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“Stepping-Stone Migration”: Polish Graduates in England

Aga Szewczyk

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Abstract

This thesis examines the migrationary processes of graduates leaving their home country and their post-migration experiences and aspirations in a receiving state. Using the case study of England, findings are presented from qualitative research with Polish graduates born between the late 1970s and early 1980s, and who moved to England after 2004. It is argued that this generation of Polish migrants is particularly important given the profound impacts of socio-cultural and economic transformation in Poland, tied to the emergence of capitalism, the preparation for accession of Poland to the European Union (EU) and EU citizenship in 2004, on current debates on the geographies of graduate migration within and beyond Europe.

Several important findings are revealed by the research. First, it is asserted that perspectives of migration which focus on structure-agency relations (Halfacree, 1995) need to encompass the economic and political aspects of participants' sending state at the time of migration, as well as the historical influences on migration decision-making processes. Second, the discussion shows that graduate migration to another country leads to differing approaches to career and life trajectory development after migration and this thesis conceptualises these using the following typology: "Continuers", "Switchers" and "Late Awakeners", with dynamism and slippage across the groupings. Third, the findings expose graduate migrant perceptions of becoming and being highly-skilled, and the role of university preparation, and other forms of post-graduate training and potentially strategic acquisitions of citizenship for labour market confidence to compete and undertake professional jobs in Poland and England. Fourth, the thesis stresses that migration is often a first step in graduate migrants' life trajectories and it emphasises the importance of a "stepping-stone migration", both socially and spatially, and which is embedded within individuals' life-phases and perceptions of home and place. It is argued that this conceptual and geographic contribution to wider studies of graduate migration across countries may have wider resonance to other graduate migrant groups in Europe and beyond.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Contemporary European Migration

Contemporary migration consists of various forms, types, processes, where different actors have various motivations for movement. The complexity of migration is also fuelled by cultural, socio-economic and political perspectives. Fielding (1983:3) describes migration as a "chaotic concept that needs to be unpacked so that each part can be seen in its proper historical and social context so that its significance in each context can be separately understood". Therefore, "migration is too diverse and multifaceted to be explained by a single theory" (Arango, 2000:283), particularly in the age of recent international migration changes, with population flows becoming more global and heterogeneous, suggesting that international migration is "entering a new era" (Arango, 2000:287). Castles and Miller (2009:10) identify it as "globalization of migration", which is one of the new tendencies of the migration flows developing in response to economic, political and cultural change. They recognise other characteristics of contemporary migration, including its "acceleration", with more people participating in migration flows in all major regions and "differentiation" with a whole range of types of immigration occurring at once in a given country (*ibid*. 10). Furthermore, they mention "proliferation of migration transition", which relates to countries primarily constituting lands of emigration, now becoming transit migration and immigration lands (Castles and Miller, 2009:11).

The causes of contemporary international migration are multifaceted. They may be related to "the disparity in levels of income, employment and social well-being between differing areas" (Castles, 2000:272). Also, the causes can be initiated and regulated by institutions, individuals themselves, or may form part of the family survival strategy (Hugo, 1994). Therefore, migration has been approached from various perspectives including economics, sociology, geography, political science, psychology and many more. The interdisciplinary nature of the research on population mobility and use of different methods, procedures and application of various theories has helped address and further our understanding of the varied and complex aspects of migration (Castles and Miller, 2009).

These diverse approaches are necessary to investigate the determinants, processes and patterns of migration. They also aid understanding of the ways in which migrants become the agents of change in sending, transit and receiving countries within socio-economic, political and cultural

spheres. Assorted methods are important as the movements of population take many forms, for example labour migration of highly-qualified specialist and manual workers, student migration or "international student mobility" (Samers, 2010), family members of previous migrants and refugees.

The migration of people can be temporary, or may lead to permanent settlement, can be forced or voluntary, legal or illegal. King *et al.* (2008) add to these binaries in migration studies another one: internal and international migration, where a boundary distinction between those two can easily become blurred. The primary example of this is the change of international borders in the EU where a created borderless zone for mobility of Member States citizens, resembles internal migration more than "traditional international migration with its regime of passports" (King *et al.*, 2008:3). Therefore, changing political conditions can shape the nature of migration, reduce or increase internal and international migration flows. Moreover, some researchers emphasise a divergence of two concepts within recent migration studies: mobility and migration observed in multiple forms. They associate different types of movements common for certain category of migrants, for example highly-skilled individuals whose movements tend to be "intermittent and short term" (Salt and Koser, 1997, in: Vertovec, 2002).

Consequently, the application of diverse theories focusing on different types and processes of migration has intensified in the last decades. In particular, transnationalism as one of the theories is thought to be of special importance due to its focus on "transnational communities" and the role that globalization plays in influencing their creation (Portes, 1997; Castles and Miller, 2009). Other theories used to explain why people move include migration systems, which has its roots in geography, migration networks theory that originated in sociology and anthropology, and neo-classical theory that derives from economics (Samers, 2010).

An equally important, yet under researched theory in connection with migration, is social generations' theory, looking at the interrelation of age of individuals and socio-historical contexts that they were born and grew up in (Mannheim, 1952; Turner, 2002). The potentialities of generational location of different cohorts understood in terms of geography, time and socio-political contexts may materialise in a form of increased mobility, or the opposite. Therefore, it is important to revise this sociological concept for the purpose of better understanding individuals' backgrounds. This also confers to the role of their social status or class belonging as the variables in defining of their motivations and causes for mobility. The expansion of the EU in

2004 is a good example of recent socio-political changes that play an imperative role in evolution of the new forms of migration and mobility (Drinkwater *et al.,* 2006, 2010).

1.1 Mobility of young people within the EU after 2004

In view of the EU enlargements in 2004 involving eight Central and Eastern European countries (A8) including the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, and further accession of Romania and Bulgaria (A2) in 2007, new forms of migration across the EU continue to emerge. One of the predominant post-enlargement migration flows are young people, who constitute a major labour force within Europe (Kohanec and Zimmermann, 2009), and who using free movement rights across Europe search for better life conditions (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009; Botterill, 2011). At the same time, Europe faces the issue of a decreasing number of working age people in the majority of the 27 EU countries; this is due to consistently low birth rates (Eurostat, 2010), which in connection with the post-2008 economic downturn (Akyüz, 2010) and rising young and graduate unemployment, leads to a loss of valuable human resources for Europe. For this reason, European policy ought to focus more on tackling challenges such as "an aging population, global competitiveness and growth" (Kohanec and Zimmermann, 2009:3), and the issue of gaining in numbers "Europe's Lost Generation", who are young, often highly educated Europeans, unable to secure employment within home and European labour market (Malik, 2012).

Among all types of migration, as King (2002:98) points out, it is highly-skilled mobility that "lies at the heart of attempts to integrate Europe through the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the EU". Such hierarchical division is made more visible in the new map of European migrations (Koser and Lutz, 1998:2). At the same time, student mobility, which belongs to highly-skilled migration, is disputed depending on criteria used for classification. To provide an example, secondary or post-secondary education as the level above which highly-skilled can be differentiated (Samers, 2010), achieved undergraduate degree (Pollack and Solimano, 2004), or at graduate level (Szelenyi, 2006), has become much promoted by the European Commission. This can be envisaged through schemes for student exchanges such as Erasmus-Socrates, where studying in another member state forms its core element. However, to quote from King (2002:99), student mobility is only one of many forms of "internal mobility of young adults within European countries", which can be also viewed as a subset of "youth migration motivated by a mixture of broader educational goals and experience/travel/pleasure seeking facilitated with casual or temporary work". Among many

migration types, in particular graduate migration, as a part of highly-skilled migration and youth migration are leaving a footprint in contemporary international and internal migration flows. However, graduate migration within the EU is under researched despite the growing internationalisation of higher education (HE) systems and increasing numbers of university leavers. Also, "the variety between European countries in terms of competences required as well as work and employment settings", being "an asset and a barrier to mobility" (Schomburg and Teichler, 2006:4), present a scope for research on graduates' migratory patterns.

Other potential constraints and opportunities in relation to European graduate migration and mobility that ought to be addressed are the effects of the 2008 global financial crises resultant in economic instability of the European economy (Akyüz, 2010). Throughout the period of post-2008 Europe, a significant increase in unemployment levels of graduates (ONS, 26/01/2011) was recorded, and prior work experience became required from graduates in order to succeed in the labour market (Coughlan, 18/01/2011). The figures on graduate unemployment in the UK show uneven levels for those who graduated up to two years ago being the highest, and those who graduated 4-6 years ago being the lowest (ONS, 26/01/2011). Unemployment in the UK for the first group peaked at 18.5% in 2010 (ONS, 26/01/2011), indicating that the economic downturn had a significant impact on fresh graduates in the labour market. Similarly in Poland, the level of unemployment for those who graduated HE was 21.5% in the first part of 2010 (GUS, 2011). Such a scenario may influence mobility behaviours among young educated individuals within the wider context of the EU, for which the problem of an ageing population puts pressure on maintaining young peoples' migration at a certain level, but also on labour market incorporation of fresh European graduates.

1.2 Migration of young highly-educated Poles to the UK

Although the new Eastern and Central European countries accessed the EU, the process was followed by transitional periods of up to seven years, restricting the admission of new member state citizens to the labour markets in the old member states (the UK, Ireland and Sweden were an exception). These factors, and additionally "geographic, linguistic or cultural distances, have had heterogeneous effects on migration flows across Europe" (Kohanec and Zimmermann, 2009:4). In particular, the migration of Poles to the UK after 2004 has received much attention in recent research, with the emphasis on the large scale of this movement (e.g. Drinkwater *et al.*, 2006, 2010; Okólski, 2007; Waniek, 2007; Drinkwater, 2008; Milewski and Ruszczak-Żbikowska, 2008; Burrell, 2009; Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009; Kaczmarczyk, 2010). Also the

perception of Polish migrants in the UK has been investigated (Fomina and Frelak, 2008). Two distinct groups of migrants with regards to their origin were recognised – "low skilled persons from periphery and highly-skilled ones from the cores" (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2008, in: Kohanec and Zimmermann, 2009:10). Furthermore, Kaczmarczyk (2009) highlights that within the post-2004 migration of Polish to the UK and Ireland, "youth" understood as persons below the age of 35, often single and relatively well educated became the dominant type of migrants. Additionally, he indicates that the proportion of young mobile individuals with tertiary education moving to the UK has increased after enlargement. Fihel and Kaczmarczyk (2009:35) reveal that in 2004-2006 the median age of post-2004 migrants to the UK was 25 years old, to Ireland it was 30 years old, and in comparison 46 years in the USA.

Despite this, there are only a few studies devoted to the reasons for migration of young and educated Polish individuals to the UK (Milewski and Ruszczak-Żbikowska, 2008; Trevena, 2008; Galasińska and Kozłowska, 2009a, 2009b; Botterill, 2011). The aspects of migration from poor towns and villages (White, 2010), the role of social networks in post-2004 Polish migration to the UK (Ryan *et al*., 2007), and their formation during the migration process (Gill and Bialski, 2011) and reasons behind employment in low skilled jobs of highly educated (Trevena, in press) were investigated by a few. Moreover, other researchers look into identities of young educated Polish migrants in Ireland (Dzięglewski, 2010, 2011), and British perception of Polish migrants in the UK, including those who are highly educated (Fomina, 2009).

The changing narratives of post-1989 and post-2004 Polish migrants to the UK were researched by Galasinska and Kozłowska (2009), who recognise major differences between these two groups. The most important characteristics of both groups show that post-1989 migrants constructed space as fixed and closed, and those who migrated after 2004 perceived space as flexible and open (*ibid*.). Correspondingly, Garapich (2008:747) provides information on the labour market in the UK, and Poles' participation in it before and after 2004. On the one hand, the lack of freedom of mobility before the enlargement had an impact on Poles' sense of security, ability to forge ties, join trade unions or establish strong economic bases (*ibid.).* On the other hand, the freedom experienced after 2004 allowed them to socialise freely, do business and form communities, and more importantly "to opt out and look for employment elsewhere, outside the community" (Garapich, 2008:748). In addition, Galasinska (2010) conducted a comparative study of three different waves of Polish migration to the UK: post-war migration, post-1989, and post-enlargement migration, and researched their narratives and Polish migrants'

way of dealing with different types of Poles and "different version of Polishness abroad" (Galasinska, 2010:949).

Within the post-2004 migration to the UK, there is a gap in research on motivations of Polish tertiary education graduates, born in the 1980s and classified as a "baby boom" generation (Iglicka, 23/01/2010). There is a lacuna of research among scholars on how Polish tertiary education graduates, who derive from various social backgrounds, and have achieved different levels of human capital in the home country and abroad, construct their biographies within the flexible and open space, and opportunities of the EU. This thesis, therefore, explores this using the example of England as a country of temporary sojourn or permanent stay, or indeed as a "stepping-stone" to another country destination. Moreover, there is no literature on reasons why Polish graduate migrants enrol into HE in England, and how this influences their mobility and migration patterns across EU and worldwide. Furthermore, individuals who arrived after 2004 and resided in the UK for 5 years, are able to communicate in English and have sufficient level of knowledge of life in the UK, can apply for British citizenship and passports (UK Border Agency website). There is a lack of research on attitudes of young highly educated Polish towards obtaining of the UK passports, or having dual nationality, which potentially could ease further mobility beyond the EU.

According to Wrzesień (2009), the Polish generation of young people who grew up in times of preparation of Poland to join the EU and its ultimate accession in 2004, when unrestricted travel across Europe become the norm, has distinctive features of being orientated towards Europe. Such individuals are also proactive in searching for a better quality of life in Europe, recently intensified by the global economic crisis. He calls this cohort "European Searchers", who could be classified as modern European travellers, mobile individuals, migrants or may constitute a new quality on its own. In other studies, Eade *et al.* (2007:11), distinguish four types of Polish migrants in the UK, based on their migratory strategies, these are: "storks", "hamsters", "searchers" and "stayers". Among those types, the group of "searchers" consisted predominantly of "young, individualistic and ambitious migrants", who emphasise "the unpredictability of their migratory plans" – which Eade *et al.* (2007:11) term as intentional unpredictability. They describe this group as adapted to a "flexible, deregulated and increasingly transnational, post-modern capitalist labour market" and having a "focus on increasing social and economic capital, both in Poland and UK, and to prepare for any possible opportunity, returning to Poland when the economic situation improves or migrating elsewhere" (*ibid*.). This group of highly educated

young Polish migrants in the UK described as "searchers", willing to experience a new way of life, constituted the majority (42.0%) of respondents in Eade *et al.'s* (2007) study.

Researching this cohort will provide important contributions to graduate migration within and outside of the EU, and motivations behind their migration or circulation. Furthermore, this thesis will seek to examine the current migratory trends of Polish graduates in England as a subset of highly-skilled migration within the EU. It will look at their motivations for migration and the role that factors such as their upbringing, generational belonging, educational background, destination country language knowledge and transnational connections play in the life and work choices they make as well as in their negotiations of home and belonging. The emphasis will be put on their intentions with regards to self and career development, the importance of transnationalism and being mobile in their lives, and obstacles they encounter in the process of migration. In addition, gender differences and similarities in motivations for migration will be looked into. Therefore, the aim of the research is to focus attention on European graduate migrants. This will be done by using a case study of Polish graduates in England who, being highly educated and referred to as "searchers" (Eade *et al*., 2007), or "European searchers" (Wrzesień, 2009), may provide evidence for a whole range of different migratory patterns across Europe and beyond. The research will refer to Eade *et al.'s* (2007) study and the concept of intentional unpredictability, yet it will look closer into Polish graduates' social backgrounds, generational belonging, and overall achieved human capital and transnational connections, and how these interplay in the graduates' life-courses and migration. This will be explored in the light of the recent and continuing global economic recession of 2008 (e.g. Akyüz, 2010).

An understanding of graduates' migration patterns is a pre-condition for designing effective migration policies in Europe, especially European Commission strategies such as Europe 2020, and policy initiatives to improve young people's education and employability in Europe, for example "Youth on the Move", or "New Skills for New Jobs" (www. ec.europa.eu). Moreover, further insight into graduates' migration could provide information on how their skills are being used, enhanced and circulated within Europe and outside, or if the brain-drain and deskilling is occurring. The research also aims to look into further education of migrant graduates in England, and its influence on their plans and motivations for migration. Additionally, an interface between graduates and the region to which they migrated to, in the case of this thesis – the East Midlands, will be utilised as a case study, in order to highlight the role of place.

According to the East Midlands Development Agency (2010), the East Midlands has experienced significant population growth in recent years and over the longer term, and it is projected that population growth in the East Midlands will be the fastest of any English region. In addition, migration has contributed to a rising younger population in the East Midlands (EMDA, 2010).

1.3 The East Midlands – a case study of an escalator region?

The geographic distribution of migrants from new accession countries proved to be different from previous migrants' destination. According to the 2001 Census, almost 40.0% of all migrants moved to London, and after 2004 only 14.0% of all migrants were registered in the capital. Higher numbers of A8 migrants were noted in the Anglia, Midlands and Central regions (Eade *et al.*, 2007), with a tendency to locate in rural areas in, for example Herefordshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire (Commission for Rural Communities, 2007). According to the UK Border Agency Accession Monitoring Report (2008), the Midlands was the second most popular A8 workers registration region in the UK, between May 2004 and September 2008, and yet there has not been much research on young and highly educated East European migrants in the region.

As a result of recent A8 migration being widespread across the UK, a series of reports for the County and City Councils have been carried out, for example on the local and economic impacts of new migration in the East and West Midlands (Green *et al.*, 2007, 2008, 2010), Leeds City Council (Cook *et al*., 2008), Nottingham City Council (Scullion *et al.* 2009), and Leicester City Council (Roberts-Thomson, 2007) often feeding into wider policy concerns over "community cohesion". However, as Burrell (2010) concludes, it is London, with an expected larger pool of migrants, that has been dominant in many of the studies with researchers such as Eade *et al.*, (2007), Ryan *et al.* (2009), and Datta (2009) among others looking at various aspects of Polish migrants' lives in the capital. Similarly, Gill and Bialski (2011:241) argue that the literature on Polish migrants' experiences in the UK tends to have an "urban-centric approach that privileges the Southern parts of the UK". Also, as Stenning and Dawley (2009:273) comment, "there is still a dearth of research exploring the impacts of migrants and migrant work at the local and regional scale", or indeed the role of places other than London in affecting migrants feeling of belonging and any attachments formed.

Although limited, there is emerging research on Polish migrants in other parts of the UK. For example, Gill (2010) focuses on Polish migrants in three towns in the north of England, Stenning

and Dawley (2009) examine Polish migrants in Newcastle, and Burrell and Rabikowska (2009) investigate the role of consumption and material goods in the rooting of recent Polish migrants both in London and the Midlands. Botterill (2011), researches aspiration and experiences of mobility of young Polish migrants in Edinburgh, and Callender (2012) explores the lives of young Polish migrants in Northamptonshire, with an outlook on their transitions through life-courses.

Nonetheless, there is a lack of information on the migration of highly-qualified graduates, whose destination are larger cities and towns in the English regions other than urban-centric South, with a focus other than on a global city such as London. The growing numbers of academic and policy papers on East European migration to the UK (e.g. Pillai, 2006) rarely focus on graduate migrants, although they do mention high numbers of highly educated within migration flows (e.g. Kaczmarczyk, 2009). The exceptions are the work of Ackers (2005a, 2005b), with a focus on academic mobility, a recent study on Hungarian and Romanian highly-skilled and graduates in London (Csedő, 2009), a study on the class of Polish graduates working in low skilled jobs in London (Trevena, 2011), and the labour market experience of Polish graduates in the East Midlands cities and London (Nowicka, 2012). Therefore, this research aims to add to this body of work by focusing on migration to one particular English region, the East Midlands, with key points being Polish graduate migrants and their life and career trajectory development in the region, the construction of home, place attachment formation and plans or intentions for the future.

As other research shows, the new arrivals from Eastern Europe "disproportionately work in East Anglia and the West and East Midlands" (Blanchflower and Lawton, 2008:8). As Pollard *et al.* (2008:62) argue, it is a special privilege of A8 migrants that "they do not have to go to a city to substantially improve their income or even enjoy urban lifestyle". Instead, many live and work in small towns and villages across the UK. They also tend to be young, educated, non-unionised and unmarried, of which approximately one third work for recruitment agencies; however they also show higher self-employment rates (Blanchflower and Lawton, 2008). On the other hand, Green *et al.* (2010) draw attention to student migration that plays an important role in some local economies, particularly in cities and towns with Universities, providing skills for future economic development.

According to HESA (2011), the number of Polish domicile students in England increased after 2005 (Appendix 1). The region in England that had the highest graduation rates of Polish

individuals was London, with 2681 graduates between 2004 and 2010. The second popular region was West Midlands, with 1197 Polish graduates. The lowest numbers of Polish graduates were in the North-East and South-West, and the East Midlands was positioned on the third place from the bottom with 412 graduates. Such a low number of Polish graduates interested in education, among others in the East Midlands, raises further questions, as to the choice of the East Midlands for further education, and in general, the motivation for further and HE after migration to England. Thus, the research aims to understand the reasons behind the migration of highly educated Poles to the East Midlands and their interests in HE after migration. Overall, this thesis will investigate why Polish graduate migrants are choosing to continue their careers in areas which are less popular for graduates.

Another aspect that ties in with the East Midlands case scenario is the concept of "an escalator region" which was introduced by Fielding (1992) and assigned to South-East region of England. According to Fielding (1992) it is a place that attracts and escalates highly educated migrants, who long after achieving career promotions, step off to less expensive locations. Since then, there have been other studies carried out on escalator regions. These include the stepping off the escalation phase (Champion, 2011), as well as insight into "secondary agglomerations" in the UK and their attractiveness and links between places. In particular, Champion and Coombes (2010) focus on agglomerations' capabilities in helping their residents and in-migrants to gain labour market skills and to achieve career progression.

According to East Midlands Development Agency (2010), there were five major urban centres, "the key drivers" in the East Midlands region: Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Northampton and Nottingham, which were connected within and throughout the region. However, there were noticeable differences between those who lived in some of those areas, and people who travelled there for work purposes. The latter were considered as having higher level of skills and earning than those who resided there (EMDA, 2010). Lincolnshire coastal area and Coalfield area experienced the lowest levels of economic activity. In contrast, rural areas of the centre and south of the region tended to be more affluent with high level of economic and business activity, with many people having high level of skills, but working elsewhere (*ibid*.).

Therefore, this research employs the concept of an escalator region for the East Midlands region, which potentially could act as such for Polish graduate migrants. Also, the study looks at the East Midlands as an agglomeration, where improved matching of supply and demand of labour ought to lead to higher productivity for cities and better prospects for career progression for

residents, as literature on agglomerations suggests (Champion and Coombes, 2010). Thus, the intention of this study of young and highly educated Polish migrants in the East Midlands is to look into their selection processes of the region and career progression or deskilling after migration. The focus will be placed on structure and agency (Giddens, 1984) in graduates' migration decision making and further choices that follow it (Halfacree, 1995; Smith, 2004). Moreover, migrants' perceptions on particular locations within the East Midlands they arrived to, live and work in, and which could provide further understanding of what is the East Midlands for Polish graduate migrants, will be explored.

1.4 Research aims and objectives

Main Aim:

This research explores the migration process of individuals who graduate in their home country and move to another, within the post-2004 European Union, using the case study of Polish graduates who migrated to England.

This thesis is based on four research objectives:

Research objective 1: To identify the motivations for migration to the East Midlands after graduation.

Research objective 2: To examine the process of adjustment of Polish graduate migrants to the British labour market.

Research objective 3: To investigate the effects of the place(s) of destination on the career trajectory development, home creation, and the acquisition of British citizenship by Polish graduates.

Research objective 4: To explore graduates' intentions and plans for future geographical migration.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical background to the research in order to situate this research project firstly within the existing literature on mobility and migration, highly-skilled migration with differentiation on student and graduate migration, social background of highly-skilled migrants and their brain circulation. Chapter 3 informs on the context for the research and refers to the conceptual framework on forms of movement within the EU highlighting the aspects of student and graduate mobility, referring to the migration of Polish graduates the UK, and England in particular. Chapter 4 discusses the methodology that was employed, including research design, positionality and ethics along with the rationale for a chosen method. The next four chapters are dedicated to research findings, with Chapter 5 discussing motivations for Polish graduates migration to England, including their family background and history of mobility prior to their departure to England. Chapter 6 outlines graduates' experiences and adjustment to the English educational system and British labour market, and provides insight into the ways graduates shape their career trajectories after migration, highlighting the existence of the three cohorts "Continuers", "Switchers" and "Late Awakeners". Chapter 7 discusses the effects of the place of destination on home creation and social mobility, to reveal the "stepping-stone" role of the East Midlands in Polish graduates life trajectory development. Chapter 8 focuses on Polish graduates' future mobility and migration plans, expectations and preparations, highlighting intentions for migration "somewhere else", and the locations sought after to "stay for longer", which are gendered. Chapter 9 highlights the original contributions of this thesis to the conceptualisation of graduate migration within Europe and changing socio-economic and population geographies.

Chapter 2

Theoretical perspectives: debating highly-skilled, graduate migration

2.1 Introduction

The general boundary between mobility and different forms of migration is "never straightforward" (King, 2002:90). In particular, the issue of the increasing incidence of short term movements has contributed to the changing attitudes among scholars to what constitutes migration, with two types distinguished. According to UN (1998) recommendation, "long-term migration" is a move for at least a year, and "short-term migration" lasts anywhere between three months and a year (Samers, 2010). However, due to the inequalities of data collection by different countries, as well as increasing numbers of frequent short term travels between destination and origin places, the notion of migration requires some level of "flexibility" (Salt and Koser, 1997:287).

Similarly, mobility is presented in myriad ways, and is often undetermined. However, it is always linked to time and space (Cresswell, 2006), history and geography (Cresswell, 2010), and its diverse opportunity heavily depends on historical context and socio-economics, as well as culture and politics (Morokvasic, 2004). Moreover, Massey (1993) upholds that mobility is located and materialised, with uneven distribution of power, referring to "power geometrics". This is further linked with social inequalities, which as Urry (2000:195) argues "are often spatial, resulting from hugely uneven forms of access to, or the effects of, various kinds of mobility". Similarly, Murphy-Lejeune (2002:4) depicts mobility as "the quality of those who can easily move and adapt to different environment" within terms of geographic locations as well as social, psychological, cultural and linguistic domains. More recently, researchers point out that mobility has progressively broadened the meaning from physical mobility to include social practices, information and ideas (Murphy-Lejeune, 2008:14). Resulting from this is a new interpretation of mobility, which has become a "fashionable concept, even a myth, evoking above all fluidity, continuity, and seamlessness" (*ibid.*). Such a perspective is well described by Shellar and Urry (2006) as "mobility turn", from vertical or social mobility to "'horizontal' mobility, a space of networks and fluidity rather than fixed space and time" (Botterill, 2011:49; see also: Urry, 2000; Castells, 2000).

The timelessness of movement has also been ascribed to contemporary migration, which according to King (2002:94) has been altered by the forces of globalisation, such as "new connectivities" and "space – time flexibilities". Thus, the conception of migration can no longer be defined as "a movement across a threshold distance for a specified threshold of time" (*ibid*.). Furthermore, one of the forms of migration, short term migration, has been inferred by scholars and policy makers as varying in the length of time of a sojourner's stay, presenting the need to accept impending "space-time flexibilities" within the artificially set time-frames of the event *(ibid.)*. In addition, Jöns (2009) suggests that a brain circulation, understood as acquiring and disseminating knowledge and skills in multiple countries of migration, became a conceptual alternative to King's (2002:90) "never straightforward boundary between migration and mobility". However, it is not always about economy, but also migrants' wellbeing and lifestyle (O'Reilly, 2009). Therefore, both, migration and mobility ought to be equally appreciated in the case of graduate movements, and looked upon from the perspective of individuals' agency as well as structural constraints (see Section 2.2).

In official terms, the OECD has defined short term or temporary migration as a stay in a host country that does not exceed three months. In some countries, this temporariness can be controlled via issuing tourist visas for three months (i.e. United States), after which the individual needs to leave the country. In case of Australia, migration policies distinguish permanent immigrants, long-term temporary immigrants who stay at least 12 months for work, business or education, and short-term temporary visitors (Castles, 2000). Samers (2010:10) explains that migration can also be "permanently temporary", when migrant frequently returns to the country of origin, which is linked to circular migration. Other researchers suggest new classifications of migration types, based on the length of stay in the destination countries which links to immigration policy. For instance, Murphy-Lejeune (2002:3-4) notes an indefinite substitute located on the margin of mobility and migration, namely the modern "traveller" who "comes and goes, circulating between spaces and times for variable durations", which are longer than "tourist's transient passage", but shorter than "migrant's long term stay".

