menzies, 2013). Parents from low socio-economic backgrounds may have had negative experiences at school themselves. What might look like a lack of commitment to their child's education, may simply be that parents from low socio-economic backgrounds do not have the capacity to provide effective support due to language difficulties or because of own lack of education (Carter-Wall and Whitfield, 2012). Bernstein (1966) argued that in order to understand disaffection in education, the relationship between the culture of the school and the family's attitudes to that culture needs to be explored.

There are different theoretical perspectives on educational aspirations. The common model sees aspirations as a driving-force for academic success in young people, both in terms of the individual and the influence of significant others. Parents, as a significant other, receive much of the attention in debates on educational success and aspirations (Strand and Winston, 2008). Research (e.g. Carter-Wall and Whitfield, 2012; Gorard et al., 2012) has shown that parental involvement in a child's education has a causal influence on their attainment. Trusty et al. (2003) found that parental involvement and aspirations were significant even when socio-economic background had been controlled for. Parental involvement in educational careers can take many forms, such as in the home through help with homework, extracurricular educational activities, school involvement, meetings with the teachers, volunteering, as well as strategic decisions on school choice. Both Menzies' (2013) and Carter-Wall and Whitfield's (2012) research have shown that the problem is not low

aspirations of parents. What is needed is interventions that seek to involve parents in a child's education by making resources available to them.

Parental expectations have also been shown to be linked to parental involvement (Goodman and Gregg, 2010). A child's perceptions of parents' educational expectations may push them to strive for better educational results. Research by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) argued that parental involvement does have an effect on a child's achievements, even when other explanatory factors had been controlled for. However, other research has shown that there is no connection between parental expectations and a child's educational performance (e.g. Englund et al., 2004). Gorard et al.'s (2012) research looked at the causal impacts of educational outcomes, aspirations, attitudes and behaviours of parents and young people. Their research found that there was an association between parents' expectations and a child's educational attainment; however, they could not assume a causal influence. They also could not find enough evidence to support a causal relationship between a child's aspirations/expectations and their educational attainment. There was, however, a causal relationship between parental involvement in a child's education and their educational attainment.

In a study investigating the association between environments, attitudes and adolescent aspirations, Marjoribanks (1998) argues that children's and parents' perception of social and cultural capital should be explored in order to understand how these forms of capital impact upon a child's academic capital. The study draws upon Bourdieu's (1984) research on the educational trajectories of individuals. Bourdieu argued that in order to understand cultural and social reproduction, one needs to examine how the habitus is produced. It is important here to understand the link between habitus and the educational trajectories aspired to, as the choice of secondary school for the participants in my own research tend to be selected with a particular trajectory for their child in mind. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984) argued that the properties that individuals possess at any given time do not entirely define them. The acquisitions of these properties are defined by the conditions that persist within their habitus. Their present position in the social space is the result of the relationship between their initial capital and their present capital. As such, their movements in the social space are subject to the forces that shape this space. It is the volume of capital that affects their possible trajectories. These trajectories are also influenced by collective events as well as individual

events – either positively or negatively. Yet, these encounters will sometimes be dependent upon the social capital that they possess (pp. 109-110). As Bourdieu states,

[i]t follows from this that position and individual trajectory are not statistically independent; all positions of arrival are not equally probable for all starting points. This implies that there is a strong correlation between social positions and the dispositions of the agents who occupy them, or, which amounts to the same thing, the trajectories which have led them to occupy them, and consequently that the modal trajectory is an integral part of the system of factors constituting the class. (The more dispersed the trajectories are—as in the *petite bourgeoisie*—the less are practices reducible to the effect of synchronically defined position.) (1984, p. 110, brackets in original).

The homogeneity of dispositions in which certain trajectories feel “natural” is in fact imposed by the average trajectory of the individual’s class origin. As such, a type of harmony exists between dispositions and aspirations (Bourdieu, 1984). Marjoribanks (1998) supports Bourdieu’s (1984) assertion that aspirations are part of the habitus. The habitus is produced by a variety of imposing structural factors or social space interactions, which can either reinforce or counteract each other – for example, an individual’s social background, family or school. Marjoribanks (1998) suggests that immediate family, school settings and an individual’s academic capital can influence an adolescent’s aspirations. The initial family background is where an individual’s academic capital is accumulated. This tends to be based on the quality and the amount of academic interaction that takes place between the parents and the child. This interaction is what can provide the child with access to the parents’ human capital.⁸ Yet, if this human capital is not supplemented by the family’s social capital, then it becomes irrelevant to the child’s educational development (p. 179).

Marjoribanks (1998) draws on research that suggests that a child’s social capital may be influenced by the parents’ aspirations for that child. In a longitudinal study from 460 families in Australia, it was found that the educational aspirations of working class non-English speaking students tended to be higher than those of the native-born Australians. As such, his research replicated a study by Taft. In this study, Taft predicated that immigrant parents’ high aspirations for their children may not be fulfilled as several barriers may come into

⁸ Human capital is the accumulation of expertise and capacities as well as social and personal attributes which are perceived as possessing economic value in the labour market (Coleman, 1988).

play, limiting their social mobility process (1976, cited in Marjoribanks, 1998, p. 192). Marjoribanks' (1998) own study found that family background and academic capital were associated with educational and occupational aspirations. Furthermore, a father's social status had a significant effect on the occupational aspirations of male adolescents, as did the cultural value of education held by parents from different social backgrounds – reflecting the possession of cultural capital held by families and their attitude towards education. To measure the cultural capital the parents possess, the study looked at their lifestyles and behaviours. The study concludes by suggesting that school outcomes are embedded within the backgrounds of students, yet contradictions may arise through gender, ethnicity and parental social status (Marjoribanks, 1998). This study is important because it illustrates how a family social background influences aspirations and perceived trajectories of children. Furthermore, it shows the high aspirations held by those of a second generation immigrant background.

Areepattamannil and Lee (2014) argue that immigrant parents' expectations and aspirations for their children's educational attainment influence their children's academic performance at school. They also argue that despite the large amount of research conducted on parental aspirations and its effect on educational attainment for the children of native-born parents (e.g. Marjoribanks, 1998; St Clair and Benjamin, 2011; Strand and Winston, 2008), there has been relatively little – or as they state 'no study to date' (Areepattamannil and Lee, 2014, p. 52) – that explores immigrant parental expectations/aspirations and their associations with educational attainment for their children. Yet, research that has looked at immigrant parents' expectations and aspirations (e.g. Fuligni and Fuligni, 2007), has shown that they tend to be higher in comparison to that of native-born parents. As such, Areepattamannil and Lee (2014) set out to investigate the association between immigrant parents' educational expectations/aspirations and their children's overall school performance. Their research surveyed the parents of 1,788 children aged between 0 to 18 years old in Canada. They explored what preparations and plans parents had in place for their children's post-secondary education. Their findings revealed that immigrant parents' educational expectations and aspirations were related to their children's school performance, finding a strong link between parents' belief in education and their children's educational attainment. However, they pointed out that future research should consider socio-economic, cultural profiles and ethnic/"racial" variations when analysing the association between immigrant parents' expectations and aspirations for their children in education.

Strand and Winston (2008) conducted research looking at educational aspirations for children in inner-city schools in the UK. Their findings highlighted the differences in educational aspirations across ethnic lines, as well as other factors that influenced the pupils' educational aspirations. One factor strongly associated with educational aspirations for the pupils was home educational aspirations. The Asian "Other" group had one of the highest scores for home educational aspirations and had significantly higher aspirations in comparison to white British pupils. Low educational aspirations of white British pupils were strongly related to a low socio-economic background as well as low home educational aspirations. Strand and Winston argue that their research shows how a young person's ethnicity is significantly associated with their level of educational aspirations. Furthermore, it demonstrated that supportive home educational aspirations can be even more important to children from low socio-economic backgrounds. It also revealed that there is a decline in aspirations for some ethnic groups – especially those living in areas of socio-economic deprivations – the longer they have been living in the UK. It was the newer immigrant groups that held high levels of educational and career aspirations and those who were more easily able to transmit such aspirations to their children. The home was key for mediating educational aspirations.

Raleigh and Kao (2010) have looked at immigrant parents' aspirations for the children's educational trajectories. By doing so, they argue that discovering the longevity of high aspirations can help indicate children's possible future upward or downward mobility. The research compares the maintenance of immigrant parents' aspirations in comparison to native-born white parents in the US. Raleigh and Kao found that larger numbers of immigrant parents maintained higher educational aspirations for their children than native-born parents across all "racial" and ethnic backgrounds – while acknowledging that socio-economic status varies across "race"/ethnicity amongst the native-born population. An important finding was that immigrant parental college aspirations for their children were significant for some "racial" and ethnic groups and not so much for others. Amongst white immigrant parents, immigrant status did not seem to affect parental college aspirations to a great extent. In fact, white immigrant parents were as optimistic of their children's educational trajectories as were white native-born parents. Once levels of acculturation had been accounted for between immigrant groups, the research found that black immigrant parents maintained higher college aspirations for their children in comparison with white

immigrants. In terms of Hispanic parents – a group which traditionally has been overrepresented in the educational underachievement category – Raleigh and Kao found that ‘immigrant Hispanic parents have almost three times the odds of having consistently high aspirations compared to U.S.-born Hispanic parents’ (2010, p. 1096). The finding that immigrant parents are more likely to hold higher educational aspirations for their children over longer periods of time in comparison to native-born parents, is noteworthy, considering that the immigrants in the study tended to have lower levels of education, as well as belonging to a lower socio-economic status group in comparison to the native-born white parents. Furthermore, the research discovered that when a language other than English is spoken in the home – across all immigrant “racial” and ethnic groups – these parents are more than twice as likely to maintain high college aspirations for their children. It is interesting to see whether Raleigh and Kao’s (2010) findings mentioned above would also hold for other contexts than the US such as for white immigrant Polish parents in the UK.

3.10 Educational Aspirations and Social Capital

Khattab (2003) argues that educational aspirations are highly associated with social capital, particularly for minority students. Drawing on Sewell and Shah (1968), Khattab (2003) argues that the expectations and norms of significant “others” that a pupil comes into contact with can affect the future aspirations of these pupils. The effects of significant “others” on minority students needs to be understood within the existing social structure, to understand how they might navigate their values and strategies against a backdrop of economic and social inequality. Strong family ties must exist in order for parents’ expectations and values to be transferred to their children. It is these ties that generate family social capital (Marjoribanks, 1998). Schneider and Stevenson’s (1999) research found that students who were from families with strong social capital, between parents and children, held stronger educational aspirations. Social capital acted as a means for students to channel their parents’ values of the education system. Khattab (2003) looked at the educational aspirations of Palestinian students in Israel amongst children between 9th and 11th grade. He found that Palestinian adolescents held strong educational aspirations and that significant “others” influenced students’ aspirations, yet parents’ educational expectations were the most significant factor for adolescents’ aspirations. Parental involvement in education was also strongly related to students’ aspirations. Palestinian students in Israel face many structural

obstacles that can lead to lower aspirations, argues Khattab (2003). His research found that social capital as well as socio-economic capital have a significant influence on students' aspirations. Social capital acts as a means of transmitting parental values and educational expectations to children. López et al. (2001) have also argued that in order to analyse parental involvement, one needs to consider how parental involvement varies across groups. Migrant families in particular face economic and structural barriers. López et al.'s research found that before parents could play a meaningful part in their children's education, they needed to address the family's social and economic needs.

Khattab (2003) does not outline what he means by social capital apart from family ties and he also does not use or mention Bourdieu in his research. Perna and Titus (2005), however, do use a Bourdieusian framework of social capital, which they frame as parental involvement in their children's college enrolment. Based on data from the U.S Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NELS), Perna and Titus investigate the relationship between parental involvement and a student's degree of social capital. They also investigate how the relationship between different types of parental involvement influences college enrolment and the association between the type of social network at the school attended and student college enrolment. Their conceptual framework recognises the other forms of capital (economic, cultural and human) the students possess and the relationship between the structural characteristics of the school. The analysis also controlled for individual variables of "race", ethnicity and gender. They argue, like Khattab (2003), that social capital is dependent upon the volume of economic and cultural capital that individuals possess. Their research found that even when controlling for measures of economic, cultural and human capital, parental involvement as a form of social capital encouraged college enrolment. This interaction conveyed the norms and values of pursuing education from the parent to the child. The students' likelihood of college enrolment was also increased when the students' peer group had further education plans (Perna and Titus, 2005).

According to Lin (2001), parental involvement as a form of social capital enables students to access resources and facilities in pursuit of their education. Lin (2001) claims that network closure is not always required for the dominant classes to maintain and reproduce their position, as individuals could also access resources via "weak ties". For Lin, social capital is the processes through which individuals access resources that are embedded in social networks. According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital is resources associated with

networks. These may be shared acquaintances or membership of a group, for example. Social networks can also be socially instituted; these networks can, for example, be maintained and reinforced through a set of institutioning acts. It is important to remember that Bourdieu's capitals are interrelated and often they sustain each other. In the case of social membership of a group, the habitus will bestow symbolic capital. As such, material and symbolic exchanges occur in social networks. The size of a network is also important for mobilising economic, cultural and symbolic capital. As social capital is based on mutual recognition, social capital becomes a means of distinction between different groups and classes. These distinctions then define what forms and uses of capitals are recognised as legitimate (cited in Siisiäinen, 2000).

3.11 Bourdieu's Theoretical Propositions in Migration and Education Research

Bourdieu's concept of habitus is central to the present investigation into Polish migrant parents' school choice for their children in the UK. It is important to understand the origin of the concept of habitus, as well as the other relational concepts that will be drawn upon in this thesis – Bourdieu's theoretical concepts of fields and capitals. In *The Work of Pierre Bourdieu*, Derek Robbins argues that Bourdieu was interested in studying Algeria as it provided an example 'of a society in transition' (1991, p. 14). Many of Bourdieu's early intellectual developments derive from the observations made within Algeria, and subsequently the observations of Algerian migrants' assimilation into French society. For Bourdieu, human agency creates internal structures for appropriate situations. However, when everyday circumstances change so too does the attitude of the individual (Robbins, 1991). Robbins (1991) argues that Bourdieu's interests in how different ways of life operated in a society undergoing transition was to a certain extent a consequence of the observations he made of Algerians' adoption of capitalism. Taking this into consideration, it becomes important to understand how and in what ways Polish migrants experience their "exporting" nation state's socio-economic and political systems (past and present), and the influences these have on their practices in Britain today.

During the Algeria field work, Bourdieu was exploring the social organisation of the Kabyle tribe. He tended to assume that the prior structure of culture was somehow internalised in the frame of thinking of the people who migrated or moved from one societal structure to

another within Algeria, while he observed a process of destruction of their traditional social values as they adapted to a “modernised” society and moved from rural areas to the town. It is here important to note that Bourdieu was trained in philosophy. He had not been formally educated as a sociologist or an anthropologist (Robbins, 2002). Robbins (2002) argues that in *Sociologie de L'Algerie* (Bourdieu, 1958), a tension between philosophy and sociology had become evident. Bourdieu had sought to produce a descriptive phenomenology of acculturation. He had become interested in phenomenology after reading Merleau-Ponty and Husserl (Robbins, 2002). Looking at the bibliography of *Sociologie de L'Algerie* – Bourdieu’s (1958) first book and, in a way, his early encounter with sociology – we find that Bourdieu drew on many of the American acculturation theorists and anthropologists, such as Herskovits (1938), Mead (1955) and Siegel (1955).

It is worth noting briefly here what is meant by “acculturation”, particularly as the literature that has looked at second generation migrants’ educational performance has widely drawn on “assimilation”. Gordon argued that the meanings of acculturation and assimilation sometimes overlap. He states that “[s]ociologists are more likely to use “assimilation”; anthropologists have favoured “acculturation” (1964, p. 61, inverted commas in original). In the 1930s, the Social Science Research Council in the US appointed a sub-committee on acculturation. This included Melville, Linton and Herskovits. In 1936, they provided a definition of acculturation. According to them, acculturation ‘comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups’ (Redfield et al., 1936, p. 149). In 1930, Robert E. Park produced a definition of assimilation: ‘the name given to the process or processes by which peoples of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain a national existence’ (1930, p. 281). In other words, the concepts of “acculturation” and “assimilation” both refer to the changes in culture which may occur as a result of migration and the everyday encounters of migrants with host society members. There is no doubting that the definitions of these two concepts have altered over the years. However, I have outlined these early definitions as the work that Bourdieu was drawing on in his research in Algeria would have been influenced by these

classifications (for more up to date definitions, see e.g. Gans, 2007).⁹ One of the important questions that was raised by acculturation theorists between 1930-1960 (e.g. Foster, 1960; Linton, 1940), was the question of dominance. Acculturation theorists were interested in the ways in which one culture might retain dominance over another culture and the resulting effects of such dominance, particularly in the direction of acculturation. When looking at group level acculturation, political dominance suggests that one group is placed in a “superior” position – as such making their culture the legitimate and recognised one. Dohrenwend and Smith (1962) argue that the conditions of administration of structural activities allow one culture to impose itself upon another. This is important when thinking about the origins of Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic violence – the relationship between the dominant and the dominated. Robbins (2008), however, argues that the tendency to represent Bourdieu as a post-colonial thinker analysing the origins of symbolic violence as represented by the French colonial forces in Algeria, tends to misrepresent Bourdieu’s work. As Robbins (2008) states, ‘[m]ethodologically Bourdieu’s intension was to observe phenomenologically the process of acculturation of Algerian tribes-people from traditional to modern social organisation, from rural to urban living’ (p. 60). Robbins suggests that Bourdieu’s intention was to measure a temporal cultural adaptation and the process of adjustment to a new state of the tribal people living in Algeria.

However, it is again important to point out here that Bourdieu’s work was not dualistic. His attempt to overcome his classification as a post-structuralist – that of someone who saw agents operating within structures – was undertaken through his analysis of his native home region Béarn. Bourdieu sought to explore the process of uprooting of his peasant culture, as it offered a case study of social disintegration in another location in addition to that of Algeria (Yacine, 2004). This analysis attempted to move away from the dualistic division between colonial and the colonised, and rather towards analysing the fleeting and shifting boundaries between the “insider” and the “outsider” (Robbins, 2008, p. 63). Bourdieu recognised that it

⁹ The two concepts of “assimilation” and “acculturation” have slightly different connotations according to more recent definitions. Whereas “assimilation” is a process whereby migrants’ home culture is more or less mitigated – or to some extent even “lost” – as migrants absorb the main cultural aspects of the host society which they have migrated to, “acculturation” is perceived to be less detrimental for migrants’ home culture as this process entails that they can still retain their central traditions and customs while simultaneously absorbing the host society’s culture (Gans, 2007).

was not possible to reduce all agents to carriers of objective structure. Sociologists needed to raise questions about social conditions that produce economic dispositions of agents. As such, the social disintegration he observed in Algeria could not be reduced to the mere process of acculturation (Yacine, 2004, p. 469). Robbins (2008) also argues that Bourdieu was in fact conscious of the way in which his concept of habitus was seen to derive from a framework of dualistic acculturation theory. The concept of habitus was meant to explain the ongoing relationalism in which agents were active in shaping their own life chances, rather than being a static concept used to explain the difference in educational performance between the working classes and the higher classes.

Bourdieu's Algerian work describes a process of uprooting for the Kabyle caused by colonialism and a fight for national liberation. The uprooting process has commonly been associated with the process of migration and displacement, particularly in Oscar Handlin's (1951) work: *The Uprooted*, which described the alienation and adjustment experienced by European immigrants who had emigrated to the US during the Great Transatlantic Wave of Migration. The work had followed on from Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918-1920) *The Polish Peasant In Europe And America*. Silverstein (2004) argues that 'Bourdieu and Sayad's work on Kabyle displacement and societal disintegration in this way represents but one moment in a longer history of dominance of arboreal metaphors in social theory' (p. 555). Silverstein (2004) points out that the Kabyle social and economic practise as described by Bourdieu and Sayad (1964) tends to offer an example of how the habitus facilitates social reproduction in which a process of misrecognition occurred as their practices are re-enacted as the norm. Yet, Bourdieu argued that the habitus continuously responds to new experiences and, as such, has the ability to adjust to new conditions – quite contrary to some later interpretations of habitus. The Kabyle offered a case study of a social group with the inclination towards endless social reproduction. However, it was shown how the Kabyles themselves responded to the changing world in which they were rooted and, furthermore, how their habitus transformed because of this change and because of the consecutive flows of return migrants to the village. As Silverstein states, this return migration 'eventually transform[ed] the bou niya into homo economicus' (2004, p. 559). Bourdieu's description of the uprooting process of the Kabyles' traditional social structure helped debunk the language of "uprootedness" which was commonly being deployed in right-wing rhetoric to defend the national culture of the French capitalist and colonial system during the time of Bourdieu's fieldwork (Silverstein, 2004, p. 560).

3.11.1 Habitus

The concept of habitus – perhaps in particular – can be read as an attempt on Bourdieu’s part to enable a sociological account that facilitates, in effect, our understanding of the complex and multifaceted interplay between actors and structures. That is, habitus can be interpreted as learned dispositions that actors acquire whilst growing up, or those practices and cultural competences that give actors a sense of the position which they occupy in social space. As Wacquant states: ‘habitus consists of a set of historical relations “deposited” within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perceptions, appreciation, and action’ (1992, p. 16, inverted commas in original). Although habitus is a learned process, the majority of people tend most of the time to perceive themselves and their own social world and circles as the “natural order of things”, or something that is taken more or less for granted (cited in Jenkins, 2002). This is part of an adjustment-process to the realities and the reproduction of their social position that is instilled into variously situated actors. Bourdieu developed the concept in order to provide an understanding of practices. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argued that the concept of habitus was developed out of the necessity to account for practices by not reducing them to an objective or subjective action. Actions are neither a ‘mechanical reaction “without an agent” ...[or] the deliberate pursuit of a conscious intention’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 121, inverted commas in original). Essentially, habitus is the externalisation of external structures, including past experiences.

Morawska (2001) looks at the reciprocal influence of societal structures and human agents in informing everyday social practices. Using a structuration model, she sets out to explain the cause and effect of post-communist income-seeking Polish migration to America. She argues that these Poles have a “cultural kit” that they use to engage with their environment. Their schemas and resources are actualised through interaction with different social networks and institutions. These cultural schemas are time and place-specific. However, they are transportable and often applied to different and new situations. When people migrate, they move between different environments and encounter new circumstances. The agents’ power derives from their socio-cultural resources, yet their economic resources and socio-cultural capitals transform over time in different socio-demographic environments. In Morawska’s case study of Polish migration to the West, she argues that these migrants possess an internal orientation and set of practices that are part of what she names the ‘*homo sovieticus* syndrome’ (2001, p. 55, emphasis in original). According to Morawska, this is

where migrants from Poland draw upon their accustomed methods and coping strategies, which are inhabited as a way to navigate themselves through new systems. Although she does not directly refer to Bourdieu's habitus, what Morawska (2001) is essentially describing is a migrant's habitus. Morawska acknowledges that these structural dispositions, or as she calls them "cultural schemas and resources", are historically embedded within the migrants' collective consciousness. As Bourdieu states:

The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms. This system of dispositions – a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices, an internal law through which the law of external necessities, irreducible to immediate constraints, is constantly exerted – is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism sees in social practices without being able to account for it; and also of the regulated transformations that cannot be explained either by the extrinsic, instantaneous determinisms of mechanistic sociology or by the purely internal but equally instantaneous determination of spontaneist subjectivism. (1990, p. 54, emphasis and inverted commas in original)

Morawska (2001) argues that strategies acquired in a period of Soviet communist rule in Poland are drawn upon by the Poles in her case study in their interaction with the informal economy. Their attitudes towards official structures also guide their migration strategies, in which Poles regularly found ways around visa restrictions. In 1996, the US government increased penalties for visitors who had overstayed their visas, meaning migrants would face a ten-year exclusion period of re-entry. Morawska (2001) points out how Polish migrants got around this rule by increasing their back-and-forth travels. Poles, Morawska argues, learnt how to "beat-the-system" finding ways around restrictions during communist rule. Similar migration strategies were found with Polish migration to the UK *before* the implementation of the European Union's eastward enlargement in 2004 (Anderson et al., 2006, p. 2). Of the 345,000 A8 migrants who had registered their employment under a Worker Registration Scheme during the time period between May 2004 and December 2005, '[o]fficials estimated that up to 30 per cent had been in the UK prior to 1 May 2004' (cited in Anderson et al., 2006, p. 2). Those migrants that had been in the UK preceding EU enlargement would often use enabling resources as a way of maintaining their stay in Britain.

These could include working as self-employed, enrolling on a course to obtain a student visa, or simply staying as an illegal resident (Anderson et al., 2006, p. 2).

Morawska (2001) also suggests that social actors use similar strategies in micro-level structures; through networks they accumulate knowledge about the destination countries and possible assistance. Crucially, Morawska argues that migration is a structuration process, because it is the transformation in political and economic structures that encourages and facilitates migration patterns. Pickel (2004) has also talked about the concept of a national habitus, or what he refers to as *homo nationis*. This *homo nationis* is historically specific to a person who is raised under a particular cultural, political and economic context – that of their nation-state. Despite the processes of globalisation, a national habitus has remained – although it is acknowledged that it may weaken over time. This nationalisation of culture and habitus helps to maintain the “social order” in a society. This is particularly so when a country has a sudden, abrupt change of economic and political systems, such as with the collapse of communism. The psychosocial cultural aspects of a nation’s collective habitus take some time to “catch up” with the socio-structural change.

Galasiński and Galasińska (2007) have researched post-communist Polish migration to the UK, following the migrants’ trajectories for ten years. They argue that these migrants’ narratives are embedded in a communist discourse of labour and state. In particular, they focus on how these migrants adjust to their new life in the UK. Galasiński and Galasińska (2007) talk about the “Polish mentality”. In so doing, they drew on research by Koralewicz and Ziółkowski (2003)¹⁰ who first introduced the term “Polish mentality” into research in 1988 after they conducted socio-psychological surveys on Poles. Galasiński and Galasińska (2007) replicated Koralewicz and Ziółkowski’s investigation in 1994 and 1998 to allow for the possible changes in attitude since the post-communist transformation in Poland. They identified a mentality using Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. The dimensions of the “Polish mentality” are:

¹⁰ It was not possible to quote directly from Koralewicz and Ziółkowski’s (2003) research, as this is only available in Polish. For the original research, however, see: Koralewicz, J. and Ziółkowski, M. (2003) *Mentalność Polaków. Sposoby myślenia o polityce, gospodarce i Śyciu społecznym 1988-2000*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR.

Dimension A: ‘passive-productive-anti-individualistic’ – a typical hero of socialist work, one who works hard within the externally set patterns, but shows no initiative or creativity. Dimension B: ‘protective-conservative-demanding’ – unwanted but ‘real’ inhabitant of communism ... Dimension C: ‘entrepreneurial-individualistic’, the ideal member of a civil society. (Galasiński and Galasińska, 2007, pp. 49-50, inverted commas in original)

Galasiński and Galasińska (2007) argue that these different dimensions are linked to social class and/or education. The first two dimensions (A and B) are characteristic of working class Poles with low education, while the third dimension (C) is typically found within the Polish middle classes. Similar to Morawska’s ‘*homo sovieticus* syndrome’ (2001, p. 55, emphasis in original) – which is a Soviet-style schema in which Poles use ‘beat-the-system/bend-the-law practices’ (p. 63) – Galasiński and Galasińska (2007) introduce the Polish verb *złatwić* which translates to “arrange for” (p. 55). This notion was continually mentioned during the interviews Galasiński and Galasińska conducted with Polish migrants. According to Galasiński and Galasińska, when these migrants were unable to achieve something in an official way because either they were failed by the system, or it was unavailable to them, they simply resorted to an informal way of getting things done, often through networks and bribery. The migrants thereby drew on the practices conditioned into them under state socialism in Poland, as mentioned by Wedel (1986). Galasiński and Galasińska (2007) were most surprised that ten years after the collapse of communism, a dramatic system transformation in Poland had not altered significantly the dimensions of the “Polish mentality” as initially coined by Koralewicz and Ziółkowski. Not only had it not altered, but it remained central to assessing and assimilating into a new life abroad. Galasiński and Galasińska referred to their participants as being ‘lost in communism’ (2007, p. 60).

As Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is central to my case of Polish migrant parents’ school choices, it is important to acknowledge criticisms of the concept, if only to rebuke them. Jenkins (2002) suggests that Bourdieu paints a deterministic picture by leaning too heavily towards the structural features and constraints of the habitus at the expense of also accounting adequately for actors’ capability to, on some occasions, step out of their “pre-determined” life path as suggested by their habitus. With the supposed overreliance on structures as a causal mechanism for individuals’ actions, Bourdieu does not manage, in Jenkins’ assessment, to explain any influence from the micro-level – or individuals’ actions

– which is independent of the “shackles” of the macro-level structures that are masquerading in the form of people’s habitus. In Bourdieu’s scheme of things, habitus is interpreted as a product of history that ‘produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history’ (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 54). This seemingly repetitive and almost uniform notion of history, in Jenkins’ (2002) words, is facilitated by the habitus as the foundation of most, if not all, human interaction. For Jenkins, this creates a problem insofar as an actor’s many and different reasons for performing a certain action – as, for example, outlined and justified by the particular actor during the course of a qualitative interview – cannot be sufficiently acknowledged since his or her habitus, in the last instance, constitutes the “true” explanation or motivational factor behind the performed action(s). On this basis, Jenkins sees Bourdieu’s habitus as ‘a machine for the suppression of history ... with an eternal ethnographic present that is indistinguishable from the past and prefigures the future ... a world where behaviour has its causes, but actors are not allowed their reasons’ (Jenkins, 2002, p. 97).

However, Jenkins’ criticism of Bourdieu can itself be criticised on the grounds that he seems to misinterpret Bourdieu in some significant respects. In particular, Jenkins’ accusation that Bourdieu applies the concept of habitus in a deterministic manner – which does not give actors any room for manoeuvre – should be scrutinised in more careful detail. John Preston asserts that critiques of Bourdieu’s supposed overreliance on structures in his formation of habitus might be found guilty of ‘an exaggeration of Bourdieu’s position which does make many references to agency’ (2007, pp. 14-15). Indeed, Bourdieu was aware of the potential criticism that could be levelled against his concept of habitus and emphasised that he intended the concept to be operationalised as a *generative* structure with ‘infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production’ (1990: 55). Read in this fashion, Benson and O’Reilly (2009) assert that the concept of habitus, while placing certain constraints on actors, also opens up for the possibility that actors are capable of invention and improvisation within these constraints.

Moreover, despite his relatively harsh criticism, even Jenkins (2002) recognises some of the significant contributions of Bourdieu’s theories, including that of habitus. These are sociological contributions that attracted me to Bourdieu’s theories in the first place and which influenced my decision to apply his theories in the context of this thesis. Jenkins

admits, for instance, that he finds Bourdieu's theories 'enormously good to think with' (Jenkins, 2002, p. 11) – meaning that his work 'invites, even demands, argument and reflection' (*ibid.*). In this respect, the theory of habitus is a useful analytical tool that facilitates an exploration of the way in which socio-economic inequalities are reproduced through the "thoughtlessness" of habits and daily routines, enabling people to act without having to think and reflect on every move that they make. Furthermore, the concept of habitus makes an important contribution by suggesting that culture is not only residing "in the minds" of people, but also materialised and embodied through the everyday practices that people perform in accordance with their habitus (Jenkins, 2002). I suggest that Bourdieu's concept of habitus is particularly useful in understanding migration, and especially Polish migrants who have experienced a transition from one societal structure to another with the collapse of communism – resembling Bourdieu's (1958) Algerian case study.

3.11.2 Social Reproduction

Bourdieu explored a wide range of themes in the course of his intellectual life. However, it is for education that his work first came to the attention of British scholars, in particular for two books; *Les Héritiers* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964) and *La Reproduction* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970) (Grenfell and James, 1998, p. 1). Within British educational research, Bourdieu's theoretical propositions were applied to research that look at the impact of educational reforms and the reproduction of social inequalities. It is often his concept of cultural capital which has been utilised to illustrate how middle class and/or upper class groups maintain and reproduce their privileged positions within the education system. This is especially so with the increasing marketisation of education and the growth of "choice"-based policies (Ball, 2003; Bennett et al., 2009; Butler and Robson, 2003; Reay, 1998).

In understanding the increasing marketisation of education and the impact of neo-liberal discourse upon strategies of social reproduction, as performed through education practices, it is important to look at what Bourdieu said about the changes to education and its impact upon strategies of reproduction. Bourdieu and Boltanski (1978) argued that changes in social structures influenced the changes in demands for education, particularly emphasising how the changes in the structure of social classes impacted upon the structure of the education system. In strategies of reproduction, those from higher socio-economic backgrounds

safeguard, maintain and improve their economic, cultural and social capital. Hence, when capital reproduction increases in demand, such as in the educational market when technical and educational qualifications become increasingly used in the job market, the structure of class relations becomes more blurred. As such, those with the most economic capital can transform the means of reproduction, moving the goalposts in order to secure the education system as a means of privileged social reproduction.

As outlined previously, education became more marketised in Britain during the 1980s after years of structural changes in the labour market with de-industrialisation and the de-skilling of traditional working class employment. The decline of traditional working class jobs has impacted upon the cultural and economic reproduction of the working classes. The general restructuring of the labour market and development of service sector work has resulted in the expansion of low-paid, part-time employment with little trade union rights (Skeggs, 2004). As Sassen (1988) points out, the restructuring of the economy has resulted in a split in the labour market in which the middle and the upper classes were employed in well-paid, secure jobs, whilst the children of the traditional working classes experienced downward mobility. Over an increasing number of years, we have also witnessed the casualisation and de-valuation of traditional middle class jobs, such as those in the health service and the teaching professions (Skeggs, 2004). This has coincided with the intensification of parental choice rights for the schooling of their children.

Bourdieu and Boltanski (1978) argued that with the restructuring of the economic field, economic relations become increasingly bureaucratised, resulting in de-personalisation and rationalisation of education and training. The restructuring of the economic field also changes the mode of operation of capital, which in turn changes the relations between the economic field and educational institutions, for example. Bourdieu and Boltanski argue that changes in the economic field influenced the changes in the mode of reproduction, whereas transmission of social positions was once directly transmitted from person to person – for example the power passed from father to son in an elite family. This reproduction has now become subject to an independent agency, such as education and schooling in which individuals are subject to the broader education market. This new mode of reproduction lessens the influence of the role of the family in the transmission of social positions and, as such, new strategies and methods of influence are sought to ensure that the education system continues and maintains a family's rule and position. As reproduction is “left” to the hands

of the education system, it can never be guaranteed. In order to secure or maintain one's privileged social position, the family needs to reproduce cultural capital as the legitimate capital recognised by the education system:

The victims of this blind instrument of random reproduction can oppose it either by *compensatory* strategies of an individual kind (like the utilisation of social capital, to make good the deficiencies of educational capital) or by collective strategies which are aimed (like the revolt against examinations and qualifications) at the class itself, through threatening the mechanisms capable of reproducing it. But the statistical mode of reproduction would inevitably lead to a redistribution of chances in each generation if it were not able to rely on the effects of another form of direct transmission, from family to children, but one that is hidden and ignored by the laws of inheritance, namely the transmission of cultural capital. (Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1978, p. 206, emphasis and brackets in original)

Economic capital can also be converted into certified cultural capital. Bourdieu and Boltanski (1978) argue that the transmission of embodied cultural capital in securing educational qualifications becomes imperative for those who come from class fractions with insufficient economic and social capital. Reproduction of class fractions is achieved through their children. Upper and middle classes perceive the predicted trajectory of reproduction through the assessment of current and future social structures by evaluating their chances of reproduction and alternating their strategies in order to maintain or elevate their social class position:

The choices made with regard to the education of their children (and in particular the choice of a profession) involve speculation which is very similar to the management of a share portfolio, and as a *long-term* speculation is one which expresses all the hopes and estimates of the future of the class. The educational strategies of the threatened categories are only one of many manifestations of the demoralisation of these classes (Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1978, p. 214, emphasis and brackets in original).

Arguably, middle class families in contemporary Britain exemplify this “threatened category”. As Ball (2003; 2006) points out, the risk and uncertainties of middle class social reproduction are intensified by the market. Bourdieu and Boltanski (1978) argued that the education market can result in “random reproduction”. It is this openness that results in middle class families being more strategic in their educational planning. School choice is just one of the areas in which the middle classes move away from an old collective welfare discourse and into the ontology of the market (Ball, 2006, p. 266). Parental choice means

that the middle class family is caught up in a vicious web of choice, calculation and risk in order to secure their own social reproduction. As Ball states, '[i]n the education market you can never know enough but often know too much' (2006, p. 267). Part of the middle class risk calculation when choosing schools is to gather as much information as possible via the use of market indicators such as league tables, Ofsted-reports, attending open days, Internet fora and word of mouth. Although as Ball and Vincent (1998) acknowledge, middle class parents are often suspicious of "hot" knowledge such as word of mouth. There is also some distrust by the educated middle classes towards official information on a school's performance. As such, the middle classes are caught up in a vicious circle of distrust and self-interest in which they navigate between official information and "hot" knowledge, continuously verifying and checking its "accuracy". Ball points out that 'there is currently a kind of moral panic around schooling and school choice, particularly in metropolitan settings' (2006, p. 266).

3.12 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature and current as well as past research on several issues that needed to be understood and taken into consideration in order to contextualise my own research project. Firstly, it contextualised the education market, internationality as well as nationally. The increasing marketisation of British education and the historical implementation of school choice policies were outlined. This was embedded within the wider global neo-liberal imperative in which "choice" and the "logic" of consumption and parental rights have been the driving force for the expansion of choice-based policies in education, both nationally and internationally. Through the examples of the USA, New Zealand and Sweden, we saw how global ideas were modified through local realities. What is clear is that in all examples of countries that have implemented school choice-based policies, "winners" and "losers" have been created in the educational field. The middle classes have used their market advantage in new educational initiatives and choice, whilst the working classes and ethnic minority students from disadvantaged backgrounds have been disproportionately affected, tending to stay in local schools labelled "bad" and those that lost revenue due to the depletion of student numbers. Faith schools in Britain have then been inserted into this competitive system of schooling and values of competition and strategic action. Illustrating how the competitive schooling system produces new strategies

in the educational field in which Roman Catholic faith schools became highly esteemed in the eyes of some middle class parents (despite their lack of religious devotion), these middle class parents become “desperate” to secure their children a place at a “good” school as evaluated by market indicators. Following this, the chapter presented an outline of the current situation within both research field sites – North London and Nottinghamshire. These sites were situated within broader considerations of economic restructuring, gentrification and local level socio-demographics, as well as the local education market.

Second, the chapter provided overview of ethnicity and education attainment in Britain through a breakdown of GCSE results across different ethnic groups. However, the complexity of the intersection of class, gender and ethnicity was highlighted and the need to interpret official statistics carefully was stressed. Wider literature on second generation migration and educational attainment as well as parental aspirations illustrated the multifaceted ways that social class affects educational attainment. It was shown how British Chinese second generation migrants achieve high educational success, contradicting traditional assumptions about socio-economic status and educational achievement and, secondly, how this led to “positive stereotyping”, which could itself be considered racist. The literature on assimilation of first and second generation migrants was outlined in order to exemplify the socio-economic, socio-cultural and political process of assimilation and possibly social mobility that have historically occurred. “Aspirations” were also contextualised within the current political rhetoric in which “raising aspirations” has been promoted as a solution to “unsuccessful” educational trajectories. It was shown that working class parents as well as ethnic minority and migrant parents have high aspirations; however, real structural conditions impact their pursuit of these aspirations.

Lastly, the chapter summarised the theoretical framework that this thesis draws upon and the influence of Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts in inspiring the proposal to research the particular issues that have been of main concern. The origin of the development of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, and the similar situation and condition to my own case study of the assimilation of the Kabyle in Algeria to new socio-economic and socio-cultural environments as their society went through a process of transition, was argued. Education and, in particular, school choice was explained as a method of social reproduction. Class as located within an education market shows how particular educational trajectories of the middle classes became “threatened”. Class struggle through the education market was

understood as competition and exclusion. The education marketplace becomes even more important as a way to ensure the social reproduction of middle class children, as the traditional modes of family generational reproduction has weakened over time as argued by Bourdieu and Boltanski (1978).

Chapter 4

Methodology

In this chapter, I will describe the link between theory and research and the choice of a qualitative methodology and semi-structured interviews that were used to collect the data. The experience of interviewing will be discussed. The use of purposive sampling and the sample population will be outlined. I will illustrate the case study research strategy used and the research sites that were selected. The process of analysis and the coding frame developed will be summarised. I will consider the importance of being reflexive about my research, the impact of my values and potential biases and the implications for the knowledge I generated. Lastly, I will review the ethical considerations being made for this research.

4.1 Theory-Practice Relationship

Burgess (1982) argues that research is a social process rather than a set of stages you engage in. In this process, it is important to understand how theory can entwine with your fieldwork. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that my subscription to a Bourdieusian framework in educational research interplayed with, firstly, my selection of the research problem and, secondly, the methods that I used to investigate it. It was my interest in Bourdieu's work and particularly his concept of capitals that formulated the problem I sought to investigate and, indeed, inspired me to write a proposal in the first place for a PhD. Thus, I was interested in exploring how Polish migrant parents' educational and cultural capital as internalised from the external societal structures – both historical and present – influenced their interaction with the British educational system, in particular with regards to their children.

My field research had a flexible design and took a “retroductive approach” (Burgess, 1982, p. 210). I was interested in the interplay between the theory and data and prior observations were accounted for by theory, which, in turn, influenced a future approach to the data collection. A retroductive strategy involves revealing the structures and mechanisms which produce the empirical issue under investigation. Retroductive reasoning entails making a hypothesis that might explain the observed phenomena and then observing the phenomenon

to find an explanation, allowing for the production of new ideas. In my case, Bourdieu's theoretical assumptions were drawn on as a possible exploratory frame for the phenomena under investigation. Robbins (1998) argues that Bourdieu's philosophical training and his prior fieldwork experience, which appropriated social anthropology, underline his methodological approach to research. Bourdieu had been influenced by Bachelard and the "epistemological break". As such, Bourdieu took a philosophical approach towards educational research in which he questioned the everyday assumptions about educational practices. Bourdieu sought to move away from the ontological priority of structure and agent and towards a relational understanding of society. For him, the rigidity of the oppositional concepts of "structure" and "agent" that had previously influenced sociology, did not capture the full dynamics – including the many blurred and interchanging positions in-between the two extremes of "structure" and "agents" – as they are played out in everyday life. The focus on structure and agents in sociology is often a response to the competition between different fields, such as the media and politicians, to produce an understanding of the social world. Bourdieu is critical of both holism and methodological individualism. Through his concept of habitus and fields we can see evidence of his relational perspective. Of particular importance are the historical relations that exist in both habitus and capitals (Wacquant, 1992, p. 15-19). Robbins (1998) also supports the argument that Bourdieu was not on either side of the structure/agency divide, but rather argued that social and cultural reproduction was produced through the mutual relations of structures and agency. Bourdieu was interesting in structuring structures. Robbins traces this back from Kantian epistemology. Bourdieu both saw "reality" as constructed by the social consensus of a society, whilst advocating that a form of knowledge is not always reduced to its social function in a society. Bourdieu (1973) was critical of "methodological fetishism" in which the techniques of analysis and obsession with empirical indicators obscured a lack of theoretical vision by some researchers. Gross states that

[t]he most critical and liberating thing to be said about methodology is that it is a tool. Therefore, it should suit the task at hand. Sometimes we need a hammer, and sometimes we need a screwdriver. Flexibility and an open-ended, somewhat skeptical attitude toward methodological absolutism serve the scholar well. Unfortunately, methodology often seems to become a trap instead. People become fixated on the virtues of a specific method and can no longer see that it does not work well for all purposes. Methodological orthodoxies develop, and orthodoxy is usually lethal to productive inquiry. (2009, p. 107)

Wacquant (1992) points out that such a position is a result of Bourdieu's self-taught anthropological training in Algeria. It was his experience in the field that convinced him that data production was ultimately entangled with theoretical constructions. As such, he was critical of "methodological absolutism" (p. 29).

4.2 Methodology and Methods

A qualitative research strategy was used. Qualitative interviewing was my choice of method for data collection. Like Silverman (1993), I agree that researchers should be careful in their attempts to specify the exact nature of a qualitative research approach. For example, Bryman (2008) tells us that definition of qualitative research is particularly problematic when it comes to the relationship between the research itself and theory. Standard definitions of qualitative research inform us that theory does not precede the investigation, and that it is usually a quantitative research strategy that is driven by theoretical issues (p. 369). Silverman argues that such descriptions of qualitative research are 'out of tune with the greater sophistication of contemporary field research design, born out of accumulated knowledge of interaction and greater concern with issues of reliability and validity' (1993, p. 24). As I discussed above, my research strategy took a "retroductive approach" (Burgess, 1982, p. 210) in which I acknowledge that deeper social structures are responsible for the events I observe in my research.

Qualitative interviews were, as stated above, the method I employed to collect the data. As also outlined in the discussion of my research sites in section 4.6, the majority of the interviews were conducted in the Polish Saturday schools. Some interviews were conducted in the participants' homes. For my semi-structured interviews, I had a series of questions that formed an interview guide (see Appendix 1). The questions were general and a frame of reference. They were simply to guide me during the interviews itself. I did not follow these questions in a linear process, but instead concentrated on the response of my interviewees – in which responses frequently intersected with other topics listed on the guide. During that process, I prompted and probed the interviewees where I felt there were significant replies in line with the interview schedule. This enabled a flexible interview process and meant the emphasis on the understanding of issues and events was placed on the interviewees. The semi-structured interviews, whilst allowing for flexibility, also provided structure to the

interviews. This was particularly valuable when conducting interviews in two different research sites. It ensured some comparability across the two different sites. All interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed verbatim. Recording the interviews allowed me to concentrate on not just what the participants were saying, but how they were saying it. This assisted with prompting, probing and follow-up questioning (Bryman, 2008). I wanted to distance myself from “abstract empiricism” (see Mills, 1959). This allowed the participants to speak at length (see Appendix 6 and Appendix 7 for samples of interviews). As such, my interviews were conducted with a loose collection of themes on the topics I wanted to cover. A benefit of giving the interviewees some leeway in the interview process was the avoidance of a binary social arrangement between interviewer-interviewee. This allowed the interviewees to “ramble” in order to generate depth and rich data in their accounts (Measor, 1985).

4.3 Interview Sample

In order to identify participants for my project, I used purposive sampling (Carter and Little, 2007). Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling, which means that my sample is not representative of a population. It is a selective form of sampling in which sample cases are selected in order to ensure that the sample is relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2008). In my case study, the Polish migrant parents were the unit of analysis. My sample population needed to have children aged between ten and twelve years of age. This was in order to obtain participants who were either choosing a secondary school for their children or had just gone through the process of doing so. The rationale was that their choices, strategies and decisions would be fresher in their minds.

34 participants were interviewed and 37 interviews were conducted. Out of the 37 conducted interviews, three of these were follow-up interviews and one of them was with a head teacher at one of the Polish Saturday schools. 19 of the participants were London residents and 11 resided in Nottinghamshire. As mentioned above, the majority of the interviews took place in the two Polish Saturday schools in London and Nottingham. Each interview lasted between one and two hours. Interviews were recorded and fully transcribed verbatim. All the data was retrieved and stored according to strict rules of confidentiality and anonymity. All participants were given pseudonyms.

I had wanted to conduct more interviews in Nottingham, but had exhausted my sample at the Polish Saturday school as those who were willing to be interviewed and fitted the criteria had already participated. I had hoped that these interviews would result in snowballing interviews outside of the Polish Saturday school and that perhaps my contact with the Polish club in Nottingham as well as the advertisement placed on the Polish Nottingham website would bring more interviews. Unfortunately, those who contacted me did not fulfil the sample requirement of possessing children aged ten to twelve. However, once I had finished my interviews at the Polish Saturday school in Nottingham, I could see clear themes, similarities and contrasts between London and Nottinghamshire. Therefore, I felt that I had achieved theoretical saturation (see Bryman, 2008, p. 462), especially as there were less secondary schools in my Nottinghamshire field site in comparison to London. Furthermore, virtually all the participants in Nottinghamshire had chosen the same schools in that area.

Five of the London participants did not send their children to Polish Saturday school. Two of these participants were recruited via snowballing from a participant I had interviewed at the London Polish Saturday school. The other three London participants who did not send their children to the Polish Saturday school were previously interviewed for my MA degree on Eastern European student migration. This gave me an interesting opportunity to do three interviews with a two-year interval. This produced rich data, as I could see how their lives had progressed and had the opportunity to re-question or probe them on aspects I found interesting or confusing which had come out of the first interview. I endeavoured to find more Polish participants who did not send their children to Polish Saturday school. The hope was to explore Polish parents who did not send their children to a Polish Saturday school connected to the Catholic Church in order to make comparisons. Unfortunately, lack of participants meant that I could not do this in the end. However, I did find some similarities between the five participants who did not send their children to a Polish Saturday school. One of the reasons was that these parents had very hectic work schedules. It was often difficult to find the time to take their children to the Polish Saturday school that started at 09.00 and pick them up when it finished at 13.00.

Three men were interviewed for the research. I had only wanted to interview mothers, but the men that I did interview were those who appeared at first sight to be actively involved in their children's education. They were the ones who brought their children to the Polish

Saturday schools and they were the ones who had approached me to be interviewed. However, I quickly learned that there were large gaps in their knowledge of school choice and their children's educational progression. Frequently, they stated they were unsure, but they knew their wives would know the answer. I endeavoured to conduct a follow-up interview with their wives, but this was problematic. I was informed that the wives were too conscious of their English language proficiency to give an interview and/or their wives worked very unsociable hours. Indeed, I discovered that the fathers who were taking their children to Polish Saturday school had only done so because their wives worked Saturdays. This is not to suggest that fathers are somehow less interested in their children's educational and career progression, it is just that my un-generalisable small case study showed that when it came to secondary school choice, the mothers were the ones completing the application forms and gaining "hot" knowledge on school choice (term used by Ball and Vincent, 1998).

My sample consisted of Polish parents who had children between the ages of ten to twelve years old. Due to the age of the children, many of my participants were in their 30s. The majority of the participants could be categorised as belonging to "Generation Y". There is some debate about the specific years of birth for "Generation Y". Hills et al. (2013) place those born between 1982 and 2000 in Generation Y. Wallop (2014) states that Generation Y, otherwise known as Millennials, are born between 1980 to 2000. Pinzaru et al. (2013) say Generation Y consist of those born between 1977 to 1997. The participants I interviewed were generally born between 1974 to 1983. As such, the participants can be categorised as belonging to late Generation X and/or Generation Y, with the majority being Generation Y. In general, Generation Y has been assigned a magnitude of different labels; "Millennials", "Net Generation" (Tapscott, 2008), "Boomerang Generation", or "Peter Pan Generation" (Shaputis, 2004) and so on. They tend to be characterised by their high consumption patterns – particularly of international brands – their attempt to emulate celebrity lifestyles and their interaction with digital technology and social media (Hills et al., 2013).

Hills et al. (2013) draw on a generational perspective to understand their own research participants. Hills et al. (2013) argue that each generation can experience a shared common history during their formative years, and although people in the same generations will not have the same life events, they will however have a shared awareness of social events and history which create a "generational personality". This "generational personality", or what could even be called a "generational habitus", will 'have a unique set of characteristics made

up of beliefs, values, attitudes and expectations, which impacts their behaviour generally' (Hills et al., 2013, p. 267). I argue that the generational placement of my participants is significant in understanding their habitus. As noted, my participants were born between the 1970s and the early 1980s. In Poland, they grew up influenced by a cold war era and were undergoing school education when the Soviet Union collapsed. 'They were educated in a period of transition often trapped between a crumbling communist system and the influx of capitalism' (Thatcher, 2012, p. 70). I believe that exploring and trying to understand my participants' shared national, historical experiences may help to better comprehend the attitudes and expectations my participants may hold towards their children's education in the UK and how this, in turn, influences their interaction and understanding of new societal structures.

4.4 Interview Encounters

In the London Polish Saturday school, often parents wanted to be interviewed while they waited for their children. The communal space provided to the parents meant that many of them stayed the four hours, socialising with other parents while their children attended classes. On a good Saturday (in that I found participants that fitted the sample criteria and wanted to give interviews) I could get two interviews done in a day. On some Saturdays, I could not find anyone to interview. I was very apprehensive about directly approaching people and, luckily for me, the head teacher had written in the school newsletter about the project, informing parents that I would be at the Polish school every Saturday. This meant that often I was approached by the parents themselves wishing to take part. Some of them were upset when their children were not the ages I was looking for. At the end of my London fieldwork, I was quite sad to have finished and for a short time felt at odds on a Saturday morning. There had been a strong sense of community at the school, and I had enjoyed not just the interviews and meeting the parents, but also learning about the traditions Polish people had as many of their traditional celebrations involved events on Saturdays after classes had finished. I also missed the children continuously coming up to me during the break and asking me about my research and what I had been speaking to their mothers about.

My research in Nottingham also followed a similar pattern, but this time I went directly to the Polish Saturday school. Again, they were welcoming and accommodating. The head

teacher even identified parents with children at the ages I was looking for and phoned them during her spare time to see if they would be interested in taking part in an interview. The school that the Polish Saturday school was using for their classes had a health and safety policy which meant parents could not wait for their children on school premises. Thus, at times I often felt quite isolated and quiet in comparison to the London Polish Saturday school. Nonetheless, the Polish Saturday school in Nottingham was very accommodating to me and allowed me to use a private area to conduct individual interviews if a parent wanted to take part. Yet, most parents preferred to be interviewed in their homes on different days of the week. When I ended my research in Nottingham, I also missed the school and the conversations I had with the teachers. There may have been a possibility for me to have interviewed the teachers at the Polish Saturday schools, but I decided against this as I did not want to run the risk of them being identified. By interviewing the teachers, I would have had to anonymise both of my research sites, which I did not want to do. I think the specific socio-demographic characteristics of my two research sites were important to make explicit when exploring the market behaviour of parents. I did interview the head teacher at one of the schools, but this, however, was done to find out the history, value and work of the school itself and not that of the teacher. I decided not to use the interview for reasons of possible identification.

Many of the Polish participants spoke fluent English. However, this was my own imposed categorisation of them from our interviews. They, however, frequently believed that their perceived lack of English communication skills was holding them back, particularly in finding better employment. Many were also extremely conscious of their “Polish accent” and felt that they were judged on it. I had a feeling that this was more of a self-esteem issue in which they felt their language and accent would not allow for incorporation and acceptance into British society. As such, emphasis was always placed on their children’s language ability and the adoption of an “English accent”, particularly of a “middle class southern English accent” – even amongst the participants in Nottingham.

I have categorised the participants’ level of English proficiency (see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5). This has not been based on any standardised categories. It was simply a note to myself, as their English proficiency was often related to their current occupational position in the UK. The longer the participants had lived in the UK, the better their English was. In many cases, the participants had gone through a great deal of effort to enhance their English

language skills, enrolling in additional English courses when arriving in England. As their English improved, so did their occupational position in many cases. All participants interviewed had a high level of English proficiency. However, where I have categorised them as “fluent” is to acknowledge that they speak English to a standard that in some cases is better than native-born English people. Indeed, some had nearly lost their “accent” which they were very conscious of. In the cases where there were grammatical errors and hesitation during the interviews, I have labelled them as possessing “medium” fluency. As I stated, this was more of a note to myself and such observations partially explained the “downgrading” of their occupational position between Poland and the UK. It is important to recognise that the participants were much more self-conscious and insecure about their English proficiency than was needed. It was their own perception that often made them reluctant to try for better jobs. Yet, once they had undergone additional English courses and had worked for a couple of years in unskilled occupations in which their everyday English language skills had been enhanced, they felt more able and confident to receive further training to advance their career prospects in the UK.

Crude categorisations can be problematic. Many of my Polish participants were extremely proud people. All of my participants were employed and/or had partners in full time occupation. Differences in employment status between the partners are a reflection that the majority of the participants interviewed were mothers and had childcare responsibilities. Enquiring about their children’s entitlement to free school meals was challenging and often went undisclosed. I also had a similar experience on the question on housing status. Some of the participants felt uncomfortable to reveal such details. Although not stated explicitly, they often looked embarrassed when such questions were posed – no matter how delicately they were asked. It was quite clear in some interviews that the status and occupation of these participants would mean their children were not entitled to free school meals. However, in other interviews it seemed possible that their children may have been entitled to free school meals. This clearly illustrates the problematic of crude categorisations of participants’ circumstances. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that the choice of data collection methods may have inhibited finding out this information. Interviews can be a very intense and personal experience.

The interview process can vary enormously, being influenced by a wide range of factors including the location for the interview, the available time the participants have to give to

the interview, as well as the interviewer-interviewee relationship. My experience of the interviewer process itself offered some valuable insights for future research. In some cases, I felt that participants were more comfortable revealing very private details about their childhood as opposed to their current situation and especially socio-economic challenges they might have been facing. In large-scale survey techniques participants may feel more comfortable revealing economic circumstances, particularly as they do not come into the same degree of personal contact with the researcher analysing the data. My choice of research data collection tool was a face-to-face interview. This produced many interesting interactions. On various occasions, I suspected that some of the participants were trying to “impress” me. This observed “desire” to seek some type of approval from myself, could usually be weakened during the course of the interview due to my neutral stance in the interview process. Furthermore, the participants tended to become more comfortable as the interview went on and were, therefore, focused on what they were saying rather than concentrating on any possible perceptions on my part.

It is important to reflect on my positionality as the interviewer. To some of the participants, I would have been seen as a highly-educated, “white” and “nicely-spoken” English woman. Many of the participants continued their conversations with me after the interview, enquiring about my studies in the UK. The London participants were particularly interested in which secondary school I had gone to, especially since some of the participants were considering this school for themselves. Some even asked questions on what to look for when choosing a secondary school, how to find out information about league tables and Ofsted-reports, as this was something I had enquired about during the interview. The few participants that were unconfident about their knowledge of school “standard” indicators, could become anxious that they had not heard of these when they were questioned about them during the interview. Obviously, this put me in a difficult position. However, after the interview had been conducted I felt that my assistance could not affect what had already been said and, therefore, I took the position that I would help them by sharing information where possible. I need to recognise that some Polish people still inhabit a mutual exchange favour system that was developed during the time of communist rule in Poland. I was aware of this before I went in to the field. My Polish friends had informed me that I may face many scenarios in which I am asked for a small favour (not monetary) after I have conducted interviews. This would usually be some type of exchange of information. From my experience, some small assistance would in turn result in subsequent support such as introduction to other

participants who could take part in the research. I should, however, point out that my assistance was more of a political decision on my part, rather than done in exchange for a further “favour”. As I pointed out, my shared information could not affect what had already been said in the interview. And as someone who has strong feelings on the inequalities the parental school choice system produces particularly for those in a disadvantaged position, I decided to help when asked. Importantly, however, *only* when asked.

I found the process of interviewing sometimes quite emotionally draining. I think at the beginning of my fieldwork I was quite naive in that I was looking at the subject of school choice and did not consider sensitive issues such as abuse, for example, to be a potential topic for the participants during the interviews. As such, I did not foresee how emotional my interviewees could become. Although I recognise that school choice and decisions could produce quite strong opinions from people, I was unprepared for how vulnerable a participant could become in response to relatively basic questions. In one case, a participant was happy to talk about her children. However, when I started to gather background information on herself such as “where did you grow up?” and “what kind of memories do you have from your childhood?”, she suddenly broke down in tears. Subsequently, I turned off the tape-recorder and terminated the interview until she felt able to talk.

4.5 Case Study

A case study approach was guided by my desire to conduct a sociological investigation into the case of Polish migrant parents’ secondary school choices for their children. Case study research is concerned with the complexity of the particular case. It is interesting that a case study approach to sociological understandings of society was developed by the Chicago school, originating from one of the major and initial case studies – that of Thomas and Znaniecki’s (1918-1920) research on Polish migration: *The Polish Peasant* (Hamel et al., 1993).

My own case study of Polish migrant parents choosing secondary school for their children could be described as ‘an *exemplifying* case’ (Bryman, 2008, p. 56, emphasis in original) as the object of the study was to capture a commonplace situation – that being choosing a school for your child. The case was the object of interest in its own right. I was concerned with the

experiences and practices of Polish migrant parents when choosing schools for their children. The field sites of North London and Nottinghamshire simply provided a backdrop rather than a focus. However, as I was concerned with the parents' interactions with a local quasi-education market, the case was contextualised within the two different locales. The case study design was flexible and open to modification during data collection, particularly in response to new information. However, this flexibility did not compromise the robustness of my case study design and procedures. I began the case study with a theoretical orientation, in particular investigating Bourdieu's theory of internalised structure – that of habitus. It was Bourdieu's theoretical proposition that guided this case study, from its original objectives to its design. This was also reflected in the development of the research questions. Both the data collection and the data analysis were influenced by this theoretical proposition (Yin, 2009). In some respects, this research inquiry would be what Stake (1995) classifies as an instrumental case study. I had certain research questions that I felt the particular case study could provide insights into. The case study itself was, in turn, being used to understand something else – not simply school choice practices of Polish parents. In addition, it was used to understand interdependency of these practices with the conditioning effects of large-scale political socio-economic structures – both previous and present, and as influenced by the sending and receiving society of the Polish migrants. The instrumental nature of the case study design was suitable, particularly due to the time restrictions I had in collecting the data from my main research sites – the Polish Saturday schools. As Stake (1995) points out, instrumental case studies allow the researcher to focus on certain contexts they find important, whilst being able to ignore other contexts that have little interest to the study.

I have already outlined my rationale for choosing two research sites in section 4.6. Initially, I had started off with a single case study design. The rationale for this single case study design was that it was suitable for exploring the secondary school choices of Polish parents in an area of North London and could help to determine whether Bourdieu's theoretical propositions on the concepts of cultural capital and habitus guided the participants' interactions with the marketised education system. As also noted, after several interviews with participants in North London, I decided I needed to replicate this case study design in a different research site. The rationale for using this case study design in another research site was to explore whether it would produce similar results and/or contrasting results, either supporting or refuting my initial set of propositions. The replication of my case study design

produced a rich theoretical framework, which facilitated my observations of the phenomena that were found in these practices of the particular sample of Polish participants (Yin, 2009).

A case study aims to provide an understanding of the personal experiences of its research subjects, and the actors' points of view should be recognised. Zonabend argues that the case study provides 'the most complete and detailed sort of presentation of the subject under investigation ... by giving special attention to totalizing in the observation, reconstruction and analysis of the objects under study' (1992, p. 52). However, it is important to also acknowledge that interpretation is a substantial part of case study research. Essentially, it is the interpretation of the researcher that is emphasised in the final analysis (Stake, 1995), and I acknowledge that my own interpretation has influenced every stage in this project (this has been outlined in section 4.8, 'Reflexivity'). One of the major criticisms of case study design method is that it can be used to verify the researcher's preconceived notions. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues, in response to the accusation of case studies' alleged subjectivism and bias towards verification, that such criticisms can apply to all research methods. In fact, case studies are the best type of method for producing falsifications – being one of the most rigorous tests of scientific proposition. Case studies' in-depth nature and close examination of the subject under investigation mean that researchers' preconceived notions can often be rendered invalid. As Flyvbjerg states

The case study contains no greater bias toward verification of the researcher's preconceived notions than other methods of inquiry. On the contrary, experience indicates that the case study contains a greater bias toward falsification of preconceived notions than toward verification. (2006, p. 237, emphasis in original)

As such, case study is a learning process that forces the researcher to confront their preconceptions.

4.6 Research Sites

Firstly, I should start off by stating that my initial research proposal did not include a case study based on two different localities: that of North London and Nottinghamshire. The proposal of my research sites went through several stages. Initially, it was suggested that I conduct my ethnography research in the London borough of Hammersmith, known for its

historical settlement of Polish migrants. This was also around the same time that I was investigating the possibility of doing a comparative study between Polish and South African migrants. However, I decided that in order to understand the school choices of Polish migrants, I needed to dedicate my thesis completely to this one group. I acknowledge the very interesting and comparative aspects of white Polish and white South African migrants, which is why I would later go on to write a comparative chapter in an edited book (see Thatcher and Halvorsrud, 2015).

After investigating the possibility of doing an ethnographic study of Polish parents' secondary school choice in the London borough of Hammersmith, I felt unsure about pursuing this due to its long historical tradition of Polish migration and the large Polish diaspora residing there. My main focus was to see how Polish people who had migrated since the collapse of communism interacted with a new society and system. Moreover, I was interested in how their former internalised habitus influenced their decision making in new encounters and environments. Therefore, I needed a site that possessed some historical draw for Polish migrants, but did not have a large post-war Polish diaspora who would be the main source of information for the new settlement. After some deliberation, I decided to choose the field site which had influenced me in deciding to conduct a PhD on Polish migration in the first place; that of my home borough and its surrounding areas in North London. It was during my BA in Sociology at London Metropolitan University from 2005 to 2008 that I became interested in the changing landscape of my home borough. On the bus journey I took daily, I saw former locksmiths and launderettes increasingly replaced by Polish delicatessens. This observation also coincided with my increasing interest in educational inequalities. Having been taught about ethnicity and educational attainment, I was curious to know where this new arrival of Polish migrants (and at that time suspected permanent settlers) would fit into the spectrum. I was informed by my Educational Sociology lecturer that the children of Polish migrants would probably be placed into the category of "white others" in terms of any large-scale research that would be conducted on ethnicity and educational attainment. This was also the period that I became heavily interested in Bourdieu's work. Hence, I was interested in how a former societal structure as well as the possession of educational and cultural capital from that of a different nation might influence Polish people's interaction with British society and, particularly, the British education system in terms of their children. I was already aware of research that was suggesting that a

large majority of the Polish migrants coming to the UK tended to be university graduates and were experiencing a de-skilling.

Through a combination of interest in my own life-long residence, convenience and, upon investigation – available access to a local Polish Saturday school – I decided that this particular area of North London would be my research site (see sections 4.3 and 4.6 for how the participants and the research sites were accessed). In this section, I want to describe how and why I ended up exploring school choices in another research site – that of Nottinghamshire. After about 15 interviews with parents who sent their children to the Polish Saturday school in North London, I started to realise it was difficult to completely understand their practices and school choices without observing what schools Polish parents were choosing in another local education market. Predominantly, the London Polish parents were telling me that they were choosing Catholic schools. However, I noticed that those parents in a higher socio-economic position as well as those who had been living in Britain for longer periods of time were also putting selective schools on their application forms. Not only were they listing these selective schools, but they were also undertaking a two-year preparation process, such as Kumon classes, in an attempt to secure a place for their children at these schools, whilst at the same time still insisting that Catholicism was one of the most important aspects of their child's education and they would be happy if their child got a place at one of the local Catholic schools.

As such, I set out to look for another research site. I was tempted by the idea of looking at another part of London. However, I felt that this would be too similar to my existing research site and that there may even be a cross-over in some aspects. Therefore, I decided to look for a research site outside of London. I considered the possibility of conducting research in some of the areas that had seen the biggest increase in settlements of Polish migration since EU accession, including Southampton, Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham. I decided on Nottingham because official statistics (see e.g. Rogers, 2011) confirmed that Nottingham had one of the biggest Polish communities in the UK and I was living there temporarily. As Stake states, '[o]ur time and access for fieldwork are almost always limited. If we can, we need to pick cases which are easy to get to and hospitable to our inquiry, perhaps for which a prospective informant can be identified' (1995, p. 4).

Nottingham city and its surrounding areas offered a local education market which held many similarities with London, including high-performing Catholic secondary schools, social polarisation and wealth inequalities, whilst at the same time possessing important differences such as no selective schools and only one partially selective school (see section 3.6.4 for a more detailed description of the local education market in Nottinghamshire). In similarity with London, the Polish Saturday school in Nottingham became the main site of participant recruitment following permission from the gatekeepers.

Prior to and during the recruitment of participants from Polish Saturday schools, I had engaged in other attempts to access the Polish community in the two research sites. This included advertisements in local Polish newspapers, forums and Polish shops. I had also hoped that Polish friends I had might know someone who fitted my research criteria, but unfortunately this was not the case. I also drew on previous research that I had conducted for my Masters dissertation, which had looked at A8 migrants who were studying in the UK. Three of these participants happened to be Polish migrants who had children within the age range of my research sample. Therefore, I contacted them to re-interview them regarding their secondary school choice for their children. My hope was that I could generate a snowballing sample. Unfortunately, all three of these participants distanced themselves from the Polish community and, interestingly, did not send their children to Polish Saturday schools.

A Polish friend suggested that I go to a Polish church and speak to the priest about leaving some leaflets with him. After phoning my local Polish church, I was invited to join the Sunday morning service. The Sunday congregation was so substantial in number that people were standing on the outside of the doors looking in. This was what first sparked my interest in the relationship Polish migrants had to Catholicism. After the service, I managed to find the priest who was incredibly friendly and welcoming and put me in touch with the head teacher of their connecting Polish Saturday school. I was invited to the Polish Saturday school to speak with her and what I thought would have been to leave leaflets. However, the head teacher suggested I stay for the duration of the Saturday school and sit with the Polish parents in the cafeteria and approach people for my study. I have to acknowledge the help and support the two Polish Saturday schools – one in London and one in Nottingham – gave me in finding participants. In the London Polish Saturday school, I went every Saturday for several months.

Both the Polish Saturday schools were connected to the Roman Catholic Polish Church in England. As such, I need to acknowledge that my research sites impacted and influenced my findings. Catholicism and Catholic school choice became a major theme. I did manage to interview parents who did not send their children to Polish Saturday schools in London, where there seemed to be a shared negative account of Catholicism. However, despite trying I could not find any more participants in this category, and I could not find any in Nottingham who did not send their child to Polish Saturday school. However, as outlined in Chapter 2, Poland has a historic relationship with Catholicism, and 94.34 per cent of the population are Catholic – one of the highest numbers in Europe (Cheney, 2005). In Chapter 3, it was also shown how the research sites influenced the particular areas that were subsequently studied. The Polish Saturday school in London had a radius in which participants predominantly came from five boroughs in North London: Islington, Camden, Haringey, Barnet and Enfield. Although, due to the connection between the Polish Saturday school and one of the longest established Polish churches in the UK, people came as far as from East London every Saturday.

The Polish Saturday school in London was founded in the interwar period and over the years had relocated to different sites as the pupil population increased. This was similar to the Polish Saturday school in Nottingham, which was founded in the 1950s. The location of the Polish Saturday school in Nottingham also meant that the radius of participants fell into two districts – City of Nottingham and Rushcliffe. Socio-demographics of all the London boroughs as well as both the Nottinghamshire districts can be found in Chapter 3.

4.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis conducted for this thesis has been guided by a “thematic framework approach” (Ritchie et al., 2003). Themes with common characteristics were developed in order to code the various sections of my interview transcripts. As noted in the sample section, 37 interviews were conducted with 34 participants. All interviews were fully transcribed verbatim. The coding practice drawn upon involved repeated interaction between me and the data. The process began with initial coding which stayed close to the data. In line with the qualitative dimension of this research, the organisation and naming of the various themes

have therefore been influenced by the participants' "own language". This means that I have been sensitive to what my participants chose to talk about and the ways in which they discussed certain issues during the course of the interviews (see Ritchie et al., 2003; Spencer et al., 2003). To ensure that the themes represented the participants' "own language" as closely as possible, it was seen as necessary to tape-record the interviews and have the interviews fully transcribed verbatim so that each uttered word and phrase could be carefully analysed after the interviews had been conducted. The initial coding remained simple, then moved towards focused coding which drew on the most significant and frequent themes that emerged from the initial coding. Focused coding allowed me to categorise large amounts of data. Essentially, focused coding helps compare the interviewees' experiences and actions (Spencer et al., 2003).

During the coding procedure, theoretical coding clarified the emergence of possible relationships between the categories and sub-categories that were representing the various themes. Thus, although a focus on participants' "own language" was implemented as mentioned above, I was also immersed and involved with the academic literature corresponding to the research questions that I had defined for my study. It should therefore not be denied that although I attempted as far as possible to let the participants "speak for themselves", my involvement with the academic literature – particularly with Bourdieu's theories and the literature on secondary school education – has somewhat dictated what I saw as most interesting and what I tended to give most attention to in the analysis of my data (see Ritchie et al., 2003; Spencer et al., 2003). Bourdieu's theoretical propositions helped in focusing my attention on certain aspects of the data and facilitated the requirement to ignore other aspects deemed less relevant for the theoretical orientation when responding to the research questions. Being somewhat influenced by the academic literature is an inevitable process for all social scientific researchers, as there is no such thing as "value-free" research – even in more "standardised" quantitative research (for a convincing argument that values are implicated in all social scientific research, see Weber, 1949). Since '[q]ualitative data are usually voluminous, messy, unwieldy and discursive' (Spencer et al., 2003, p. 202), it is often a necessity to be guided in certain respects by the academic literature in order to be concise enough and manage to "reduce" the data adequately in accordance with the research questions and what the study aims to investigate (*ibid.*). However, being influenced by Bourdieu's theories and concepts, for instance, has not meant that I took the position that I was unquestionably going to reify his theories and simply search for quotes that fitted in

with his line of argumentation. Participants would, in this sense, always be “consulted” by meticulously looking through their interview transcripts and asking myself whether their statements or practices perhaps were less in tune with the academic literature in question than might appear at first glance.

Coding of the verbatim transcription was undertaken using a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software package – MAXQDA. The code and retrieve feature helped to provide a systematic overview of the data and assisted analytical understanding (see Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 205). The use of categories and sub-categories was also a helpful feature as it helped to interrelate ideas and possible connections between codes/themes. Overall, even when adding into the equation the obvious caveat that a qualitative data analysis software package ought not to be seen as a replacement for the researcher’s own judgements and decision-making in the process of analysing the data, I believe that the assistance of MAXQDA made the coding and retrieval process quicker and more efficient than would have been the case if I were to organise all my data manually (Bryman, 2008, p. 567).

4.8 Reflexivity

According to Wacquant, ‘[i]f there is a single feature that makes Bourdieu stand out in the landscape of contemporary social theory, it is his signature obsession with reflexivity’ (1992, p. 36). In this section, I will draw on Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity not because I have used his theoretical propositions throughout every stage of my research process, but rather because I fundamentally believe that the social world in which I exist has both shaped myself and the discipline of sociology with which I have engaged. My sociologically formed knowledge has been produced by the historically constructed discipline of sociology and, in turn, guided what I chose to research for this PhD.

Bourdieu (2003) argued that it is misleading for a social scientist to claim that they are objective and that their social locations and positionality have not had any bearing upon their produced research. It is crucial that a researcher reflects continuously upon their own experiences, whilst at the same time avoiding producing ‘narcissistic confessions’ (p. 287) typically seen in postmodern reflexivity. Essentially, Bourdieu is discussing what he refers to as the need for ‘objectivation’ (p. 283) in which it is not the social scientist conducting

the research who is the subject of analysis, but rather the social world which has formed the social scientist and its discipline. As such, I should acknowledge that I have been conditioned by not only the discipline of sociology, but a particular national sociological field – that of British Sociology. In regards to reflexivity when examining the epistemological unconsciousness and social organisation of whichever discipline the researcher was practicing, Bourdieu argued that it is essential

to grasp everything that the thinking of the anthropologist (or sociologist) may owe to the fact that she (or he) is inserted in a national scientific field, with its traditions, habits of thought, problematics, shared commonplaces, and so on, and to the fact that she occupies in it a particular position (newcomer who has to prove herself versus consecrated master, etc.), with ‘interests’ of a particular kind which unconsciously orientate her scientific choices (of discipline, method, object, etc.). (2003, p. 284, brackets and inverted commas in original)

Hence, the social field into which I am inserted has specific relationships and power conditions that can be said to generate a particular habitus. I was one of the co-founders and now current co-convenor of the British Sociological Association’s (BSA) Bourdieu Study Group. As such, the sociological work I choose to read, the conferences I choose to attend as well as organise, the keynote speakers I choose to invite and the other sociologists I choose to socialise with, all have one thing in common; not just a Bourdieusian orientation, but a political value perspective that would endorse a critical reflection on the way in which sociology is practised within the current neo-liberal funding regime. Bourdieu himself argued that educational research is always dependent on state funding, the consequence of which is a ‘*double bind*’ (Bourdieu, 2000/1997, p. 160ff, cited in Grenfell and James, 2004, p. 591, emphasis in original) as the researcher on one hand claims objective legitimacy in researching a topic whilst being dependent on the funders who define what that legitimacy is (Grenfell and James, 2004).

The discipline of sociology with which I engage has been founded on Bourdieu’s theoretical propositions. I need to reflect, and have done so throughout this thesis, that every stage of my research – from the initial inspiration to study Eastern European migrants’ cultural capital and education, through to the coding system with which I analysed my transcripts and the final writing of this thesis – was influenced by my interest in Bourdieu’s theories and concepts. This acknowledgement is a recognition of what has been widely referred to as a domination of Bourdieusian theory within British Sociology – particularly for a new

generation of sociologists, many of whom had engaged with Bourdieu's work after his death and are applying his theoretical propositions to a different time and space from its original conceptions and, in some cases, to social issues which Bourdieu himself never looked at (Burke et al., 2015). Ironically, taking Bourdieu's principles of reflexivity in examining my own position within the discipline of British Sociology, makes me very aware of Bourdieu's current influence on British Sociology. So significant is the interest in Bourdieusian Sociology within Britain that it has recently started to produce a "backlash":

Bourdiesian ideas are rampant in contemporary British sociology at the moment, to the extent that one attendee at a recent BSA conference quipped that Bourdieu's name should be barred from next [BSA] year's abstracts. (Hillyard, 2015, para. 1)

At the last BSA annual conference in 2015, one sociologist at Glasgow University decided to do a content analysis on the book of abstracts consisting of over 700 papers to report that 'Bourdieu/Bourdiesian' was the most cited social theorist (Dawson, 2015). Therefore, in terms of engaging in reflexivity, I acknowledge that the intellectual field and its analytical tools which I draw upon are embedded within the field of British Sociology, but that this embedding, in turn, has produced a circular effect in which I now contribute – in a very small part – to the reproduction of Bourdieu's position in British Sociology.

For Bourdieu, one of the most obvious factors to influence a social researcher's interest and pursuit of a research topic, is their location within social space. Fries states that '[t]he social researcher, for Bourdieu, requires a self-referential awareness of his or her interests and motivations in relation to the research act' (2009, p. 332). This means that the social researcher must acknowledge how their social class, gender and ethnicity, for example, may have inspired their initial interests as well as impacted upon the research process and its final analysis. Part of this social researcher's awareness of her location in social space, is always the consideration of her past experiences. Bourdieu (2003) argued that researchers should mobilise their past experiences in all stages of the research, but it is not simply good enough to reflect on your past experiences – you must thoroughly examine these experiences:

For what has to be questioned is not only this reactivated past but one's entire relation to this past which, when it acts outside of the controls of consciousness, may be the source of a systematic distortion of evocation and thus of the memories evoked. (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 291)

Therefore, I will outline my pre-notions, which in part inspired me to pursue this research, as well as acknowledging significant past influences that shaped and formed my values and political outlooks. I started my thesis journey with the conception that cultural capital was in some way of equal importance with economic and social capital, and that in some respects it could stand on its own accord as a benefit to an agent who was endowed with it. Although I believed that I understood Bourdieu's methodological relationalism, I now realise that I had not fully comprehended the relational aspect between Bourdieu's capitals. This, in part, can be explained by my location in past social spaces and, in particular, having a mother from a traditional British middle class family – one who would subsequently experience downward mobility – and a politically engaged father from a working class background. I do not divulge these private experiences as some type of self-indulgent act. I am aware, as Wacquant tells us, that 'Bourdieu sees no need to make resounding private revelations to explain himself sociologically, for what happened to him is not singular: it is linked to a social trajectory' (Wacquant, 1992, p. 44). However, it is these experiences that in some respect I now believe drew me towards the study of Polish migrant parents. Their faith and conviction in the pursuit of education to achieve social mobility for their children, resonated with me.

My mother used to tell me that if you have culture, you can mix with anyone. According to her, possessing knowledge of different types of music, art, movies and books allowed you to move in certain social circles despite a lack of money. She was not sociologically trained or highly educated, she was just an ex-Las Vegas showgirl who suffered downward mobility because she developed mental health problems. Therefore, the little disability benefits my mother received were used to drag my sister and I around numerous art galleries, museums and theatres every summer holiday, in spite of my protest and insistence of wanting to spend my holidays playing on the local estate. I was then sent every school holiday to stay with my aunt in Tonbridge Wells, where I also underwent a strict regime of "etiquette lessons" instilling into me which cutlery to use, being shouted at when I did not close my knife and fork after I had finished eating, as well as not scooping up my soup in "the right direction" while in England (apparently it is a different direction in France!). In fact, this was so much instilled into me that I still shake when eating soup in a restaurant. When back home with my mother, my evenings consisted of watching old Hitchcock movies, being given elocution lessons which I was told were a fun "word game" and being read Kafka and Oscar Wilde as bedtime stories – until I finally rebelled as a teenager and developed a "London accent",

much to my mother's distress. Despite my period of rebellion, my mother's message on culture stuck in my mind – particularly when I became a beauty therapist and worked in affluent areas of London and witnessed the type of acknowledgement I received from clients when demonstrating my cultural knowledge in conversations. It was also what first attracted me to Bourdieu's theoretical propositions during my access course. I could not wait to tell my mother of Bourdieu's amazing forms of capital. But she already knew of Bourdieu and then subsequently told me I should read Goffman.

I should also acknowledge that my father was a socialist. I was brought up to believe that anything other than full communism would produce inequality. As a child, I was taken along by my father to revolutionary socialist meetings where I sat and listened to the debate. One such debate was with regard to Eastern Europe. I was told it was not “real” communism – yet there were still many benefits to their societal structure in comparison to a full capitalist one. In 1988, my grandmother was also part of a documentary in the USSR in which she went to stay in Moscow with a Russian family. The documentary was made for Russian TV and was about “new friendships” between the Western world and the newly-evolving Eastern Bloc. For years to come, my grandmother would tell me stories about how well the Russian family had treated her, how they had purchased expensive food and goods for her on the black market and how she had been quite shocked when a year later the system collapsed. On November the 9th 1989, I sat in front of the television and watched people tear down the Berlin Wall, and in the following months observed reports on the changing life of Eastern Europe as the influx of Western ideology and consumer goods flooded in. And so I began my fascination with societies other than the one I lived in.

I have reflected on these experiences as a systematic exploration of what I am aware has, first, inspired me to pursue this particular topic for my PhD and, second, to recognise that they have determined the way I chose to analyse my empirical research and what I chose to present.

4.9 Ethics

After the initial interviews, I started to question my ethical self. I became conscious of how I probed and prompted participants on some quite prejudicial statements that could be

considered racist and classist. However, I take the position that when conducting an interview, the main purpose is to gather information and to allow the participant to talk. I feel as the interviewer I should not show either approval or disapproval with what they tell me, but rather interest in what they are saying. Through showing interest, my participants felt comfortable to disclose opinions on subjects they might not share with others. Yet, in some cases, I felt the participants spoke to me as if I would recognise and agree with what they stated on migration, “race” and religion simply because they perceived me as “white” and British. Therefore, I have to acknowledge that as the interviewer, I impacted upon the interview situation.

It is important to note that ethical procedures were strictly adhered to. A detailed research proposal, including the design of my methodology and data collection tools, was approved by the university’s ethical committee. As noted in the ‘4.2 Methodology and Methods’ section above, a number of the interviews were conducted in the participants’ homes. In this situation I made sure that a close friend knew exactly where I was going, and once I had entered the home before starting the interview and assessed that the situation was safe, I texted them to let them know. Once the interview had completed, I phoned them to let them know that I had left the premises and that I was safe. They were also informed that if the interview would take over two and a half hours, I would text them to let them know I was still interviewing and they were given instructions to call me if they had not heard from me by a reasonable amount of time.

I obtained a Criminal Records’ check and presented my certificates to both Polish Saturday schools – even though I was just interviewing parents. I explained the purpose of my research to the participants before the interview, went through the informed consent form (see Appendix 2) and ensured that they understood it and asked them to sign. I have anonymised participants’ names by using pseudonyms. I also anonymised information such as references to local areas that might identify the schools the participants were discussing. Due to the limited number of Polish Saturday schools in the country, I did not interview any of the teachers in order for them not to be identified. The Polish Saturday schools’ populations were sufficiently large enough that my procedures of anonymity would make it virtually impossible for participants to be identified.

Chapter 5

School Choice

This chapter addresses the first research question, in which the strategies, skills and knowledge that the Polish migrant parents bring with them upon migration and/or develop in Britain with regards to secondary school choice for their children are contextualised and explored within two localised education markets – North London and Nottinghamshire. Specifically, it describes how Polish migrant parents positioned faith schools within a wider, or national, marketised education system as well as that of their local educational market. It explores the complexity of the education market and the multiple choices different parents make in distinctive settings, showing how diversity of school availability in specific local markets impacts upon the parents' school choices. It also highlights how a competitive schooling system, combined with the “high status” and strong academic performance of Roman Catholic secondary schools, produces tensions between the Polish migrant parents and white middle class parents, who are seen as ‘desperate to secure their own children a place’ at one of the schools despite many of these white middle class parents not being Catholic and stating they are feeling “disadvantaged” with regards to the admission policies of faith schools. It will show how choice in education is systematically related to social class differences and how the composition and volume of different capitals – economic, cultural and social – impact upon the capacity to engage with choice practices. Lastly, it considers what “good parenting” means to the Polish parents when they become “consumers” of education in the UK. How do the parents balance their own politics, ethical selves and that of their children's wishes for schools, when making choices about their children's possible future educational trajectory and social mobility, particularly when they themselves have experienced downward mobility upon migration as well as discrimination in the host society?

5.1 Interaction with the Market

The principles of choice can be generalisable to some extent, but the local and specific relations of choice must not be forgotten (Ball et al., 1995). Education policies are embedded

within local cultural-political surroundings. As such, research in two different cities – Nottingham and North London – provides the opportunity to explore Polish migrant parents’ engagement with a complex and competitive schooling system. Their school choice interaction and practices within the two different local education markets have been explored using an adapted analytical model used in previous educational research investigating school choice. Figure 9 was inspired by Ball’s (2003, p. 9) research. This framework helps to reveal the intersection between larger structures, the local education market and the choice/practices of the parents. Ball’s framework was itself influenced by the basic analytical framework used by Bourdieu to explore ‘the relationship between structure (system properties), dispositions and recognisable social practices’ (1986, cited in Ball, 2003, p. 8, bracket in original).

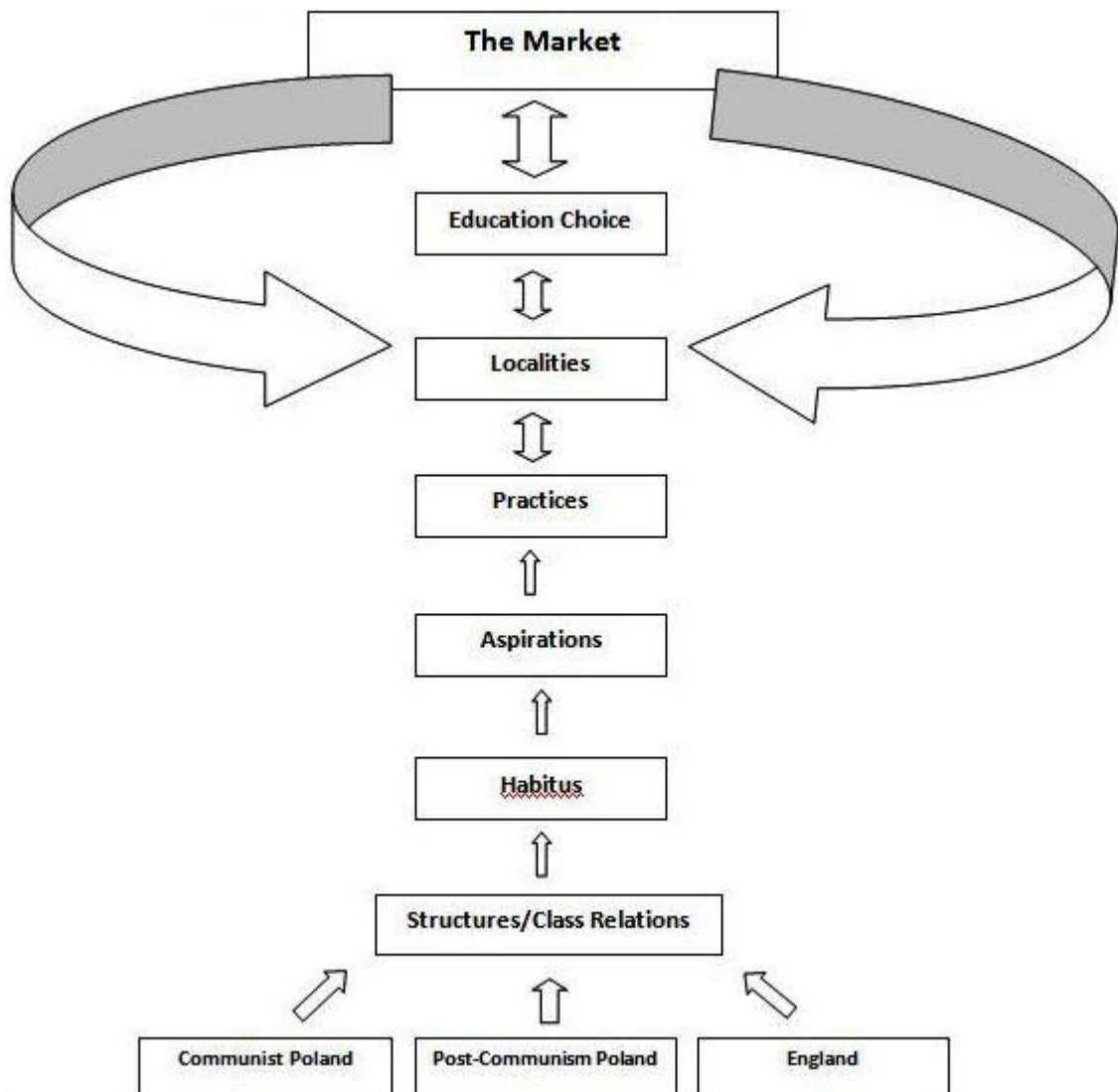


Figure 9: The interaction between structures, education market and choice/practices

5.2a Catholicism

Chapter 3 outlined how the expansion of choice-based policies encourages the role of competition between schools and individualised educational “success”. It also showed how the discourse on having the “right” of parental choice and “doing the best for you children” is actively seized upon by the middle classes. As measured by market indicators, faith schools are valued highly and positioned accordingly within this education market, because of their high educational performance and standards. In the individualisation of choice, faith schools, and in this case Roman Catholic schools, are marketed on their ability to create an educational environment based upon shared values and religious beliefs. Therefore, an important question is, are Roman Catholic schools being chosen for religious reasons and/or because of their high educational performance and good reputation?

For the majority of the respondents – both in North London and Nottinghamshire – Catholic Secondary schools were often the first choice. There were slight differences between the two sites, and this will be explored in more detail later on in this chapter, as well as in the succeeding two analytical chapters. For nearly all the respondents, being Catholic was essential to their way of living. There was a division between those who were deeply Catholic, those who wanted to pass its traditions on to their children but were ambivalent about it themselves, and those who rejected it at times, associating it with what they considered to be “negative” about Poland. Catholicism was regularly linked to Polish Saturday schools and the Polish community. For many of the parents, providing their child with a Catholic framework was an obligation and a basic requirement of being a “good” Polish parent, seeing Catholicism as a duty. Many parents regarded a Catholic foundation to be important in influencing the future person that their children would transpire to become, with the desire that their children would be a “good” and “moral” person. Catholicism for the majority of the participants was a part of their identity, while others saw it as being a useful reserve resource they could draw on in the “game” of choosing schools for their children.

Although being “amongst Catholics” was important for the majority of the interviewees and was one of the reasons stated as motivating their choice of Catholic schools for their children, participants were also strategic in this choice. Many of them were aware of the good academic performance and pupil achievement in state-maintained Catholic schools in

England, especially for socially disadvantaged pupils. The majority of parents understood the importance of attending their local Catholic church in order to get their children into a Catholic school. The Catholic Church and the Priest were often central in helping the parents understand the English education system and in their choice of school, specifically when they were newly arrived migrants. The Catholic Church became an essential resource for school access, as the Church and Priest would provide the parents with references virtually guaranteeing their children's entry into the local Catholic school. The parents recognised that the Catholic Church was an effective resource for access to "good" Catholic schools. However, they considered this to be separate from a set of connections/networks that are used for one's own advantage. The interviewees did not seem to promote individualism over all else when it came to their children's educational success. They found this behaviour perplexing when they encountered it. When they did come across competitive behaviour from English parents, the Polish migrant parents tended to see it as a problem resulting from the wider structural system and not that of the individual. Often the respondents established their own networks with other migrant groups in which they freely share information on the school access procedure. It was never clearly asserted with any certainty during the analysis why the Polish parents freely shared school admission procedure advice with each other and other non-Polish parents, and whether this communal value behaviour might change over time. However, what was evident was that when the respondents reflected upon their own school choice practices and strategies and wondered whether they themselves may be helping to reproduce divisions through school choice, they found it difficult to deal with this and would blame it on what they deemed to be the inadequacies of the education system.

Catholicism was not only a major influence and resource in the Polish migrant parents' school choice process, it was also an important way of reconstructing their own identity and establishing that of their children's identity in England. Catholicism also shaped some of the respondents' attitudes towards family life. Often they talked about their childhood and the pressure they were under to assist their mothers in the household. A few of the Polish migrant mothers expressed their sadness in the interviews that their own relationship with their daughters did not resemble the one they had with their own mother in Poland. They believed this to be because of lack of contact with the Polish community, as well as the influence of English friendship groups, which they assumed resulted in disrespect for the traditional Polish mother and daughter relationship in which the daughter would normally help with the domestic labour. Yet many of the mothers admitted that in Poland the Catholic Church could

operate to oppress women's liberation and support the traditional role of women, in particular the sexual division of labour and gender segregation. Some of the respondents had experienced gender discrimination in the labour market, especially when they became mothers. For those that did encounter this discrimination, many associated it with the patriarchal influence the Catholic Church had in Poland.

Ryan (2010), in her research on Polish migrants in London, found that religion was often a key component of Polish migrants' ethnic identity and was habitually used as a way to express their "Polishness". Attending a Polish church was seen as a method to convey both their "Polishness" and their Catholicism. "Polishness" as expressed through Catholicism can be exclusionary of those Poles who do not subscribe to religion. Ryan found that some Polish migrants were very critical of the connection between Catholicism and "Polishness". In the context of geographical relocation, religion offers a means of preserving ethnic traditions. Ryan's (2010) findings, similar to my own findings, revealed that after migrating to the UK, Polish migrants often increase their church attendance. The church and the Polish Priest in particular were frequently a key point of contact for information about jobs and accommodation through a social network of Polish Catholics. My research found that Polish parents regularly went to the church and the Polish Priest when seeking information about schools. This included newly-arrived Polish migrant parents, as well as those who had been residents in Britain longer term and whose children were born in the UK.

5.2b "You Got to Have Faith"

The majority of participants spoke of their astonishment at the diversity of school choice that existed in Britain in comparison to that of Poland, in their own opinion. The respondents were pleasantly surprised at the existence of Catholic schools both at primary and secondary school level in the UK. During communist rule in Poland, religious education was forbidden in schools, despite the fact that it is a deeply Catholic society in which approximately 95 per cent of the population are Catholic (Cheney, 2005; Wedel, 1992). The majority of my interviewees had their formative years of education during the communist period, and their later years of education during the early period of transition in the 1990s. Although the decentralisation of the Polish education system occurred in the late 1990s and the Catholic Church was once again allowed to be involved in educational provision in Poland, none of

the respondents had experienced this. Furthermore, as the majority of the respondents had either brought their children to England before they started school and/or gave birth to their children in England, they had not engaged with the Polish education system, and many stated that “there is no such thing as Catholic schools in Poland”. However, when they discovered the provision of Catholic schools in Britain, this was immediately the first and “only” choice of school in the UK for the majority of the respondents. As noted above, migration can increase religious devotion as migrants reproduce their ethnic-religious identity as a way to adapt into a new society, whilst keeping their ties with their home society. The Polish migrant parents’ engagement with Catholic schools and the practices they engage in, in order to secure their child a place at one of these schools, illustrates how strategies and motivations adapt to the available commodity, as well as the necessity to cope in a new environment. Interestingly, despite the majority of participants’ lack of awareness of Catholic schools in Britain prior to migration, once the option was available to them they became defensive about their “right” as a Catholic to receive a place – especially upon finding out that Catholic schools tended to be the highest ranking schools in league tables.

There were a number of Polish migrant parents who had researched the British schooling system before migrating. This information via official sources, as well as social networks, influenced their practice of school choice in a new environment. Specifically, the school league table system, as well as other market indicators seemed to some extent to influence their choice of Catholic schools. It should be noted that the few Polish migrant parents who did extensively research schools before migrating were from higher socio-economic backgrounds. In the case of Ola from London, distance was not of concern in school choice. Indeed, she lived in East London and travelled every Saturday to the Polish Saturday school in North London, because it was connected to the Polish Catholic Church. The secondary school she had chosen for both her son aged twelve and her daughter aged ten was a Catholic secondary school which had over 70 per cent of students achieving five GCSEs, including maths and English, at grades A*-C, and the school was rated “good” by Ofsted. Despite Ola’s son struggling with ADHD, she chose a school that would require him to travel a long distance and on public transport. Firstly, this school was chosen because it was Catholic and, secondly, because the school was able to give her son the additional and individual support he needed. Both she and her husband had MAs from Poland. Ola had been employed in a high status job before coming to England and now had worked in a lower-paid part-time job, whereas her husband became employed in a similar high-status job – in logistics – to the one

he had in Poland. Ola exemplified an “embedded chooser” (Ball, 2006, p. 222). Distance was not an issue and her choice was based on extensive research. In fact, Ola had thoroughly researched the education and choice of schools in London before even leaving Poland. She collected information from newspapers she would never normally read, spoke to friends and associates, both those who lived in the UK and those who had lived there previously and returned to Poland. Before she left Poland she had been advised to always try and get a place at a Catholic school first, as these were generally considered to be “best”. To verify this information, she went on the Internet before leaving Poland. When in England, she went to a central education centre to get information about schools, but they did not have sufficient information on Catholic schools and, therefore, she conducted her own research again on the Internet by collecting all the brochures on Catholic schools in her area. She also familiarised herself with the rules and regulations of the education system in the UK, particularly those regarding admission policies.

Many of the participants were very defensive of Catholic school admission policies and regulations. Gracja from London talked about the “importance” of abiding by the Catholic schools’ admission policies. This was part of a wider discussion on how she believed some English parents lied about their religion to get their children into Catholic schools. She was protective of her child’s entitlement to attend a Catholic school, and stated that there are special regulations in the school application to ensure that someone is Catholic. Gracja’s sense of entitlement to a Catholic school place may have resulted from the frustration she first experienced when she tried to enrol her daughter into a Catholic primary school upon her arrival to the UK. She had repeatedly attempted this over several years, but was never successful, and was continually told that they had a long waiting list. She enrolled her daughter in a Church of England primary school, because she wanted her child to have a Christian religious education – whether Catholic or otherwise. Eventually, she secured her daughter a place at a Catholic secondary school – but it should be noted that this was a selective Catholic school. However, she feels, in some way, that her daughter missed out during her primary school years due to school places being given to non-Catholics.

The admission policies of faith schools, including selection on religious grounds, have come under increasing scrutiny. Church schools are hugely oversubscribed and their religious criteria are becoming even stricter as baptism certificates and church attendance are meticulously checked. Every year, the number of investigations into suspicious school

applications is rising. Fraudulent application cases even include: fake baptism certificates, fake addresses and falsely claiming that a sibling of the applicant has already attended the school. Although this is most common in London and the Southeast, it is increasing all over the country. In a study based on interviews with 1,173 parents conducted by the Sutton Trust, it found that one in ten of upper middle class parents admitted pretending to hold religious beliefs in order to get their children into a faith school. Between 2007 and 2013, 7,600 suspicious school applications were investigated (Francis and Hutchings, 2013). Even the former Chief School Adjudicator Dr. Ian Craig admitted that he had friends and neighbours who “played the system”. Parental forums are full with examples of parents trying to obtain information and strategies on how to get their children into a religious school (cited in Shepherd, 2010).

Stefa from London, like many of the other participants, spoke about the perceived cultural differences between Polish and English people. One of the main themes that kept arising was “dishonesty” on the part of English people. This ranged from lying on a CV to get “better” jobs, to lying on school applications to get a place at a “better” school. Many of the participants raised concerns that other parents, in particular English middle class parents, might pretend to be Catholic to secure their child a place at a Catholic secondary school. For example, Alicja spoke about how she and her family attended their local Catholic Sunday service one day, as they did every week, only to walk in and spot the mother of her daughter’s school friend sitting in the front row. In her recollection to me, she said she had felt surprised and curious that this person, who she spoke to regularly in the school playground, had not mentioned her Catholicism before. The respondent said she was happy to see her and felt that they now had something in common. Going to sit by her in the church she stated ‘it’s lovely to see you, I didn’t know you were Catholic’, at which the mother turned and whispered ‘I’m not, but I need to attend this church for two years’.

It is surprising that a parent would be so open about their deceit. However, incidents like these seemed a common occurrence in several of the interviews – both in North London and Nottinghamshire. I feel that by telling me this, the Polish parents were trying to make a distinction between themselves as a “moral, honest” Catholic, as opposed to someone who would use “religious capital” for their own gain. Gracja from London, for example, worried when she was applying to Catholic secondary schools, that her daughter’s place may be at risk from these “deceitful” English middle class parents. As such, she believes that the

school's practice of interviewing "pupils" will help expose those who are not Catholic. Research shows that in school interviews, parents are the ones being assessed. Interestingly, Gracja asserts that the interview will be a process to assess who really belongs in a Catholic school, yet her narrative can also be seen in terms of social class distinction. Rather than stating they will be able to tell who is Catholic or not, she talks about whether the child "fits into" the school. Her knowledge that this is one of the "best" schools in her area and her previous discussion of her assessment of schools by observing pupil intake and behaviour, reveal her perception of which social class she feels her child belongs to. The school in question had a large white middle class pupil population.

According to the new School Admissions Code brought in by the Education and Inspections Act of 2006, there is a ban on specific criteria that has been designed to prevent selection such as interviewing pupils and/or their parents. As such, I became very confused when analysing my data, as being interviewed by secondary schools had been mentioned a handful of times in my London interviews. At first, I assumed that they had been talking about private schools, but my transcripts continuously showed that the parents were talking about Catholic schools, although some of these had been selective Catholic schools. Further investigation revealed that in 2012, after my interviews had been conducted, the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) found several faith schools to be in breach of the School Admissions Code. The breaches included interviewing parents prior to admission, which may have been used as a covert socio-economic selection (cited in British Humanist Association, 2012). I discovered that this included schools that my participants had been selecting. It was also revealed that these schools had allowed the Priest to approve or reject parents without revealing the criteria through which he made his decisions. During a couple of interviews, it was revealed that some of these schools had been selected and some Polish migrant parents spoke about how the English middle class mothers in the playground informed them that it would be very difficult to get their children into these schools. The mothers had then spoken to the Priest after Sunday service of their concerns about securing a place for their child at the local Catholic secondary school. However, he had apparently assured them that they were not to worry as they were 'good Catholics' and 'regularly attended church'. They were also informed that this information would be put in their reference.

The School Admissions Code was updated in an attempt to address an admissions system that produces and maintains social class and ability segregation across the school system.

However, my knowledge of the socio-economic status of the Polish migrant parents in question, makes it difficult to say for sure whether the whole purpose of these interviews was a method used by the schools to filter out pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds. I know that two of the parents in question managed to secure a place at their first choice Catholic secondary school, which had been conducting interviews. Unfortunately, I was not to find this information out from the other parents. The two parents who were interviewed and secured a place at their chosen Catholic secondary school for their children had partners who were employed in low-paid manual work. The mothers themselves were housewives and, as such, did not have a high household income; however, both of them were highly educated in Poland with degrees. Both of them had ensured that their children embarked on a range of cultural activities outside of school; including music lessons, extra tuition and sports. The two mothers had also stated that they wished for their child/ren to go to university, and had already started thinking about ways that they could financially support their children through a university education. Yet, the reassurance from the Priest that they were “good” Catholics and had regular church attendance, also makes me wonder whether this could have been a contributing factor towards securing their first choice at a top Catholic school.

Henrieta from Nottingham had thoroughly researched the top-ranking secondary schools, attended all the opening evenings and had spoken with both teachers and friends about the schools. Her son had wanted to attend an academy secondary school that was marked as “outstanding” by Ofsted. It was the nearest secondary school and all his friends from his primary school were going there. However, Henrieta had felt that the two top secondary schools in Nottingham/Nottinghamshire were the Catholic ones. Therefore, without telling her son, she put the two Catholic secondary schools as first and second choice. In the end, she managed to secure a place for her son at one of the top Catholic secondary schools. During the interview with me, she asserted that the two Catholic schools were placed on the application form because of her commitment to Catholicism and the desire to provide a religious education for her children, although she acknowledged that these Catholic schools were the “best” – referring to the high ranked positions they held in the Nottinghamshire school league table. Henrieta’s decision to reject a “top” school in her catchment area and choose to send her son to a high status Catholic school outside of her catchment area, had caused friction with her manager at work. According to Henrieta, the Catholic school at which she managed to secure a place was one that was in the catchment area of his residence.

His daughter was the same age as her son, and so they were applying for secondary schools at the same time. However, he never informed her that he had applied for that particular Catholic secondary school. This was only revealed after she had mentioned her son would be going there in September that year. She told me that this news produced resentment towards her from her boss, and this confused her because he was not Catholic. However, his reasoning was that he deserved the place more because he lived near the school:

My own boss was, he really liked [name of Catholic secondary school] for his children and only when I announced at work that my son would go to [name of Catholic secondary school] he was very jealous. He was, of course he's English but he lives in [area of school] so it's quite difficult for him to send his children somewhere else, I don't know why he didn't send his children to anywhere in Nottingham, but also because they're not Catholics so they couldn't really apply because they don't have those sacraments. (Henrieta, Nottingham)

Marja from Nottingham, who previously worked as a teacher in a private school in Poland, also believed that there was some type of resentment from English parents due to the ability of Polish migrants to be able to send their children to the two top Catholic secondary schools in Nottingham:

Maybe the English people don't like the discrimination, that you do take the Catholic children first and then others but I think that is fair enough. (Marja, Nottingham)

Interestingly, Marja admitted that she did not attend Sunday service regularly and that her English husband was in fact an atheist. Yet, she still decided to send her children to the Catholic secondary school, as this was one of the best in her opinion – not only due to its league table position, but also its policy on student discipline.

It is important to contextualise the apparent tension between the white English middle classes and the Polish parents seen in this research. Research by YouGov, which surveyed 4,000 people for an annual Westminster Faith Debate in 2013, found that faith schools are often chosen for quality, not religion. In order of the most important, the top three criteria when choosing a school were academic standards, location and discipline (cited in Gledhill, 2013). A similar survey was commissioned for a Westminster Hall Debate on Catholic schools in 2014. The dominating debate centred around the socio-economic intake of Catholic schools' admissions. Labour MP Barry Sheerman argued that both Catholic and Anglian schools admit fewer people from lower socio-economic backgrounds than would be expected based

on the socio-demographic characteristics of the Catholic population in England (cited in Fair Admissions Campaign, 2013). Similarly, figures released by the Fair Admissions Campaign showed that Church of England schools admitted 31 per cent fewer children on free school meals (FSM), while Roman Catholic secondaries admitted 24 per cent fewer FSM-pupils than would be expected for the area (cited in London Evening Standard, 2013). A report from The Sutton Trust also indicated that higher socio-economic status parents were about twice as likely, in comparison to poorer parents, to use tactics such as faking religious beliefs in order to secure a place at a high-ranking faith school (Francis and Hutchings, 2013).

Faith schools have come under increasing criticism for their high intake of white middle class pupils. A reverend in the borough of Islington, Stephen Coles, spoke to the local Islington paper, the Islington Tribune, to criticise middle class parents who “played the system” by attending church in an attempt to secure a place at a church school. Reverend Stephen Coles told the Islington Tribune that the church should serve those from under-privileged backgrounds as well the middle classes. The “abuse” of faith schools’ admission policies is increasing segregation in Islington, according to Reverend Coles (cited in Wroe, 2007). The former Chief School Adjudicator Dr. Ian Craig of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) – which deals with complaints against schools made by parents – stated in 2010 that ‘some faith schools were unconsciously skewing their intakes towards the rich’ (cited in Shepherd, 2010, para. 2). The reason for this, claims Craig, is that many schools have complex points-based admission systems. Points are awarded, for example, on church attendance and for parents who volunteered at a church – the “unintended” consequences of which include discrimination against parents from disadvantaged socio-economic positions, who tend to work longer hours and have less free time to volunteer for church activities. In a tribunal report, Craig points out that the points-based admissions system benefits white middle class areas and is an obstacle to immigrant children in those communities. Some faith schools’ criteria, which include having to get your child baptised within three months of birth, disadvantages some Eastern European countries as the custom is to baptise children when they reach one year of age. The former Minister for Schools, Liberal-Democrat MP David Laws, told a House of Commons Debate that although ‘the Department had not made an assessment of some of the trends in demand for Catholic schools recently ... an influx of immigrants from communities with strong Catholic representation abroad had put pressure on Catholic school places in some communities in the country’ (House of Commons Hansard Debates, 2014).

One of the reasons faith schools' admissions policy is so contentious, is that they are state-funded. All Roman Catholic schools in the UK have a voluntary-aided status. These schools receive up to a 100 per cent of their funding from the Secretary of State. Nevertheless, Catholic schools can have their own admission criteria, as long as they do not breach the Schools' Admissions Code. Consequently, they choose to prioritise pupils who practice the school's religious ethos. If a voluntary-aided school is undersubscribed they can admit pupils from any faiths, as well as non-religious pupils. However, if a faith school is oversubscribed it can admit 100 per cent of pupils who subscribed to a particular faith (Oldfield et al., 2013).

Research has shown that many parents as taxpayers who live near a state-funded faith school, believed they should have the right to send their child to the best school in their area – whether it is religious or not. As the strain on places at “good” schools increases and parents feel they are being denied access to certain high-ranked schools, the debate over whether these schools should be state-funded will intensify. A survey by Opinium revealed that ‘70% of respondents said the taxpayer should not be funding the promotion of religion in schools, while 60% said such schools promoted division and segregation’ (Helm and Townsend, 2014, para. 3). It should be noted that the recent media attention in May 2014 on faith schools and the supposed indoctrination of “radicalised” and “extremist” views, saw Muslim faith schools come under particular criticism. Many religious leaders have stepped in to the debate in fierce defence of faith schools (Addelman, 2014).

Research which surveyed 11,533 parents on primary school preference (see Burgess et al., 2011), found that ‘parents with degrees were more likely to choose schools with a religious ethos [while] [j]ust over 1% of parents with no qualifications said a school's religious ethos had been the most important factor’ (cited in Shepherd, 2009, para. 7). Indeed, parents are becoming increasingly concerned that their choice of primary school may influence admissions decisions when choosing a secondary school. This concern is illustrated in the case of Gracja from North London mentioned above and the frustration she felt at not being able to get her child into a Catholic primary school. Although she sent her child to a Church of England primary school to provide her child with a religious education, she possessed real anxiety that this might affect her child's chances of securing a place at a Catholic secondary school. Many of the parents, particularly in the North London sample, spoke about how the

church had recommended Catholic primary schools, as these were ‘feeder schools’ for certain high-ranking Catholic secondary schools.

Many of the respondents informed me that they were sending their child to a certain secondary school because it was Catholic (these, of course, were high-ranking schools in the league tables). This repeated assertion made it difficult to ever really say with any certainty whether some of the parents chose Catholic secondary schools because they were the “best” schools or because these schools promoted a religious ethos. Possibly it was a mixture of both. Izabel from London offers an example of a parent who chose a high-ranking Catholic secondary school over an attempt to try for a higher-ranking Catholic secondary school that was in fact selective. The local Catholic girls’ school had almost 80 per cent of students achieving five GCSEs, including maths and English, at grades A*-C and rated “good” by Ofsted, whereas the Catholic grammar girls’ school was rated “outstanding” by Ofsted in which 100 per cent of students achieved five GCSEs, including maths and English, at grades A*-C. Izabel believed she had more of a chance of her daughter getting a place at the non-selective Catholic secondary, as the Catholic grammar school had an entrance exam. What Izabel’s example shows is that anxiety and fear about getting a place at a Catholic school for some parents, as well as their lack of confidence and knowledge about the choice-based education system, would result in them making a calculated decision about which schools to put on the application form. Izabel feared not only that her daughter might fail the entrance exam, but that the non-selective Catholic secondary school would discover that it had not been put down on the application form as first choice. Therefore, she excluded the possibility of attempting to get a place at the selective Catholic school and opted for what she considered to be the safest option.

Liljana from London offered a clear example of a parent who chose a Catholic school simply because of its religious ethos rather than its position in the league tables or Ofsted reports. Liljana had chosen a boys’ Catholic school for her sons aged eleven and ten. This school had been rated as “requiring improvement” by Ofsted. The Ofsted report identified three areas out of four that “required improvement” at the school. These included: achievement of pupils, quality of teaching, and leadership and management. Liljana had not drawn on the market indicators when making a decision about secondary school. Her choice was based on the impression she got from the open day and the fact that she had friends who sent their children to the same school. Most significantly, she chose the school because it was Catholic:

We've been in a few schools you know you've got those open evenings and I just, I knew in my heart that our first choice is going to be a catholic secondary school, maybe because they're more strict, maybe they're because they've got like a ethos, yes, so it's like a direction and because we're Catholics, so I just thought it's going to be easier for them you know to feel they're belonging to a certain community. I don't know really, we like the school, got a good opinion, we had a few friends who already there and they said to us it's hard to get there, but luckily we got a place there. (Liljana, London)

Liljana had gone to university in Poland to study Midwifery and had worked several years as a midwife in Poland. Both of Liljana's parents had only been educated to secondary school level: her mother had worked as an administrator in an office and her father had worked on the railways while she was growing up. Both her grandparents had been peasant farmers. Her husband, who worked as a security guard, was doing a part-time degree at the Open University. Liljana was now unemployed and lived in a deprived area of London. There is no doubt that Liljana's insistence on sending her children to a Catholic secondary school was the most important factor in her choice. Yet, there were other Catholic schools in her area that had been rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and had a high position in the league tables. They were only a short distance from her chosen school. Here we see the different class strategies that are involved in reproduction. Liljana did not possess the cultural capital of the middle classes that is employed in market strategies. This school was a "safe" choice for her because she knew people who were sending their children to the school. It was local and she liked what she saw on the open day.

It was clear that Catholic schools were seen to possess certain values and principles such as being more disciplined, promoting Catholicism and possessing a student community united by faith which meant their children would be around others with similar religious beliefs – factors influencing the choice of these schools for the parents. Yet, in the case of Nottingham, I wonder what would have happened if the two top schools in Nottingham had not been Catholic. In London, for example, some parents appeared to have more knowledge of the education market mainly because, despite the high-ranking positions of their local Catholic secondary schools, they underwent a two-year preparation procedure in an attempt to secure a place for their children at a selective school when this option was available. Hence, a Catholic school was the back-up plan for some.

The North London sample provided a clearer distinction between those parents who chose a Catholic secondary school because of its religious ethos and those who despite asserting their devotion to Catholicism chose a selective school as first choice, whilst putting the Catholic secondary schools as back-up plans. For many of the London participants, the association of Polish Saturday schools was an important source of information and guidance, particularly for the more recently-arrived Polish parents. Many of the respondents were advised to choose a Catholic school both at primary and secondary school levels. The Polish Saturday school was connected to the Polish Catholic Church, which promoted the choice of Catholic schools to encourage an education with a particular religious ethos. Respondents also told me that when these schools were recommended, their high standards and high positions on school league tables were also stated as a motivational factor, to encourage parents to send their children there. Several of the respondents spoke about their confusion between state schools and faith schools, referring back to Poland, where they told me they had been unaware of such divisions.

Polish participants in London had often claimed that their commitment to Catholicism guided their choice of Catholic schools. Yet, even those with low knowledge of the education market were often aware of the good reputation Catholic schools held through social networks within the Polish community and the church. Those Polish participants who had been living in the UK for a longer time, and who also possessed higher cultural capital and educational credentials, demonstrated a deeper understanding of the workings of the market – in particular ways of gathering information and the practice of comparing “competitors” with each other. Thus, researching league tables and seeing that the selective schools maintained a 100 per cent pass rate of students achieving five A*-C grades including maths and English strongly dictated their positioning of selective schools as first choices and sometimes the *only* choices over that of the highly-performing – but not quite equally high-performing – Catholic schools. Contrast this with the case of Nottingham in which two of the highest performing secondary schools were both Catholic schools. Unlike North London, Nottingham only had one selective secondary school and this was *partially* selective at best. Importantly, it was lower down the league tables than the two top-performing Catholic secondary schools in Nottingham. Here, we saw that the majority of the parents interviewed listed the Catholic secondary schools as first and second choice and the partially selective grammar as their third. Again, their rationale and insistence was that their dedication to Catholicism had determined their choice. In this example, then, we see how comparison

between two different local education markets illustrates how the available “commodity” impacts upon the educational choice strategies parents use.

Gracja from London also insisted that Catholicism had played a significant role in choice of school. Yet, her choice of Catholic school happened to be the highest ranked secondary school in her area. Her narrative centred around its performance, league table position and the variety of extracurricular activities it offered. Gracja was highly educated, with a Masters in Science. She had previously worked as a mechanical designer in Poland, but was now unemployed. Both her parents had gone to university and her mother was an accountant, while her father was an economist for the agricultural sector during communism. They had had high ambitions for her and had wanted her to be a doctor. She had even started a medical degree to train to be a doctor while she was in Poland, but upon meeting her husband she swapped her studies to mechanical designing. Gracja’s husband was also a qualified technician who worked in construction. Hence, she did not face the same economic difficulties as lower-skilled, lower-educated Polish migrant parents in this study. Her aspirations for her sons were for them to have a job working “inside” rather than doing an “outside” job, such as ‘*cleaning the streets*’. She commented that she would be happy for them to become hairdressers as it would make good money. Compare this to someone like Salomea who was a descendant of Polish aristocracy who had stated that she would be resentful after paying so much money for her son’s private education if ‘*he was to become something such as a hairdresser*’. Gracja’s daughter had won a music scholarship in which she received free flute lessons and her mother no longer needed to pay the private ones. She played in an orchestra and was also in the church choir.

I think it's very good because well, you know, nowadays when parents especially work, because me and my husband we both work, then sometimes you can't control what your child is doing after when they go back from school, usually they sit, they're watching TV, they play computer games, everything, and she's got a little something extra to do, it's like showing the way, it's not only the virtual world it's something that you can do really nice in this world as well, you can play some instrument, you can go outside, you can play football, these sorts of things. (Gracja, London)

Gracja’s daughter had been able to benefit from this musical scholarship through her mother’s involvement with the school in which she had regular contact with her daughter’s teachers. The supportive role that her mother had demonstrated in relation to her child’s schooling had apparently impressed the teachers. Through her possession of cultural capital

and the confidence that this endowed her with, she regularly sought her daughter's form tutors' advice on her child's educational progress. This included going to talk to the teacher to enquire about where she could find private music lessons, as her daughter had previously been receiving these in Poland. The teacher, however, immediately suggested that she apply for the school's musical scholarship given her daughter's academic record, which she then successfully secured.