Furthermore, Iglicka (2000) discerns four types of migrants using the example of the dynamics of Polish migration to Germany during the 1990s. She discusses the difference between movements based on the length of stay of such migrants, naming those who stay for less than three months "shuttle" or "pendular" migrants, and those who move for more than three months, but less than a year, "short term" migrants. According to Iglicka (2000), "long term" migrants move to a host country for more than a year, and those who decide to permanently reside there –

"settler migrants". Such variations highlight the scope of the debate on definition of migration, which is constantly changing in response to "political and economic goals and public attitudes" (Castles, 2000:270), but also due to the development of technology of communication, broader access to it, and diverse motivations for movement.

The rapid changes occurring within the global arena of migration can be illustrated by the example of mobile individuals who are highly-skilled and educated. Some researchers emphasise that highly-skilled individuals whose movement tends to be intermittent and short term can be associated with terms of mobility rather than migration "as it does fewer assumptions about the length of time involved" (Salt and Koser, 1997:288), and is associated with the ability of being mobile. They argue further that highly-skilled migration continues to evolve due to emergence of the new forms of short term movements, which "outweigh traditional longer-term transfers" (*ibid*.).

On the whole, the debate among scholars about the meaning of the word "migration" with regards to the emerging contemporary motion of people brought about its redefinition by the usage of mobility and movement denotations. Both notions convey an unarticulated time frame of the individuals stay in the destination locations understood in the context of geographical places and spaces, ranging from socio-cultural to psychological spheres and individuals' interactions between them. In the light of emerging new forms of movement that involve various time scales, researchers call for a change of the profound meaning of migration. Salt and Koser (1997:299) suggest that the long established meaning of migration as permanent or at least of long-term stay, ought to be conceptualised as movement, which "duration away may range from days to years". On the one hand, there are types of migrants who follow the long established pattern of migrant settlement in other locations. On the other hand, there are contemporary forms of migration which can be re-defined as fluid in time and space movement. They are practiced by diverse types of migrants, but predominantly associated with highly-skilled and educated individuals and those who possess the knowledge and previous experience of mobility, or the mobility capital (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). Such forms of movement exercised by educated individuals have been referred to by other researchers as circular migration (Vertovec, 2007; Portes, 2009).

Despite "the age of migration" (Castles and Miller, 2009), the majority of the world is not involved in international migration (Samers, 2010). A few scholars cite statistical data on the numbers of international migrants, estimating 200 million or approximately 3.0% of the world

population living outside their country of origin (Castles and Miller, 2009; Samers, 2010). The reasons behind this may be twofold: "involuntary immobility" (Carling, 2002), and the lack of knowledge of how to be mobile. Bauman (1998a) observes that voluntary and chosen mobility is for certain individuals, since the majority of people even in Western countries are caught in a space and situation that holds little promise about their future, which derives from both limitations that prevent many people from migrating, including immigration policies.

Another aspect that influences people to migrate, is the knowledge of how to be mobile, which Murphy-Lejeune (2002:51) calls a "mobility capital" and defines the term as "a subcomponent of human capital". Vertovec (2007:5) terms such knowledge a "migration specific capital", which derives from the "self-perpetuating" nature of migration, where mobile individuals learn about migration itself, where and how to find accommodation or jobs. He further argues that previous experience of mobility and associated broad knowledge about movements decrease risks and costs for an individual when moving again, and increase chances of success, leading to the encouragement of "circular migration" (*ibid.*). The previous experience of mobility trains an individual to adapt to subsequent changes in geographical location, cultural spheres and systems, and provides an opportunity for making new contacts that may assist in the potential upcoming movements. In addition, as Baláz *et al.* (2004:12) stress "temporary migration is a learning experience, which provides enhanced knowledge and self confidence, thereby facilitating permanent migration", but it does not guarantee permanent migration. Other researchers emphasised the importance of not only international, but also internal mobility, within one's country boundaries, which can contribute to the experience of another culture. For example, Murphy-Lejeune (2002:66) argued that young people who are in a transit between two different worlds, for instance moving to another city to begin their university education, have to adapt to a new environment and lifestyle, what "prepares the ground for later experiences", including external mobility.

Carling (2002:32) points the debate towards those individuals who wish to migrate, but are not able to due to restrictive immigration policies and other barriers that potential migrants are differently equipped to overcome. She argues that an individual's ability to migrate is determined by person's age, gender, educational attainment, social network, family migration history, socio-economic status and many others. In her findings, socio-economic characteristics become a particularly decisive element of person's aspirations and abilities to migrate. She argues that the low income individuals without stable career arrangements and education are

"expected to have a high aspiration to emigrate" but the same such characteristics will prevent their movements abroad (Carling, 2002:33).

Conversely, individuals from wealthy backgrounds show lower aspirations for migration, amid characteristics that increase their abilities to migrate. She argues that such a scenario will lead to a reduction in the numbers of migrants, however, on the other side of the spectrum, "most of the migrants come from the middle socio-economic strata" (*ibid*.: 33). Castles (2000:272) links that to development, economic and educational improvements that make people seek better opportunities in other places. Therefore, as a result, "middle-income groups in developing areas are most likely to depart". On the one hand, Samers (2010) contends that governments create obstacles for especially low-skilled or low-income migrants. For example it is becoming more and more difficult for low skilled migrants from outside of the EEA to enter Europe, unless it is under family reunification scheme. On the other hand, such a statement can be challenged by providing the example of the recently introduced migration cap for skilled workers from outside of the European Economic Area (BBC, 23/11/2010) in the UK, indicating that governments and publics continue to create obstacles for various groups and types of highly skilled migrants (Mavroudi and Warren, in press).

Regardless of the category of migrants, decisions on migration cannot be viewed as "simple" ones (Samers, 2010:105), as they "relate to migrant's past and anticipated future" (Boyle *et al.*, 1998:80). Samers (2010:8) describes migration as "a complicated, challenging and diverse phenomenon involving changing statuses and multiple geographical trajectories". Decisions to migrate can be "pushed" by some factors, for example the economic situation of a migrant in the home country, a need to avoid unemployment, or migrants may be compelled to move to another country by circumstances that are beyond their control – poverty, political issues (King, 2002:92). Another group differentiated by King (2002:92) are "forced migrants" for whom the decision to migrate has been taken by others, for instance refugees or forced repatriation. Samers (2010:300) indicates that especially low income migrants – "whether they are highly-skilled or not, may suffer from forced mobility", which is linked with searching for a "better life". Often, these migrants are forced to migrate, even though governments recognise them as "voluntary migrants" (Samers, 2010:13). Castles and Van Hear (2005) refer to a "migration-asylum nexus", highlighting difficulties in separating forced and economic migration, due to the boundaries between the two becoming blurred and difficult to recognise. The "free floating global movers" (Favell and Smith, 2006), or "persons who choose to migrate to satisfy non-economic life-choice ambitions, for instance to obtain a better education" (King, 2002:92) can also be influenced by

some circumstances, and encouragements, thus falling into a "pushed" category, as boundaries between these four types are elusive and blurred. As Glaser (2001:33, in: Recchi, 2006:64) states, "people do not seek to migrate unless there are compelling reasons", as the risks of movement will have a long lasting effect on migrants themselves, for example positive and negative aspects of leaving family behind.

Currently, increasing competition for talent (OECD, 2001), or "war over skills" (Iredale, 2001:21), the amplification of knowledge and, in particular, the expanding globalisation of markets, favour the (new) migration flow of the highly-skilled. However, mobility patterns and motivations for migration of this type of migrants may become clearer after further breakdown of who those highly-skilled are. For instance highly-skilled specialists may have different migration motivations and socio-economic situation than students or new graduates. Therefore, the next section focuses not only on definitions of highly-skilled migrants, but also their classification.

2.2 Highly-skilled migration

The focus of early research into highly-skilled migrants was placed on expatriates and permanent settlement, and with the term of highly-skilled migrants came the notion of a "brain-drain". In the UK, the study of highly-skilled migration began in the 1960s with a scientific brain-drain mainly to the US (Salt and Koser, 1997), which in the next decade shifted towards emigration of the most educated citizens from developing countries to the New World. Once again "brain-drain" came into spotlight after political change in Eastern Europe in the 1990s, when highly-skilled migrants took mundane occupations in the West. That movement was repeated after another recent transformation in Europe – the EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007. Recently, the phenomenon of brain-drain is being replaced with the increasing importance of short and long-term cross-border mobility, potentially creating "brain circulation" of highly-skilled migrants on a global scale (Baláz and Williams, 2004; Ackers, 2005b; Favell and Smith, 2006).

The heterogeneity of highly-skilled international migration become apparent in the 1980s (Salt and Koser, 1997), and stimulated research about highly-skilled specialists relocating on temporary contracts, so-called "nomadic workers" (Beaverstock, 2005). Castells (2000) and Beaverstock (2005) call such highly-skilled and knowledge rich "transnational managerial elites". Although successful, international knowledge rich individuals play a key part in global financial operations (i.e. Beaverstock, 2002, 2005), they constitute only a part of highly-skilled

migration flows. Pollack and Solimano (2004) divided highly-skilled migrants into groups that pertain to various labour market sectors, such as education, business sector and banking industry. According to them, highly-skilled migrants that belong to the education (and science) sector include students, scientists, scholars and researchers; those who fit in to the business sector are, for example engineers, information technology experts, managers, whereas migrants in the banking industry include experts in risk analysis, portfolio managers, strategists and others. However, there is no consistency among researchers and policy makers in defining highly-skilled migrants, and two variables: qualifications and skills ought to be taken into account.

2.2.1 Highly-skilled or highly-qualified?

The debate about who can be classified as a highly-skilled migrant is an ongoing one among scholars. According to one of the definitions presented by policy makers, highly-skilled migrants carry high standards of knowledge and skills, which are equivalent of at least a first degree of tertiary education attained in their native or destination countries, even if they cannot be immediately used in the country of destination (Cancedda, 2005:25). Samers (2010:14) refers to secondary or post-secondary education as the level above which highly-skilled can be differentiated from low-skilled, who lack that education or professional qualifications to obtain "highly paid" jobs. Moreover, Salt (1997) referred to the term "expertise" as an extra asset to general skills, and distinguished two types: skills and qualifications based professional expertise.

Furthermore, economists have aimed to define who the highly-skilled are. Chiswick *et al.* (2005) argue that, the labour markets generate and demand job-specific skills, whereas general skills are those to be attained through a formal education. Therefore, in migratory contexts one would need a set of skills to be called skilled, and those Chiswick *et al.* (2005:488) described as: "labour market information, destination language proficiency, occupational licences, certification or credentials, as well as more narrowly, task-specific skills". However, it is important to remember that the ability to acquire proficiency in another language decreases with age (Chiswick and Miller, 2008).

This irregularity in defining of highly-skilled migrants provoked Csedő (2008) to categorise two groups of migrants: highly-qualified and highly-skilled. The characterisation of both cohorts is based on the level of education obtained prior to migration, with the equivalent of a third level education as minimum required to be classified as highly-qualified. This stance opposes Salt's

(1997) "expertise" typology, where those educated to a degree level only have general skills, but lack extra skills or knowledge to be labelled as highly-skilled or qualified.

Salt (1997:3) defines graduate migrants as individuals who obtained an equivalent of tertiary educational qualification, but cannot immediately be categorised as highly-skilled from the labour market perspective. He assumed that graduates are unlikely to be employed within a high expertise environment and those who did not attend university but acquired job experience can often be labelled as highly-skilled. Salt's supposition of graduates' weaknesses in the labour market due to having generic skills and knowledge as opposed to expertise, stresses the significance of skills enrichment within further education or the labour market. However, if none of them become available, the deskilling of graduate migrants may occur.

Nonetheless, as Pollack and Solimano (2004:2) argue, "skills can also be acquired through experience and what is skilled or unskilled may vary from country to country and depends on the job being performed". This can be envisaged in the example of various countries definitions of and approaches to highly-skilled migrants through setting criteria for visa applicants. This way labour immigration policies in countries such as Australia are increasingly differentiating migrants on the skills level, recruiting migrants with skills that are of value to the national economy (Hawthorne, 2005; Markus *et al.,* 2009).

While designing immigration policies, issues related to current skills shortages are often taken into consideration. For example, in order to enter Australia under the Skilled Migrant Visa system, applicant must have post-secondary (such as university or trade) qualifications, and has to be employed in skilled occupation for 12-18 months prior to application, which is nominated on Skilled Occupations List and fits applicants' qualifications and skills. In comparison, UK immigration policy until December 2010 allowed highly-skilled people to look for work or self-employment opportunities in the UK under the Tier 1 (General) category (UKBA, 05/02/2011). Through that system, applicants were awarded points based on their qualifications, previous earnings, UK experience, age, English language skills and funds. With regards to qualifications, the points were allocated to those who achieved minimum a Bachelor degree, and maximum score within that category was for those who obtained PhD and MBA from a list of specific universities. Similarly, Tier 2 (General) category used points based system, where the higher the education the higher the score applicants received. However, migrants also have difficulty in finding a job due to immigration policy in the UK, e.g. where companies have to perform the resident labour market test if the job is not in demand. Therefore, the focus on employability of

"local" workers, and restrictions on employing from outside EEA can put off smaller and medium size companies employing people from other countries. On the other side of spectrum are experience and negotiation of immigration policies (Mavroudi and Warren, in press), which are often omitted in scholars on skilled and highly-skilled migration.

On the contrary, sociologists disagree on the matter of skills attainment and obtained university qualifications as leading to the same product – a highly-skilled individual (Noon and Blyton, 2002). Since education is perceived as one of the most important components of human capital (next to work experience and language knowledge), calculating the number of years of completed education has served as the basis for differentiation of highly-skilled from others. Some researchers deviate from this unbalanced terminology by naming their respondents students, graduates and professionals, where a clear measurement can be put into practice. Csedő (2009) for the purpose of her research distinguished graduates who completed at least a degree of tertiary education, and professionals, who are graduates with at least five years of professional experience. Iradale (2001:8) considers highly-skilled as those having a university degree or equivalent experience in a given field; however, for the principle of her study she distinguished a group of "professionals with a university degree" (*ibid*.).

As it has been shown, amid current discussions on who can be named highly-skilled or highly-qualified, most authors use different classifications for the purpose of their research. There is no general consensus on the definition of highly-skilled; however it is accepted to measure the number of years of completed education, and those who achieved an undergraduate degree of tertiary education are named as highly-skilled, or those with higher level of human capital (Pollack and Solimano, 2004). Nonetheless, differentiation of various cohorts within highly-skilled migrants, for instance graduates with some years of professional work experience, or those without, could provide better understanding of market and society incorporation of this type of migrants in the host countries. This could help to recognise patterns of highly-skilled migration. Conversely, perception and self-assessment of those who are classified by governments and academics as highly-skilled could provide additional insights for the definition formation of the highly-skilled. In particular, worthy of attention is the issue of graduate migrants with high level education and general skills attainment, and their perception of which category of migrants they could refer themselves to. Such a self-assessment could provide the clues on the shortcomings of education systems, and the role of migration process in the re-classification of one's formal documentation and confidence in the labour market.

2.2.2 Students and graduates as a subset of highly-skilled migration

The emerging issue of the internationalisation of HE provides a fresh outlook on student and graduate migration (Salt and Koser, 1997), especially those from middle-class backgrounds (Waters, 2006; Brooks and Waters, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c), as a subset of highly-skilled migration, about which knowledge is still negligible. Favell and Smith (2006:2) includes within the globally mobile skilled and educated group: "ambitious or adventurous upwardly mobile middle-classes", including students and graduates deriving from that socio-economic background, and "migrants from intermediate developing states" who cannot be described as "elites". Szelenyi (2006:66) explains that "student migration, especially on the graduate level, forms an integral part of the cross-border mobility of the highly-skilled"; however, as many researchers point out, the subject is under researched. Similarly, Cairns (2009) identifies the absence of youth in migration theory (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000; Castles and Miller, 2009), particularly in relation to those who are highly-qualified graduates.

Conversely, Brunello *et al.* (2007:74) indicate that "HE is associated with general skills, adaptability of individuals and, in the case of HE, some experience of studying in another city or region". Therefore, highly educated individuals should not necessarily be labelled as highly-skilled, especially in case of young fresh graduates, with university generated general skills. Nonetheless, this cannot be generalised since some university students work part time or volunteer to gain relevant industry or organisational experience along with valuable marketable skills, and general knowledge that is supplied by the university. Additionally, access to HE for everyone, but also the natural process of technology advancement, contributed to a steady increase in the economic value of theoretical knowledge. That resulted in a rise in qualifications required to be employed in any job, forcing students to think of additional skills that can be obtained at multiple universities nationally and abroad, or outside of the HE institution (Brown *et al.*, 2000; Brown and Hesketh, 2004).

Furthermore, the division between students and graduates is observed, with international student mobility being well studied (Waters, 2006; Brooks and Waters, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c), comparatively to graduates movement being of less focus, and predominantly within economics and economic geography (Bristow *et al.*, 2011). In 2007, more than 2.9 million students sought an education outside their home country, which represents a 57.0% increase since 1999 (OECD,

2009b). The Institute of International Education (2009) predicts a further increase of mobile young people by 8 million by 2025. A criticism is that data on the numbers of international students underestimates the real scale of the mobility, mainly because UNESCO and OECD system classification of data count only students who moved for a year (Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2009). This approach eliminates students enrolled in short term study programmes, for instance ERASMUS-Socrates or Leonardo that are an integral part of student migration across Europe. Also, data being primarily collected by ministries of education, enrolments in private institutions, which are growing fast in some countries, are not always captured, leading to misrepresentative numbers of international students (Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2009).

There are some other limitations in research on student migration, which is related to how governments define and categorise them, either as migrants or just as temporary students. King (2010) links it with conventional perceptions of migrants as "workers" or "poor people" which are different to how international students behave (King, 2010:1355). They often self- identify as "visiting students", and "distance themselves from the image of a poor Third World migrant", following the cultural canons of the host country and not challenging it by "preserving own culture, language and religions"; this influences the public who do not see them as migrants, and the host countries institutions call them "visiting students" (*ibid*.). Murphy-Lejeune (2002:4) identifies student migrants as "student travellers", whose mobility behaviours draw a distinctive line between of what is understood as the "traditional migrants" and "the contemporary mobile individual". She described the "traveller" as "a modern nomad, who comes and goes, circulating between spaces and times for variable durations", and students as "travellers in transition from migration to mobility" (*ibid*.).

The main attention among scholars on student migration and mobility has become the destination and origin of international student flows, showing high concentrations of students in Anglophone countries and Europe in general. The US accounted for 29.0% of the total, followed by the UK (13.0%), Germany (10.0%) and France (9.0%) (Baláz and Williams, 2004; Bhandari and Blumental, 2009). Statistics also show that, almost half of the students in the UK and Germany came from other European countries, with the growing number of those coming from Eastern Europe. For example, there were 38000 Polish students studying in another European country in 2006, which positioned them in third place in terms of student mobility within Europe, behind Germany and France (Eurostat, 2007). Important influences of intra-European mobility are European Commission assisted student mobility programmes – ERASMUS-Socrates, Tempus or

Leonardo. The few studies that address youth migration are within those schemes, mainly ERASMUS-Socrates (Deakin, 2012).

However, independent, young "spontaneous" movers, who may already be tertiary graduates of their home countries universities, or who may enter HE again at some stage of their lives abroad have received less attention (i.e. King, 2002; King and Ruis-Gelices 2003; Findlay *et al.*, 2006, Rivza and Teichler, 2007; Brooks and Waters, 2010a). The existing research is focused predominantly on graduates migration within Western countries (Guth and Gill, 2008; Wiers-Jenssen, 2008; Bond *at al.,* 2010; Brooks and Waters, 2010), and those within the EU referred yet again to Western and South Europe (Faggian *et al*., 2007; Faggian and McCann, 2009; Cairns, 2009; Mosca and Wright, 2010, 2011; Bristow *et al.,* 2011; Conti, 2011). There is a lacuna of research on Central and East to West graduate migration across the EU after its enlargement in 2004, with a few examples of studies carried out (i.e. Csedő, 2008; Trevena, 2011). However, in the light of increased Polish migration to the UK and to England more specifically, young and educated individuals were commonly mentioned (Drinkwater *et al.*, 2006, Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009), but they did not constitute a case study. Therefore, the pattern of migration of those young highly-qualified individuals requires further research, since their movement may impact on both countries: origin and destination with brain-drain and brain-gain, as consequences. It may also be contributing to "brain circulation" within the EU and worldwide, when highly-skilled migrants move between various countries, which act as "steps", "stages" or "transient countries" (Samers, 2010:10). In the process, they acquire more human capital, but also disseminate their knowledge, skills and ideas, before they move on to their "final destination" (*ibid*.: 10), which may never occur. Therefore, it is important to look into graduates' motivations for not one but multiple migrations and their outcomes in terms of career trajectories.

2.2.3 Motivations for migration

The limited amount of research on the motivations of graduates' mobility is surprising, given the fact that mobility amongst young qualified people, although intensifying, is not a new phenomenon. According to Kennedy (2010:467), it is employment and career or educational needs that are the paramount in deciding to migrate "although the desire to travel and/or escape from home were also significant". Favell and Smith (2006) perceive graduate migration as a sequential process, where initial migration begins when students move to another location for the purpose of studies, which then implies further mobility for employment reasons after graduation.

Faggian *et al.* (2007) observe that both the level of human capital (see Section 2.2.3 Chapter 2) and the history of previous migration influenced graduates' job market search and ability to undertake regional or national employment. In addition, those who migrated for their HE should experience lower psychological and emotional costs of future mobility for employment purposes (Da Vanzo, 1983). This is related to their initial experience of being "confronted with classmates from other sub-regions or areas" (Brunello *et al*., 2007:74), which enhances their interpersonal skills, for example "raises the ability to exchange and communicate" (*ibid*.). Wier-Janssen (2008) suggests that mobile students are more likely than their peers to secure a job abroad upon graduation. In that respect, HE received in foreign locations, enriches young migrants with human and personal capital, facilitates development of social cross national networks, and knowledge about mobility and migration itself. It also prepares them for further potential mobility, migration and eventually circulation (Samers, 2010).

Some migration scholars suggest that the level of human capital of a graduate migrant will be a significant factor in one's movement between regions. However, also the chances of employment and differences in regional wages may prove to be stimulants of a graduate mobility (Faggian *et al*., 2006; 2007). Kennedy (2010) argues that economic constraints are often a more important reason in choosing a place of destination than personal preference. According to Hoare and Corver (2010:491), it is an ongoing choice of destinations, as "with ever more mobile labour forces, both spatially and between jobs, occupations and employers, any assumption that first destinations represent jobs and labour markets for life is clearly never less tenable than now".

On the other hand, there are only a few authors who look at graduate migration beyond economics, and which often was related to life evolvement. For example, Bond *et al.* (2008) argues, that as graduates mature, other aspects, such as environment suitability for family formation and long-term relationships becomes a priority to them. The life-course (see Section 2.2.1) approach to migration, with age and marital status as its descriptors, have been introduced in a few studies on college graduate migrants' behaviour within American studies (i.e. Plane and Heins, 2003; Whisler *et al.*, 2008). For example, Whisler *et al.* (2008) identifies six distinct groups of college-educated, reflecting different life-stages: recent graduates, the young married, settled down middle-agers, about to retire empty-nesters, and retired empty-nesters, with different choices on mobility and location depending on the life-phase and age of individuals. Furthermore, researchers referred to "amenities" of places (Whisler *et al.*, 2008:63), which they described as "place-specific attributes that people differentially value at different stages of their

life". Researchers also underlined that places offer "bundles of amenities", and therefore migrants have to constantly "take the bad with the good in choosing the place where its set of attributes best satisfies their tastes and preferences" (*ibid*.). Furthermore, Whisler *et al.* (2008) calls for the research on migration patterns of highly educated with a reference to locational choices, whose high income potential imposes "fewer constraints on relocating according to tastes and preferences" (*ibid*.).

Also, Bond *et al.* (2010) identify a lack of detailed research on graduates' motivations for further migration, whereas Favell and Smith (2006) recognise major gaps in study on the everyday reality of highly educated migrants who come from middle class backgrounds, who are not classified as "elites", and who arrive from "bell-shaped" class structured countries. Furthermore, Szelenyi (2006) stresses the limitations in the knowledge of short and long-term migratory intentions and behaviours of students who obtained their degrees outside their home countries. Additionally, Baláz and Williams (2004) underline the lack of research on graduates' motivations for return, which are linked to "brain circulation". At the same time, there are researchers who perceive graduates as a primary source of talented human capital and their migration as knowledge transfer between regions (i.e. Florida, 1999; Faggian and McCann, 2009; Bristow *et al.*, 2011), which should be looked into accordingly.

Also, worthy of further investigation is the relation of the social background of graduates and their potential belonging to social generations, and influence of these on patterns of their spatial and social mobility. In addition, graduates' perception on their identities, and impact of migration on the process of dynamic identity formation should be looked into. Therefore, the following sections will introduce the above mentioned theories, beginning with the applicability of structure-agency in graduate migration studies, including economic and sociologic concepts such as human, cultural and personal capital. This will be shown in the light of graduate life-courses.

2.3 Impact of structure-agency debates on graduate life-courses

The debate over the role of structure and agency was initiated by Giddens' "structuration theory" (1984), broadly disputed since (Archer, 1982, 1995, 1996; Mouzelis 1995, 1996; Healy, 1998), with the effects of strong reference in migration theories (Halfacree, 1995; Goss and Lindquist, 1995, Smith, 2004), and often critiqued for its duality: the constraint and facilitation of migration (Bakewell, 2010). Giddens (1984:25) views structure as having a dual nature "medium and the

outcome of the social practices they recursively organize". In other words, structure can be understood as the "rules and resources, which human agents are knowledgeable about, and which they use to achieve certain aims, albeit through reflective practices" (Samers, 2010:104). Even though some actions may be constrained, "people's agency ensures that they always have some degree of freedom – some room to manoeuvre" (Bakewell, 2010:1695). Conversely, the meaning of a "human agent" is well described by Sewell (1992:20):

> "To be an agent means to be capable of exerting some degrees of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree".

Nonetheless, there are more layers to human agency, which are highlighted by Halfacree and Boyle (1993), and Halfacree (1995), who divide agency into discursive and non-discursive, and refer to a reciprocal relationship between resources and rules deriving from structures, and human agency in migration decision-making processes. In particular, they underlined a lack of focus by migration scholars on unintentional aspects of human agency related to family migration decision-making. This thesis follows the group of migration scholars which acknowledged the importance of both structure and agency (Goss and Lindquist, 1995; Morawska, 2001; Conway, 2007), which may also be of significance in the migration practices of graduates. At the same time, this thesis adopts the view that integrating different disciplinary approaches proves to be indispensable in attempts to understand the causes of migration, as well as patterns of migration (Boswell and Mueser, 2008:519).

Furthermore, Smith (2004:274) raises the question of "intentionality and unintentionality of different post-migration employment status and labour market participation" within family migration. Such a question may hold valid for other types of migrants, in particular, graduates, who may seek migratory perspectives in the light of the recent economic recession that begun in 2008. Correspondingly, in migratory contexts, discussing skills and education acquisition and their usage in the labour markets requires various points of view, including economists, as well as sociologists and geographers.

This section discusses various notions used by migration scholars in making a contribution to a better understanding of migration. It employs the concept of structure and human agency, and other scholarly concepts such as human capital and personal capital which acquisition may depend on structure-agency power relation. The section begins with "human capital", a concept

exported from economics, and its transfer across the countries. Then it follows with personal, social and cultural capital, the notions incorporated into migration scholars from sociology. Finally, the importance of the life-course perspective is highlighted. In addition, this section looks at the consequences of struggle or balancing between agency and structure, including the role of the place of destination and generational belonging in graduate migrants' life and career development. This is in the light of Smith's (2004:273) call for the "more sophisticated analysis of human agency" in migratory contexts.

2.3.1 Human capital - agency in its acquisition and the structural ambivalence of its application

The notion of human capital has been defined as "the knowledge, skills and competences and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity" (OECD, 1998:9). A common practice among economists is to measure human capital in terms of years of completed education, with the more credentials achieved the higher level of human capital reached. Therefore, education gained with all qualifications and credentials form its core. This approach however has been disputed by other scholars who have found that education becomes a commodity that increases the possibilities of getting a job, rather than providing skills for doing the job. Therefore, it no longer can be a single measure to highlight the level of human capital (Bills, 2004; Brunello *et al*, 2007; Csedő, 2008), or stating who is highly educated or highly-skilled/qualified in the labour market. At the same time, the emergence of a "diploma disease" (Dore, 1976), or the phenomenon of "over-qualification" (Bills, 2004) has been recognised, and is translated as holding excess of educational qualifications relative to those their jobs require (Green and Zhu, 2008).