She chose three selective schools (first choice selective Catholic girls' secondary, second and third choice non-Catholic selective secondary) on the application form despite her insistence that being Catholic was one of the most important principles in her life. For this participant, other parents' suggestion that she should put a non-selective Catholic secondary school down on her application was seen as an insult. As mentioned previously, Gracja would eventually secure her daughter a place at her first choice: the selective Catholic secondary school.

Stefa from London also offered an example of a parent who only chose selective secondary schools as her three choices. Stefa expressed with certainty that her daughter would be able to pass the exam and if she did not, she believed that as a mother she was giving her daughter opportunities to attend the top schools in her area. Interestingly, one of the local Catholic secondary schools that was recommended as an option to her by the teacher and was suggested should be listed on her application form as a back-up plan, was in fact one of the top performing schools in the borough – though admittedly not as “high-performing” as the selective schools she had chosen. Yet, she still did not feel it was good enough to consider:

I was talking to English parents and I found out that if you want exam schools [selective schools] they are the best but you need to prepare because the second – non-verbal [exam], they don't do it at school [prepare children]. We did ask at the meeting with the head teacher why they didn't prepare and – why don't you prepare for the close by secondary catchment school [name of Catholic selective secondary] and she said no, you are Catholic – why you don't do it [apply to the non-selective Catholic school]? There are some of the schools – there is one school, a Catholic one in [borough in North London] who – [Name of top Catholic secondary school] give the people a chance if they want to, or at least to prepare some children who are maybe not able to pass the test because they are not that clever, they cannot take all the things, but they – for parents, if they want to send them and they want to prepare they are more than welcome. (Stefa, London)

Choices of schools are influenced by wider global ideas, inflicted through national educational policies, which are embedded into local realities. It is important to comprehend the geographical specificity of school choice. Policy impacts upon different localities and evenly. These national education policies are implemented into specific local, cultural and political settings. Looking at Polish parents' school choice in two settings – North London and Nottinghamshire – helps to illustrate how school choice decisions are affected by the variety and differences in the type of schools available to choose from, as well as the impact that particular socio-economic characteristics of local geographies have on choice. By comparing the two local and specific education markets, we can see what happens when those parents possessed with high level of market knowledge are faced with the decision between a high-ranking Catholic secondary school and an even higher-performing selective secondary school. I think it would be interesting if a comparative study was made between Polish parents and another case study of an Eastern European non-Catholic group, to explore how the latter group would choose secondary schools when Catholicism cannot be stated with certainty as dictating their choice of school.

The above examples illustrate Polish migrant parents who have chosen either Catholic schools or selective schools. For these parents, the private sector was out of reach, they deployed their economic, social and cultural capital by purchasing whatever educational advantages that they could afford. These came in the form of private tuition and cultural activities and engagements. The additional expense of tutoring, expensive hobbies and cultural activities are invested in so that their children will be advanced over others, in their own opinion, in which they deemed such activities as a way to secure their aspired trajectory of their children on the progression onto a “good” university. For those Polish parents who purchased private Kumon lessons as well as sent their children to private music lessons, their consumption was always justified in a narrative of the aspired future trajectories of their children. The common trajectory discussed followed a particular pattern: the Kumon lessons would assist them in the selective school entrance exams and the music lessons would benefit them in the music aptitude tests – which may secure them a musical scholarship at the selective school. This, in turn, would be used in their UCAS-form, while the attendance at a selective school is perceived to almost guarantee good exam results. The consequence of this is admission to a “good” university and subsequently a well-paying job and career. However, unlike the native-born middle classes who are desperately trying to maintain their advantage at the perceived fear of the possible downward mobility of their children, the

majority of the Polish parents following this trajectory strategy were probably going to increase their social mobility for their children. This is what Ball (2003, p. 176) refers to as the strategic sense that is related to class processes. Here the parents are rejecting their past in some form in pursuit of an aspired present and future through an upward social reproduction of their children. As stated by Bourdieu,

If rising petit bourgeois can act as if they had better chances than they have (or, at least, better than they would be if they did not believe them to be better) and so actually improve them, this is because their dispositions tend to reproduce not the position of which they are the product, but the slope of their individual or collective social trajectory, transformed into an inclination whereby this upward trajectory tends to be continued and completed. A sort of *nisus perseverandi*, as Leibniz put it, in which past trajectory is conserved in the form of a striving towards the future which prolongs it, it delimits 'reasonable' ambitions and therefore the price to be paid to realize this realistic ambition. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 333, brackets and emphasis in original)

Strategic decisions become paramount at points of transitions and where class resources come into play in order to make their aspirations a reality (Ball, 2003, p. 3). The Polish parents' children's social mobility did not simply circulate around educational performance and the schools attended, but was intertwined with a narrative of requiring a particular form of "English middle class cultural capital" in which they perceived it as one of the determining factors in increasing social mobility. There was a real awareness that education on its own was not enough. This may partially be explained for some of the participants by their own educational capital from Poland, which was often unrecognised and unacknowledged by the white middle classes in the UK. However, it must not be forgotten that some of the most ambitious and aspirational parents were those who left school and never went to university, but did nonetheless possess what Bourdieu (2005) has termed a "technical" capital which in some cases resulted in less economic downward mobility upon arriving in the UK.

5.3 Social Capital and School Choice

There are several interpretations of the concept of social capital. For Bourdieu (1986), social capital was a form of exchange and social obligations that operated within social groups and networks to create both a sense of belonging as well as a form of social closure. Social capital is class-specific and operates differently within specific social fields, particularly when there

is a struggle between classes and fractions to maintain, reproduce or advance their interests. Crucially, social capital, like all of Bourdieu's concepts, is relational, and the volume of social capital for individuals, families or social groups is connected to their cultural and economic capital (Ball, 2003). The existence and deployment of social networks as a valued resource in gaining educational information, has been revealed in research (see Ball and Vincent, 1998).

The operation of social capital as a way of acknowledging group membership and shared identity as well as a sense of obligation, becomes all the more interesting when looking at the educational practices of a particular migrant group. The problem of identifying the operation of social capital, has been widely acknowledged (see Ball, 2003, p. 81). Of particular interest to this section, is the deployment of social capital as informed by the Polish migrants' habitus – internalised both historically and in the present. In order to understand the strategies that the Polish migrant parents bring with them upon migration and use in their school choice practices, it is important to acknowledge that informal networks were so integrated into all aspects of everyday life during the communist period in Poland that it was difficult to engage in even the simplest activity without drawing upon the informal system of exchange of information or goods that operated widely. Wedel (1986) informs us that Poland had a two-tiered economic structure during communism. The first one was the state socialised sector, the second one was a legal private sector – although these enterprises were required to be registered by the state and were taxable. These were the official sectors; however, the informal economy was heavily integrated into the legal sectors. It was this informal economy that met the basic food production and distribution needs of the population, particularly during times of economic recession. A “black market” operated in which relatives brought commodities into Poland from abroad. In the agricultural sector, farmers often bypassed state agencies and sold their goods in the informal economy. By the end of the 1970s, these activities were often quite open and public. Part of being able to operate in the informal economy was to be able to gather reliable information, creating networks and information on how and where to get resources. These networks took on two forms, both private circles of friends and relatives, but also being able to gather information from public settings in which it was common to ask a stranger for information. These public settings sometimes involved a Priest or church worker. These networks were a resource for solving problems and functioned as an exchange system of individual knowledge with a variety of solutions (Wedel, 1986). Wedel (1986) points out that class membership and a

person's status impacted upon the opportunities to negotiate knowledge exchange. One of the most beneficial resource memberships in the informal economy was to be associated with the Communist Party. A system of "bureaucratic rationality" operated. Informal networks had a list of bureaucrats that would often exchange goods in a "bartering system". The informal economy existed because of the inequality between demand and supply and, as such, the government was unable to control it. Consumer needs that were not met by the state were therefore met by the informal economy (Wedel, 1986).

Many of the respondents reported stories of growing up and being either advantaged or disadvantaged by their social networks in Poland. This would range from getting Western goods on the "black market", to being encouraged to go to university because the teachers were friends with their parents, to being discouraged from going to university because of the family's socio-economic position. During the Soviet period, social capital was constituted by political capital, which yielded privileges similar to those provided by economic capital in other social fields and Western societies. For example, membership of the Communist Party acted as a collective resource that institutionalised the relationship between mutual acquaintances, recognition and privileges (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Of particular importance to me was the participants' recollection of a system of exchange of knowledge. During the interviews, as mentioned above, many of the respondents found the restriction of knowledge by British middle class parents perplexing – especially when they had freely offered these middle class parents information beforehand. This "mentality", as they labelled it, was associated with white English parents. It was something that they said would not be happening in Poland. In some examples, participants pointed out that even when you disliked the person, you participated in an exchange of knowledge to assist each other. Regularly, participants spoke about the ease with which they gained helpful information regarding school choice from Irish Catholic parents and, especially, educationally "aspirational" ethnic minority parents.

Natalina from London works part-time as a waitress. She studied to become a seamstress in Poland before she came to England with her then-boyfriend, who later became her husband. Her husband worked as a tiler in the building trade. Her father was a mechanic and her mother worked in administration while Natalina was growing up. Natalina had wanted to send her son to an all boys' Catholic school because Catholicism was a very important part of her life. The school had an 83 per cent rate of students achieving five GCSEs, including

maths and English, at grades A*-C and the school was rated “good” by Ofsted. However, after speaking to her son’s teacher about secondary school when he was in Year 4, she was advised to aim for the grammar schools because of her child’s educational performance. The grammar school she decided upon as her first choice had a 100 per cent of students achieving five GCSEs, including maths and English, at grades A*-C and the school was rated “outstanding” by Ofsted. The school had been founded in the sixteenth century and its former students had many distinguished achievements. Initially, Natalina had been intimidated after researching the school. Yet, she went about giving her son what she regarded as the best chance possible of getting a place. At first she tried to ask the English mothers in the playground about whether they were thinking about sending their children to the grammar school and what they were doing to prepare their children for the entrance exam. However, she told me that she could not find anything out. She then spoke to a neighbour who was from an Indian migrant background and whose son had successfully passed the entrance exam to the same grammar school. This time she received lots of helpful information, including the phone number of the neighbour’s son’s tutor who had privately tutored him for the entrance exam. She was also given information about the local Kumon centre.¹¹ In addition to private tutorial lessons in preparation for the grammar school entrance exam, Natalina’s son was also receiving private guitar, piano lessons and was part of a chess club. At the time of the interview, Natalina’s son had made it down to the final 180 pupils out of 1,160 boys who had taken the exam.

In Natalina’s example, we can see how the chance to even attempt to get a selective school had been aided by social connections. This was found with a number of my interviewed parents, who had particularly been assisted by members of other educationally “aspirational” migrant groups. Of course, the Polish Church, the Priest and the Polish Saturday school also formed a network which Polish parents could draw on for information on schools in the local area, in addition to the credentials these networks offered in gaining admission to Catholic schools.

¹¹ Kumon has local study centres based all around the country. Their programme of study is individualised around English and maths. Their English and maths programme aimed to develop independent learning skills and increase children’s ability to solve new problems. Lessons usually cost between £30-50 per hour.

There were slight differences between social networks and the ability to gain schooling information in Nottingham and North London. In Nottingham, the newer-arrived Polish migrants were more integrated with the previous generations of Polish migrants, particularly those from the post-Second World War. This was partially because Nottingham is a lot smaller than London and had one main Polish club established and run by former Polish migrants and their children, who were born in Nottingham. Also, several of the participants who had migrated after the collapse of communism in the 1990s had married second generation Polish migrants in Nottingham and/or British people. This meant that their networks consisted of British friends and relatives. In this respect, they spoke about how they were more easily able to gain information on the schooling system from British networks and, in particular, which schools to choose. These networks would also assist the migrants in completing school choice application forms when needed.

He was Polish but he was married to a British – an English girl, which means it was a mixed family. The children they prefer to speak English, because it is easier for them, even if they know Polish very well, and I was searching for schools in England then I ask which school is good and where to spend children, and obviously my friend got their son into [top Catholic secondary school] and she was unhappy with other local schools, so told me to apply there. (Jola, Nottingham)

In London, the newly-arrived Polish migrants were much more reliant for information on schools from the Polish Catholic Church, the Polish Saturday school and other migrant groups. There were slight differences between the Polish Saturday schools in North London and Nottingham. Both schools relied on volunteers. But whereas the Nottingham Polish Saturday school had many second generation Polish migrants volunteering, the London Polish Saturday school had a larger number of newly-arrived Polish migrants amongst their volunteers. Furthermore, the education market in North London was more complex than that of Nottingham. The Polish migrant parents in North London had to navigate their choices in a market that consisted of not just top-performing Catholic secondary schools, but also selective schools. The Polish migrant parents in North London exhibited a higher level of anxiety and distrust of information. Their strategies would involve gathering information from several different sources and then going out of their way to verify this information.

I can't understand what exactly they can say in school on the open day, but you have to be sure it will be good information. So if you go to the open evening you can't take notes from the school and try and translate to your language, but if you have a school which lies, I have to watch the children and how they are behaving, because

if the children after school ... and the behaviour is good then this school will be okay.
(Tamary, London)

This distrust of official information was heightened after people that she worked with had informed her that all schools would only provide good information and would not tell you the negative aspects. Therefore, the advice she was given by her work colleagues was apparently to go and observe different secondary schools at closing time and watch the behaviour of the children as they were leaving the school. Ball (2003) also argues that in the process of choice making and gathering market information, trust in social networks becomes significant. As a consequence of migration and the loss of strong ties, weak ties become even more important for gathering information. However, the lack of shared identity with weak ties also decreases their confidence in the information they obtain. There seemed to be a higher level of distrust in London regarding social networks and school information than there was in Nottingham. There may be several reasons for this. School choice in London was more complex due to a larger variety and differences in available schools to choose from. It also did not possess the same elements of community to that of Nottingham, perhaps because the Polish community was more tightly-knitted in Nottingham.

Ball (2003) argues that in a market setting, trust becomes more complex as there is a tension between competition, co-operation and self-interest. Markets, by their general nature, promote on one hand choice and the wider availability of information on which to base decisions, whereas on the other hand they elicit mistrust of those providing information. It is important to understand that the majority of the Polish migrant parents in this study did not have the same availability of “strong” and “weak” ties to draw on to get information about schools as a middle class British parent would have, for example, or indeed that of a native-born working class parent. Many of the participants were navigating themselves not only in a new country and society, as well as a new local setting, but they were also having to make important decisions about school choice whilst trying to understand a new and different education system. Their close networks usually consisted of other Polish migrants. Many spoke to me about the difficulty and confusion they felt when trying to work out the school choice system. There was also a real problem of language barriers. Although they spent the time and effort collecting information and brochures about schools, the more recently-arrived, lower-skilled migrants were often reliant on other people to read and translate this for them. In these situations, the acquisition of “hot” knowledge (term used by

Ball and Vincent, 1998) such as information passed on by word of mouth, became even more significant as a basis for their decisions. However, this reliance also increased their fears and anxieties about whether they could trust this information completely. There was a strong suspicion that information from (specifically) white middle class parents was being withheld from them. This they saw as a problem with a competitive schooling system in which places at “good” schools were scarce. As such, they believed that the withholding of information from others was a method of protecting these scarce resources for their own children. Take for example the below quotation from Penelopa from London:

It's not about even foreigners. I heard – secondary school I heard people saying it's not the foreigners, but even between each other, friends between each other, English to English they are worried that some other child could take my child's place, so they don't talk about it and until after the exam finishes and they get the result and the child gets the place that they want. I heard that they won't even talk to each other about schools. They go: what to do to prepare them for the school, so it's weird for me, it means that everyone can get the chance if they're capable and I mean if they're bright then why not and I found it kind of funny because I remember I used to go to ballet with girls and there was a lady and she had all the trials girls and she was preparing her for this and that and she was saying that the parents won't talk to you because of this thing, no parent will talk to you. It's like “hello” and that's it. Don't even mention secondary school because everyone wants to get the place for their own child and so they're kind of very coy about it up to the moment where the child actually has the place and “Oh, your child goes to the same school as mine” or something like that, so it's kind of weird, but it's maybe lack of secondary good schools that makes these people obsessed with their own child to get to a good one. There are not enough so they know about it. (Penelopa, London)

Ball (2003) tells us that social capital is class-specific and networks rest on a mutual habitus in which information is shared for common interests. However, it was evident in the analysis that migrant parents from higher class positions either prior to migration, or the class position they currently held in the UK, were excluded from traditional middle class information networks. Even Polish migrant parents who had taken the decision to opt out of the market by selecting independent schools, expressed a sense of frustration at the lack of communication from white middle class parents when trying to attain information on different schools. The only thing that seemed to facilitate the accumulation of “hot” knowledge, was when the mother was married to a native-born British man and/or whose friendship groups consisted of a Polish friend who was in a relationship with a native-born British individual. It was clear that the Polish migrant parents understood the importance of networks in gathering information – both about the schools themselves as well as about the

procedures that would potentially secure their child a place at their chosen school. As noted, those with poorer English language skills were even more reliant on networks for information. What was revealed during interviews was the mistrust and suspicion of formal information provided by the schools as well as the local council. This may have been because of their migrant status; however, during several interviews many participants spoke about the bureaucratic “totalitarianism” which they experienced in Poland in their engagement with official organisations – in particular governmental ones. For example, Gracja from London even complained that a system of corruption operates in Polish schools, and claimed that teachers can be bribed for better grades. Therefore, she believes that the education system in the UK is more “meritocratic”. Importantly, the use and involvement of social capital for the migrants was related to their cultural and economic capital – although, as acknowledged, not to the same extent that this would have operated for a native-born British individual.

A small number of the Polish migrant parents who had recently migrated to the UK had insufficient “strong” or “weak” ties to draw upon for information in the new environment and had less economic and cultural capital to utilise. Ludmila from Nottingham, who I had interviewed in her home, was living in a cramped, damp and cold flat above a shop in a very deprived area of Nottingham. The flat did not have a main entrance and I had to go through the back of a yard to get access. In the living room where the interview was conducted, a bed was placed at the side where her 14-year-old son slept. There was black mould and damp with peeling wallpaper throughout the flat. The living room was so cold I could see the breath leave mine and my participant’s mouth during the interview. The participant had recently had a baby. The baby was at the side of the room in her cot. It was so cold that the baby was wearing her outdoor clothing, as was the participant. The participant told me how she never wanted to come to the UK, but she had no choice as her husband had come first and he did not want to go back to Poland. She also told me how she could not get a job as she had just had a baby, how she did not understand about the benefit system or how to fill out a form. When she did go to enquire about child benefit, she was informed that she was not entitled despite living in the UK for six months. Yet, the official rule is that once you have been living in the UK for three months and from the EU, you should be entitled to child benefit (GovUK, 2014). Hence, I informed her of this. Her 14-year-old son was attending an academy that had been listed as “failing” in the Ofsted report, which had stated that it had “inadequate” teaching (Garner, 2013). This could perhaps be explained by the fact that she

had only been living in the UK for about six months and would have had to enrol her son at a secondary school in the middle of a school year when he was already in Year 9. Hence, most of the “good” schools would have had no spaces available. Yet, for her daughter aged ten, Ludmila from Nottingham had listed the same “failing” academy as her first choice and also listed another “failing” academy placed under special measures as her second choice. Ludmila admitted that she did not have many friends in Nottingham, and was having to make decisions about schools based on location. In fact, the few people she knew and who warned her against the school she chose produced more anxiety and stress for Ludmila. She did not find this advice helpful, as these were negative comments about the school she had chosen. She was more stressed, at the time, about finding any school place at all, as she had arrived mid-term. Furthermore, she had reassured herself that this was a “good” school because it was a new, modern building with many facilities. In this example, we see how “hot” knowledge can actually be impractical. Ludmila embodied what Ball (2006) describes as a “disconnected chooser” – someone who makes a “choice” as necessary. They have little confidence in understanding market indicators and are impressed by the schools’ external characteristics. It is not that Ludmila did not care about the education of her children – she was deeply concerned. But her main priority was getting them a place at a school in the UK in the first place. As long as her children were happy and could adjust to the school, this was her main concern.

What the above examples have illustrated is that the fears and anxieties expressed by the parents were related to social reproduction – particularly for the more highly skilled and highly educated migrants, as well as those who aspired to achieve social mobility for their children. In these instances, knowledge from informal social networks was highly valued, but never fully trusted. When a parent was required to make a school choice through necessity, then information about schools produced anxiety for other reasons. Advice to them seemed unconstructive as the parent was unable to act upon it and would, therefore, prefer not to know.

Bourdieu (1986) argued that connections to networks are not socially given; it is an act of institution, such as in the case of the family. Networks are the product of an investment strategy; both individually and collectively. Networks operate in a system of exchange in which membership of the group receives recognition and, as such, reproduces the group. This act also produces a method for closure, as seen in the example of Natalina when she

attempted to gain information about grammar schools from white middle class mothers in the school playground. In many cases, social networks require a great deal of time and energy – yet social capital can be inherited, for example in the case of a family name. This type of social capital can form long-lasting social relationships, which can be used in exchange for other forms of capital. These networks regulate the conditions of membership (p. 22). The concept of social capital underlines the conflict and operation of power as actors attempt to advance their interests through social relations. Social capital becomes a struggle, which is performed in different fields (cited in Siisiäinen, 2000). As Bourdieu states,

[t]he kinds of capital, like trumps in a game of cards, are powers which define the chances of profit in a given field (in fact, to every field or sub-field there corresponds a particular kind of capital, which is current, as a power or stake, in that field). (1994, p. 112, brackets in original)

Forms of capital for Bourdieu are the central factors defining an agent's position and the possibilities open to them in a given field.

5.4 Practicality First

During times of major transition, as for example the move from primary to secondary school, class resources and identities become crucial. It is at times like these that the class habitus and the possession of capital interact with policy regimes. Classes and identities influence lifestyle choices. However, these choices, in particular with regards to the field of education, are dependent on the composition and volume of multiple capitals. It is important to acknowledge that a migrant's previous class position, education and the knowledge they possess, will impact upon their assimilation and mobility in a new society. Despite a previously held class identity, reproduction and mobility is never guaranteed in a new society, and in times of crises practical issues often become the most essential focus of everyday life. Below are examples of parents whose economic, social and cultural capitals are imbalanced. If they had the available time, they would have the social competence and capability to research different schools. However, their need to work and organise family life around practical necessity means that their school choices are articulated and justified through practicality.

Celina from London had little knowledge about the education market. Similar to other parents who did not understand how to operate in an education market, their choice of school was usually determined by location and facilities.

So I just felt that this school was very colourful, like in a new building because it was built from basically nothing, so no reputation, nothing like you know information, nothing, absolutely nothing because everybody in there was new. I just knew the area. We live in a very close, very nice area so it's just like a residential area so I felt that it can be nice and it could be nice so that was only one thing. And definitely I was thinking also about the distance from home to school. (Celina, London)

A number of parents in London cited choosing a school because it was new, as in newly built. When I asked them about Ofsted reports or league tables, they informed me that because the school was new it had not had the time to establish itself, so that market indicators were seen as valueless and not worth consideration. It seemed that the parents thought the buildings and the surroundings of a school could influence a child's academic performance. Most significantly, these mothers were usually very busy, either working, studying or with another young child to look after. Therefore, location and convenience were the most important factors in the choice of secondary school.

Penelopa from London appeared to possess a sufficient quantity of educational capital which would enable her to navigate the education market. She had an MA degree from Poland in University Administration, as well as winning a scholarship for a degree specialising in European Law. Currently, Penelopa works as a Deputy Manager in a further education college in the UK. Her mother was an accountant and her father was a university educated high-ranking police officer. Her sister also has an MA degree (in Accounting). Her three choices of schools at first slightly surprised me. She chose three comprehensive schools, two of which were rated "good" and held just slightly above average league table positions. Her second choice did, however, have a good league table position with 70 per cent of students achieving five GCSEs, including maths and English, at grades A*-C and the school was rated "outstanding" by Ofsted. Yet, this was her second choice because it was located further away than her first choice. When I asked her why it was a consideration, her main motive for picking it was because it was an all girls' school and she seemed unaware of its league table position. Penelopa had not based her choices on any market indicators of the schools' performance. Nor had her Catholicism influenced her choice of school, even though she regularly attended church. Yet, her reason for attending church had been to do with her

“duties” as the mother and to put her daughter through her confirmation. Despite there being a high-ranking and “outstanding” Catholic school for girls very close to her first choice of school, which had a higher position in the league tables than her first three choices, she was not really considering it. She told me that she was leaving 50 per cent of the decision of secondary school choice to her daughter and that her own choices had been based on “word of mouth” from friends. Crucially, it was the school’s location – within five minutes walking distance of her home – that influenced her decision to put it as the first choice school.

Exploring Penelopa’s case in more detail, it can be seen how the difficulties and struggles she had had in her private life had not allowed for engagement with the education market and the various strategies that are applied by other parents. Penelopa was absent from her daughter’s life for several years due to a broken relationship with the father. Her daughter, who was in Year 5, had been living with her in England for only a year and the mother’s main concern had been the behavioural difficulties she had been experiencing with her daughter. We can see in this example that, as with other of my interviews, the less time the Polish parents had to engage with the education system and its market, the fewer strategies they apply in navigating it. Despite the parents’ own educational capital, we see that these parents display similar educational strategies to that of the native-born working classes.

Penelopa from London illustrated an almost archetypical “contingent chooser” (Ball, 2006, p. 218). For her, choice was distant. She had other more important events in her life occupying her time, and getting her daughter through primary school was one of these. She had used minimal information in making her choices through lack of social capital and her choices were local. One of the reasons Penelopa chose a school within five minutes of walking distance was that she was a single parent with a full-time job. Her concern with her daughter’s behavioural problems and peer group had also dictated that she chose a school within close distance. Hence, her choice of schools had to fit into the practicalities of life, in particular after school activities and clubs. This, of course, did not mean that her daughter’s education was not important to Penelopa, but it was rather that the difficulties in her everyday life which impacted upon her choice decisions. Importantly, although Penelopa did not extensively research her local education market and therefore may have missed the opportunity to send her daughter to a higher-ranking all girls secondary Catholic school, the research that she had undertaken had examined particular market indicators such as GCSE results and the schools in question had been chosen with a particular educational trajectory

in mind for her daughter. Penelopa had ensured that the chosen school had a sixth form, as she wanted her daughter to continue on to A-levels and go to university. This illustrates that, although practical issues were prioritised in decision making, the educational and cultural capital that she brought with her from Poland was drawn upon as a way to reproduce a similar educational trajectory for her daughter.

I thought about it because it's [name of first choice school] not too far from the place where I live okay so even if she's going to have to walk it's going to be much better for her because it's not far and it doesn't involve a bus in it. I would like to choose somewhere where she is going to do good and what they are going to provide, some activities after school, but what I'm taking into consideration as well is that the place she does her GCSEs at the same place [where she does her A-levels], that she don't have to move because I've noticed that some secondary schools they have like a couple of years only and then you decide do you want to do it [A-levels] or you don't want to do it, no I want one with a sixth form. (Penelopa, London)

Kasia from outer London was considering applying for a grammar school. However, the long commute to and from school was cited as a major obstacle and, strangely, she justified her choice of grammar school simply as an opportunity to give her son extra exam practice. It was clear that she could see the connection between attending a high-ranking secondary school and the possible influence it could have on his future educational trajectory. However, she justified her exclusion of a selective school through her own childhood experience of being pushed by her parents, who both had PhDs and had expressed their disappointment in her life-style choices to not pursue postgraduate education. Kasia stated that her main aspiration for her son was to be happy and healthy. However, during the interview, sending her child to a school located close by was mentioned several times. Kasia's husband worked long hours. She had just had a baby and was completing an open university degree.

I think that we were doing research a couple of years ago about just where the schools stand really and we found this [Name of grammar school] and we did more research about that and yeah, it seems a very nice school because at parenting nights you....kids finishing [Name of grammar school] and going to Oxford or Cambridge and stuff like that, but what is the disadvantage of there? He needs to travel there on a bus and here he would finish at 3pm and 3.10pm he is home. From [Name of grammar school], which is in town, it would take him probably about an hour or an hour and a half to get back, in the traffic. (Kasia, London)

The distance of schools as reflected in parents' choice is important in understanding household organisation as well as the relations between the school market and other

government policies such as transport (Carlen et al., 1992). Butler and Robson's (2003) research shows that white middle class parents are more willing to let their children travel long distances in order to attend a "good" school. McDowell et al. (2006) also supports this finding; their research found that once middle class parents need to make decisions about secondary schooling their attitude towards education provision becomes more strategic. At the time of my interviews in Nottingham, parents were allowed to choose faith schools outside their catchment areas. Nottingham Council had a discretionary travel scheme that allowed free school travel for children who attended schools outside their catchment area. However, this scheme was under threat because of government cuts in which subsidised faith school transport in places such as Nottingham was likely to end (Boocock, 2013). Such a move would clearly impact upon parental choice both for reasons of practicality and because of financial constraints. However, with the present scheme still intact, many of the Polish participants chose a Catholic school in Nottingham in spite of distance – and insisted that their choice was based on the Catholic faith ethos of the school. It would, nevertheless, be interesting to see whether this pattern would persist if the scheme was scrapped. Moreover, this could be compared to London, where all under 16-year-olds are entitled to free public transport. Yet, this did not seem to impact much on Penelopa from London's choice of school, as she still wanted a school within walking distance.

5.5 Opting Out of the Market

Ball (2003) has linked the rise of the "risk society" (see e.g. Giddens, 2002) to that of the fear of the middle classes over their social reproduction in the education market. In a time of modernisation, individuals are continuously monitoring and calculating their choices – no more so than in the education system. Focusing on the day-to-day processes of social reproduction of the middle classes through their relationship with educational institutions, Ball (2003) shows how the middle classes have to work harder to maintain their advantages in a competitive education market based on choice. The risk of "choice" is associated with the assertion that it is "open" to all. Hence, although the middle class parents employ specific strategies to advance their children in the education system, the children's social reproduction is never guaranteed. There is always the "risk" that the parents make the "wrong" choices, resulting in downward mobility for their children, who are then overtaken

by those children whose parents have made the “right” choices, which maintains or increases their children’s social position.

As Bourdieu and Boltanski (1978) acknowledged, economic capital can be used to accumulate cultural capital, particularly in the form of institutionalised capital as seen in educational qualifications. With the aim of reducing the risks associated with the “failure” of privileged social class reproduction, those with economic capital are able to reduce the perceived risks by purchasing educational advantages through that of the private school sector. Salomea was the only participant from London to choose a private secondary school for her child. Not only was it a private school, but it was one of the top elite schools in the country. Her son had spent his first two years in education in a high-ranking Catholic primary school in a wealthy area of London. However, this was only because they were on a waiting list for a private primary school place. Once it was available, he was sent there immediately and then progressed to a private junior school. At the time of the interview, he was waiting to start at the elite secondary school. Salomea’s main rationale for private education was that she felt her son was talented and could not receive the attention he needed from the state school sector. She wanted her son to be in a smaller class. The available facilities of the private school, such as its large sports facilities as well as its setting, and the option of boarding and what she described as a ‘beautiful’ and ‘gorgeous’ campus, were also used to justify her choice of school. But what stood out most in Salomea’s narrative was her discussion of surrounding her son in an environment that felt ‘right’ and where he would be with ‘people like himself’. Salomea and her husband had aristocratic heritage, were highly educated and in the top socio-economic positions in the UK as categorised by the SOC (2000). Whilst talking about her delight in finding the ‘right’ school for her son, she also demonstrated resentment at having to drive him a long distance to and from school daily. This frustration was expressed through a narrative about the schools in her area ‘not being good enough’ – a similar finding to Butler’s (2003) research on the narratives of upper middle class Islington parents. Most significant in Salomea’s narrative was the fear that her son might ‘waste’ his expensive education. When I asked her why she chose to pay for his education, she justified it in terms of the de-valuation of qualifications and providing future opportunities for her son whether he takes them or not:

I think, with time, employment is becoming a lottery rather than every person’s right, it is more and more difficult to get a job so chances are that in 10 years time to sweep

the roads you will need a Master's degree in environmental science therefore I think, you know, have that, this is something – what can parents give a child? They can write a cheque with a large inheritance if they're lucky and if not you can give the child all the tools to later on master his life, if he wants to be a road sweeper I reckon he'll be able to swing it if he's fit but if he wants to do something else he'll have that option because he will have received a good education and that is my investment in him. (Salomea, London)

Danuta was the only Nottingham participant to send her child to a private school. Although Danuta did not come from the same elite background as Salomea, her parents were still part of the Intelligentsia during the communist period in Poland. Her parents both had university degrees, her mother worked as a teacher and her father worked for the economic sector. Danuta herself had an MA in Law from Poland, while her husband who was English was an accountant. Yet, Danuta could not transfer her qualifications to England. Instead, she did a teaching and HLTA course in Nottingham in order to become a teaching assistant at a primary school. It is this teaching experience that influenced her decision to send her daughter to a private school. Like Salomea, she cited the size of school classes in the state sector as one of her biggest concerns. It was also her fear and anxiety of not getting the 'right' secondary school choice that first led her to investigate the private sector. After visiting the two top-performing Catholic secondary schools in Nottingham, she decided that these were the only 'acceptable' state schools to send her daughter to – even though she did not practice her Catholicism any more. She became incensed by her daughter's primary school teacher after she suggested that Danuta should also list one of the local state secondary schools, and had apparently told her that she might not get her first choice. Yet, her daughter was accepted for her first choice, which was one of the top-performing Catholic secondary schools and one of the best in the area. Nevertheless, she still sent her to a private school after she told me she was so impressed when she went to look around. Danuta displayed a sense of admiration towards the families who sent their children to the private school. For Danuta, her daughter was now mixing with the 'right' people – although she herself was excluded from the parents' dinner parties. The decision to send her daughter to a private school was because of her own desire to distance her daughter from the local children in order to endow her with middle class cultural capital:

I'm sorry, I don't want to be awful, but I wouldn't send [name of daughter] to the local school; although that school is outstanding apparently but looking at those children when they walk home, oh god, I probably sound awful but it's just – I don't know, there is just something about them, I don't want to be awful. I know that drugs

can be everywhere. But they don't behave the way that I would expect the child to behave on the streets. They smoke on the street, I think that you represent your school when you have your uniform. They look always so scruffy. While at the school that [daughter] is, you have to look really presentable all day long or they would tell you off, so I think that everything about education is not only what you learn, it's everything that you learn, you learn how to behave, to have your manners, and how you look like, because it gives you know it gives you a start. I don't want to sound like a snob, because honestly you know, it's a stretch for us to send her to private school but when I went to see that school for the first time, the private one, I just couldn't believe. I work in primary school and quite often we take our children to a local secondary school for like transition and activities so I was only comparing with that one school and I just couldn't believe! I was taken around [name of private school] and it was play time at some point because I was there for hours, and I thought oh my god, these children are not running, they are not bashing each other, they just walk nice, I thought my god, that is unreal, that is totally different standards. (Danuta, Nottingham)

For Danuta from Nottingham, she downplays the use of economic capital in securing a place at the private school and instead speaks about how her daughter was talented enough to pass the entrance exam and, as such, 'deserves' a place.

It is interesting that only two of the participants from my entire interview sample had chosen private education over state or selective schools, especially as both of them had secured places at "outstanding" Catholic schools. First, with Salomea from London at a primary school, who merely used this as a "waiting room" until a private school place became available. Second, Danuta from Nottingham, who despite gaining her first choice of one of the top-performing secondary schools which happened to be a Catholic school, nevertheless rejected the place and sent her child to a private school. This research attempted to find more Polish parents who had chosen the private schooling sector. Yet, this proved difficult. It is important to remember that private education did not exist under Poland's state socialism. The majority of the parents interviewed were quite critical of private education. Of course, we cannot make generalisations from two interviews. Nonetheless, it is interesting to see from this small in-depth qualitative case study that both Salomea and Danuta – who were from the Intelligentsia and had both married English, highly educated husbands – also seemed to understand the importance of cultural capital in securing one's status and position in society. Their narrative shared similarities in that they were not willing to take a "risk" with their children's futures. As such, they used their economic capital to purchase private education. Ball (2003) has noted that the purchase of private education is often used to guard against uncertainty and potential "risks". It also offers an enclave in which social

reproduction can occur without “danger” of “contamination” of the “unwanted” elements of the “dangerous” classes.

5.6 Choice, Academies and Ethical Dilemmas

The data presented so far has shown how the capacity to engage in choice can be class-specific, as well as geographically influenced according to local education markets. As the majority of the participants in this research were highly educated and highly skilled, they brought with them a class habitus that determined, to some extent, their choice practices in pursuit of increased social mobility for their children. This means, in many of the cases, that parents chose to send their children to the highest status schools – be that Catholic or selective. It was shown in the case of Marja that she still chose to send her daughter to a Catholic secondary school, even though she was no longer a practising Catholic and her husband was an atheist. The majority of Polish migrant parents who demonstrated a sufficient amount of capability and skill in choosing a school, with a perceived future goal-orientation for their child in mind, justified their decisions as being in the “best interest” of their children. In a very limited number of cases, putting the interests of their child first in terms of school choice, meant compromising their own political beliefs on equality.

Roza from London had become very politicised during her studies as a mature Sociology student and faced an ethical dilemma with regards to her choice of school for her daughter. As a single mother, the local school was the obvious choice. It also happened to be turning into an academy and had been marked as “exceptional” and “outstanding” in Ofsted reports. Roza had undertaken thorough research on the school, including speaking to a large number of parents and teachers and checking all the various market indicators on the school’s performance. She also seemed very certain that her daughter would receive a place at the school, as she was in the catchment area. Yet, the fact that it was going to become an academy and it was going to have a Christian sponsor clashed very much with Roza’s socialist and atheist politics:

Well I think academies reminds me a bit of this two tier system when we have better and not so good, okay. I really do think that this is the way that our government basically wants the schools to be and this as well reminds me very much of how the education works in Poland and this has changed because people recogniseit is

dividing children in to two groups and you are doing well academically and you are doing well to have whatever skills and so on which will be then – you will be treated as a second class citizen because you do not have these academic potentials and so on, and I think that this is exactly what is happening and as well I don't like private businesses and huge corporations brainwashing my children. Basically that is what it would be about and I'm scared that in time it will get to the point when a school board can decide let's teach children creationism because we're Christians and we want this to be, so let's block this type of learning. I really don't believe that it gives children balanced views. (Roza, London)

Roza then went on to speak about the importance of not wanting to reproduce inequalities in society through her own choices, including for example the ethical struggle she has to face about sending her child to one of the “best” schools in the area. When I asked her where this thought process came from, she told me ‘*[t]o be honest I think it's probably the communist brainwashing I got as a child! [laughter]*’ and her background of not coming from a privileged family as well as the discrimination she faced in the UK from being an immigrant. She tried to justify her choice of school by talking about the work it was doing to raise awareness of LGBT issues as well as the fact that there was wide ethnic diversity among pupils. Roza’s justification for going against her belief is her disadvantaged background and her experience of being a single mother and immigrant in the UK. Hence, she wants to give her children the best possible start in life so they do not face the same struggles she has had to cope with. Yet, Roza still combats her feelings of guilt at betraying her ideological beliefs by focusing on the social class and ethnic diversity of the school:

So for me this school is very mixed and this is really good. It's mixed, I think, it is mixed in terms of different religious backgrounds, different ethnic backgrounds, different social backgrounds and economic backgrounds. You have children from very poor families and there are middle class children from this area around street which go to the school, so I think that this is what's great about this school, this is what I would really look for in any school rather than to be one community. Whatever that is, whether it's white, middle class, or Black Caribbean, I would like the community to be mixed. (Roza, London)

Crozier et al. (2008, p. 261) and Reay et al. (2011) have also identified the dilemmas middle class parents face in trying to perform “the good/ethical self”, while simultaneously guaranteeing the “best” educational choices for their children. They investigated a section of the middle classes who chose not to “play” the education market by sending their children to the local comprehensive irrespective of league table positions. As a consequence, these white middle class parents had to deal with the psychosocial conflict these choices produced.

These parents justified such decisions by talking about the benefits their children would receive from mixing with people from a wide diversity of backgrounds and ethnicities. This was in comparison with their own privileged backgrounds, in which they were sheltered from the harsh realities of society. As such, they were performing what Crozier et al. (2008) term “the good self” in which they were standing by their values of ensuring the survival of the welfare state, for example. In the case of Roza, we almost see the opposite. She has to come to terms with the fact she is choosing a school that goes against her political and ideological beliefs in order to ensure a good education for her daughter.

It is important to point out the contrast between my respondents in comparison to those in Crozier et al. (2008) and Reay et al. (2011). Crozier et al. (2008) and Reay et al. (2011) chose to focus on white middle class families making strategic choices to act against self-interest. In research presented in Crozier et al. (2008), the samples were divided into three types of middle class categories, which were historically located: established middle class, whose private education as well as university education could be dated back over three generations, second generation middle class, whose private or grammar school education as well as university education was reproduced over two generations, and first generation middle class, who were usually the first in their family to go to university (p. 236). The interviewed parents in all these categories that engaged in ‘[a]gainst-the-grain school choice’ (Reay et al., 2011, p. 39) were choosing to send their children to urban comprehensive schools achieving below the national average A*-C GCSE results. These parents were balancing their own political beliefs against what was “best” for their children. It may be assumed that these parents were taking a “risk” with their children’s education and future trajectories. After all, many of these parents possessed the economic capital to send their children to private schools, and this was always a possibility should they become unhappy with the state comprehensive school they had chosen. Furthermore, one of the reasons why the parents had chosen socially mixed urban comprehensives was so their children could develop a type of citizenship skill involving the understanding of difference and tolerance in an increasingly globalised society. Sending their children to these schools was seen as “a toughening experience”, the opportunity for their children to develop resilience and become ‘worldly-wise’ (Reay et al., 2011, p. 155, inverted commas in original). Attendance at these comprehensives was seen as a way to advantage their children in some respects. Furthermore, despite the valuing of mixed schools, working class children were always positioned as the “other”, and the parents as well as the children engaged with them on a semi-detached basis. Streaming and schemes

such as the Gifted and Talented were utilised by the middle classes – therefore, it was acceptable to send their children to those schools as long as they were in the top set and with “people like themselves”. As such, a type of in-school segregation was produced. The middle class parents also engaged in other forms of risk management when sending these children to comprehensives, such as joining school governing bodies.

If we compare this to the Polish migrant parents seen in my own research, we can start by considering their historical class location. Apart from a very limited number whose grandparents were Polish aristocracy, tracing back the socio-economic position three generations shows that for the majority of the participants their grandparents were peasant farmers – in most cases illiterate. Their own parents may have been the first in the family to go to university, as a result of the positive discrimination policies that existed during the communist regime – particularly in the 1950s and the 1960s. Secondly, Polish parents experience downward mobility and deskilling upon migrating to the UK (as illustrated in Appendix 3). Thirdly, looking at their current socio-economic position, we can see that the majority of Polish parents in this research could not afford to send their children to private schools if they wanted. Indeed, paying for Kumon lessons often resulted in undertaking additional work, including in the informal economy. Many of the participants in this study spoke about the discrimination they faced in the UK. This was used in many cases to justify what they saw as ‘doing their best for their children’. Some of the Polish parents in the interviews spoke about placing their own preferences of schools on the application form, whilst not informing their children that this had been done – leaving their children to believe that their own desired school had been listed. They spoke about wanting to give their children the best possible opportunities – particularly when there was a sense of guilt surrounding moving their child from one country to another. Getting their children into a “good” school, was seen by the respondents as the responsibility of being a “good parent”. “Good parenting” is not a class-neutral concept. Ball (2003) argues that middle class parents consider the happiness of a child to refer to not just the present situation, but also to his or her socio-economic position in future life. As such, the child’s own wishes and preferences come second to that of the parent when choosing schools (p. 55). What the Polish migrant parents in this research – who engaged in this behaviour – demonstrated, adheres to the conception of what is seen to be a “good parent”. Their future educational success and economic security were seen as more important than the child’s wishes at ten or eleven years of age. The Polish parents that engaged in this type of practice also displayed anxiety and fear of their children

getting involved in the “wrong” circle of friends. Sometimes these schools were chosen to distance their children from “undesirable” others who had been befriended during primary school. These respondents did not have the security of the economic capital that would allow them to remove their children at any given moment and send them to private school. Parenting practices involving authoritarian control and strictness and supervision, have been linked to encouraging educational success (Gray and Steinberg, 1999; Steinberg et al., 1992). It is important that these respondents are not stereotyped as “overprotective” and too “controlling”, but rather that their practices are located within the research on school choice and social class. They should not be seen as “problematic”, such as in the case of British Chinese parents who were stereotyped in this way by teachers in Archer and Francis’ (2005) research. Their behaviour exemplifies “typical” middle class school choice practices. However, they do not have the security to take “risks” with their children’s futures.

5.7 Summary

This chapter has addressed the first research question, exploring the strategies, skills and knowledge that Polish migrant parents brought with them upon migration and/or develop in Britain with regards to secondary school choice for their children. It provided an overview of the complexity of the choices parents made in the specific local education markets of North London and Nottinghamshire, showing how diversity of school availability impacts upon the parents’ school choices. The way in which Polish migrant parents positioned faith schools within a marketised education system was illustrated by demonstrating the justifications the majority of parents expressed for: firstly, choosing only Catholic secondary schools in Nottingham and citing their religious devotion as dictating their choice and, secondly, showing how some parents chose selective schools over Catholic secondary schools when the former school was higher in school league tables and this option was available – regardless of their insistence on their commitment to Catholicism. In a highly competitive schooling system, the “high status” and strong academic performance of Roman Catholic secondary schools produces tensions between Polish migrant parents and white middle class parents. In the fear and anxiety Polish parents felt about “getting a place” at their chosen school, they exhibited a type of suspicion that white middle class parents were ‘desperate to secure their own children a place’ at one of the top Catholic schools, despite

not being Catholic. It was clear from the interviews that the majority of Polish migrant parents experienced social closure from this group when inquiring about secondary schools. Research shows that white middle class parents would most likely possess market knowledge and, therefore, we could assume that they have the capacity to share this if they wanted to. Furthermore, respondents recalled stories of being told by white middle class parents that admission policies of faith schools were “unfair”. Crucially, the social class of the respondents and their possession of economic, cultural and social capital, impacted upon their capacity to engage with choice. However, it was also revealed that in the face of time restrictions, work commitments and lack of knowledge about an education system in a new environment, class strategies and the enactment of class skills were reduced. Lastly, the chapter considered what being a “good parent” involves when respondents became “consumers” of education in the UK, including the ethical dilemma they face when their choice of school for their children goes against their own politics and the wishes of their children. This was explained by the parents’ declaration that the future educational trajectory and social mobility of their children is prioritised because of their own experience of downward mobility in the host society as well as the discrimination they face.

Chapter 6

Social Divisions

This chapter will address the second research question, exploring the perceptions Polish migrant parents have of social divisions within British society, and will consider to what extent, if any, these perceptions influence their school choice for their children. Comparative measures of cross-national occupational status will be discussed briefly. The chapter will then take a closer look at the respondents' understandings of social class in British society and the influence that past structures may have in shaping their current class subjectivities. Exploring shared discourses of social divisions in British society, we will see how the Polish migrant parents distinguish themselves as “worthy”, “moral” and “hard-working”, particularly in comparison to disadvantaged communities. The chapter will show how the majority of the respondents understand social inequality as a cultural rather than as a structural issue, and how this in turn reinforces their own discourse around mobility and parenting, which they deem possible to achieve in a “meritocratic” society through their appropriation of middle class values as the norm in British society. In positioning themselves in opposition to disadvantaged sections of society, we will see how this elevates anxiety and fears about “others”, influencing their school choice. Finally, the chapter will offer an overview of the international transferability of cultural capital, and will show how religious capital performs as a type of cultural capital leading to educational capital and social networks.

6.1a Social Class

Over the last few decades, the relevance of social class to understanding identity and social relationships in society has been contested. So much so that by the late 1980s, debates centred around whether social class existed at all in contemporary society. The demise of class-based politics since the 1980s and rise of post-industrial individualism and consumer society saw inequality reconstructed as a “cultural” rather than structural issue. This chapter is not attempting to give an overview of the broader debate on the relevance of social class and/or the way in which as sociologists we understand new forms of class relations in contemporary society. Its purpose is to contextualise the Polish migrant parents' school

choice decisions as influenced by their perceptions of social divisions in terms of both class and ethnicity in Britain and their local education markets. I take the position that social class persists in contemporary society and that inequalities are entrenched in these divisions. The social class to which a person belongs shapes their life chances. Furthermore, social class has become indistinguishable from wider political and policy rhetoric about what is seen to be morally “right” and “wrong” – particularly in regards to child rearing strategies. In order to understand how the Polish migrant parents construct themselves as “good” parents, making the “right” school choice decisions for their children, we need to understand how they position themselves in opposition to others and how this has been influenced by the wider societal indoctrination of middle class values as the norm. In order to understand the practices that the Polish migrant parents in this research engaged in, in their pursuit of a middle class ideal, it is important to understand the role that culture plays in class constructions. Bourdieu offers a more nuanced understanding of how class positioning is generated through symbolic and culturally produced classifications and distinctions (Gillies, 2005). School choice offers an example in which class practices and class identification interact with state policy, producing – intentionally or unintentionally – patterns of social closure. Ball (2003, p. 3) recommends looking at the micro-practices of social reproduction in order to understand class. A market system of education separates the individual from the collective, as schools are based on the individual criteria of the parents: ‘The collectivist basis of social protection is cloaked by the celebration of individual responsibility embedded in choice policies’ (Ball, 2003, p. 54).

6.1b Locating the Participants’ Socio-Economic Status

Understanding the intersection between social class and school choice practices for Polish migrant parents adds another layer of complexity in regards to class analysis. Polish migrants can be categorised by their socio-economic status through occupational hierarchies in the UK. In Table 1 below, I have given an overview of the participants’ past, present and family occupations and education. However, it is important to understand the general downward mobility and de-skilling Polish migrants experience upon migration to the UK. Recognising this will help in understanding the different volumes and compositions of capitals – in comparison to other UK-based workers who share the same position in the occupational hierarchy – they possess. Like other A8 migrants, many Polish migrants tend to be recent

graduates, but they are still employed predominantly in “lower-skilled” occupations. Düvell and Garapich’s (2011, p. 35) research showed that in 2008 non-immigrants’ median school leaving age was 16 compared to A8 workers’ median school leaving age of 19 years. Despite this, nearly half of A8 migrants worked in “lower-skilled” occupations compared to 18 per cent of the British-born population. The consequence of this is that the A8 migrants tend to receive lower wages and reduced returns on their education. Blanchflower and Lawton’s (2010, p. 7) research found that on average A10 migrants earned 12.5 per cent less than the British-born population, while Clark and Drinkwater (2008) argued that when education is controlled for in their analysis, A8 migrants earn the lowest of any immigrant group in the UK. Research finds that for the period March 2008 to March 2009, 67 per cent of A8 workers who registered on the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) stated that their hourly paid rate was between £4.40-£5.99 (UKBA et al., 2008, p. 16). The WRS is ‘[a] government programme to monitor the employment of citizens of A8 countries after EU enlargement in May 2004’ (Migration Observatory, 2014). Research conducted (UKBA et al., 2008) found that between May 2004 and September 2008 Polish workers constituted the largest proportion of all occupational sectors in the UK in comparison to other A8 migrants. Polish workers accounted for ‘69% of those registering to work in manufacturing, 68% in administration, business and management (including employment agencies) and 64% in hospitality and catering’ (UKBA et al., 2008, p. 21, brackets in original). The ONS also showed the high employment rate of Polish-born people: ‘In the second quarter of 2011 an estimated 84.6 per cent of Poles aged 16 to 64 were in employment, compared with a rate of 70.4 per cent for the UK as a whole’ (2011a, p. 2).

Classifying my own participants – as has been done in Table 1 below – was a difficult decision for me. It was not something I was comfortable with, particularly as I was doing qualitative research. I avoided imposing such crude classifications upon my participants for as long as I could, but then realised I needed some type of reference for my participants’ socio-economic backgrounds in order to explore how this may impact upon school choice. Initially, I had attempted to classify my participants’ socio-economic background using Savage et al.’s (2013) seven classifications of social class, as my main aim had been to show the differentiation between the participants’ current economic situation and their possession of cultural and educational capital. Yet, my participants simply did not fit into the new classification system. I then tried to use Goldthorpe’s (1980) social mobility and class structure of modern Britain, but again it became difficult to classify my participants within

these categories. Goldthorpe's social mobility and class structure of modern Britain appeared outdated and difficult to apply to the empirical data. Whereas Savage et al.'s (2013) classification seemed to have several categories missing – possibly because, as Savage (2013) has acknowledged himself, *The Great British Class Survey* had difficulties in attracting working class participants – there was also an issue of classification using the standard occupational classification 2000 (SOC 2000) scale, as this was based on occupation. When someone was unemployed, I could not assign them to a category. However, the SOC 2000 scale of social class categorisations seemed to work best in comparison with other classification scales.

SOC 2000 Major Groups:

1. Managers and senior officials
2. Professional occupations
3. Associate professional and technical occupations
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations
5. Skilled trades occupations
6. Personal service occupations
7. Sales and customer service occupations
8. Process, plant and machine operatives
9. Elementary occupation

(SOC, 2000)

In Table 1 below, participants' highest level of education, previous employment in Poland, current occupation in Britain and type of school selected, have been listed.

Table 1: Participants' Socio-Economic Status

Participant's name	Participant's highest level of education	Employment in Poland	Participant's social class in UK based on employment categorisation	Type of schools selected ¹	Attends Polish Sat. school?
Danuta (Nottingham)	MA Law (Poland), HLTA (UK)	Student	(7) Teaching assistant in a primary school	Private selective coeducational secondary boarding school: (no Ofsted-rating at the time of interview) 100% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
Serafin (Nottingham)	<i>Pâtisserie</i> at vocational school (Poland)	<i>Pâtisserie</i>	(5) <i>Pâtisserie</i>	Attends a coeducational Catholic secondary school (■■■■■): rated "good" by Ofsted and 70% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
Elizaveta (Nottingham)	Midwifery at technical college/university (Poland), updated Midwifery qualifications in the UK	Midwife	(3) Midwife	Both children attend coeducational Catholic secondary school (■■■■■): rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 79% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
Emilia (Nottingham)	Midwifery at technical college/university (Poland)	Midwife	(7) Nursery assistant	First choice coeducational Catholic secondary school (■■■■■) rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 79% Five GCSES A*-C, second choice coeducational Catholic secondary school (■■■■■) rated "good" by Ofsted and 70% Five GCSES A*-C and third choice a coeducational academy (■■■■■) rated "inadequate" by Ofsted and 66% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
Marja (Nottingham)	English degree (Poland), HLTA (UK)	Secondary school English teacher	(7) Teaching assistant	Attends a coeducational Catholic secondary school (■■■■■): rated "good" by Ofsted and 70% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes

¹ Where participants had several children, the interview centred around the child/ren which was aged between 10-12 as this was the stage at which they were either choosing or just chosen a secondary school.