Moreover, Dolton and Silles (2003) confer that over the life-course people shift in and out of over-education. Therefore, they argue, it is not a "static condition", as some start a job for which they feel or are over-qualified, but they also make a relatively quick progress to something that is more suitable for their qualifications. Other researchers, such as Green and McIntosh (2007) also distinguish qualifications from skills, and Green and Zhu (2008) identify that the rising extent of over-qualification was not paired with skill underutilisation, leading to a hypothesis that although graduates were taking up jobs below their qualifications, they nonetheless were making use of their skills in such work places. Additionally, Green and McIntosh (2007) recognise that with the broader scope of skills shortages reported by employers in the UK, there is a growing number of highly-educated individuals, and seemingly over-qualified people. This led to a conclusion that

the highly-qualified often do not convey appropriate levels of skills required to perform in higher skilled jobs.

Conversely, as Dolton and Silles (2003:204) identify, graduates who are over-educated at the start of their careers find it more problematic to obtain graduate jobs later, when compared to those who initially commenced employment that requires a degree. They found that the probability of being over-educated in the future is statistically significant for those who were over-educated in their first occupations after graduation, where they were receiving on-the-job training. Also, Hartog (2000) states that over-education is generally higher in the time of transition from school to work. From the point of view of human capital theory, it is predominantly lack of experience that results in the high incidence of over-education (Allen and Velden, 2001). Additionally, the language knowledge impacts on the use of skills in a destination country. Some scholarship suggest that proficiency in the language of a host country is more important for increasing chances of migrants involvement in the labour market (Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003; Rooth and Ekberg, 2006; Chiswick and Miller, 2008), than only educational achievement in the home country.

Both economists and sociologists recognised two reasons for education under-utilisation: employers' lack of information to assess the credentials, and institutional structures blocking immigrants' ability to use their talent and skills (Salaff and Greve, 2003). They further argue that with the first scenario being just a matter of time, until migrants' qualifications become recognised, the latter can force migrants to invest in new, locally recognised skills in order to enter the system. As Friedberg (2000:221) points out, one of the options would be to acquire additional education following immigration, which appears to "confer a compound benefit by raising the return to education acquired abroad". Csedő (2008) reveals that highly-qualified Romanian and Hungarian migrants in the UK want to invest in their human capital because of two reasons: emerging "qualificationism" and the quality and international prestige of the UK tertiary education, with another reason being problems in credentials and skills recognition. Csedő (2008:807) adds another element to the process of skills recognition, which is "immigrants' ability to signal the value of their qualifications in specific social contexts" to employers in the destination labour market. Therefore, migrants' skills and qualifications obtained from their native country may be better utilised, once skills advancement relevant to the place of destination was followed, and the negotiation skills in the new social context acquired.

Overall, the tendency of decoupling of qualifications and skills within economy, and career development of graduates should be further investigated, as it may provide with answers about which migrants can be classified as highly-skilled. Also, it may clarify, whether graduates can be referred to as highly-skilled in the labour market, and how graduates try to advance their labour market positions.

2.3.2 Transferability of human capital and the role of higher education internationalisation

The location and culture of the place where general skills and expertise are acquired is significant for their future transferability. This can be looked upon from the perspective of structures, for example, labour market customs and requirements in the receiving countries, as well as abilities of graduates to act in signalling of the value of their human capital gained, or overcoming imposed constraints. Therefore, Frieddberg (2000) argues that the portability of human capital across countries is imperfect, with not only differences in the quality of educational systems between countries, but also experiences from the home country. His main assumption was that migrants with comparable demographic characteristics and measured skills attainment to the native population will find themselves in a disadvantaged position in the labour market after migration. For those reasons, the internationalisation of the HE, which involves physical mobility of students to another country or region, could potentially even out the discrepancies. Such mobility has been "the core activity for the internationalisation of higher education" (Kehm and Teichler, 2007:271), which recently became propelled also by globalisation and rise of other mobility forms, for instance through Information Technology, the knowledge economy (Kofman, 2007) and an integrated world economy (Altbach, 2004).

At the same time, there are many differing interpretations of the internationalisation of HE, linked to the concept of globalization (Knight, 1997). As Altbach observes (2004) due to the centrality of the knowledge economy and education for the new economy, higher education fulfils an even more important role both within countries and internationally. One of the examples is a debate concerning the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) – "an effort by multinational corporations and some government agencies in the rich countries to integrate HE into the legal structures of world trade through the World Trade Organisation" (Altbach, 2004:3). Furthermore, Healey (2006:2) comments that it is "the internationalisation of the *student* body that gives rise to the perception that universities are beginning to mimic corporations in their outlook".

On the other hand, Iredale (2001) argues that the internationalisation and standardisation of education in Western countries causes barriers in skills transferring for those graduating in developing countries and in economic transition. In addition to the numerous difficulties for graduate migrants may be unfamiliarity with socio-cultural characteristics of the receiving country, lack of proficiency in the language, human relations and key contacts creating a lack of opportunities for graduates to enter the labour market. The OECD (2009a) presented a number of difficulties that qualified immigrants may encounter when accessing labour markets in OECD countries. These are attributable to: "problems with recognition of degrees acquired in the country of origin, unobserved differences in 'value' of degrees or inherent skills, a lack of human and social capital related to the country of destination, local labour market situation as well as assorted forms of discrimination" (OECD, 2007:132).

Therefore, Chapman and Iredale (1993) regard general skills and those of international context, so gained, for instance, in Western countries, as more easily transferable in comparison to "expertise" gained in other countries. Csedő (2009:24) takes it further - suggesting the benefits of cross-border mobility especially for inexperienced graduates with standard, not strictly technical skills, but which are necessary to "understand contemporary societies" (Cancedda, 2005:26). Correspondingly, Brunello *et al.* (2007) observe that "in a world of increased turbulence, for example, in the context of the European Enlargement, general and portable skills are more valuable". Overall, mobility for education purposes may increase future productivity and stock of human capital (Kaczmarczyk, 2010:183), which can aid mobile students and graduates with an understanding of different places and cultures on top of university knowledge gained.

However, Brunello *et al.* (2007) argue that not only HE achieved, but above all studying in another city or region is associated with the acquisition of general skills and adaptability, and those abilities induce mobility and cushion general human capital transfer. Therefore, one of the possibilities that could enable young educated migrants to transfer their knowledge, as well as obtain understanding of necessary cultural characteristics of a country is through further education in the host country. Tremblay (2002:41) argues that a degree from a host country can "lift the entry barriers related to the recognition of their diplomas, thereby facilitating the international transferability of their embedded human capital". Another advantage of graduating from tertiary institution in the host country is producing credentials that are "known" to local and international employers, but also "the linguistic and social proficiencies which are generally associated with education in the host country" (*ibid.*).

Consequently, the balancing between the agency and structure can be visible in the example of those graduate migrants who after arrival decided to enrol in further education or training, as part of transferring and enhancing their human capital, leading to further individualisation of their life-courses. However, human capital and its transferability, although important, can be viewed as just elements in a broad structure-agency relationship in graduate migrants' life-courses, and other aspects, for example personal capital and skills gained outside of the university may prove to be important in graduates' lives after migration.

2.3.3 Personal capital and individualisation of life-phases

The importance of skills, in particular employability skills have been supported by various governmental initiatives, and are reflected in the HE programs at British universities (Deakin, 2012). These are the UK-government funded and designed to support the development of employability skills, including Higher Education for Capability (1988) and Enterprise in Higher Education (1989), and the Dearing Report (1997), which recommends the development of key employability skills to be a central aim of HE. In particular, the Dearing Report (1997) advocates development of four main skills, which stimulate employability: communication skills, numeracy, the use of information technology and learning how to learn. Apart from these, the Report stressed the significance of capabilities: being able to be flexible and adaptable, to work in teams, and to manage own development and career. Above all, employability is "the relative chances of getting and maintaining different kind of employment" (Brown *et al.*, 2000:25), and it depends on the "personality package that needs to be sold in a tough-entry competition for jobs" *(ibid.)*. Therefore, it is not only about meeting the requirements for doing the job, but also about the position to others in a hierarchy of other job seekers.

At the same time, human capital can only be treated as a piecemeal in understanding of career trajectories of graduates in migratory context, where further experience and abilities, which often cannot be obtained solely within a classroom (Cranmer, 2006), influence the graduate migrants life-courses. The available research indicates that a degree gained at university forms the minimum towards employability, and the activity that is beyond it, including sandwich placements, and other employment based training being the few examples, allow for the full employability management (Brown *et al.*, 2000; Mason *et al.*, 2003; Cranmer, 2006; Brooks and Everett, 2009). Thus, as Brown *et al.* (2000:120) argue, "the value of an individual to an employer is no longer represented by the denomination of academic currency, but by the

economy of experience". However, others elucidate that it is not always the experience of work that leads to development of "the most useful employability skills", but rather the meaningful engagement in the discourse and activities associated with specific "communities of practice"' (Mason *et al.*, 2003:10).

Furthermore, economists (see Tomer, 2003; Brown and Hesketh, 2004) identify factors that influence employability of cohorts originating from the same social background, and with a similar level of acquired education, which cannot be defined in terms of human capital theory. They use the term "personal capital" which Tomer (2003:456) describes as "an individual's basic personal qualities", including the "quality of an individual's psychological, physical, and spiritual functioning". Brown and Hesketh (2004:220) argue that personal capital is closely related to "self-identity" the understanding of which influences the future success of the potential knowledge worker. The notion of "self identity" was introduced by Giddens (1991:5), who argues that the modern individual faces a diversity of possible selves, as the identity is no longer structured in advance, through social hierarchies. He disputes that identity is not a collection of traits either, but an ongoing process of reflexivity about the individual's personal biography. The available choices of for instance travel, education, job, meeting new acquaintances, provide the individuals with an opportunity of production of an ongoing story about their lives. In part, individuals have to plan their future life, by making choices about their lifestyles (O'Reilly, 2009), and identity for life-phases, rather than their entire life, and continuously build up their biographies with a reflexive outlook on "who I am" and "how I am to live" (Giddens, 1991:5).

In other words, personal capital is "who we are and what we have done in our lives beyond education", and it "reflects individual identity, human freedom, and social circumstances" (*ibid*.). Therefore, the personal capital could be regarded as an effect of human agency, which is linked to a broader structure-agency debate (Giddens, 1984). At the same time, "individual life-stages are shaped by particular social contexts and cannot be accounted for by a simple biological life-cycle model" (Hunt, 2010, in: Giddens and Sutton, 2010:169). Such a stance also means that modern individuals are conscious of the motion and transition of their biographies within social structures, influenced by constraints and possibilities deriving from these, as well as their agency in re-designing their own lives.

A shift towards the "choice biography" (Nilsen and Brannen, 2002a, 2002b), based on choices and decisions of individuals, influenced individualisation in the contemporary society (Beck, 1992). The individualism is described as "a compulsion for the manufacture, self design and self

staging of not just one's own biography but also its commitments and networks as preferences and life-phases change, under the overall conditions and modes of the welfare state, such as educational system (acquiring certificates), the labour market" (Beck, 1994:15). In other words, individualism enforces persons to become active agents of their life-phases. They can choose and decide, re-create and re-design their whole life-courses. Following Hutchinson (2007:14) "a life-course perspective is stage-like because it proposes that each person experiences a number of transitions, or changes in roles and statuses", which differ to previous roles individuals experienced. Hutchison (2007:15) refers to a concept of trajectories which are "long term patterns of stability and change in a person's life, involving multiple transitions". However, she further argues, that due to living in multiple spheres, lives of individuals are made up of multiple, intersecting trajectories, for example educational trajectories, work trajectories, family life trajectories, and these are not necessarily straight lines, however are expected to have some continuity of direction.

It also seems that the construction of life-course through human agency has its limits, which Hutchinson (2007) lists as structural and cultural arrangements of a given historical era, where unequal opportunities provide some members of a society with more options than others. Therefore, it is vital to look closer into Polish graduate migrants who grew up in time of social and economic transition taking place in Poland, and the role of human agency in their motivations for migration and further life-course construction in a new country. The aspects of social generations and historical time and space constraining or enabling graduates' horizontal and vertical mobility are discussed further in this Chapter, in Section 2.2.8.

Taken together, the features of human and personal capital are important when looking at migration of graduates. However, their life-courses even if looked reflectively upon, may point towards social and geographical mobility fragmentation due to various educational choices and labour markets uncertainty (Cairns, 2009:229). Such an outlook is especially valid from the perspective of continuing economic recession of 2008 (e.g. Akyüz, 2010), with its hallmark in weakened labour market incorporation of graduates across the EU Member States (e.g. ONS, 2011). Particularly, important are the effects of graduate migration, with the subject of brain-training and circulation within the EU.

2.3.4 The focus on brain-training and circulation

Looking at the young highly-skilled migration from the perspective of human and personal capital gained could provide valuable information on how these groups could be aided in the labour market incorporation within the EU. This is particularly important due to shrinking youth cohorts, caused by consistently low birth rates across Europe (Eurostat, 2010). In its entirety, Europe had 18.9 million registered active students in 2007, with more than 2 million students reported for each of the five Member States: the UK, German, France, Poland and Italy. Approximately 4.1 million students graduated from tertiary education in 2007 in the EU. In the same year, there were 487 thousand European students being educated in another EU country (Eurydice, 2009). Therefore, due to declining numbers of young Europeans, it is important to maintain the skills, abilities and employability of those with tertiary education, migrating between the EU countries and others immigrating to the EU, as they are the productive human force of the future Europe.

In the last decades, attention to both brain-drain and brain-gain has shifted from the initiated movement of highly-skilled workers from Europe to United States, towards flows of highly-skilled from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to the West (Ackers, 2005b). The concept of brain-drain refers to the "permanent or long term migration of highly-skilled individuals from the perspective of sending countries", whereas "brain-gain" refers to receiving countries that host highly-skilled migrant for extended periods, or often permanently (Szelenyi, 2006:68). To reverse the impact of the brain-drain and maximise gain for receiving and sending countries as well as migrants themselves, policy makers aim to facilitate highly-skilled migrants with possibilities of temporary return visits (Vertovec, 2007:3).

Therefore, the concept of "brain circulation" is thought to replace the traditional notions of brain-drain versus brain-gain, with the main reasons being "growing mobility of human talent across countries boundaries" (Daugeliene and Marcinkeviciene, 2009:50), and the nature of highly-skilled migration, that is becoming circular between host and origin countries (Vertovec, 2007). Portes (2009) argues that brain circulation refers to the professionals out migrations that commonly originate in mid-income and developed countries, where differentials in salaries between the origin and host countries are not so significant. However, Balaz and Williams (2004:5) emphasise the ever present threat of brain-drain across the new EU accession countries, arguing that selectivity of migration, with contemporary migrants being younger and better educated, can lead to "youth brain-drain".

This however depends on the preliminary strategy for mobility, with ever changing individuals' motivations. Balaz *et al.* (2004:7) argue that the initial temporary migration may lead to permanent migration, due to "migrants' resources and aspirations unintentionally moulded by their initial experiences", altering the desired pattern of brain circulation to an ultimate brain-drain for the sending country. Therefore, temporary migration fuelling brain circulation can be a "stage" in the migration process (Balaz, 2004:13). Other forms of brain migration that were differentiated in the example of international students, who migrate primarily to enhance their human capital in forms of education, language and other skills, can be termed as "brain-training" (Balaz and Williams, 2004:218), which is temporary in nature and can be regarded as a phase in the migration process.

Mobility can promote brain circulation and as Favell and Smith (2006:25) suggest, the economic impact of highly-skilled migration which evolved from brain-drain is now "encouraging brain circulation that feeds new forms of global competition". They refer to "contemporary transnationalism" with frequent movements of migrants, ideas, knowledge, information and skill sets between localities and countries contributing to brain circulation. Portes (2009) provides a different stance on transnationalism, stressing that the "cyclical flows" of professionals enable the transfer of scientific-technological knowledge, encouraging the new productive investments in sending countries can be outbalanced by the loss of population which is capable of implementing the new ideas on the national grounds. He argues that transnationalism is exercised mostly by immigrants who are established in a "more solid economic position" in the countries of destination, and the level of transnationalism is rising with the length of stay and education of migrants in the host countries (Portes, 2009:12). Nonetheless, scholars argue that highly-skilled migration can bring gains for receiving and sending countries, as well as migrants themselves creating proverbial "win-win-win" scenario (Vertovec, 2007:2). Findlay (2002:40) stresses that this can only be achieved by a strategy ensuring that "international skill mobility does not serve only the interests of western capital", but integrates the notion of brain circulation into international migration policies (Findlay, 2002; Castles and Miller, 2009).

One of the most important aspects of highly-skilled circular migration is knowledge transfer. However, brain circulation viewed as a means of disseminating acquired knowledge and generating new ideas that can be used across the borders may become restrained when the "external brain waste", that is of not using migrants gained qualifications, occurs in the host countries (Ackers, 2005a). In such cases, there is evidence of a brain-drain for the sending country, but gains are not registered for the receiving regions. In that respect, there is no

contribution of migrants, who cannot exercise their skills in the host country, or transfer of skills and knowledge during their stay and upon their return (Castles and Miller, 2009:65). However, Castles and Miller argue that when highly-skilled people cannot find employment at home, "they are not damaging the economy by leaving" (*ibid*.), or contributing to brain-drain of that country. The out migration in such a case can prevent "internal brain waste" or "stagnation" when highly-skilled individuals take up placements which are below their qualifications, in order to make a living (Ackers, 2005a:116). This can be illustrated by the example of Polish graduates, who experienced national labour market saturation with specialists in some disciplines, making it difficult to get a satisfying job, leading to decisions on temporary migrations to the UK to work in secondary labour sectors, for instance pubs in London (Korys, 2003).

However, the experience of working abroad that is "supposed to provide a chance to get to know the world, to learn language and to earn money", in practice led to the exclusion of Polish adolescents from the Polish labour market upon their return, and "limited possibilities for finding a satisfying job in Poland" (Korys, 2003:36). Thus, the potential brain circulation initiated by the domestic labour market difficulties and escape from "internal brain waste" was replaced by the "external brain waste" in the UK, which in turn disqualified the highly educated from the professional domestic labour market upon their return. A brain drain for a country means potential loss of knowledge and scientific expertise, and this has been confirmed in times when brain circulation is supposedly taking precedence over the fight for brains.

On the other hand, the hopes for brain circulation include appreciation of migrants' knowledge and skills by both the origin and host countries, and migrants' skills in articulating their expertise on the labour market. Nevertheless, it is not only achievement of a certain level of human capital, understood as qualifications and skills, that impacts on graduate migrants' achievement at the labour markets. There are also other factors, that of the social and cultural capital of graduates, whose ambitions and determination to obtain a full value of their qualifications depend on social origins (Roberts, 2001), which is further discussed in this Chapter, Section 2.2.6. Also the influence of geographical regions on migrants' vertical mobility, and the ultimate "life chances" or career development possibilities may stimulate further brain circulation.

2.3.5 "Escalator regions" and the impact of place on social mobility

The growing recognition of the effect of place on life chances became debated in the 1980s. In particular, the interest became focused on individuals with the same level of qualifications and

work practice, who were experiencing varied class trajectories in different places (Ashton *et al.*, 1987). In addition, the studies of other authors brought to the attention the subject of a "missing link" that of an ignored bond between social and geographical mobility (Savage, 1988; Fielding, 1990).

Moreover, different regions present various conditions for socio-economic mobility, within which an accelerated intra-generational social upward mobility may occur. Such a situation is well described by the metaphor of an upward moving escalator, which was first articulated formally by Fielding (1992). The concept of "escalator regions" argues that "migrating from one region to another, individuals "step off" one escalator and "step onto" another, benefiting from their rides within career trajectories (Fielding, 1992:3).

On the example of south-east region in the UK, Fielding suggests three stages of regional escalation. The first one encompasses attracting young people to the region, with a promotion possibilities, where young and educated can "step on the escalator". He argued that it is predominantly young and ambitious who "combine an energetic pursuit of career advancement within their fields of expertise with a judicious use of spatial differences" (*ibid.*). The second stage involves "being taken up by the escalator", and finally "stepping off the escalator" and out-migration from the region, in particular to regions with relatively lower costs of living. Fielding also reveals that there is a migration of people between the member countries of the European Community, from one region to another, often linked to seeking to enhance migrants' life chances. This could be even more pronounced after 2004, when A8 countries joined the EU. As Forsberg (1998:192) summarises, "jumping off the escalator at the right moment can give economic and positional gains" and moving to a less expensive area can enhance these.

Furthermore, some authors argue that escalator regions will often have expansive economic growth (Fielding, 1992; Andersson, 1996). This will attract not only those who are swiftly moving between jobs and education, but also those who became jobless or workless in their localities. It may happen that also new migrants to the region may "experience more of a downward social path through migration to an escalator region" (Forsberg, 1998:192), which can have further implications, including polarisation, with those who achieve accelerated success, and those who are left behind.

Above all, the escalator region concept stressed the regional location as an integral part of individual's life chances, rather than the personal attributes of the individual. As Champion (2011:2) argues, it expresses the social and political significance of the economic geography of

the country, and asserts a crucial role of migration in social promotion and the role of place. However, migrants' execution of social promotion or increasing its chances depends not only on geography, but also the social background one derives from and a class of university attended, all in conjunction with the role of their human agency in goals pursuing. This, however, is connected with cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) and a desire to maintain or advance ones social position, which will be discussed next.

2.3.6 Class and social mobility tactics through physical and geographical mobility

Another important aspect when looking at the role of structure and agency in graduates' migration context is cultural capital acquisition and reference to social classes. Bourdieu (1986:47) recognise the existence of cultural capital in three states: "institutionalised" – through academic qualification, "embodied" in the characteristics of a person and "objectified" in material artefacts. Through accumulation of those three interrelated attributes of cultural capital, different classes of society reproduce their social status, or de facto ensure their constant upgrade. However, there are numerous critiques of Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory. Goldthorpe (2007) reveals cultural capital as something that can be achieved by an individual, but admits that certain cohorts may be endowed with parental cultural capital making it more probable to happen. However, he also argues that with the schooling system becoming more inclusionary, education becomes available to working class families, through which a social class upgrade may be incurred. This leads to searching for alternatives in education for higher social classes, such as studying in another country and at the top universities, and such patterns become the norm for social cultural capital acquisition of these cohorts. An example of studying in another country is provided by Waters (2006), who researched the geographies of cultural capital of East Asian middle class families and their decision making in education, for which the choice of migration in pursuit of a Western university degree becomes a form of social reproduction.

Recent trends show that for highly-skilled migrants, only a small percentage are part of a "privileged" class from a wealthy background, with social international networks in place. One of the effects of globalisation is "massification" of international migration opportunities linked to careers and education; therefore it is not "elites" that the further research should be focused on within highly-skilled migration, but the increasing in numbers middle class which is facing the personal and social uncertainties that globalisation imposes (Favell and Smith, 2006). Therefore, middle class migration strategies become a tactic to maintain their position in the class structure

through the process of reproduction as theorised by Bourdieu (1984). He considers the ability to perform well in an academic environment, and the association of other talents as an investment of time and cultural capital, that begun within the domestic environment and continued in further schooling.

Some scholarship on international and immigrant students suggests that young cohorts are strategically planning and consciously pursuing their educational and career advancement against steeply rising competition on local and national levels that is combined with the recent global economic downturn (Balaz and Williams, 2004a, 2004b; Baláz and Williams, 2005; Waters, 2006; Rivza and Teichler, 2007; Brooks and Waters, 2010c). Brooks and Waters (2010c:217) refer to the spatially uneven and socially exclusive nature of international HE that has not changed with the "democratisation" of access to it. They argue that middle class families in order to maintain their position in the class structure and ensure "social reproduction" (Bourdieu, 1986), use various tactics, such as studies abroad.

Nonetheless, it is not only education and qualifications that determine the employment opportunities, type of jobs obtained and subsequent career progress. Roberts (2001:217) argues that "at all levels of qualification, social class origins have always made a difference to immediate job prospects". Most entrants from "middle-class backgrounds have always been more likely to achieve promotions, than those from working class" (*ibid*.), for which he prises social and cultural capital, mirrored in young peoples' ambitions. Moreover, he argues that the higher their social origins, the more determined they are to gain the full value back on their qualifications, but issues such as accent, tastes and dress sense, as well as the right contacts can influence the subsequent career development of young adults.

To summarise, individuals from various backgrounds aim to acquire human capital, which due to internationalisation of education, and rising competition locally and internationally is sought worldwide in order to maintain positional advantage. They are consciously pursuing their educational and career advancement against steeply rising competition on local and national level that is heightened by the recent global economic downturn. This in turn may serve as an illustration of dynamic lives which are impacted by both structure and agency.

Nevertheless, higher levels of education, or more qualifications may not always guarantee the ultimate success in terms of desired job or income. For some, it is the choice of a place that can enable them to achieve a rapid acceleration of class-based upward mobility. Ones drive may also

depend on their life aims, and place preferences, which may not always be related to social upward mobility. Thus, it is important to look at migrants' feelings towards different places, their perception of home and belonging, and attachments formed. Following human geographers' explanation of who we are as related to where we are (i.e. Keith and Pile, 1993), it is important to look at the effects it may have on graduates' brain migration, inducing brain-training and circulation.

2.3.7 The issues of home and belonging, place attachment, and identities formation

Even though social class belonging is an important aspect of migrants' personal feelings of fitting in, there are also other ways of belonging, as well as the issue of feeling at home. This multidimensionality of belonging (Marshall and Foster, 2002), among others, may be related to social classes, but also other factors, such as perceived cultural differences, language knowledge, or even the marital status of migrants. Also, as Antonsich (2010) reveals, amid rapid uptake of the term in the social sciences, the term belonging is left undefined by various scholars, among them geographers. Some researchers have differentiated two distinctive forms of belonging. The first is a personal and intimate feeling of being "at home" in a place (Yuval-Davis, 2006), or a private sentiment of place attachment built up through every day practices, defined as "the bonding established between people and places" (Shamsuddin and Ujang, 2008:399), and often referred to as "sense of belonging" (Fenster, 2005). The second form of belonging is related to socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (Yuval-Davis, 2006), or a "public oriented formal structure of membership" (Antonsich, 2010: 645), for example citizenship (Fenster, 2005). This section will begin with an overview of the issue of personal belonging, feeling "at home", and place attachment, then present it in a context of migration and finally issues around the concept of home, that geographers are interested in.

2.3.7.1 The issue of home and place attachment

The notion of home can be perceived as a "material and affective space, shaped by everyday practices, lived experiences, social relations, memories and emotions" (Blunt, 2005:506), or as Berger (1984:64) explains, a set of habitual practices, including "words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, even the way ones wear a hat". At the same time, the home can be a "contested space and of physical as well as symbolic attachment and importance" (Papastergiadis, 1998, in: Mavroudi, 2005), or "a mobile habitat" lacking of a "singular or fixed physical structure" (Rapport and Dawson, 1998:27). Most importantly, as Rapport (1995) elucidates, everyone

chooses their own home, therefore the choice is highly individualised and privatised, for some remaining invisible or irrelevant to others. Matthews (2002:69) lists various issues that surround the notion of home, including a place of birth, importance of country of origin, family residence, where one has lived the longest, the symbolic meaning, as well as "the shifting of home at different points in one's life". She further suggests that home is "where one best knows oneself", and because individuals live in a "movement, transition and transgression" it is paradoxical to call it home (*ibid:* 79).

This refers to Berger's (1984) conception of home in a modern world where movement plays its central role. As he argues, one is at home not in a place, or a physical structure, but "in a life being lived in movement" (*ibid:* 64). Thus in the age of migration, the meaning of home loses its attachments to being "a stable physical centre of the universe – a safe place to leave and return" (Rapport and Dawson, 1998:27). Instead, home can be taken with oneself, and be re-organised "whenever one decamps" (*ibid.*). In addition, as Rapport (1994) observes, home can be found in a routine set of practices and in a repetition of habitual social interactions.

On the other hand, Hay (1998:19) recognises a strong impact of "the stage of maturation on the development of a sense of place". For example, the attention of those who were assigned to a group of young adults, aged between about 20 and 30 to 35 was diverted towards matters of livelihood. He further underlines that there is an intense period of adjustment during early adulthood, with "respondents reporting little time available to reflect on their place experiences" (*ibid.*). At the same time, this group strongly emphasised that the development of sense of place could be achieved through owning one's own home and raising a family.

Moreover, it is not only a life stage, but also a life narrative that influences a place attachment. Savage *et al.* (2004) emphasises, that a sense of belonging is created when the chosen place of residence harmonises with the individual's life story, and therefore the reasons for moving to a new place, for example better quality of life, or aesthetic enjoyment. Moreover, Williams *et al.* (1995) argue that it is a significance of place and ability of its attributes to support individual's behavioural goals, which contribute to place attachment formation.

In particular, geographers often privilege notions of place in the process of migration (Cloke *et al.*, 1991; Blunt, 2007). People have various attachments to places where they work, rest, play or travel, which among others can be of an emotional, practical or political nature (Cloke *et al.*, 1991:59). Cloke *et al.* go on to explain that in "everyday geographies" of the places that people

labour and live, for instance houses, offices, schools, streets, parks where most of people spend their days, at the same time they develop a "sense of place", an understanding of how this place "works", and ultimately they build up feelings towards them, for example liking, loving, disliking or hating (*ibid*.), which overall makes a difference in their identity negotiation.