Participant's name	Participant's highest level of education	Employment in Poland	Participant's social class in UK based on employment categorisation	Type of schools selected	Attends Polish Sat. school?
Michalina (Nottingham)	English degree and teaching training (Poland), HLTA (UK)	English teacher	(7) Teaching assistant	All three children attend a coeducational academy (■■■■■) rated "inadequate" by Ofsted and 66% Five GCSES A*-C. Were refused places at partially selective coeducational academy (■■■■■) rated "good" by Ofsted and 65% Five GCSES A*-C) as well as at a coeducational Catholic secondary school (■■■■■) rated "good" by Ofsted and 70% Five GCSES A*-C)	Yes
Mila (Nottingham)	Midwifery at technical college/university (Poland), re-trained as a Nurse in the UK	Midwife	(3) Nurse	Son attends coeducational Catholic secondary school (■■■■■) rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 79% Five GCSES A*-C. Participant put down partially selective coeducational academy as second choice (■■■■■) rated "good" by Ofsted and 65% Five GCSES A*-C) and is doing the same for her daughter aged ten	Yes
Joanka (Nottingham)	Vocational training as Chef (Poland)	Sales assistant	(9) Cleaner	Attends coeducational Catholic secondary school listed as first choice (■■■■■) rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 79% Five GCSES A*-C, ■■■■■ listed as second choice (rated "good" by Ofsted and 70% Five GCSES A*-C) and partially selective coeducational academy as third choice (■■■■■) rated "good" by Ofsted and 65% Five GCSES A*-C)	Yes
Jola (Nottingham)	Business degree (Poland)	Market and sales representative	(7) Works in a call centre	Youngest daughter attends Catholic primary school, eldest daughter attends coeducational Catholic secondary school (■■■■■) rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 79% Five GCSES A*-C. Choices made for youngest daughter: Trinity and partially selective coeducational academy (■■■■■) rated "good" by Ofsted and 65% Five GCSES A*-C)	Yes
Truda (Nottingham)	Economic degree (Poland), ICP course in Childminding (UK)	Worked in administration for a university	(7) Childminder	Eldest child goes to coeducational Catholic secondary school (■■■■■) rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 79% Five GCSES A*-C, youngest child going to Catholic primary school and has put same secondary school as eldest child as first choice (■■■■■)	Yes

Participant's name	Participant's highest level of education	Employment in Poland	Participant's social class in UK based on employment categorisation	Type of schools selected	Attends Polish Sat. school?
<u>Wojciech</u> (Nottingham)	Educated to secondary school level (Poland), currently studying Welding at college (UK)	Manual labourer	Unemployment (previous job in the UK as a kitchen porter)	Attends coeducational Catholic secondary school (██████): rated "outstanding" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 79% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
<u>Ludmila</u> (Nottingham)	Technical college (Poland)	Admin for human resources	Unemployed	Son (14) attending a "failing" coeducational academy (██████) rated "inadequate" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 38% Five GCSES A*-C. Mother has chosen this "failing" academy in addition to another "failing" coeducational academy (██████) rated "inadequate" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 31% Five GCSES A*-C) for her daughter	Yes
<u>Henrieta</u> (Nottingham)	Degree in Art and Advertising Design (University in the US)	Went to the US for her studies at 17	(3) Graphic designer	Son given place at coeducational Catholic secondary school (██████) rated "good" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 70% Five GCSES A*-C). Listed this school as well as coeducational Catholic secondary school (██████) rated "outstanding" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 79% Five GCSES A*-C) and a partially selective coeducational academy (██████) rated "good" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 65% Five GCSES A*-C)	Yes
<u>Celina</u> (London)	Psychology degree (Poland), Fashion degree (UK)	Came to London straight after she had finished her Psychology degree in Poland	(7) Manager of high-end boutique designer bag company in both interviews, although she changed companies in-between	Will choose the nearest school for convenience. However, wants him to attend schools with more "white" people. At the time of the interview, she was still unsure about school choices	No
<u>Kasia</u> (London)	Started an Economics degree but dropped out (Poland), Nursing degree & an additional course in Psychology (UK)	Student	Housewife/student (recently had another baby)	First choice a local comprehensive within walking distance and newly-built. Due to recently opening, <u>Ofsted</u> reports and league tables were not available. Second choice a boys' selective grammar school rated outstanding by <u>Ofsted</u> and 100% Five GCSES A*-C, but was concerned about distance	No

Participant's name	Participant's highest level of education	Employment in Poland	Participant's social class in UK based on employment categorisation	Type of schools selected	Attends Polish Sat. school?
<u>Rozalinda</u> (London)	Educated to secondary school level (Poland), in the final year of a Social Science degree (UK)	Sales Assistant	(4) Part-time work for Citizens Advice Bureau (Previously a self-employed decorator)	Sending daughter to a mixed academy rated "outstanding" and "exceptional" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 82% Five GCSES A*-C	No
<u>Berta</u> (London)	MA in Education (Poland)	Teaching Education and Sociology at college and part-time nursing assistant	(9) Cleaner	Oldest son studying at university in Poland, youngest son goes to Catholic primary school and has been accepted for Catholic secondary school rated as "outstanding" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 67% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
<u>Salomea</u> (London)	Economics degree (Poland), Economics Accounting and Finance degree from an elite UK university	Student	(2) Banker in the City	Currently at a top selective boys' private junior school and will attend a selective boys' private school when he reaches 13. Both schools have optional boarding	Yes
<u>Tamara</u> (London)	Accounting degree (Poland)	Housewife and mother	(9) Cleaner	Both sons attend a boys' Catholic secondary school rated "good" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 83% Five GCSES A*-C (██████████████████)	Yes
<u>Alicja</u> (London)	Slavonic degree (Poland)	Part-time secondary school teacher (teaching Russian) and part-time librarian of a school	Unemployed	Three choices including one coeducational selective grammar as first choice (██████) rated "outstanding" and 98% Five GCSES A*-C), second choice selective grammar girls' school rated "outstanding" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 100% Five GCSES A*-C, third choice Catholic girls' secondary schools rated "good" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 57% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
<u>Antonina</u> (London)	Educated to secondary school level and then fell pregnant at 18	Single mother	(9) Cleaner and breakfast assistant in a hotel	Son currently attends sixth form college and doing A-levels and applying to university. Daughter to attend mixed state school rated "outstanding" by <u>Ofsted</u> and 78% Five GCSES A*-C	No

Participant's name	Participant's highest level of education	Employment in Poland	Participant's social class in UK based on employment categorisation	Type of schools selected	Attends Polish Sat. school?
Rahel (London)	<i>Pâtisserie</i> at vocational school (Poland)	<i>Pâtisserie</i>	(5) <i>Pâtisserie</i>	██████████ (coeducational Catholic school marked "outstanding" in Ofsted report and 86% Five GCSES A*-C), ██████████ (coeducational comprehensive marked "outstanding" by Ofsted and 59% Five GCSES A*-C), ██████████ (coeducational Catholic school marked as "outstanding" and 80% Five GCSES A*-C)	No
Franciszka (London)	Degree in Psychotherapy (Poland)	Worked in the Polish healthcare system	(7) Health care assistant in a nursing home	First choice coeducational selective grammar school (██████████) rated "outstanding" and 98% Five GCSES A*-C. Did not want to send her to Catholic although rated "outstanding", because she stated that the majority of students were black	Yes
Gracja (London)	Master of Science in Biology, but dropped out to study Mechanical Design (Poland)	Mechanical designer	(3) Mechanical designer	Secured place at Catholic girls' secondary school, "best" school in the area rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 100% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
Liliana (London)	Studied to be a midwife at university (Poland)	Midwife	Unemployed housewife	Picked local Catholic boys' secondary school rated as "requiring improvement" by Ofsted and 71% Five GCSES A*-C (██████████)	Yes
Piotr (London)	Masters degree in Marketing (Poland)	Student	(4) Works in administration (When first arrived in the UK he worked illegally as a pot washer in restaurants)	Have selected "outstanding" coeducational Catholic secondary school for twin sons and 86% Five GCSES A*-C (██████████)	Yes
Natalina (London)	Started studying Law at university but dropped out. Study to become a Seamstress (Poland)	Student	(7) Works part-time as a waitress	Got place at first choice, which was a grammar school (██████████) for boys rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 100% Five GCSES A*-C. Second choice was coeducational grammar school (██████████) rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 98% Five GCSES A*-C. Third choice was ██████████ School for boys rated "good" by Ofsted and 83% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes

Participant's name	Participant's highest level of education	Employment in Poland	Participant's social class in UK based on employment categorisation	Type of schools selected	Attends Polish Sat. school?
penelopa (London)	MA in European Law and Administration (Poland)	Student	(3) Deputy Manager in a further educational institute	First choice is ██████████ School (comprehensive school for girls rated "good" by Ofsted, 67% Five GCSES A*-C), second choice is ██████████ School (comprehensive school for girls rated "outstanding" by Ofsted, 70% Five GCSES A*-C) and third choice is ██████████ School (coeducational comprehensive rated "good" by Ofsted, 50% Five GCSES A*-C)	Yes
Ola (London)	MA Logistics and Business Administration (Poland)	Worked looking at logistics for a major international co-operation	(7) Assistant in a dental surgery (part-time), also teaches Polish history and geography within the Polish community. Worked in a hotel kitchen when she first came to the UK	Coeducational Catholic secondary school (██████████) rated "good" by Ofsted, 71% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
Izabel (London)	Biomedical degree (Poland), currently studying for a degree in Midwifery in London	Student	(7) Previously teaching assistant and translator	First choice a Catholic girls' school - ██████████ (rated "good" by Ofsted and 77% Five GCSES A*-C). Second choice (██████████) is a Catholic grammar school for girls with an entrance exam rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 100% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
Alina (London)	Master of Education (Poland)	Teacher	(7) Teaching Assistant	Attending a grammar school rated "outstanding" and 100% Five GCSES A*-C	No
Stefa (London)	Educated to secondary school level	Student	Unemployed (Before this, she was a fruit picker and waitress in the UK)	First choice coeducational selective grammar school (██████████) rated "outstanding" and 98% Five GCSES A*-C. Second choice (██████████) is a Catholic grammar school for girls with an entrance exam rated "outstanding" by Ofsted and 100% Five GCSES A*-C. Third choice is a selective academy (██████████) rated "outstanding" and 100% Five GCSES A*-C	Yes
Ina (London)	Degree in Economics (Poland), BA English Literature (UK)	Student	Still studying	Coeducational gender Academy school chosen because of location. Ofsted report stated the school "required improvement" with under 50% Five GCSES A*-C	No

As was mentioned previously, I was uncomfortable determining my participants' class position in terms of middle and working class. Categorising participants in this manner gives the impression that determining participants' social class is straightforward, whereas I argue that in order to understand the social class of the respondents we need to see it as historically positioned, as well as understanding how they enact their social class through process and practice.

I also faced the dilemma of whether to categorise my respondents' occupation in Poland using an International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO, 2007) scale. However, doing this would have required me to apply the same scale to their occupations whilst resident in the UK. I did not think this was a reliable representation of their position in British society. Problems of compatibility of social class measures across comparative contexts have been widely acknowledged in Sociology (Breen and Jonsson, 2005; Ganzeboom and Treiman, 1996). Common frameworks for social origin classifications tend to use a framework of prestige scales, socio-economic guides and social class typologies. The overarching variable for these frameworks is occupational information (Breen and Jonsson, 2005), which has been, historically, the main variable used in stratification research. Since the early- and mid-twentieth century, it has been recognised that the division of labour is connected with economic income, which has in turn impacted upon inequality. As the labour market constitutes the main source of income for the majority of people, it has been central to structuring class divisions (Savage, 2000). However, cross-national comparative measures of occupation status have been very hard to achieve. Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) have pointed out how differences in national particularities between countries should be taken into consideration when trying to do a comparative study of, for instance, social mobility, inequality and social origin. Comparative scales are problematic for many reasons, including variations in sample sizes between countries. This has been the case specifically in former Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries (Robert and Bukodi, 2004). Cross-national variations have also included micro-model testing of individual behaviour, which again may differ between countries as impacted by societal and institutional characteristics (Breen and Jonsson, 2005).

Another issue with trying to locate the social origin of individual respondents as influenced by their parental occupational status and education, was locating this historically within the specific socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political conditions that existed under

communism. The categorisation of manual workers during communism was too homogeneous, and did not allow for variations within manual labour occupations. Although many writers (e.g. Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987; Szelenyi, 1982; Wedel, 1986) have illustrated how the Intelligentsia could be divided into an occupational hierarchy, the division of manual workers such as those seen in Goldthorpe's (1980) social mobility and class structure of modern Britain – in which he differentiates between skilled, semi-skilled and routine occupations – seems to be non-existent in the case of manual workers during communism. Of course, I have already written at length on how Soviet communist ideology endeavoured to produce a homogenised working class in Chapter 2. Yet, scholars (e.g. Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987; Szelenyi, 1982; Wedel, 1986) who identified the divisions within the Intelligentsia have not seemed to have done the same for manual workers. As done under Soviet communism, these scholars simply categorised people based on the division between manual workers and peasants (agricultural workers).

6.2 Social Class Subjectivities

School choice practices are inextricably linked to social class. As such, it was important to explore how my participants positioned themselves in the class spectrum and understood their class subjectivities. As Perrier points out 'classed selves are not fixed but are continually made and re-made' (2012, p. 661). Understanding my participant's class subjectivities was even more important given that the majority of them experienced downward mobility and de-skilling upon migration, as well as taking into consideration that they had been born and spent their formative years under a communist regime that denied the existence of social class hierarchies. It was also important to explore their perceptions of stratification during the communist period.

Salomea from London was one of the very few of my participants who came from a background where all of her grandparents had been to university. Many of the participants' grandparents had been farmers during early communism. In the case of Salomea, we can see how her former family lineage generates social reproduction in her life trajectory. Despite both sides of her family having their wealth and assets seized under communism, their cultural capital continued to be reproduced. During the communist period whilst Salomea was growing up, she undertook private Spanish and French lessons outside of compulsory

state schooling. Salomea was able to reflect on her own social reproduction. Although her family's wealth and title were taken away by the Communist Party, she understood how her former family's social positional advantage was transmitted through education and to what extent education during that period culturally distinguished people:

I was talking about the fact that over here we've got a social circle, for example you belong to certain circles very much depending on how much money you've got, whether you live in the right area, whether you send your children to the right school, it doesn't really depend that much what you represent with yourself intellectually, you need to be fun and so on, have money and you will be accepted. Where I've been raised and brought up, you know, my parents for example were with higher education, they were intellectuals, they would have friends from similar intellectual circles, next door you could have the richest guy in the world but if he was not educated and he made his fortune in, I don't know, plumbing gadgets, he would not be accepted in that circle because the conversation with him apart from the odd job would not be at a certain level. I guess when you ask me what that noble family history gave me it probably gave me an elitist attitude but it's less to do with the birth right nowadays but it has been replaced by education. (Salomea, London)

Wesolowski and Slomczynski (1968) argued that the eradication of earlier forms of social inequality could lead to the manifestation of other forms of inequality instead. Thus, rather than being a matter of economic inequality in that the economy was centrally controlled and monitored, the fault line during state socialism in Poland was, according to Wesolowski and Slomczynski, centred more around "cultural differences" within the population. "Cultural differences" tended *in practice* – quite contrary to *the rhetoric* of "de-stratification" and "equality" – to constitute a crucial element of societal distribution in communist Poland. In order to understand the complex dynamics making cultural resources so important during times of state-led communism with its emphasis on equal distribution of material resources, it is useful to note that 'under circumstances that prevent people from acquiring material resources, individuals will tend to concentrate their socially distinctive and socially reproductive behaviour on the accumulation of cultural resources' (Ganzeboom and Nieuwbeerta, 1999, p. 343). It also seems to be the case that cultural resources are more enduring and resistant to outside change than material resources, as the former can only be appropriated in a longer process of socialisation as typically provided by the family and/or the educational institutions. Nevertheless, it is still noteworthy that even in communist societies cultural capital might retain this bearing upon educational opportunities – despite the acquisition and employment of cultural capital supposedly being more important in market-regulated societies with their more overt elements of competition (*ibid.*).

As with other Polish migrant parents in this study who came from a variety of backgrounds including the Intelligentsia and the manual working classes, Salomea struggled to place herself within a social class categorisation in England. In fact, she even went as far as to call herself “working-class”, because, as she stated, she has to work and does ‘*not have a trust fund to live off*’. During the interview, she was self reflective about this categorisation of herself, which she later defines as ‘*working/middle class*’; she connected it back to the era of communism she grew up in. Salomea spoke about the continuing tension that she experienced when living in a society during communist times where people were continually told that Poland was “classless” while simultaneously witnessing social division herself:

I mean, you know, you lived in an artificially classless society but, you know, if I can quote Orwell, we're all equal but some of us are more equal than the others so remember I was also relatively well read including English literature, including contemporary literature. (Salomea, London)

Roza from London was also reflexive about the divisions and hierarchies that existed under communism whilst at the same time stating that the collapse of communism resulted in the deepening of economic class divisions once Poland was opened to the global economy:

From what I speak with other people, coming from other countries, I think that most of them have exactly the same feelings and I think that the class system in terms of we have working class, middle class and upper class and, you know, it was really – well it was abolished really in Poland because of the communist system but it doesn't mean that there was no other classes or no other class provision – I think that in Poland it was more that we had the group of doctors, there are doctors and lawyers and miners and teachers and there are farmers and there is the Intelligentsia I suppose so there will be these divisions and people will stick within these groups. The difference is that each of these groups would think they are more important than the others and would try to obtain as many privileges for themselves as possible and people from these different groups would be leading a very similar lifestyle, so the teachers would live in exactly the same flats as the miners and they would show each other that you're miners, you are teachers, but they would basically lead exactly the same way of life because there is no other thing. After the system changed the class system changed a little bit as well so from what I see now it's more to do with – on the one hand it's how much money do you have, but as well there is this huge prejudice against these people have the money but they are actually not middle class because they don't have an educational background of the middle classes. (Roza, London)

Here we see two participants – Salomea and Roza – who both acknowledged in their narratives the impact the former communist regime had on their mind-set in relation to class hierarchies. Both participants also recognised that social class divisions, to a certain extent, existed in Poland during communism. Despite the communist government’s instance that Poland was a “classless” society, scholars have shown that this was not the case. Szelenyi (1982) argued that there was a class dichotomy between the working class and Intelligentsia. Within the Intelligentsia there were class divisions. Those responsible for redistribution in state socialist societies had an entrenched interest in taking full advantage of redistributive powers and formed a dominating class in which antagonistic tensions arose between them and producers. According to Szelenyi (1982), political power was not the basis of elite constitution. Instead, this political class was the foundation of a system of economic reproduction, and it was this that gave them the ruling position. As such, he refers to this group as the political-economic classes. Szelenyi also argued that downward mobility from the Intelligentsia was becoming less frequent, and although it had not quite caught up with Western patterns of the reproduction of position along family lines, those born into powerful families were still considerably privileged. The Intelligentsia was advantaged by their knowledge and cultural resources; they understood how to “play the system” and, as such, were more likely to get a highly-subsidised flat, fill the positions in trade unions, shop in tax free outlets and get access to the best hospitals, for example. The Intelligentsia would not recognise itself as a class and promoted the ideology of “classlessness”. Yet, its interest in the social structure and system was a pre-condition for the creation of a class consciousness (Szelenyi, 1982).

In 1989, Bourdieu gave a lecture in East Berlin which was subsequently published in *Practical Reason* (1998, p. 14-18) entitled ‘The “Soviet” Variant and Political Capital’. In this lecture, Bourdieu posed the question of whether the model of class distinction could be validated beyond the case of France and in particular to the German Democratic Republic.¹² Bourdieu argued that his class model of distinction was universal, but that researchers needed to be sensitive to the historical variations and differentiations that constitute social space. Once this has been done, researchers can then start to look at the relationships between

¹² The German Democratic Republic was part of the Soviet Bloc and regarded as communist in 1989 (Bourdieu, 1998).

the dominant and the dominated in a society. Bourdieu pointed out that in France, economic and cultural capital determines the structure of its social space. Therefore, in order to understand whether the model proposed in Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984) could be applied to the German Democratic Republic, one would first need to understand the elements of differentiation in that society. Bourdieu (1998) pointed out that because private possession and the means of production were officially state-owned, economic capital had less significance than in capitalist societies. However, cultural capital was highly valued. Therefore, the possession of cultural capital and its unequal distribution is a principle of differentiation. According to Bourdieu, cultural and educational capital is not the only means of appropriating goods and services. Like Szelenyi (1982), Bourdieu argues that a form of political capital operates in communist societies, which acts as another principle of differentiation whereby the political nomenklatura have a propensity towards the '*private appropriation of public goods and services*' (1998, p. 16, emphasis in original). It is this political capital that becomes the elemental principle of differentiation and may come into conflict with holders of academic capital:

The introduction of an index of a specifically political capital of the Soviet type – an index that would have to be elaborated with some care, taking into account not only positions in the hierarchy of political apparatuses (in the first place, that of the Communist Party itself), but also the seniority of each agent and of his lineage among the political dynasties – would no doubt enable us to construct a representation of social space capable of accounting for the distribution of powers and privileges, as well as of lifestyles. (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 17, brackets in original)

Bourdieu (1998) suggests that the holders of academic capital would be the most likely to rise up against those in possession of political capital – principally because they are the ones most able to revolt against the political nomenklatura's claim of legitimacy based on a so-called "egalitarian" or "meritocratic" system. Although this chapter is specifically trying to analyse the Polish migrant parents' understanding of social divisions in British society, it is important to contextualise this within the respondents' assessment of their present class subjectivities as well as their historical class locations and, in particular, their perception of so-called "classlessness".

Oliver and O'Reilly (2010) explored migration to so-called "classless" societies in which they applied a Bourdieusian framework. Looking at British migration to Spain, they explored the ways in which class was articulated under new conditions and the extent to which the

migrants' habitus re-established itself upon encounters with new social fields. They found that regardless of social class background, the participants shared similar reasons for migration to Spain – one of which included a search for a better life for themselves and especially for their children. Oliver and O'Reilly refer to these migrants as “lifestyle migrants” in which their search for “the good life” determines their migration strategies (p. 9). Moving to Spain, for some of the participants, was also seen as a way to leave their past behind and start afresh. However, in situations where the background of others was unknown and the breakdown of work roles disrupted the traditional British social class divisions based on occupation, the acknowledgement of a shared habitus became even more important. Narratives of different types of British migrants in Spain often took on a derogatory discourse replicating social class divisions in Britain. The reproduction of dominant cultural capital and distinctions retained greater value, especially as economic status could be disguised or in some cases seen as “irrelevant”. Nonetheless, economic capital was connected to habitus, where those with more money could afford to purchase the “labour power” of working class British migrants. Yet, a distinction was made to those who had a large amount of economic capital, yet little cultural and educational capital. Oliver and O'Reilly describe how an Oxbridge network reproduced their cultural tastes and styles. Educational achievements were highly valued, as was knowledge of art, theatre, music and Spanish culture. Working class migrants were often oppositionally positioned as “uncultured” Brits who were “ignorant” of Spanish lifestyles and “unwilling” to learn. As such, acquisition of social capital became important in assuring that the middle class migrants created a network of “people like us” as well as ensuring they avoided mixing with the stereotypical British working class migrant – in which a process of symbolic violence occurred (p. 14). However, Oliver and O'Reilly also report that there were still possibilities regardless of a migrant's previous position in social space to acquire symbolic capital through the means of integration into Spanish culture and learning the language (p. 21).

Oliver and O'Reilly's (2010) research is significant as it clearly demonstrates through an empirical case study the usefulness of a Bourdieusian framework in understanding the practices of migrants. In a new setting, which was considered “egalitarian”, Oliver and O'Reilly illustrated how Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital, habitus and distinction operated to reproduce social stratification. Of particular importance was the process of distinction and the recognition of habitus. In the struggle for power in new fields, the habitus helps to position others. As they state, “[a] habitus finds similar habitus; one is thus attracted

to those of one's own class, to avoid feeling like fish out of water' (2010, p. 22). Yet, although the research shows how social divisions are reproduced, there is still room for these classifications to be contested, in which actors have the opportunity to re-invent themselves – although Oliver and O'Reilly suggest that the transformation of a habitus is limited.

For the Polish migrant respondents in my own research, traditional sociological understandings of social class and occupational status in Britain were embedded within discourses of mobility, “worth” and “otherness”. The respondents frequently drew upon processes of classification and distinction that were substantially influenced by wider political and media rhetoric presenting the middle class experience as normative and the working classes as the “other”. As with the middle class British migrants in Spain in Oliver and O'Reilly's (2010) research, the Polish migrant parents in this research position themselves oppositionally in relation to the white working class British population, who they perceived as “uncultured”, “ignorant” and “immoral”. Their class dispositions shaped their identities and practices as parents and, in particular, as mothers. Rather than seeing societal inequalities and divisions as structurally produced, many of the respondents “pathologised” working class parents and explained class disadvantage as a “cultural” issue. Some of the Polish migrant parents also showed resentment towards state assistance and welfare for underprivileged communities.

Michelina from Nottingham believed she was discriminated against by British educational structures because of so-called positive discrimination towards people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Crucial to this narrative was the fact that Michelina did not get her choice of school for her daughters. She claims that her educational capital has put her children at a disadvantage. Michelina migrated from Poland in 2007 after her husband died, as she wanted a change of environment. She worked as a teacher in Poland and spoke about how it did not pay enough to support three children on her own. After meeting a new partner who was also Polish, she came to Nottingham to live with him and brought her three daughters with her. Her daughters were eight, twelve and thirteen when she arrived. Therefore, her two oldest daughters were starting secondary school in the middle of a school term. Michelina chose a partially selective academy and the two top Catholic schools to send her two oldest daughters to. This would also be her choice for her youngest daughter once the daughter had reached secondary school application age. However, she was refused a place for all of these schools for all three daughters. She appealed against the decision and

had a place on their waiting lists, but still failed to get a place at her chosen schools in the end.

Michelina's narrative of so-called positive discrimination and the "disadvantage" it puts middle class people at, is interesting given that her own past family trajectory had benefitted from such policies during the communist period in Poland. Michelina's family was part of the Intelligentsia during communism. Her mother graduated with an MA degree in the 1950s and worked as a teacher. Her father also graduated with an MA degree in the 1950s and worked as an engineer. Michelina spoke about how the Communist Party's policy of encouraging higher education enrolment for people from peasant backgrounds, had aided both her parents' admission to university – as her grandparents on both sides had been illiterate peasant farmers. However, reflecting on her current position in British society and the fact that her own children did not get places at the schools of her choosing, she situated this as a consequence of the so-called "assistance" given to underprivileged people in Britain. She argued that middle-class educated, "cultured" and those in employment, like herself, were disadvantaged and encountered "discrimination" for being too educated and "hard working". Her experience of not getting the secondary schools of her choice was also influencing the way in which she was now filling in the UCAS application form for her oldest daughter aged 17 years old. Michelina's three daughters engaged in middle class extracurricular activities, including additional private tuition for Maths, English and Science as well as languages, piano and drama lessons. They also participated in a stream of cultural activities such as going to the theatre, museums and lessons at an art centre. Yet, Michelina believed that this would somehow disadvantage her daughters on university application forms, stating that the admission tutor would "discriminate" against them "in favour" of a "poorer" student:

I think that people whose parents are not educated, or who haven't got higher education, their children are more likely to be admitted, or at least this is what I've understood from the forms that my eldest daughter was filling in this year.

* ***That's university?***

Yes, so they do ask about it and I think that people – I don't know how they do it, the process, but she said she [eldest daughter] would have more chances if I wasn't educated (laughter). Also I know there are lots of places awarded, or maybe there is a percentage of places awarded to people from overseas as well, so being an overseas student, but not an EU student, so being an overseas student gives you also more possibilities probably.

* ***Do you think that your daughter would have more chance of getting into uni because you've got a degree?***

Well I do hope so! I think it should work this way. Well I don't think that she should be favoured for the fact that I'm educated, or whoever, or her grandmother was, but likewise I wouldn't like people to be favoured because their parents weren't educated. Everyone should look at the grades, because this shows you what potential the child has and the opinion from school should do. Also your language barriers or the fact you are from another country shouldn't count at all, because if you are successful in exams that means you will be successful in your studies. (Michelina, Nottingham)

Although the majority of the participants positioned themselves in opposition to the excluded working classes, a very few were able to understand the broader social divisions that occurred in British society and, by doing so, separate their own socio-economic status and aspirations for their children's future trajectory from the middle class reproductive practices they encountered, in order to make reflective decisions on their children's social mobility.

I find this always difficult to explain, but there is a huge class division in England and I think that for anybody who comes from the continent it's like a shock to the system when you come to England. It's like "What?! It finished like a century ago". England is very much divided by classes and social backgrounds and I think that these days it has more to do with cultural attitudes rather than financial actually. Of course the finances will go there as well but it's mostly to do with attitudes, culture and the way of leading rather than economic... I think that from what I saw of children that go to private schools who come from one particular community and from one particular class and my daughter will never be that. She is not middle class, she is not – I don't know if I can describe my children in any class backgrounds really. She is foreign, she is different. (Roza, London)

In the examples of the three participants above, Salomea, Roza and Michelina, we can see how their understanding of stratification – both historically located in Poland as well as presently situated in Britain – speaks of social class divisions as produced not just by money or occupation, but also through education, culture and networks. Of particular importance in all three narratives was the possession of what can be defined as cultural capital.

6.3 Cultural Capital

According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital resides in three forms; *the embodied state* (dispositions), *the objectified state* (cultural goods) and *the institutionalised state* (educational qualifications). For Bourdieu, cultural capital is a theoretical hypothesis which

can be used to explain the differences in educational achievement between children in different social classes. The distribution of cultural capitals differs between social classes. The domestic transmission of cultural capital is in fact another strategy used in the reproduction of educational advantages. As the transmission of cultural capital, as well as its acquisition, is not as obvious as that of economic capital, it often goes unrecognised as a capital responsible for reproducing inequalities. In fact, it functions as a symbolic capital in which a person's social positioning is *misrecognised* and *legitimised* (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 18).

In order to understand how the participants positioned their class subjectivities in Britain, it is also important to explore their conceptions of what configuration of cultural capital is valued in British society and, in particular, in what ways they feel the cultural capital they accumulated in Poland transfers to British society. Going back to the example of Salomea, we can consider how she spoke about her interaction with her son's teachers. She spoke about her insecurity when engaging with these teachers. Salomea was a third generation graduate and was from the original Polish aristocracy and her child went to a fee-paying private school. When I asked her why she felt she was not respected by the teachers, she did not see it in terms of her "Polishness", but rather her class position and the fact that she had to work – despite the fact that this job was a high-paying banking position in the City of London. Salomea specifically uses culture as a means to define a person's class position. However, she seems unaware of her own accumulation of cultural capital and the symbolic capital it may hold in interactions with English people. She still feels excluded from British upper-middle class society. This may be because she is a migrant, yet as she states she does not think this is the reason. It may also be that she works despite this being a high-status job. She told me that the other mothers at her son's high-status independent school apparently spent their whole day having their hair done and going to lunch with each other. As such, she believed her education and cultural knowledge were not valued in the parents' social circles. Whether it was necessary for her to work financially, I could not discover. Her husband runs an international business. Her choice of school – the area of London in which she lives – and the extracurricular activities that her son engages in, suggested that she was relatively well-off – as she admits herself. However, she also admits the need to work for herself, also relating this back to Poland as a "working society". Wedel (1986) argues that insecurity was a major facet of the Polish system and humiliation was used to socialise people into that system. Humiliation often began at school in state socialist Poland, where

what they were taught at school often contradicted with what they learned at home and what their teachers themselves believed in. Humiliation then continued to the bureaucratic and official organisations in which people were treated unpleasantly and felt controlled by the person they had to deal with. Humiliation often resulted in feelings of both pride and shame – the Polish term for which is *normalny* (normal). This term had two meanings; the first meaning being “typical” and the second meaning being “how things should be” (Wedel, 1986, p. 151). Here we see a system of Pedagogic Action (PA) in which a system of power relations operates between groups of people in the communist system. Wedel (1986) points out how this symbolic violence under state socialism in Poland is first encountered at school, almost in order to prepare you for this interaction with all other state institutions that you would need to engage with in future. It is important to keep in mind that my participants would have encountered this Pedagogic Action while growing up in Poland, although it may have been more symbolically violent to some participants than others given the different backgrounds they came from. This type of experience may have impacted upon Salomea’s interaction with the school system in terms of engagement with the teachers and socialising with the other parents, but also the value she placed upon her own educational and cultural capital within a new society such as Britain.

It has already been illustrated in Table 1 above that the majority of participants in my research are highly educated, have parents who went to university and were in a high-status occupation before migrating to Britain. It has also been illustrated how participants understand how the possession of cultural capital produces distinction. However, it is important to understand how participants understood the transferability of cultural capital as influencing their children’s educational achievement and how this, in turn, impacted upon their school choices. One way of assessing this is to understand the socio-cultural processes that were invested in by the parents as a way to give their children various kinds of resources and experiences such as involvement in high-status cultural activities. Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 briefly outline the variety and differences in cultural activities and hobbies that the respondents’ children engaged with. Crucially, the majority of the Polish migrant parents seemed aware of the influential effects that investment in various kinds of cultural pursuits could have upon the educational attainment of their children. Commonly, cultural pursuits were also underpinned by dominant cultural reconstructions of social class and day-to-day processes of raising children and being a “good” parent were based on notions of “deserving” individuality. Their discursive constructions of a “deserving” self and a “good” parent had

been legitimised by political rhetoric that normalised a middle class approach to parental involvement. Importantly, this approach by the Polish migrant parents was also entwined with educating their children about Polish culture and, in the majority of cases, providing their children with a Catholic framework:

what I'm trying to do with her as well is just to teach her a little bit more about the culture and everything so it's like we are living here and sometimes we go into the Polish community and we go in there, like we will go and see the performance in Polish, we walk into the cinemas so she can see how people behave and how to be quiet and we go to the libraries, I bring a lot of books from Poland and there is English and Polish in the work book and this is all very old stories which my mum read to me and Little Red Hood and all that stuff so a lot of legends as well so I'm trying to invest a lot of money in that kind of information ... Basically, [name of daughter] is not very Catholic, I do everything what I have to do, what I should in the religious, so the baptism and now she's going to have her first communion this year, I'm doing it because I don't want to leave it to when she reaches 25 she's going to meet men of her life and she's going to want to do the wedding in the church and the priest is going to tell her you can't do it because you don't have this and this, this and this. I want to give her everything what I have so I've been through all of the traditional but what she wants to do with her religion is up to her, there's no force whatsoever, if she wants to be Buddhist, Baptist, what she's going to be, it's not for me to be judge. I just give her the full package and then free will do whatever.
(Penelopa, London)

The transferability of migrants' cultural capital from one society to another, has been explored by Erel (2010) in a comparative case study of skilled Turkish and Kurdish migrants in Britain and Germany. Erel (2010) argues that rather than migrants simply replicating the cultural capital that they bring with them to the host society, they in fact find new ways of reproducing cultural capital that extend power relations. Erel points out that one of the strengths of a Bourdieusian approach is that it enables a more comprehensive description of how different forms of capitals interact and are relational. As such, Erel sets out to explore the meanings of the cultural practices and the way in which they are articulated in a migration-specific field. Of particular importance is how other forms of capital interact with the migrants' cultural capital. Migration itself disrupts the reproduction of cultural capital. Migrants also experience a rupture in their legitimate symbolic capital as they move to a new country. Erel (2010) is critical of the propensity to reify the concept of cultural capital in migrants' occupational and social mobility research, as well as the tendency to see cultural capital as transported from the home to the host society which she entitles "the rucksack approach" (p. 643). "The rucksack approach" assumes that migrants bring with them a set

of cultural resources which may or may not aid their integration into a host society. Erel argues that a Bourdieusian approach to cultural capital enables a more thorough understanding of how agents possess the power to reproduce and transform their cultural capital. Initially starting with the same understanding as “the rucksack approach” in that migrants come to the host society with a package of cultural resources, the Bourdieusian approach proposed by Erel suggests that when these are “unpacked” in the host country migrants instantly begin negotiating how to use them in both their everyday practices and in their interaction with host societal institutions (p. 649). Kelly and Lusic (2006) have pointed out that migrants’ resources are often undervalued, limiting their power within different fields in the host society. However, Erel (2010) points out that migrants accumulate new forms of cultural capital, building on the cultural capital they bring with them. Erel (2010) argues that a parallel process of validation of some forms of capital and devaluation of others can occur in migration. Within the diasporic political community groups, participants with a low level of institutionalised cultural capital often felt alienated by the transnational dynamics of distinction that operated in these networks. Many of those who possessed a Western-educated middle class embodied cultural capital, assumed positions of leaders in these organisations, insisting that they represented the voice of Turkish women whilst at the same time speaking for Kurdish women. Yet, access to these services was based on the ability to speak Turkish, therefore denying Kurdish women the same right of participation. Inability to speak standard Turkish was therefore framed as not possessing the “right” cultural capital. As Erel states,

[I]language is a salient marker of distinction within the migrant group: the conversion of the cultural capital of speaking ‘good Turkish’ into economic capital is a relational process based on the devaluation of other cultural forms – i.e. the vernacular mixed language of second generation migrants or rural dialects, deemed unworthy of transmission. (2010, p. 654, inverted commas in original)

What was significant about Erel’s (2010) research was how she found that migrants acquired and lost cultural capital, and how social divisions within the host society did not necessarily mirror that of the country of origin. Migrants found new ways to create intra-migrant distinctions, particularly in the ability to convert cultural and social capital into political capital which consequently increased the actors’ economic capital. As such, the cultural practices of these migrants were gendered, classed and ethnicised, demonstrating the complex hierarchies of distinction. As with migrants in Erel’s research, the Polish migrants

in this study found ways to convert their religious capital – a form of cultural capital – into socio-cultural and educational capital. The application of religious capital for the respondents in my research has been elaborated in section 6.7, ‘Religious Capital and Social Order’.

6.4 Perceptions of Social Divisions in Britain

Education policy endeavours to appease the concerns and interests of the middle class. In the contestation of class interest and class struggle, policy produces a means in which class interests are situated in practices. The state on one hand responds to middle class interests, whilst at the same time dividing social groups through the ideology of “individualism”. The effect is the production of strategies of social reproduction and social closure in which anxiety and perceptions of risk are generated as families draw upon their economic, social and cultural capital in order to ensure their children’s desired social class trajectory. However, it is important to understand, as Stephen Ball has pointed out (2003), that these perceptions of risk may vary according to where an individual lives and who else resides in their locale. By looking at school choice practices in two different localities, we can explore how the differing class and ethnic composition is understood and how this, in turn, may influence the participants’ choice of school. In the subsequent chapter, I will look at the participants’ perception of ethnicity – in particular “whiteness”. This chapter is aiming to understand the participants’ observations of social divisions – in particular class – in order to apprehend if and how they distinguish themselves and how they might locate their own class subjectivities within these perceptions.

Social class is often ambiguous and difficult to capture. Skeggs (2004) points out that locatedness and sites of spatial contestation ‘become a way of speaking class indirectly’ (p. 50). Class is lived through perceptions of the social world, in which sites of struggle in everyday life are engaged with. No more so is this than in the urban space. Leonardo and Hunter (2009) argue that “urban reality” ‘is as much an *imagined*, in addition to a real, place’ (p. 143, emphasis in original). It is imagined because the meaning of the “urban” is often contested. By examining my participants’ perceptions of the “dangers” of schools and families located in particular areas, it was discovered that their narratives of space and locality were often signifiers for class divisions. It was these perceptions that influenced their

choice of secondary school in the urban setting. Leonardo and Hunter (2009) argue that the contested narratives of the urban fall into three categories: ‘as a sophisticated space, an authentic place of identity, and a disorganized “jungle” ’ (p. 144, inverted commas in original). These are not binary categorisations, but illustrate the power relations and structural divisions between “race” and class that are often produced in the urban imaginary. In the case of Nottingham, the urban/suburban were often divided as “bad”/“good”. A number of participants made “observations” about particular areas in Nottingham that had bad reputations. The Polish participants came into contact with these areas in various ways. Either they worked in organisations located near these areas, or they themselves lived there due to their low economic position.

I know that people where they are not working anywhere – this is my neighbours. Both of them are not working and they live just on benefits or something like that. I don't know, they probably don't have contact with different people, they've got very, very close friends and they are absolutely saying the same things what they are doing, so that's right. I know that from the house where both of them are working it would not be so bad. And the children, what are the children doing in the street at 10-11 o'clock, so where are the parents? So it has happened because the family is not good. The family is mum and dad, they are not good. Don't give the children how they have to be. (Henrieta, Nottingham)

In our nursery, when we did help in the community topic, we organised a home corner as a home and in the morning you make breakfast because you go to work and then suddenly it clicked, who actually of these childrens' parents goes to work in the morning, and then you think “oh, that's a little bit different”, and you try to educate them (children she works with) about work, but if they've never seen it, and they don't know it, then I think it maybe that will be the fourth generation who won't work either. It's not that they can't and maybe it's that they wouldn't like to. (Marja, Nottingham)

Many of the narratives expressed by the Polish participants about deprived communities perceived the social and economic inequalities they witnessed to be the result of individual and cultural factors rather than structural constraints. A similar finding was revealed in Lopez Rodriguez' (2010) research. The Polish mothers in her study were predominantly highly educated. Often they associated themselves with white middle class mothers, whilst at the same time experiencing social segregation. The mothers in her research felt that they and their children were alien from the English parents in lower socio-economic positions, particularly those who were on long-term unemployment benefits. Lopez Rodriguez (2010) points out that one of the possible explanations for this condemnation of under-privileged

groups may stem from their former indoctrination in so-called “classless” societies. However, if we look back on research done by Wedel (1986) on Polish society under the communist regime, we see that there was widespread positioning of particular social groups seen as “un-moral”, often led by those who subscribed to the discourses of the Polish Catholic church. Their characterisations of “bad families”, “drunken behaviour”, “laziness” and “criminal activity” showed striking similarities to my own research in how Polish migrants described the “undesirable” residents of Nottingham. As stated by Lopez Rodriguez (2010), ‘[h]ere, the stigmatisation of others appears as an attempt to escape being pinpointed as an unsuited migrant taking advantage of the British welfare system and this shunning is being accomplished by blaming the ‘irregular’; it may entail the unemployed, non-English, black or non-heterosexual’ (p. 353, inverted commas in original). In similarity with Lopez Rodriguez’ findings, my participants produced their identity as based on middle class norms – not just in opposition to what would be defined as the precariat class, but more importantly an identity on “not being” an “undesirable other”.

I don't want to be horrible now but I just – if I go to Asda to do my shopping I can see poor people on benefits and I'm 100% sure I'm right. You know, they become like a small community, they wear a very similar way, they've got quite a lot of children, plenty of shopping. Yeah, I don't want to be seen like this. In six years I have never claimed anything, apart from the child benefit which you are entitled to, I'm quite proud of this, you know. Nobody will tell me that they [Polish migrants] come here and take something. They work very hard from the first day. That is how it is supposed to be. Don't get me wrong, I think that you should help other people. It's like probably when they've got very ill children or they can't work, they have to – then fine, but not if somebody is just lazy. It just makes me angry. (Jola, Nottingham)

Like other participants – particularly in Nottingham – Jola perceives inequalities between people as being the result of individual factors such as the extent to which a person “works hard” as well as their motivation to work. Significantly, Jola ascribes class identity to locality, whilst not recognising that social processes such as geographical location may impact upon structural, economic inequalities.

I think when you go to the countryside you can see the differences as well. I don't know if these people are well educated because I don't know this, I didn't check them, but they are a bit posh and you can see that they don't – okay they are very nice, they give you a smile but they don't want to be involved and they don't like strangers. I think that it's like my friends at work, they speak absolutely normal for me. They've

got a different education level, lower and higher and different yeah, but they've got families, they go to work, they've got ...

* ***What do you mean by 'posh'?***

Well better than somebody, than you, and because they've got a bit more money. You know, maybe because they are better educated as well, they did well because they finished Oxford and ...think I'm better than you, which is not always true, but you can see me as a Polish person, I can say, yes. (Jola, Nottingham)

Jola from Nottingham worked in a call centre. Her work was low-paid with unsociable hours. She also did several night shifts. Her partner who was a building labourer. Despite Jola's low occupational status, she was highly educated with a Business degree from Poland. Yet, she did not seem to possess any awareness of how her previous education may have influenced her possession of cultural capital and, therefore, not just her attitude toward the social mobility of her children, but also towards the cultural competence and confidence that she would be endowed with in order for her to engage in employment despite it being below her qualification level. Jola's older daughter attended one of the top Catholic secondary schools in Nottingham. She was in the process of applying to university. Jola had also listed the same secondary school for her youngest daughter aged eleven.

In many of the respondents' narratives of social division in Britain, the poor were depicted as too "materialistic", "excessive" and susceptible to consumer culture. The respondents depicted those in receipt of welfare benefits as "workless" and "workshy" and that they are somehow making a reflexive individual choice not to work.

I think that some people are lazy, because obviously we've got quite a good thing with the benefits here haven't we. On the other side of this area, on the high road there is the council estate and [name of son] has got two friends from his classroom that are living there and every time you go there, for example I am, all the curtains are shut and they are sleeping because they're not going to work, they just don't bother to get up in the morning which is really annoying me because the parent are on benefit but those people have got new cars there, you know, they've got massive big houses which they're getting from the council. (Kasia, London)

I know people who have got a job, so mum and dad going to work, they can't speak to their children and between them bad language. I know that people where they are not working anywhere – this is my neighbours. Both of them are not working and they live just on benefits or something like that. I don't know, they probably don't have contact with different people, they've got very, very close friends and they are absolutely saying the same things what they are doing, so that's right. I know that from a house where both of parents are working it would not be so bad. (Emilja, Nottingham)

Commonly, social deprivation was characterised as located on particular council estates. Some of the respondents had lived in close proximity to these estates, as well as in them in some cases. They spoke about the regret they felt of not being “aware” of cultural and material deprivation in British society in that this unfamiliarity resulted in them sending their children to local primary schools when they first migrated to Britain and exposing their children to these “dangerous others”. In these cases, choosing the right secondary school was even more important.

Increased focus on social inclusion and exclusion by successive governments, including New Labour, has facilitated the pathologisation of inequalities and disadvantage as the result of individual qualities, choices and conduct rather than structural constraints (Gillies, 2005). Citizens are now categorised as “worthy” as long as they subscribe to middle class values. Middle class existence is normalised, and despite the social closure respondents experience as Polish migrants, their aspiration is to facilitate their children’s integration into these social groups. As they face discrimination and societal obstacles, they attempt to distinguish themselves as “worthy”. One of the methods of doing this is to position themselves in opposition to others. Central to the narratives they use to justify their residence in Britain, is the emphasis on “self-improvement” and their knowledge of the “right” way of doing things and “behaving”. They commonly draw on discourses of “deserving” and “non-deserving”. They project themselves to an almost imaginary middle class audience as a homogenous group of Polish migrants “deserving” of respect and residency.

All my friends, they say we don't mind Polish people because they work and Polish people come here to work and that's the reason why they come here. They don't come here because they will have benefits. That's the destiny, we come here, we get a job, quite often they are very qualified people and they work in factories, only because it's better pay and they probably have a slightly better living here than in Poland, so personally whoever I speak to, and I have got a friend who is the manager in [pharmacy] and he said nobody works better than Polish people and he says actually he had like a poster and it was one person digging something and there was like five English people standing around and the person who was working was the Polish one and then everybody else was management, supervising, you know what I mean? So Polish people are very, very hard working people and I'm sure that they are not here for benefits. That is the reason why they come here, it's to better themselves a little bit but from the publicity, the media, it does make me feel sometimes 'go back to your own country', do you know what I mean? I've got British nationality and I live here, I pay my taxes – I have never been on any benefit but I think that the general opinion of English people, in the current economic climate

when it's a fight for jobs – but on the other hand English people don't want to do the jobs that Polish people do. (Danuta, Nottingham)

I think the fact that there's so many foreign people who would maybe abuse the system, who would, like there's so many working people and so many people who claim benefits and maybe they're just so fed up. Even my husband says, you know, we work so hard and so much money goes on benefits, so it is upsetting. It upsets us and that's why I think that by showing that actually our son is doing so well and we both work I have nothing to hide. We just want to show that we're not scroungers, we work hard for what we've got and nothing is given to us and I think just, if you want to judge me just look at my son, look at my child and if he's naughty then you can judge me but that's, again, that's my opinion. But because he's doing so well. Maybe in a way, I'm sure that for some people it could be quite upsetting that although he's a foreigner he's still one of the top in the class for instance. (Natalina, London)

Again we can go back to the way that government policy focuses on social inclusion and exclusion. An integral part of tackling disadvantages was the process of parenting. Gillies (2005) argues that discursive constructions of “deserving” selves are consolidated in child-rearing practices, in particular parental involvement in education. There is no denying that parents play an essential part in determining the life chances of their children. However, what should be recognised is that parental practices are perceived as having to subscribe to middle class values in order for citizens to be seen as “doing their best” for their children. Many of the respondents, whether influenced by this rhetoric, their own class location, Catholicism or a Polish family-orientation, engaged in middle class parenting practices. They distinguished themselves as “good” parents – again in opposition to others. They legitimised their belonging through the moral choices they made as a parent, while casting working class people as “immoral” and “unable” to raise their children. As noted previously, this influenced their school choice.

It is also important to understand how the Polish participants' discourses on the “immorality” of poverty and parenting may have been influenced by their home society's dominant value system, which has been shaped by both communism and Catholicism. In Poland during the communist regime, coming from a “good” family was seen as an important characteristic of a person's moral standing. In every social strata or community, certain families were considered “good” or “bad”. The perceived moral standards and cross-generational discipline of one family were significant markers of a family's standing. A “good” family often possessed “connections”. Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Church often guided the

morality of Poles. By the 1980s, 95 per cent of the Polish population was Catholic despite communist attempts to discourage religion (Wedel, 1992). In 1984, the month of August was declared as one of abstinence by the church. In particular, the Church sought to fight alcoholism, yet was unsuccessful. Polish people were selective in their obedience towards the Church's teachings. The Church embodied *normalny* for many. Like many other institutions in Poland, it was a source both of pride and shame; pride for standing up against the government, for providing a refuge for the people, yet its teachings on the morality of different life styles filled people with guilt and shame. By the end of the communist period in the late 1980s, the average Pole had attended religious classes for 12 years. To Poles, going to mass and catechism was an obligation. Wedel's (1992) research on teenagers attending catechism found several explanations for attending the classes. These consisted of a mixture of bureaucratic rationalisations – i.e. communions, baptisms, weddings – and motivation by a sense of morality – including humiliation from the family through non-attendance, falling into disrepute, being unable to control one's own morality and losing status within one's community. Wedel (1992) argues that by the time Polish children reached adolescence, they had undergone a moralisation process in which great amounts of shame are associated with certain behaviours and the family is placed at the centre of life. Therefore, it is important to recognise that the participants' derogatory discourses on poverty and disadvantage need to be contextualised within both the home and host societal structures. Communism, Catholicism and middle classness have all promoted the “normalcy” of “hard work”, discipline, parenting and morality.

6.5 Aspirations and Trajectories

The interaction between families and school choice practices needs to be situated within valued trajectories. These valued trajectories are understood as influenced by social class subjectivities in pursuit of social mobility for their children, which also acts as a way to increase their own status within British society. As shown by Natalina from London who stated: *'if you want to judge me just look at my son, look at my child'*, many of the participants entwined their own future trajectory with that of their children's perceived future educational success. For many of the participants, the exercise of their choices as class practices were embedded within discourses of educational success, responsibility, risk and consequences. It is important to explore what future trajectories Polish migrant parents imagine for their

children and, as such, assess whether their aspirations influenced their school choices. Career trajectories were most commonly cited by the “more ambitious” parents when discussing their aspirations for their children aged ten to twelve years of age. These parents connected occupation with status. For some of the parents, they expressed a frustration at their children’s lack of future plans even though they were only eleven years old. Franciszka from London was irritated with her eleven year old daughter’s ambition to be a hairdresser even though her daughter had apparently discussed this in terms of being a business woman and owning her own salon. For Franciszka, it was much more important that her daughter went to university:

my daughter, she hasn't got too much ambition in her life. She wants to be a hairdresser and in her mind she is not like “I need to like my school, go to university” and I tried to explain to her every time that she is good in school and she can go higher and higher but she doesn't want too much. She is like “I want to do my hairdressing job and I go to college with this job and I earn” and that's it. I will try to give her a little bit of advice or more talk to her and showing her if she can do more, because hair work in Poland is a very hard job. (Franciszka, London)

For Franciszka, the desire for her daughter to go to university was connected back to her own under-privileged background. Although she had gone to university herself, her parents had not even finished secondary school. She was very poor as a child and she lived in a village where her parents worked in agriculture. The choice of a “good” secondary school was seen as part of a whole educational trajectory the mother had planned for her daughter. Franciszka did not want her daughter to do hard physical work like that her parents had to endure. For Franciszka, education was about options. Going to university would give her daughter more opportunities in the future. Education was also seen in terms of possible return to Poland after her daughter’s education. Hence, should her daughter ever want to live in Poland, being a hairdresser was low status, low paid and hard work:

My parents didn't finish any schools, not even secondary school. Like primary school. Yes, because they were from the village and they didn't push me to go to university, I just wanted to by myself and I saw it's like you can be quite clever when you go to high school. Like aspiration, give the child aspiration to learn. This is why I would like to send her to a good school. (Franciszka, London)

Lopez Rodriguez (2010) also found that Polish parents’ aspirations for their children’s education were often formed in opposition against their own experience of discrimination and social segregation, as well as social closure experienced by the Polish mothers. Natalina

from London linked her aspirations for her son back to her own childhood, in which she told me that she was never pushed academically, something that her father would later tell her he regretted. Her mum was also busy working and when she did have spare time, rather than spending it with her children she would do the chores and make sure the house was clean. Natalina's life centred around her child. She believed that mothers should always put a child first and sacrifice their own careers in order to get the best out of their children. For her, people were more important than material objects and, as such, she did not see career aspirations for adults or parents as part of their development or well-being, but rather as being linked with the pursuit of money. Again, she connected this back to her past and in particular the communist period during which she grew up and the disruptions that were caused in the transition period – particularly the changes it caused to people's everyday lives and the influx of "brands". One of her reasons for disliking Poland and, indeed, as she told me, Polish people, was her perceived opinion that Poland had become obsessed with materialism:

Poland is very competitive, you know. I think maybe that's why we didn't like, because in Poland it's mostly about showing off, how much you've got or what you've got. When we go back actually, I mean where we come from, we come from the west part of Poland which is very close to the German border and actually lots of people used to go there to Germany to work. Then obviously with the German money they could afford more. What actually struck me was the fact that even if you're rich you don't necessarily show it off. So I feel more comfortable living here [London]. In Poland you have to look good and you always have to have the brands, I'm not into that really. Buying a new car and a big television and a big house, beautiful house, and this is their pride but actually with us we think that our son is our investment. So we would rather invest in him and maybe to spend money on him and his education and the extracurricular activities. (Natalina, London)

Looking at Table 1 in section 6.1b 'Locating the Participants' Socio-Economic Status' in this chapter, we can see that those participants and their partners who possessed a vocational skilled trade (technical capital) upon migration, seemed more easily to transfer those skills to the UK job market in pursuit of employment. They tended to have a similar job in both the UK and Poland and, as such, experienced less downgrading of occupations in comparison to those with a university degree. Men/the partners of the mothers interviewed were more likely to have a skilled trade occupation in comparison to women.

Stefa from London spoke at length about her mother and father never supporting her educationally. Neither of her parents had been to university and they did not see the point of

qualifications. She also points out that due to her parents working both in a factory and on a collective farm, they did not really have time to help her educationally even if they could have. She uses this as one of the reasons why she takes such a strong interest in her children's educational performance:

I do push my kids lots because I feel they're not able to make that massive decision in this age. Even now my oldest one is Year 5 and I am already preparing her for school exams so she will at least have the opportunity. I don't know if she will be able to get that ...because she has to pass her exam but at least she will have the option open for her and ...go and if she passes then ...on the day, if she passes she will have opened more and better qualifications in the future, better university, better everything. I see like okay, if she doesn't pass I will work it out but I will give her this option and I know I have to be there. I'm paying for private tutoring now and ...few months and there are other pieces which I'm paying for outside of the school because the school doesn't do enough. Primary school is really bad here. They don't do enough for children to prepare them for secondary schools. (Stefa, London)

Like some of the other parents, Stefa was preparing her oldest daughter who is in Year 5 for selective school entrance exams – even though they were still another year away. Despite both her and her husband being unemployed, she was using what little savings she had to pay for private tuition for her daughter. She demonstrated a strong insight into economic capital and its ability to “buy” education. She also gave clear examples of the division between families on low income and wealthier families in terms of the ability to “buy” education and reap the rewards with regard to educational achievement. One aspect which particularly disgusted and shocked her in UK schools, was the class contempt that was projected onto children from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Her daughter was being bullied at school and the mother was astonished to find out that the boy that bullied was from what she stated ‘*a very good family*’:

* ***What do you mean ‘very good family’ boy?***

A rich family. Parents both working, they have three kids, they are wealthy, so sometimes you don't expect for a wealthy family to be a bully. (Stefa, London)

Stefa was also reflective about her own and her husband's disadvantaged upbringing, in which her family never encouraged cultural engagement with music or art. Her husband had told her that he always wanted to learn to play musical instruments, but his parents could not afford lessons. As such, extracurricular cultural activities for Stefa's children became particularly important. Her eldest daughter had started private music lessons at three years

old. She now played the flute, piano and violin and is part of an orchestra outside of school. She also had ballet and tap-dancing classes, swimming lessons and is part of the church choir. When her husband was made redundant – which coincided with the period for selective school exam preparation – she had to stop the private music lessons, but Stefa managed to secure her free music lessons through her daughter’s primary school and training in the orchestra. The savings she made from stopping private music lessons were then used towards paying for private group Kumon tuition preparing her daughter for the selective school’s entrance exams. When I asked why sending her child to a selective school was important to her, she stated that it was about choice and opportunity for the future:

I feel like maybe it's a choice that comes from my background because I felt I wasn't given the choice, the life things ...I feel the education is the most important thing for the child and even she doesn't realise now but she will do and then she will say thank you. (Stefa, London)

Lopez Rodriguez (2010) who researched the strategies Polish migrant mothers used in their children’s education in the UK, revealed that the structural constraints of social class were not considered as significant in influencing a child’s educational success and, in turn, did not impact on the pursuit of their children’s trajectories for social mobility. Significantly, Lopez Rodriguez found that even working class Polish parents displayed a type of involvement with their children’s education that would be typical of a native-born English middle class mother. Lopez Rodriguez connected this to the indoctrination of so-called “classlessness” that Polish migrants had previously experienced under communist rule, as well the parents regarding Britain as a “meritocratic” society.

In my own research, it was revealed that despite the majority of the respondents’ high university education, several of them cited the happiness and health of their children as more important than academic performance. Some of the participants possessed a type of naivety when it came to strategies and knowledge about reproducing their own class identity through the education market. These participants believed in “meritocracy”, stating that if their children really wanted to go to Oxford, for example, they could:

I think that you can achieve a lot here in this country as long as you want to work (Danuta, Nottingham)

In this country, they can do what they want to do, they can achieve anything if they're willing to (Elizaveta, Nottingham)

I think if she will be good and she will go to good state school she may academically achieve a certain level anyway and it won't be much different than the private sector (Roza, London).

Many of the participants in my study produced similar narratives about the possibility of achieving desired goals in British society. The majority of the participants were not aware of the embedded class constraints that exist in British society. Lopez Rodriguez (2010) drew on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capitals in helping to explain the mothers' interaction with the education field. Lopez Rodriguez argues that Bourdieu's theoretical approach is useful in helping to understand the disadvantaged position migrants inhabit within the structural hierarchy of the host society and the implications this has for social reproduction. Upon arrival in the UK, the mothers in her study often brought with them high expectations for their children's educational achievement and, according to Lopez Rodriguez, they were 'not inhibited by any 'rules of the game' and external social codes, or unaware of fields of struggles for power' (p. 353, inverted commas in original). The research seemed to suggest that the Polish migrant mothers did not possess the same pre-reflexive intuitive knowledge as that of British-born parents. According to Lopez Rodriguez, this could lead to *misrecognition* of social division as legitimate. Lopez Rodriguez also argues that the particular educational habitus of educated Polish mothers, meant they knew "how to play the game" when it came to pursuing a particular educational trajectory for their children. A particularly important aspect of Lopez Rodriguez' (2010) research, is the way she drew upon Bourdieu's notion of habitus in explaining Polish mothers' attitudes towards British society. Lopez Rodriguez argues that Polish mothers as a migratory group may illustrate how habitus is not completely durable in that their choices are connected back to the opportunities and constraints they experienced in their earlier life, which were often framed by a different societal context. Thus, habitus and beliefs influence choices, which result in reproduction.

Zuccotti (2014) looked at intergenerational social reproduction and social mobility of second-generation ethnic minorities in England and Wales. She wanted to understand the differing effects of parental social background on occupational outcomes between ethnic minorities and white British people. She also wanted to explore the relationship between

ethnic “penalties”¹³ and intergenerational social reproduction. Zuccotti defines the class of origin by measuring the parental occupational status. Zuccotti was testing for both lower and higher social reproduction in ethnic minorities. Commonly, immigrants suffer a downward occupational mobility when they arrive in their destination country. It is also hypothesised in Zuccotti’s research that migrant parents have more difficulties transmitting their cultural capital to their children due to education and language barriers. The results revealed that social reproduction varies between groups; that because of the different motivations and aspirations ethnic minorities tended to hold in comparison to the native-born population, the reproduction of social structures experienced by the general population cannot always be applied to ethnic minorities. The ethnic minorities’ cultural distinctions result in diverse social reproduction patterns. Furthermore, and importantly for this project, it found that coming from a low socio-economic background could be an advantage. This is because the motivation to increase social mobility is significantly higher in ethnic minority groups who have suffered occupational downward mobility in the host country. Yet, the research also found that the higher the socio-economic position was of the ethnic minority groups, the more the patterns of social reproduction resembled that of higher class reproduction in the native-born population. Nevertheless, ethnic minority groups from higher class origins were affected more significantly by ethnic “penalties”, as loss of occupational status was more likely to occur than for those from lower class origins. Zuccotti concludes that the research demonstrated the importance of parental background in understanding second-generation ethnic minority occupational trajectories.

In both Lopez Rodriguez’ (2010) and Zuccotti’s (2014) work, it is shown how despite the ethnic penalties and downward mobility and de-skilling migrants experience they are still able to transmit their educational and cultural capital intergenerationally. Furthermore, each set of research findings revealed that possessing a lower socio-economic occupation before migration did not negatively impact upon the aspirations and social mobility of second-generation migrant children. In some cases, this was actually an advantage. It is difficult to assess what influence the high aspirations of the Polish migrant parents in my own research

¹³ Ethnic “penalties”, for example, may be an employer not valuing the education of an ethnic minority individual and may also include other forms of discrimination in the labour market or other institutions (Zuccotti, 2014).

will have on the future trajectory of their children. However, what can be assessed is that even the respondents from lower socio-economic backgrounds subscribed to an imagined middle class future educational and career trajectory for their children, in which narratives of “deprivation”, “worklessness” and “immorality” were drawn upon in order to position themselves in opposition to other parents. Again, it is important to acknowledge the influence that both Catholicism and communism may have had on these parents’ aspirations for their children.

6.6 Reproduction

In the section above, the parents’ aspirations and trajectories for their children were explored. As Stephen Ball has argued, the middle classes have historically been ‘able to assert their monopoly of privileged trajectories’ (2003, p. 29). Choice policies have enabled the middle classes to achieve and maintain social closure. It is important to understand social closure as a means in which individuals and groups monopolise educational sites in pursuit of social reproduction. Social closure and other strategies of social reproduction must also be situated in a highly competitive market education system which produces fear and anxieties for parents. These anxieties also, in turn, should be embedded within the broader rhetoric of social divisions in Britain.

Salomea is related to Polish aristocracy who had their wealth sized under the communist system. As mentioned in Chapter 5, despite Salomea’s family’s lack of economic capital under communism, the transmission of cultural capital was ensured while she was growing up, because education was extensively promoted and monitored, and extracurricular activities such as Western literature and private French lessons were fostered. When Salomea moved to England to study in the 1990s, she met her partner – a second generation Italian migrant and also related to aristocracy. We can see how their privileged background is intergenerationally transmitted to their son. Their son attends one of the top fee-paying public selective junior schools in the country and, despite being only eleven and a half years old, speaks English, Polish and French fluently, as well as learning Italian, Latin and Spanish. At the time of the interview, her son had recently taken a pre-selection exam and secured a place at another top selective fee-paying public school, which he will attend at 13 years of age. When I asked Salomea why she had chosen to send her son to a private school,

she spoke about the school ‘feeling’ right for her son. Here we can see how such a school evokes a certain type of privileged habitus:

We live in a certain area so then there is let's say five or six schools that you consider within a reasonable driving distance and it's a combination of, you know, obviously league tables, rankings but also something very important; the feel for the school and whether the school is right for your child because it's, you know, everybody aspires to send – in the private sector everybody aspires to send their children to [name of historically elite private school] or to [name of another historically elite private school] but, you know, even if by some fluke my son got there those schools would be completely wrong for them, they're very competitive, you know, the kids needs to be able to keep up with the pressure. We found a beautiful school in [name of location], gorgeous campus, it's a boarding and day school so there's some flexible options, just the right environment, you know. It's the kind of school - we went there, it felt right to us, it felt right to him, a lot of his friends are going there as well which is always a bonus. (Salomea, London)

Here we see how Salomea justifies the choice of school by comparing it to two of the countries' top elite schools. However, the school she did choose would also be classified as not just a private boarding school, but one of the historically elite fee-paying public schools. She rationalises her choice of school by saying he thinks her son would be more comfortable there. It could be assumed that the child's own judgement and preferences were taken into consideration as Salomea had spoken about her son's wish to maintain his friendship group. This shows contrast with a number of parents in Chapter 5 where some of the respondents had ignored the wishes of their children even to the extent of not informing them that they had not put their desired school on the application form and had instead put three schools of their own choosing. It was found that one of the reasons for this in a number of cases was to actually distance their children from certain friendship groups they had joined whilst in primary school. The fact that Salomea's son was already attending an elite fee-paying public junior school, and his friendship group consisted of other children at the school, reduced the risk of any possible “contamination” from the “wrong” sort of people. Family histories, social location and opportunity, including economic capital, produce different types of response to risk in relation to social reproduction, distinction and choice (Ball, 2003).

In *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argued that the accumulation of embodied cultural capital was endowed upon children from wealthy parents. This embodied cultural capital advances the possession of institutional cultural

capital in the form of qualifications, which in turn leads to advantages in the job market (Crossley, 2008). Bourdieu (1986) argued that as well as the power of agents to transmit their advantages, they also seek to maintain and secure their interests. When the dominant exercise their power in maintaining their advantages, it appears “naturalised” and “routinised” in its symbolic form. As such, agents routinely reproduce structures and their positions within it. It is the reproduction process that is key to understanding class. In terms of educational attainment, this offers prestige and value in the form of symbolic capital. Those who possess this educated culture use their power to maintain its legitimacy, as Bourdieu and Passeron state:

In any given social formation, the agencies which objectively lay claim to the legitimate exercise of a power of symbolic imposition and, in so doing, tend to claim the monopoly on legitimacy, necessarily enter into relations of competition, i.e. power relations and symbolic relations whose structure expresses in its own logic the state of the balance of power between the groups or classes. (1990, p. 18)

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) go on to say that conflict arises between the legitimacy claiming agents in any given field. This conflict is symbolically expressed. It is the agencies with the most power that lay claim to legitimacy and, as such, it becomes a struggle between different classes. Yet, the dominant classes need only to use a little of their strength to maintain their privileged position within the social hierarchy. These hierarchies are reproduced in ways that are seen to be legitimate. The symbolic domination which reproduces this system is in fact symbolically violent. This violence operates by “naturalising” systems of classification. The dominated misrecognise this inequality as “natural” (Schubert, 2008).

Crucially, Bourdieu (1986) argued that the transmission of cultural capital, particularly in the embodied form, is dependent upon the whole family. Reay (1998) argues that Bourdieu’s theory of cultural reproduction is particularly useful in understanding the central role mothers play in transmitting cultural capital. The mother’s own cultural capital is important in influencing her involvement with her child’s educational career. Reay also writes that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus helps to explore how mothers’ own educational experiences shape their involvement with their children’s schooling. Reay identifies seven aspects of cultural capital that may be usefully applied to an empirical study looking at parental involvement in children’s schooling. Of these seven aspects, the following are relevant for

my own case study: educational qualifications, information about the education system, educational knowledge, available time and material resources (1998, p. 59). Interestingly, Reay found that mothers educated overseas felt that they sometimes possessed the “wrong” acquisition of cultural capital in that it was sometimes alien to the host society. As such, these mothers needed to make an increased effort in tracking the educational progress of their children, especially for more recent migrants who may lack language skills.

It is important to remember that family migration and reunification can be complex and messy, especially in the situation of relationship break-down. Ensuring a child’s well-being and stability in a new country may take precedence over traditional methods of social reproduction, which become negotiable on their list of practical and emotional concerns. Penelopa, for example, came from a family where both her parents were educated to postgraduate level under communism, and could be categorised as the Intelligentsia. She herself had MA in European Law and worked in a managerial role in the UK. Her husband at the time had been the first to come to London to find work. After he persuaded her to join him, Penelopa temporarily left her daughter with her mother in Poland while she found a job and accommodation that would be suitable for her daughter to join them. Unfortunately, Penelopa’s husband then subsequently lost his job and wanted to return to Poland. Penelopa had started to make a life for herself in London and did not want to return. Without any warning, her husband went to Poland without her and removed their daughter from Penelopa’s mother’s house. He did not inform Penelopa where he was living. As such, Penelopa spent several years trying to trace the whereabouts of her daughter before she was able to track her down and reunite with her, bringing her to England. When Penelopa managed to find her daughter after two years, she discovered that the husband had a new partner and was living in a house with eight people which she felt was an unsuitable environment for her daughter. Penelopa’s daughter was sharing a bedroom with several people and, according to her, was extremely unhappy. Although Penelopa displayed middle class school choice practices, her main concern was her daughter’s emotional well-being:

I never wanted to put an expectation higher than she’s able to do it because she’s a very bright girl but she went through a lot and I have to take that under consideration so whatever I’m planning for her, whatever I wanted to do is that first take a lot of discussions with her... I’m trying to build her confidence but this is a very slow process because when she doesn’t know something she’s not going to do it, so it takes time to explain to her, listen honey you try this one, if you’re not going to like it it’s fair enough I’m not going to force you to do it but you have to try. Her self-esteem,

her self-confidence is so low that I'm spending most of my time just helping to go further, at the moment she is actually on her own a lot so she catch up with all the kids in the class in English, she can read, she was invited by the head teacher to tell her how proud he is because she achieved so much, it's just the one issue with the writing but she's getting there so, yeah. (Penelopa, London)

Penelopa spoke about how her relationship with her daughter was extremely strained and that her daughter now had emotional and behavioural problems. This was a very sensitive topic for Penelopa and she became very tearful. She was very concerned about her daughter's progress and ability to integrate into a British school, especially as she was ten years old and did not know much English. She also told me that she believed her daughter was behind for her age in regards to her educational ability and the knowledge she should possess as a Polish pupil. According to Penelopa, the father never read with their daughter or helped her with her homework and, as such, the mother has had a double battle to improve both her daughter's Polish education and English proficiency. For the mother, the Polish Saturday school became a sort of sanctuary in which she found the daughter displayed renewed confidence and made friends. The Polish Saturday school also offered a resource for the mother to mix with other parents. Yet, the mother was very concerned about the friendship groups her daughter had made at her English primary school, believing that the "type of girls" she befriended were encouraging disrespectful behaviour towards her as a mother. In these conditions, Penelopa had put the choice of secondary school to the back of her mind. She had a brief list of requirements for her daughter's secondary school, which included it being an all girls' school and a Catholic one. However, as mentioned previously, there were still considerations about the long-term educational trajectory of her daughter, as she had purposefully chosen schools with Sixth Form with the intention that her daughter would do A-levels and go to university.

Ola from London was one of the cases that clearly illustrated a downward mobility upon migration. She regularly repeated how happy and successful she had been at her job in Poland as a logistics expert for a major international cooperation, where she had worked for ten years. Yet, after two years of living apart from her husband – as he had migrated to the UK without her – she felt the relationship could no longer bear the strain of being a long-distant one. Ola felt resigned to her current situation in which she seemed depressed and was struggling with the loss of her employment status. On top of this, her son, who was 12, had been diagnosed with autism and caring for him was strenuous and tiring. Like Penelopa from

London, secondary school choice was not the major concern in her life. Because she had already gone through the process with her son, she knew how to fill out the forms and was planning to send her daughter, who was 10, to the local Catholic secondary school. Here we see a case like many others in this research, which shows that although women have an active role in deciding whether family reunifications happen, they sometimes feel compelled to join their husband in the UK – even though it can result in downward mobility. By not doing so, they risk the break-up of their marriage and a situation where the relationship between their children and their father becomes one that is long-distant and part-time. Hence, these mothers have an enormous responsibility and pressure sometimes unfairly placed upon them. In similarity with Ryan and Sales (2011) and White (2011), these women can be considered active agents in decisions about return migration. The fact that they sometimes reluctantly join their husbands in the UK, uprooting their children and their whole life and creating a new life for themselves and their children, gives them a kind of leverage which comes into play in discussions about whether to return to Poland. Many of the mothers spoke of how returning to Poland was not even a consideration while the child was at school in England. This could only be a consideration once the child had reached 18. This assertion was justified to their partners by stressing the amount of emotional labour expended both by the mothers themselves, and by the school, to integrate their children. Due to the process of disruption to the family routines caused by migration, as well as the de-skilling and downward mobility the Polish migrant parents experience in the UK, their ability to reproduce their previous social class identity is restricted. Their day-to-day efforts to endow their children with adaptive skills in which the emotional and practical issues were prioritised, shows similar patterns to working class parenting (Gillies, 2005). Like working class parents, Penelopa and Ola were more concerned about their children's ability to cope with instability and, as such, the choice of a Catholic secondary school became even more important.

6.7 Religious Capital and Social Order

Religious capital is a form of cultural capital, which can be used as a resource as embedded within social relations (Swartz, 1996). This chapter has gone back to the theme of Catholicism that was elaborated in Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, we saw how participants positioned faith schools within a marketised education system. This section outlines the relationship between religion, class, power and school choice. Religion is a field like any

other field and an arena for competition, in which agents legitimise and accumulate their form of religious capital (Rey, 2004). In the struggle for resources, the Polish participants drew upon their religious capital, positioning themselves oppositionally to non-religious, “immoral” working class people. They also placed Catholicism within a perceived hierarchy of religion in Western societies as in conflict with non-Western faiths such as Islamic ideology. This issue will be outlined in the following chapter (Chapter 7), showing how the participants interrelated “whiteness” and Catholicism.

Bourdieu (1971) argued that religion contributed to the *misrecognition* of social order. In a society divided by social class, religious practices contribute towards the reproduction of social order. In order to explore how religion works as a capital, it is also important to understand how religion influences the habitus. A homogeneous religious experience produces similar perceptions amongst its exponents. Rey (2004) argues that the religious field shapes the habitus. As Bourdieu states, the religious habitus is ‘the principal generator of all thoughts, perceptions and actions consistent with the norms of a religious representation of the natural and supernatural worlds’ (1971, p. 319). As such, the perception and meanings of power relations, conflicts of interest and struggle over other forms of capital can be attributed to my respondents’ religious habitus. Specifically, the *misrecognition* and *legitimation* of social inequalities in British society have been influenced by an accumulation of experiences and ideologies, including communism, neo-liberal doctrine and Catholicism.

In the struggle over resources – in this case school places – the respondents perceived themselves to be in a competitive class and status hierarchy in which they pursue strategies to achieve their interests. In doing so, they accumulate and legitimise Catholicism in order to secure a place at a high-ranking Catholic school. However, it is important to acknowledge that the Polish migrants themselves would not consider their Catholicism to in any way benefit them economically or socially. For the majority of the participants devoted to Catholicism, their religion was a fundamental part of their identity and integral to developing their sense of belonging in British society. Essentially, their Catholicism was at the very core of their subjectivity and it was used to position themselves oppositionally in relation to those they defined as “unworthy”, “immoral”, “low-class” people.

Sometimes we do talk about different religions because they [respondent’s children] seemed to be really worried about people who don’t believe in god at all and just

from our point of view they wouldn't go to hell, so we did have a lot of discussions about you first of all have to be a good person. If you are good to everyone then people will return it, and I do everything according to what my church tells me to do, because I think it is morally right and I was brought up in such a way. (Michelina, Nottingham)

Religion for the majority of the Polish participants was inextricably entwined with social class. Therefore, religion for many of the participants was drawn upon to justify their choice of school – not just as a way to maintain their ethno-religious identity in a new society, but also as a means to distance their children from what they considered to be “undesirable” others. This was not explicitly stated when they were directly asked why they chose a Catholic school, but rather the discipline of Catholic schools and being around people “like themselves” were given as reasons for the choice of school. However, the majority of participants claimed they were choosing Catholic schools because being a Catholic was embodied within them as a person as well as generationally transmitted through their family. As such, they felt it was a duty to continue this transmission to their children – particularly in a new country. Catholicism for the Polish migrants was part of their ethnic identity.

*** *Why was it important for you to send your child to the catholic school?***

Maybe this is in my blood. I came from Poland there is more Catholics than the other religion and I think that is why. I am a very Catholic person, very religious. I think that this is in my blood. That was like my parents, like my grandparents. I can't imagine that my life would be different. (Elizaveta, Nottingham)

*** *And I mean you said that with Catholic school that was important but you don't know why.***

No, I know why – we are a Polish Catholic family, all my grandmother, her mother, and every time was only Catholic, but that is normal. Everybody is Catholic. Now maybe not but it was for me important and here it is different, I came here and yes people were going to church but it's different, baptism, or for a christening or something like that but for me it was important and I know that maybe we're not going every Sunday to church but I want my children to know that God is ...help and everything. (Joanka, Nottingham)

*** *Secondary, so this is the secondary school?***

Yes, that is the secondary school – because you are born Catholic, so it doesn't matter if you practice it or not, you have it in your blood and so I thought [name of daughter] has to go to Catholic school because I am not a practising one and I thought at least they can teach her at school and she can go through her first communion and things like this, so I thought that that would be a good start and the Catholic schools usually have a high standard and the discipline is good and that was outstanding. (Emilja, Nottingham)

*** *Why is it important for you that your children are Catholic?***

Because in Poland this is – I don't know, because my parents are believing, they are Catholics. My husband's parents as well and we grow up in that community where you have to go to church and we have always been very close to the church and all Christmas and all Easter time – we always have been around church so even when my children were little in Poland I always take them to church with me so they grew up in that community and we tried to keep that the same here because it's important, it is a very important part of our lives. (Truda, Nottingham)

*** *Why did you want to send her to Catholic school?***

Why? Because I am Catholic and I want our children to continue that. Maybe it is better, maybe not, I don't know. Because in England there is not too many Catholics but in Poland there is many. (Serafin, Nottingham)

*** *Could you tell me about why you chose a Catholic school?***

Why? Because all my family are Catholic and it is our tradition and we have grown up with. (Berta, London)

*** *Is being Catholic important for yourself?***

Yes it is I think, at the moment. Especially when my child was born and I was on my own in this country it became important to belong somewhere and my roots, my Catholic roots (Alicja, London)

The importance of religion and Polish assimilation into British society was researched by Zubrzycki (1956) in his study of Polish immigration to Britain in the post-war period. Zubrzycki researched the adjustment and assimilation of Polish immigrants by arguing that there were two main factors affecting their assimilation; the first one being the willingness of the migrant group to adapt its values and cultural patterns to that of the host society, the second factor being the extent to which they identified with the cultural values in the host society. According to Zubrzycki, institutional factors significantly influenced an immigrant's predisposition to adapt to the norms and modes of the host community. These institutions included religious organisations. Zubrzycki claims that the Polish community in Great Britain has played a significant role in the process of adjustment of Poles to Britain, together with the Parish organisation of the Roman Catholic Church.

Sandberg (1974) found that Polish national identity and beliefs associated with this were expressed by Polish people as being "in the blood" – a theme that occurred in my own research. In Sandberg's research, this was more so in the case of working class Polish-Americans. Sandberg has argued that the Roman Catholic Church transcends national identification. However, within each nation the Roman Catholic Church has variations amongst the religious practices – hence providing a religio-ethnic basis for Catholicism (p. 29). Sandberg (1974) looked at fourth generation Polish-Americans living in California. He

found that as Polish migrants assimilated into the culture of the larger society, their educational and economic opportunities increased, resulting in subsequent generations moving away from their ethnic neighbourhood enclaves and dispersing into the suburbs. Importantly, Sandberg points out that upward social mobility and assimilation often conflict with group ethnic solidarity. The interesting question for Sandberg was how this affected their religious engagement. There was also a correlation between socio-economic position and religious engagement, with working class Polish-Americans preferring to attend Polish church and maintain the Polish religious traditions. In my own research, when I looked at the participants' socio-economic positions both in the UK and in Poland as well as that of their parents, it was found that the more highly educated the participant was, in addition to having university educated parents, the more likely they were to choose a selective school when the opportunity was available over a Catholic secondary school.

In the context of my own study, it is perhaps particularly relevant to consider Tropman's (2002) *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Community* – an inverted title from Weber's (1965 [1906]) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In this book, Tropman is amazed by the fact that there had hardly been any considerations or discussions of the *Catholic* ethic – despite the fact that it had taken about 100 years since Weber's well-appraised study on the Protestant ethic. Although acknowledging that there is no inevitable dichotomy between Catholicism and Protestantism, Tropman argues that the Catholic ethic, as opposed to the Protestant ethic, is based to a greater extent on a sense of “community” than the more individualistic orientation of Protestantism. Tropman's thesis therefore builds in important respects on Émile Durkheim's (1951 [1897]) study of why suicide is found to be more common amongst people of a Protestant rather than a Catholic devotion, as there is normally less community support to help individuals cope with emotional difficulties within the former as opposed to within the latter religious devotion. By maintaining that Catholicism consists of a community-oriented ethic, Tropman thinks of “community” as implying ‘strong connections with others, a sense that “we are all in the same boat,” and norms of helping, supporting, and co-operating with others’ (2002, p. 2, inverted commas in original). It is interesting to note that different religious views have sometimes been associated with a particular “nation” (see Turner 1991) and that “the Catholic ethic” as described by Tropman does, in this regard, closely resemble my participants' own notion of a “*Polish* mentality” of sticking together with and helping other Poles. Yet, it is also revealing of the fact that the “ideal types” of a Protestant versus a Catholic ethic are not

always in line with the realities, and that many of my participants were proud of Poles' "hard working" mentality in the UK – despite Poles typically coming from a Catholic rather than a Protestant background and the associated inference that this would render them less "hard working" according to Weber's (1965 [1906]) thesis. Again, it is important to understand the interplay of different structures in shaping the Polish participants' attitude to work. It must not be forgotten that the value of the "hard work" of the working class person was a central ideology in the communist regime in Poland.

Essentially, the importance of the participants' ethno-religious identity has been outlined, as it acts as a means of group identity, assimilation, sense of belonging and the formation of social networks which, in turn, influence the majority of the participants' choice of Catholic school for their children. However, Catholicism also constitutes a reference scheme through which to categorise and position others in British society. It is drawn on as a way to understand social divisions both in terms of social class and ethnicity. These understandings then also influence the participants' choice of school.

For Bourdieu (1991), religion acted as a way of imposing the dominant social order upon the dominated and transcribing divisions of wealth and power as "naturalised" by making it "the will of God". Hence, those who were inculcated to a set of beliefs were subject to symbolic violence in which the inequalities in the social order and their own position were *misrecognised*. According to Rey (2007), '[t]herein lies one of the main reasons why Bourdieu is so useful to the study of religion: to demonstrate the role of religion in the establishment, legitimization and reproduction of social inequality and all of its incumbent injustices' (p. 5). Dianteill (2004) points out there is a strong parallel between the sociology of religion and that of Bourdieu's relational sociology with the links between beliefs, habitus and fields. According to Bourdieu, churches should be acknowledged – like other institutions are – as facilitating people's unreflective submission in society (cited in Rey, 2007, p. 10). This relation of domination in which privilege and injustice is legitimised, links in to Bourdieu's concept of doxa in which social institutions, structure and relations contribute to reproduction. Doxa is the 'pre-reflexive intuitive knowledge' (Deer, 2008, p. 120).

For Bourdieu, symbolic violence was central to the way that individuals and collective groups perceived the social world and reproduced society's hierarchies. As individuals interact with social fields, their habitus and cultural capital – including their religious beliefs

– position them in the struggle over symbolic capital. We can apply this to the case study of Polish Catholic migrants in the UK. In one way, they are positioned and limited by their beliefs and religious devotion and, as such, there may be examples where people “accept” the faith that they were handed. However, with migrants we have to remember that we are looking at a specific type of active individuals who have already made a major life change by moving to a new society in order – as cited in many of the participants’ interviews – to make a better life both for themselves and their children. They then encounter a local education market in which schools that prescribe to their particular religious ethos firstly offer them a place to provide a religious education to their children, which covers many of the values associated with their religio-ethnic identity. Secondly, these schools often tend to be the best performing in their local catchment area. Yet, admittance to these schools dictates a devotion to Catholicism, requiring documented proof of their stated belief in the form of baptism certificates, church attendance records and a reference from the local priest. The Polish migrants in this case may unintentionally enter a field in which they are automatically advantaged and, as such, religion offers a type of capital within the education market.

6.8 Summary

This chapter has addressed the second research question, exploring the perceptions Polish migrant parents have of issues of social divisions within British society, and considered to what extent, if any, these perceptions influence the respondents’ school choice for their children. The occupational status of the participants was outlined, both before migration and after, as well as that of their parents and partners. Issues with cross-national comparative measures of occupational status were briefly discussed, in particular the socio-historic dimension that added extra complexity due to the communist regime’s denial of stratification and class hierarchy. The latter issue was drawn out in the narratives of the respondents, in which their understandings of social stratification during the period of communism were explored. The respondents’ identifications of social class divisions in British society were then examined in order to look at how they understood their current class subjectivities. The chapter showed how several participants – particularly in Nottingham – pathologised disadvantaged sections of society, exemplifying how respondents negotiated geographical terrains. In the attempt to justify their residence in the UK, they reproduced elements of the discourses of exclusion used by the right-wing media and politicians aimed at disadvantaged

communities. We saw how the Polish migrant parents distinguish themselves as “worthy”, “moral” and “hard-working”. Social inequality was portrayed as a cultural rather than as a structural issue, and this was reinforced by their own discourse on mobility and parenting which they deem possible to achieve in a “meritocratic” society. In their struggle for acceptance they appropriated middle class values as the norm in British society and adopted the strategies, values and practices of white middle class parents when choosing schools. An overview of the international transferability of cultural capital was also discussed, in which it was shown how religious capital performed as a type of cultural capital, leading to educational capital and social networks. Overall, this chapter has demonstrated how the respondents’ lives were embedded with multiple identities that were contested and fragmented: they are Polish, migrants, parents, classed, Catholics and white. The last identity, “whiteness”, will be further explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

“Whiteness”

This chapter will address the third and final research question, exploring how a set of “white” minority migrant parents negotiate their school choice practices within multiracial/multicultural urban settings. Firstly, it will be shown how the Polish migrant parents juxtapose themselves in opposition to disadvantaged sections of society, including ethnic minority groups, other migrant groups and the white working class – positioning themselves in a perceived “racial hierarchy” they observe as operating in British society. Through justifications of concern over “reverse racism” and children being the white minority in a school, a number of the Polish migrant parents avoid sending their children to secondary schools with larger than average ethnic minority student intake. The chapter will also illustrate the ways in which “whiteness” becomes intersected with Catholicism and “Englishness”. The respondents discuss a conflict of faiths in which sending their children to a Catholic school is seen as a way of “protecting” them from the influence of other faiths. “Whiteness” moreover becomes integrated with “Englishness” for the respondents, as those from higher socio-economic backgrounds pursue the acculturation of a particular type of “Englishness” – specifically a white middle class standard of English language and accent. This represents the interrelation between social class and “whiteness”, showing that “whiteness” in itself is not always a privilege in British society. Middle class “whiteness” for the respondents is interpreted as a location of structural advantage and a set of cultural practices. The “Englishisation” of their children is pursued, as they believe that this converts into educational advantages. Lastly, the chapter will explore the intersection between national belonging and “whiteness” through the cases of three Polish white migrant mothers who were married to husbands from different ethnic groups – including Vietnamese, Afro-Caribbean and French Moroccan – and had children who are considered to be “non-white”.

7.1 Choosing Schools in Multiethnic/Multiracial Urban Areas

School choice policies have led to greater stratification and separation of students along racial and socio-economic lines. As seen in Chapter 5, parents from higher socio-economic

backgrounds are more likely to send their children to higher status schools, in which the benefits of a racially diverse school are weighed against their children's educational trajectory and future success in the context of a competitive and unequal education system. As shown in Chapter 6, the majority of the Polish migrant parents came from high socio-economic backgrounds prior to migration, were well-educated (sometimes to postgraduate level), as were their parents. Upon migration, they experienced de-skilling and downward mobility in which they had to reshape their class subjectivities. This was done mainly through a process of positioning themselves oppositionally to disadvantaged sections of society, including ethnic minority groups, other migrants and the white working class. Garner (2012) argues that a person's understanding of social processes is often based on their experiences in which class and "race" have been present and, in turn, shape their evaluation of belonging. Therefore, the question is how does the ethnic composition of localities and that of certain schools influence how the Polish migrant parents choose secondary schools for their children, and in what way did the respondents' and their children's "whiteness" impact upon these choices?

Research on Polish migration to the UK (Eade et al., 2007; Fox et al., 2012; Garapich, 2008; Sales et al., 2008) has shown how Polish migrants draw on racialised discourses to position themselves in a "racial hierarchy" that they perceive as operating in British society. Sales et al. (2008) argued that this is sometimes a result of the experience of living in a majority white society before migration with little familiarity of racial and ethnic diversity. Importantly, Sales et al. (2008) point out that racial discourses tend to decrease the longer the Polish migrants had been living in the UK. My own research found that a number of participants also tended to draw on a racialised discourse when discussing school choice. Again in similarity with Sales et al. (2008), the longer the Polish parents had been living in the UK, the less likely they were to use these discourses. This may have been because their perceptions and attitudes to ethnic "others" changed over time, but another reason could also be that they developed the capacity to frame their narratives in a more abstract way. This ability was present particularly in the narratives of the more middle class Polish migrant parents. Rather than overt accounts of avoiding schools with larger than average ethnic intakes, their choices were framed around arguments of resources, culture and school standards. Whereas Polish respondents from lower socio-economic backgrounds centred their narratives around the perceived lack of integration from previous generations of other groups of migrants, particularly from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups that they

identified as “disengaged” from British society and its values. This produced a set of anxieties for some parents regarding the ethnic and racial composition of schools, as they expressed concern about their children’s friendship groups, particularly when they believed that choosing certain schools would mean their children would be a “white minority”.

In a handful of cases, parents guesstimated the percentage of the black student body of the schools. Like other participants, Franciszka from London talked about the observations she had made of certain schools in her local area when going about her day-to-day activities. Often the black students, and in particular black female students, were depicted as being “loud” and “unruly”, hanging around in large “gangs” at the end of the school day. The guesstimates of black pupil intake differed between participants, but were often in the 80-90 percent mark. For example, Franciszka from London stated that ‘90 per cent of the students were black’ at a particular school that she had been observing, and she did not want her daughter to be the minority as a white student. Significantly, although the majority of the parents asserted that sending their children to a Catholic school was one of the most important aspects of choosing a school, for some parents who used racialised discourses certain Catholic schools were dismissed due to their racial and ethnic composition:

If I see the school, which they don’t have discipline, like the children there are doing what they want then I don’t want this school. I am looking for some strict school with good behaviour children. What I’ve have heard is just, again, opinion. They are mostly Catholic schools, they have got a lot of black people and they are behaving badly sometimes, I saw on [pause] [name of Catholic secondary school], or even [name of another girls’ Catholic secondary school], there was fighting many times on their own and I’m not trusting that school which doesn’t have discipline. (Franciszka, London)

Tamary from London had a degree from Poland in Accounting. She was the first in her family to go to university. Her father had been a lorry driver and her mother had been a housewife. She had been living in the UK for six years, and had experienced de-skilling. She now worked as a cleaner and her husband, who had vocational education in the building trade from Poland, now worked as a building labourer. Like Franciszka, evaluations of particular secondary schools were done through observation of the ethnic composition and the “behaviour” of the students:

I watch which parents come and if there are so much black or Indian people, because usually (laughter) sorry, usually black people, there is so much

aggression and I worry about my son. You know, if you are in the class which 90% are black boys and only my son is white then for careers in the future, he will be exactly the same like black. So I worry about English [language], because I know black or Indian people stop speaking English. it is completely different English than people who are born here and live in English families (Tamary, London).

In the above-quotation, Tamary is referring to what she sees as differences in the level of cultural belonging to Britain. She is constructing her son's trajectory as based on a particular type of "Englishness" which she sees as a more authentic source of identification, specifically a white middle class standard of English language and accent. This illustrates how she has constructed a hierarchical structure of belonging in Britain. It is important to point out, as was mentioned in Chapter 6, that anxiety about secondary school choice and making the right "choice" was sometimes based on experiences the Polish migrant parents had had of primary schools. Some of the respondents had spoken about how they were unaware of the social divisions and differences between schools when they had first migrated to the UK. As such, they sent their children to the local primary school in which their children were the minority due to their "whiteness". In these cases, the respondents explicitly referred to their children being disadvantaged due to their "whiteness" and "good behaviour" in which the teachers' attention was consumed with trying to discipline students rather than teach. Tamary even stated that the teacher had apparently expressed concern for her son's predominantly black friendship group:

The first school I had the choice for my children, it was mixed, so lots of black people and Muslims, so maybe that is why my son was classified, and nobody wants to help him, I don't know. No, I am not racist, I'm not discriminating. My son has lots of friends who are black and Indian, but I remember one situation when my son went to class and in the class few children were white, really white, and another ones were black and Indian and so I think that it's unfair because the teacher said to me 'Why does your son only have black and Indian friends' and I thought that she meant my son was a stupid boy, because he has black friends (Tamary, London)

Another participant, Celina from London, connects her ambition to send her son to a high-ranking primary school with its low ethnic diversity of the student intake. However, her narrative of school choice is expressed through concern about her son being a minority as a white child in his primary school. According to Celina, this experience was detrimental to

his identity. Therefore, her choice of secondary will be one in which white children are the majority:

Right now I'm thinking to move somewhere here [affluent area of London] just to live here because also I can see at his school, he's saying that because there are not a lot of white people in there and he also needs to have something like at least an ethnic identity or something and because he's blonde, he has got blonde white hair so he is always – like where do blonde white boys live? They're not here. It's nothing from race history or something but he wants to have somebody who is similar to him and I can see it, he doesn't want to cut his hair off, he wants to have long hair and he wants to have it even brighter than he's got, so it's like at school he says he doesn't want to go there for the longer time because he wants to have similar friends, so it's like he's got his first love I think, an Indian girl. We'll see, we'll see what's going to happen but as I said this is my ambition and it is not only an ambition because I'm ambitious and I need to be ambitious. (Celina, London)

Even more political and anti-racist parents, like Roza, spoke about how their children had been disadvantaged in lower-status primary schools with higher levels of students from lower socio-economic ethnic minority backgrounds. Roza's education in Sociology meant she was able to understand this as a societal structural issue rather than as a cultural one. Yet, in fulfilling her "duty" as a "responsible" mother, combined with her own disadvantaged position in British society, "doing her best" for the child trumped her politics and she ended up moving her child to a high ranking primary school:

I think our mistake was that her [daughter] school started at the same time as my younger child was born and having a new sibling was difficult enough, starting school and having sibling is very, very difficult and so I think that was one factor. The other factor was the school wasn't mixed, the school was representing one community which I think was mainly Caribbean children who lived very close to school, they knew each other very well and they're from very strong community and so she was kind of outside that. Even though this is very much immigrant school, she was outside there in this immigrant community. The other factor was that [name of daughter] was speaking English as a first language, she doesn't speak Polish. Her English was on a very good level so when she started school it was very much, loads of children in her classroom didn't and I think teachers put a lot of effort and I think rightly to help children who don't speak English to help them associate and speak English and I think somehow because she is a child who doesn't cause any trouble, she's quiet, she didn't feel she belonged to school. She had a problem with making friends from the beginning, she found it really hard which may be two factors, one home and one school itself, we will never know. There was a lot of very funny stuff happening in school. Within the first six months she had two or three teachers. She wasn't used to that. There was loads of black boys which were perceived as

disruptive, I don't think they were, I think they were just boisterous and boyish and happy children but there was lots of attitude of keeping them quiet and sit still so I didn't like that. I thought I would help a bit in school, just to help my daughter I thought by me being there and I'd do favour but what I saw there was something I didn't like. I saw quite a few times teachers shouting at the children. The effort was spent on disciplining them rather than making their lesson nice and interesting. I saw several teachers within the period of two months being with them. Half of the time it was like sit still, keep quiet, I demand this, this and that and I didn't like the way children were spoken to. The teachers were basically talking at children and not to the children. (Roza, London)

The three quotations above are all from participants making secondary school choice in North London. It is important to remember how local dynamics of settlement may influence the racialised distinctions present in the interviews. London is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the UK, and although Nottingham is also racially diverse, the majority of the Nottingham participants lived in white middle class neighbourhoods in Nottingham in which around 90 per cent of residents belonged to the ethnic category of “white”. A number of the participants expressed resentment towards positive discrimination policies, which will be touched upon below. However, what is important to highlight is that school choice for a small number of participants who drew on racialised discourses tended to elide “race” and instead focus on culture. This cultural racism was particularly focused towards Islam as a perceived threat towards British and European values. Particular themes were that Indians and Muslims dressed differently, were seen as culturally different, and as a group not attempting to assimilate into British society. In particular, respondents discussed a conflict of faiths. “Whiteness” became intersected with Catholicism, with which other and non-Christian religions were seen to produce an antagonistic relationship, while at the same time sending their children to a Catholic school was seen as a means of “protecting” them from the influence of other faiths by avoiding intermixing in an educational setting.

During one of my interviews with Elizaveta from Nottingham, her husband Thomas, who was second generation Polish, decided to join the interview and discuss the school choice of their children. Elizaveta and Thomas were one of the longest established in the UK of my participants. Elizaveta came from the post-communist wave of migration to the UK in the early 1990s. She had migrated to Nottingham to work as a nanny because she had connections to the post-war Polish migration to the area. Thomas's parents were from this earlier wave of migration to Nottingham. Elizaveta stayed in Nottingham when she met

Thomas and they married. Of all the participants I interviewed, Thomas was the most forthright with his attitudes towards other “races” and cultures, which could be perceived by others as prejudice and even racist. His views about other cultures also constituted his rationale for marrying not just someone from a Polish background, but someone who had been brought up in Poland and who was seen by him to fully embraced a “Polish habitus”. The fact that he had grown up in Nottingham meant that unlike the other Polish participants, where the mother made the decisions and choices and went through the application process, he informed Elizaveta of what they would do and why. He even told me that he only put down two choices on the application form, both of which were Catholic secondary schools. When I asked them what would have happened if their children had not been accepted into either of those schools, he refused to even contemplate what he would have done. Elizaveta and Thomas insisted that they wanted to send their children to a Catholic school because it was more disciplined, as well as not wanting their children to be around other religious cultures:

‘The Catholic school, it gives them more manners, they solve their problems differently, you know’ (Elizaveta, Nottingham).

Some cultures are less disciplined than others. (Thomas, Nottingham)

When I prompted Thomas on what other cultures he was referring to, he made reference to ‘Asian religious cultures’ – in one instance associating the Pakistani nationality with a religion. The intersection between faith, “race” and school standards became used in their justifications of Catholic school choice:

Well there are less other religions there. Because it's a Catholic school so you don't have the hassle of Hindus and Buddhism and whatever the other religions are. Okay they are taught, but they are just taught, you don't get those issues with that. The kids are all Catholic and therefore it's just one religion, whereas you go to a normal school and you've got all sorts of religions, Pakistanis and all that sort of thing, and they are all – the levels are not as high because obviously the same thing, the parents are whatever, their English is poor and they are teaching the kids their ways. So you have all this mix and I think that that is detrimental to the teaching. (Thomas, Nottingham)

I came from Poland where there is more Catholics than the other religion and I think that is why. I think that the Catholic schools are quieter. [Name of secondary school] there is a lot of Indian children and Pakistani children there and they want their own rules. I didn't want that. I wanted my children go to proper school with my religion if I can. Why not? (Elizaveta, Nottingham)

Here we see how “white Christian” religious values and norms are juxtaposed against what they consider to be different and “inferior”. Garner argues that social relations are ‘more complex than the black-white binary allows for’ (2009, p. 797). Elizaveta and Thomas place Catholicism in a hierarchy of “acceptable” faiths perceived to be operating in British society. Although they do not state, like the other participants above, that they are avoiding particular schools because they do not want their children to be a “white minority”, they do conflate Asian nationality with attributing innate characteristics and cultural values of non-Christian religions which they perceive to be a threat to the cultural reproduction of their children. In this respect, “whiteness” is seen as homogenous, with clear distinctions between nations, religions and belonging. Garner (2012) points out that Britain has a long history of racialising normally white immigrant groups such as the Jews and the Irish. Therefore, it is interesting to see how a first generation and second generation Polish migrant parent links their own white identities to the “acceptability” of certain faiths as influenced by wider political rhetoric which has promoted identification with certain values and cultures as associated with “Britishness”, while government policies on terrorism such as PREVENT have targeted Muslim communities. McGhee et al. (2013) have argued that Polish migrants’ speech can become “infiltrated” by the language and wording of their host society. This, in turn, influences their practices, such as positioning themselves against other migrant groups in different structural contexts. Data from the British Social Attitudes survey conducted in 2013 shows that prejudice against other racial groups has risen since 2001. The data shows that in 2001, racial prejudice was at an all time low of 25 per cent. However, following the 9/11 attacks in the US and the invasion of Afghanistan, racial prejudice began to rise sharply in 2002. By 2011, it was at an all time high of 38 per cent. Campaigners have said that 9/11 and “the war on terrorism”, as well as increased hostility towards immigration since the EU accession, are all factors that need to be added into the equation. As Tariq Modood suggests, part of the reason for this growth in prejudice is that ‘many people were conflating anti-Muslim sentiment and racial animus’ (cited in Taylor and Muir, 2014).

A small number of Polish migrants cited policies such as positive discrimination, which they saw as being in favour of black people and against white people, as an example of a society “gone too far”. This was a perceived characteristic of British policy that influenced their school choice. One of the perceived consequences of positive discrimination towards minority ethnic groups in Britain, was what they saw as a system of “reverse racism”

operating as a “benefit” for certain ethnic minority and immigrant groups while disadvantaging white immigrant groups through fear of being labelled a “racist”. Antonina from London, who works as a cleaner, believes black people receive advantageous treatment in the workplace because others are scared to have disputes with them over work-related issues due to the fear of being called a “racist”:

All the history with black people they were treated badly by racists, but now it's completely changed. Whatever is happening about whatever, they say because we're racist. I see even at work the different treatment of people. They can more, they can more, for example, one black woman is not cleaning enough rooms and they are afraid to tell her because it will be racism. This is like their privilege, we can say this? I don't know. They're using this, this is their weapon. (Antonina, London)

For a very small number of participants it was not only a matter of the fear of being labelled as a “racist”, but there was also a perception that Polish people in general were disliked by black people. As such, they used what they claimed as experiences of “reverse racism” to justify the exclusions of certain schools where white students were the minority.

You know black person don't like Polish people. Or they hate Polish people. Once this woman at the city council, a black woman. She helped me because my neighbours they put rubbish to our dustbins. And do you know I speak with her, we were sitting and she told me that black women hate Polish women and this is true, because sometimes when we go to out they [black women] look like at us all horrible because they say Polish women like black men. (Ludmila, Nottingham)

With most of my experience at work, when I used to work as a carer, there were quite a few people from Africa and then, hmm, they just hated Polish girls so because they lost their job, to be honest my first job so I moved to a different care home because one of the ladies, I couldn't work with her. (Mila, Nottingham)

I think to be honest with you it's the other way around now. Being white is a disadvantage, you get – what's the word? Racism has turned around now. Because you're white – they have to employ so many blacks, for example-and I've heard about it on the news as well not long ago, so it's definitely turning around. It will get worse as we go forward. (Thomas, Nottingham)

Norton and Sommers' (2011) research has shown that white North Americans, for example, view racism as a “zero-sum game”. Concern about so-called “reverse racism”, they argue, dates back to the 1970s after the civil rights' movement. Their research found that whites perceived an ‘anti-White bias as a bigger societal problem than anti-Black bias’ (2011, p.

215). The white people in their research seemed to believe that more equality for black people equated to less equality for whites. This is despite awareness of other statistical evidence that shows poorer black people are disproportionately disadvantaged in education and employment. In my own research, it could be assumed that the Polish migrant parents have been exposed to the above-discourse and regurgitated it. Their perception of “reverse racism” could also be connected to the feeling that as Polish migrants they are in competition with other “non-white” ethnic minority or immigrant groups as situated in wider political discourses of national entitlement and priority of resources, jobs and welfare.

I had some situation from the past and I went out, I speak to people and everybody was nice and lovely until they asked me where are you from. Ah from Poland. But I understand, there's a lot of Polish people coming there they are quite, how I can describe the typical Polish people, they came to make money, they are not very honest sometimes, not all of them but they like money, make money, make money. I'm actually not one of them, as you can see. I think some Polish people they are not very popular at the moment because there's too much of us as well. But what is strange because more of Polish people we're working hard, we pay taxes, we put in the system a lot of money actually. I think people are looking at this differently, they say we took work from the English people, I don't saw never English woman working in the hotel, on that kind of position actually. (Antonina, London)

Clarke and Garner (2010) argue that some minority groups, in this case white Europeans, reproduce the racialised discourses of the dominant white group. While the Polish migrants faced constructions as “excessively hard-working” and “taking jobs” (Garner, 2012), they draw on older visual distinctions of skin colour positioning other groups as “beneficiaries” of the British “welfare state” and equality policies.

However, it is important to point out that a number of participants, both in London and Nottingham, spoke positively about diversity, particularly in comparison to Poland:

I very much love the fact, comparing it to Poland, that your child can go to the park when she was little and she can play with four or five different nationalities in a sandpit and I think that is lovely. I always think that I am different, so I want to be accepted so I want to have people to be accepted as well. (Marja, Nottingham)

I know for children they come over to England the biggest shock is for them all these coloured people because we don't see black people [in Poland]. When [her children] goes off to school they've got different friends now. [Daughter] has got Asian friends, she has got black African friends, she has got Polish friends. No, we never had a problem. I think that when people come from small villages and small

cities they might have a bit of a problem because they're not used to it and it's something strange and difficult. (Jola, Nottingham)

Research on Eastern European migrants in the UK (e.g. Eade et al., 2007; Siara, 2009; White, 2011) has regularly observed how living in British cities possibly enables an alternative way of reflecting upon and approaching issues with regard to racial and ethnic diversity for these migrants, particularly when bearing in mind their upbringing in countries with a relatively mono-ethnic composition since the Second World War such as Poland. White (2011) suggests that these positive attitudes towards diversity are made all the more possible as Eastern European migrants are most commonly located in parts of British cities which accommodate a relatively high proportion of ethnic minority and migrant groups. Furthermore, Eastern European migrants tend to be mainly employed in occupations carried out by migrants (p. 149). In the case of London, Eade et al. conclude that

[t]he experience of London's diversity has resulted in 54% of [their] respondents expressing enthusiastic to positive attitudes towards multiculturalism and treating it as one of the city's main strengths and attractions. At the same time approximately a third of the[ir] respondents disagreed and regarded ethnic diversity as abnormal. (2007, p. 40)

The term “super-diversity”, as coined by Vertovec (2007), is useful in explaining how diversity has not only been witnessed in regards to a diversification of “racial”/ethnic backgrounds in London, but from the 1990s has also increasingly taken a range of other forms such as nationality, language, religious affiliations, immigration or citizenship status, spatial distribution, gender and sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and so on. Thus, ‘[o]ver the past ten years, the nature of immigration to Britain has brought with it a transformative “diversification of diversity” ... with respect to a multiplication of significant variables that affect where, how and with whom people live’ (p. 1025, inverted commas in original). Yet, it appears that intensified mobility and international relations in the last decades might, simultaneously, be seen as “unsettling” and even as posing a perceived “threat” to certain people within a global city environment such as London. Furthermore, the marketisation of the education system in which parents are now more at liberty to “choose” which schools to send their children to, has reinforced inequalities and notions of “insiders”/“outsiders” in the urban setting (see e.g. Pratt-Adams et al., 2010). Hence, Pratt-Adams et al. conclude that ‘[i]n educational terms, the issue is not about diversity in the city

but is more about the avoidance of diversity, the marginalization of the “other” ’ (2010, p. 35, inverted commas in original).

7.2 The “Invisibility” of “Whiteness”

Clarke and Garner (2010) argue that the concept of “whiteness” can be utilised as a working tool by contextualising it within longer historical processes of white European migration, rather than simply focusing on “whiteness” in the post-war period. As outlined in Chapter 2, Poland has traditionally been a migrating society, from which, during the “great transatlantic migration”, Polish migrants to the USA became fully absorbed into American society after three generations (Zhou, 1997). In this situation, their “whiteness” meant they were not subject to the same structural racism as more established communities of “non-white” descendants of the transatlantic slave trade. A traditional starting point for “whiteness” is that it signifies an invisible “non-raced” identity. However, the “visibility” and “invisibility” of “whiteness” rest on the location of the person observing it (Garner, 2009). White identity has been strategically and ideologically maintained as “invisible” and produced as a “norm”. The production of “whiteness” as a “norm” has meant that “non-white” people are juxtaposed against it as “others”. As Pearce states, ‘[w]hiteness is something that defines the ‘other’ but is not itself subject to others’ definitions’ (2003, p. 274, inverted commas in original). However, although “whiteness” signifies a social location, “whiteness” as a privilege is uneven and situational. “Whiteness” as a practice involves not only racialised distinctions, but also inter- and intra-class distinctions (Garner, 2012). In line with scholars such as Gillborn who conceptualise “white supremacy” as ‘the operation of forces that saturate the everyday mundane actions and policies that shape the world in the interests of White people’ (2008, p. 35), I acknowledge how being “white” might, in the respondents’ everyday actions and educational practices such as school choices, bestow certain privileges upon them which produce specific strategies. Therefore, in accordance with scholars such as Gillborn (2008), I am avoiding traditional conceptualisations of “white supremacy” merely in terms of extreme organisations that are explicitly racist and, rather, making the case for understanding the dynamics of “whiteness” in a more nuanced fashion. Scholars such as Mike Cole (2009) and John Preston (2007) demonstrate the ways in which the privileges of “whiteness” are bestowed unequally on white people depending on, for instance, the ethnic group and/or social class background they belong to. With regard to ethnic group, being in

a disadvantaged position as migrants can result in the situation in which Polish people draw upon their “whiteness” as a form of compensatory privilege (Cole, 2009, p. 27). However, as mentioned, the claim to the privileges of “whiteness” might be dependent on the social class location occupied by individual Polish migrant parents both prior to and after migration – with those from higher socio-economic locations being in a more resourceful position from which to tap into the privileges associated with “whiteness”. The traditional focus of Bourdieusian analyses of class is, therefore, complemented by the crucial insight that the extent to which individuals benefit from their “whiteness” intersects with their social class positioning by showing that “whiteness” in itself is not always a privilege in British society, but requires the possession of white middle class cultural capital. As Garner argues (2012), “whiteness” is not a departure point, it is an outcome. People make themselves “white” and class emerges in this “whitening” process. The question is then in what way do the white Polish migrant parents construct their identity as a form of belonging in opposition to others and how does “whiteness” act, if at all, as a form of privilege?

Many of my respondents, both in London and Nottingham, acknowledged or perceived themselves as more able to “blend in” to British society due to their “whiteness”.

At the moment you're walking around the streets, you see a black person and you don't really know if the black person was born here or in Africa. (Kasia, London)

A number of participants placed themselves into a racialised hierarchy that they perceived to be operating in British society, viewing their “whiteness” as a benefit:

Many times I was thinking “oh thank god I'm white” so I don't have too much troubles for example in my first home, the Jewish home, they were not accepting black people. It's like prejudice (Franciszka, London)

[Polish people], they wear the same clothes so they can disappear in the crowd. Definitely. That is – although you think it shouldn't be because the empire existed for such a long time, but still – [being white] is definitely helpful (Marja, Nottingham)

Eade et al. (2007) found that one of the most noteworthy methods of classification for the Polish migrants in London was that they located themselves in a “racial” and ethnic hierarchy as “whites” rather than Poles. In fact, 54 per cent believed their “whiteness” to be an important asset in British society in ensuring that they elude the “racial” discrimination

that “non-white” migrants and ethnic minorities suffer. Although they believed Britain was a “meritocracy” and in some way almost “classless”, they still recognised the prevalent “racial” discrimination that “non-white” migrants and ethnic minorities face (p. 17). Peggy McIntosh (1988) argues that white people are socialised to believe that their “whiteness” is an advantage in society. As she states,

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions which were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turf, and I was among those who could control the turf ... My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as “belonging” in major ways, and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. (p. 11, inverted commas in original)

Ryan’s (2010) research also illustrates how ethnic identity is mediated through “whiteness” and “European-ness”. Ryan tells us that the migrants felt a definition of “Polishness” was being ascribed to them. As such, many needed to re-negotiate their sense of what it was to be a “Polish person”. This shows how identity is constructed through social relations and is situated in time and space. Often migrants have to confront negative stereotypes of themselves. This requires them to make sense of their difference from other groups. Ethnic identity is often oppositional in that supposed differences from other groups help produce a sense of self. My research had a similar finding in which the respondents’ “Europeaness” and “whiteness” were emphasised.

It is easier to integrate when you are white because anywhere you will have more or less the same background and even the holidays that we celebrate together, and the way that you spend your life, what you are interested in, how you spend your summer holidays or any sort of holidays, Christmas or Easter – I think if you are white it's easier to integrate because you have more in common. (Michelina, Nottingham)

Fox et al. (2012) argue that Eastern European migrants shared “whiteness” aided, in part and parcel, racialised inclusion into British society. However, their cultural differences were subsequently used as a criterion for exclusion. As such, Fox et al.’s (2012) research shows that Eastern European migrants cannot take their “whiteness” for granted, but instead must negotiate it. Fox (2012) also shows that despite Hungarian and Romanian EU migrants’ assumed shared “whiteness” with the white ethnic majority in Britain, they are still victims of racism. Yet, they still use their “whiteness” to define and defend their precarious position both in the labour market and Britain’s racialised hierarchy.

The “whiteness” of Poles could be divided into two aspects. One emphasises that they are privileged by their “whiteness” and, on the other hand, that they are “not quite white enough” in that their Polish nationality and perceived cultural differences are emphasised in the discrimination against them. McDowell (2009) argues that there is an implicit difference between this new wave of EU economic migrants and previous post-war migration in a white ethnic majority society marked by “racial” discrimination such as Britain. As such, this new wave of migration is less visible; they are white and have a European identity and Christian heritage to draw upon. McDowell (2009) therefore argues that “whiteness” can act as a signifier of privilege in the labour market even in “low-skilled” jobs. However, even if research shows that “whiteness” may act as a privilege for Polish migrants to the UK, it must be understood that “whiteness”, like other racial constructions, is historically located and is subject to changes. Mahoney (1997) argues that the construction of privilege for “whiteness” is most prone to change. This is because white privilege is multi-faceted. Firstly, it is positioned in a hierarchy of structural advantages, but it is also because “whiteness” is a cultural practice.

Clarke and Garner (2010) argue that a new type of stereotypical discourse of racialisation directed towards white European “others” has emerged. “Whiteness” in this respect operates as a set of contingent hierarchies separating racialised subgroups. This can be linked to the imaginary notion of home, “strangers” and “unfamiliar people”. As such, white migrants produce a rupture in binary divisions between “white” and “non-white”. Polish migrants are neither ‘us’ nor ‘them’ (Clarke and Garner, 2010, p. 110). Drawing on Bauman (1990), Clarke and Garner (2010) argue that the “stranger” produces suspicion by violating the assumed structure and order of a society. This fear of the white “stranger” has become more elevated in the context of Fortress Europe and free flow of migration between EU states. Several of the participants, although acknowledging their ability to be camouflaged in British society because of their “whiteness”, also spoke about the break in this perceived element of belonging once they started to speak and people heard their “Polish accents” and/or lack of English proficiency:

So even we can feel sometimes – it is such a shame sometimes there is a lot of Polish people and sometimes they don’t speak Polish on the street because we don’t want to let them know we are Polish. Even when we get this flat, in July we were looking for a flat and even in the agencies, when you speak English and you are a working

person and not on benefits you can get a flat. It's like not a written rule, if you're on benefits and you don't speak English they don't want to even deal with you. There was another family, a Polish family, they didn't speak English and they said that they think that we are English! (laughter) they said in Polish "Ah, they can get the flat because they are working and they speak English". (Franciszka, London)

a general thing maybe because you speak with an accent and people who are, well I'm not saying less educated, but I remember the fact I went to the shop and when you started saying something, in a vegetable shop "oh I don't understand" and you think "You do understand,understands" but because you sense a slight bit of an accent (Marja, Nottingham)

Came here and I'm an immigrant and any time I open my mouth "Where are you from?" "Poland" "Oh, are you a cleaner?" so this attitude is very much (Roza, London)

When I started childminding , when I made a course, when I finished, and I started looking for parents which needed childcare then they sometimes were quite funny, they said "I shouldn't charge the same price as English childminders" because I'm not English. I said "Yes, but my service is the same, so why?", "Oh, because you don't speak English fluently, so maybe the children can gain a different accent" (Truda, Nottingham)

I think because of the job I'm doing, I always feel some parents might feel why is the Polish one teaching my child, so it is always in the back of my head, but it never really – nobody ever made me feel worse, it is me. It's me. Because I've got quite high standards and it's the foreign accent, you carry on thinking you're a second class citizen, it doesn't matter how well you achieve, you are always a second class citizen. (Danuta, Nottingham)

Previous research on Polish migrants in London (Ryan, 2010), found that some Polish migrants appropriated a position of “invisibility”, even to the point where they asserted that they did not have a “Polish accent” when speaking English. Often this was due to the perceived notion of the “badly behaving” Poles in public spaces. These Poles were seen as breaking the social norms of Polish society and behaving in a way that was “un-Polish”. By stigmatising this group, distancing themselves and taking a position of “invisibility”, they could position themselves as “moral” and “well-behaving” Poles. This can be linked back to Wedel’s (1986) research, which showed how Catholicism and the church in Poland were central components of being a “moral” Pole in Polish society.

In investigating or re-examining the experiences of current white Polish migrant parents, it is important to acknowledge the comparative differences they are likely to face by virtue of their “racial” imposed categorisation which may often include the socially constructed

category of – ‘not yet “white” enough’ (Bukowczyk, 1996, p.31). Fox et al. (2012) examine how Eastern European migration has been racialised in immigration policy and in the media. They argue that the nature of institutional racism is incorporated into immigration policy by implying that “whiteness” equates to inclusion in British society, securing Eastern European migrants residence status based on the visa-free agreement of EU membership. This is in sharp contrast to the tabloid media which focuses on cultural differences invoking a foundation for racial differentiation, thereby ensuring that Eastern European migrants are excluded from the imagined “British nation” in culturally racist ways despite their “whiteness”. An important point of this paper (Fox et al., 2012) is therefore the examination of “degrees of whiteness” and the continued salience of “race” and/or ethnicity as a basis of inclusion and exclusion. In the above-quotes, we saw how Truda and Danuta (both of whom worked with children) had experienced, or perceived themselves to experience, discrimination from British people because they were immigrants. While Danuta said she felt like a second class citizen because of her “Polish accent”, Truda spoke about how her skills and work were devalued due to her “Polishness”. In some ways, these two migrants were seen, or perceived that they were seen, as “contaminating” the reproduction of the cultural “purity” of British children because of their “Polishness”.

Preston (2007) argues that “whiteness” is a political category that is socially and historically reproduced. What is important to take from Preston’s work is the emphasis he lays on the macro- and micro-economic and social processes. Who benefits from “whiteness” is defined by macro-structures such as the state and institutions, while “whiteness” becomes a practice in the micro-interactions and choices individuals make in everyday life such as choice of where to live, what school to send their children to and what politics to support. Preston tells us that “whiteness” is not an identity, but rather a political, economic category that is used in opposition to other racial constructions. Preston emphasises that not all white people benefit to the same extent from “white supremacy” as, he suggests, “whiteness” does not automatically grant privilege. This is specifically because the white middle class and elite continuously reproduce and maintain their class privileges.

Lopez Rodriguez’ (2010) research found that Polish migrants often suffered stigma and were reflective about how others they interacted with positioned them in British society. Similarly, my research found that Polish parents’ displayed a sense of frustration and anger at being placed in an “inferior” position by native-born Britons, which created a sense of insecurity

often in spite of their possession of educational and cultural capital. For them, their status mobility was transferred into the aspirations they held for their children's assimilation and "success" in British society. Lopez Rodriguez also had similar findings, in which education was perceived as one of the main vehicles for achieving upward mobility, and their reliance on the perceived "meritocratic" values of British society meant that they had faith in their own and their children's abilities. In the next section 7.3, it will be shown how "whiteness" is connected with "Englishness", in particular white middle class "Englishness". Due to the discrimination that the Polish migrant parents experienced themselves, they set out on "Englishising" their own children.

7.3 "Whiteness" and "Englishness"

The social construction of "whiteness" can be ethnically located. As Dyer (1997, cited in Jackson, 1998) argues, although "whiteness" is historically signified by "invisibility", it nevertheless intersects with class, gender and nation. In this case "whiteness" for many of the Polish migrant parents is articulated through discourses of "Englishness" – specifically middle class "Englishness". Certain attributes of "whiteness" were seen to assist the Polish migrant parents' children's assimilation and aspired future social mobility in British society, in particular accent:

You see I will never have an English accent, no chance, but my daughters, yeah.
(Jola, Nottingham)

Middle class "whiteness" was then interpreted as a location of structural advantage and a set of cultural practices. For the Polish migrant parents who were aware of their perceived cultural differences as a barrier to their own integration the "Englishisation" of their children was pursued, as they believed that this would convert into educational advantages. Significantly, the choice of school was also considered to be part of the "Englishisation" process. Therefore, sending the children to the "right" kind of school, was particularly important to the Polish migrant parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds who displayed more strategic practices of school choice.

When [name of daughter] was at nursery she used to come home and say "Come 'ere mam" and it was just so I thought you're kidding! You're are better off with

my accent, but she is not too strong, she is quite articulate I would say. Certainly that school is going to sort her out. The other day she came from school and she said to me, I nearly collapsed, she said "Mum, may I now go and have my dinner please?", oh my god, that is my daughter! So they will sort her out. (Danuta, Nottingham)

I think that because I know children who are in the high school in Nottingham, and the accent that they are being taught is the more queen-y one, than the Nottingham one, and also coming back to the schools that my children are in, most of the teachers use the more university sort of English language and I know it is very mean for me to assess it but because I know my accent is different as well, but it doesn't matter on an every day basis, however if you look for jobs later on then people will look at it. (Michelina, Nottingham)

Natalina from London was reflective about her own Polish identity and was very critical of other Polish people. Like some of the participants, she engaged in a process of avoidance of other Polish migrants. Although Natalina embraced her Polish identity on one hand by sending her son to Polish Saturday school and "honouring" all the Polish traditions, on the other hand, other Polish migrants reminded her of the visible markers of being Polish and "different" in British society. This was something she did not want her son to experience as she feared it would lead to discrimination. However, the process of "Englishisation" was class-specific, in which a white middle class English identity was promoted. During the interview, Natalina spoke about how another Polish migrant she had worked with had irritated her because of her "Polish accent" and she was grateful that she and her son did not speak "like that".