Additionally, a place attachment may depend on the psychological standpoint of an individual, weighing temporariness or permanence of the stay in a host country. Some in-migrants experience permanent state of mind of "being a migrant", and are therefore unable to clearly define the existence of their "true home" in a geographical and cultural sense (King, 2002:93), living suspended between different localities. According to Bailey *et al.* (2002:139) "permanent temporariness describes the static experience of being temporary" (i.e. in legal, and geographical, and societal terms), and also "resistance in the acquired knowledge that such temporariness is permanent". Samers (2010:10) interprets this as a belief in a "temporary sense of permanent" or "permanent sense of temporary", which King (2002:93) refers to as a "myth of return" familiar to many long term migrants, who are "torn between the desire to return and the desire (or need) to stay", which overall may have an impact on the development of their sense of belonging. Above all, home is "no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived" (Berger 1984:64). The untold story refers to the narrative of those who are in a movement, and who have no temporal and financial resources "to sit down and formally record the stories of their lives", and even if they did, they would struggle to be heard among millions of others (Rapport and Dawson, 1998:31).

However, getting to know places takes time, and therefore sociologists and environmental psychologists consider the length of residence of in-migrants in the process of a sense of place-belongingness, or place attachment generation (e.g. Hay, 1998; Markova and Black, 2007). Similarly, Osipovič (2010:233) recognises that with a prolonged duration of stay in London, Polish migrants began to develop "emotive attachments to their place of residence, purely as a result of leading a relatively comfortable existence". On the other hand, White (2011) and Kaczmarek-Day (2010) point out that the place attachment of Polish migrants in the UK was also related to the attractiveness of those places they lived in or moved through. At the same time, social psychologists (Altman and Low, 1992) argue that a place attachment, viewed as a form of bonding between a person and the setting, can be of an emotional nature, and influences how people perceive their identity, which additionally can be exposed to contesting forces of places (Bristow *et al.,* 2011), for example when migrating.

2.3.7.2 Place and space in identities formation and migration

On the whole, migration processes introduce changes in migrants' feeling of home and belonging, and above all they alter migrants themselves, their biographies and identities. Vertovec (2001:573) refers to identity as a concept that suggests "ways in which people conceive of themselves and are characterised by others". Lemke (2007:21) adds to this the role of agency, arguing that "we construct our own identities out of the options afforded to us by our general positionality and our particular trajectory of experiences, encounters, options for action, and so forth". Furthermore, the role of space and place in identities formation should not be omitted. It can be implied, that "space" as defined by Faist (2000:45) as encompassing various territorial locations, including two or more places, and which "has a social meaning that extends beyond simple territoriality", should be considered instead of a place to explain identities intercession. This clear distinction between space and place, where space has a social meaning with "concrete social or symbolic ties" (*ibid*.), could provide different perspectives on migrants identity construction that occurs within the frame of one or across multiple spaces (Desforges, 2000; Fortier, 2000; Mavroudi, 2005, 2010; Rabikowska, 2010).

Ultimately, human geographers relate the question of who we are, to where we are (Keith and Pile, 1993). In particular, two human geographers: Relph (1976) and Tuan (1980; 1991) contribute to the tradition of work on place-identity processes. For the reason that people hold strong emotional attachments to places, Relph (1976:43) asserts the association between the places 'where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences' as 'a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security'. However, this can be contested in particular in the light of migration, and transnationalism, which challenges the assumptions of place-based identities. In other words, migration complicates further 'multiplicity and hybridity of social identities across both diverse human relationships and social categories' (Lemke, 2007:17).

For this reason, Wodak and Krzyzanowski (2007) suggest re-thinking the concept of identity in order to approach migrants' identities. Their recommendation is to follow Fortier's (2000) approach, which embraces identity as "a location that by definition frames the passage from one space to another" (Fortier, 2000:2); therefore, identity can be seen "as transition, always producing itself through the combined process of being and becoming" (Fortier, 2000:2). It is worth stressing that in the transnational migration context such identities are formed in relation to spaces that span across both the homeland and new destination place. Therefore it is about

connections between "here" and "there" (Glick-Schiller *et al.*, 1995; Smith, 2001) and having dual or multiple lives, as opposed to a single reference to a land of migrants' birth, with some undergoing the feeling at home, intertwined with a feeling of not being at home (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002), not settling and not able to establish strong ties with a home country (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004).

Similarly, Vertovec (2001:573) corroborates that identities of mobile individuals are negotiated within "social worlds that span more than one place". Other researchers recognise a dual orientation of migrants to two often dissimilar spaces and termed it "bifocality", stemming from "a contradictory transnationalism" (Rouse, 1992:46; Mahler, 1998; Vertovec, 2004). What is more, Vertovec (1999:447) accentuates the juxtaposition of migrants' identities and transnationalism, which refers to "multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (Vertovec, 1999:447). Those links or transnational networks "are grounded upon the perception that they share some form of common identity, often based upon place of origin and the cultural and linguistic traits associated with it" (Vertovec, 2001:572). Communication that interplays within those networks, such as the exchange of resources, information and participation in socio-cultural and political activities can be exercised across various places.

Moreover, Hannerz (1996) refers to unrestricted territorially and diverse "habitats of meaning", where individuals comprise cultural experiences, which influence, construct and re-construct their multiple identities. He suggests that each habitat or locality encompasses a range of factors that influence the negotiation of identities, including: racialised socio-economic hierarchies, degree and type of collective mobilisation, and histories and stereotypes of local belonging and exclusion. Pries (1999) entitled those habitats as "transnational social spaces", and Glick-Schiller *et al*. (1992) use the term "transnational social field". Carling (2002:7) points out that instead of "uprooting", migrants "expand their social environment across borders", and Vertovec (2001:578) terms it as "multi-local life-world" with a complex set of conditions that affect reproduction of social identities. This is further linked with the expanding concept of home due to building and maintaining of multiple linkages between "here and there" (Glick-Schiller *et al.*, 1995), which leads to "neither settlement nor the severing of home country ties" being seen as inevitable (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004:1180), or as Al-Ali and Koser (2002) argue, transnational migrants can undergo the feeling at home, intertwined with a feeling of not being at home.

Some scholarship notices a multiplicity of identities among mobile individuals, who in the process of incorporating into new countries and spaces, their systems and cultures, may experience "several possible biographies" (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002:15). Some may undergo a "metaphysical loss of self" (Berger *et al*., 1973:82), with the ever present feeling of searching for home that can never be found neither in the country of their origin nor in the "step" countries. Thus, in transnational social space the relations and ties can imply incongruous meanings for migrants, which may lead to contesting of identities and belonging. It is argued further, that once dual or multiple orientations are created, they are "hard to dismantle" (Vertovec, 2004:975). Therefore, identity transformations of those who are mobile can be intrinsic, as mobility is "a continuous and multiple process, rather than a one-way ticket" (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002:2).

Furthermore, the place and socio-historical context that individuals were born to and spent early years of their childhood may shape their perception of the world (Mannheim, 1952). Also the possibilities and obstructions that occur within the location and time scale of childhood and youth may impact on individuals' life choices, and which is explained by the notion of social generation.

2.3.8 The concepts of social generation and generational belonging

The interrelation of individuals' age and the socio-historical contexts in which they were born and grew up in is defined by sociologists as a concept of "social generation" (Mannheim, 1952; Lagree, 1992, 2002; Pilcher, 1994), and whose life-courses may become strongly defined by socio-historical events forming backgrounds for their childhood, youth and adulthood. Edmunds and Turner (2002a:7) describe generation as "an age cohort that comes to have social significance by virtue of constituting itself as cultural identity" through its interaction between historical resources, circumstances and social formation. Miller (2000:30) recognises two approaches in establishment of generational cohorts: demographical and by "historical experiences that affect a group of people born at a particular time more directly than others".

According to Edmunds and Turner (2002b) there were three different ways Mannheim (1952) conceptualised generations: 'generational site' for those who are related by their location in historical time, 'generation as actuality' when a group becomes self-aware of their connection, and a 'generational unit', being a cohort within a generation, that shares particular characteristics. Consequently, those who "share the same year of birth, are endowed to the extent with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process" (Mannheim,

1952:290). He further refers to the opportunities and specific 'life chances' of a generation, which stem from the places where people were born and grew up in, but also location in time with its specific socio-economic and political constellation. Therefore, it is argued that the "destiny" (Wohl, 1979) or a "fate" of the generation is influenced by its "generational site" (Mannheim, 1952) or "generational location" (Edmunds and Turner, 2002b:5). However, "the location as such only contains potentialities which may materialize, or be suppressed" (Mannheim, 1952:303), as these may depend on the agency of the individual or structures, which can be obeyed or discarded. Thus, the grounded and material nature of people's lives is important, as are their particular life stories, which may differ within persons who were born in the same socio-historical context and who grow up in similar location.

The "generation as actuality" occurs when members of the same generation become aware of their common location, and create cohesion through a shared understanding and articulation of its meaning (Corsten, 1999:254). Therefore, not only is a generation's location important, but also an individual's consciousness of belonging to the same generation and its location in the historical process, referred to as "generation as actuality" (Mannheim, 1952). Andrews (2002:80) recognises that consciousness of belonging to a generation can be manifested through narratives and dialogue. Andrews argues further, that individuals "become who they are through telling stories about their lives and living the stories they tell; their stories are a cornerstone of their identity" (*ibid*.). Although narratives are constructed by individuals, they assemble elements of the individuals' life, "communities to which they feel they belong to", but also belonging to a particular time and space, and through that intersection individuals can express their generational consciousness (Andrews, 2002:81). Ochs and Capps (1996:29) comment that individuals "actualise themselves through the activity of narrating", which Andrews (2002:86) describes as "telling, listening and doing".

There may be however many interpretations, and members of a generation may form groups, the so called "generational units", so groups of individuals responding differently to the shared experiences. Mannheim (1952) differentiats 'generational units' within the broader term of generation, which has similar connotation as cohorts, and refers to the individuals that experience comparable historical events at similar age, and react to those occurrences in a similar manner. Glenn (1977) defines "cohort" as a population sharing experiences shaped by the same significant event within a given time frame. The creation of generation and subsequently different subgroups (cohorts) within that generation through formative experiences is particularly strong during youth, which Mannheim (1952) highlights as the key period for social generations

establishment. He observed the development of different generational units, mainly due to individuals' living in different geographical and cultural locations, participating in contemporary social and cultural events and dissimilar responses to particular situations. Similarly, Wrzesień (2009:23) elucidates, that belonging to a generation is being established primarily between the age of 19 and 26, when the life-courses of the young are being the most turbulently established and influenced by the socio-historical factors, but also geographical location, and other structural constraints and opportunities.

Furthermore, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argue that life-courses are individualised, and young people can choose their own life path. Therefore, the role of agency in the transition process between young and adult becomes important. However, there are other emerging structural factors in the complexity or multiplicity of lived youth transitions, such as class, gender, ethnicity, geographical location and so forth, which can limit the opportunities and experiences of young people (i.e. Tolonen, 2008). Therefore, the period of transformation can potentially be seen as a very opportunistic yet chaotic process in young persons' lives, during which belonging to a social generation or a generational unit may evolve.

It is argued that members of the generational unit are "held together by the fact that they experience historical events from the same, or a similar, vantage point" (Edmunds and Turner (2002a:8), and such "collective sharing assumptions of a common life experience, and the time frame, turns into a social fact itself" (Corsten, 1999:253). In particular, people are influenced by the socio-historical context that predominated in their youth, which becomes a determining factor in their natural view of the world (Mannheim, 1952). Lagree (2002:11) argues that each country, culture, tradition and history "creates its own representations of youth", and Edmunds and Turner (2005) indicate the influence of globalisation in such processes.

Therefore, the conceptualisation of generations in terms of places which individuals were born and grow up in is important. Mannheim (1952) describes generations within their national context, whereas Edmunds and Turner (2005:564) propose embracing generations cross-nationally, arguing that "globally experienced traumatic events may facilitate the development of global generations". However, the similarity of responses and shared opinions, or the way of living may differ among those ascribed to the same cohort. Therefore, it is important to look at the bottom up approach, by asking individuals of their perceived belonging to groups or awareness of belonging to larger social generational units.

There have been limited studies that looked at the theory of generations from migrants' perspectives, but mostly they focused on migrants' children and their identities (Glick-Schiller and Lewitt, 2004; Glick-Schiller and Fouron, 2002). Also limited research was carried on first generation migrants, but it referred to adaptation mainly, for example, Eckstein (2002:212) looks at migrants' cultural, economic and political "baggage" in influencing their adaptation to a new environment. She recognises the difference in pre-emigration backgrounds that lead to variable post-emigration experiences, and the fact that migration at different time periods influenced adjustment to new conditions. Nonetheless, it is also vital to understand how generational belonging is experienced by first generation migrants, and how it influences their identities and mobility. Therefore more emphasis should be placed on the research of different cohorts of migrants, including their primary generational belonging, historical pre-emigration background and post-emigration experiences.

The mobility of young highly-skilled and educated individuals has become an increasingly important aspect of global population flows, in particular within economic and socio-cultural grounds, and therefore these types of migrants and their patterns of movement ought to be studied further. In addition, the need for obtaining a destination country citizenship and passport may derive from socio-historical aspects that influenced migrants' outlook on mobility and indicate migrants' intentions of establishment in one place, or aid further mobility. It also may be an implication of migrants' feeling of belonging to a host country, or regarded as a strategy for their future career and migratory steps.

2.3.9 Citizenship - belonging or a strategy for further migration

The notion of citizenship remains contested (Faulks, 2000). Following Kymlicka and Norman (1994:352) "citizenship is intimately linked to ideas of individual entitlement on the one hand and of attachment to a particular community on the other". Therefore, citizenship defines status by a set of rights and responsibilities, and conveys an identity, "an expression of one's membership in a political community" (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994:369). However, the relationships between citizenship and national identity for migrants are complex due to their multiple attachments, feelings of belonging and political loyalties (Mavroudi, 2008). This intricate relationship between citizenship and identity is described by Isin and Wood (1999) as the notion of the decoupling of both, with a possibility for migrants to obtain a citizenship of the host country, without stopping the feeling of attachment to their homeland.

With the notion of decoupling of citizenship and identity, other concepts emerged, with "instrumental citizenship" (Ip *et al.,* 1997), "flexible citizenship" (Ong, 1999), and "pragmatic citizenship" (Mavroudi, 2008) being among others. Ip *et al.'s* (1997) "instrumental citizenship" refers to the acquisition of a secure, legal status of the host country, without any meaningful personal and affective connotations of the act. By contrast, Ong (1999:6) observes an additional benefit stemming from citizenship and mobility, that of capital acquisition and characterised a "flexible citizenship" as the "cultural logics of capital accumulation, travel and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions". She based her study on wealthy and powerful individuals, who are the most able to benefit from mobility, taking the advantage of opportunities, without being "tied down to any particular place" (Waters, 2009). Furthermore, Ong (1999:2) refers to those people as those who are "always in transit". As a result, "individuals with multiple passports are simply able to move around the world with much greater ease – citizenships lubricate global business and heighten opportunities" (Waters, 2009:637).

However, it can be argued, that it is not only the wealthy who gain the most from mobility and citizenship. With increasing numbers of migrants deriving from the middle classes, such migrants will also be seeking and aspiring to improve their life conditions. This can be achieved through acquisition of symbolic capitals, beginning with passports, but also "represented by language ability, education, dress and general compartment which come from spending time overseas" (Waters, 2009:637). As a result, citizenship can be seen as something that can be "strategically accumulated – a package of cultural capital that can be traded, in some contexts, for economic capital" (Waters, 2009:637). Moreover, Nagel and Staeheli (2004:2) argue that migration transforms the relationship between citizenship and identity, and "it is possible to claim identity as a citizen of a country without claiming an identity as belonging to or being of that country". The importance of feeling of belonging, or as Mavroudi (2008:307) argues "multiple feelings of belonging that are positioned at particular times/spaces for particular reasons", and people's rights to belong and to form strong attachments to such place(s) can be echoed in "pragmatic citizenship". This notion is inclusive of individuals with "a complex and ambiguous legal status, feelings of belonging and relations to the state" (*ibid.*).

Even so "dual citizenship has become an unavoidable and widespread phenomenon" (Howard, 2005:698), and some countries have clear policies on allowance or prevention of dual citizenship where being loyal to just one state is seen as important. However, "most contain multiple contingencies and exceptions, and the policies are not always enforced as written" (Howard,

2005:699). Nonetheless, in the "age of migration", staying loyal to just one nation state, has become contested and unrealistic. As Nagel and Staeheli (2004:8) point out, immigrant groups "exist in a new global market of political loyalties, engaging in a complex politics of 'here and there'".

Historically, in the 1960s a singular citizenship was Europe's ideal principle. Many European countries, including the UK, signed the Council of Europe's "Convention on the Reduction of cases of Multiple Nationality", which aimed to "reduce as far as possible the number of cases of multiple nationality, as between Parties" (Council of Europe, 1963). However, despite the efforts of many states to stop people from acquiring citizenship in two countries, "more and more people begun discreetly holding two passports, without either country knowing about the other, or even being able to find out" (Howard, 2005:702). Therefore, in 1997 a new "European Convention on Nationality" was passed, providing individual states "the freedom to decide whether or not to allow dual citizenship and whether or not to require renunciation of a person's previous citizenship when acquiring another one" (Howard, 2005:704).

Conversely, globalisation and transnational migration have influenced how national citizenship is perceived. According to post-national theories, it is transnational migration that is "steadily eroding the traditional basis of nation-state membership, namely citizenship, as rights have come to be predicated on residency, not citizen status, the distinction between 'citizen' and 'alien' has eroded" (Jacobson, 1996:8). These rights have been given to noncitizens on the basis of their "personhood" and supported by international human rights institutions and conventions, becoming the main source of rights (Koopmans and Statham, 1999:656). This has led to a decoupling of two main elements of citizenship: identity and rights (*ibid*.). Furthermore, Soysal (1998:208) argues that identities "still express particularity and are conceived of as territorially bounded". Within those terms, citizenship becomes less important, but people can belong to places without the need for defined citizenship status. Nonetheless, national citizenship as an identity still exists, but "in terms of its translation into rights and privileges, it is no longer a significant construction" (*ibid*.).

Nonetheless, national citizenship, or possession of a document such as passport, may open a range of other opportunities when considering further mobility to the countries that impose restrictions on entry, for instance visas, or because of political conflict. Therefore, passports can be gateways to other destinations, and when considered dual citizenship, there may be even more options for mobility. Despite ongoing debates on citizenship among scholars, there is a gap in the

knowledge in citizenship and migration studies that refers to migrants' views on citizenship (Osipovič, 2010). Similarly, Bauböck (2006:31) argues of the need for the both qualitative and quantitative research methods utilisation in researching of the "citizenship practices among migrant populations".

2.4 Summary

The first part of this chapter discussed the ever fluid boundary between migration and mobility, providing different examples of both, including short term migration and circular migration. It provided a brief overview of highly-skilled migration within migration scholars, and debated on theoretical perspectives on highly-skilled migration. In this chapter, the focus was placed in particular on graduate migrants as a contested subject in definition formation of who can be referred to as highly-skilled.

The second section highlighted how multiple aspects deriving from various disciplines, including economy, sociology and geography are important in discussing graduates' migration and mobility. Furthermore, balancing structure and agency in graduate migrants' life trajectories takes place at manifold levels, within the concepts of capital, social generations, as well as the influence of place and space on identity formation, which may be both intentional and unintentional. Overall, there are many elements that stimulate graduates' decision making on their migratory life-courses. Therefore, this thesis postulates that graduates manoeuvre between a proliferation of structures and use different levels of agency as they negotiate their education, career, and family trajectories, which has to be approached holistically in order to get a better picture of any migratory patterns emerging. In the next Chapter, the study context is discussed with migration across the EU and a focus on graduate movers from Poland to the UK. The information presented forms a background for the research, which aim is to investigate of what happens to individuals who graduate in a home country and migrate to another, with a case study of Polish graduates of Polish universities, who migrated to England after 2004.

Chapter 3

Contextual Information - Forms of movement within the EU

3.1 Introduction

Without political regulations of migration, such as naturalization laws, the control and classification of border crossing – "migration" named as such for political reasons loses its meaning, becoming just a movement of people (Zolberg, 1999). This can be observed in the example of the EU, whose member state citizens acquired a new political status that of citizens of the EU through Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties, with the right to live and work freely in the territories of other member states. Now, when European citizens move "it is a politically unrecognized and invisible act" (Favell, 2008:274). Favell (2008) explains further that the movement of EU citizens within the Union is not recognised by its member countries as migration, as there is no need for visa, or passport (but national identity cards), or need for becoming citizens of the other Member State. This open cross-country movement policy, "turns international into internal migration" (Recchi, 2006:62), which potentially could be named as a "relocation" within EU. Similarly, Brunello *et al.* (2007:71) refer to those movements across European countries by its members as "internal mobility". Those movers "do not think of themselves as migrants; they may or may not show up somewhere on state statistics, and they have lives functionally organized across a quite complicated European space that corresponds to no national or cultural lines" (Favell, 2008:274).

Since all citizens of the EU have no political constraints to exercise their choices of moving to another country of the Union, the term migration could be replaced with a term of relocation. The change in legal status by becoming a citizen of another member state turned into less significant, but may still convey benefits when crossing the borders of non-member states (i.e. when acquiring visa to travel to the United States). In that context, migration to another member country combined with attaining a new nationality, or dual nationality may convey intangible benefits for potential future transnational movements. Favell (2008:275) theorises that mobile Europeans are less constrained and have better opportunities to "engage in social forms and networks unclassified and unobserved by nation-states, and not in a way captured by national societies". Therefore, the EU could be a place with "a possible new cosmopolitan or transnational society" (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Morokvasic (2004:7) argues that new Central and Eastern European migrants tend to be 'settled in mobility', based on leaving home and going

away which became “a strategy of staying at home”, rather than following the definitions of permanent emigration and immigration. Therefore, new migrants instead of relying on transnational networking to improve the quality of life in the country of their destination, tend to remain mobile for ‘as long as they can’ to maintain and advance their living standards in countries of origin (Morokvasic, 2004). Even so, the circulatory mobility may also involve networks, stronger and weaker ties that mobile Europeans create in order to maintain the movement.

However, with the favourable conditions and an official encouragement of the European Union to mobility through politically unlimited and “liberalised human mobility” providing a choice of being mobile, the number of Europeans living in another member country comparatively to other migrants is small (Favell and Smith, 2006; Brunello *et al.,* 2007). With the total EU population reaching 497.4 million persons in 2008, almost 30.8 million were foreigners, out of which only 11.3 million were citizens of another Member State (Eurostat, 2010:192). This 2.3 percent of mobile EU citizens shows that “Europe today is still overwhelmingly sedentary”, and “the vast majority of its citizens are ‘immobile’ nationals, settled within their national borders, which they only leave for short trips” (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002:2). This resembles the wider context of international migration, which is voluntarily immobile or not accustomed to mobility. Therefore, such favourable political conditions for movement encouraged by the EU can help to explain other mobility limitations, both economic and social, or point towards new ones, such as the knowledge, or its lack of European citizens, of how to be mobile. According to Murphy-Lejeune (2002:51), it is the unparallel timing of changes of EU policy on citizens’ mobility and Europeans lifestyles, which still make the “European mobility more a dream, than reality”. Therefore, mobility or immobility of Europeans across countries has “important consequences on the efficiency of their skill allocation as well as on the impact of foreign skills on these economies” (Brunello *et al*., 2007:71).

In contrast, Recchi (2006:63) accentuates that “those who have tasted free movement rights are led to appreciate EU citizenship”. Therefore potentially those who travelled or experienced lifestyle migration in the past, as well as both educated graduates and students who have participated in Erasmus programme potentially have developed such a cosmopolitan outlook. Many scholars confirm that being a foreign student increases “likelihood of being a skilled migrant at a later stage” (Vertovec, 2002:6; Salt, 1997). Ultimately, Brunello *et al.* (2007:74) point out that the impact of education on mobility is large and common in all countries,

indicating that in Europe within country mobility is greater for employees with higher level of human capital than those who are less educated.

Murphy-Lejeune (2002:5) calls mobile European students "migratory elites", but stresses their belonging to be only potential, "since students' destiny is still wide open". Recchi (2006:66) speculates that European territorial mobility although represented in majority by "middle to upper classes with nomadic and globalizing lifestyle", should not be called "elite migration". This is because the opportunities to move within the EU are available and appealing to "lower middle class" individuals, who use it as a "shortcut" to economic and cultural capital accumulation (*ibid*.), and therefore an upgrade in their social status. Nonetheless, Favell and Smith (2006:21) stress the importance of the appearance of a "new kind of middle-class professional "spiralist" movement that accompanies the emergence of a more European-minded younger generation". Such perceptions on prospective group and class belonging draws attention to the wider socio-economic context of how a migrant's social and cultural background and social and cultural capital contribute to an upgrade or achievement of higher social status, within the host and origin countries. Following the statement that "social inequality also increasingly expresses itself in terms of mobility" (Semprini, 2003, in: Murphy-Lejeune, 2008:16), it is vital to research further of which young adults in the EU are mobile and why.

Equally important are the identities of those young mobile adults in Europe. EU citizens can move across the borders of the countries of their origin to another Member States without any political constraints, even though they may experience different cultural and economic settings which can influence their personal transformation and identities. Within that process, the political border is less significant than the cultural perimeters of another Member State. Bond *et al.* (2010:484) show the importance of the 'states' that are multicultural, and transnationalism "describes a situation where migrant interests and identities are divided between different state contexts". He further argues that there are migrants who move within the state boundaries retaining their previous citizenship rights, but cross national borders, what compels them to re-negotiate their identities within a changed national context. The results for migrants may include "a disrupted sense of belonging and identification", where "formal citizenship is not guaranteed against informal and symbolic exclusion" (*ibid*.). This stance may be weighed against the perception of Commission on the European Communities (1994:10), which argues that citizens of Europe ought to be "identifiable as citizens of their own countries but integrated in the host societies, they remain attached to their countries of origin, but are open to their everyday environment".

In particular, students and graduates can well be fitted into that definition. To quote from King and Ruiz-Galices (2003:230), "living and studying abroad in early adulthood can have important effects on individuals' identity formation", and contribute to creation of "bricolage-biographies" spanning across many places, cultures and languages (Lash, 2002, in: King and Ruiz-Galices, 2003). Such "place-confidence" (King and Ruiz-Galices, 2003:246), or "place-polygamy" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002:25) allows individuals to feel at home in many places. In the light of recent European integration, such moderated identity might be seen as "increasingly favourable towards the idea of 'Europe'", and more detached from nationalistic perspectives" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002:230). They further argue that the sense of 'feeling more European' by young who studied for a year abroad is enhanced through social interaction with host-country and other international students (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002:240). Additionally, they find that those who experienced further migration since graduation had higher levels of attachment to the country where they studied (if they studied abroad, or in the region other than their domicile) and to "Europe as a whole, than those who had not migrated since graduation" (*ibid*.). Therefore, it is important to look at student mobility in Europe, to explore who these young mobile individuals are but also to examine the graduates of European universities and their reasons for migration to other Member States.

3.2 Graduate movers

With most scholarship focusing on European students migration through organised channels of mobility, mostly ERASMUS-Socrates programme and students experiences of short-term studying abroad, there are small numbers of national studies about graduates pursuing spontaneous and independent movements abroad (Araujo, 2007; Guth and Gill, 2008; Wiers-Jenssen, 2008; Bond *et al*., 2010), and in particular those with a focus on the new EU members of Eastern and Central Europe (Csedő, 2008; Cairns, 2009, Brooks and Waters, 2010b). Most of the literature addressing motivation for migration broadly concerns highly-skilled migrants (Salt and Koser, 1997) or provides information on graduate migration as a stage process from domicile to the place of study and then for further employment. Such links between studying outside of individuals' home localities and subsequent mobility for employment purposes was captured by the research conducted by Faggian *et al.* (2006). Researchers argue that "higher human capital encourages migration", with higher qualifications and university grades reducing the likelihood of being a non-migrant, or returning home to work (*ibid*.: 469).

In comparison, Mosca and Wright (2010) used modelling to provide probabilities of graduate mobility and determinants of graduate migration flows, with the emphasis on the extent of movement in the UK. Their findings show that those who obtained a superior class of qualification have a higher international migration probability (Mosca and Wright, 2010:13). They also found that although those who moved regions to study have higher probability of migration, it reflects a national rather than international mobility. What is more, King and Ruiz-Gelices's (2003:244) findings indicate a strong relation between graduate migration and previous study abroad. Those with experience of studying in another European country were twice as likely to migrate abroad after graduation as those who completed their degrees in the home country. Similarly, Teichler and Jahr (2001:452) suggest that mobility during the course of study increases the likelihood of international professional mobility after graduation; however, family background with university-trained parents also contributes to such mobility. Researchers also suggest that "formerly mobile students are more frequently employed abroad after graduation, use their international competences more frequently and reach a somewhat higher status on average than graduates who were not mobile during their course of study"(Teichler and Jahr, 2001:455). Therefore, studying abroad is perceived as "a successful way of preparing for international mobility" (*ibid*.).