It's the language, it's the accent, for instance, we've got a Polish girl in our restaurant, the manageress and her accent gets on my nerves. It's like I say 'Oh just stop it' it just tires you, it tires you out. So I think maybe that's why, it's not like my accent is

*** You said you're friends with an Irish family, do they have an Irish accent?**

I think so. I'm not an expert in accents to be honest, but I think they have. Parents definitely do, I'm not sure about the children because we say about our son, that he's got a 'Muswell Hill' accent. He's got a beautiful, I mean he can speak like English. (Natalina, London)

One of the findings was that parents in Nottingham seemed more concerned about their children's development of a "middle class English accent" in comparison to London. This may be explained by the fact that London is in the Southeast of England, whereas a regional Nottingham accent is particularly classed in the places where the Nottingham participants

lived. Another finding was that those migrants from higher socio-economic backgrounds – both prior to migration and currently situated in the UK – were also more concerned about what type of class accent their children were acquiring. The Polish migrant parents in more insecure lower status social locations were more worried about their children’s English proficiency progression in the UK. For them, getting their children “up to speed” was the important criterion. They were fearful that their children being behind at a school level would negatively impact upon their future employment prospects. This, in turn, also led to the avoidance of the Polish community – more so in London than in Nottingham. A number of participants in London, actively avoided schools which had a large Polish intake. They felt that sending their children to a school with many Polish children would encourage their children not to mix with English children as they would rather speak Polish in school to their friendship groups. Such was the unease over their children’s English language development skills that parents regularly employed private English tutors. Frequently, many who did this were not concerned about their children’s progress in other subjects and, therefore, did not see a need to employ private tutors in those subject areas. They felt that once their children’s English had improved, that they would then be able to catch up in other subject areas. However, for those parents who were trying to get their children into selective and grammar schools, they soon realised that they needed to expand the private tuition of their children in order to obtain a place. These schools had entrance exams, sometimes based on two rounds.

Preston’s (2007) interdisciplinary approach to the study of “whiteness” stresses the importance of linking “whiteness” with class, showing the way in which the white working-class has come to be labelled as “white trash”, “chavs” etc. as well as the way in which white privilege is produced via a system of oppression. In Nottingham, this discourse was frequently appropriated by some of the Polish migrant parents as a way of distinguishing their own “whiteness” from that of people they deemed “undesirable whites”, illustrating their understanding of the intersection between class and “whiteness”:

I think that people choose not to work because it is easier to be on benefits. I think it is, how to say it? It's the ethos, so that is my opinion about some English people but my friend who is British, and I quote her, she calls them 'white' trash because they don't have an example to follow – to get an education and get a job, they just do the same as the rest of the estate does and they have children at 16, so I don't want to be disrespectful but that is how I see it and I think that you can achieve a lot here in this country as long as you want to work. (Henrieta, Nottingham)

Due to the de-skilling and downward social mobility many of the Polish migrant parents experienced upon migration, some of them found themselves located within communities suffering from large-scale structural inequalities in employment and housing. This meant that they interacted with other disadvantaged residents on a daily basis, and often experienced abuse and discrimination. They, in turn, drew on neo-liberal political rhetoric of “self-improvement”, “exploitation of the welfare state” and discourses of “cultural impoverishment”. The consequence in some cases was a type of disgust and repulsion at the white working classes, particularly those who were unemployed. Many of them positioned themselves in opposition to this group, citing the “hard-working” ethic of Polish people, as seen in Chapter 6. They were reflexive about the structural racism that other immigrant and “non-white” minority groups would face in British society – even though they could produce racialised discourses themselves. However, some tended to assert their bewilderment at seeing what they referred to as generations of white British people living on social welfare. Many of them said that these people on the one hand accused them of taking work, whilst on the other hand would not do the jobs that Polish migrants undertake;

I had one no good neighbour and she came to me, she said you back to Poland, you take work from English people. I said “Yes, alright, I give you my work” she said “I am not cleaner”, I said “You are not cleaner? But two seconds ago you told me that I take a job from you”, “Yeah, but I am no cleaner”, “Never mind, if you want a job you take it”. It is strange, I know my neighbours who are a good family, normal working – no good family no working, they get only benefits and want every time more, more, more, so jealous if we have something, but we are really, really hard working. If I want to buy a car I need to be hard working and I am going to buy a car. That is why sometimes I don’t understand how she thinks. Don’t want to go to work, what for? She has the same mother, no working. Nobody give me, I need to go to work. You know what I mean? But sometimes I speak – it’s a Polish shop and this gentleman lives here for 30 years, he’s Polish but he lives here and he said “Believe me, no good family who live on benefits, live from grandfather, father, son, grandson” they live only for benefits. (Joanka, Nottingham)

What is important to remember here is that in Poland during Soviet control, there was much effort to produce a discursive construction of a socialist working class. Within this discourse was “hard work” and the political value attached to such work. This construction was assisted by propaganda of the “hero worker”. Particularly important to the discursive construction of the working class was industrialisation and urbanisation, which was seen to produce an “urban” working class. Significantly, their status was established on their relationship to production. Work status and workplace also constructed workers’ social lives. These workers developed a new sense of identity, one that was collective (Stenning, 2005).

Despite these large-scale transformations and the creation of new social groups in communist Poland, very few studies were conducted on the culture or practices of the working classes. Working class communities were the cornerstone of the socialist regimes. From the conception of a socialist working class, the political structure in socialist regimes necessitated its own legitimatisation by constructing the working class as “moral”. These constructions were also gender-biased, whereby the “worker hero” is a male worker (Stenning, 2005). This may in part explain why many of the Polish migrant parents who participated in employment way behind their educational and skill level, expressed a type of disgust and disapproval at unemployed white established working class communities.

7.4 Second Generation “Mixed Race” Polish Children

The previous section showed how “whiteness” intersects with class and nation and the ways in which Polish migrant parents draw upon their “whiteness” in the pursuit of the “Englishisation” of their white children. This included the acculturation of a typical English middle class “accent” – the possession of which was deemed to increase their children’s “invisibility” in a structurally racist society and increasing the likelihood of future social mobility and educational success. This is based on the fact that Poland is perceived as a “white nation” and that Polish migrants are predominantly white. Although all of my participants were white, three of my participants were married to husbands from different ethnic groups – these included Vietnamese, Afro-Caribbean and French Moroccan. The majority of research that has been conducted on Polish migrant mothers in the UK (see e.g. Lopez Rodriguez, 2010; Ryan, 2010), has been based on the fact that mothering practices are primarily in the context of a “racially unified” family. This section will explore how white mothers who are Polish migrants attempt to pass their ethnic identity on to their children. How do these white Polish mothers parent biracial children in a “monoracial” institutional and societal context?

Izabel from London met her husband in Poland while he was working there. He was of mixed second generation Jamaican and Barbadian nationality. Therefore, Izabel’s daughter was half Polish and half West Indian. Izabel spoke about the construction of her children’s identity. She was very keen to embrace all aspects of their cultural heritage on both sides. However, she did reflect on her perception that her children were not “white” in the same

way as other second generation Polish migrants. Here we see how Izabel's own "whiteness" placed her in a paradoxical position to that of her black children (an identity Izabel had given to her children). Izabel was upset that her children tended to think that "whiteness" seemed to denote "Englishness", but found it interesting that they would still categorise themselves as "British":

I sometimes talk to them and [name of daughter] will always say 'I am British. I'm not English because I'm not white, but I'm British, I'm 100% British, but a little bit Polish and a little bit of Jamaican'. That's what she would say. (Izabel, London)

Although Izabel as a Polish migrant was subjected to everyday racism herself, she understood that her "whiteness" endowed her with a certain privilege which separated her from the experiences of her children. She related this experience to the structural racism she witnessed in the UK, even contrasting it to her childhood residency in South America during the 1980s which she claimed did not have the same racial divisions that the UK has. Izabel had quite a privileged background, even during the communist period. Due to her father's high-ranking position as an officer in the Polish army, she was allowed to travel outside Poland. Her father was located in Brazil for several years and as a result she lived abroad for a few years during her childhood. She spoke about how she had maids growing up in Brazil, but also how she had contact with different ethnicities/racial groups because of her childhood there. This gave her a more nuanced perspective on racial and cultural differences:

We were always the same, even when I was in Brazil I had no concept of differentiation, I've learned it here [in the UK]. There's such a big emphasis, you're black, you're white, and you know this: 'Is she black or is she white?' I said 'My God, does it matter?' (Izabel, London)

Interestingly, acculturating her daughter into her Polish nationality still became very important for Izabel. Izabel made a point of having to attend a Polish Catholic church, of sending her daughter to the Polish scouts and making sure she attended Polish Saturday school. However, Izabel tried equally to promote her children's West Indian identity, encouraging them to learn about Jamaican food from their grandmother as well as educating them in Black history:

* ***'Do you teach them about their Jamaican culture?'***

'They go to their grandma so they would know the food...I make sure they go every second weekends, or half terms they would spend, because obviously we go to Poland. So this Christmas they can't go there but weekend before we're making a Christmas do, like a party in their house, down to Grandma's house. They know their Jerk chicken and rice and all of this, yeah. Sometimes if there was Black Month I would take them to things as well, we've got [Black Parents' and Teachers' Association Centre] in [local area] and they organise the artists and things so I would make sure that they have some, maybe not as much as Polish I have to say.'
(Izabel, London)

Izabel relied on her husband's Caribbean family and network in providing her children with cultural and material resources to bestow her children with specific cultural knowledge of their heritage. This shows similarities with Winddance Twine (1999), whose research revealed how white mothers of black children often formed co-mothering alliances with their black extended family members. However, when I enquired whether Izabel had reflected, at the beginning of the relationship, on any perceived issues that her husband's different culture might cause, she informed me that this was not of concern to her as her husband was Catholic and this was the only reason she had agreed to date him. Had he not been Catholic, she would have refused his date. Significantly, promoting a Catholic identity for her daughter was seen as a duty. It was similar for Stefa from London, who was married to a French Moroccan:

*** *How important is being a Catholic to you?***

It means a lot. For example – you say this is confidential so I can say something. For example when I came here I met some boys, if I knew that their strong religion was Muslim I wouldn't go out with them because I knew I could not be with someone who was Muslim or who wouldn't take my religion or wouldn't marry me in a church, so it was quite strong because I would cut off the relationship or I wouldn't even go there if I knew there is no chance to get married or to have children, there is no future with the faith, because it needs to be with my faith.

*** *So your husband was-***

He wasn't. He didn't believe in nothing but because of me being quite strong he decided – and it came from him, not like some people think it was from me, he decided that he would become Catholic so we would be able to get married in the church and bring up the kids in my religion, so he did quite a lot for me and I do appreciate that. Although I didn't push him to do it, but he sees me how much it means to me so I don't know if he did it to please me? I feel like yeah it was part of showing how much he loves me. (Stefa, London)

What is interesting about Stefa's account of her husband's faith, or rather lack of faith at that particular time and his willingness to convert to Catholicism, is that it illustrates the tensions and complexity that can exist in the Polish migrants' acceptance of different identities. For Stefa, her husband being French Moroccan was not of concern – it was more important that

he was not a French Moroccan practicing Muslim. Stefa did not view the operationalisation of racism in British society in the same way as Izabel. For Stefa, “whiteness” did not denote belonging to Britain. She spoke about how in London you would never be able to tell how long a person had been living in the UK, or if they were born here, whereas seeing a black person in Poland in a small village would be very unusual. Stefa believed that her children could be accepted as “English” and, if necessary, she even encouraged them to conceal their migrant background (French Moroccan and Polish) when they reached an age to enter the employment market:

I'm saying to them yeah, you are English, at home we're Polish and French, but I say you're English and you have more chance to get better job, better education if you say you are English. (Stefa, London)

Kasia met and married her Vietnamese husband in Poland and stated that one of her reasons for leaving Poland was because of the discrimination she had faced because of her choice of a foreign husband. In this respect, she found Britain a much more inclusive nation towards diversity, and she did not believe her child would face any discrimination and prejudice in British society despite both of his parents being immigrants.

In Poland, unfortunately, most of the time it's white people, so if you have got foreign husband it's like “Ohh, a foreigner!” or if you've got kids of mixed race going to school then they are treating them differently. Not teachers, but other kids. They can be quite nasty... I say Poland is not racist but there is a little bit of discrimination towards especially Asian, Indian people. He [husband] had job [in Poland], there was no problem but it was just neighbours when he was working on the streets, they were not very nice things said to him, so after when little one was one year old we just decided to just leave the country. I thought we don't need that. Actually I had a choice, to fight with us in Poland or just do something about it and because you cannot fight with whole country it was better and easier to leave. (Kasia, London)

Kasia was reflective of the hostility and discrimination she faced in Poland because she had not engaged in the reproduction of a monoracial white child. This was a particular site of tension within her family, as she felt her own mother and father held racist views that might damage the self-esteem of her children. Although her parents now accepted her grandchildren and enacted their grandparenting role towards Kasia's children, there was still bitterness and resentment towards their previous actions in the initial stages of her relationship with her Vietnamese husband – which they had disapproved of and they had also attempted to break up their relationship. Both this experience within her own family and

the discrimination she had faced in Poland, had resulted in her rejecting the acculturation of Polish culture for her children that many of the other Polish migrant parents had engaged in. Kasia was one of the very few participants who did not send her children to the Polish Saturday school, nor practice her Catholicism. Unlike Izabel and Stefa, who both chose to send their children to Catholic secondary schools, Kasia had chosen the local non-secular comprehensive school. These three examples of white Polish mothers raising biracial children illustrate how they convey their “whiteness” in different ways compared to the other Polish migrant parents in monoracial relationships.

7.5 Summary

This chapter has addressed the final research question by exploring how a set of “white” minority migrant parents negotiate their school choice practices within multiracial/multicultural urban settings. It has revealed how the Polish migrant parents juxtapose themselves in opposition to disadvantaged sections of society, including ethnic minority groups, other migrant groups and the white working class. In doing so, the respondents drew upon racialised discourses used in broader media and political rhetoric to position themselves in a perceived “racial hierarchy” they observed as operating in British society. The exposure to such discourses produced a set of anxieties for some parents regarding the ethnic and racial composition of schools. The respondents expressed concern about their children’s friendship groups, particularly when they believed that choosing certain schools would mean their children would be a white minority. As such, many of the respondents avoided choosing schools with larger than average ethnic intakes in which discourses of perceived “reverse racism” were drawn on to justify their choice of school.

The chapter also illustrated the ways in which “whiteness” became intersected with Catholicism and “Englishness”. In the former case, we saw how the respondents discussed a conflict of faiths. “Whiteness” became intermixed with Catholicism, whilst non-Christian religions were seen to produce an antagonistic relationship. The respondents considered sending their children to a Catholic school as a way of “protecting” them from the influence of other faiths. In the latter case, “whiteness” became fused with “Englishness”. Many of the Polish migrant parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds pursued the acculturation of a particular type of “Englishness” which they saw as a more “authentic” source of

identification – specifically a white middle class standard of English language and accent. This belief had been influenced by a perceived hierarchical structure of belonging in Britain, as the Polish migrant parents navigated a structurally racist society which had subjected them to various forms of discrimination. Their children’s “white” skin colour and “English accent” would remove, in their view, structural obstacles, enabling their children’s social mobility. This exemplified the interrelation between social class and “whiteness” showing that “whiteness” in itself is not always a privilege in British society, but necessitates the possession of white middle class cultural capital. The Polish migrant parents felt required to “make” their children “white”, and class emerged in this “whitening” process. The respondents understood how “whiteness” operated as a set of contingent hierarchies separating racialised subgroups as they were exposed to stereotypical discourses on “Polish migrants”. Lastly, the chapter explored the intersection between national belonging and “whiteness” through the cases of three Polish white migrant mothers who were married to husbands from different ethnic groups – including Vietnamese, Afro-Caribbean and French Moroccan – and had children who were considered to be “non-white”. It demonstrated how the conception of “Englishness” was associated with “whiteness” even for these “non-white” children themselves. This, then, raises wider questions of identity for children whose parents are both migrants from different nations while they themselves are growing up in England.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 What this Thesis Set Out to Achieve

This thesis set out to investigate the extent to which the analytical categories of social structure and human agency can account for the reciprocal influences of Polish migrants' "exporting" and "importing" societal structures, in shaping their practices and aspirations for their children's educational success. In order to explore this, a case study in two localised education markets – that of North London and Nottingham – was conducted on secondary school choices for Polish migrant parents. The strategies used by the respondents in two local quasi-education markets were researched, helping to illustrate the differing accumulation and compositions of capitals – economic, social and cultural – by the Polish migrant parents in the pursuit of the aspirations they held for their children through the choice of secondary school.

The main argument of this thesis was that the greater the exposure of my Polish migrant parent respondents to the marketised education system, the more consumerist their choices become. In both the school choice analysis chapter (Chapter 5) and the social divisions analysis chapter (Chapter 6), the research revealed that the longer the respondents had been living in the UK, and the more entrenched their networks were with particularly British-born parents, the greater awareness they seemed to possess about the school choice system and market indicators. The greater the awareness on the school choice system, the more strategic their practices became. Importantly, it was shown that this awareness also intersected with social class. The higher the respondents' socio-economic status both prior to migration and after, the more they demonstrated traditional school choice practices associated with the middle classes as seen in previous research such as Ball (2003) and Ball et al. (1995).

Although not explicitly illustrated in any research chapter, the longer and more exposed the Polish migrant parents became to the neo-liberal market ideology, the less "meritocratic" they believed British society to be. This was shown indirectly in Chapter 6 on social divisions and Chapter 7 on "whiteness", in which many of the respondents saw the pursuit of their

children's successful educational trajectory as a zero-sum game. Although the respondents were reflective about the social closure they experienced from white middle class parents as helping to reproduce inequalities, they instead positioned themselves in opposition to the most disadvantaged sections of society. School choice became a means of distancing themselves from these "undesirable" elements of society, whilst acting as a means of developing a white "Englishised" middle class child. Becoming a "white middle class" person was for the Polish parents deemed as the predominant platform from which to achieve educational success and social mobility in British society. Furthermore, the respondents having experienced de-skilling and downward mobility themselves upon migration, pursued their own social mobility and status elevation in British society through that of their children's educational success. As such, getting school choice "right" became paramount and filled with anxiety and calculation of risks.

However, it is important to point out that although the majority of respondents saw social divisions as a cultural rather than structural consequence, and that they themselves pursued the acculturation of a white middle class habitus for their children, many were strongly disapproving of a school choice system which they saw as producing competition, anxiety and inequality. These problems they understood to be a result of larger structural divisions between "good" and "bad" schools. Many argued that if all schools were "good", then other parents would engage in school choice differently. This assertion can be put down to two explanations. Firstly, it might be assessed that this finding supports the argument on the influence of home societal structures – both historical and present. The participants held a strong stance on communalism and shared information. This may be partially explained by their early socialisation that occurred under the Polish communist regime. Many of the participants would recite the virtues of "communality" and "collectivism", and reflected on how this former regime produced an educational programme based on a so-called "socialist mantra" that was instilled in them during their formative years. Significantly, it must be pointed out that the earlier point of respondents seeing their children's educational success as a zero-sum game, was a finding revealed in those participants who had been living in the UK for a longer time. Whereas the Polish migrant parents who had lived in the UK for shorter periods of time exemplified, in comparison, more bewilderment and confusion about the social closure they experienced – particularly from white middle class parents – when trying to gain information on school choice.

Secondly, the tension between the respondents and white middle class parents over school choice, should be contextualised within the specifics of this case study in which the majority of the participants had been recruited from Polish Saturday schools linked to the Catholic Church. As such, the choice of Catholic secondary school for the majority of the participants was significant and, as outlined in Chapter 3, the choice of faith schools and tension over admission policies can be situated within the wider education market and parental choice system. As noted, when the majority of the participants stated “if all schools were good, then there would not be a friction over school places”, they were referring to non-Catholics wanting to send their children to Catholic secondary schools because of their high status in the league tables, as opposed to any devotion white middle class non-Catholics held towards Catholicism.

The wider implication for this research is the contribution it makes towards the debate on faith schools and admission procedures. Firstly, we see a group of parents who wish their children to receive a religious education shaped by shared values which secure community identity. On the other side, we see the friction that Catholic Polish migrant parents face from white middle class parents over the “scarce” places at high-ranking secondary schools. The more competitive the education market becomes, the more it produces “individualistic” and self-interested parents who are simply trying to “do the best” for their children. This also raises interesting questions as to whether or not the Polish migrant parents see the Catholic school as a means to iterating their children into a set of values or, by contrast, whether they therefore are more concerned with positioning their children in certain social circles and networks. Is attendance at Polish Saturday and/or Catholic school a means to the end of more general assimilation to society at large? Or is it a way of enclosing their children within a safe and self-validating community?

Early on in the research process, access to participants resulted in a sample of participants who were Catholic. Needless to say, the impact that this had upon the findings that Catholic schools were often the main – and in some cases the only – choice, was not surprising. However, what was interesting was how the varying availability of school choices in two different local education markets, impacted upon Catholic school choice. In Nottingham, the Catholic schools that were chosen by the majority of my participants ranked higher in the league tables than that of a partially selective school with a good reputation. Here we saw narratives on the insistence that Catholic school was the only choice, even to the extent that

Polish parents refused to put three choices on their secondary school application and instead placed only the two high performing Catholic schools. In London, the highly aspirational parents were faced with a dilemma – whether to send their child to a Catholic school and receive the religious education that was so important to the parents’ identity, particularly in terms of an ethnic-religious identity, or whether instead to choose the historical selective schools with a 100 per cent five GCSE A*-C grades including maths and English. Of course, these selective schools came with a status, particularly as children were selected on “ability”. Securing a place at one of these schools would illustrate to the Polish community how “good” a parent you were. Thus, the most educationally aspirational parents chose the selective over the Catholic schools – although their strategy of having a “back-up” plan was to put a Catholic state school on the application form, as a number of the selective schools were Catholic in London. It could be argued that this very specific and small case study shows that these Polish parents have been absorbed into the “individualistic” marketised education system. Indeed, the longer the migrant had been living in the UK, the more knowledge they possessed on school choice strategies. However, returning to the research conducted in Nottingham, in which the majority of the participants insisted that their devotion to Catholicism had influenced their choice of school, we can see how the two Catholic secondary schools were both highly regarded and placed high on the league tables. Yet, one of these schools was award-winning and “outstanding” and certainly possessed more status than the other Catholic secondary school. Nevertheless, when I questioned the participants on which Catholic school they had put first, many were ambivalent and had not placed these schools in a hierarchy. Their choice had usually been influenced by friendship groups at one particular school, or sibling already attending. They commented that they did not mind which of the two top Catholic schools their children attended, as they did not distinguish between them. As long as it was Catholic, that was all that mattered.

I argue that this case study provides significant and distinctive insights into habitus transition, from a group who experienced a double transition. The first transition occurred during the collapse of the communist regime, as Polish people underwent an abrupt and immediate shift from one cultural, political and socio-economic order to another. I assumed that the doctrines of the communist regime would appear to intensify as this section of the population subsequently experienced their second transition when they migrated to and settled in British society. The research revealed, particularly in Chapter 6 on social divisions, that many of the participants could be perceived to hold attitudes about social class,

“morality”, employment and culture, for example, that could be connected back to the socialisation they had experienced in their formative years during the communist period. What was interesting is that a number of participants reflected upon the existence of stratification in Poland during communism and how this stratification was based upon occupation status and the possession of intellectual capital. Economic capital was not the main social divider during these years, and culture and education became a means of distinguishing oneself. This influenced the Polish migrant parents’ educational aspirations for their children – as practiced through school choice. The majority of parents understood the importance of the possession of cultural capital in the process of educational success, yet a type of naivety seemed to exist regarding the consequences of their lack of economic capital and other structural obstacles they and their children might encounter in their pursuit of social mobility in Britain. Unlike communist Poland, the possession of cultural capital in Britain was reliant upon economic capital: extracurricular activities, Kumon classes to assist with selective school entrance exams and material resources all required economic capital. Part of the Polish migrant parents’ social reproduction strategies was knowing exactly how to use their own cultural and educational capital in their quest for the accumulation of economic capital for their children. In today’s world, cultural capital cannot be independent from economic capital. Despite my participants’ counter-economic strategy in their pursuit of cultural capital, they could not overcome the real and often brutal social class divisions that exist in British society. This, in turn, led them to position themselves in opposition to other disadvantaged sections of society. The finding that the Polish migrant parents’ habitus can be located and influenced by specific historical and current home societal structures, brings this thesis back to the theoretical propositions that inspired the study. Drawing on Bourdieu’s (1958) work on Algeria, habitus offered a way of assessing the empirical research and acted as an explanatory tool to frame the data in order to account for the way in which previous structures from the “exporting” societies and former societal structures are embodied and used to navigate themselves in the “importing” society.

8.2 Answering the Research Questions

In order to explore the secondary school practices for Polish migrant parents, I focused the research around three specific research questions:

- 1) What strategies, skills and knowledge do the Polish migrant parents bring with them upon migration and/or develop in the host society with regards to secondary school choice for their children, and how is this negotiated in a marketised education system?
- 2) What perceptions do Polish migrant parents have of social divisions within British society and to what extent, if any, do these perceptions influence their school choice for their children?
- 3) How do a set of “white” minority migrant parents negotiate their school choice practices within multiracial/multicultural urban settings?

This section will give an overview of how far it was possible to answer all three of them through my research findings. The thesis contained three analysis chapters. Each of them dealt with a specific research question – although it is recognised that the research findings intersected with more than one question at several points. For example, Chapter 5 looked at the marketised education system and the school choice practices the respondents demonstrated when choosing schools. This, of course, overlapped with social class and the perceptions they held towards social divisions in Britain, as seen in Chapter 6. In turn, the respondents’ perceptions of social divisions in British society intersected with their understandings on “whiteness”, outlined in Chapter 7.

Chapter 5 – ‘School Choice’ – addressed the first research question, exploring the strategies, skills and knowledge that Polish migrant parents brought with them upon migration and/or develop in Britain with regards to secondary school choice for their children. It provided an overview of the complexity of the choices parents made in the specific local education markets, showing how diversity of school availability impacts upon the parents’ school choices. It also illustrated how Polish migrant parents positioned faith schools within a marketised education system. In a highly competitive schooling system, the “high status” and strong academic performance of Roman Catholic secondary schools produces tensions between Polish migrant parents and white middle class parents. In the fear and anxiety Polish parents felt about “getting a place” at their chosen school, they exhibited a type of suspicion that white middle class parents were ‘desperate to secure their own children a place’ at one of the top Catholic schools, despite not being Catholic. Crucially, the social class of the

respondents and their possession of economic, cultural and social capital, impacted upon their capacity to engage with choice. The chapter considered what being a “good parent” involves when respondents became “consumers” of education in the UK, including the ethical dilemma they face when their choice of school for their children goes against their own politics and the wishes of their children. This was explained by the parents’ declaration that the future educational trajectory and social mobility of their children is prioritised because of their own experience of downward mobility in the host society, as well as the discrimination they face. Overall, the chapter highlighted the importance of the participants’ previous social class locations. Despite downward mobility, the majority of the Polish migrant parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds were able to bring with them class-based strategic practices which helped them pursue social reproduction of their children – with school choice being one element of this. These strategies, skills and knowledge were further enhanced the longer and more exposed they became to the British marketised education system, as well as the more they were able to reverse their own initial downward mobility many had experienced upon migration. Furthermore, it was shown how their Catholic identity as internalised by them prior to migration in Polish society, firstly, dictated their choice of Catholic school in the majority of cases and, secondly, became an identity that could be capitalised on in admission to top-ranking Catholic secondary schools. What was interesting was the acknowledgement the respondents made about never really contemplating how important sending their child to a Catholic secondary school had been until they arrived in the UK. This was linked back to their education during their formative years under the communist regime, in which the Catholic Church was forbidden to be involved in educational provision. Therefore, attending a Catholic school was not an experience any of the participants had had themselves. Although they confessed that sending their children to a Catholic school had been thought about prior to migration, once they were given this option, they were fiercely protective of it – asserting their “right” to educate their children in their own faith. This may have been because they became more aware of the high ranking status of Catholic schools in a marketised education system and/or attachment to an ethno-religious identity became even more important upon migration. One issue which made it difficult to compare the respondents’ strategies of school choice prior to migration, was the fact that many of the respondents had migrated whilst their children were of kindergarten age and/or their children were in fact born in the UK. Therefore, these respondents had never really needed to engage in school choice prior to migration. In order to have a more comprehensive answer to my first research question, future research would need to involve

a probability sampling method that would recruit participants who had needed to engage in school choice both in Poland and in the UK.

Chapter 6 – ‘Social Divisions’ – addressed the second research question, exploring the perceptions Polish migrant parents have towards issues of social divisions within British society, and considered to what extent, if any, these perceptions influence the respondents’ school choice for their children. In order to answer this question, I firstly needed to understand how the respondents positioned their own class subjectivities both prior to migration in Poland and following their migration to Britain. The occupational status of the participants was outlined, both before migration and after, as well as that of their parents and partners. Issues with cross-national comparative measures of occupational status were briefly discussed, in particular the socio-historic dimension that added extra complexity due to the communist regime’s denial of stratification and class hierarchy. The respondents’ identifications of social class divisions in British society were then examined in order to look at how they understood their current class subjectivities. Several participants – particularly in Nottingham – pathologised disadvantaged sections of society, exemplifying how respondents negotiated geographical terrains. In the attempt to justify their residence in the UK, they reproduced elements of the discourses of exclusion used by the right-wing media and politicians aimed at disadvantaged communities. We saw how the Polish migrant parents distinguish themselves as “worthy”, “moral” and “hard-working”. Social inequality was portrayed as a cultural rather than as a structural issue, and this was reinforced by their own discourse on mobility and parenting which they deem possible to achieve in a “meritocratic” society. In their struggle for acceptance, they appropriated middle class values as the norm in British society and adopted the strategies, values and practices of white middle class parents when choosing schools. The respondents’ understanding of social divisions did influence their choice of secondary school. The choice of school was seen as a way of distancing their children from “undesirable” sections of society. Furthermore, the choice of a Catholic school was seen as a way of ensuring their children were endowed with “morals” and “discipline” – aspects which many of the respondents perceived to be lacking from disadvantaged members of society. Therefore, I can assert that perceptions on social divisions in British society did impact upon the respondents’ school choices. However, it is important to point out that these school choice practices intersected with the respondents’ own class subjectivities. Although the majority of the respondents asserted that the choice of Catholic school was because of their devotion to Catholicism and the discipline of the

school, those participants from higher economic statuses in London, for example, were more likely to opt for a selective Catholic secondary school as opposed to a non-selective one. Significantly, it must also be remembered that the research revealed that despite some participants' high economic status prior to migration, school choice could be necessitated by concerns for practicality in extreme cases of unstable living and relationship circumstances – some of which were a result of the process of migration. In these examples, parents needed to choose local secondary schools in order to arrange parenting responsibilities around their own employment schedule.

Chapter 7 – 'Whiteness' – addressed the final research question by exploring how a set of "white" minority migrant parents negotiate their school choice practices within multiracial/multicultural urban settings. In order to answer this question, I took a similar approach to that which was used in Chapter 6. I looked at the respondents' perceptions and attitudes towards ethnic "others", including the white working classes. I then investigated how the respondents understood their own "whiteness" and that of their children's "whiteness". The research data revealed that the Polish migrant parents juxtapose themselves in opposition to disadvantaged sections of society, including ethnic minority groups, other migrant groups and the white working class. A number of respondents drew upon racialised discourses used in broader media and political rhetoric to position themselves in a perceived "racial hierarchy" they observed as operating in British society. These discourses were used to justify the "authenticity" of their anxieties towards the ethnic and racial composition of schools. Many of the respondents avoided choosing schools with larger than average ethnic intakes in which discourses of perceived "reverse racism" were drawn on to defend not just their choice of school, but moreover the dismissal of other types of schools. The research also revealed that "whiteness" became intersected with Catholicism and "Englishness" for the respondents. The respondents considered sending their children to a Catholic school as a way of "protecting" them from the influence of other faiths considered to be "non-Western" and, by extension, "non-white". "Whiteness" also became merged with "Englishness". Many of the Polish migrant parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds pursued the acculturation of a particular type of "Englishness" which they saw as a more beneficial source of identification – specifically a white middle class standard of English language and "accent". As the Polish migrant parents navigated a structurally racist society which had subjected them to various forms of discrimination, their children's "white" skin colour and "English accent" would remove, in their view, structural obstacles – enabling their children's

social mobility. This exemplified the interrelation between social class and “whiteness”, showing that “whiteness” necessitated the possession of white middle class cultural capital in order to be respected. The Polish migrant parents felt required to “make” their children “white”, and class emerged in this “whitening” process. The research data sufficiently answered the research question on how a set of white migrants negotiated their school practices in multiracial/multicultural urban settings. However, it should be acknowledged that I became aware during the interview process – but not before conducting the interviews – that although the respondents themselves were white, this did not mean that their children were. Three participants had biracial children. This reflects my own assumptions that Polish migrants would predominantly be in monoracial relationships, or rather it reflects my non-consideration of the possibility of the alternative. This in itself is a finding, and has made me think about my own “whiteness”. Although this was a relatively small number of cases, it did highlight some interesting findings in the “whiteness”-chapter. These white Polish mothers did not transmit their white privilege directly on to their children and, in turn, it made them reflective about their own “whiteness” and broader structural racism both in Poland and in the UK.

Throughout the analysis chapters, I have tried to demonstrate how choice in itself is not the issue, but rather the consumerist-oriented agenda underpinning parental choice-based policies. I do not advocate curtailing the choices made available to parents to choose which type of school they wish to send their children to. Having spent time in an ethnographic setting getting to know and understand why the majority of my participants choose to send their children to a Catholic school, I am deeply aware of the importance the parents place on providing their children with an education that endows them with their ethno-religious values and beliefs. This is even more important when the parents themselves have undergone the experience of migration and the disrupture which that entails. Moreover, it is important to remember that the Polish parents themselves were born into a system in which choice was restricted and forbidden in some cases, particularly in regards to religion. For many of the participants, the idea of choice seems to promise the parents equality and freedom, but in an unequal society (the UK) choice is more available to some than to others. A vast amount of sociological research (e.g. Ball et al., 1996; Reay, 2008; Roda and Wells, 2013) has shown how parental choice is classed, “race”-ed and gendered, and how the middle classes are able to use their market advantages within increasingly parental-focused educational policies and initiatives. No-one is suggesting that the majority of middle class parents go out of their way

to perpetuate educational inequalities through their choices of schools; but the unfortunate reality is that this is an unintended consequence of people's practices. The question, then, is whether Polish parents can get their children into Catholic schools because of their faith – in which Catholicism is an advantage despite low economic position – particularly as faith schools tend to have larger than average intakes of children from higher socio-economic backgrounds. How will this be perceived by the British middle classes in a highly competitive education market?

8.3 Future Research and Further Issues to be Explored

In section 5.6, 'Choice, Academies and Ethical Dilemmas', it was acknowledged that in the majority of cases, the Polish migrant parents took the ultimate decisions on which schools would be placed on the application forms. Some of the Polish parents in the interviews spoke about placing their own preferences of schools on the application form, whilst not informing their children that this had been done – leaving their children to believe that their own desired school had been listed. This decision was never discussed by any of the participants as problematic. They simply believed that they were being a "good parent". Getting their children into a "good" school, was seen by the respondents as the responsibility of being a "good parent". "Good parenting" is not class-neutral. As the majority of the participants in this research were highly educated and highly skilled, they brought with them a class habitus that determined, to some extent, their choice practices in pursuit of increased social mobility for their children. This means, in many of the cases, that parents chose to send their children to the highest status schools – be that Catholic or selective. Many of the participants in this study spoke about the discrimination they faced in the UK. This was used in many cases to justify what they saw as 'doing their best for their children'. They spoke about wanting to give their children the best possible opportunities. The majority of Polish migrant parents who demonstrated a sufficient amount of capability and skill in choosing a school, with a perceived future goal-orientation for their child in mind, justified their decisions as being in the "best interest" of their children. It is important that these respondents are not stereotyped as "overprotective" and too "controlling", but rather that their practices are located within the research on school choice and social class. The data throughout the analysis chapters has revealed how the Polish migrant parents became conditioned to believe that middle class values are the only credible values to subscribe to in order to gain acceptance and

respectability in British society. Therefore, engaging in the middle class practice of being a “responsible” parent and planning for the child’s future rather than present happiness, should be contextualised within the wider political rhetoric of “good parenting”, as outlined in section 6.4, ‘Perceptions of Social Divisions in Britain’. It should also be taken into consideration that the respondents parenting styles, including a more disciplined approach, may also be influenced by their subscription to Catholicism. These findings are in conflict with other research, such as Reay and Lucey (2000) who found that children were actively involved in school choice processes and parents were willingly allowing this involvement. Therefore, another possible and interesting research project could involve exploring second generation Polish migrant children’s own discourses and engagement in educational choices in the UK. Studying the level of second generation Polish children’s participation in educational choices would raise interesting questions about children’s citizenship and the structuration of adult-child relations in Polish families.

A comparative analysis between non-Catholic and Catholic Polish migrant parents would be useful in expanding the understanding on the strategies employed in pursuing educational success for their children in British society. Another possible future project is inspired by Sandberg (1974) who researched the social mobility and educational careers of third and fourth generation Polish migrants in Los Angeles, whose ancestors had come in the “great transatlantic migration” movement. It would be very fascinating to research the career trajectories of current second generation Polish migrants all the way up to university, employment and their own parental strategies used in the education of their future children.

Possible future projects could also include research on white Polish migrant mothers who are parenting biracial children, in a similar fashion to research by Winddance Twine (1999) who explores the experiences of white English mothers with black children. Winddance Twine (1999) argues that the white mothers occupy a privileged racial position in Britain, but exhibit their “whiteness” in a different way from white mothers of white children. What would be interesting in a case study of white Polish mothers with biracial children, is that the white Polish mothers themselves are negotiating the unstableness of their own “whiteness” in Britain as they face discrimination and structural obstacles due to their migrant status – and may be defined as “not white enough”. The question then is how does their status as a mother of a biracial child intersect with their white identity in a context of migration?

A comparative study between Polish migrant parents' and Irish migrant parents' school choices for their children would also be of significant value. Ryan (2009) has argued that there is a structural affinity between Polish and Irish migrants. Both nations have a long history of invasion and high levels of migration, particularly in the nineteenth century with large waves emigrating to North America. They are both Catholic societies within Europe, and they share similar current migration patterns in terms of demographic characteristics of migrants who tend to be young, single and from rural areas. Yet, there has been very little direct comparative studies between the Irish and the Polish in Britain. Another commonality, which Ryan (2009) fails to mention, is that Irish and Polish migrants are predominantly white. A comparative study on second generation Polish migrants and Irish migrants would raise interesting questions. Research on second generation Irish migrants (Hickman et al., 2005) has highlighted the problematic assumptions that have been made towards this population. Their white skin colour, local British "accents" and assumed cultural similarities have been taken for granted as indicators that they are assimilated into the white English majority. However, Hickman et al. (2005) argue this is a myth of homogeneity which denies the differences within the white population and hierarchies of belonging in Britain. The problematic experience and position of second generation Irish migrants, particularly within education, has been revealed in research by Hickman (1995). In a number of interviews for my own research, the Polish migrant parent respondents mentioned that their children experienced negative stereotyping and racism in the playground for being Polish and, in the case they had an English "accent", their parents' migration status was emphasised in a derogatory manner.

These possible future studies, then, raise interesting questions for the assimilation and hierarchy of belonging for second generation Polish migrants:

- Will the respondents' children ever be "white middle class"?
- Will these children ever be accepted as "British"? And in what ways, if any, will their "whiteness" and parental social class background influence this?
- Will the respondents' children be stigmatised and labelled as "the children of 2004 EU-migrants"? If so, how will this impact upon their life trajectories?

- How will Polish migrant parents who have put a vast amount of emotional and economic capital into educational practices in order to pursue social mobility for their children, feel if their children rebel and take a different route in life to the one that was planned?

These questions highlight the limitations of the research presented in this thesis. However, these questions are also a product of the research itself, as they have emerged out of my research findings as potential avenues for future research.

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Appendix 1: Topic Guide

Introduction

Thank you so much for agreeing to take part in this study. I am a PhD student undertaking a thesis at the University of East London. I am looking at Polish migration to Britain and their experiences of British education.

As part of the thesis, I am carrying out research using interviews. The interview is confidential in the sense that it will be anonymous, no-one will know your name or your child's. As you can probably imagine, it would be very difficult for me to take notes as well as concentrate on what you say, so would you mind if I tape-record the interview. I am the only person who will listen to the tape.

TOPIC GUIDE ON IMMIGRATION AND CHILDRENS EDUCATION

OBJECTIVES

- To explore immigration and education
- To gather reflections on immigrants experiences of the British education system
- To examine contact between teachers/school and parents

1 PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

- Age
- where live
- who is in the household
- Summary of current activity (work/education/other)
- other household member's work
- Nature of current housing status
- Sources and level of income
 - ◆ **Children**
- How many
- Gender
- Age/School year

2 LIFE HISTORY

- Childhood and family background
- where born
- family composition
- family circumstances (emotional, economic, stability and mobility)
- School life/education
- where went to school (mobility, stability)
- experiences of/memories of school

- relationships with teachers
- when left school/further education
- any qualifications
- parents' hopes when growing up
- You hope when you were 12 years
- Becoming yourselves
- **Working History**
- Whether worked in home country
- Types of Jobs

3 IMMIGRATION REASONS

- Reasons for coming to Britain
- Attitudes to EU expansion
- Education system influence decisions
- how life has changed

4 FRIENDSHIPS

- Important friendships and relationships with people already living here before you came
- Important contacts when arriving, still important
- whether local network of friends, what based around, how (easily) made
- Friendship made with other parents at same school/same area
- Friendships made with British people and people from home country
- Further relationships

5 SCHOOL / HOME CONTEXT

- What type of school/ how did you choose school
- Knowledge of the British education system/ league tables /parental choice/ Ofsted
- Parental social networks and resources at schools
 - **Home and School Relations**
- Parental involvement in school
- Parent support in education/reading at home
- Use of English language at home
- Teacher's attitudes and interaction
- Extra curricular activities outside school
- main difficulties experienced
- Feelings about your educational experiences

6 CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

- whether made friends, whether a happy time
- Favorite subjects
- any experiences of bullying

- experiences of exclusion or absence temporary or permanent
- Pupil teacher interaction
- Language use/ Extra English lessons
- National Assessments/ tests/ feedback on progress
- Set allocation/mixed ability
- Feelings about your children's educational experiences
- Identity Construction
- Saturday School
- Church Attendance

7. SOCIETAL DIFFERENCES

- Differences in values, expectation and behavior from western peers
- Feelings on societal differences
 - ✓ Values
 - ✓ Solidarity
 - ✓ Class division
 - ✓ materialism
 - ✓ Religion
- Feelings on the transformation of your home country with the end of communism

8. CULTURE AND VALUES

- Identity Construction
- Schools and opportunities for children
- Student's and Parent's Educational aspirations
- What do you hope your child will become
- What's the sort of path do you imagine for your children?
- Overall experiences of the British education system
- would aspirations be different in Poland?
- Where do you hope to be yourselves in twenty years time?
- Return to home country

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form



Informed Consent Form

This informed consent form is to check you understand and are happy with the information you have been given about this research project. That the interviewer has explained the purpose of the interview and informed you of your rights. To ensure that you wish to participate in the exercise.

	Yes	No
1. The interviewer has explained the purpose of the interview and the research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I was given the opportunity to discuss any concerns with the interviewer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The interviewer has given me adequate information to base my decision on taking part	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I understand I do not have to answer every question	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I understand I can withdraw from the interview at any time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree to participate in the research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature _____

Date _____

Print Name _____

Data Protection Statement

The information you provide is protected under The Data Protection Act. The Data Protection Act regulates how your personal information is used and protects you from the misuse of your personal details. The Act provides stronger protection for sensitive information, such as ethnic origin and health. The information you provide will not be shared with any other organisations. The provided information is strictly for the research. To get more details on the Data Protection Act you can go to: <http://www.direct.gov.uk>.

(Adapted from Arksey and Knight (1999) *Interviewing for Social Scientists*, p. 131)

Appendix 3: Social Class Tables

In the below table the respondents' parents' occupations are defined using Lovenduski and Woodall's (1987, p. 154) categorisation of occupational hierarchy during communism in the Soviet Bloc:

1. the technical intelligentsia
2. managers and directors of enterprises
3. the legal and economic experts
4. teachers and school inspectors
5. the humanistic professionals
6. others with higher education

(Lovenduski and Woodall, 1987, p. 154)

The respondents' and their partners' current socio-economic status in the UK are defined using the SOC 2000 scale of social class categorisations:

1. Managers and senior officials
2. Professional occupations
3. Associate professional and technical occupations
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations
5. Skilled trades occupations
6. Personal service occupations
7. Sales and customer service occupations
8. Process, plant and machine operatives
9. Elementary occupation

(SOC, 2000)

Participant's name	Father's social class under communism	Mother's social class under communism	Participant's highest level of education	Employment in Poland	Participant's social class in UK based on employment categorisation	Partner's social class in UK based on employment categorisation	Housing status
Danuta Nottingham	(3) the legal and economic experts	(4) Teacher	MA Law (Poland), HLTA (UK)	Student	(7) Teaching assistant in a primary school	(3) Accountant (White English)	Homeowner
Serafin Nottingham	Semi-skilled manual (Lorry driver)	Housewife	Pâtisserie at vocational school (Poland)	Pâtisserie	(5) Pâtisserie	(9) Cleaner and Playground assistant (In Poland skilled occupation as a tailor)	Privately rented flat
Elizaveta Nottingham	(4) Secondary school teacher	(4) Secondary school teacher	Midwifery at technical college/university (Poland), updated Midwifery qualifications in the UK	Midwife	(3) Midwife	(3) Works in IT	Homeowner
Emilja Nottingham	Manual worker in factory	Manual worker in factory	Midwifery at technical college/university (Poland)	Midwife	(7) Nursery assistant	(8) Lorry driver (Radiologist in Poland)	Homeowner
Marja Nottingham	(5) the humanistic professionals	Farmer	English degree (Poland), HLTA (UK)	Secondary school English teacher	(7) Teaching assistant	(7) Secondary school English teacher (Third generation Polish Jewish)	Homeowner
Michelina Nottingham	(1) the technical intelligentsia	(4) Teacher	English degree and teaching training (Poland), HLTA (UK)	English teacher	(7) Teaching assistant	Deceased. Worked as a language translator	Lives in new partner's house
Mila Nottingham	Skilled manual (Car mechanic)	Skilled manual (Dressmaker)	Midwifery at technical college/university (Poland), re-trained as a Nurse in the UK	Midwife	(3) Nurse	(8) Working in a factory (Electrician in Poland)	Homeowner
Joanka Nottingham	Skilled manual	(3) Accountant	Vocational training as Chef (Poland)	Sales assistant	(9) Cleaner	(9) Delivery driver (Car mechanic in Poland)	Rented council flat
Jola Nottingham	Father abandoned participant when she was 2 years old and was not around	Housewife with low education	Business degree (Poland)	Market and sales representative	(7) Works in a call centre	(9) Building labourer (Business owner in Poland)	Privately rented property
Truda Nottingham	Skilled manual (Welder)	Skilled manual (Sewer)	Economic degree (Poland), ICP course in Childminding (UK)	Worked in administration for a university	(7) Childminder	(5) Panel beater (Both in the UK and Poland)	Rents privately
Wojciech Nottingham	Skilled manual (Welder)	Childminder	Educated to secondary school level (Poland), currently studying Welding at college (UK)	Manual labourer	Unemployment (previous job in the UK as a kitchen porter)	Unemployed (Educated to secondary school level in Poland)	Council house and receiving housing benefit

Ludmila Nottingham	(2) Principal director of the city council	(5) Doctor	Technical college (Poland)	Admin for human resources	Unemployed	(7) Sales assistant	Privately rented flat
Henrieta Nottingham	Semi-skilled manual (Lorry driver)	Skilled trade (Seamstress)	Degree in Art and Advertising Design (University in the US)	Went to the US for her studies at 17	(3) Graphic designer	(5) Pattern cutter for a high-end fashion boutique (BTSC in pattern cutting from the US, is a Hungarian national)	Homeowner
Celina (London) – conducted two interviews with an interval of two years in-between.	Absent from her life, left when participant was very young	(6) Worked for the Polish police	Psychology degree (Poland), Fashion degree (UK)	Came to London straight after she had finished her Psychology degree in Poland	(7) Manager of high-end boutique designer bag company in both interviews, although she changed companies in-between	(9) Delivery driver (Polish, not the child's biological father but married to the participant)	Privately rented accommodation
Kasia (London) – conducted two interviews with an interval of two years in-between.	(1) Technical intelligentsia (PhD in Electronics)	(3) Economic expert (PhD in Economics)	Started an Economics degree but dropped out (Poland), Nursing degree & an additional course in Psychology (UK)	Student	Housewife/student (recently had another baby)	(8) Works in a factory (Vietnamese, but met in Poland)	Privately rented house
Roza (London) – conducted two interviews with an interval of two years in-between.	Agriculture on a collective farm (his family owned the land before the Communist Party seized it)	Agriculture (Basic secondary school education)	Educated to secondary school level (Poland), in the final year of a Social Science degree (UK)	Sales Assistant	(4) Part-time work for Citizens Advice Bureau (Previously a self-employed decorator)	(5) Self-employed decorator and studying a Law degree (Ex-husband)	Rented council flat
Berta (London)	Company boss (Educated to secondary school level)	(4) Teacher	MA in Education (Poland)	Teaching Education and Sociology at college and part-time nursing assistant	(9) Cleaner	Unemployed (Terminally ill with cancer)	Privately rented house
Salomea (London)	(1) Engineer (former aristocracy background)	Doctor (former aristocracy background)	Economics degree (Poland), Economics Accounting and Finance degree from an elite UK university	Student	(2) Banker in the City	(1) Company director (Second generation Italian from an aristocratic background, born in the UK)	Homeowner
Tamary (London)	Semi-skilled manual (Lorry driver)	Housewife	Accounting degree (Poland)	Housewife and mother	(9) Cleaner	(5) Builder and related trades worker (Went to vocational school to become a builder and trades worker)	Privately rented house
Alicja (London)	Manual worker (Worked on	Skilled trade (Seamstress. Educated to	Slavonic degree (Poland)	Part-time secondary school	Unemployed	(Portuguese. Restraining order put on	Temporary council accommodation

	the railways. Educated to secondary school level)	secondary school level.		teacher (teaching Russian) and part-time librarian of a school		him because of domestic abuse)	n (officially homeless)
Antonina (London)	Family-run boutique business (Educated to secondary school level)	Family-run boutique business (Educated to secondary school level)	Educated to secondary school level and then fell pregnant at 18	Single mother	(9) Cleaner and breakfast assistant in a hotel	(Two children by different fathers. Both parents Polish, but not involved in the children's life)	Rented council flat
Rahel (London)	Absent from participant's life	Educated and trained as Florist, but did not work as schizophrenic.	<i>Pâtisserie</i> at vocational school (Poland)	<i>Pâtisserie</i>	(5) <i>Pâtisserie</i>	(5) <i>Pâtisserie</i> (<i>Pâtisserie</i> at vocational school in Poland)	Privately rented house
Franciszka (London)	Worked in agriculture (Did not complete secondary school level)	Worked in agriculture (Did not complete secondary school level)	Degree in Psychotherapy (Poland)	Worked in the Polish healthcare system	(7) Health care assistant in a nursing home	(5) Maintenance work (Dropped out of university in Poland)	Privately rented flat
Gracja (London)	(3) Accountant (Educated to university level)	(3) Economist for agriculture (Educated to university level)	Master of Science in Biology, but dropped out to study Mechanical Design (Poland)	Mechanical designer	(3) Mechanical designer	(5) Works in construction (Mechanical designer in Poland) has a Master of Science from Poland)	Privately rented accommodation
Liljana (London)	Skilled manual (Manager of a section for the Polish railway. Educated to secondary school level)	Worked in administration (Educated to secondary school level)	Studied to be a midwife at university (Poland)	Midwife	Unemployed housewife	(7) Security officer (part-time studying Business Administration degree at UK university)	Privately rented property
Piotr (London)	(6) Engineer (Studied Engineering at university)	Shop assistant (Educated to secondary school level)	Masters degree in Marketing (Poland)	Student	(4) Works in administration (When first arrived in the UK he worked illegally as a pot washer in restaurants)	(7) Personal care worker in the private sector (Went to university in Poland to become a nurse)	Privately rented property
Natalina (London)	Semi-skilled manual (International lorry driver. Went to technical college to learn mechanics)	Admin for a healthcare organisation	Started studying Law at university but dropped out. Study to become a Seamstress (Poland)	Student	(7) Works part-time as a waitress	(5) Skilled trade builder (Tiler). (Vocational training to learn to be a tiler and building finisher)	Homeowner
Penelopa (London)	(6) Soldier and a high-ranking police officer (MA degree)	(3) under communism) Has now her own accounting practice (Went to university for Accounting)	MA in European Law and Administration (Poland)	Student	(3) Deputy Manager in a further educational institute	Separated from her husband	Privately rented property
Ola (London)	Manual work (Worked away.	Manual work (Educated to	MA Logistics and Business	Worked looking at logistics for a	(7) Assistant in a dental surgery (part-time), also	(3) Contract work in logistics (Went	Privately rented property

	Educated to secondary school level)	secondary school level)	Administration (Poland)	major international co-operation	teaches Polish history and geography within the Polish community. Worked in a hotel kitchen when she first came to the UK	to university in Poland to become a qualified aeroplane instructor)	
Izabel (London)	(1) Was a high-ranking officer who worked in South America (Educated at a military school)	Manager of a chain of shops (Educated to secondary school level)	Biomedical degree (Poland), currently studying for a degree in Midwifery in London	Student	(7) Previously teaching assistant and translator	(1) Owns his own company in the security business (Dropped out of a Biology degree in the UK. Second generation Jamaican and Barbadian nationality)	Council rented property
Alina (London)	(3) Accountant	(4) Secondary school teacher	Master of Education (Poland)	Teacher	(7) Teaching Assistant	(3) Analytical designer (same job as in Poland. Has an MA in Graphic Design from Poland)	Privately rented property
Stefa (London)	Skilled manual (Worked on a farm and in a factory making car engines)	Skilled manual (Worked on a farm and in a factory making car engines)	Educated to secondary school level	Student	Unemployed (Before this, she was a fruit picker and waitress in the UK)	Unemployed (educated to secondary school level in France and formerly worked as a chef's assistant in a UK restaurant)	Rented council house (on housing benefit)
Ina (London)	(4) Teaching Linguistics at university (Degree in Languages)	Housewife (Educated to secondary school level)	Degree in Economics (Poland), BA English Literature (UK)	Student	Still studying	(7) Security guard (Studied Mechanics at vocational school)	Rented council property

Appendix 4: Nottingham Participants

DANUTA

Age	40
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	1996
Years of Residence in Britain	15
Marital Status	Married for 15 years since 1996. Met husband in a pub when she was doing a summer job as a strawberry picker in ██████████, Kent
English Language	Speaks fluently, but self-conscious of accent
Religion	Catholic, not practicing but attended church to ensure daughter has communion
Considering Return to Poland	No
Siblings	One older sister, MA awards in Economics. Lives in Poland
Grandparents	Not educated

Husband	<u>Age</u>	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	47	English, originally from Nottingham	English Protestant	First generation to go to university, did an NCCA course	Accountant
Daughter	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Child's Aspirations</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Child</u>	
	11	Plays guitar, used to take French lessons, did	To be a Forensic Scientist	To go into Law	

		ballet for several years		
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SERAFIN

Age	32
Sex	Male
When Migrated from Poland	2007
Years of Residence in Britain	Five years. Came to the UK to find work and worked for three months in Peterborough, wife and children stayed in Poland. Then came to Nottingham for a job and brought his family. Would have gone wherever there was employment
Marital Status	Married
English Language	Nearly fluent, but self-conscious. Interview was conducted with him as his wife felt her English was not strong enough
Religion	Strongly Catholic, attends Polish Catholic school every Sunday and cultural centre
Considering Return to Poland	Maybe
Siblings	Four brothers and one sister

Wife	<u>Age</u>	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Family Background</u>	<u>Occupation in Poland</u>	<u>Occupation in the UK</u>
	34	Polish, lived in a small village in Poland while growing up	Parents own a small business and sell what they grow on their farm. Father also worked chopping trees down	A professional tailor, dressmaker	School helper. Cleaning and helping like midday staff for children

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
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	Son is eleven and daughter is ten	Just want them to be happy
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ELIZAVETA

Age	39
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	1991 to work as an au-pair in Nottingham
Years of Residence in Britain	Lived several years in [REDACTED] as husband work in a bank there. Came back to the UK in 2002
Marital Status	Married in 1994. Met husband in a [REDACTED] in Nottingham in 1992
English Language	Very good, but self-conscious
Religion	Strongly Catholic. Attends Polish Catholic church
Considering Return to Poland	Would like to go back for a few years when the children have grown-up and then travel
Siblings	Two sisters. Both teachers and went to university
Grandparents	Farmers

Husband	<u>Age</u>	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	49	Polish, but born in Nottingham. Parents migrated to the UK from Poland after	Attended Polish Saturday school when a child. Not a strict Catholic	First generation to go to university – Polytechnic at the time	Works in information technology

		Second World War			
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Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Both girls, aged 14 and twelve	Dancing, swimming, synchronic ice-skating. They attend private piano lessons	"Could be prime ministers if they wanted. They are very gifted and have artistic and musical talents. They will probably be teachers"

EMILJA

Age	36
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2002
Years of Residence in Britain	Eight-nine years
Marital Status	Married at age 21
English Language	Fluent, but feels her English communication skills are holding her back from finding a good job
Religion	Catholic. Attends Polish Catholic church
Considering Return to Poland	No
Siblings	One elder brother, went to technical school and lives in Norway. Elder sister went to university, lives in Poland and works as a teacher. Younger sister has lived in Austria for twelve years

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
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	Polish	Catholic	Qualified Radiologist in Poland	Lorry Driver in UK. Found a job in Nottingham and migrated from Poland in 2002
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Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Daughter aged ten	Daughter goes swimming, but no swimming lessons. She plays netball, started flute lessons and did ballet last year	Their aspirations for their daughter are for her to become a doctor, but the mother thinks she might become a midwife like herself

MARJA

Age	46
Sex	Female
Years of Residence in Britain	15
Marital Status	Married. Met her husband when working in a private school teaching English – he was doing a certificate and proficiency exam in Polish. He lived in Poland for two years and they got married after a year and a half, and then he decided to go back to England and she was pregnant a year and a half later
English Language	Completely fluent
Religion	Catholic. However, doesn't attend church regularly because husband is an atheist
Considering Return to Poland	They have land and a house there, but do not know if they will return

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Family Background</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	English. Grew up in Kent and London	Grandparents immigrated to London before the Second World War from Poland, they were Jewish	Atheist	Has a degree in English and has a PGCE. First generation to go to university	Secondary school English teacher

Daughter	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Child's Aspirations</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Child</u>
	Twelve	Skiing, drama and cheerleading	Wants to go to RADA to become an actress or study languages	That she achieves in whatever she chooses

MICHELINA

Age	42
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2007
Years of Residence in Britain	About five years. After husband died, she wanted to change the environment and another thing was that she is a teacher and teachers don't earn enough in Poland to maintain a big family
Marital Status	Husband and father of their three children died five years ago. He worked as a translator in Poland and translated in to and from English. Participant currently living together with new partner from Poland

English Language	Good, as she used to teach English in Poland
Religion	Go to church every Sunday and they are very orthodox Catholics
Considering Return to Poland	Definitely not

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Three daughters, aged twelve, 16 and 17 and a half years	They did play piano in Poland and they had a lot of drama lessons in the theatre and art lessons in some art centres, but unfortunately we had to give it up when they came to England because they had to focus on the language, so they still play but they don't have regular lessons and she never agreed for them to have instruments in school, because this means withdrawing them from English or Maths or Science	"[A]ll of them will probably go to university. Well they don't have to, but if they want to, yes, yes. I would like them to."