Nonetheless, as Cairns (2009:229) points out, young people's life-courses became fragmented due to abundance of educational choices, but also increasing uncertainty in labour markets. Therefore, he argues that young people need to be "reflexive in their educational and occupational planning if they are to adapt to unpredictable and insecure circumstances" (*ibid*.), what is linked to individualisation and self-development, and potentially to different motivations for mobility during the study and after graduation. Bond *et al.* (2010:489) research outcomes provide more detailed information on graduates' motivations for migration. They selected three groups of factors leading to decisions of graduates on migration: "*opportunities"* existing in various geographical places, "*connections"* to those places, and *"expectations* they have for their future lives" (*ibid*.). This can be illustrated in the research carried by Guth and Gill (2008), who found that motivations for doctoral mobility are interlinked with expectation within a science career. For many European scientists it is a necessity to be mobile in order to progress in their careers; therefore, it is not their choice, but their career that demands them to accept repeated internal and international mobility (Ackers, 2004:194). By contrast, Avveduto (2001) reveals that, PhD candidates' networks, as well as the type of research, influence the choice of destination.

In terms of the labour market incorporation of graduates in the EU, Kostoglou and Paloukis (2007:104) observe the following current trend among fresh European graduates: that searching for a job is not related to their subject of study. As they conclude, "the society invests in human capital – knowledge and specialisation with doubtful results" (*ibid*.). Moreover, the waiting time for the graduate to enter the job market varies from country to country within EU, with the largest problems in graduates' unemployment observed among others in Poland. Such scenarios can lead to deskilling of young graduates. Therefore, it is vital to study motivations for migration of Polish graduates, and their subsequent life-courses after migration and career choices.

3.3 Polish migration to the UK

The migratory movements between Poland and the UK have existed from the Cold War; however, it is in the 1980s when they started to grow (Drinkwater *et al*., 2010:74). Therefore, "this helped the formation of potentially important migration networks" and strengthened the post-2004 migration of Poles to the UK (*ibid*.). After the expansion of the EU in 2004, when Poland and other East European countries joined the Union, the UK granted immediate labour market access to all new Member States nationals. Such a decision reinforced migration flows of Poles to the UK.

According to McDowell (2009), the reasons for opening the labour market to East European citizens were severe labour market shortages, especially in the South-East England, in low-wage and low skilled occupations, in particular within hospitality, construction, transport, public services, including the health service (nursing). There was only one condition for those who migrated with the intention to undertake an employment in the UK. In order to gain full social and welfare rights, including unemployment benefits, new migrant workers in the UK were obliged to register with a Worker Registration Scheme (WRS), when starting a new employment. After complying with the registration process for a period of twelve months of uninterrupted employment in the UK, workers become eligible for an EEA residence permit, and become entitled to state benefits.

According to WRS, over 500,000 Poles registered with the system up until 2007 (Kaczmarczyk and Okolski, 2008). However, it is argued that many have failed to register (CRONEM, 2006; Drinkwater *et al*., 2010), and in 2007 number of WRS applications has reached a threshold, after which it started to decrease (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009:34). There are other competing statistics on the numbers of Polish migrants in the UK, for instance the estimates of the Central

Statistical Office indicate that in 2007 over 690,000 Polish nationals were staying in the UK (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009:29), and according to the National Insurance Number statistics, since the fiscal year 2004/2005 Poles have been the major immigrant group in the UK, outnumbering citizens of India and Pakistan.

The location patterns of recent Polish migration to the UK, shows that although London is still a popular destination for Poles, "the concentration of recent migrants in the capital is far lower than it is in other parts of the world" (Drinkwater *et al.*, 2010:81). In particular, Poles are overrepresented in Scotland, the North-West and South-West (*ibid.*). According to the UK Border Agency Accession Monitoring Report (2008), the Midlands region (comprising of East and West Midlands) had the second highest (after Anglia), total number of 123,375 of registered workers from all A8 countries between May 2004 and September 2008. Furthermore, according to Bauere *et al.* (2007), Poles constituted 98.0% (2,356) of the A8 population living in Gedling Borough in East Midlands. According to the Gedling Partnership Report (2008:10), this number suggests that there is "an increasing migration of Polish workers into Gedling for employment, but they are residents in neighbouring local authorities". The reasons for this are thought to be linked to employment through employment agencies, with whom migrants may be registered, but "their actual employment base may well be in a separate location either inside or outside the Borough" (*ibid.*).

In terms of demographic characteristic of Polish migrants in the UK, they are predominantly very young and relatively highly educated (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2008; Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009). The median age of those in Britain is 25, "making the population of Polish migrants in the country the youngest among all destinations of Polish citizens" (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009:34). At the time of enlargement 50.0% of them were under 25, with a further 25.0% aged 26-27 (*ibid.*). Furthermore, taking into consideration the typical age of graduation from a tertiary education in Poland being 22-23, many of those Polish graduates who arrived in the UK after 2004, lacked work experiences from their home country, making the UK a place of their first employment after graduation (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009).

Moreover, Britain became the main destination country for Polish university graduates. According to the Polish Labour Force Survey (LFS, in: Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009:34), the percentage of Polish migrants in the UK with a tertiary degree was 24.0%, comparatively to 19.0% in the United States, or Germany only 6.0%. Therefore, it is vital to look closer at the HE

realms in Poland, but also at the motivations of young educated Poles for mobility and decision to remain for longer, in particular to the UK.

3.3.1 Motivations for migration

For some young educated Polish individuals, a decision on migration coincided with economic conditions in Poland. The two of the most important pull factors that Trevena (2008) points out are the freedom of travel fully regained by Poles after 1989, additionally rights to reside in any other European country after 2004, and the English language boom. Since 1990s English language was gaining a huge importance in Poland, and perceived as a valuable asset for better employment prospects on the national labour market. Therefore, travel to English speaking countries, both the United States and the UK became a common strategy to acquire the language skills. The expansion of education in Poland also contributed to a proliferation of not only state schools, but also private schools teaching English, with an increasing popularity among young Poles whose families were able to afford the tutorials.

Conversely, White (2010) argues that migration was seen as a necessity, where economic push factors are dominant in young peoples' decision on migration, comparatively to migration as an opportunity, which is a privilege for only some. Above all, the number of Polish workplaces for graduates cannot keep up with the demand, leading to unemployment of fresh graduates and subsequent brain overflow to the UK. Therefore, as White (2010:566) states, "lacking of opportunities at home has been a motivation even for highly educated young Poles". However, she argues that "almost all young Polish migrants have more agency than do their elders" (White, 2010:578), and the ease of their decisions on migration is connected to networks that they have in the country of destination, which include weaker ties, like acquaintances and agencies. Additionally, the migration of young Poles can be treated as an escape, "where material incentives combine with the wish to be independent of parents" (White, 2010:573). Such independence was not possible otherwise in the home country because of cultural factors and very expensive housing, discouraging young people from moving out from their parents' house in search for work or better work in Poland (White, 2010). The result was unemployment of graduates at the level of 7.3% in 2004 (Fihel *et al.*, 2008). Additional push factors for graduates, stressed by Trevena (in press), were corruption and nepotism, making it more difficult to establish oneself in the Polish labour market.

As Fihel and Kaczmarczyk (2009:38) argue "the selectivity in the profile of post-accession migrants choosing the UK has been based on the fact that migration is now perceived as a good start to the continuation of, or simply the attainment of a career". Garapich (2006:4) suggests that after 2004 Polish migrants became "well adapted transnational actors using – or at least trying the best of both worlds, keeping feet in both places". In research carried by Milewski and Ruszczak-Żbikowska (2008:11), three general groups of Polish migrants in the UK are differentiated. Among them, migrants whose main reason to move to the UK was the opportunity to gain new life experiences and progress with career constituted 27.0% of all respondents. Such migrants were predominantly up to 24 years old, and others included in that group had tertiary education completed in Poland or elsewhere. Their reasons for migration take account of curiosity of the world, possibility to learn English fluently and enrolment into further education in one of the UK's HE institutions. The motivations for migration of this young educated cohort may also provide the characteristics of a new generation of Poles, whose biography is marked by the opportunities and constraints of a transition economy, with one of the options offered - westwards migration.

3.3.2 Social generations of young Polish migrants

Referring to Polish graduate migrants as a social generation, it is important to look into previous research and divisions noticed by other researchers with regards to young people born and brought up in Poland during the transition time. The group of Polish born in the late 1970s and early 1980s was divided into two by Wrzesień (2009:60), whose research focus is on generations in Poland. He distinguished two social generations: "Maruderzy Konca Wieku" (*The end of Century Grumblers* – researcher's translation), who were born from 1977 to 1982, and "Europejscy Poszukiwacze" (*European Searchers* – researcher's translation) succeeding the previous generation, born in years from 1983 to 1988. Wrzesień (2009:60) argues that "The end of Century Grumblers" can be regarded as innovators of searching for permanent employment abroad after accession of Poland to the EU in 2004, and cohorts of "European Searchers" generation follow that route. Furthermore, individuals from both generations have got the chance to invest in their cultural capital through scholarships, for example Erasmus, what allowed them to understand the cultural differences among the EU member states and realms of the labour market in the EU. Wrzesień (2009:63) characterises "Grumblers" as those for whom career stands as first, and who invested in human and personal capital, for instance through studying of multiple subjects conjoined with scholarships and work experience in the home country and abroad, often at the same time. He argues that such an effort put into one's development

coincided with worsening conditions in the Polish labour market. Therefore, the constrained start into an adulthood of this generation, forced individuals to look reflexively on their life and career.

The succeeding generation of "European Searchers" grew up in the light of socio-political changes of Poland, in particular economic transformation in 1989 from People's Republic of Poland (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa) to Commonwealth Poland (Rzeczpospolita Polska), and preparation and accession of Poland to the EU. Wrzesień (2009:76) argues that "European Searchers" is the first generation that does not remember PRL, as the social memory begins at around the age of 6, and the oldest individuals from this generation were 6 years old when the transformation started. Furthermore, he argues, that this is the first generation of young Poles who experienced increased possibilities deriving from the EU, in terms of holidays, shopping, studying and working, but also temporary and permanent migration with the right to freely live and work in other member states. In addition, he distinguished among this generation a cohort that favours migration, and which was numerous in respondents at the time of the research carried from 2005-2008.

Such mobility opportunities, as Burrell (2011a) informs, became available to the youth born between 1975 and 1985 by "double transition" of temporal and spatial changes. She argues that the old, safe and tried socialist system, as well, as their childhoods were lost to them, and at the same time there were no clear rules on how to build their future in the new system, where the new regulations were often "oblique and ill informed". As Burrell (2011a:418) further observes, for respondents in her research the goal of migrating westwards became "one of the clearest routes into the future" that was on offer.

Moreover, Galasińska (2010:944) stresses the distinctiveness of the post-enlargement group of Polish migrants to the UK, arguing that they "constructed their migration as a temporary or open-ended period in their lives". Additionally, she accentuates that they have "achieved some degree of generational identity", which can be seen through "the mediated character of personal narratives, both in the British and Polish press", use of new communication methods, networks, and technology (*ibid*.). An example of this is "Metro", a Polish daily newspaper targeting young readers living in Polish big cities, i.e. Warsaw. In 2008, Metro published a range of articles on the generation of young Poles who were born in the 1980s, during the demographic boom (Metro, 8/12/2008). The newspaper ordered a survey, which was carried out by MB SMG/KRC in 2008 on 1000 persons aged 24-34 years old, about their perception on life and career.

Depending on young people's experiences, aspirations in life and family relations, they differentiated five different groups of young: "aspiration led materialists", "family orientated", "optimistic leaders", "alienated malcontents", and "stabilised idealists". Among those, "optimistic leaders" were characterised as very well educated and mobile, easily able to migrate to shape a better future in another countries, who believe in their agency and success in life, are active, open and optimistic (Metro, 8/12/2008).

Similarly, one of Burrell's (2011a:418) findings refers to young Polish migrants in Britain, who predominantly came from affluent urban areas in Poland, and who were far more mobile than some of their contemporaries in Poland, but whose narratives on mobility and excitement of such a possibility were "tempered with the anxieties and strains of the uncertainty of the post-socialist period". As Burrell (2011a) and Stenning (2005) underline, access to mobility is uneven across post-socialist countries. Despite such a variation in geographical mobility, Bauman (1998b:77) notes, that "most of us are on the move even if physically we stay put" due to a sense of displacement caused the dynamic changes of the world around us. Therefore, the transformation, and a result of it for some in the form of migration, may serve as a learning curve for others who remained in one location.

Conversely, information in the British press on a generation of young Poles, and in particular graduates, portrayed them as lacking prospects in the Polish labour market. In particular, in the beginning of 2011, the Guardian published a range of articles on Polish migrants in the UK. One of the articles entitled: "For a generation of young Poles, travelling abroad is still often the only option" (Guradian 8/04/2011), discussed the life situation of a group of young Poles, aged below 20 years who were about to choose their career path. One of the least wanted options was migration to the UK for work purposes. This youth was associating the UK with performing menial jobs. Young Poles underlined that they are "studying to get better jobs than that", so "they will go somewhere else" (Guardian 8/04/2011).

Following the article, the portrayed group of young individuals suggests that they might have experienced migration of their older peers to the UK, and heard the stories that influenced their perception of the labour market in the UK, and chances for career development, which did not sound attractive for this group. Therefore, the opportunity of migration, in particular to the UK, has been perceived as the least wanted possibility, and this group preferred to seek out other options towards their future. However, worth mentioning is the place of the interviews carried out for the article. Those have been held in a small town in the southern part of Poland, where

not only job opportunities for young and graduates are slimmer than in larger cities, but also education prospects are much more constrained. Therefore, responses of young may be different to those who come from bigger cities in Poland (Burrell, 2011a), and that was not covered in the article.

For the purpose of this study, the classification of Polish generations suggested by Wrzesień (2009) was used and the potential members of both differentiated cohorts researched. Thus, the age range of respondents for this study is between 22-35 years old, and they derive from various locations in Poland, smaller towns and villages, and larger cities. However, as researchers on social generations explain (Mannheim, 1952; Edmunds and Turner, 2002a; Wrzesień, 2009) belonging to a social generation is connected to an awareness of one's participation in the process of generation formation. Therefore, the emphasis will be put on the respondents' subjective opinions on their socio-generational belonging and therefore contested. Further study of the perception on generational belonging of young Polish migrants in the UK and characteristics of this cohort could provide valuable information on the generational unity or its absence among Polish graduates in member states of the EU. It also may shed light on young graduates' perception on mobility and their motivations for migration.

Other important aspects of graduate migration to the UK are the outcomes in terms of graduates' sense of home and belonging to both countries and the way they deal with those feelings, and which may have an impact on their future mobility or settlement.

3.3.3 Social class belonging of Polish graduates and creating homes in the UK

Most studies on Polish migrants' perception of home and belonging in the UK, predominantly focused on their social positions and class belonging both in Poland and in the UK, and their comparisons (Eade *et al*., 2007; Trevena, 2011). The issue of social class belonging of Poles after migration to the UK was studied by Eade *et al.* (2007:10), who observes that migrants "constructed their class position in terms of their perceived life chances and plans". The recent migrants understood class in terms of "the opportunities that lay ahead rather than an occupational or economic position held at present" (*ibid*.), treating their current occupation and social position in temporal and transient terms. Researchers also find that respondents understanding of their class position "depended on their migration strategy, settlement plans and the extent to which they were engaged in transnational activities" (*ibid*.).

Furthermore, Trevena (2011) argues that class belonging has been mostly studied from the perception of the established immigrant groups and entire nation, rather than looking at the heterogeneity of the migrants population, in particular within the new comers. Thus, she focused her research on Polish graduates view on their class position within employment and social relations in the UK. Moreover, Trevena (2011:92) finds that Polish graduate migrants in London do not feel a part of the British society, but rather a smaller international London community, "where origin and class do not matter", and where class appeared to be an abstract concept. As she finds out, many of those educated persons were "unable to place themselves within the structure of the receiving society" (*ibid: 93*). Some of them referred to their social background in Poland, and on the basis of that were able to classify themselves as "something like middle class", however when confronted with their reality in a receiving country, their low earnings and occupational status, graduates could not state their belonging to the British middle class (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, as Garapich (2006:4) observes, those Polish migrants after 2004 are "building their class identities in both settings with stronger emphasis on individual achievement, human agency, self-determination and flexibility".

Overall, the view of home and its construction by Polish migrants has not been addressed in much literature on Polish migration. Burrell and Rabikowska (2009) examined the link between Polish food in the UK and Polish migrants belonging and home. They argue that a space of consumption may serve as an "'ethnic marker' balancing the lack of formal belonging to the host community and making a home attachment more visible and more meaningful" (Burrell and Rabikowska, 2009: 211). Some researchers focus on emotional negotiation in the process of migration and moving between spaces of belonging of Polish migrants, for instance between Poland and Northern Ireland (Svašek, 2009). Svašek (2009) refers to the immediate situation of migrants who after arrival may be confronted with "homesickness" and feelings of non-belonging, in the light of unwelcoming locals, as well with difficulties in finding employment and accommodation. On the other hand, Osipovič (2010:233) notices, that with time, Polish migrants in London began to develop "emotive attachments to their place of residence, purely as a result of leading a relatively comfortable existence". However, there is a gap in literature on Polish migration, and in particular graduate migrants and their home construction and development or its lack of sense of belonging, during the time spent in a host country. This thesis aims to address that issue in Chapter 7, with a particular look on graduates perception of their belongings to British and Polish societies, as well as their feeling at home in both or neither of those countries.

3.3.4 The acquisition of a British citizenship

For some migrants, citizenship may be a matter "of a security, but not an identity" (Rutter *et al.*, 2008:15); other researchers, for example Leitner and Ehrkamp (2006:1625) recognise that "formal citizenship neither erases differences and racism nor guarantees equality". Different examples constitute Polish migrants who arrived in the UK after 2004, who do not seek British citizenship, having the powerful legal protection offered by the EU citizenship (Osipovič, 2010:178). Her doctoral research findings show that "Polish migrants rejected the conflation between citizenship and nationality as well as between society and nation", identifying with "local communities in Britain in which they resided and to a smaller degree with British society as a whole, but felt no part of the British nation" (*ibid*.). In addition, Polish migrants declare cultural and national Polish identity, and attachment to Polish cultural and linguistic heritage, "doubting whether they would ever be inclined to feel British in these respects" (*ibid*.).

In comparison, the research carried by Rutter *et al.* (2008:16), who interviewed 10 Polish migrants in Great Britain, indicates that responses to the possibility of the British citizenship are not alike. She argues that although British citizenship for some was not appealing as it did not provide additional advantages, for others who "were applying for British citizenship cited ease of travel to Canada and Australia as prime reasons for doing so". Additionally, other participants in her research noted the ease of starting a "business and secure bank loans with a British passport" (*ibid*.). Therefore, the primary reasons of their interest in British passports were greater visa restrictions in many countries around the world for Polish passport holders, making it more difficult to travel, set up businesses, and in general to be mobile.

Rutter *et al.* point to another phenomenon: that of a changing rate of applications for British citizenship of Polish migrants who migrated before and after 2004. The number of applications has fallen since the period before the accession to the EU, from 750 applications for citizenship in 2003, compared with 580 in 2006. Furthermore, Rutter *et al.* (2008:14) suggest that due to the full membership in EU, Polish citizens became less interested in naturalisation, "which is in line with that of other EEA nationals". Nonetheless, it can be argued, that the different responses with regards to citizenship may be generated depending on the accumulated human capital, social background as well as migrants' knowledge of how to be mobile.

The study carried out by Rutter *et al.* (2008) involve interviews with only 10 Polish migrants who migrated to the UK after 2004 and they did not cover specific cohorts of migrants, for

instance graduates or professionals, what otherwise could inform better on the type of Polish migrants who are interested in becoming British citizens and why. Furthermore, the research was carried out when those who migrated since 2004 were not eligible for naturalisation. For those who migrated after 2004, eligibility for naturalisation and British citizenship commenced in 2009 after minimum of five years of uninterrupted living in the UK. As Home Office's Citizenship data show (2012), number of Polish nationals granted British citizenship in a period 2004 to 2011 previously declined from 800 in 2004 to 250 applicants in 2008, but continuous increasing since, with nearly 2000 applicants in 2011. Therefore, the insight on perceptions of citizenship of Polish graduates ought to be further explored, and understating of their attitudes towards it may shed light on their further migration or settlement.

It is also important to look at the initial motivations of Polish graduates migration to England, and to investigate attitudes towards their skills and qualifications upgrading and acting against deskilling in England. To do this, however, the information on access to and received education in Poland, the general HE culture and Polish society perception on university degrees which may operate as catalyst for further development and mobility, should be looked into.

3.4 Polish private and public higher education systems and graduates' interest in education at English universities

The promotion of education after 1989, fuelled by a shift from centrally planned economy to a free market in Poland resulted in increased number of graduates, who were able to access well paid professional jobs mainly due to fact of possessing a diploma of HE, rather than professional skills (Białecki, 1996; Furmańska, 2005). The initiated boom of education, resulted in quadrupling of number of graduates at the Polish labour market within less than 10 years, from 89,000 in 1995 to almost 366,000 in 2003 (Appendix 7). Following the data from the Central Statistics Office the gross enrolment ratio of the 19-24 year old age group was close to 50.0% in the early 2000s "meaning that Poland has almost matched the higher education participation rates of developed countries" (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009:43).

Although the demand for HE in Poland increased after 1989, as Żuk (2010) observes, the quality of the "commercial" or "industrial" education became uneven across different HE institutions. The dominant force in the education market became private HE institutions, with the number of 326 in 2009, and only 132 public universities including polytechnics, economic academies and theology academies (Ministry of Science and Higher Education). There were almost 480

thousand of graduates in the 2009/2010 academic year, of which almost 323 thousands graduated from public universities and 157 thousands from non-public HE institutions (GUS, 2011; Appendix 7).

Nonetheless, the amplified rise in students which continued for almost 15 years, begun to slow down, and a final decrease in student numbers have been noted in 2006. The main reason for this is a demographic low, which continues to be the cause of the decline in new enrolments into universities in Poland (Gorlewski and Antonowicz, 2011). According to a report on the effects of the demographic low on HE in Poland by 2020, carried out for the Socrates Institute, Gorlewski and Antonowicz (2011) argue that a drop in potential students related to decrease of those aged 19-24, would result in closure predominantly of private HE institutions that are on peripheries of Poland, and in smaller cities, whereas number of students at public universities, in full time education will remain similar. The overall decreasing number of students at Polish private HE institutions has another element to it: wider interest of Polish potential students in university courses abroad.

A range of problems with Polish HE institutions, including demographics, and other issues have became openly debated in a Polish press. Among others, Goc in Gazeta Wyborcza (20/12/2011) writes about one of the best private university – the School of Business – National Louis University in Nowy Sacz, which lost students not only because of demographics, but also because of EU enlargement, and stronger interests of potential students in studying abroad. Although, the nature of education at that university was focused on obtaining of an extra curriculum that is recognizable abroad, offering BSc in Management, along with Polish Masters due to the links with National Louis University in Chicago in the USA, the form of study was not typical for a Polish HE, therefore their clients presented a different, more outwardly looking cohort. Therefore, the outflow of potential students of the School of Business abroad, their decisions and motivations, may vary to other students' cohorts, and should not be looked as representative of the Polish student population.

Nonetheless, a high and still increasing number of graduates of tertiary type-A education, positioned Poland in fourth place in 2009, in terms of number of individuals who graduated for the first time within the OECD countries, with the level above 50.0% (OECD, 2011). It is essential to note that the number of international students at Polish universities is very low, comparatively to the UK, Australia or New Zealand. Therefore, the numbers of students and graduates are not artificially inflated, which would be the case when students entering HE

already hold a degree from a home country university. Nonetheless, the number of international students is steadily rising at Polish universities, who arrive predominantly from Ukraine, Belarus, Norway and Sweden.

Therefore, the cohort of Polish graduates who belong to a highly educated demographic high of the 1980s may provide additional and interesting observations with regards to the labour market incorporation of graduates, and practices related to their further development and mobility. The importance of this cohort lies in the high numbers of graduates, which can serve as a source of information and understanding of graduate mobility behaviour.

The rapid increase in graduates in the Polish labour market, which became a result of the promotion of education after 1989 fuelled by a shift from a centrally planned economy to a free market in Poland, led to another concern, well described by Białecki (1996). This was an increased number of graduates, who were able to access well paid professional jobs mainly due to fact of possessing a diploma of HE, rather than professional skills (Białecki, 1996). The initiated boom of education caused a quadrupling of number of graduates in the Polish labour market within less than 10 years. That paired with decreasing demand for graduates due to market saturation, which was additionally fuelled by the recession of the 90s. The result was steeply rising general unemployment levels from 6.5% in 1990 to 20.0% in 2003, which decreased to 9.5% in 2008, and increased again to 12.5% in 2010 (GUS, 2011). Although overall graduates unemployment in 2004, was 7.3% (Fihel *et al.*, 2008), those who were graduates of HE institutions, 21.5% were unemployed in the first part of 2010 (GUS, 2010).

3.4.1 Access to higher education in Poland

The access to HE in Poland proved to be geographically uneven. Some scholars pointed out the problem of inequality in access to HE, visible in the example of individuals living in the countryside and the city (Żuk, 2010). According to Nowak (2010), individuals who due to geographical constrains are less mobile, and with less economic and cultural capital not allowing them to study fulltime at the tuition fee free public universities, tend to choose tuition fee based private educational institutions, which are widely available. Furthermore, Białecki (2003:11) recognises that the disproportionate access to HE of those who come from educated family backgrounds and those from backgrounds with less cultural capital accumulated was greater than in the rest of Europe.

Whilst acknowledging the high number of students circulating around 2 million in 2009 as registered by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Nowak (2010:128) comments on the quality of the majority of private education, as not having a real educational influence, as they "do not transmit cultural assets", therefore "students do not multiply the cultural and social capital". Therefore, those with less capital tend to pay for their own education, decreasing their own chances for cultural and economic capital accumulation. Consequently, social upward mobility may not be fully achieved by those individuals. As a result, students of private educational institutions and also those studying in the system of extra-mural studies at public universities are left outside of the academic habitués, which leads to further social class division in Poland (Nowak, 2010). However, such a situation may start changing due to the demographic low, during which public and private universities will compete for students. The struggle for undergraduate and graduate courses attendees may lead to decreasing educational and competency requirements from prospective students, leading to further fluctuations of the social class divisions.

Similarly, Domański (2000) argues that the Polish "intelligentsia" had the most resources to enter the top universities, understood in terms of cultural and economic capital. However, the commercialisation of Polish HE forced individuals originating from higher classes to seek other perhaps more exclusive forms of education, among others through study in other countries. The main reason is cultural reproduction and the maintaining of a higher social status, which in the light of the rising national and global competition is sought in more elitist programme participation.

Correspondingly, Andrejuk (2011) recognises that educational Polish migrants in London originate from other backgrounds than the majority of labour migrants. They are predominantly from big cities, in particular Warsaw and an urban area of Tricity, consisting of three Polish cities: Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot, from wealthy families, with both parents being educated to university degree in professional occupations. She refers to those young people as "high-quality children of the middle and upper-middle class families determined to invest in their university education even until the age of 30" (Andrejuk, 2011:4). These results refer predominantly to young people who completed their A-levels in Poland and migrated to London to enrol at English universities. She also recognises that there were Polish graduate labour migrants in London who enrolled in university courses, whilst working part time or full time, which evokes their ambition to raise their vocational qualifications on the British market.

Such high numbers of students at Polish HE institutions, as well as increasing numbers of graduates on the Polish labour market have an impact not only on the labour market, but also on the Polish society perception of the HE, and graduates in particular. Overall, the combination of society's perception and labour market situation may result in further demand for university education in Poland and abroad, leading to increase or decrease in mobility of students and graduates, those who are in higher echelons of the society, and also those with less economic capital. Additionally, after Poland's accession to EU, number of Polish students at English universities increased and continued rising throughout academic year 2010/2011 (HESA, 2011).

3.4.2 Polish students and graduates at English universities

Data on HE of Polish domicile students provided by HESA (2011) show that the number of Polish students significantly increased since 2005. The highest increase was noted for the academic year 2006/07, when the number doubled comparing to academic year 2005/06, and fluctuated above 1000 of students. Since then the number of students who obtained their qualifications has been steadily rising, with 2114 students registered for the academic year 2009/10 (Appendix 1).

In total from 2003/04 to 2009/10 there were 3855 graduates with a first degree, those who completed other postgraduate courses were 2791, and those who achieved a doctorate were 239. The registered by HESA other undergraduate graduates accounted for 860, and in this sector qualifications included were an equivalent to and below first degree level, for example Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at level H, foundation degrees and diplomas in HE, and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) to mention a few. The majority of students who obtained HE qualifications at English universities (data for the regions: East Midlands, East of England, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber) between 2003/04-2009/10 were in the age group 22-26 years old. Those aged 22-24 constituted the highest numbers of students, above 1000 for each age group, with those aged 24 being the most represented with 1124 students. In terms of the level of qualification, the majority who obtained a first degree were aged 21-23, with numbers above 500 in each age group, and 982 for those aged 22. Those who obtained their postgraduate qualifications, excluding a doctorate, were predominantly aged between 23-28 years old, with those who were 25 constituting the highest number of 532. The majority of individuals who were awarded a doctorate were aged 28-31.

There were more female graduates from English HE institutions, with the overall number of 5084, compared to male qualifiers 2661. The predominating mode of study was full-time, on all levels for both genders. The most popular study subjects among Polish women were: Business Studies with 446 graduates, English Studies with 168 graduates, Psychology 166, Hospitality, Leisure Tourism and Transport with 163 graduates, and Politics 159. For men Business Studies with 240 graduates also proved to be the most popular, however there was other range of courses that mostly male students enrolled into: Computer Science with 166 graduates, General Engineering with 113 graduates, Management Studies 103, and Economics 101.

The highest number of Polish graduates was registered in London, with 2681 students and in West Midlands counting for 1197 graduates for the period from 2003/04-2009/10. The East Midlands registered less Polish graduates, with the total number 412 for the whole period, what positioned the region on the seventh place in the ranking of all regions. There were 276 Polish females among graduates and 136 male graduates in the East Midlands. The least Polish graduates were noted for the North East region of England.

Polish students were registered at eight universities in the East Midlands, with the University of Derby being the most popular with a total of 110 graduates from 2003/04 to 2009/2010. On the second place was Nottingham University with the number of 87 Polish graduates. The number of Polish graduates at the other six universities did not exceed 50 for each, at the University of Lincoln there were 47 Polish students, and at Loughborough University the least Poles graduated within the given period - only 22. The number of Polish graduates in the East Midlands grew steadily, and first it nearly tripled from 12 in 2004/05 to 30 students in 2005/06, and next almost doubled from 65 in 2007/08 to 109 in 2008/09. In comparison to other regions, academic years 2006/07 and 2007/08 were seen as those when the numbers of Polish graduates from English HE institutions significantly increased.

In the period between 2003/04 to 2006/07 the most popular subjects of study in the East Midlands were the Physical and Terrestrial Geographical and Environmental Sciences with 20 graduates, English Studies with 14 qualifiers and Architecture with 10 graduates. For the period from 2007/08 5 to 2009/10 the most commonly chosen subjects were Business Studies, with a total of 34 graduates, English Studies with 22 graduates, Economics with 15 qualifiers, and Management Studies with 14 graduates.

Overall, the gathered data by HESA provides information that Polish seek further HE, and their professional development in England. However, the numbers related only to higher education, and other options including colleges and professional training could potentially be chosen by some. Therefore, it is important to research Polish graduate migrants who enrolled into higher and further education in England, and those who did not, to gain the understanding of their made decisions with regards to career and education trajectories, and their adjustment to the labour market after migration to England. In addition, an introduction of higher tuition fees may alter Polish graduates interest in pursuing of the HE at English universities, towards increased enrolment in professional courses, or alternatively studies in other European countries. Such scenario may influence further mobility choices and brain-training of Polish graduates.

3.5 Issues of deskilling and brain-training

The surge in Polish graduate numbers, not only led to increasing requirements for job position at the Polish labour market, but also influenced a change of graduates' strategies in pursuing their professional advancement. Domański (2002), points attention towards a young, educated generation of Poles whose life strategies resemble British "professionals", more than class of Polish intelligentsia. This new cohort is more mobile and advantageously planning their careers, being more strategic and aware of opportunities abroad. However, there is lack of information on how those young educated people access opportunities and challenge the traps of deskilling in the host countries. There is no information showing the share within graduate migrants of those who graduated public or private universities and their qualifications acquisition and skills upgrade after migration, including their perceptions of their skills usage in an employment, or the opposite, wastage.

Nonetheless, Fihel and Kaczmarczyk (2009:43) argue that "the increase in the share of relatively well educated migrants should be perceived as a natural consequence of educational developments in Poland", and that the outflow of those with tertiary education who face problems in the Polish labour market should be described as a brain overflow, rather than a brain-drain (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009:44). However, the brain overflow of those with tertiary education does not always lead to positive effects of migration in the host country, for instance opportunities to improve qualifications, professional development, and an employment according to their education, or in general a graduate job. Fihel and Kaczmarczyk (2009:44) indicate that alongside the fact that approximately 25.0-30.0% of Polish migrants in the UK hold

a university degree, out of which more female than male migrants in the UK were highly educated (Kaczmarczyk, 2009), such opportunities are out of reach for the majority.

As an alternative, brain wasting or deskilling became the apparent outcomes of the post 2004 migration to the UK. Other researchers (Drinkwater *et al.*, 2006, Eade *et al.*, 2007; Clark and Drinkwater, 2008; Drinkwater, 2008; Drinkwater *et al.*, 2010) show that A8 migrants experience very low rates of return on their education, even a few years after their migration to the UK, because of their much higher levels of education. While employment in low-skilled jobs which tends to be a gateway to the UK labour market for CEE migrants, after which an upgrade should follow, the absence of latter process is often the case. Thus, Fihel and Kaczmarczyk (2009:46) argue that such a scenario in the long run could lead to a downgrading of the migrants' human capital, and impact negatively on "the determination to improve skills and qualifications". Conversely, migrants' social and educational background, including the type of Polish university attended may influence graduates ability and motivations for further skills enhancement in the destination country.

Even so, there is lack of qualitative research on the reasons why those educated migrants remain employed in secondary sector for such extended period of time. What is more important, the means by which Polish graduates are trying to gain more skills, and act against deskilling in the UK on the example of England, and what is their perception on skills and qualifications that they gained before migration and after some time spent in England has not been investigated. As a contrasting method to deskilling, enrolling into another university course on undergraduate or postgraduate level in England could potentially serve this purpose. Drinkwater *et al*. (2010:86) conclude that given the size of the migrants' population in the UK, many are likely to become permanent settlers in the UK, but this will depend mostly on "how well they progress through the British labour market, in addition to the relative conditions in the Polish labour market". Other factors influencing permanent stay in England may be graduates' motivations for initial migration, and their fluctuation depending on personal and career experiences and opportunities at the British labour market. Thus, it is important to look into motivations for migration of Polish HE graduates in general, to get an insight into their decisions not only for mobility but also their aims and ambitions, which could help with understanding of the mobility patterns of this cohort.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has provided the research context for this study by analysing secondary data from a variety of resources. Different forms of movement within EU were discussed, as well as theories of migration and mobility. The focus of this chapter has been on graduate movers, their migration patterns and labour market incorporation within EU.

Moreover, the brief history of Polish migration to the UK has been introduced, with a focus on migration after 2004, indicating that the UK became the main destination country for Polish university graduates. The main focus of this chapter was the portrayal of young Polish graduates motivations for migration in literature, indicating that economic push factors, lack of opportunities in Poland, the need to gain independence conjoined with freedom of movement, were the most important factors for migration. The chapter referred to concepts such as generational belonging of young Polish graduates, referred to as 'European Searchers' who grew up in the light of socio-political changes of Poland, in particular economic transformation in 1989 from People's Republic of Poland (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa) to Commonwealth Poland (Rzeczpospolita Polska), and preparation and accession of Poland to the EU. Furthermore social class belonging, and formation of homes after migration to the UK, including citizenship acquisition by Polish migrants in the UK, has been elaborated further in this chapter.

The last part of the chapter discussed HE situation in Poland, beginning with the promotion of education after 1989 fuelled by a shift from a centrally planned economy to a free market in Poland. The results of demographic high entering universities, increasing demand and supply of higher education was quadrupling of number of graduates in the Polish labour market within less than 10 years. That paired with steeply raising graduate unemployment. Also the geographically uneven access to quality education has been mentioned, and recognised disproportionate access to HE of those who come from educated family backgrounds and those from backgrounds with less cultural capital accumulated, as greater than in the rest of Europe.

Chapter 4
Research context and methods of research

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a discussion of the methodological premises underpinning this research and a description of methods used to research migration and career trajectories development practices of Polish graduate migrants in East Midlands. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 1 outlines the research procedure, and includes a section on data collection. Section 2 relates to ethics and power relations, including language usage and transcribing, coding and analysis. Section 3 summarises the chapter.

4.2 Research design: data collection

In line with the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1, and in order to address these in this research, qualitative methods were used. Due to the lack of prior research in this particular field a grounded theory approach was used, highlighting how data collection occurs prior to the development and discussion of theory.

Semi-structured interviews were the leading method used in this data collection. The selection of semi-structured interviews through which distinctive features of experiences and situations can be picked up and a broad description of the phenomenon delivered (Geertz, 2000), deemed the best way to explore the research questions. As other researchers claim, semi-structured interviews are one of the most commonly used qualitative methods (Kitchen and Tate, 2000:213), which "has some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informant" (Dunn, 2000:52). The aim of the interview is to "understand how individual people experience and make sense of their own lives" (Valentine, 1997:111), and it ought to not be treated as representative.

To gain an understanding of the context, it was necessary to refer to secondary statistical data of a macro and regional level. Overall, aside of the primary data gathered through semi-structured interviews, the research relied on various statistics and other secondary data which connect the case study to the broader socio-political situation. For example, researcher obtained data on HE of Polish domicile students at English universities form HESA (2011), from year 2003/2004 to

academic year 2009/2010, and data on Polish migration to the UK from British and Polish Labour Force Survey (GUS). Moreover, the British and Polish press coverage was studied to understand the social significance of the subject. These data served as a context for the research on young educated individuals in England.

The reason this research went beyond descriptive statistics was to uncover the motivations and practices among Polish graduates after migration to England with regards to the labour market incorporation, education and mobility. Other aspects which could not be recovered from the quantitative data are individual's family background, experiences from the home countries that influenced mobility, as well as impact of people, connections and networks on graduates ultimate migration to England, education and potential intentions of further migration, and the reasons behind this. Such motivations often convey complexities of external and personal factors, and which were recorded during the interviews. Following Silverman (2006), one of the advantages of semi-structured interviews is their free structure that allows not only to compare the collected data, but also to look closely at the individual meaning and comprehension of the process and experiences of migrants. Therefore, open questions in the semi-structured interviews provide room for additional questions to be asked, and to customise the interview to the life-course of the narrators, allowing them for the freedom of responses, storytelling in the sequence of the events that have happened, rather than answering questions generated by the interviewer in the strictly framed order. Thus, the less rigid structure of the semi-structured interviews can empower respondents to express individual views and experiences without structural constraints (Limb and Dwyer, 2001).

The next section elaborates on the design and implementation of the semi-structured interviews as a method used for data collection for this research.

4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews: preparation and implementation

The initial concept for interviewing, and selection of respondents was to concentrate on Polish graduates who lived in the East Midlands for at least a year at the time of the interview. The idea was to find out if the East Midlands region was an initial place of arrival, or if migrants moved within the UK after migration to other parts of the country. The choice of East Midlands region was directed by the high number of A8 migrants arriving in the UK, with the highest numbers of those who registered for employment Polish constituted 66.0% (between 2004 and 2007) of all applicants, and within Anglia and Midlands in 2007 there were 14.0% and 11.0% of A8 workers

registered respectively, more than in London (EMDA, 2010). In addition, only those Poles who hold at least a degree from any Polish university were considered, and who were aged 22-35 years old. This is in accordance with other findings on Polish migrants in the UK after 2004, who were predominantly young below the age of 35, often single and relatively well educated (Kaczmarczyk, 2009), with the median age being 25 (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009).

Exchange students visiting English universities, where their stay was a limited to one or two semesters were excluded from the recruitment process. The reason behind this was to compare responses of graduates, their motivations for migration, background, personal and mobility capital in their further decisions on skills acquisitions and labour markets admissions, where their stay in England was not limited by a sending institution. In addition, the employment status and labour market experiences of respondents from all cohorts, were infiltrated; however, this did not constitute a divisive role for the recruitment.

Furthermore, at first, the intention was to find only respondents who after migration entered HE in England, and those who decided against it. However, during the process of searching for respondents and first interviews, the researcher realised that there were many Polish graduates who were involved in other types of training, which were not university based. Such graduates formed the second category, of those who decided not to enter of the HE after arrival in England, but nonetheless made a decision to do some form of further education in England. Thus, a group of those who opted out from doing additional university based degree in England was divided further into four different cohorts, depending on their proceedings after migration related to career and education trajectories, including their intentions of obtaining additional credentials.

Within those who refrained from HE in England, three subgroups were differentiated:

A/ those who undertook some form of professional training which was non-university based;
B/ those who attended only English courses in England;
C/ graduates who were not interested in doing any type of education after migration to England

Overall, 17 respondents entered some form of HE after arrival in the UK, another 20 enrolled in non-university training, and 3 persons decided not to pursue any type of education.

Courses attended in the UK	**Number of graduates**
PhD	8 (with Masters)
Masters	8
Bachelor	1
Other non-university training (i.e. college courses, NVQ, professional training, online courses)	14
English courses	6
none	3

Figure 1. Courses attended in the UK

Contact with Polish students and graduates in England was established through universities within the East Midlands (Appendix 2). Ten universities within East Midlands were contacted, and the researcher enquired about the possibility of them sending emails to those of Polish origin on researcher's behalf advertising the study and call for respondents both in English and Polish. Support was received from five universities in the East Midlands: University of Northampton, University of Nottingham, Loughborough University, University of Leicester, and University of Derby and University of Lincoln. Due to the help of administrative staff in admissions offices, emails to students and graduates of Polish origin were disseminated, informing them on the research conducted on Polish migrants. This way the researcher received 16 positive responses from both: graduates and students. There were more people who were interested in taking part in the research, but who did not meet the criteria. In particular, those who migrated to England straight after completing their A levels in Poland, and started undergraduate courses in England were among those who answered in large numbers for this advertisement. Thus, researcher has recognised additional aspect which ought to be looked in focus, that of preferences of studying at English Universities instead of Polish. This subject however is not in the scope of this thesis.

One of the successful method of searching for respondents proved to be advertising in a local Polish newspaper Signpost for Polish Success (East Midlands po Polsku), which covers the area of East Midlands, and was particularly important for obtaining respondents who did not study in England. Some of respondents recruited this way were either enrolled in other courses, or in full time or part time employment throughout their whole stay in England. The researcher started the process of recruitment for interviews through the Polish local newspaper in December 2010. The

advertisement was written in Polish (Appendix 3, and Appendix 2), and nine persons replied to the advert. Also, through this particular method, responses were received from people who did not meet the criteria for the research; predominantly those were Polish people who did not have a degree from any Polish university. One of the persons recruited through the newspaper became a gatekeeper, and provided the researcher with four additional contacts. Furthermore, the researcher approached migrants randomly, in particular those who were working in shops, in public spaces where customer service is required, and openly enquired if they would like to take part in the research – explaining the required characteristics and the purpose of the research. This way, one more respondent agreed to take part in the interview.

The interviews were carried out between the end of May 2011 and end of October 2011 with total of 40 respondents (Appendix 4). The interviews were conducted in person, taking form of the "archetypal interviews" (Bryman, 2001), where an interviewer sits in front of the respondent, asking questions. This form of interviewing, as opposed to telephone interviewing, or a newer version - social media, for example Skype interviewing has advantages and disadvantages. The predominant beneficial aspect of face-to-face interviewing is the quality of data derived from the conversation, which is likely to last longer due to the relationship created in person between the interviewer and the participant (Bryman, 2001).

Furthermore, graduates interviewed were classified into four further sub-groups, whose ratio was as follows: students and graduates constituted the largest group: 19 persons, those who enrolled in additional training – 12 respondents, graduates who did English language courses only - 6 persons, and graduates who were not interested in doing any further training, with additional 3 persons. The fifth category overlaps with those who have done additional studies or training, and those who have not since they have arrived in England, but who still would like to do some form of training and courses in the near future, with 11 persons belonging to this category.

In terms of gender, the researcher aimed to have a similar number of male and female respondents, with the final number of 16 male participants and 24 female interviewees. The reason for this was interest in motivations for migration, and further development after migration, and any differences or similarities stemming from the role of gender. However, although gender issues were not central in this study, the education trajectories of graduates after arrival in England did highlight that gender differences needed to be taken into account.

Some interviews involved having a stroll through local areas; others were more stationary, usually meeting in public spaces, such as cafes, where respondents could feel comfortable. The reason some respondents wanted to have a walking interview, was because of having small children with them who could not stay in one place for longer period of time, being active, and needing lots of space and attention. This often had an impact on respondents' reflectivity, as their stream of thoughts was often interrupted. Also, such interviews tended to be slightly longer, as they required many breaks, with regards to children to be looked after. There were woman respondents with children who chose to stay in one location, either home or a cafe, giving their children something to play with, to be occupied with, or putting them to bed for an afternoon nap.

Nonetheless, such respondents felt half committed in their responses, all the time having their children to look after at the back of their minds. However, such situations where women decided to meet at their homes, were the most convenient for them, as allowed the most natural settings and feeling of comfort for giving an interview even with children, which otherwise would have been more stressful looking after children in public spaces. In total, five women and one men respondents were interviewed with children being with them at the time. On the contrary, those who decided to meet without children, and those who did not have children, predominantly chose sitting places, and were able to engage more in the conversation and interview, having enough time and comfort for thinking reflectively on their lives. The decision on meeting places was always left to respondents, so they could chose the most comfortable and secure place conducting of such an interview.

At first, the researcher emphasised the chronological and biographical progression of subjects talked about during the interviews, with the aim of examining the individual migration stories embedded in the general economic and social environment (Boyle *et al.,* 1998). Interviews with graduates were structured around broad themes. Often, interviews begun with a question on graduates' familial background and upbringing, obtained education, mobility capital including history of holiday travelling, and longer stays in other countries. Furthermore, subjects covered motivations for migration to England (East Midlands), perceived position in the labour market and society after migration and stance towards deskilling. Another topic referred to perceived belonging, such as generational belonging, attitude towards British or dual citizenship and the issue of home. The final interview themes comprised of life aims and future plans in terms of their careers and further migration, as well as their perceptions on achieved success in life. Even though the interviews had such a chronological structure (Appendix 5), it was quite common for

respondents to start with their intentions and plans for future and how that was related with their past. Due to this reflective approach respondents could express better what was most important in their lives, and how certain events were interrelated, or how interviewees' perceptions changed over time.

During the interviews, participants had a chance to develop their own narratives, and reconstruct lived experiences, which often lead to further outbreaks of thoughts, conclusions, which were surprising for the interviewees themselves. Frequently, after the interviews researcher was given feedback from respondents on the nature of questions asked. In most cases they acknowledged the topic, mainly because it allowed them to think through about their career development since they have left universities in Poland, but also their approach to life planning and using arising opportunities. Many respondents, after the interview, asked about other educated Poles in England and the rest of the UK, showing an interest in the general pattern of Polish graduates' fate in the UK, often trying to find out, if other migrants think of returning back to Poland, and whether they achieved success in the host country.

4.3 Ethics and power relations

The use of qualitative methodology, in particular semi-structured interviews, requires from the researcher not only the knowledge of how to formulate questions, recruit participants and transcribe data, but "at the same time remaining cognizant of the ethical issues and power relations involved in qualitative research" (Longhurst, 2007:121). As Valentine (1997:113), states, it is important to reflect on who the researcher is, and how his or her identity will shape the interactions with interviewees. Therefore, recognition of own positionality (McDowell, 1992; Madge, 1993; England, 1994; Limb and Dwyer, 2001) towards others is one of the most important aspects of engagement with qualitative methods, along with issues of ethics and representation, which were reflected upon and any action for the research was based on them. The research received ethical clearance from Loughborough's Ethical Advisory Committee as it involved human participants. To get this I filled in an ethical clearance checklist which was subsequently approved. Then I ensured that I gave all participants a participant information sheet, explained the research and outputs to them fully, gave them a chance to ask questions and then asked them to sign an informed consent form. I also asked their permission to tape record the interviews.

4.3.1 Positionality and ethics

Within the research, issues of positionality and ethics were paramount, and begun with the approach to recruitment of the participants. The interviewees were approached via universities in the East Midlands who sent on my behalf emails to all Polish full-time and part-time students, leaving the decision on contacting the researcher to students themselves. In addition, the advertisement for participants was submitted to a local Polish newspaper *Signpost for Polish Success*, with contact details of the researcher for those who were interested in taking part in the project. Therefore, participants were only informed about the research, about which they could enquire and decide on their inclusion.

During the interviews, great care was taken to make sure that participants did not feel obliged to take part in the research, and that they could withdraw at any stage if they wished to. In order to gain informed consent, the researcher provided graduates with a participant information sheet with key facts on the research project, information on the interviewer, the management of recorded data, how the data is kept and treated and how the collected and analysed data will be disseminated. Then, participants were given written informed consent forms, which they signed, and no one felt the need to stop the interview or withdraw at any of its stages. In addition, the interviewer is the only person who knows the contact details and names of the participants, and the equipment where such data is stored, is password protected. In the thesis, altered names are used, and any identifiable details in case they were provided by respondents, were removed.

Another aspect that was looked into carefully when designing the interview questions and preparing for conducting interviews was the likelihood of researcher affecting the interview situation by formulating questions that influence the given answers. Great care was taken to minimise such influences during the research preparation process, and was controlled during the interviews, which ultimately helped to improve the quality and robustness of the research.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduced herself, and explained her short story of migration to England, and the purpose and scope of her research. After the outline, respondents were given short pre-interview surveys to fill in (Appendix 6), which referred to the interview questions, allowing respondents to start the process of thinking about their past mobility experiences, as well as plans for the future in terms of migration and mobility. The surveys had additional questions on their willingness to take part in a second interview, and their preferred forms of contact. The purpose of these short pre-interview surveys was to provide

respondents with some time to think about their mobility patterns in the past, before the commencement of the interview, which could allow for more details answers, and tune the respondent with the topic of the following up interview. Due to the surveys, respondents also had an extra understanding of the interview scope, which proved beneficial for them in case they wanted to withdraw their participation at an early stage. The data and all contact details provided by respondents were scanned and are kept in password protected on a private hard disk, to which only the researcher has access to. The original forms with contact details were carefully disposed of.

The main challenge recognised in using semi-structured interviews was the issue of the researcher's positionality. The researcher's Polish background made her more aware of the current socio-economic situation in Poland, but also the fact of belonging to the group of individuals holding characteristics required for the research (a cohort of Polish graduate migrants living and/or studying in England) made her an insider for the researched population. The issue of outsider/insider refers to boundary marking "that is seen to circumscribe identity, social position and belonging, and as such marks those who do not belong and hence are excluded" (Mohammad, 2001:101). This had an impact on interviewees' feelings of comfort when discussing issues of migration, because of the ease of speaking both Polish and English, and being able to make references not only to common roots, but also to migrants lived experiences.

The researcher aimed to balance the power relations between the researcher and interviewee as a result of her behaviour and conversation with respondents. Overall, even though the researcher was conducting an interview, most of the time interviewees treated her as a colleague, who similarly to them migrated to England, worked and undergone HE. In particular that was the case with respondents who were students or graduates of English universities, or did any additional studies or training in England. In case of those who worked only, the relation was different. Such respondents often found the researcher to hold a greater knowledge in terms of possibilities and options, and after the interview such respondents often asked questions on how they could progress in England, of what they could do to improve their life situation.

In most cases the researcher noted that those who engaged with HE in England were more open to sharing their life stories with regards to career trajectories, than those who worked only after migration. This could be referred to their curiosity and comparison of educational experiences at English universities. Often such respondents asked questions indicating their need to compare negative and positive aspects at English universities. For this group of respondents, the fact that

the interviewer was Polish and did her Masters in England, and was in the process of doing PhD, was regarded as natural. This could be supported by a statement of one of the respondents, who before the recorder was switched on, asked the researcher a question: "so how many degrees have you got already?" laughing at the same time, and explaining further, that many of her friends and herself hold at least two Masters, and are in the process of doing some additional degrees or further professional training. Therefore, it could be regarded as in the case of half of the interviewed group, the researcher's nationality and education made her an insider, and treated her as 'one of them'. In some cases, such a position led to ambiguity of answers, mainly because of the assumption of respondents that the researcher was aware of what they had gone through, instead of them speaking about their experiences. Thus, answers, such as: *"you know what I mean...", "you get the idea of what it's like, you've been there too"* were often heard noted in their responses. In such cases, respondents were asked for further elucidation of the issue, rather than acknowledging and moving on to another subject.

On the other hand, those who did not study in England viewed the interviewer as a person with a broad knowledge on educational possibilities, able to provide directions for their personal development. Often, graduates asked questions relating to career progression during the interviews. At those instances, researcher made notes of the questions trying to maintain the flow of the interview, and answered after the interviews. In general, respondents were more interested in potential options for their development, than in the interviewer's migration story. This was the case predominantly for those who at the time were studying English language, and considering doing additional courses in the UK. Often they knew what they would like to achieve in England, but they did not know where to start.

Therefore, in such instances, the relation of researcher-interviewee showed an imbalance in power, with graduates' perception on researcher as being well informed, and able to help them, for example to provide contact details or ideas. There appeared to be an age issue only with one respondent who was the youngest from the interviewed group, aged 22, and treated the researcher as the one with much authority, calling her Miss, instead of the introduced name – Aga. However, this happened only in one case, and the age difference does not explain the peculiar behaviour of the interviewee towards the researcher. The respondent felt very shy at the beginning of the interview, and it was very difficult to engage in more in-depth conversation. The answers for questions were provided in short sentences, sometimes even in one or two words, and it was very difficult to maintain continuity and flow of the chat. Nonetheless, after some time into the interviewing time, this graduate started relaxing a little bit more, and even

asking additional questions to researcher, gaining the idea of who the researcher is, and starting to trust more and open up. With regards to those who were older than researcher there were no significant effects on the issues of power or trust. Overall, respondents were of similar age to researcher, who at the time of conducting the research was 28.

Additionally, the issues of understanding and emotion became increasingly important within geographical and social science research (Davidson and Bondi, 2004). Therefore research also has to be prepared to dealing with emotion, particularly when asking questions that could be sensitive for participants. Even though the drafted questions were designed to talk about personal issues which were related to peoples' lives, the researcher had to take into account that every person is different, and that an easy sounding question for one, may ignite memories of hardship or any other feeling for another. However, the majority of respondents did not portray strong emotions when discussing their migration.

Nonetheless, other feelings and emotions surfaced, in particular when talking about their current lives, for instance for those who were single, the issue of loneliness was expressed quite often in their responses, or for those who were working in basic skilled jobs, frustration and anxiety surfaced up, sometimes of such strong intensity that led one of respondents to cry. It is therefore crucial to be aware of emotion in the research on the part of both, researcher and researched that influence the outcome of findings. In the case of emotional outburst, the researcher switched the recorder off, and tried to comfort the respondent. This involved listening to her more personal story, which she preferred not to be included in the interview. Before switching the recorder on again, the researcher ensured that she got permission to do so, and that the interviewee was able to continue. This highlights the personal nature of research and how emotional and subjective it is and how hard it is to be a detached observer. Thus, the empirical analysis and findings of this thesis are the products of the research design, which included data collection and implementation, and which are the focus of the five chapters.

To conclude, it was not enough to be a graduate of Polish university to be regarded as insider, but the experiences after migration, and in particular formal ways of career development; for example additional HE proved to disturb or maintain a balance of power relation between researcher and interviewees. The impact of such a relation influenced recorded material. Responses of graduates who did not do their HE in England seemed to be more descriptive, providing more details on their struggles, undertaken steps and ongoing problems in their career trajectories progression. Those who entered a HE in England often treated the researcher as one

of them, a friend who they met for a cup of "casual" coffee, sometimes asking for researcher's opinion on certain topics, which were not directly related to the interview and asked questions. This is strongly related to the issue of being an insider and trust. Through further questioning of the researcher, respondents gained more trust in the relationship: interviewer and interviewee, and became more open to share their opinions.

Overall, the researcher, being a graduate of two universities in Poland and in England, but also being an "after 2004" migrant in England, helped some respondents to open up and share their stories with a person who lived in those two countries, and to compare experiences in a friendly, and trusted environment. Also, the researcher ensured that respondents were at ease and did not feel pressurised, exploited or mistreated, by leaving them with a choice of the interview place, so they could find themselves in the most comfortable and relaxing environment for their life story telling. Therefore, often selected by respondents places were in public places, but those that graduates felt the most comfortable in, and did not seem to be afraid of answering private questions. The chosen places, being in large cafes often were not crowded, with enough space to allow for a private conversation, and not being noisy enough to affect the recorded material.