MILA

Age	30
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2006
Years of Residence in Britain	About six years
Marital Status	Married when 23 years old. Met husband as he came from a different city, different side of Poland to his grandmother's village and he used to live with them in the summer holidays
English Language	Did a three-year English course and self-conscious of language

Religion	Usually go to Catholic school every Sunday
Considering Return to Poland	"I don't think so. It must be something that happens that is very serious"
Siblings	Got two younger brothers, and the third one is studying in Poland

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	Has got enough qualifications from Poland to be an electrician, but not for the UK, so needs different documents. As he is working every day, he can't go to college anymore and has started studying at home instead	In Poland an electrician, but in the UK working in a factory as his qualifications from Poland are not transferable

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Daughter aged ten and son aged twelve		"[E]njoy their job. Every time I ask my son what he wants to be, sometimes the answer is just horrible. He wants to be a builder, or ... it is not about earning money, it's about what he wants to do and enjoy."

JOANKA

Age	36
Sex	Female
Qualifications	Secondary school and chefs' course
Occupation	In Poland a shop worker. In the UK a cleaner at a school and at a small surgery
When Migrated from Poland	Current partner came to the UK first, in 2004. She followed in 2005
Years of Residence in Britain	About seven years
Marital Status	Living with Polish partner and father of youngest child. Former partner and father of oldest child lives in Poland
English Language	"when we came here I can't speak English, nothing, my words were 'Good morning', always, and 'I love you', and everything that I speak now I have learned relating to my work, my teacher, my manager
Religion	"we are a Polish Catholic family, all my grandmother, her mother, and every time was only Catholic, but that is normal", "we are going to Polish Church, alright not every Sunday, I know, but this is my wrong"
Considering Return to Poland	No
Siblings	
Grandparents	Grandfather worked as security guard. Grandmother worked with sewing

Current Partner	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	Vocational training	In Poland a car mechanic. In the UK self-employed and driving newspapers seven nights a week

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>

	Two daughters aged 13 and 10	Horse-riding, dancing, singing	Wants them to be happy and good people
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JOLA

Age	36
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	Husband in 2004, but participant and daughters in 2006
Years of Residence in Britain	About six years
Marital Status	Married
English Language	Self-conscious of accent: "You see I will never [have] an English accent, no chance, but my daughters, yeah. Yes, their English is very good"
Religion	"I'm not a fanatic, I am not crazy about the religion [Catholicism] ... But I think it is good to have something to believe in"
Considering Return to Poland	"Yes, definitely. I have to wait until my daughters have finished education and then they decide what they do – then we will probably go back"
Siblings	One brother, 12 years younger than her
Grandparents	Participant used to live with grandparents, mother and brother when she was a child. Grandmother did the middle school until 15 and used to work for the army in the canteen. Grandfather died.

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	Four years of education in Poland equivalent to A-levels	In Poland had his own business. In the UK work as a building labourer

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Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Two daughters, aged 17 and eleven	Swimming, dancing	Really hope that children go to university

TRUDA

Age	36
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2008
Years of Residence in Britain	About four years, arrived in the UK before husband
Marital Status	Married
English Language	Good
Religion	"We try going every Sunday [to the Polish church] but sometimes after all week we're just too tired, so we try every second or third, yeah, but we keep trying because we are Catholic and we try to keep our children, not going every single Sunday or every single Friday to church but we try to keep their beliefs"
Considering Return to Poland	Have considered it, but thinks it would be difficult for daughter in particular to start all over again in a new school system
Siblings	"my older sister, she is working like a cook, the next one has got her own shop with food. My younger sister is working in – because she lives here, she is working for Tesco and my youngest one is in college, so she is doing university"

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	In Poland and in the UK: A panel beater – fixing broken cars

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Son is 17 and daughter is ten	Son likes computers and drawing. Daughter likes dancing and swimming, as well as reading "if she has to"	Leave it up to the children to choose

WOJCIECH

Age	35
Sex	Male
When Migrated from Poland	2006
Years of Residence in Britain	Six years
Marital Status	Married
English Language	Didn't understand much English when first arrived, but has taken English lessons to improve his language skills
Religion	Catholic and wants children to continue that
Considering Return to Poland	Don't think so
Mother	65 years old and on pension. Used to work with children. Standard education at school
Father	Died 10-20 years ago, participant unsure precisely when.

	Standard education at school
Siblings	Two younger sisters in the UK, six and ten years younger
Grandparents	

Wife	<u>Age</u>	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	37	Polish	Catholic	Standard education in Poland to qualify for a job: Eight years at primary school and three years at high school	In Poland worked on a factory. On maternity leave at the moment in the UK. Before that was working in a factory and for an agency in the UK

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Daughters aged eleven years	She likes art and painting	Have hopes for the future, as they are under the impression that their child "ha[s] got a better start in life" in the UK than they had in Poland

LUDMILA

Age	36
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2011
Years of Residence in Britain	Five or six months
Current Residence in Britain	Nottingham
Marital Status	Married and lives with husband and their three children
English Language	Takes English lessons

Religion	“Here in the UK I wasn’t at the church. My daughter, yes, every Sunday – but I don’t know why I don’t go”
Considering Return to Poland	No
Grandparents	Grandmother worked at a factory in the office

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	Technical education from Poland	Works for a high-street fashion sports chain

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents’ Aspirations for Children</u>
	Son is 14, while daughter is ten and got another daughter who is one year old	Polish Saturday school	“I am not my mother, no. If they want to go [to university] okay, if not okay. This is life, Jacob’s and Sophia’s, but I will be pray”

HENRIETA

Age	35
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	Has not lived in Poland since she was 17, but been to America before she went to the UK in 2005
Years of Residence in Britain	Seven
Current Residence in Britain	Nottingham
Marital Status	Married for 12 years and lives with husband and two children, with a third child expected soon

English Language	Fluent
Religion	Raised in a 'very Catholic' home. They go to Polish church usually once a week
Considering Return to Poland	"No, we wouldn't consider, we are settled here and there is nothing really that could make us move"
Grandparents	"My grandma and grandpa was a farmer, they were both farmers, and on the other side of my father's family my grandpa was working with rails ... My grandma was a nurse but she had seven children so after a couple of children she stopped being a nurse and then she became a housewife"

Husband	<u>Age</u>	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	41	Hungarian	Finished an FIT in [REDACTED]. Has Associate, or BTEC, in Pattern Cutting	Works within fashion as a pattern cutter for a company called [REDACTED]

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Son is eleven and Daughter is ten. Both born in America.	Daughter goes to ballet classes, while son does karate and self-defence lessons. They both play tennis	Want children to become doctors and tennis champions: "Apart from my son or my daughter being doctors they both are going to be tennis champions, that's our dream"

Appendix 5: London Participants

CELINA (first interview)

Age	31
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	Late 2005/early 2006
Years of Residence in Britain	Three and a half years
Current Residence in Britain	Redbridge, North East London
Housing Status	Renting house
Marital Status	Living with partner and son. Partner is not the father of her child
English Language	Fluent
Religion	Atheist
Considering Return to Poland	"[D]efinitely, definitely, no"
Siblings	"My sister she got married. Actually now they've built house. She's working, she's got a great job, same thing as her husband"

Partner	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Lapsed Catholic	He got a job in the London/████████ Council as a driver

Son	<u>Age</u>	<u>Child's Aspirations/Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Child</u>
	Ten	"He loves to write basically. He loves to count and I don't know, I haven't heard, may be I just heard because it's	"For me I've got nothing like educational aspirations because I would like him to go as far and as high as he wants and I will help him. Definitely I would help him in everything, what he wants to do but I will not, never

		like a boy's dream, he'd like to be a policeman or something". Also likes football	basically, I will not push him on this or that way, to do this or this"
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CELINA (follow-up interview)

Age	33
Sex	Female
Years of Residence in Britain	About five years
Current Residence in Britain	Still living same place: Redbridge, North East London
Marital Status	Recently married her partner who she lived with last time as well. He is not the father of her child
English Language	Fluent
Religion	"We are more like atheists than anything else so even Philip, he hasn't been christened"
Considering Return to Poland	"No, absolutely not"

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Still working for the London/ [REDACTED] Council as a driver

Son	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Child</u>
	Eleven		

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KASIA (first interview)

Age	30
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2003. Left because of the racism that they experienced in Polish society directed against her husband who is Vietnamese. Has previously also lived a year in Vietnam with husband
Years of Residence in Britain	Six
Marital Status	Married, lives with husband and one child
English Language	"[M]y dad was always pushing me with English language which I was really angry with him at the time all my primary school and secondary school I went to study English and after I just went to the English school ... but I think I am quite happy with that at the moment"
Religion	Not very religious
Considering Return to Poland	"No, never in 100 years...I would never go back"
Siblings	"My brother is working as an informatic as well with the computers. He finished his master three years ago"

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Vietnamese	Studied Informatics and Computer Science in Poland	Working in a factory in the UK

Son	<u>Age</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Child</u>
	8	

	<p>“Of course probably every mum wants their child to be a doctor or a lawyer or god knows what else but it’s totally up to him in the future what he wants to do ... If he wants to go to uni he will, if he doesn’t he will do something else. Of course, I would be acting if he’s going down in the druggie thingies, of course, I will be there and kicking the stupid things from his head but as long as he is all right I don’t mind”</p>
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KASIA (follow-up interview)

Age	32
Sex	Female
Years of Residence in Britain	Eight
Marital Status	Still married with same husband
English Language	Fluent
Religion	“I do believe, but I don’t go to the church anymore. I think it's got something to do with my childhood as well. My parents were very Catholic, <i>very Catholic</i> ”
Considering Return to Poland	Still convinced that she would never return to Poland
Siblings	Parents paid for brother’s education: “I think my brother was always the chosen one and he still is”

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Children’s Aspirations</u>	<u>Parents’ Aspirations for Child</u>
	Son is 10	“My son wants to be a football player which we’re trying to explain to him that it's only certain people getting the football so he is brilliant – I think because of his stupid age now he is brilliant in writing stories, he has got a talent and even we were told from the school”	“I think every parent wants their kids to be someone really special. Probably because I love medicine and all that so I would love them to be in the same as what I am, which I don’t think that my son is going to be, because he absolutely hates blood. Yeah, I think I want them to be someone who is going to be happy, and like for example her, she absolutely enjoys planning on the keyboard and she dances and sings, so if she wants to be the opera singer then let her be it”

ROZA (first interview)

Age	31
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	“I think it was February 2003 when I arrived” Her then-husband arrived before this
Years of Residence in Britain	About six and a half years
Marital Status	Still lives with her children’s father although they are now divorced, as well as her two children
English Language	Fluent
Religion	“I didn’t like Poland for many reasons. One of the reasons is it is a very Catholic country”
Considering Return to Poland	No: “My life is here definitely”
Family Background	“I would describe my family background as a working class I think trying to translate it to English society ... My dad was born in central Poland to very old family who had their own land and they were farmers ... My mum’s family was I think western part of Poland ... She was very much working person. She finished her school at the age of 18 and she was working since she was 15”
Siblings	Got two older sisters and a younger brother

Ex-husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications and Occupation</u>
	Polish	Not very religious	“He was working up to I think 2007 then he started full-time studying and once we broke up he returned to part-time study at

			as well [to study Law] and came back to self-employment as a decorator”
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Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Schools Attended</u>	<u>Parents’ Aspirations for Children</u>
	Daughter is nine and son is aged eight	Daughter started at a different primary school, but parents changed schools for her as they were not impressed with the standard of the other school. Also they intend to send her to Polish Saturday school soon. In addition, “[s]he’s doing in English at the moment individual supportive writing ... We intend to test her for dyslexia if she will not do better by the end of this term”.	“I believe that there are certain routes to achieving anything you want in life and I think it’s not necessarily going through the system like primary school, secondary, university ... She wants to be vet and she knows that to be a vet she has to go to Imperial College, London and that’s her dad saying, she even knows where the university is but I think we both got a bit different approach”

ROZA (follow-up interview)

Age	33
Sex	Female
Years of Residence in Britain	Almost eight
Marital Status	Still living with children, but not living with ex-husband anymore
English Language	Fluent
Religion	Atheist
Considering Return to Poland	No

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents’ Aspirations for Children</u>
	Daughter is eleven	“She is doing quite a lot of art at home and this is something that she	“I think that on one level this is important for me as well that my daughter ... ha[s] formal qualifications in order to help

	and son aged six	really likes and enjoys”	[her] in the market, the world market, but as well it will give [her] the social circle”
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BERTA

Age	45
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2006
Years of Residence in Britain	Five
Housing Status	Tenant, private landlord
Marital Status	Married and lives with husband
English Language	Fluent
Religion	“one week I go to English church and the next Sunday I go to Polish Church in Islington”
Considering Return to Poland	Maybe
Siblings	Brother was first person in family to go to university

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	Doesn't work at the moment because he is recovering from an operation. He had terminal cancer and is still at home

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
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	Oldest son is 21 and lives in Poland, whereas youngest son is 11 and lives in the UK	Oldest son likes music. Youngest son likes painting and reading	Want youngest son to make his own choice, as long as he goes to study something at university
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SALOMEA

Age	40
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	1991, went on a summer holiday to the UK with no intentions of staying whatsoever until she met her husband and decided to give it a go
Years of Residence in Britain	20
Marital Status	Married to a company director who is born in England, but of Italian descent
English Language	Fluent, with no 'accent'
Religion	Attends church "[n]ot as frequently as I should according to my faith but yes, major festivities"
Considering Return to Poland	"we already have a place in Italy and we already have a place in Poland so we will travel between both with a base in London? Perhaps"
Grandparents	"My grandparents probably did not have degree equivalents but bear in mind that my grandparents were born before the war, into noble families where, you know, girls were supposed to marry and so on. Both of them have post secondary education actually, three of my four grandparents were accountants, book-keeper accountants and one was a secondary school teacher"

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
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	Second generation Italian	Catholic	Company director from an aristocratic background
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Son	Age	Child's Aspiration	Parents' Aspirations for Child
	Eleven and a half years	Wants to become a journalist	"[A] lot of people would say I really want my son to go into banking, especially when you're a banker, I really hope he doesn't". "I would love for him to be a doctor. Will I damage my relationship with my son if he says no, he can't be a doctor but he'll work in a bike shop? No, probably not, I will probably feel some resentment that I've wasted a lot of money on his private education but you know, if he's happy, he's with the right people, if he grows as the right person, right man, you know, balanced with himself, balanced in his life with the right set of values and is able to support himself"

TAMARY

Age	34
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2005
Years of Residence in Britain	Six
Marital Status	Married when she was 20. Met husband in college in Poland
English Language	Medium fluency
Religion	Attends Catholic church regularly
Considering Return to Poland	"I think I will go back when I grow old, but I am not sure because if you – am talking about 20 years in the future, 30, yeah. Because if you are back to Poland, and my children stay here, so how will be the relations with them"
Siblings	"I have six siblings so I am the first daughter in my family for my parents and our family is three girls and two boys, and before me is one boy"

Husband	<u>Age</u>	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
		Polish	Catholic	Went to college for three years in Poland to become a builder	Works as a builder

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Two sons, aged twelve and 14 years old	To find a good job and study. What they want to do is their choice, although mother does not want her children to work as a cleaner like herself or as a builder like their father

ALICJA

Age	39
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2000
Years of Residence in Britain	Eleven
Marital Status	Single. Never married her former partner, who is of Portuguese descent
English Language	Fluent, but self-conscious of accent
Religion	"[W]e go to church every Sunday, plus I go to church more often if I can to pray"
Considering Return to Poland	"England gave me so much and it has changed me so much. I don't know. I think I will stay here and I would like to pay back, in a way, it

	would be a struggle to go back to Poland but who knows. When my daughter is grown up and if she chooses to live there, if she needs me there, then maybe I would go back and support her if she needs me. If she doesn't then I'm not sure"
Siblings	Two elder sisters and they are both married and have three children each. "So my sister graduated later than me even though she was older, but she got married early and so she raised her children but she was working since the age of 20. Plus studying, so she has worked as a teacher for 20 years now. The other sister worked on the farm with her husband"
Grandparents	Farmers

Daughter	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Child</u>
	Eleven, born in England	Dance classes, sports club, karaoke, English Scouts and arts and crafts	To be happy in what she is doing

ANTONINA

Age	
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2004
Years of Residence in Britain	Seven
Marital Status	"I separate from my son's father when my son was one year old, then just five years later I meet my daughter's father [who is also Polish] but here we separate"
English Language	Fluent, but self-conscious of language and accent
Religion	"My family is catholic but I'm not"

Considering Return to Poland	Not answered, but likes to go back and visit Poland
Siblings	A sister who is ten years younger
Grandparents	Grandfather went to university and worked as an accountant

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
Two different fathers, both out of the picture	Son 17 and daughter is ten	Son likes computers	"I want that they will be happy in doing things they like in their life not like me, for example, I'm doing because I have to do something to survive. But I think my son is in a good way to do this"

RAHEL

Age	31
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	Husband arrived in 2005, she arrived in 2006/7
Years of Residence in Britain	Four/five years
Marital Status	Married, met husband when she was still at school in Poland
English Language	Medium fluency
Religion	Tries to attend church on Sundays as often as possible
Considering Return to Poland	She wants to stay in the UK as son goes to school there
Parents	Parents got divorced when she was three years old. Has a step-dad that got together with her mum when she had left the father. Mum worked as a florist. She is suffering from mental health problems
Siblings	Her sister lives in Italy
Grandparents	Her grandmother used to babysit her two or three days a week because her mother was schizophrenic

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	Standard education in Poland, qualified to work in bakeries and with pastries	Works in the bakery

Son	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Child</u>
	10	Likes football	“For me I don’t want prefer him doing the same as my husband. I Prefer like normal work, like 9 hours, I don’t want – I don’t see my son working in an office because my son is too much active, just like – maybe something supervisor in a shop, maybe something like office, a computer. I don’t know”

FRANCISZKA

Age	37
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	Late 2006/early 2007
Years of Residence in Britain	Four and a half years
Marital Status	Married
English Language	Good, but still wants to “influence or improve my English”
Religion	Being Catholic is very important to her
Considering Return to Poland	When the children finish school
Parents	60 years old. “My parents didn’t finish any schools, like they just finished – it’s not even secondary school. Like primary school. Yes, because they were from the village and they didn’t push me to do it, I

just wanted to by myself and I saw it's like you can be younger longer and you can be quite clever when you go to high school. Like aspiration, give the child aspiration to learn. This is why I would like to send her (daughter) to a good school". "So you know, quite poor people, going to the church, and we had got some values different to the rich people, so we invest in ourselves, we go to good schools and we try to go higher in a poor situation, a poor class"

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Standard education at school in Poland – a civil qualification. Additionally, "he wanted to go higher and he started university, a Polish language university but his parents they expected work from him and he was working, going to university and he [didn't] manage to do both of them so he just stopped"	Maintenance, works in the same company as participant

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Children's aspirations</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Older daughter eleven, younger daughter four years old	Older daughter wants to become a hairdresser, and also own a barber shop as a business woman	Want older daughter to go to university rather than become a hairdresser

GRACJA

Age	36
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2006

Years of Residence in Britain	Five years
Marital Status	Married and lives with husband and daughter. Was 17 when she met her husband
English Language	Fluent
Religion	Try to go to church every Sunday
Considering Return to Poland	"[W]e're in a very good position because we have a place to live in Poland, we can always go back but I don't think so"

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	Master of Science degree from technical university in Poland	A contractor who does plumbing and electrics and works in construction sites and provides building services

Daughter	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Child</u>
	Twelve	Plays in the orchestra and choir	

LILJANA

Age	35
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	1997
Years of Residence in Britain	14
Marital Status	Married and lives with husband and two children
English Language	Fluent

Religion	Being Catholic is considered important
Considering Return to Poland	"Maybe when we retire"
Siblings	One younger brother
Grandparents	"My grandparents they were educated probably during the Second World War or just after, so I don't think they've been in higher education as well, but they were both, you know they could read and write. So like one side, one of my grandparents I remember them working when I was small, my granny was working in wood industry somewhere in the office and my grandfather was working for like a city council, but the other side, my both grandparents were farmers. So they had, I don't know, eight acres of field and so that was their job"

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	At the end of his second year at the [REDACTED] University, studying Business Administration	Security officer

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Two sons, aged ten and eleven. Both born in the UK		"My older one, because he's lazy, so I'd just stick him in the office somewhere you see, in a nice cosy office where he can sit down and have his computer and whatever. The little one, it's hard to tell, yeah, but both of them I want for them to like have a job inside, let's say or like a doctor or dentist or I don't know even hairdresser, good hairdresser get a good money when you're good at it you see or I don't know, I don't want definitely them be like cleaning of the streets"

PIOTR

Age	36
Sex	Male
When Migrated from Poland	Participant came in 2004 and wife and children came in 2005
Years of Residence in Britain	Five
Marital Status	Married with two children
English Language	Fluent
Religion	They usually go to Catholic church on Sundays
Considering Return to Poland	No
Siblings	"[A]ll six of us went to university"

Wife	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	"She did primary and secondary school and she is actually a qualified nurse, but to be honest she never worked as a nurse"	Works in the private sector

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Two sons, aged ten	Oldest son plays football and goes swimming with dad	To finish school and, depending on whether they can afford it, would like them to go to university, but would not push that

NATALINA

Age	35
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	“It was 1994, the first year that I came and then my boyfriend then came to England. So we stayed here, we got married in Poland, because we only said that we were coming here for six months and then it was a year and then every year one more year, one more year”
Years of Residence in Britain	“[A]bout twelve, thirteen years, something like that, we've had a break in between because when I became pregnant we went back to Poland. We thought that that would be it but actually after he was fourteen months old we decided to come back”
Marital Status	Married with one child. Went to primary school in Poland with husband
English Language	Fluent
Religion	Being Catholic is considered ‘very important’ to participant
Considering Return to Poland	Undecided

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	“[A] three year school but based on learning the skills of tiling, being a tiler”	Tiler

Son	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Child’s Aspirations</u>
	11	Likes music; plays guitar and wants to take up piano lessons	According to mother, he wants to get a ‘powerful’ job such as head teacher or a banker

PENELOPA

Age	31
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2006
Years of Residence in Britain	Almost four years
Marital Status	Previously married, but now lives alone with her daughter
English Language	Fluent
Religion	"[W]e go into the church because she has this year her first communion and because just to see her in the church and because it's tradition and because it's a part of our culture, not because I like to"
Considering Return to Poland	Not until the daughter finishes school
Siblings	A sister who is nine years older. She has an MA degree and is an accountant

Daughter	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Child</u>
	Ten	Loves sports and everything with a ball, such as basketball, volleyball, dodge ball	

OLA

Age	35
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	September 2006. Husband arrived two years earlier without her
Years of Residence in Britain	Almost four years
Marital Status	Married when she was 20 and lives with husband and two children

English Language	Attended English courses
Religion	Catholic
Considering Return to Poland	Not until children finish school

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	University qualification to become an aeroplane instructor	Self-employed, works with logistics

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Son is twelve and daughter is ten		

IZABEL

Age	36
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	1999
Years of Residence in Britain	Eleven
Marital Status	Married. Met husband when she was 24 and currently lives with him and two children
English Language	Fluent

Religion	“We go to church as we're Catholics so we go always to Polish church”
Considering Return to Poland	Not until daughter finishes school
Siblings	“[M]y brother was in America, the other brother was in Argentina”

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Born in England, but met him in Poland. He is of ‘mixed ethnicity’ with parents coming from Jamaica and Barbados	Catholic	“[W]ent to university to study biology and I think he quit, he hasn't finished it. I think after the second year he dropped out”	“[G]ot a company, a security company, so his own business”

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents’ Aspirations for Children</u>
	Daughter is ten years old. Born in England	“[S]he used to have piano, violin, but I've cut it because I can't take them literally until I've finished my ... She goes to an after school club where I can involve her in art and crafts and some designs, she loves designing dresses”	‘I would like her to have a good level of education, preferably go to university. Although now I'm not sure with all these changes of the Government, but I want her to go to university and I would make sure that I provide for that, but whether she will go I don't know’

INA

Age	36
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	1999
Years of Residence in Britain	Eleven

Current Residence in Britain	London
Marital Status	Married
English Language	Speaks fluently, but conscious about her accent
Religion	Catholic. Does not send children to Polish Saturday school
Considering Return to Poland	Not considering returning

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	Mechanics at vocational school	Security guard

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Two daughters aged eleven and eighth	Daughter likes to make up dances to music videos and plays out with friends	'you know with education it's different because at the end of the day if you want your child to be the best, the best, the best because you want to take them to Oxford University and then after he can have a powerful position, that's something that you want that's fine but you could live without it and when it comes to health it's different because it's about your life, it's something that you really don't want anyone to mess up with it, and when it comes to education there are many, many people that can achieve a lot in their without education but health is something else, I wouldn't compare it'

ALINA

Age	Did not want to reveal age
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	2007, husband migrated first

Years of Residence in Britain	Four years
Marital Status	Married
English Language	Fluent
Religion	Catholic, does not attend church
Considering Return to Poland	Not until after daughter finishes secondary school

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Polish	Catholic	MA Graphic Design (Poland)	Analytical designer both in Poland and in the UK

Daughter	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	12	Plays the piano, also has private tuitions in English, French and Maths, as well as going to the Scouts	Want her to go to an elite university and seem to understand the importance of status and subject choice

STefa

Age	36
Sex	Female
When Migrated from Poland	1995
Years of Residence in Britain	15
Marital Status	Married

English Language	Fluent
Religion	Catholic
Considering Return to Poland	No
Siblings	Two younger brothers

Husband	<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	French Moroccan	Became a Catholic in order to marry her	Finished secondary school in France	Unemployed (Previously worked as a chef's assistant in a restaurant in the UK, which was very low paid)

Children	<u>Age</u>	<u>Hobbies</u>	<u>Parents' Aspirations for Children</u>
	Three daughters aged ten, seven and two years old	Ballet, tap-dancing, swimming, choir, violin, piano, flute, orchestra, paid for private music lessons in the past when husband had a job (started lessons at three years old), now receives music lessons through the school and is in orchestra training	'At least finish – I don't know what kind of study but some kind of study, some kind of university. It depends how well they will do and I'm hoping – I don't want them to be pushed to it but to choose. I need to push as well. I'm pushing the music and she will see if she wants to carry on later on or if she will give up. But at least I say to them: good secondary school, university, you do university and then after you can think about getting married or a job or whatever you want to do, but I think that there is a choice, if you do one study and then do another one of your own choice or whatever – make a mistake they can hopefully learn on it and do another'

Appendix 6: Example of a London Follow-up Interview Transcript

* Okay so I just wanted to start off with just the things like what has changed since I last met you in terms of are you still living in the same house.

F I've moved many times. Many things have changed, that's the first thing. I moved home several times over the one year and then I divorced my husband and I moved to my permanent accommodation which is still in the same district, so it's still [REDACTED] and it's still this area – live very close to [REDACTED], just the other side really, so that's really what –

* Because when I met you last you were in the process of divorcing and I don't know if you were just divorcing or in the process of divorcing.

F I can't remember.

* You were still living with your husband, so you're not living together now?

F No.

* And did [REDACTED] have to change schools when you moved house?

F No, the children stayed in the same school and initially we moved I think for three months to one accommodation which was quite far from school and then we moved to a really nice flat and it was still [REDACTED] but it was really far from school but then I couldn't stay in it living with my husband any longer so I found this flat and we moved again and we lived there for – at the moment it's more than a year, we've been living there more than a year. It's very settled and everything changed in my life really, it's quite calm and I can't remember whether I had already started training when we met but because I'm doing university I'm on the third year and I'm doing a [REDACTED] training as well and I started because I had a problem with work, it was loads of hours and just really difficult so I decided to change-

* Was that your decorating work?

F Yes, I decided to change completely. It didn't bring enough money and you really need to be flexible and it was almost impossible to work with having children and especially being on my own, I knew I couldn't do that. I mean I could do it on my own but I couldn't do it with the children and around their needs and it was answering the phone from 6am until 10pm seven days a week and I never had enough time with the kids and I think that this already affected the children, so I initially was still continuing part time but I found myself a female partner and we were doing decorating together and for a couple of months and it was quite okay. At the same time I started training with the [REDACTED] which is basically I'm volunteering for them and in return I'm getting a certificate ...and that's – so initially I was trying to do both and it was really difficult; the children, work *and* training so I left work.

* You said it was difficult for their children. Did it affect their school work at all?

F It's hard to say what affected their school work but there was an effect on their school work but it's hard to say because there was so many things going on. There were many moves and there was of course a divorce going on and loads of other issues around it so there was a point at which I started to have concerns about [REDACTED] learning and I think that I knew there was a problem with her reading since the very beginning but I didn't know actually what was the problem. I knew that there was a problem and I knew that this is one area where it doesn't match the rest of her education and the way that she develops and this was one area she really struggles with. I think that I started to bring up the issue that I think there is some problems when she was in year 2.

* Yes, I think that you wanted to get her tested for dyslexia.

F Yes, so as happens really funnily when I was going on and trying to find out what my daughters difficulties are I find out that I'm dyslexic and dyspraxic and I have been tested a couple of months ago because I have the ...dyspraxia and dyslexia and I didn't know what dyspraxia is before and I never thought of it and once I found out it's like "Yeah, now I understand all of those things" and [REDACTED] still hasn't been tested for her dyslexia because my test was covered by the university and *her* test would cost me £500, and because I have 2 children that is times 2 which is coming up to £1000 which I can't afford and as well they are quite young. So spending all this money at the moment when they're young, you know, with her we could actually tell but with [REDACTED] it is just too early.

The school decided to accommodate for that so [REDACTED] is on an individual ...plan since quite early and actually this is interesting, because I was going to school and talking about her problems and the school could not accommodate for that but then when I started to really push and I made an official complaint and submitted a letter saying I'm not happy and I'm being ignored and my daughter is stuck and there is nothing happening and then I find that she is actually on an individual educational plan which made me furious and they initially put her on speaking and nobody told me, the school did not consult me or – I was told at some point by the teacher that he has a concern with her speaking and that was it. He didn't say that she is going to have an individual educational plan, he didn't explain what it is, so I found all that out myself and then I went to school really furious and met with the deputy head teacher who was helpful and she apologised and the schools explanation, and probably it was quite right, was that it was loads of changes in terms of staff at school and [REDACTED] had three teachers in one year, I think it was year 3 or year 4, I can't remember now, I think it was year 3, so there were three teachers in one year and the school had a problem adjusting and things were just missing between the changes that were happening within a school so once I raised the issue I was treated very seriously and I said this is what it should be about and I was introduced to the SENCO co-ordinator at school and I found out quite a lot about the school procedure and how it's going to look like and everything and what I needed to know how to help my daughter.

We discussed her future targets and she was taken off of speaking and she was doing both reading and writing – she was on an individual plan for those two areas and as it happens the targets over the time – now she is in year five, she shows very clear signs of dyslexia and so she will meet some targets and she will have to go back on them and she still writes letters ..she still - So it is very clear that she is having problems. It is really funny because of the last term was the moment when the teacher actually started to refer to [REDACTED] as dyslexic rather than saying 'well we know there's a problem' and this year theythey school

accommodated for that. Then they decided to test the whole school, which is quite unusual, but they did manage to secure funding for buying computer programmes, so what they do – [REDACTED] actually finished the assessment yesterday and we don't know what the results are yet, the results are going to be put in next week and we'll see what happens.

I have some worries about my son as well because he started reception this year. He was in nursery last year in the same school and now he's reception and he is doing academically quite well, however he is a very, very, very clever boy, he is very intelligent and he is very articulate. I still think that because this is the same situation, that because he is very clever he is doing quite well at school. He doesn't match his potential, but because it is well it's not seen as problematic so everyone says it's fantastic, it's great, but I know that he can do things much more and he can say and understand more than he can actually show in the schoolwork and as well exactly the same as [REDACTED], her strengths are art and science and she is not doing well in English and she's not doing that well in maths, but she's okay but it's something she needs constant help with and it's funny because [REDACTED] shows exactly the same predispositions, even though he's more technical than [REDACTED], they are completely different personalities. He shows that in these areas whichscience, this is his strength and he loves stories, he shows interest as a child his age, but he will not be keen on starting reading and this is the difference between him and many children, that he loves stories but he gets really irritated when he starts-

So it is very similar in a way to when [REDACTED] was starting reading. Whether either of them really do have dyslexia I don't know because it's just too early to say, especially for him, but I think because I'm aware that they may face problems and that actually has a positive outcome because I'm accommodating for that and that means they can actually move on.

* How are you accommodating, because you mentioned before that they need constant help, so maybe you could talk a bit about how you help and how you accommodate it?

F Well first of all for [REDACTED] it was much easier because she was a bit older when I realised and the first thing was to tell her that you may have these difficulties, I have dyslexia, this is how it affects me and it can affect you in a similar way. It doesn't mean you're not clever. And that actually changed a lot because it changed her attitude and when she is stuck she will say "Okay, I have a problem with that, how can I go about it?" rather than getting really irritated and very stroppy and saying "I'm not going to do it!" and then when I was doing homework with her we worked out that in maths she can do mentally three calculations one after another, or three operations, and then she gets lost. So I showed her – because how they're being taught at school for maths is that now when they're adding the two digit numbers, so they will do the operation first on units, then on tens, then they will write units and tens, and how their school is teaching them is a different way to how I was taught, so it's more breaking down and by the time you get to the answer – I would say that's relevant, it's the way that you get to the answer which is all the steps and therefore there is this whole mental calculation that you have to do all the way and in the long term there will be children who will be better suited for the advanced maths and they will be very quick at calculating, but when they're learning it takes longer to learn to do it. That causes problems for her because she can do up to three calculations in her mind and then she gets – well she gets "What am I counting now?" and this is very typical for every person who is dyslexic or dyspraxic.

Because we know she's there and she's doing that then she has methods of writing down what I'm actually calculating and she can make her operation and look at her piece of paper and say "okay, this is what I'm calculating" and then she can pick up on her thinking process, so that's the one way. The other is because she's getting individual help and I'm meeting with teachers every couple of months so they say –

* So do you initiate the meetings or do they? Are you the one who goes and says "I want to meet"?

F No, the meetings have to be every three months and the school has a duty to discuss this with the parents and so this is their procedure. They have like the guidance so they don't really have to – they have guidance that says the good practice is to discuss the issue with the child and with the parents and that we have to have meetings.

I know that I'm one of these mothers them made because I'm going there all the time and if I have any problems I will just ask for a meeting and because the school – there was loads of changes in the school over the last two years and the school got a really bad Ofsted report, the school is really pushing and really keen on the changes.

* How did that make you feel? Because I remember you went through so much trouble to get [REDACTED] in to that school before.

F It wasn't surprising, the report said exactly what I saw at the school. I still think that there are many areas in which the school is really good and they were picked up by Ofsted and I think that one of the greatest things about the school is the mentoring of the students and so they will have – they have fantastic abilities – the school has a fantastic way of dealing with students behaviour and if there is any bullying they talk about this a lot. There is sexual education in the school and the children are being made to feel comfortable to talk about this and discuss it and the school actually really accommodate for these interpersonal skills and for social skills and the children can apply for being the so called 'playground buddy' and it's being treated as a job so you have to fill in the form, you have to go through an interview process and you have to say what your strengths are and it's not like you have to do it and you have to compete against other children but actually there are people who help children to think about it, to prepare themselves, so it's like the first step of preparing for later life and I think that is really nice about school.

* How does that compare to your experience of school? I mean did you have anything like that when you were very young in Poland?

F Hmm, no. It's a completely different way of teaching and a completely different way of treating students. It's a completely different system. So our education was really hard and children starting a bit later, they're starting when they're 7 and actually they go in to year 1, but when they do start it's really, really starting education, so we would sit for 45 minutes in a lesson called maths, then we have five minutes break, then we have Polish, then we have five minutes break, then we have geography, and all the subjects were broken down. It's not like here science, we had division from year 3, the division of all the subjects and the kids were put under enormous pressure and we had enormous amounts of school hours and basically the school attitude was 'get over it, you have to do it, if you

don't manage then you're just a bad student' and you're graded from year 1. The years started in year 1.

So it was completely different. I'm not saying that this was really bad but I'm saying it's different and I think that one of it was that any child ...system, wasn't just falling out of the system. Any comment that children who had slight difficulties could really lose on their education that they were getting because the slight difficulties – they could not catch up with the best students.

* So do you feel that affected you, now that you've been diagnosed with dyslexia?

F Ermm, it definitely did on the – well I think I was always really academically good in primary school. My grades were really good but I was progressing and my grades were going down and then I went to high school which I hated. I really disliked the high school and I think that one of my problems, my handwriting is really difficult to read to anybody and it always was and the attitude of my teacher; you actually get grades of how your notebook looks like and it has to be perfect, so they would make me re-write whole notebooks and several pages. I hated that and I honestly considered that torture. Of course I never was able to write like they wanted and I still can't do it and as well things like maths, I absolutely hated maths and I felt that my maths was really rubbish and the test that I did in June shows that my numeracy skills are above average which is amazing, when my attitude was that I hate it and I can't do it and the skills are completely-

* How does this make you feel?

F It makes me feel more determined to make sure that my children will not face the same problems in their school and I think that if I would be in England in education I don't think I would get that much different treatment because education in England 20 years ago was different than it is now and I think it's because now there is recognition of slight learning difficulties as well as the more ...learning difficulties and I honestly don't believe that kids who have dyslexia or dyspraxia will not be able to learn things like other people, but – I don't even really think that they need an individual plan outside of the classroom, I just think that there must be accommodation for all different learning styles.

* How do you feel about [REDACTED] getting individual attention?

F I'm not sure about it. I think that once she's taking out of class then she's losing on something that's happening with the class. But on the other hand she is making progress, and a very clear on in all the areas which means that it is working. It may – well I don't think it's working itself – there are very many different things that maybe ...substitute because they know now that there is a problem and ...

I think that my attitude changed as well in terms of how I approach [REDACTED] learning. I think that I took a completely ...of [REDACTED], I don't do homework with her anymore, in terms that she will bring the homework and I will give her time to do it herself and then of course I will pick what she's doing (laughter) but she will just do it and it's usually when she is asleep I go through to check it, but because she has this one teacher who believes, as I do, that she needs on her own to see how she is progressing and how she is doing, she is bringing all the marked homework and she is having the same folder with all the marked homework from the previous year and one day we just sat down together and

said "Let's go and see what you've done" and she was like "I can't believe I made a mistake here, it's so easy now" so she can actually see it herself rather than me saying "You're doing really well". That made a huge difference. You know before when I said "The homework", she said "Oh god, no, please" now I will say "Well Saturday is the time when mummy sleeps longer. This is your time to do homework" and she actually enjoys it. She finds it's her own time to do her own things and I think she really got in to it and she really likes it and she-

* How much homework does she get?

F It's not much. It's very little. Compared to other schools I think she will get 2 A4 pages and on each will be like maybe two or three exercises for maths and then there will be I think one or two things from English which she will be asked for example to write or re-write a short story. It depends, because I think the homework is different for different children, so she gets homework what reflects what she's doing and what her level is but it's not much and I think it takes her half an hour to do it all and her homework does get better, so it's less mistakes and she can do it herself, correct herself, and this is really good.

I saw her the other day having difficulties with maths and she was, instead of getting frustrated she was actually trying to work out the problem and I think that as she was progressing with her homework she noticed that she made a mistake in the first one because once she got to the third answer she was like "Hang on a second, this is not what I was doing before" and she actually did it and I was really pleased to see that.

* I remember you saying your dad really pushed you in terms of education when you were younger. He really wanted you to get to university and things like that? You made this point, you said "They helped you in that way where they pushed you to do the work, but they couldn't help in other ways in terms of sitting down and doing the homework with you", and has that influenced the way that you interact with [REDACTED] perhaps in her homework?

F Yes, I think it does. First of all I'm just pushing them as much as my parents are pushing. I'm not saying you have to do it, but when we talk about the future and choices and options it never occurred to me that they would not go to university really, so what they both think is that they will go to university, so in that way I'm pushing my agenda because they can't see another way at the moment. They don't understand that there is actually another way, that they may finish education earlier, they have in their minds that they will go to university and I think that at the beginning I was as well quite pushy with the homework, "You have to do it" and now I'm really relaxed. I mean many things have changed in my life and the way that I see many things as well, and because there is no influence of my husband I do things my own way as well and I just left it but I do something else and I think this is what helps them much more, and I think this is something that I missed with my parents, and that is that I will play with the children and incorporate my knowledge and like say things at their level, so he will come up to me and say he wants to watch something on YouTube, so we watch a few short videos he likes, then I will find a few videos, which the Hungry Caterpillar story and we enjoy it, or we choose games, and I will myself learn games I can play with them, so they don't even know that we're learning. We're just playing more and this is something I have to learn as well as them, because this is something I didn't get when I was a child. It was that you have to sit down and learn and education is very formal and very at the table and you just spent hours learning.

So I think that my attitude to education is changing, you know, as I'm learning myself. I'm trying to give them something completely different and to basically play- As well I spent almost every Wednesday morning in [REDACTED] nursery, we had something called a family Wednesday where everybody could come to nursery and the idea was that the parents would stay for ½ an hour or 1 hours or something but because the teachers were very accommodating and very nice you could stay there for a whole day with them, so there were times when I was actually staying for lunch because [REDACTED] would be "Mum, please stay, stay" and I was just watching how they were managing, how they were teaching children to play really healthily and this is how ideally I would be able to do it this way. I'm trying to do it through games but I think that we're getting there.

* I remember you saying that you were going in to [REDACTED] school originally and reading with the children as well. Do you feel that you missed out in some way, that your parents weren't able to do the things that you could do with [REDACTED] and –

F I think that was one of the reasons when I made the decision to stop working so long and I decided to basically be a stay at home mum. I'm just doing two days a week training within the school hours which means I'm there for them and yes I do think that I missed a lot. It's really hard to say because I was doing academically well and I still managed to have A-Levels, they were quite disappointing but they were still good enough for me to be able to go to university and I did eventually go to university but I think I could do much better and I think that it's interesting because when I speak to my mum as well now she says "I wish I didn't work so much, I wish I had more time with you" and I was thinking of my children growing and in a couple of years time I will be too late and starting work at 6am and finishing at 10pm won't do. This is not what I want for my children and this is not how I want them to grow up and how I want them to enjoy – I want them to enjoy life really and I want to be able to explore who they are and to discover – even if they decide to leave education and go through a different route, I want them to always have the option of doing whatever they feel is best for them.

So I think that they both have a big potential to go to university but I have the slight feeling that maybe [REDACTED] is really, really clever. He is so clever that actually people who work with children professionally and meet [REDACTED] are like "How old is he, is it 4/5?", he is amazing and his ability is – and I think that he has more chances to do well even in a hostile environment academically while [REDACTED] will need some help. So I don't know what they will choose in the end or how this will change.

* I just want to go back to your relationship with your mother because I remember you saying that she kind of gave up her education for her children, if I've got that right? That's what I think I got from the first interview, but you've continued to learn and so do you think perhaps seeing your mother give up her education influenced you in a way to continue learning?

F To be honest I never thought about my mum and education really. When I was growing up it was just a fact that my mum is working, my mum is doing so many things, but it's one thing that my mother was always doing – she was always reading and she was driving me mad because she could cook dinner and read a book at the same time and I was "mum, mum, mum" ... to her and she was "uhu, hmmm" and she didn't really know what I was talking about because she was reading and in a way actually when I look at it now I can see a little change

over the past two years, but when I think of my mum and how sheeven though my mother gave up education she was always – I remember her for example when she was watching the news in the evening she would talk a lot and she would say things and how she understands what is happening politically and her views were quite radical in many areas when I think of it now. For example she was perfectly aware of women's position in society. She never actually had a vocabulary to say it and she had no clue about the feminist movement in the 70s in England so she doesn't use this feminist vocabulary but the way that she was talking about it, the way that she as voicing her own concerns as a woman and it was amazing and she was, as well which is quite unusual being in Poland at that time she was very anti-Church, even though she was submitting to certain rules she was having this political agenda about the church and religious teachings which she was voiding a lot.

And then she absolutely loves history and she always would watch a history programme on TV and we had to watch because there was nothing else to do as well.

* So do you think that influenced you? Because I remember you saying on the first interview that one of the reasons you wanted to get away from Poland was because of the Catholic brainwashing. Do you think that your mother's attitude or opinions influenced you somehow?

F Yeah, I think. I think they did a lot and I didn't realise for a very, very long time how they actually did because my mum would say about these things at home but she would accept and meet society's expectations, so she would go once a year to go to confession because everyone was going, so she would send us to church, she never went on her own but she would send us there and she would – we all were baptised and she would send us to first communion and stuff like that, so she would meet what society expected, or the community in which she was living expected her to do but she still had her own views and she was voicing them.

I think my relationship with my mum has really changed over the last year as well and I really like talking to her about many things, because I think although she didn't finish education and although her vocabulary is not an academic vocabulary she very often talks about things and she doesn't even know that there was some philosopher who already went through this and this is called this way and she's talking about this because she learned that through her own experience and so I think yes, it's something I didn't recognise before but the way that my mum talks and the way that my mum is thinking about things and talking about them really did influence the way that I see things and the way that I can – I think that I always have a very big distance to everything that's happening in politics. I never believed what the newspaper said and I'm not falling for this precisely because my mum was the strongest critic, or any politics throughout all my childhood really.

* And does that make you conscious about how you interact with your children?

F Well, my children – well I'm politically really active and I define myself as a radical feminist by opinion and I do talk to my children about this and it's really funny because I have these fantastic conversations with my children – well it's hard to call it a conversation, we were in a park and I can't remember but [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were carrying something and they were having a siblings argument and this argument about "What are you looking at?" went in to calling each other

names and I was just observing them and watching what they're doing and they went through "Oh you're a silly head" and "You're a poo-poo head" and it just went worse and then of course [REDACTED] is older and she has much more of these names, so at some point [REDACTED] lost the argument and he didn't know what to say to her to make her really angry or really upset and he shouted at the to of his voice really, really angry "And you are not feminist!!" which he meant as the absolute worst insult and me and [REDACTED] burst out laughing because really it was so sweet but that showed me how much it affects them, how I see the world and the fact that I do talk about it and I do it in front of them and I take them for the Feminist Conference every year, so I take them with me and they stay in a crèche which is provided by pro=feminist men.

* Where is that?

F It's called Feminism in London and it's every year different places, so last October we went, this October I didn't go because it was just before leaving...two parents so I wasn't able to fit it in but I took them a couple of times and sometimes – I belong to the [REDACTED] Feminism [REDACTED] and they organise something called Feminars which is basically training for members to raise consciousness about many issues, but as well to give information which you don't get anywhere else and I do take the kids with me to the feminars whenever I can. There is a crèche provided so we can take them, but they usually stay with me on lectures and actually they stayed with me for a one and a half hour lecture about radical feminism and they were really interested and it was amazing because I thought they would go to the room next door where they can see me through the glass and play and do whatever, but they were actually sitting with me and listening and they were like "The lecture was actually really, really interesting" and as well-

* Do you consider that as part of their wider learning?

F Yes definitely. Definitely. I'm really pushing – I don't like the way that history is taught at school and I think that women are completely cut off from history and the schools still don't recognise that. The schools still don't know that they do this male history and the *only* thing about women in history is maybe the children will find out about the suffragette women and I initially said on the [REDACTED] Feminists [REDACTED] that I really want to do something about it and actually they started Women's History Month and over the months I withdrew from that so I don't do it actively but I still keep in touch with them. So the group and I think the website is going to be launched within the next few weeks and then the first women's history month is going to be celebrated this March. The website is there to provide – it is basically very similar to the LGBT community history month and to their website, so the idea is that there will be resources for everybody and people can do any event about history which ..in a calendar, there will be a calendar, so the idea is very similar but it's providing resources for teachers, providing lesson plans and stuff like that, so there is a group of women who really work hard for that couple of months –

* Have you been in contact with your children's school about it?

F I spoke to the head teacher about something else, I spoke about London Councillors pay for self defence courses for children and I can't remember now the name of the organisation who provides it and I asked the school if they could look in to it and they were like "Yes, yes, we can" and nothing happened and because I have had quite a hard time over the past couple of months I just withdrew from doing any activities that I don't have to at the moment, but that

doesn't mean I won't do them in the future. So the school, because I'm there all the time and because I'm really involved the school knows that ...for woman agenda but actually [REDACTED] is amazing. [REDACTED] is pushing for it at school, so she will show the teacher that this is a perspective the teachers pick this up and they really are very happy about this and this is something which I'm glad about, that when [REDACTED] will say "yes, but this is another perspective, this is what happened" they will actually not put her down and they will not say it's not true, it's "Oh yes, that's another interesting perspective" and this is really what I'm looking for.

* That's really interesting. When you talked in terms of the feminists and how women are taught in history I'm thinking about something you mentioned in the last interview about how you disliked the school books and I can't remember exactly what you said but I think that you – in the way that history was taught and the relationship with Russia and that for me Do you feel that that somehow links to the way that you feel women are taught in this country?

F Well I think history is written by whoever is in power, so whatever group is privilege in society then this group will write the history and as well there will be always this nationalistic in every country – you know, like a twist to every story that is said but I think that it's exactly the same in every country, that history is being felt from the point of view of men and so the white men will be there and the black history, well we have one month a year of black history but it's not really incorporated within the main stream. History is just there and it does give children a taste and awareness and this is really good but it's not good enough for me.

I think as well that in the same term about women – and I think it's a part of how the whole of society works and how it develops that the privilege voice is always heard in any area more than any other group and I think that's affecting everybody in every country. I don't believe that there is any other country where you don't have this mainstream agenda pushed on us, whether it's through movies or books or whatever, through books.

* And just thinking about – because you were saying you were so pleased about the teachers embracing [REDACTED] feminism and I remember you saying that there was one teacher in particular, a Polish teacher at school when you went to school and I think one of the things you said is she didn't judge you from what family background you were from. And how important is that, I mean maybe you could talk a bit about why that was important for you?

F I think that I learned the hard way that people will always use the information that you provide them with or that they have, against you. Unfortunately I think that the very moment that people around us and the people in a school, the parents, and the teachers as well find out that my children are going through a hard time and that they're parents are getting divorced and that there are issues and their attitude was there definitely. We had – this was really interesting for me to watch and ...would find it amusing, because this was not my child, but when I divorced my husband, when I finally left him I obtained an injunction order against him because he was abusive and of course because of how the process of leaving an abusive partner is there is always social services involved in the process and so when the social services become involved the first thing they do is they ask school whether there are any issues with the children and this all happened not this summer but the summer before so I was going through the process of obtaining an injunction and the police getting involved and social services just set the letters to school asking if there were any concerns about

the children and this is the moment when my son is starting school and I just moved in to the new flat which is completely empty and I literally put the boxes there and this is the day when there is a visit for [REDACTED] teacher and I have the choice, I can call them and say please do not come because I'm not ready, but I knew I would not be ready for months and months and so I thought well come and I'll tell you have just moved in.

So there was one teacher who came and he started to ask questions and I told him the school is not aware of all this, the school is aware that we got divorced and of course they are aware that there are enquiries from social services and so he comes to my house this teacher and [REDACTED] just went to bed and didn't want to talk to him and the teacher was saying "Oh come on" and [REDACTED] room was the only room that was done by the time that we moved in, it was the only room that I managed to finish off and his room was okay, so I actually invited the teacher to the one room I had done and he was very nice and he was asking about the circumstances and stuff like that and then [REDACTED] startednursery, and [REDACTED] needs time to get used to everything and his way of showing that there are changes in his life and he is not happy about this, he is getting very hyperactive and he is overall a very active boy but then when he startschanges in life he gets really – he will see me at the end of the day and he will just crash himself in to me "Mummy!" and this is the way that he will interact with others as well and because I've found that my children do need help with adjusting to new situations they were doing counselling and [REDACTED] counsellor was saying how well they were doing I saw how really they reacted positively to the changes to the routine and to their lives and I thought ...they were doing really fantastically and I knew as well that there were some difficulties with [REDACTED] and he was finding at the beginning difficult and he was getting irritated quickly and stuff like that but nothing that I would think should be a concern and as a matter of fact many people who know me and know [REDACTED] would be surprised that actually this is a child whose parents are going through a divorce, because he didn't show anything unusual for his age. He wasn't even showing the usual and typical signs of a child who goes through their parents divorce. He wasn't doing anything wrong.

Then we had a meeting with the teacher at the end of the term and the teachers attitude infuriated me. He said "how do you think [REDACTED] is doing?" and I said I think he's getting there, he's doing really okay, and this wasn't only my view it was the view of his counsellor and "Well I think he is going through a really hard time, he is a really angry boy who is very cross about things and he's this and he is that and I think you should look at what you're doing" and we were basically told off like children and I said – because he had two children, [REDACTED] had two teachers and this was one of them who was saying but he wasn't the key worker so this is parents evening and there are ten minuets and you don't want to discuss and the teacher then said these things and he then said "Okay, now our time is up" and I said okay, in that case I want to make an appointment for half an hour to see [REDACTED] key worker and to discuss all the issues you just brought up and I went to the meeting with [REDACTED] key worker and she was basically explaining "Oh no, no, no, it's not that bad, it's not this" and it was basically attitude which the guy acquired at the very beginning which prevented him from seeing who [REDACTED] really is and how he is doing fantastically well and I think because I'm going to the school and I was there every Wednesday and this Wednesday for parents and because [REDACTED] is a fantastic little boy and he is doing really well and he is really well behaved and he is doing really well, at the end of the school term the same teacher was "Oh no, no, no, he's doing so fantastically, so great, everything changed and he's so lovely" and I was like no

he didn't actually, he was exactly the same in December like it is now, but your attitude was there and because I was pushing and because I said I'm not going to leave it like that, I'm going to bring forward – and they that already, that I'm capable of going straight to the head teacher if there is any problem and I will keep up and push for my children.

* How did that make you feel in terms of the way that ...the teacher can come and visit you at home?

F I don't like it. To be honest I don't like how early years goals are set for school for the children. I don't like the idea of teaching a child and testing it straight away when the child is five and you have to do these 200 pieces of evidence every term or whatever and I think this very formal way of assessing children at such a young age actually prevents them from learning. I am really, really strongly opposing the early years development goals at the moment and because in this school there are loads of very well aware parents because the early years do have a very good co-ordinator and the school is managing this quite well and the children do have the possibility of exploring it. But I find this ridiculous how much pressure is put on the teacher to basically evidence that the child can write his or her name by this or that time. Come on, they're children and they learn at completely different – it's the complete opposite to what ... education is about and I'm getting really cross with their proposed changes. Yesterday was ...announced to education, it is honestly backwards. We're going really backwards in terms of if this will all be implemented then first of all centralised funding for schools is absolutely ridiculous. I absolutely hate the idea of academies and that a school which my daughter would probably go to, it's the second time when they do the round of consultations and actually the consultations I think are 6th of December and whether the school will become an academy or not and there is quite a big group of parents who opposed it and there was a way that the parents were not allowed to meet in the library. The meeting was in [REDACTED].... Because [REDACTED] Council refused the parents to meet on the premises on the basis that they oppose the policies in terms of academies.

* Yes, if we could talk a little bit more about that? So this is the secondary School that [REDACTED] might be going to?

F She will be going to. She goes in year 6 and she is in year 5 now.

* So she will start in September.

F Not this September, the last one. I didn't put the application in yet. I know she will get to this school because this is the only [REDACTED] school we're in the catchment area in and I have already checked, we are quite comfortably in the catchment area and because [REDACTED] has dyslexia there is really a likelihood that she will be put there. Well I would be very surprised if she did not get in to this school.

* Is this the school you want her to go to?

F I think that this is the school which has not only an outstanding Ofsted report but this school has a really good opinion amongst – for example [REDACTED] counsellor said it's quite a good school. She didn't say it's perfect, there are better schools, but this one is quite good and this is a school which has quite a strong lesbian and gay community, they're doing training for teachers, they're doing fantastic

after school clubs and after school care and they really have the attitude of bringing up all different communities and I know that there are some fantastic people at the school and I can't remember her name, she is very strongly involved in children being well aware of LGBT community issues and protecting the children who areexplore and I'm really happy about this and there are loads of feminists.

* How did you go about finding out information about the school?

F Well there are many different ways. The first of course if the Ofsted reports but what I do is I just talk to people about this, I talk to other parents and I'm asking "What do you think about the school?" but we just talk about issues andsubject and people tell me what ...there was quite a large number of children [REDACTED] age group who have their siblings in the school and I hear them talking and see how they interact and how they feel about the school, but as well of course I'm going to the school website and I'm following what is happening on the news and I'm following what other parents in this area think about the school and I like the idea that there is a very strong parent group who are actively involved in the school and they don't want it to be an academy and they strongly fight about this and I really like it.

* What is it about being an academy?

F Well I think academies reminds me a bit of this two tier system when we have better and not so good, okay. I really do think that this is the way that our government basically wants the schools to be and this as well reminds me very much of how the education works in Poland and this has changed because people recogniseit is dividing children in to two groups and you are doing well academically and you are doing well to have whatever skills and so on which will be then – you will be treated as a second class citizen because you do not have these academic potentials and so on, and I think that this is exactly what is happening and as well I don't like private businesses and huge corporations brainwashing my children. Basically that is what it would be about and I'm scared that in time it will get to the point when a school board can decide let's teacher children creationism because we're Christians and we want this to be so let's block this type of learning. I really don't believe that it gives children balanced views.

* And I was going to say so you would say it's more like your political stance, that you wouldn't want it to become an academy?

F It's not only that, but what does it mean that this school will be able to put aside the curriculum that other children are doing or that the state is. I don't understand how they want it to work, so if the school had a Christian sponsor then does it mean they will learn something different to children in different schools? I don't like this idea. I don't like the idea of dividing people in to these groups and then – of course there will be some groups stronger than the others and as well how that would affect teachers and how would that mean that there would be schools where all the good teachers will go to because they have better packages and this school eventually becomes a fantastic school and only the privilege will go? These are all questions I'm asking myself.

* I think that's very I don't know, maybe other parents would be thinking only of their children rather than the whole situation. What do you think makes you

feel you can be very open minded and see the whole picture rather than just thinking “Oh this would be good for my individual child”?

F I don't know. To be honest I think it's probably the communist brainwashing I got as a child! (laughter) But I do think in terms of communities and I do value community life and that's why I like ...even though there are issues with it and it is very much decided, at the better end of not so good, there are still quite strong communities which stand up together and do things and bring a positive change and I like it, and this feel of community life is very much here and that's why I like living here. And as well, I think when you're a person from a privileged background you very often don't see, from your point of view, how it is actually to fight for yourself and to get half what other people can get for not doing anything really and I think I didn't have a privileged background and I think I would have to always manage and I never ..in to the system for many reasons. One is my parents economic background, and I was a woman, which put me in to a disadvantage straight away, and then I came here and I'm an immigrant and any time I open my mouth “Where are you from?” “Poland” “Oh, are you a cleaner?” so this attitude is very much there and that's why – because of my background, the people that I interact with and the people that I am with and the people who are in the same situation, many of my friends are immigrants from different countries and somehow I find myself in this – well I think for some strange reason I am strongly against this authoritarian systems and I think that's to do with my upbringing and the fact that when I was a child and I was growing up in a period of political changes, and that means I'm not so easily influenced by newspapers for example. I read all the newspapers and I'm going to viewing all the newspapers every single day rather than reading one type of newspaper, I read them all and I found that I'm watching – depending on who is writing, the same issue can be presented in many different ways. But as well I think it's because of what I'm studying. I can connect many issues and I do not look at things in terms of a simple issue which has no connection to anything else.

I mean as well feminism is very much philosophy which incorporates all the possible philosophies together and I very often think that that is why feminists are so full of contradiction because it looks as so many things and it incorporates so many things at the same time and I do think that many women who do start to read feminist stories and feminists philosophers do look at things completely differently. They don't look at works any more as black and white, but it became more complex and you start to see all the connections and this is the way that I think and this is the way that I look at words.

* I think that's really interesting because you mentioned words like complexities and contradictions and I'm thinking in your sentence before you said you referred to your upbringing in communism and you almost referred to it as divided, so you said at one point that you take from it your sense of community and at the other side you don't like the system. How does that – maybe you could talk a little bit more about that?

F Well I do think that my views are a bit leftist and a bit socialist to some extent. But let's say I don't think that Marx meant for society to work the way that communists always really – so there is this huge difference between the ideology and how in practice that works and I do believe in community life and community being able – people having different attitudes and different views and negotiating and talking about this and achieving things through compromise and the diverse community is the best that can happen. It's not perfect, but it's the best way of doing things.