4.3.2 Language and translation

Within this research, language and translation are issues that were carefully thought about. Translation can be understood as a process where "the meaning and expression in one language (source) is tuned with the meaning of another (target) whether the medium is spoken, written or signed" (Crystal, 1991:346). At the same time, some researchers argue i.e. Temple and Young (2004:167-168) that speaking for others, in any language is a political issue that "involves the use of language to construct self and other". Therefore, "if researchers see themselves as active in the research process then they have a responsibility for the way that they represent others and their languages" (*ibid*.). In particular, those researchers who act as translators have the opportunity for close attention to cross cultural meaning and interpretations on the one hand, but on the other hand, it is important to remember that the issue of the researcher positioning, which "will give the meaning to the dual translator/researcher role" (*ibid*.). They argue further that such meaning alters with insider/outsider status, which in turn impacts on the validity of the work.

Moreover, Barrett (1992:203) points out that "the meaning is constructed in, rather than expressed by language". Therefore, Temple and Young (2004:164) identify that "methodological and epistemological challenges arise from the recognition that people using different languages

may construct different ways of seeing social life". Simon (1996:137) acknowledges that "translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two different worlds they inhibit are "the same". She argues further that it is vital to understand the way language is tied to "local realities, to literary forms and to changing identities" (*ibid*.). However, not only translation, but also "transliteration" the term that is defined "as a process of replacing or complementing the words or meanings of one language with meanings of another" (Regmi, 2010:18) is required to provide full meaning of the conveyed message by respondents.

Being fluent in both Polish and English, and acting as a researcher and translator, allowed the researcher to use both languages for interviewing and listening purposes, depending on the participants' preference. In the case of translation from Polish into English, great care was put in place to dilute the ambiguity of translation. If certain used words did not exist in another language, the decision was based on the context of usage in the sentence, and the primary cultural meaning of respondents' answers. Following Temple and Young (2004:171), the translator always makes her mark on the research, by "making assumptions about meaning equivalence that make her an analyst and cultural broker as much as a translator". Therefore, being in the position of researcher and translator who grew up in Poland and experienced migration to England, the researcher was able to look in depth into the primary source of information provided by respondents in both languages.

Before each interview, respondents were asked which language they would prefer to use. The majority of respondents indicated that they did not mind answering in either language, and that having an interview in English was equally comfortable as in Polish, although it was not their strongest language. Overall, the majority of respondents were interviewed in English, with 34 respondents choosing this language, and only remaining six preferred to speak in Polish, not feeling confident enough to speak in English. Those were usually respondents who only started attending English language courses in the UK, who stated that their communication level in English was not strong enough for more personal conversation, and that they would prefer to speak in Polish.

For those who chose English, the interviewer indicated that if they felt like providing some explanations in Polish, or to use particular words or expressions in Polish, which have significance for them, to not hesitate in doing so. There were only three respondents who

switched languages depending on their thought flow, from English to Polish and vice-versa, but mostly they answered in English.

Such openness and confidence in talking about their lives in English may indicate that they have got used to functioning in English on career and personal levels, and have acquired a new layer of identity that was constructed in England, with an additional element of it – command of the English language. Therefore, it may further signpost that creating of a narrative in English felt most adequate to express their new self and perceived reality. It may also signify that Polish graduates enjoyed the cosmopolitan outlook and the issues of Polishness, such as speaking in Polish, became less important. Overall, the researcher enquired about making new friendships in England, and what was stressed by respondents, was that they meet Polish people, but they did not aim to become friends with them purely because of having the same nationality. Instead, they assessed if newly met Polish people in England would have a potential to become their friends, if they met them in Poland.

This way, respondents expressed that there were not many people who could qualify, and making friendships in England was based on like-mindedness and interests rather than nationality. Therefore, in particular those who entered university in England were able to make friendships with other nationalities, but those who worked in basic skilled jobs in particular, did not have many chances to meet other educated people with whom they could feel the connection. Often, those who worked in a warehouse or factories mentioned that they made new friends with Polish people in such places, and who also happened to be graduates of Polish universities. Thus one of the requirements for the majority was the level of education, and common interests rather than nationality. Such selectivity indicates that they feel confident in England and appear individualistic.

Additionally, some respondents felt environmentally restricted when talking in Polish in public spaces in England. Some respondents mentioned that they did not like getting the looks from other people, when they talked in their native language. They preferred to speak in English in public spaces. At the same time, majority of respondents did not have problems with expressing themselves in English. What was more interesting, as the researcher went through the process of becoming fluent in English due to her stay, work and education in England, she was able to observe the process with respondents. A striking discovery was that the usage of English depended on the place and environment graduates acquired it, with respondents working for local authorities, or doing university degrees, or those who were working in lower skilled

occupations, such as warehouses, having different approaches to expressing themselves in English, and using different phrases that were nonetheless aimed at conveying their Polish perception of their lives. The areas that related to working and public functioning in England were well explained, however more reflective aspects, in particular for respondents who did not have other nationality partners with whom they had to communicate in English (in total 5), became much more difficult for those who had spent less time in England, and had less possibility to acquire a varied vocabulary, in particular those who did not study in England.

Nonetheless, after the majority of the interviews, graduates tended to ask personal questions to the researcher in English and with time switching to Polish, and once the conversation went from English to Polish, it remained in the latter. Some respondents switched from English to Polish, and vice versa, depending on the most suitable phrase that could describe the event or a thought. Often single words or phrases, rather than whole sentences in English were used, to which researcher was responding either in English or in Polish, trying to follow and customise herself to the situation. It is important to note that there were two types of respondents: those who preferred to speak in one language and not to substitute any words from another language, the other group did not consider purity of spoken language as important, and they were majority of respondents. At times, after the interview, the researcher had to switch the recorder again, with the permission of respondents, and additional information was recorded in Polish, in English, or a mix of the two, depending on respondents' thought flows.

However, an additional aspect was noticed, namely that some respondents when speaking in Polish were cautious of the volume of the conversation, and how loud they were talking in their native language. It ought to be stressed that interview places were selected by respondents themselves, therefore providing them with the most comfort in terms of chosen environment. However, for some, selecting a public space, and choosing English language may have suggested a 'professional' approach to the carried out interviews, where respondents were gaining trust in researcher with the flow of the interview and questions asked. This ultimately has resulted in "opening up" towards the end and even after the interview, when they added a few thoughts in Polish, which was recorded with their permission. Not all graduates felt constrained when talking in Polish, in particular those who could not speak English well, did not feel insecure about using Polish in public spaces. Those respondents did not have a choice, but to communicate in Polish. The fact of feeling more confident in speaking English also depended on experiences of discrimination, which was often mentioned by respondents, however in the majority of cases it had a very subtle form i.e. jokes, or comments. Also, many graduates expressed that they did not

mind being Polish, but they felt ashamed of many Poles' behaviour in England, who spoke vulgar Polish on the streets, and misbehaved. Respondents often underlined, that they did not want to be confused with such a group, and hence the issue of speaking Polish quietly in public spaces.

The fact of speaking in English affected the results, as some graduates had a better or worse level of English, and although the facts of their life trajectories were well covered, the more personal aspects could have been better explained by some respondents if they had chosen to speak in Polish. Nonetheless, the narrative of their lives in England as constructed in English, provided other valuable information for the research itself, as to what level of English respondents were, and how confident they felt in using the language, which was important to understanding graduates' positions at the British labour market.

4.3.3 Transcribing, coding and analysis

In terms of transcription and translation in qualitative research, there are a few strategies that can be employed. One of the approaches aims to transcribe interviews conducted in an original language word for word (verbatim), including pauses, emotional expressions and annotations in the same language (Crabtree and Miller 1999). Then, each transcript is translated into a target language (in this instance English). Another technique for transcribing involves only the key themes or issues that emerge in the process of translation (Birbili, 2000). This approach can save time as less transcribing is required (Emmel and Malby, 2001; Regmi *et al.*, 2010). For this research the verbatim technique was used for all interviews conducted in English, and the simultaneous translation and transcribing for those interviews that were conducted in Polish. The transcription of interviews followed up every interview not later than up to a week after the interview took place. This way, the researcher was able to engage more in the transcribing material, knowing the feelings, situation and general circumstances of the interview. Also, this allowed for commencement of early analysis, and drafting additional notes in case some themes not thought of before started to emerge, and using them in consecutive interviews. Correspondingly, after the interviews were carried out, translated and transcribed, the analysis of interviews begun, following the outlines of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006). After the fifth interview was transcribed, the researcher was able to recognise initial patterns emerging, and started the first coding of data. This way, the researcher constructed code system for 21 sub-themes, which at later stages of analysis were clustered into four larger groups (Figure 2).

The 21 sub-themes consisted of:

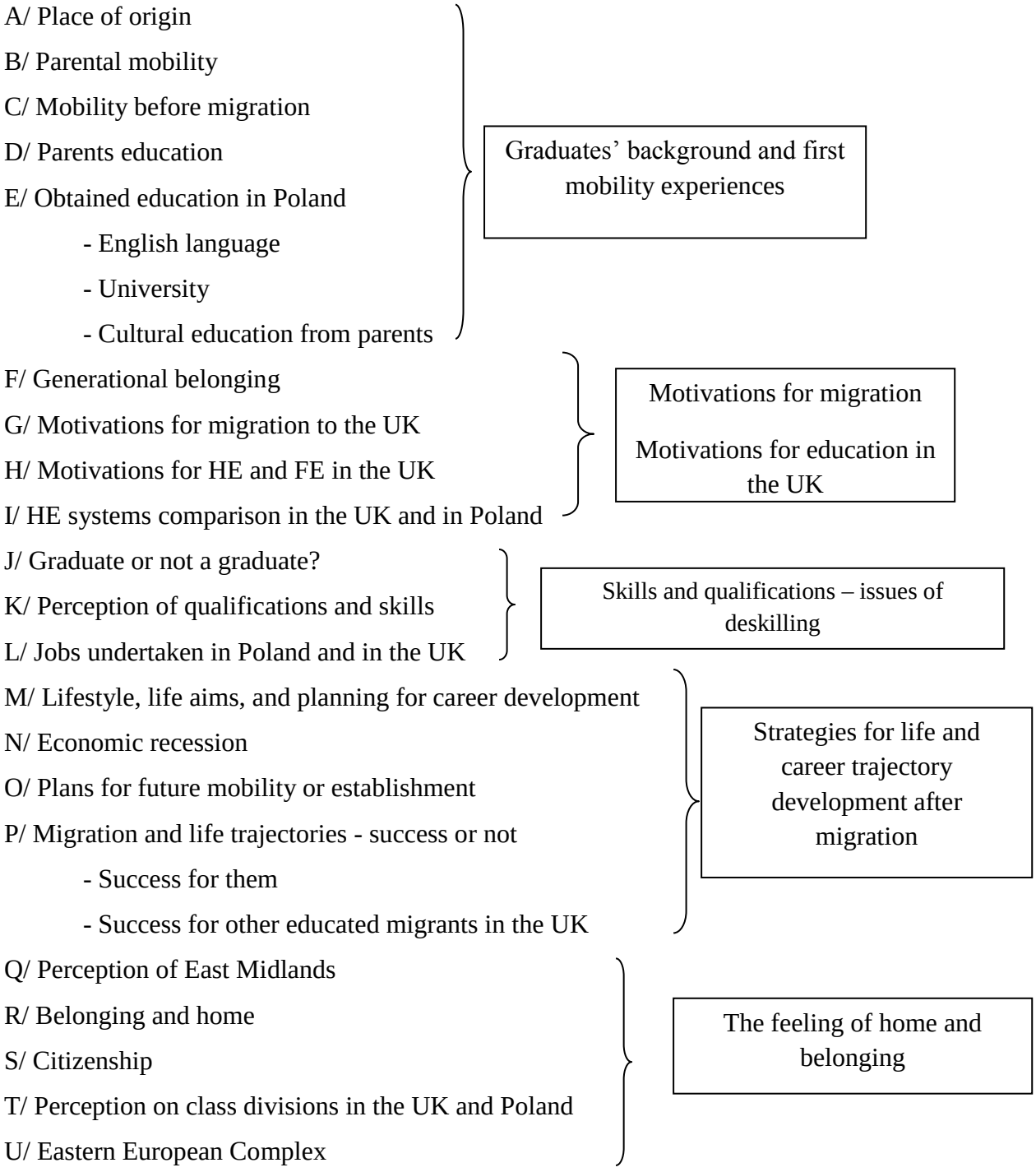

Figure 2. Stages of analysis

The same set of codes was used separately for men and women, to pay attention to any differences in responses and migration patterns. At later stages of analysis these themes were grouped into four larger themes which formed the final chapters of the thesis. Some sub-themes previously noted were discarded at later stages of data gathering, because of becoming a secondary or tertiary issue, which did not prove as relevant as new emerging themes. Therefore, the stage of interviews and transcribing, when the initial coding and analysis was initiated, was a

very dynamic one, when researcher had to be open minded for new clues emerging, and making sure that these were implemented in further interviews.

Overall, the researcher proceeded from the detailed coding, to more generalised coding, which in the final stage allowed creating four separate analytical chapters. In reality, each chapter went through numerous transformations in terms of what material it would cover as many of the issues investigated in this research are interrelated. All in all, the researcher looked at the data through cross-tabulation of various sub-themes in a structured manner, with an interlude of spontaneous reading of transcripts. This way it was possible to highlight any ideas not constrained by the initial coding, which allowed the researcher to differentiate emerging patterns from various perspectives.

To provide an explanation of the demarcation of four different cohorts of graduates with regards to their career trajectories development, which are described in Chapter 6, the researcher began the process with the initial coding. Following the curiosity, reading the sub-themes on motivations for HE and FE in England, HE systems comparison in England and in Poland, perception on qualifications and skills, and jobs undertaken in Poland and in England, and other sub-themes, the researcher was able to recognize different patterns among graduates.

Therefore, the value of qualitative methods is the generation of thorough data, rather than providing representative information, and it leaves the room for the unexpected, where not only the researcher but also interviewee may explore issues not thought about before, leading to reflexivity and comprehension of one's position in the process of migration, which could be traced in the future. Thus, the data gathered through semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to achieve a better understanding of the broader social phenomenon of graduate migration within the EU, in which she took part herself.

In the future, researcher aims to continue the study on Polish graduate migrants with an additional phase of interviews to be held five years after first data was collected. The intention is to investigate to what extent graduates career and life trajectories have changed, and how their plans on future mobility evolved or extinguished. All interviewed respondents agreed in writing to be re-contacted in the future to take part in a second interview. On additional, pre-interview forms, graduates provided researcher with their email addresses and telephone numbers, which will be tested if they are still in use two years before planned interviews.

4.4 Summary

Polish graduate migration to England is explored using 40 semi-structured interviews, pre-interview short questionnaires, and secondary data. Therefore, the primary data collected is of qualitative nature. The graduates' own experiences and perceptions formed the priority of this study, and allowed the production of rich empirical findings that contribute to the literature on graduate migration and mobility.

The following chapters discuss findings from the qualitative primary data collected in this research. Chapter 5 explores the influence of socio-historical background on Polish graduates' motivations for migration, Chapter 6 analyses graduates' career trajectories after arrival in the UK, Chapter 7 examines the influence of place on graduates social and geographical movement and home creation, and Chapter 8 delves into graduates' future mobility plans. Throughout these four chapters, links between the drivers, experiences and future plans and aims of graduates are investigated.

Chapter 5
Polish graduate motivations for migration to England

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the influence of socio-historical background on Polish graduates' formative years, and their previous mobility experience in decision making and motivations for migration to England. It also examines the notions of movement of Polish graduates to England, including education and job arrangements and social networks. The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1 discusses generational belonging of Polish graduates born in the late 1970s and beginning of 1980s, uncovering different generational units of graduates: generation of changes, opportunities, mobility and European generation. Section 2 delivers background information on mobility of graduates within Poland, Europe and beyond before they migrated to England. It includes first family travelling, first individual mobility experiences and impacts of University on mobility decisions, including studying abroad and undertaking seasonal work abroad during holidays. Section 3 provides information on graduates' motivations for migration to England, differentiating between two most important factors: lack of commitments which is related to life-stages and marital status graduates were at, and economic-aspirational factors. Section 4 looks into graduates' channels of mobility and their ultimate choice of destination as the East Midlands, which was often selected because of social ties and job/study arrangements rather than the merits of the region.

5.2 The ambiguity of a generation of Polish graduates: Lost, Pioneers or European Searchers?

The conceptualisation of the term social generation, brought to public attention by Mannheim in 1952, provides three distinctive types, beginning with "generational site" where a group of people are bonded by their location in historical time, for whom the date of birth is a "fate" (Mannheim, 1952) or a "destiny" (Wohl, 1979), as shaping influences experienced during the formative years of youth, set a person's views throughout a lifetime (Pilcher, 1994; Wrzesień, 2002).

This however can be recognised by individuals themselves. An expression of their belonging to certain groups, the so called "generational units", which are cohorts within a generation sharing particular characteristics, leads to another form: "generation as actuality", or in other words, a group that is self-aware of its bond.

The issue complicates when migration experiences are brought into attention. The group of prospective migrants may have been endowed with similar resources constituting "potentialities" (Mannheim, 1952), which may materialise for them in a form of mobility, but which ultimately depends on their agency. Therefore, decisions on migration and mobility cannot be directly linked to generational belonging; however the socio-historical contexts and 'fixed' views of respondents that were formed throughout character determining years can provide understanding of graduates' potential self-awareness of belonging to generational units, and their ultimate decision making process on mobility and migration, deriving from both intentional and unintentional agency. Finally, the migration and mobility can impact on an individual's feeling of belonging to a certain cohort, that of a group that has made such a step, but ultimately, it can also have other layers to it.

This study refers to the theory of social generations, and findings indicate that Polish graduates in England recognised themselves as belonging to various "generational units". The majority of graduates interviewed in England saw themselves as a part of a cohort born in the 1980s, which has been shaped by system changes taking place in Poland from the end of the 1980s, and continues nowadays. However, some individuals purely relate to a cohort of highly educated who left Poland because of an inability to fulfil their dreams there. Others do not express feelings of belonging to any cohorts, remaining individualistic, underlying the importance of their university education, but they constitute a significant minority.

> *"I don't feel part of any generation...I'm just 29 years old... I feel like a person with HE, and that's important to me"* (I35).

Nonetheless, most of the graduates felt that they belong to some generation, by giving examples of how different they are from their parents and younger siblings, and above all the fact that they were part of the demographic high of the 1980s, who experienced political changes happening in Poland, and finally, a belonging to a cohort that is highly educated, and another group of those who migrated after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004.

The findings of this research indicate that the majority of respondents felt belonging to four different generational cohorts: generation of changes, opportunities, mobility generation, and European generation, which are described in detail further in this chapter.

5.2.1 A generation of "changes"

> *"I think that our generation went through so many changes, like collapsing of communism, then seeing country joining EU, which influenced our lives"* (I14).

Following Andrews (2002:81), narratives constructed by individuals provide elements of not only their individual lives, but also communities to which they feel they belong to, as well as a particular time and space. Certainly this is the case for the majority of Polish graduates interviewed, who emphasised their belonging to a generation that witnessed major socio-political changes in Poland, including the fall of communism, development of a free country followed by preparation and accession of Poland to the EU in 2004. It is emphasised by many that these events which happened across their Polish life-spans and above all witnessing the scope of changes distinguishes them from the older and younger generations. Specifically, the change has a significant meaning in their lives.

Some respondents argue that being able to grow up with all these transformations made them stronger and prepared to work hard, at the same time made them ready to achieve more, no matter what are the conditions or situations:

> *"I believe that all that changes make us special, because we have the knowledge, experience, of the changing and developing country, and we know that because we survived all and took part in that, we can do a lot more, wherever it will be..."* (I28).

This statement of a graduate indicates a strong belief and drive to work hard, which is observed in practice for many respondents, after their migration to England. The hard work is often referred to enduring employments that are not related to their interests, but trying to take as much as possible out of their current positions, and learn in the work place, at the same time working towards their life aims and career objectives. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Therefore, the constant major changes in Poland are understood as a catalyst that allows respondents to refer to a form of unity, and talk about their generation. The subject of

generational units is well explained by Edmunds and Turner (2002a, 2002b). Researchers emphasise that members forming a generational unit are held together because of experiences of historical events from a similar viewpoint, which Mannheim (1997) regards as the socio-historical context which predominated in their youth, and which continues influencing their natural view of the world. This has been directly referred to by one of the respondents who noticed that the experiences from the past formed his personality:

> *"I saw it from a child's perspective (socialism), but I think it shaped me in some way"* (I31).

Most respondents noticed basic socio-political changes happening when they were growing up, positioning them between the two distinct systems: socialism and democracy, and finally in the EU. Those changes have been recognised as something special that distinguishes the cohort born in the late 1970s and early 1980s form the generation of their parents, older and younger siblings:

> *"I was born in 1981, so I think it's important, cos when I was 10 years old, in 1991, democracy came in etc. I don't remember communism, I don't like to say communism, it was socialism...So, I think, I'm from this generation that does not remember it [...] we don't remember socialism, but we still are not in this new system, we were not born in democracy [...] we were born in socialism, but our independent, conscious life was in democracy, so it's like two different worlds. So, I think we are a "bridging generation" ('przejsciowe pokolenie')"* (I26).

> *"Because we were born in the 80s, so we are still a bit post communist, communist a bit, and post communist. We are like...'in the middle generation'"* (I11).

In other studies on migrants in the UK, Williams and Balaz (2005) look at three different groups of Slovaks depending on their labour occupations: professionals and managers, students and au pairs. Describing them all, they use the term of "the transition generation", mainly as they entered labour market or sought to advance in their careers at the time of skills and capital shortages in Slovakia, which was caused by "the place-specific shift from state socialism to a market economy" (Williams and Balaz, 2005:463). They argue at the same time that attributes of structural changes increased uncertainty, what overall encouraged migration. Nonetheless, authors do not research respondents' perception on generational belonging, but only classified them broadly to a category which potentially was containing various generational units.

In this research, graduates used several different descriptions for the cohort to which they felt they belong to, namely: *"post-communist generation"* (I22), *"kids of the state of war"* (I28), "*last generation that remember socialist time"* (I31), *"generation of change"* (I25) and *"transformation generation"* (I6). The names used indicate an influence of experiences of the past on the perception of unity and belonging to certain cohorts. It can be noted that graduates feel in between the groups, and the most precedential influence on their outlook on the world has the ongoing process of change, and which commenced in their childhood. This reinforces the debate on transition and early life-course, i.e. Hörschelmann (2009:93) and Kovacheva (2001:41) who stress that post-socialist societal transition for those born in the late 1970s and early 1980s took place parallel to their key biographical changes. Also, Burrell (2011a:414) underlines the first generation's venture into adulthood in a new system implied "double transition" – personal and national "with new rules, expectations and freedoms, developing in a new build environment". In addition, Bailey (2009:2) notes that "space plays an important role in mediating transitions". Therefore, this thesis argues that the interaction of personal, spatial and societal changes led to the gaining of new individualistic qualities of those who experienced their formative years in Poland during the period of transition.

Most of the graduates interviewed could describe characteristics of people who were born at a similar time. They emphasized major political and economic changes during their youth that influenced who they are now. At the same time, due to their current absence in a Polish society daily life, it was difficult for them to compare their generation with especially younger ones. The bases for observations provided them contacts maintained with their families. It was through their comparison to younger siblings or cousins that allowed them to notice the differences in perception and behaviour, stemming from dissimilar conditions the younger family members were brought up in. Altogether, graduates were able to compare themselves with other generations growing up and living in dissimilar socio-political situations in Poland: their parents in socialist Poland, them in times of transitions, vaguely remembering socialism, but growing up in a free economy country, and their younger siblings who are brought up in a capitalist Poland.

> *"Well looking at my sister, the age gap is 5 years* (sister 5 years younger*), but my generation was a bit different, grown up on more strict rules, and more directed, parents were more giving, imputing in their education and values"* (I38).

Nonetheless, some respondents argue that because of living across constant changes in the socio-political arena, as well as within the labour market, the shift of values, and requirements made them feel insecure, and above all – lost:

> *"I think we are in a very special situation, because of the condition of the country, and because of the condition of the labour market. I definitely feel that I belong to like a really 'lost generation'"* (I4).

However, the feeling of being a lost generation can be contrasted with opportunities that those young educated Poles have been offered by the EU enlargement. The changes that were happening during respondents' formative years and continue nowadays provided them with multiple ranges of adaptive responses and traits that form the features of their personalities. Armoured in such characteristics, graduates may use them in response to a range of opportunities that arise due to a free movement within Europe.

5.2.2 The "opportunities" generation

The majority of graduates interviewed characterised their peers and friends from Poland who were born in or around the 1980s as ambitious, but struggling with achieving their dreams. This is strongly linked with the timing. On the one hand, graduates became exposed to the opportunities due to Poland joining the EU; on the other hand, they become pioneers in establishing new routes to success, which are associated with uncertainty. Even though they admit that they have many more opportunities than their parents' generation, they don't know how to use them efficiently, which confirms Burrell's (2011a:414) stance on youth in "double transition", "who are unfamiliar to the traditional guides of parents and teachers, as to the youths themselves". Therefore, as this research shows, for them it is a trial and error method in understanding and working out of the new routes in free market economy. As a result, being accustomed to changes, on the one hand allows for flexibility and recognition of the opportunities, but on the other hand, innovation of the routes requires individuals' agency, and working out what they can do within the new structures, untested by their parents. Overall, Kovacheva (2001:43) describes the times when youth of post-socialist countries happened to enter adult lives, and a loss of predictable routes into adulthood and working life, as the insecurity of the era, which then translates into personal insecurity. To provide an example, Leszczynski (2011) writes in the Guardian that at the Polish graduate labour market "there is virtually no job security; employers feel it is a buyers' market, and think they can always find a

better employee; they are slow to hire and eager to fire". Therefore, on the one hand the struggle for fair and lasting recruitment fuels insecurities for young graduates. On the other hand, as this research confirms, the insecurity derives also from the lack of guidance on exploitation of opportunities, and above all, the findings of this research show that it is the abundance of options, what makes their management more difficult. Thus, the freedom of making choices not restricted politically by Poland or EU is contrasted with ability to administer the opportunities, linked to the knowledge or its lack of how to utilize them, but also provides a room for the agency and creativity, shaping their own reality.

> *"Many of my friends...we are confused still what to do, we don't have a feeling of security, we have lots of ambitions, and we have right to these ambitions. But at the same time, it's so much more difficult for us to fulfil our dreams. It's just because we are this post-communist generation, so we want a lot because we suddenly can go out of the country, we could see the world, its beauty, what people have and what we could have, and really can have it! Because now we can do everything, we can travel, we can study, we can work, you know whatever, learn languages, whatever we want, but at the same time we have no basis for this"* (I4).

Those above mentioned opportunities are often paired with graduates' aspirations. Many respondents described their peers and friends as ambitious, open minded, adventurous, and aiming to achieve something in their lives. They are perceived as having goals in life, often difficult to achieve, but they are pictured as hard working, and not afraid to be mobile to fulfil their dreams. Because many of them found it impossible to do it in Poland, they chose other ways of working towards their goals - abroad. Therefore, Sztompka's (2004) optimistic prediction about youth flexibility and their ability to move unharmed beyond the despoil of posts-socialist change, can be contrasted with the results of this research, which shows graduates ambitions, at the same time lack of established routes to fulfil their dreams in a new capitalist world. Additionally, graduates may choose one of the options offered – migration, which conveys another life transformation, and which outcome may yet be unknown.

For many Polish graduates, the new undertaken routes are often related to commencing their lives abroad with a job below their qualifications. It is thought however, that these are not their ultimate social and economic positions, and graduates perceive their peers as those who are constantly improving their skills and knowledge about the world around them, as for them it's not money that is the most important, but a good life experience, and above all, living their dreams:

"These are people who thought that they will achieve something in Poland. They graduated, they were studying, they thought that they will achieve something, but the reality turned to be the way that they had to leave everything behind in Poland, and migrate somewhere else and to get any jobs to just earn money - not in Poland, but abroad. And they keep climbing up, to get to the top" (I37).

"*These are people who have high aims, keep doing some sort of HE, post graduate studies and so on, or PhD [...] they are not money driven, but they are experienced intensively in life. They travel a lot, they speak languages, they feel confident"* (I5).

"Adventurers, quite open minded, wanting to learn about other cultures, other countries [...] they like to go out, and travel, they are keep, they just don't stay in little homes, but look what's around them, they are open, and in terms of moves they are a bit more brave..." (I23).

"Have some goals, sometimes really difficult to achieve but they try to do everything to get there, so they are hard-working, and want to get very ambitious jobs, and are not afraid of moving around to fulfil that dream" (I22).