On the other hand I do understand that when you have community and social life you have to accommodate for that. This is the question for me as an individual, it's a question of compromise and how hard I will be – how far I would be prepared to compromise for a company to take aside my own personal interests and – you see this is the question that I feel everyone has to answer for themselves. When you ...of course you have to adjust yourself but how far you adjust and what you can do if you're not happy in the community and I believe we can change that. I'm one of the people who thinks that by getting us active and by voicing things you can actually shape things, which doesn't mean you can always control your thinking on other people and make them adjust, but by getting active you are voicing your concerns and thinking how things work, how they can work, how they can be improved and you're really doing your bit for yourself and for others.

* I'm just thinking now in terms of you're entering the secondary school process now and you've mentioned the reasons why you like the school is ...diverse community and I think you saidteachers there. What other things would you look for in a secondary school?

F Well I would like the school to be able to accommodate, or what's my wishful thinking, but to be able to accommodate for individual students. What I mean by that is that the students will be seen as individuals and learn differently, to have different ideas and the school will do it's best to give every student a voice and to give every student chances and this is what I really want from the school and as well it's quite important for me that the school will be able to communicate with the parents and it's quite important for me that the school will not be at the very bottom of their achievement sometimes of education, it doesn't have to be ...because I don't believe that league tables actually show exact – it all depends, there are so many factors involved in how the school will do in league tables. I would check them, I would follow them, and I would see how these levels came about but I would have distance to this so I would as well go to the teachers and see their attitude and see what type of students they actually have.

* I'm just thinking about, because you were very concerned with [REDACTED] firstbecause you felt because of the type of population they had there, the afro-Caribbean ...that they were too heavily disciplined. Is that important when you're looking now at the secondary school?

F I think one of the bad things about the school, and I know it is, their school has a problem with students behaviour outside of the school.

* This is the one you want to send her too?

F Yes, so at 2pm you have police officers on both sides of the road every single day and there were issues with drug dealing outside of the school and stuff like that and I know that there is a few kids who do show behaviours which were like that, but I believe it's part of learning and part of life to be able to – you know, life is not all rosy and there will be always people who will have difficult lives and people who will be anti-social and stuff like that and you have to learn to deal with it, you have to learn to live life really and I don't have – whereas some parents would say “I would never send my daughter/son to this school because of that” and I say actually I would because I want my daughter to be able to learn that while she's young and to learn how to deal with different types of behaviours and this school actually does accommodate those students well, so if there is

any bullying then the school can resort I would like my daughter to learn all that stuff as well.

So for me this school is very mixed and this is really good. It's mixed, I think, it is mixed in terms of different religious backgrounds, different ethnic backgrounds, different social backgrounds and economic backgrounds. You have children from very poor families and there are middle class children from this area aroundstreet which go to the school so I think that this is what's great about this school, this is what I would really look for in any school, rather than to be one community, whatever that is, whether it's white, middle class, or Black Caribbean, I would like to the community to be mixed.

* What do you think [REDACTED] will take from that?

F Well apart from not feeling an outsider I want her to see a different way of thinking and a different way of looking at things.

* I remember you saying that your ex-husband was very keen on private school and one of the issues was that you didn't want to be treated, or you felt that sometimes you were treated differently as being Polish and you didn't want your daughter to be treated like that. Do you think that if she goes to the school that you've chosen now that she will be more incorporated.

F Yes definitely, and I think that I'm against private education actually for many reasons. Most of them are political, and I wouldn't like to send my daughter to private school but if I would find the perfect private school which I know would accommodate for her needs then I still would have the feeling that she would still not fit in and she would be the outsider and she would always feel "I'm different".

I find this always difficult to explain, but there is a huge class division in England and I think that for anybody who comes from the continent it's like a shock to the system when you come to England. It's like "What?! It finished like a century ago". England is very much divided by classes and social backgrounds and I think that these days it has more to do with cultural attitudes rather than financial actually. Of course the finances will go there as well but it's mostly to do with attitudes, culture and the way of leading rather than economic. I think that from what I saw children that go to private schools do come from one particular community and from one particular class and [REDACTED] will never be that. She is not middle class, she is not – I don't know if I can describe my children in any class backgrounds really. She is foreign, she is different. So now she is living in a household with a single mother and there is no chance she will fit in and because of attitudes that I meet and see every day in England I don't believe she will be accepted as 'one of us'.

* What do you mean by accepted?

F This attitude I came across very often in England and this attitude still shocks me. One incident I had at the very beginning when [REDACTED] was very young and I wanted to go to work and we really had financial problems and I said really I can do cleaning work and I put out the leaflets and there was one lady who phoned me and we had a conversation and what was striking was the distance she was keeping to me and she was treating me as somebody who was a lower background and lower class, and one thing that she was saying was "And this is a green box because you know here in England we look after the environment and we segregate our rubbish" and I started to laugh and I said "Yeah I know,

because you have one of the lowest rates in Europe” and she as really offended, she thought it was an arrogant answer and she didn’t see how arrogant was her-

I do receive this attitude quite often and I do receive it from some of the parents in [REDACTED] school.

* What type of parents?

F There is a group of parents who really stick together and most of them are professionals. I would describe them as middle class and they are very nice like saying hello when they have to, but when they can avoid saying hello they will avoid saying hello. So there is this very much attitude – not all of them, not all of the parents are like that but I found there is more in [REDACTED] class than in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] class is much more diverse than [REDACTED] is.

...to interact completely differently. In [REDACTED] class I did receive very hostile attitudes from some of the friends, like you are not on the same level so if I have to say ...this is still the attitude that I'm receiving from some parents in [REDACTED] class. There is one particular couple which basically you can see that nobody will say it straight in to your face, but from the situation you of course know exactly what they mean.

* And ...

F Well most of the time. I think everywhere in the world you have always groups of people who feel better than others and you think that because they're this and that they're better and others are worse and I think that there is nothing you can do about it and I don't think that there is anything I would worry about, unless it would really, really affect my children or my opportunities.

If I was to go for a job interview and I would really feel I was being treated this way I would get really cross, as long as it doesn't happen or at least I don't feel it then it doesn't worry me. This is the fact of society and I won't change everything but I can of course do my best to make sure that my children are aware of it.

* And does this affect [REDACTED] friendships?

F Yes, very much it does affect [REDACTED] friendship groups. She had problems in the school when her friendship with her best friend broke and then the children are divided in to groups which all ..together and once her group broke and her friendships broke then she had nobody else to play with because she felt that she is not invited in to certain groups but this is really funny – there are a group of girls who are very much a middle class background and you can see professional parents all wearing converse and skinny jeans and wearing the clothes from certain shops and stuff like that and [REDACTED] is really looking up to them and she really wants to be part of the group and we had – I had a long discussion with [REDACTED] about acquiring certain accessories, so in this school to which [REDACTED] is going, it is very much a middle class school and in every school the children have like the thing that all the children want to have, so in [REDACTED] school things happen to be a bit more expensive than the neighbouring William Barton (?) School. So in [REDACTED] school the children buy Build-a-Bear and they go to the Build-a-Bear workshop which is an extremely expensive bear with all the accessories and so on. I love them, but you can buy the same bears really anywhere else and this is that the children at [REDACTED] school, all of them have it.

So of course [REDACTED] has to have it as well and now I'm spending loads of money on accessories because she has to be part of the group and if she is not doing this she is outside of the classroom and outside of the group, and I think that there are loads of things that play outside of ...she doesn't watch X-Factor and she has no clue what it is and she is like "Mum, what is X-Factor, everybody is talking about it and I don't know anything about it" and stuff like that.

* Why don't you have TV?

F Because I find TV a waste of time and money really. Although I think the kids really push me for it, not for the reason that they want to watch TV, but for the reason that they need TV to be able to socialise with their peer group and I am really seriously considering whether I should buy a TV and buy a TV licence and let them watch some of the things. The other thing is we don't have time to watch it anyway.

* You said if you didn't buy all these accessories she would be outside of the group, so is she being accepted now?

F To some extent. I think at this stage there will be always other factors. Children will be very much looking at other children through their parents eyes but there will be other factors as well and because they are children they will like each other. [REDACTED] personality makes people think that she's making everybody laugh, so even though she's not necessarily within the group she is still liked and accepted as a member of class which the class overall likes and I think these accessories do help her to socialise and I do accommodate for that and I do invite girls for sleepovers and I do spend loads of money on birthday parties, even though I find them ridiculous, to make sure that she has this connection with peers and now as the kids are growing the accessories are changing and it's not only Build-a-Bear now, the last time it was sleepover bags from Paperchain and of course it has to be Paperchain, the one on [REDACTED], so I had to buy her this huge bag because she really feels not good about herself when she doesn't get it but the way that I do this is I don't accommodate her completely so I will talk about why she wants this bag, what she things will influence her decision and I will show her different ones and compare the prices with her and I will make her save for the bag to a certain extent, or she will work for it rather than just have it, so she will see the value of the things that she is acquiring and she will be able to have this kind of distance towards it and I really hope it will start to bring results any time soon because I'll go bankrupt otherwise.

* And you said when you came to England it was a very class divided society but do you see any differences between here and Poland?

F Yes, it's a huge difference. An enormous difference and from what I speak with other people, coming from other countries, I think that most of them have exactly the same feelings and I think that the class system in terms of we have working class, middle class and upper class and, you know, it was really – well it was abolished really in Poland because of the community system but it doesn't mean that there was no other classes or no other class provision – I think that in Poland it was more that we had the group of doctors, there are doctors and lawyers and miners and teachers and there are farmers and there is the intelligentsia I suppose so there will be these divisions and people will stick within these groups. The difference is that each of these groups would think they are more important than the others and would try to obtain as many privileges for themselves as possible and people from these different groups would be leading a very similar

lifestyle, so the teachers would live in exactly the same flats as the miners and they would show each other that you're miners, you are teachers, but they would basically lead exactly the same way of life because there is no other thing. After the system changed the class system changed a little bit as well so from what I see now it's more to do with – on the one hand it's how much money do you have, but as well there is this huge prejudice against these people have the money but they are actually not middle class because they don't have an educational background of the middle class, so it's – I think it's really messy at the moment because it's still very fresh after the change happened in 1989 and I think it's going to take years to actually see exactly what is happening, but it's different.

* Because it's quite interesting that you mention culture quite a bit, so it's not just about the economic world, it's about education and culture, and do you think that has influenced perhaps your decision to go to university or how you interact with your children in terms of education?

F What do you mean?

* Well kind of you know the importance of education in terms of class. Do you think that has influenced your decision to go to university?

F I think that university, on a practical level, opens new ways to different employment. It gives you chances to access basically certain employment, however it as well, there are limits to what university can do in terms of how far you can go and I think it's very important which university you're doing, what type of degree you are getting, what your subject is as well, so I am aware of limits, of training in higher education, but I do think that getting university opened ...for me I wanted to do university that I can remember, for many reasons. For me university is very pleasurable, I really love learning and for me this is mainly something that I really enjoy and I really like but as well I am perfectly aware that without English qualifications there is no chance. When I started training with CAB, the feedback I was getting is like "Your skills are amazing, you are really good, you are actually doing really, really well. You are at the beginning of your training and you could be finishing it" and I said I know that, but I couldn't show it on my CV and therefore there is no way that I would ever get the job. But that training shows a little bit of my attitude towards the formal qualifications you have. The training is supposed to be lasting for 18 months and it's supposed to be finishing with a certificate and a title of ...advisor, but in order to get the certificate you have to submit records of learning as you go along, and even though I've done this training for the very purpose of obtaining this piece of paper as I was going along I love the job and it's the really right kind of job for me and I absolutely enjoy it and it's something I really like and of course instead of doing records of learning I would be really spending loads of time with clients and pushing my manager to give me additional interviews and I think that I'm the only volunteer that didn't get a certificate yet who actually was representing clients in the tribunals because I really wanted to do it and when I found a client, or when a client came across who really needed representation I just went to my manager and I said "I'm going to tribunal and you will not stop me" so this is my attitude. So even though I started this as a fast track way of getting the certificate, I still how don't have the certificate because I enjoy work and I can't be bothered with that really. I found this difficult to make myself to sit down and get a ...to the work I'm doing and focus on obtaining the qualifications so I can move to paid employment.

* And you said it's just instilled in to children to get in to university – apart from qualifications what other benefits do you think that would give them?

F Well I think that university does open your way of thinking and I think that the fantastic thing about the university that I'm doing is that the people there are very diverse and because as well we're doing social sciences of course, so talking about, I love ...anything really, I love to see how people from different backgrounds, from different cultures, completely differently look at problems. Completely showing a different attitude. I think that university gives a fantastic opportunity for you to really see many different points of view and as well of course university teaches critical thinking about anything, and I don't think that yougo to university and any education up to the point of university is about acquiring facts and then presenting them, while at university level you have for the first time, there are ...and you have to look at ..sites and you have to question it really hard, and I think that this is what university gives.

* That's interesting, because you think of university for your children in terms of opening up their minds and I'm thinking about trying to put the relationship between you and your parents, and you and your childrenware there differences between the career aspirations that your parents had for you and the educational aspirations that you have for your children?

F I think yes. My parents really wanted me to finish university and finding a job and then they, as well, expected me to be realistic enough to know that because of my background and who I am and where I come from that there was a limit to what I could do and they really felt that finish university, have your Masters in your hand and then go and look for work as a receptionist somewhere so you can get a steady income and then you will have a husband and family. Then your husband will change your life. He will rescue you.

I think that this is very much the way that my parents were looking at it, but as well I think, because my dad didn't do education, he didn't finish, I think that he got A-levels but never went to university and he was very bright and he was pushed on by teachers and ... like he never ...it was as though ...my children will do one step further. Funnily enough he has four children and both of my sisters have masters, my brother has A-Levels and I'm in the process of and I think that on one level this is important for me as well that my daughter and my son have formal qualifications in order to help them in the market, the world market, but as well it will give them the social circle and I think that the majority of people find their friends for life at the university and it will open their ways of thinking and to open their possibilities and whatever they will decide, I don't know, to spend their life in Africa or go to India or come back to Poland it is their choice, but I want them to have this choice. I don't want them to be unhappy forever and think "Well my life is work/home/work/home and I do not get any personal satisfaction about that".

* And I just wanted to ask you a bit about what [REDACTED] does out of school. I think last time I met you you said she was playing the violin, is she still doing that?

F No.

* What happened?

F [REDACTED] statedreally enjoyed it and she quit, she really didn't want to do it, then she started violin, she was really pushing, she was doing it and enjoying it and

then she said she doesn't want to do it and it became basically me pushing her to do violin, which I don't think she has the talent to be worth fighting. So I said it's your decision and then of course she quit. Then she started the netball and she loved it for the first year and this year she decided to quit, so my attitude is as long as she's trying out different things and enjoying it then I'm fine about it. I don't think I'll be pushing. I think that she is trying to find out what she's enjoying and what she's really interested in and I don't mind. I know that (husband) has a different attitude – he expected me to push for her to do activities and I'm not bothered. I don't think that it's something I would fight for as long as she keeps an interested in doing loads of things and she will try again and it will give her the ability to do anything, you know. There are amazing after school clubs, they don't cost much and the schoolpaying something towards the cost so the parents don't have to pay.

* What does she do in the after school clubs?

F This term she was doing netball, which she quit halfway through the – she plans to do after the Christmas break there will be a new start, new clubs, she wants to do scrap art again, she wants to do art again. She is doing quite a lot of art at home and this is something that she really likes and enjoys. I want her to do – I signed her for girl guides and I wanted her to start doing it but the trouble is it's really difficult getting to the girl guides because there isn't enough – there is one group which meets on Mondays and she can't do Mondays. There were places available in that group but [REDACTED] cannot do Mondays and thenduring the days, she is on a waiting list for the past three months and I didn't know it was such a long waiting list. I don't want Olga to do scouts, I want her to do girl guides, because I want her to be in a girl's environment and I want her to be able to enjoy herself a girl and I really like what girl guides is doing and I want her to have loads of strong female role models and I think that this is what girl guides will give her. I'm thinking about [REDACTED], he can do scouts next year and for him I want him to do scouts and I think that scouts are going to be right for him.

* Would that be English Scouts? I know in [REDACTED] there's a Polish Scout Association.

F English.

* Why?

F First of all [REDACTED] doesn't speak Polish yet. It is much more difficult – [REDACTED] does speak Polish and she can communicate on a basic level and she understands very well and it's much more difficult to teach [REDACTED] Polish. First of all because we communicate in English at home and he communicates in English with [REDACTED] and I think when [REDACTED] was younger she had me and her dad communicating in Polish as well and when [REDACTED] was the same age we barely communicated at all and if we did it was ...Polish, it was such a mix up of languages that he didn't have the same contact with the Polish language, so my goal is for both of them to have at least two additional languages to English, on a basic level, by the time they're adults so that they can go and learn more or they can decide what to do with it.

* And did they go to Polish School?

F [REDACTED] initially, we signed her to Polish school and we quit because the school is teaching Polish as a first language and how much work they were doing, within

a couple of hours she had homework, like I wouldn't be able to do this homework quickly, and it was very much this old style education. [REDACTED] was able to unable to understand metaphors and poetry, because her language is not at that level, there is only one Polish school that teachers children Polish as a second language and this school is too far away, it has a long waiting list, there is no way we could get there so I decided to quit it and I want to try with [REDACTED] – I'm trying something different. I decided to go to Poland more often and my contacts with my family became very much better once I divorced, much more close. We spent a week in Poland in the last half term and the children absolutely loved it and what's interesting is that [REDACTED] didn't want to go back to England, she said we're coming to pick our cards and we're moving in to Poland and she was really upset that we're going back to England which was very interesting. [REDACTED] was not so keen, he was like "Mum I want to go back home now" which just shows how they both feel about it. [REDACTED] doesn't think about Poland in terms of – you know, my family lives there but actually who cares.

* I remember you saying that when [REDACTED] was younger she used to say "my mum and dad are from Poland but I'm from England". How does she see herself now?

F She says she is Polish. She says Poland is this imaginary fairy land so she goes for holidays there and she is absolutely spoiled by grandpa and she absolutely loves him and in her mind Poland is this fantastic place where everyone is so lovely to you and she always comes back from holiday saying "Why in London are all the streets so dirty, there are dogs everywhere and rubbish on the streets?" and ... but I think for her it's just holidays that are fantastic and she dreams about it as well and this place is really important and there is family there and they both actually, when I took them to my family ...my sisters, my brothers, ...cousins and we spend fantastic weekends and they felt that they belonged somewhere and this was the first time because I don't have family here, this is an issue. They felt like they don't have extended family and then once we went there actually [REDACTED] said "Ah, I have a grandpa?" and it's "Of course you do" and he doesn't feel that, because they're so far. So my idea is to go to Poland more often for shorter visits, to go for weekends, just to take a flight here and there just to see granny and help my parents so they can come for various short visits but more often as well.

* Do you have plans to go back to Poland?

F No.

* I'm thinking in terms of you say for [REDACTED] it's like a holiday, it's a fairyland. Do you think that she would feel differently if she lived there and went to school there?

F [REDACTED] had a very interesting experience with Polish schools. My niece is going to exactly the same primary school as I was going to, it's a huge school and when I say huge it's huge huge and when I was going there it was a couple of thousand kids in one school and it's not so big anymore and there are many different schools. The education system changed a lot, but it's still very similar. I think it was two years ago when she stayed with my mum on the day when my niece started school because schools started 1st September and she was coming back I think 4th September and my niece really insisted of [REDACTED] going to her school and spending the first day in school, it is actually very formal, it is just one ...and a teacher presents the lesson plans for the next year and things like

that and my mum asked the teacher and the teacher agreed and [REDACTED] was there and she took part in the opening assembly and she absolutely hated it!

She felt overwhelmed by the number of children, by the formality of it, the opening assembly the children have to be in a special uniform and there is officialchildren and loads of talking and you have to stand and listen for a really long time and it looks completely different ...in the English school when she will sit on the carpet and watch other children doing ...performance and everyone cheering and clapping. It is really a very formal way of starting their school year. Then you go this class where you have a table where children sit in pairs and they can't talk, they have to just sit down and do their work and even though it's the first day and it's less formal than the rest of the day she was still overwhelmed. She said how could you go to this school mum, there are so many children, the noise ...the teachers are very strict, they yell at kids all the time and they are very strict with the children and she was terrified. I think that she would die if I sent her to Polish school now. I think she would. That was really the day whendon't have that much pressure on them and they don't have a lot of work and she was allowed to go to the classroom because it was this ...formal day and she still found it really difficult to ...I don't think that she would adjust to the Polish education system whatsoever. Not at the moment. I think she would have difficulty.

*

I think that covers everything I wanted to ask so thank you. (end of recording)

Appendix 7: Example of a Nottingham Interview Transcript

* So basically if you start telling me your age and where you're living in Nottingham?

F I'm [REDACTED] years old and I live in [REDACTED] Nottingham.

* And do you own your house?

F Yes, we do own our house.

* And can you tell me about who else lives in your household?

F It's my husband, myself, and our daughter.

* And I remember you saying that your husband is English?

F He is English, and he is a secondary school teacher, an English teacher.

* And how about your profession?

F I'm a teaching assistant in a primary school, in an inner-city school in Nottingham.

* Maybe you could tell me now, going back to your life in Poland, if I can ask you about your childhood, where you were born in Poland?

F I was born in a small village, about [REDACTED], my parents had a very small farm – my father was working as a professional and my mother was a housewife, looking after the smallholding, our little farm. We are probably almost sustainable in the sense of food. I finished the primary school there in the village, and then went to the secondary school at the age of 14 to the bigger city which is called [REDACTED], which is the [REDACTED] city in Poland now. After the secondary school my mother died earlier so I spent 2 years at home working in the village library and then working as a youth worker part time as a librarian and youth worker in the area that I lived. That's how the contact with English started. I started as well the English course at that time and then we had an exchange with a fantastic group from [REDACTED] – we still keep in touch with these people, and we went with the youth group to [REDACTED] and when we came back I still worked in the library for the youth organisation, but I also started doing a more intensive English course.

In the 1980s, after the uprising and the Solidarity, Russian was no more a compulsory uprising in Poland and we started or I started college of foreign languages and I started studying English to become a teacher, so I did my B.Ed there, but I moved then from our family home. I moved to [REDACTED] which is [REDACTED] of Poland because my sister lived there and I did my university degree in [REDACTED] and automatically I started working in the primary and secondary school teaching English in [REDACTED] and I also worked on a private evening course in a private school where I met my husband who came to teach – he came for first certificate and proficiency exams as a native speaker. He lives in Poland for two years and we got married after a year and a half, and then he decided to go back to England because of getting worried about being away from the country about

so long and about his prospects of being able to be employed or get the pension – just to renew that. We came back to England with plans to travel more and to teach English abroad – probably somewhere in Asia, we are both very interested in China and that part of the world. But after a year and a half our daughter was born and we settled and we still plan to go somewhere.

So I was doing odd jobs for the first year, so cleaning or whatever I was able just to earn some money and I have always been working so I found it very difficult to be stuck at home and I did quite a lot of voluntary work in the primary schools, in [REDACTED] where I live. From these contacts I got some job in the out of school club, and then I did NNEB, which is nursery nursing, enabling me to go back to schools, because that is what I always did and I want to do that, because at that time my degree was not transferable by no means. It is only in 2004 when Poland joined the European Community that you could apply, which I did apply, but I worked in my job now – after NNEB I applied for a job in a primary school and I got the job and I'm happy with what I'm doing and Ian is so busy with his work and homework, working as an English teacher, that it's good to have a second person to do the other things.

* And what was his parents background?

F Actually that's very interesting, because his grandparents came here before the second world war from Poland, they were Jews. They settled in London and that was the roots, so when my husband went to Poland it was completely accidental but then he found out, his mum said actually there are some roots. He even tried to find them but it was very difficult because their records, you know, the war was there, so they are his roots but he was brought up in London. He was born in [REDACTED] and then lived in the [REDACTED] and then he travelled, he was teaching English abroad as well with his first wife in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for quite a few years. When he came back from Poland he did he is PGCE because he only had a degree in teaching English as a second language, as a TEFL, so then he did his PGCE to teach English in the school system.

* So is he Jewish?

F He is not actually, because his mum married, you know, he probably is because his mum married a Scottish guy-

* Okay, but not religious.

F No, and then they are bringing – mum completely cut herself off any Jewish religion because there were three sisters and one brother and the brother got everything, all the family inheritance, and the sisters were left with nothing. So mum never knew where the sisters were, they left home and then they never wanted to know anything about the family, which is quite sad. Mum dad when she was 83 and there were two other sisters somewhere in the world and they never let anybody know where they were, and mum didn't want to go back.

* And did his parents go to university?

F No.

* So he was first generation to go?

- F Yes.
- * What about your parents?
- F No, it was probably simple, some sort of equivalent of the primary vocational school. In my village there was hardly anybody really who really went anywhere, from the village, to really move.
- * What do you think made you go to university?
- F I think that it's the influence of my parents. You know it's a funny thing but my mother's sister, during the second world war, was working in Germany. Loads of the people were taken from Poland to be a workforce in Germany during the war and then after the second world war she had a chance to go back to the Polish country, which was already taken by Russian or the allies were taken to the West, and she chose West. She got married and she went to America. So we always had contact with America, in as much as you could during the socialist time, but we always had clothes sent, so we were a little bit – I don't know, maybe the world was a little bigger for us than it was for the loads of people. It's not that you're more clever but you had maybe more desire or you had more knowledge that there was more out there and you were not scared maybe to go for it. That is the only thing, that you were probably more adventurous because even through the cards sent to us and clothes and sometimes magazines we could only flick through, but you could see there is something different out there and that is not the end and you have to do what you do. Never consciously – we were never pushed to do that, and dad was working, so maybe we had a little bit more money than people who had only very small farms and the priorities were different and we were not maybe kind of ...the farm, that everything has to go back so you can have more next year. We still could buy ourselves clothes and we still went to the concerts of theatre. That was different.
- * Did your parents sell the clothes at all? The stuff they got from America?
- F No, there never was enough for that. You might have one or two parcels, because she had daughters so everything that they wore she would pack it up and you would get a parcel maybe once or twice a year and you always had a couple of clothes which were different and mum, because mum was the same age, two years different with her sister, so I think that gave us this edge. You know, the lipstick sometimes on.
- * Do you think that people might have treated you differently?
- F Hmm, maybe more because of dad's work, he was supplying food to local shops so if someone had a wedding or someone had a christening, they would always say "We would like. Would you mind?" because people had no cars or anything. It's not even – it simply was like a neighbour would do a favour to a neighbour, otherwise you would have to have a bicycle, or maybe someone had ...but not everyone, so he would drop them whatever they needed on the way when he was delivering to the shops and then gave the shop the money, but he never had anything out of it.
- * You know about, because obviously people have told me about the bribery system that operated during communism-

- F Very much so. That is how it works probably nowadays still, if you go to hospital or anywhere, you know, every country I think has got their own system – sometimes when you look at South America you think how can they ever function with that mañana system but they do and it still functions like that. Bribery was, if dad wanted more things for the shops in this area he had to bribe someone from the big store so he could get people whatever – oranges for Christmas, because there was only one shop for the whole country, so if he had – and it never was a bribery because we never made any money, we never had any more than people did around and everyone was on one more or less level but people did help each other in this sense.
- * And how do you think – because you said it operates in all countries but how do you see it in Britain? Do you see it going on in Britain?
- F I think it's going on a higher level fortunately than yesterday, have I got news for you, you know, you think he has got some deals with whatever he has, [REDACTED], who was that, with one of the countries, whatever, there was American – they do it. I think that the system is very fair on our level, this average working class person sort of level.
- * Is that how you would define yourself? You said working class, would you define yourself as working class?
- F Yes, definitely.
- * And I mean what do you think is the difference between working class and a middle class person?
- F Yes, maybe I am between the middle class and working class, because even the place I'm living in, [REDACTED] is a middle class part of Nottingham, because you've been on the schools which are – and people want to live there because their children will go there, we live there by accident, my husband had the house there before we moved in, so yes. I love working. I've got my allotment, we are self sufficient almost. We work very hard – I work here every morning and I do think that it's from Poland, you shouldn't be idle, you should always have something to do. Take something when you go upstairs so you don't go empty handed. It's a silly thing, but that's from home I think. So I work for my living. But maybe middle because of the friends that we've got as well, there are loads of families where the life doesn't have to work because the husbands have got very good jobs, so although we have groups with the allotments, we've got shared garden groups, but loads of these ladies work two days a week or maybe don't work at all but they've got maybe young children as well and it will change when children go to school. Maybe they will want to them take up some sort of work just to-
- * And I'm just thinking about how you said on your kind of level, if there is more equal – and you mentioned that you live in a quite good area, so the schools are good. I mean how do you think-
- F But I work in [REDACTED]
- * You work in an inner-city school.
- F And I love working there, because I think it's very easy to organise groups in [REDACTED] with ladies who don't work and it's very difficult to organise it in

██████████ where the third generation of children has never worked. In our nursery, when we did help in the community topic, we organised a home corner as a home and in the morning you make breakfast because you go to work and then suddenly it clicked, who actually from these children goes to work in the morning, the parents, and then you think “oh, that's a little bit different”, and you try to educate them about it but if they've never seen it, and they don't know it, then it maybe that the fourth generation won't work either. It's not that they can't and maybe it's not that they wouldn't like to, but so I do loads of community work as well in ██████████, taking part in the ██████████ community group and we've got community gardens there and I send the children there and I take them – doing loads of community work there, and it's easier in ██████████ I always think.

* And would you be happy to send your child to an inner-city school?

F Not mine, probably. No. It's so unfair isn't it, I always think about that. Because I live in ██████████ I can have the best of both worlds and it's hypocritical probably but the catchment area is there so I've got an excuse. But I would prefer her to go somewhere else, because I think if you've got 80-90% of the children – simply the world is so much smaller, it is very hard, suddenly, for this 10% to achieve more but I believe in mixture, I believe in mixture. We used to, our school now, because we had this amalgamation in ██████████ four or five years ago, and our school got amalgamated so the building has taken over because it's very close to the river and the river is the boundary between South and North and we got loads of children from the South, from ██████████ and that was a perfect arrangement for me, there was half and half probably in the nursery and we had the mothers who were not working and coming from ██████████ and you had these ones who were not working and coming from the ██████████ and there was a little bit of competition but I think that's just healthy and that worked and I can see, but if you've got this ██████████ area where they are – you know, not that I mind the child going to the school but they are like selected already by the economical situation that they are – that she ...better, but there was nothing to aspire to, to even compare yourself to. Because our lifestyle is different; we go abroad for example, which is Poland, but these children had never been out of Nottingham and they haven't seen anything, so it's not what you know, it's what you've experienced really, more than anything.

* Is there any way that you try to give your child or daughter some type of social mixture?

F There is no doubt about it. All the nursery friends, because she went with me to the nursery, because in ██████████ you have no nurseries, because you have to pay for them and so at that time you could bring your child to our ██████████ nursery. There is about five friends who live in ██████████ and we are very best friends and ██████████ still is, although they are in different schools they still go with us camping, two of them. One of them is of Russian original, ██████████ and ...moved to ██████████, so there is still a mixture of that because there is always a mixture of people everywhere but we made friends at that time and we still are, so we still keep friends with them.

* So you would say that her friends come from a variety of social classes?

F Yes. Or, you know, you can think about friends she has got in Polish school now – most of these people are physical workers, working class, because they came three years ago, they haven't established maybe themselves and so they took whatever they could and they will make their way up because they are ambitious.

We have got very good friends so there is a cross section and I think that me working in [REDACTED] and having Polish roots, and that is what gave her --- and then she has got her friends from her school who are all people with swimming pools in their houses, you know, that is the mixture. As I said, that's healthy.

* How about the ethnic mixture.

F You mean not only Polish but different ethnicity? Yes, yes, I do because I think being – I call myself a foreigner, but being from a different country, sometimes it opens the door to parents who are from different countries because I speak with an accent and they speak with an accent and ... we can understand each other, because we are both in this country. So a lot of Indian, our teacher friends are still Indian, so Indian. Maybe not that many afro-Caribbean, yeah, maybe there is one couple who is probably but yes, there is a mixture, definitely. I very much love the fact, comparing it to Poland, that your child can go to the park when she was little and she can play with four or five different nationalities in a sandpit and I think that is lovely and we were even saying the other day driving across, you know, the big group of all black people going, and I thought "Oh gosh, what a lovely place to live that you-" I would have living somewhere like in Africa, we are always talking about South Africa, that you can feel this barrier, that would be terrible, so that is a big bonus. I always think that I am different, so I want to be accepted so I want to have people to be accepted as well.

* How about your daughter, what is her identity?

F She would say half Polish. Half English, or maybe she would say less than half Polish because she has got a little bit of Jewish there probably as well. It was difficult at the beginning to send her to Polish school. I remember [REDACTED], the head teacher who was head teacher at that time, when I was teaching in Polish school as well, I was teaching for about seven years and then there was so much with the full time work as well in the school but we had to come with her to school as well because she didn't want to come, it was such an ordeal when she was 6, 7, 8, it was very hard. So we said we will come and sit with you and so my husband was coming. I think it was difficult because I was going to a different class and teaching and she wanted to stay with mummy but then we were going to Poland a couple of times and my old university friends still organise loads of camps and adventure holidays – mainly because of lack of money but because we have always had – you can call it now probably extreme sports where we go skiing in the places where there was like one ski lift and at the beginning it was because we had no money but we still do these things, we went horse riding with them somewhere in the Polish mountains and [REDACTED], who rides horses, we went with the group and she was then about 8 years old and we went with the group of teenagers, all mixture, my nephew was there as well and the conditions were spartan, I have to say, all the kids had one room and all the grown ups had another room, so – but she absolutely loved it. She was 8, she was with my friend's daughter, they were the youngest. The rest were 14,15,16, and the Polish kids are a little bit different – they are more sort of sisterly/brotherly about the youngsters. I think it comes from home, 'I take responsibility, they bother me but I have to look after them', and they were the best holidays that she's had and from that time Poland was cool because she was painting nails with these girls and the boys were carrying her on their back and the other girl and they were looking after them and she could listen to their conversations and she was a part of the group, so from them on Polish has never been a problem. Polish was always the popular thing, becausethen we went with then canoeing down the National Parks in awful, terrible conditions which just bonds people together.

- * Does your daughter have any hobbies now?
- F Yes, we love skiing, we go skiing every spring. We didn't go last year because we always go Easter and it's a little bit – it was later last year but we do it every year and we love it. She does the horse riding, not as often as she would like to, and drama is her love. She is going to be an actress! I shouldn't be laughing, she will tell me off for that, but she is. She is very keen on it. She is good on the stage. I am the most critical person and she is very good.
- * Does the school you are at now-
- F The school does very little towards that, but she goes to a separate group which is a drama group. She does cheerleading, like the girls her age probably, all of them do these things. So there is loads to do, plus the Saturday morning in Polish school. She has a very busy life.
- * How about her homework?
- F She is very good now. There used to be a time where I had to sit with her every evening when she was a young child, me or daddy, but I think for the last year or two she knows what she needs to do and we trust her and never have to worry about it. She will come, and she is very good, she will come to us for help if she needs to, but she is very good. She never ...school, she is very good socially but that is the most important thing when we go to parents evenings, we are interested in her results because we want her to do well, it is good for her and she feels good about it, but she is always praised for being a good friend. So that is the priority for us as parents. We know what she is like -
- * Do you feel that having qualifications here are important? You're quite qualified yourself.
- F Maybe. On the one hand yes, but on the other hand although I showed my head teacher my qualifications you will never do anything about it, because why shouldn't he have me for the money that he pays me when he doesn't have to change that, so of course you will employ all these people for as little as possible, so that is for your business, so that is not where there's an English person and a Polish person and they've got the same qualification – you will always-
- * I'm thinking in terms of your daughter, how important is it for your daughter to get so many GCSEs and A-Levels-
- F As important as it is for her, I hope it is important for her because she wants to study, she wants to go to RADA, if she wants to go to RADA or wherever she wants to go. She knows that. That is a lovely thing because you can just leave it to her now. You know ...
- * So she knows what qualifications that she needs.
- F Yes. She already talks about what GCSEs she wants to do and if she wants to do them she wants to do languages, she is good at languages, she wants to do her English, she wants to do her drama, she likes her RE. So she thinks in these terms about her GCSEs, which is early but she already does-
- * Does she have any private tuition?

F No. No, she used to have some help in year 6 with maths. She is very good now. I think when we were worries someone said she has simply not clicked. You know how it is with children, you think “Why can’t they get it? It’s so simple”, because they haven’t clicked yet, and never again. Not needed help. My husband is helping her with her English -re-write it, that is not the right way, because we have got ...as well so we just do, you know, I don’t think so. I think that we will do it with two or three, ... the thing is when she was worried about maths she was worried because she couldn’t understand that and I think I don’t want you to worry about things like that, you know, I want you to get on a confident level and then you will do whatever you can.

* What kind of secondary school does your husband teach in?

F He is teaching in a middle school – in [REDACTED] the system for the middle schools operate, so it’s 11-14, although next year they’re going to 16 and they are an academy, as it is. So he is teaching 11-14.

* If you can tell me a bit now about, if you can remember, how you chose your secondary school for your daughter?

F That is a feeder school from the primary school. You just go straight away because it’s a Catholic school, it just goes automatically. It’s a good school. So I know of course you have maybe wanted to change it fairly recently and you want to go ... we would have applied for a different school but there was no question – all her friends were going there and she was happy to go there so there was no, we were spared this worry about choosing a school, it was just automatically very smoothly-

* Did you check the Ofsted records, or-

F We knew that this was one of the – we always knew that the [REDACTED] is one of the best schools.

* How did you know that?

F Because from the primary school you already know. It was such a tight, you know, the exchange and the co-operation between the primary school and secondary school, you are sort of indoctrinated already from an early age.

* Why did you originally choose a Catholic primary school?

F First of all it’s our area, it’s very close to where we live. And secondary makes sense going there, the children who lives wherever they lived, they all went to the school but we lived close. Friends were there so that’s why.

* And do you go to church?

F Not that often, I have to say. Not that often, not as often as – no it probably is as often as I would like to. No, I am not practicing that much.

* Would you like to go more?

F Hmm, maybe not yet. I haven’t got the desire. Maybe when I get older, maybe then it comes -can do so much and maybe it’s an excuse but working every day of the week and then coming here every Saturday and if I was supposed to

go to church every Sunday, you know, this is a subconscious thing, we want to have a life as well. Our life is things that we do together, we love doing things together so although I do loads of community work we have to pray in the allotment.

* And so is there any other way that your life, apart from going to church, that you practice being a Catholic?

F No. My family never was like this in Poland. We sort of – all of us did go to church but maybe not every Sunday and some people, the importance of church and it governs their life, but maybe not for us.

* What do you think the difference is between you and the people?

F For example they do go to church every single Sunday and that's what they believe but I never did. I never did, so that didn't change for me that much but people are – I don't know why they do it but I'm thinking because there were so many other Polish people and I know that ...Polish people, most of my friends are English, more than – because I have been here maybe longer and my English was good when I came and I could communicate so that was different and my husband had friends here in the city and so that was different. So not that much.

* What do you think then of sending your daughter to a Catholic school? Is she raised to be Catholic?

F Yes, she was christened.

* Communion?

F Yes, communion and everything. Yes. Is it ...no, no, because it's the part to be, as well, part of this community. All her friends. We are interested –not that we are ...but my husband is an atheist but he is a very respectful one. He will remember about our church celebrations more sometimes than we do. At Christmas we always do that and he is the one, I think to celebrate, because the church in the Polish culture, the church gives the reason to your life and it is a very – you know, you can't work on Sunday, you don't wash your cars on Sunday, which my husband will be forbidden to do that because that is a *horrible* thing to do on Sunday. Let's go for a walk, so certain things stay in you, even if you don't realise that, but then he loves the Polish traditions and all the Polish traditions, whether it will be All Saints or lighting the candles or advent calendars and Christmas, we do all the things that we do in Poland. We dress up our Christmas tree on Christmas eve because he will do that and he will make sure that we never do it a day earlier and we will have our Christmas eve supper and then we will have Christmas dinner on Sunday. We love doing that, so we will have our Polish food cooked and we grow our own vegetables and we have our English as well and Chinese which we love.

* Did you have any worries about marrying an atheist?

F No. I was already then by myself and my parents were already dead.

* Oh, both your parents?

F Yes, my dad died when I was 24, so I was living by myself in a flat and I think he was a little older than me, 10 years, I think this father figure for me was this mature man and I think that I thoughtand he is a really lovely man, very caring, and church never really that much, although we did want to have a church wedding and we tried to get – because of the family I think more and in Poland everyone does and when they didn't let us, because he was never married in the church but he was married and whatever, then it was a disappointment, but it doesn't bother me now. It bothered me that time in the moment but then we moved on. It never bothered him. Maybe one of the reasons – you see I don't even think about it but maybe one of the reasons I maybe don't go to church as often as I could is because I am married to a man who is not a Catholic, so I cannot go to confession or have communion.

* You can't.

F Nowadays they will let you probably sit in a church but maybe before many years ago you would have to be outside? I don't know how it works, but nobody does things like that. My daughter still did all these things, so I'm sort of on the – if he doesn't ...I will go when I want to. Very often I go because I support the school as well as a presentation very often and for [REDACTED] and for myself directly sometimes as well.

* Can you talk a bit about the school, you volunteer?

F I used to work here when I was pregnant with [REDACTED] I started, and then I was working for six or seven years as a teacher. Then I stopped for three years and then I was on the committee but very sort of, just on a paper I think because there was a different head teacher and she was a lovely lady but she had a different way of running the place and she was left by herself in the end, unfortunately and struggling and always complaining and you know people then withdraw from you and then the [REDACTED]

* What year was that?

F [REDACTED]

* Why do you think they did that?

F [REDACTED]

* Is this the Catholic church?

F

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

*

Where do you think that this kind of attitude comes from? This kind of sense of responsibility?

F

Family very much so – my father was like this, he was always very much a community person and helpful and there was always people in the house always coming and big family as well and living in a village, that is something that – and

probably being here in this country you look for a little bit of this being part of the community, although we do have it at home, because we've got a few groups, big groups in our allotment and eco groups – we do loads of these things there.

* You're in an eco group.

F Yes, connected with the allotments and sustainability and things like that.

* Do you think that working in the allotment comes from your father's background?

F I think so, from home. I don't know it comes because every time when you were asked you hated and you just went and did it and then when [REDACTED] was born I just wanted this plot of land terribly and then our friend is Dutch, she started a group in our allotments, there was about 8 of us and we took more allotments on and it was 12 people and 12 families, so again we had all the celebrations and coffee and cakes and it was lovely! So we were doing loads of things as a group again, a support group. We've got chickens now as a separate group. It is lovely, it is a lovely place to be and it is a lovely place for [REDACTED] to be as well. I think that I was looking for a place for her – "Where will she play in this country? There is nowhere to play here?", and we've got a tiny garden and there is nowhere to play, you know, we used to roam around the place playing all different and here is all fenced and you can take them to the park and bring them back but then the allotment came and she had all this freedom; trees, ditches, building things – which again you are looking for your childhood, so she did loads of that and she loved it, she still comes and helps me sometimes.

* I was just thinking, because your husband came from [REDACTED], then he lived in [REDACTED] for a bit, and you said that you like Nottingham because of the different kind of mixture of people. Why Nottingham and not London?

F It was dictated by the fact that he had a house here. He moved from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] – they moved to Nottingham and he was an osteopath, a therapist, he had a house here and then he and his first wife decided to travel, they wanted a change in their life and they travelled and they worked and taught English in different places and then they got divorced and they shared the house. When we came the house was sold already and all our friends had the furniture, we had this long list, the bed here, chairs there, spoons in this house – so when we came, well we were open to go anywhere but it was so hard for [REDACTED] to get a university place, he was quite older doing his PGCE and he did his TEFL training in [REDACTED], somewhere in [REDACTED], which was a very intensive two years – he had the best results that anyone had for the last year but they still didn't want him at the university because it was 2 and not 3, but [REDACTED] took him. He applied everywhere, so you can see how it was determined that we should come back to Nottingham, because [REDACTED] was the university and then he applies for jobs after a year and he applied everywhere. Applications for [REDACTED], everywhere.

* What year was that?

F We came here in 1995, so it must have been 1996 or something and because he was older you see, that was the things. Maybe that was the reason, and the only school that took him was [REDACTED] school and it was determined that we stayed in Nottingham. Although Ian's mum, she died now, but lives in [REDACTED], [REDACTED] on the border, and we said that we would never want to live in London down there. Just the speed of life, the traffic on the roads, and why

should – it is just terrible, Ian is “Why should it take me so long to get somewhere?”, absolutely not. And our friends were here, Ian’s friends which became my friends, which was so important again, this feeling maybe of belonging and having someone you know and not having any family, because Ian hasn’t got any brothers and sisters and there was only him and his mum and his dad died a long time ago when he was a little boy, so being with friends was always important.

* What are your friends then? How would you describe your friends?

F They are mainly I think, the best friends are the ones who live in [REDACTED], they are common friends, [REDACTED] and mine. Then I will have some friends from the [REDACTED], the parents of the children which are going to school together, we have stayed friends, and I still work because their children are in my school now, some of them. Then Ian says always that the friends are more important for me than for him, but he does enjoy them once he goes but he can never make the effort, “Oh god, another party”, but then the Polish school again, so yes, and there are some friends that we made in Poland, yes, who is a godfather to our daughter, Ian, he lives in England but we met him in Poland in the same sort of circumstances with his wife, but they are moving – he has got a business so they come and go, but a mixture really.

* Do you think it was easier for you to perhaps leave Poland because of what had happened to your parents?

F Yes, I always say that. It was much easier. This thing of being old and not having anybody to have around – so all these reports about England and about these people in hospital being neglected and having nobody here and I've got quite a few parents in my school who come and say “My dad is in hospital now and if we don't go he doesn't drink and if we don't go he doesn't go to the toilet” so the family goes there all the time and they look after him. That is a terrible thing, so yes, that probably would be an awful thing for me to think that they are there old and – although my sister is there and my brother is there so it's different. But yeah, that was definitely much easier.

* I remember you saying last week that in the school that you teach you've had an increase of 16-

F Yeah, there was around 15, maybe 14 or 15 children because we had [REDACTED] and we've got two boys coming to the nursery now, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, around this number and none of them is in Polish school, so it's interesting to see how many parents don't think there is a need to send them to Polish school because they speak Polish. But you as a teacher, you know that your speaking will continue but your – the other skills, the writing and reading will go.

* What do you think is the difference between the parents that send their children to Polish school and the ones that don't? Have you noticed?

F Hmm, I don't know. I've never consciously looked at that. Some of them simply thing because we speak Polish at home that's enough. Although I did talk to them and I said “Never forget, because it's an extra GCSE” but maybe they are not long enough here to think about the importance of that and loads of them work on Saturdays, loads of them do, and if the husband takes the care then there is no simply physical ability but then we've got in the nursery –

(respondents speaks to colleague in Polish) No, I think that it is one of the biggest ... I really do. Maybe the institution of the Pope – for me he is not a Pope, he is just a great person but he could be ...Pope.

* You mean-

F John Paul II.

* Do you think that was important to Polish people?

F It was incredibly important, that was a recognition wasn't it. It's like if anybody says Marie Curie is French everyone says "She is Polish, she is not French!!" and nobody mentions it now but it was very important.

* Because it was communism as well at the time.

F Yes, and everyone thing that thanks to him we were able to do what we did because he pushed it, he helped from outside with the support of other countries and maybe kept the Russians a little bit at the back, you know, so they didn't step in straight away to Poland like they did in Czechoslovakia in '56, so that is probably very different. Sorry, we just diverted there.

* I forgot what we were talking about before now. Oh, I was going to ask you – do you think that the Polish community dynamic has changed since you've had an increase in-

F Very much so. I was here because I'm here for 15 years, so you could see the old and you can tell by even the church. Three years ago the priest asked for a completely new board of the parish, whatever they call it, the parish committee. All the old people went, in came all the new people. I think sometimes this older generation, because now 70% of the children at school are the people who came recently, I think more now, we haven't done the numbers. Last year it was like that much and this year it might be more. It is interesting to do this statistic just for our sake, so people who came here after the second world war, you know, they bought the buildings, they put all the money, loads of them when they died, they passed all their goods and money to church and to build the community and so their children felt the ownership of that and nothing without us, without our contribution. We have to decide. All the new generation, the younger people should always feel grateful for what has been done, which I'm not saying is bad, that is how it was in the world you have to thank them and say, you know. The new people who came in 2004, they don't know what you're talking about, it means nothing to them! Suddenly they became very disrespectful, according to the old generation. "They come here and they take everything for nothing, they don't want to do anything". What do they take for nothing? They work, what are you talking about?! In their minds there was even a problem on the television, the BBC did this programme about Polish immigration and there was an elderly gentleman, a Polish one, saying "Oh they come and they want everything for free!", but what do they want for free? They work. Like our old club they want for free and the new generation hasn't got the same connection and the same feeling of gratitude to the old generation who worked hard. There was nothing here and they, from scratch, built up this community. So that is a new generation. It might seem disrespectful but I don't think it is. It is just a new generation came. So there was a time, when we left the parish, there was a time that in the church there was maybe 30 people sitting when you came. Today you will have to be standing outside.

- * Oh yeah.
- F You've seen it. So the change is drastic, it changed completely, and it made the older generation very cross and unhappy but they are getting used to it now because there is no other way, so it's changing now, the attitude.
- * How about, because you've been here for 15 years, how do you find the Nottingham people, how have they responded to Polish migration in Nottingham?
- F I think they embraced it as well, because you look from the economic – well there is probably all different points of view but there is more money for the church, there will be more activity as well, there is more groups, it's more active, so it all sort of thrives. It's like an economy – more put in and more gets out.
- * How about the average normal Nottingham person that has lived here all their lives and their grandparents lived-
- F You mean an English person?
- * Yes.
- F They all know the Polish Club, I think. When you talk to – I talk to my English friends, they all know about the Polish Club being there. I think it was alright, the people I know are very respectful, they sometimes now there is a Polish restaurant, they go to the restaurant to try the different foods loads of them, so I think that in my opinion, maybe because of the place I live and the friends I have, it was always respected and accepted.
- * Do you think there's been any hostility towards Polish migration?
- F I don't think so. I don't think so.
- * You've never experienced it?
- F I haven't. And again people sometimes say "Oh, because of where you live" but I work in [REDACTED] and as a general thing maybe because you speak with an accent and people who are, well I'm not saying less educated, but I remember the fact I went to the shop and when you started saying something, in a vegetable shop "oh I don't understand" and you think "You do understand,understands" but because you sense a slight bit of an accent – and of course I'm thinking there will be people the same in Poland feeling like this "Oh he's a foreigner, I might not be able to talk" and I shut straight away, but whether I am French or whatever they are the same. Although saying that loads of my friends did take it very personally because I remember my friend saying "I went to Asda and there was two for one and she counted it as a two because she could see I was Polish, with an accent". She doesn't care you are Polish or others, there are hundreds of people coming through there. She made a mistake or she didn't, but I'm not going to take it personally, but maybe if you feel vulnerable and when you feel very insecure you will take it personally and then you react and then they react. So very often it's a double sided thing I think.
- * How about the fact that Polish people are white?

- F It is, definitely. The integration is you are European, I think that is different. That is definitely – I can tell that, and especially in places like [REDACTED], yes, that definitely helps. They are caring, and they like their houses clean and they want to better themselves, and they are ambitious, and they look the same, yes, and they wear the same clothes so they can disappear in the crowd. Definitely. That is – yeah, although you think it shouldn't be because the empire existed for such a long time, but still – that is definitely helpful.
- * And just because someone was talking to me about this last week, I remembered it in the media and then when she told me I remembered it coming up. Oh yes, did you need to get a letter from your priest for your daughter to go to the Catholic school.
- F Yes.
- * Was there any school that you thought, "I wouldn't want my daughter to go there"? If the council hadn't given you your choice-
- F No, the English people are more strict about it than I am. Because my friends, who live close to me, there is three schools in [REDACTED], they say "Oh I would never send my child to this Catholic school, how can you do that, that is almost cruel", but why is it cruel?, "Because they are so strict!", well that's good. That's good. I want them to be strict. Maybe the English people don't like the discrimination, that you do take the Catholic children first and then others but I think that is fair enough. Again, as I say, you should be mixed. I believe in the more you mix the better it will be for everybody because it works like that. I wouldn't mind if it was a closed school and again I would go ...good school, they are all good, I would send my child to any [REDACTED] schools which are close to my house. I wouldn't have any prejudice, absolutely not.
- * What do you think the English parent's main prejudice are about certain schools?
- F I think that, for example, Catholic – they wouldn't like children to go. Some do. Some would like to send their children there because it is a very good school, but some wouldn't, like my colleague who has got the children now that went to year 1 and 2, she wouldn't because it's Catholic. She believes it should be open for everybody and a mixture of different children, so they would be more prejudice. Yes. On the other hand she wouldn't be able to send her children there probably because she is so low down the priority list. You have to be a Catholic, then if you don't then you may be someone in family – so then you-
- * Did your daughter have to take an exam to get in to the school?
- F No, because it's a catchment, you don't. I don't think that anybody does, but you have to register a year or something in advance, then the governors get together and make the choice. I think that the Polish children usually get in because they are Catholic, and if you live close. I think when you live close then I think that's-
- * Do you think that there is any kind of fear and anxiety, sorry, I didn't finish up – the story, basically someone was telling me about a Polish student who hanged themselves in one of the [REDACTED] about a year or two years ago.
- F Yes, [REDACTED] I think mentioned.
- * Is there any kind of – have you heard that story or?

- F I have heard that story, yeah. Maybe I should think more about it but it's an incredibly big community now and it is bound to happen, things which happened in cross section everywhere. Some time ago if one of the grandmothers was mugged on the street then everyone in church knew it, how could that happen, but now you won't because there is hundreds and thousands. So of course I sympathise as I would for any child because that is a terrible loss but we know that there were family problems there as well. It wasn't only school. Usually it is more than one thing. It may be one thing, I'm not saying, but there was loads of circumstances that cause a breakdown like that and from what I new – and you think we didn't know them but you think was there sufficient support for the family from the community or from the school to help them. I don't know. I can't answer that.
- * And your daughter, she was born here, so she has an English accent.
- F Yes.
- * So no one would know that she was Polish really would they.
- F No, and she has got more her dad's accent. She hasn't got that much from Nottingham, she has got sort of more of a South accent.
- * Surrey.
- F Yes. And ■■■, because he was teaching English he speaks very clearly. The Polish students loved him because he speaks so clearly.
- * And do you hear the difference – you can hear a Nottingham accent?
- F Yes.
- * What do you think of your daughter having quite a southern English well-spoken accent, or what someone would class as a middle-class accent?
- F She says "Oh they always laugh at me at school that I speak posh", that's what she says.
- * Do you feel that might give her any benefits in society?
- F Hmm, I never thought about that, no, not really. I think that I'm indoctrinated by the English way of thinking that it doesn't matter, you've got different accents all across the board. The BBC encourages people with different accents doing the news so I don't. We never encouraged that, it just happened the way – probably she just ...maybe it was a better one.
- * And so you think-
- F I think that ■■■ likes it, maybe Ian likes it that she speaks like that. Maybe Ian likes it. I will have to ask him.
- * You said that English people don't mind different accents?
- F I think that is the main way of speaking and I would say that, that you shouldn't mind anybody's accent, because I don't mind.
- * Do you think that there are English people that do judge you on your accent?

- F Yes, because you know how they speak in our school, when they sometimes speak you can hardly understand them, eating the endings of every word and stretching it, yes and you know when [REDACTED] talks about friends at school, this one, "Oh she is really chavvy, you know mum, she speaks like that" but they are still very good friends, with a laugh, you know-
- * And do you have any anxiety about, because you are very open to her having different types of friends, but do you ever have any worries that maybe she could be lead astray because she has different friends? I mean are there certain friends you would prefer her to stick to?
- F Maybe I should but I don't. I trust her.
- * How about your husband?
- F The same. She is a sensible girl. More sensible every year, but then on the other hand anything can happen and we will deal with it when it comes, but she has got – all her friends come to our house, [REDACTED], she is half [REDACTED], she is coming tonight, and she is a different girl than my daughter completely, make-up, ... I say God [REDACTED], never like this, I can't take it! but she is a lovely girl and they are very good friends and we know the parents and I would always make sure that I do.
- * So it is important for you to know the parents?
- F Definitely, definitely, and I do know the parents and we know when they are going having sleepovers, parties, we always take them, we always make sure that we go inside, we talk to parents, we know who they are. Definitely.
- * What if you didn't like the parents?
- F [REDACTED] would still go, but I don't know. I think we are so close because of having an only child, we have never had a situation like this. I don't need to know the parents. That way you just make sure you go and talk to them and they know you when you come and all thethings we have done in our house when they come then we have cakes with the parents, so that is -
- * What are your aspirations for your daughter?
- F Whatever her aspirations are first of all, what she achieves, whatever she would like to achieve, and we will do everything to help her with that with all means possible, but I think living in different countries me and my husband would like her to be just open to everything, to have this open mind and embrace everything and be adventurous and experience things and for the time being that is how we have been leading our lives, that is how we are, we do loads of things and we are interested in loads of things and hopefully that is how she would be.
- * How aboutin 20 years time for example, where do you see yourself?
- F Retired on my allotment, or travelling. I would like to do some ESOL maybe abroad, maybe in Asia. Because Ian is retiring in 3 years time so we were thinking that maybe we could have a gap year. We would love to go to China and work and we visited a few times and we would like to go and work. Not to travel, but we would like to go and stay in one place and do some work and get more in to the life there.

- * Do you think that you ever might return back to Poland?
- F We were thinking about it but it's very difficult. Although we have still got the land there, and the house, which I could have access to but for Ian it would be difficult because of the cultural side of it, you know, we love concert and theatre and books and the internet can give you all this but friends as well, I think that he would feel very isolated if we went to Poland. Although he dreams about the fishing lake and mushroom picking in the Polish virgin forest somewhere, and log cabin, but I think it would be good for a month or two and then he would like to come back. Yeah, we do. I think that it's just a dream that would be difficult – even if we had a house, because we're thinking about having a small place somewhere, but then you wouldn't be able to go anywhere else because then you would feel guilty that you've got this place and so we said no, it's better that he has the option of travelling.
- * And just to finish really, I just wanted to ask you about – you've bought flowers in today, I think you were telling me it's for?
- F It's the teachers, it's international teachers day, it's the post-communist traditions which we are happy to keep, as long as we can. The 14th of October.
- * It is communist?
- F it is communist still, but we still keep it, yes, after the system has gone. We still celebrate our women's day on the 8th of March as well, and we, on our school website hopefully we put a big wishes for the teachers and we will try to give them all flowers. In recognition of their work. They don't work for much money here and they give so much for – I hope that some of them do not work in their profession outside of school, they do all sorts of other jobs, so it would for me feel important to do this job and to be a teacher and this is my qualification from Poland, so-
- * Why do you think communism had these days for different professions?
- F I think that you had to feel a little bit better because it wasn't that good there! So you just perked yourself up with these special days and you got always a broken – did you get a carnation when you were in Poland, for women's day, or a tulip bent?
- * Yes.
- F It was a pretty gloomy place to live, generally. We didn't know it was gloomy but it looked gloomy around, even the clothes that people are wearing, so that was always there and it was always on the television and the teachers got special medals for whatever. It was to make a celebration, to make people feel better. There was nothing different about that. It was just to make people think that they should feel better because they are so important. 1st of May you had to parade and wave the flags, and you feel so good, and I remember -
- * Boxes with sausages.
- F Yes, for free. For free to get it.
- * It was a good place to be honest. It was for children.

F You see I have always missed it, because from school the whole school has to go and because my father had some land I always was lying, I had to say "Sorry, but we have to plant the potatoes" so I was going home and we never did, they were always planted by the 1st of May but they would never refuse you because planting potatoes was as important as marching. So I always had a day at home with the family. So we do the celebrations don't we, we do the Polish, we like getting together and having a laugh and having a drink, so that's from that.

* Okay, thank you very much.

(end of recording)