Moreover, another respondent noticed mentality contrasts within this generation unit, where people on the one hand are ambitious, but on the other frustrated and depressed because of inability to use gained knowledge and willingness to contribute in the labour market. One of the antidotes for their life discontent became the right to move out from Poland:

"They are ambitious, hard-working, but also frustrated, depressed - these are the reasons why I have always wanted to leave Poland...because of that kind of depression. So yeah, depending on advantages and disadvantages, this is quite an oxymoron, but they are like ambitious and depressed, de-motivated almost but still ambitious. It's a bit ironic" (I10).

Thus the enlargement of the EU serves as an option and their move to any European country as a chance for fulfilling their life aspirations, where working hard is thought to be a means to achieving this. The hard work and fruits of it can also be the answer to the Polish labour market realities, where success heavily depends on personal contacts and where unfair work practices are still common, about which Botterill (2011) and Trevena (2011) mention in their research. Thus, this study shows that graduate migrants are prepared to work hard and believe in the

effects of hard work on achieving of their ambitions within Europe, as discussed further in Chapter 6.

5.2.3 The "mobility" generation

The effects of the process of migration on graduates' perception on belonging to a special cohort, has been acknowledged in this research. Some respondents named their generation as a *"migration generation"*, and the fact that many of their peers migrated to other countries, including the UK, made some respondents to feel unoriginal in making a decision on migration to England. On the reverse, they felt a part of the group of those who felt compelled to migrate after graduating universities in Poland, and whose friends selected a similar option:

> *"My parents belong to a working generation, and we are a "migration generation", or a generation of migrants, where everybody started going abroad. I had a feeling that all my friends moved somewhere abroad [...] I do not feel worse or betrayed by the life too much, looking at my peers, who also had to follow a similar pattern"* (I37).

In addition to not feeling "*unique"* with decisions on migration, some respondents underline the characteristics of their generation, as having international experiences as well as international relationships and friendships:

> *"I am not unique. My friends do the same what I do. All my friends have similar experiences [...] I have realised a couple of things...that a generation born in the 80s is like me. When I look at my friends, sister, people in our age, they all are so driven, we all go far. And they all have international experiences, and some sort of, maybe not international relationships, but definitely friendships"* (I15).

> *"I think it's like a first generation that experimented living abroad, having relationships with people from abroad"* (I13).

The difference has been also noticed in the life-course of older generations, who tended to follow a traditional Polish life pattern, completing a degree, finding a permanent job, getting married, then having children:

"I have a sister who is 10 years older than me, and I know a lot of her friends, who she associates with, and they all are just those people who fit in a Polish pattern...do a degree, especially for women, do a degree, get married, have children, have a lovely home, and kind of live in a 'baby valley' (a housing area popular among new couples, with new born babies) (I13).

The generation of the 1980s, followed a different route, that of mobility and travelling, forming relationships, often international, but leaving the decision on getting married for later, which is discussed in detail later on in this chapter, in a section on mobility and life-stages:

"I have a lot of friends, who are like 30, and I'm 28, but some of my friends turn 30 this year or next year, and they just don't have children, they are in relationships but not like married [...] People from my generation, they all kind of expand, they do a lot of travelling, they do degrees abroad, and most of my friends are in international kind of relationships" (I13).

Some respondents feel generally a part of the movement, of the group that graduated universities in Poland and migrated to Western Europe. Even though they are hesitant about the existence of such a generational unit, they have observed a trend, which is gaining in intensity and popularity among their peer group:

"I think I belong to a generation of people who basically graduated from the university in Poland and just moved out. Because they think, they deserve a bit better than the situation, reality is in Poland at the moment. Although, I don't really know if such a generation really exists, but a lot of people are moving out from Poland, and this is becoming quite common" (I7).

***"**I migrated 2 years after EU accession, so I think a lot of people must have come straight after, but I feel a part of that movement anyway"* (I23).

"I belong to a generation that migrated to the UK" (I40).

At the same time, taking the route of mobility and migration to fulfil graduates' dreams is not perceived as the easiest one, and not every person can do it, which accords with migration scholars on mobility treating on selectivity of mobility, which has to be learnt (i.e. Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Balaz *et al*., 2004; Vertovec, 2007).

"It's been a long way that eventually led me here, where I'm here and now studying, but it's been a very difficult way as well. And I can understand that many people are afraid to do it" (I4).

Above all, graduates are looking for better opportunities for their development, and life in general, doing something extra that would not be possible in Poland:

"Graduates from the uni are just looking for a better career opportunity, maybe better future. Because they could have earned something in Poland as well, have house and mortgage initially but something to do with their lives...like some opportunities they wouldn't have in Poland" (I7).

Therefore, the role of constant changes across the life span of those who were born in the late 1970s and 1980s as well as opportunities that those changes evoke, provide them with chances that can only be administered by individuals. One respondent calls them a "*first generation of true chances*" that is only dependent on some economic conditions, but has no other constraints:

"*I think we are a first generation of true chances ("pokolenie prawdziwych szans"), depending only on ourselves. We are in a position to navigate our reality how we would want it, and we are not dependent on...well we are dependent on some economic conditions, of course, but there are no other constraints, or if there are, they seem to be reasonable [...] So we are more able to create our reality and this reality is now more dependent on us, than it used to be in the past for older generations"* (I2).

The mentioned role of an individual's agency is well described in Mannheim's (1952) study, which unfolds that although the opportunities and specific life chances of a generation stem from the geographical location and place in time, these contain only the potentialities which can be made use of or discarded by individuals.

Indeed, many graduates have noticed that being born and growing up in Poland in times of political and economic changes have shaped their identities. However, the opportunities available to them due to those changes, for instance Poland's accession to the EU, can be selected depending on their personal preferences, aims and needs. Nonetheless, research carried by Burrell (2011a), shows that transitioning Poland was perceived by the interviewed as a place

of opportunity, with a strong narrative indicating that the greatest chances were placed in increased international mobility offered by the collapse of socialism. The major aspect of Burrell's (2011a) research is the awareness of a young Polish generation about their ability to make the most out of these changes. As Burrell (2011a:416) states, the transition and later EU accession was narrated by young respondents as inevitable move towards an increased and much anticipated ability to travel across Europe "allowing future opportunities to be envisioned outside of the country perhaps even more easily than within it".

This thesis argues that graduates interviewed thought that contextual experiences, that of growing up in changing political situation and economy, can influence their decisions on mobility and migration. One of the important elements of their youth is witnessing changes from socialist-style planned economy into a market economy, and stemming from this adjustment within the society and culture. The process of changes forms a contextual background for their formative years, and which made them more adaptable to new conditions and circumstances. It can be argued that such experience of change made them more open to opportunities, which require decisions and openness, involving further changes. On the whole, growing up in the process of transformation became a self-propelling scheme of change. First of all, individuals' vantage point of change, and their ability to maintain the potentiality of it became something innate, and embedded within migration agency stemming from this could be regarded as unintentional. After Poland's accession to the EU, the emerging opportunities allowed individuals for their agency in chances' management.

Therefore this thesis stresses that the possibility of a free movement, which comes as a result of the EU enlargement, is coupled with young graduates' ability to make those quick decisions on mobility, a skill that has been acquired throughout their formative years in Poland, and which is taken for granted. Furthermore, that level of human agency could be considered as "a practical consciousness" (Giddens, 1984), and can be seen as "inaccessible to conscious reflection and discursive articulation" (Smith, 2004). What it means, is that the structural conditions (Giddens, 1991) of socio-historical influence on young graduates identities and their vantage point, provide unconscious motives for action, and often the manner in which those actions are taken, for example, without previous long-term planning or preparation:

> *"So the decision making process, I don't know, took like a month, It wasn't like a result of pre-conceived notion or idea. She just said like 'hey, let's do it' and I said 'yeah, why not?'"* (I13).

There were other respondents who declared an impulsive decision making process on migration to England, and behind their "why not?" calculation, the pros and cons of the risk involved in migration were embedded, with imagined nuances of what mobility involves, and how it will benefit them:

> *"Why not? One way ticket, more opportunities, no commitments back at home, and my sister was here"* (I11).

> *"I thought, 'why not'? Why not....just try different life, live somewhere where people are a bit different, yeah, it can be challenging and we decided to move"* (I24).

> *"When that money stopped coming, I decided ...yeah...'why not' to do the same what my brother did..?...Go to the agency and find a job for me in the UK, so find something for myself...and because I had a previous experience in working in hospital they offered me a job in a care sector!* (I28).

> *"I was waiting to finish my school, and then I knew I will get those papers, so I started a new stage and so... 'Why not' to try the UK....so I decided to come"* (I30).

Such spontaneity of decision-making and the process lasting often for short periods of time has also been noticed previously by Galasinska and Kozlowska (2009), who focus their study of narratives of two groups of Polish migrants in the UK, pre-1989, and post-2004. The narratives of respondents from the post-2004 cohort significantly differed in style, performance and linguistic when giving accounts on moving country, with decisions being impulsive, made in days and the journey description often absent. The authors also discern that the stories are "neutral, cool or calculated" and the language used is often colloquial, sentences are short, and verbs omitted (Galasinska and Kozlowska, 2009:184). The comparable result were noticed within this study, where the flippant expression: "*why not"*", conveyed the ultimate decision making process, and mostly dry facts, and withhold description of the process, indicating lack of emotional engagement to mobility have been presented by respondents.

It is worth noting that the expression of "why not" refers not only to decision making on migration, but also other major decisions in life, for example choice of university, or a decision to accept a work placement offer. This has been observed among other graduates' responses:

"At first I was planning only to finish my degree here, to get the additional paper to my wallet, and after that just go back home, but at some point I was offer that job at the uni, so I thought: 'why not'? Maybe I will experience just working for myself, having a full time job, be independent" (I18).

Another interviewee was sending applications to various universities in the UK, already motivated to do her Masters there, but not being certain at which university. The choice was dictated by the positive and friendly answer from Loughborough University, and the decision was based yet again on the "*why not"* factor:

"So basically I got a response from the uni of Loughborough. It was very kind and nice, so I said OK...yeah! 'Why not?!'" (I20).

Consequently, the prompt assessment of personal life directions, may also suggest, that the swiftly made decisions are treated as casual, the risks involved as minuscule, and potential benefits perceived as realistic ones, rather than a promised pot of gold at the other end of the rainbow. As a result, the tangibility of various opportunities, allows for immediate choices. Finally, the research suggests that the contextual background of graduates, being accustomed to changes due to historical circumstances, influence the decision making process, adding velocity and ordinariness to the method.

Additionally, one of the historical events, that of preparation and joining of Poland to the EU, influenced many young Polish graduates' life choices, and some of interlocutors considered belonging to a cohort of European generation.

5.2.4 The "European" generation

The right of free movement across Europe is a major possibility for Polish graduates, and respondents recognise the difference it makes to be free, such as being able to travel, study and work where they want to. They are also aware that they are one of the first who graduated universities, who can leave Poland without commitments and follow their dreams outside of the country unrestricted:

"I think that me and people like 2-3 years older than me, were the first one who actually were able to see that: 'oh gosh, we joined EU and now we can do this, we can do that...we are allowed to travel here, there...and to study where we want [...] I just know that I'm one of first people in the generation who actually have a free choice, we are not restricted by any Polish system" (I18).

Some of them call their generation a *"European Union generation"*, even though not many of them were educated in the EU yet, or decided to study, or to do additional degrees abroad. However, the majority of them chose to use other benefits of the EU, not only travelling, but also EU grants, support to establish their own businesses, to start something that would be much more difficult to do in the old system:

"So basically we are the first one who decided that EU is useful in many aspects" (I18).

Therefore, a few respondents call their cohort *"Euro-Citizens"* (I5), *"European Union generation" (*I18), or *"Pioneers on a large scale – with new opportunities"* (I20). This finding illustrates Wrzesień's (2009) pronouncement on the existence of a Polish generation of "European Searchers", who grew up in times of preparation to and accession of Poland to the EU. As he argues, "European Searchers" started gradually to experience new possibilities in a transforming country both during pre- and post accession period, beginning with holidays abroad, shopping, then studying and working, and ultimately moving to another country, where for some, it was short stays, whereas others experienced them for longer. What is more, he emphasises that this group is the first among Polish youth that has faced such possibilities and is not afraid to use them, therefore, he calls them "European". The reason he describes them as "Searchers" has got connotations with the EU enlargement on the one end bringing new wave of opportunities to explore, and problems that young people have with planning of their lives "here and now, or in the near future" on the other (Wrzesień, 2009:82). Equally important in Wrzesień's study is the role of the economic crisis which started in 2008 (e.g. Akyüz, 2010), and which not only intensified but also applied new values to the processes of "searching".

Nonetheless, for the purpose of this study, the researched sample consists only of those who migrated to England, therefore, they already share similar features, such as a physical migration, and not only its potentiality. Therefore, the cohort interviewed constitutes a new quality on its own, where respondents selected for the research were born in the late 1970s to early 1980s,

grew up in times of Poland's transformation, graduated from a Polish university and migrated to the UK after 2004.

Despite the fact that graduates interviewed shared similar social experiences, as well as decisions made that directed their lives, such as a HE and migration to England, there were noticeable differences within the researched cohort, and these were dependent on individuals' life aims and personal ambitions, as well as their agency in creating their own reality and fulfilling their goals.

Although the responses of those who were born in the late 1970s and early 1980s provide a clear focus on changes and mobility, this is not the whole cross-section of the Polish generations, as there maybe more than one, with many cohorts sharing different characteristics. These findings refer only to a potential unit of born in times of demographic boom paralleled with the country's transformation, young Poles who were educated to a university level, and used the opportunity of mobility, arriving in England after 2004. Like some graduates indicated, they feel unity with those who hold a HE, as well as with those associated with a movement - those who migrated to England. On the whole, graduates' perceptions on peer groups, generations of older and younger siblings as well as parents provide additional background information to their motivations for mobility and migration.

The differentiated generational cohorts among the interviewed graduates, that of generation of changes, opportunities, mobility, European generation and the fifth group of those who do not consider themselves belonging to any cohort, but felt individualistic and regarded themselves as having completed a HE, and acting independently, provide a different perspective on Polish graduate migrants in England. It shows that the socio-historical context of those who were born in the late 1970s and early 1980s has an influence on graduates feeling of belonging to various generational subgroups, which could be related to observed opportunities, constraints and actions taken.

This socio-historical background adds up to understanding of decisions on life-courses and mobility of graduates, however it should be looked upon in conjunction with another element that contributes to the overall experience of mobility, that is graduates' family background, parents' mobility and graduates first movements within Poland and abroad in their childhood and at later stages in life.

5.3 Travelling abroad before migration to England

This research on graduate migration through graduates' narratives looked back at their perceived childhood and youth mobility, and also their early familial mobility, up to the times when they made decisions on migration to England. The history of their mobility can be traced from their first memory of travelling, with some respondents having experienced travelling with family in their childhood, then during school times with friends, and some continued being mobile during their university courses.

For the majority, the first experience travelling abroad was in their childhood, but there were also respondents who started going abroad towards the final years of their high school, or even later – at universities. The majority of interviewed graduates sampled mobility for leisure, and a number of respondents travelled for work purposes, before they ultimately migrated to England. The research also draws upon the usefulness of mobility in helping to achieve life aims of graduates, what is described in greater detail further in this chapter.

5.3.1 Family travelling and parental mobility

Previous mobility to other countries was predominantly in the form of holidays and mostly within Europe, starting with family holidays, or trips organised by primary, secondary school or college, then during the university course becoming more mixed, with working abroad to earn money for another academic year, or going for a few weeks language and other university training, including Erasmus scholarship. Thus, travelling to other countries for holidays, study, and short term work related migration for a few weeks, might have contributed to increased self – confidence and provided enhanced knowledge of mobility, or "mobility capital" facilitating further migration as suggested by a few, for example Balaz *et al.* (2004); Murphy-Lejeune (2002); Vertovec (2007).

One respondent remembers travelling with family when they were children:

> *"We were travelling when we were little. Basically dad and mum were taking us to places like Legoland, Disneyland, this kind of stuff"* (I18).

In terms of parents' mobility, 8 persons out of 35 admitted that their parents didn't travel abroad at all. On average, mothers tended to be more mobile than fathers, and 10 respondents stated that

only their mothers travelled abroad for the reasons of studying, working, and generally going on holidays. Most of respondents' parents travelled together, with 14 graduates stating that their parents tended to go abroad for holidays, however it was not that popular because of the money issue.

Some respondents noticed that their parents' mobility patterns have shaped their perception on mobility and needs for travelling in their adult life. Such observation becomes an important aspect of narrative on mobility or lack of knowledge of how to be mobile, and mobility confidence, due to the sedentary life-styles of parents:

> *"I think I've got it after them...very limited mobility, my mother didn't want to travel far, because she didn't want to go abroad...so maybe that's why I have not got something in me, this confidence, that I will not manage because I cannot speak the language etc"* (I36).

On the contrary, another person reconstructs his feelings from first journeys and experienced mobility undertaken with his father around Poland when he was a boy. For him, early mobility introduced into his life by his father, influenced his positive feelings towards travelling, the motive of a road, as well as space:

> *"My father, he was a lorry driver, and he used to take me to various trips. If there was some historic town on a way, or a castle, so when my dad has accomplished his task of delivering some goods, we used to stop in such places and he was showing me around. I liked space, I liked mobility, and generally the motif of road, it appealed to me quite strongly. I used to sit with my dad in the car, I was feeling the happiest in the world...we were going to travel..."* (I3).

Other factors contributing to mobility capital accumulation is the family history of mobility and education that parents impose on children, where age when young people start learning foreign languages and travelling becomes another aspect of mobility capital accumulation (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002).

The commencement of travelling at a young age, which was imposed by parents, became an eye opener for the importance of learning languages:

"The first ones were usually to either Germany or Czech Republic, but I never wanted to learn any languages, so my parents sent me on a school trip to Legoland, with my friends, alone. And that was my first trip alone. I was like 8 or 9. So I went to Legoland and I couldn't communicate obviously, so I came back and I started to learn languages. I think it was a very good strategy" (I16).

Studying English language became popular in Poland in the 1990s, and English has grown to be a valuable asset in the national labour market, therefore taking a gap year in English speaking country started to be a common practice among students (Trevena, 2011). Most of respondents (28) commenced learning English language in their primary school, and 26 attended private English tuition at some stage of their education in Poland, which is explained by one of respondents:

"I guess in Poland there is a tendency to send kids to private classes, no matter what" (I6).

Thus, parental agency in passing on to children the skill of mobility, in particular during their childhood, in the form of short leisure-type trips within the country, holidays abroad with family, as well as sending their offspring for various school trips within the country and abroad, allows for mobility confidence gain, understanding the usefulness of knowing languages, therefore broadens awareness, which has an influence on the future life-courses of young individuals. Some researchers identify new Polish migrants in the UK as developing 'cosmopolitans' (Datta, 2009), and as Recchi (2006:63) accentuates, the cosmopolitan outlook can be achieved due to testing of free movement rights in the EU and travelling. Similarly, Botterill (2011:58) finds that some Polish respondents seek out for a "difference and a celebration of uncertainty", resembling cosmopolitan theories of migration, and Favell's (2003) "Eurostars". This study supports such an outlook, and adds to the debate on Polish cosmopolitanism practices in the UK the fact that majority of respondents preferred to speak in English during the interviews. Such an attitude may indicate that Polishness is set aside, and they are ready to function even with another Polish person, not in their native language. This however was true for respondents who started English language education in their primary or secondary schools, and through their stay in England they gained in confidence in communication in this language. Furthermore, graduates intentions of further mobility and migration also provide a better picture of graduates' cosmopolitan identities, which is elaborated further in Chapter 8. To have a full profile of respondents it is important to look at their initial stages of mobility, from their childhood up to migration to England.

5.3.2 The impact of university experience on migration decisions

Another important element of graduates' migration is commencement of a university course in Poland. According to Murphy-Lejeune's (2002:66) concept of a "mobility capital", it can be acquired not only due to international mobility experience, but also within one's national borders. Therefore, moving to another city in Poland to commence education is reflected in a researched sample, with 25 respondents changed locations for study purposes. Mostly, those who moved out were living in small towns or villages. Those who lived in bigger cities, tended to go to universities located within the city, and to stay with their parents throughout the course. Many (11) respondents came from larger cities, studied in the same city and lived with their parents. This can also have implication for their future preferences in choosing places to live (small village-to small place abroad).

In total, 15 respondents didn't move out from their parents' house during the university course, among them 4 persons were commuting to another city to study. Living with parents during their studies provided them with the possibility to save some money, whereas those who moved out to larger cities often had to work during the course of their studies, or to take a loan, but the second option was less common. Only one person took a loan to do the university course. Some worked abroad during holidays, which is further analysed in this chapter.

Altogether, at a later stage of respondents' lives, other factors can contribute to their further mobility. For example, the theory proposed by Mosca and Wright (2010:13) argues that those who obtained a superior class of qualifications have a higher probability of international migration.

The research findings indicate that 32 interviewees graduated public universities in Poland, in particular those that are regarded as one of the best in the country (i.e. Warsaw University, Jagiellonian University, or Wroclaw University). The majority (36) graduated with Masters Degree, and only 4 respondents finished their education in Poland with Bachelor degrees. The debate on the quality of private education in Poland, which presents it as not having a real educational influence because of not transmitting cultural assets, therefore depriving students of chances for compilation of cultural and social capital (Nowak, 2010) has further complications for graduates' life trajectories.

The correlation of studying abroad and further migration, as King and Ruiz-Gelices's (2003) suggest, has been found true for one third of the researched group. Additionally, 13 respondents visited other countries for short term training, study or internship purposes, but only 5 respondents attended the Erasmus programme in another European country.

> *"On our last year of studies, we went to Sweden as exchange students, for Erasmus. We spent whole 5th year in Sweden, after which I never really came back, like for good to Poland"* (I4).

> *"I knew straight away that I want to do a PhD, and when I decided to go to the university, and I, just after the Erasmus, realised, well, not realised, it's just....I confirmed myself in a decision that I don't want to do a PhD in Poland"* (I7).

Therefore, the time spent abroad broadened graduates horizons, and influenced their decision making in not only what they would like to do in the future, but also on the choice of the country.

The short term courses were also practised before respondents commenced their HE in Poland, with some respondents going to England to study English language:

> *"Actually, I was in England before...and that was three weeks intensive English course, in the south of England. Yes, that was a good experience, I was 17"* (I33).

Overall, the chosen short term study destination countries were predominantly in Europe, and only one person went to the USA to do an internship. There was no prevailing country, but most of them were in Western Europe: the UK, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Portugal.

5.3.3 Travelling and work abroad

More than one third (14) of respondents experienced working abroad before their migration to England, mostly working in the EU (12), with only 2 persons working in the USA and China. Most of the jobs undertaken required only basic skills, and were carried out during holidays, for example picking up strawberries in Germany and in the UK, working in a hotel or restaurant in the UK, helping with renovating of the house in Italy, or looking after an older person in Italy.

The most popular destinations for work, mentioned by respondents, were the UK (5 respondents), Germany (4 respondents), and Italy (2).

> *"I was helping my uncle. We went to Germany, because he was selling some washing machines, and any other equipment, like TV sets and fridges as well, so I was actually helping him at first, well...we actually lived close to boarder with Germany, only 20 miles to the border, so we could easily go to Germany to get some extra money"* (I30).

> *"It was basically due to my dad as he had contacts in some company, and I generally wanted to improve my German language skills, which are almost gone by now, and I was offered a month placement, they were paying for accommodation and travel expenses. It was part holiday, part voluntary work"* (I18).

The common procedures among graduates were holidays spent in a Western country, doing basic jobs to earn money for another academic year in Poland, with two respondents describing the scenario:

> *"I've been to Germany, for the so called: "saksy"*(*informal, going abroad to do seasonal work)...[...] *it happened three times in a row, in the age of 16,17 and 18 years old. In the age of 16 I was there just to earn some spare money, in the age of 17 and 18 – to earn some money for my higher education at university"* (I1).

> *"Then, when I finished my 1st year at university, I went for a summer holiday to Germany again, just like seasonal work picking up fruits, strawberries in the fields. So I think I was there for 6 weeks. When I completed my second year, I went again for a similar type of seasonal work, but to the UK, in Scotland, after that I went again to England this time, like following year, working on a farm that was somewhere in Suffolk"* (I14).

Such stories show that some graduates perceived mobility during university as more purposeful, to efficiently use the summer breaks. Also, once they sampled this, subsequent, almost circular movements occurred. However, at that stage of their lives, respondents felt obliged to come back to Poland, and not to prolong their stay abroad, because of two reasons: willingness to complete the university courses, which could increase their chances of a better future. Once they graduated the familiarity and confidence of the place that they gained over the recurrent work-holidays and lack of strong personal ties in Poland influenced their ultimate migration to England.

"At my uni, after my 1st year, my friend from uni and I decided to go to England, to Southampton. That was in 2004 [...] we worked in a car factory, we did night shifts, working on the assembly line, we didn't mind what we were doing, just to keep us occupied for this short period of time. But it wasn't an ambitious job, we were just doing it. Then, I was coming subsequently, the following year again for like 2-3 months, and then when I finished uni I came here permanently in 2006" (I23).

Therefore, the movement abroad after graduation has not been constrained by any time-frame, or the feeling of unfinished projects. For those who practiced circular mobility during their university course, mobility after graduation has been framed within a new life-stage, with various aims and ambitions.

For the majority of respondents, the factors that contributed to their mobility and migration originate from their geographical and particular socio-political location, as well as their familial backgrounds that provided them with an example of what it means to be mobile, and boosted in them a confidence for exploration of new places and cultures.

Recognition of the influence of time and geographical location, as well as graduates backgrounds, should not negate graduates' agency in the use of available opportunities and resources for overcoming obstacles. It is above all graduates' particular life stories, which differ within persons who were born in the same socio-historical context, and grew up in similar location, that form an important part in making an understanding of their motivations for mobility and migration. Above all, respondents interviewed notice that their priorities and needs change, but also the socio-historical conditions they find themselves in allow for those changes. Thus, it is important to look at motivations of respondents for their mobility and migration to England, with a perspective on life-stage they were at, and historical-economic situation they lived in when making decisions on migration to England.

5.4 Motivations for migration to England

The graduates interviewed form a part of the generation that sees mobility as integral to their life trajectories (see other research on life-courses and migration of highly educated: Plane and Heins, 2003; Whisler *et al.*, 2008), and most of them treated HE in Poland as a life-stage. Therefore, a moment of becoming a graduate can be regarded as a finalisation of their student

life-phase, and commencement of another chapter, which is not only linked to their career, but in general a life-trajectory, often lifestyle.

After graduation from a university, the next Polish traditional steps would be finding appropriate employment, followed by a creation of stronger bonds with life partners, and ultimately setting up families. Often, HE in that process would play a significant role – that of increasing chances of finding an employment. Another aspect of it is the culture of HE in Poland, where young people perceive it as not only a way to find an employment in the future, but because there are so many Polish graduates already, it seems as a natural decision to make, regardless of its labour market fruition.

From a perspective of graduates interviewed, a HE is greatly valued by Polish society, and often it is taken for granted, which can be observed by a high number of students in Poland:

> *"In Poland education is perceived very well by the majority of the society, and the example is the high number of students in Poland, and also access to studying is not restricted"* (I2).

This elevated treatment of higher education lead to taking tertiary education for granted, as something that will boost the success in life. It is not enough to have a degree; it has to be Masters Degree at least:

> *"I guess that's how our society works. You don't really gain much during these two years when you are doing your Masters, and still everybody is doing that, because you have these three magical letters in front of your name"*(I6).

However, one respondent admitted that after migration to England, he realised that a Masters degree is not necessarily needed to achieve success in life:

> *"The perception that I got from my home country was wrong. You don't need Masters to be successful in your life"* (I15).

The lack of tuition fees at public universities for full time programmes, and relatively small fees for a private HE allows more people to attend degree courses in Poland, which by majority of graduates is considered as a negative aspect, mainly because of overcrowding at universities and increased difficulties with finding of an employment after graduation:

"I think that access to higher education in Poland is...it's too easy to get the MA degree in that country. In my year at the uni, there were 400-500 students – do we really need that many lawyers?! [...] it was overcrowded, and career opportunities weren't..." (I12).

The easiness of obtaining of a HE degree was also commonly mentioned:

"It's quite natural now that people are doing full studies. It's very easy to get HE" (I27).

Nonetheless, others appreciated the fact that the price of a HE in Poland is not extortionate, allowing them to graduate and not having the burden of debt at the start of their career life:

"In Poland, education is basically for free, so you don't end up after graduating from the university with a massive debt" (I7).

Overall, easy access to a HE in Poland, lack of financial debt, freedom of mobility gained in 2004, and possibilities of migration to another countries support the movement of highly educated Poles abroad. That led to a questioning of the functionality of the Polish HE system, where tax payers' money contribute to a high level education of individuals, whose expertise is potentially underused in a home country and abroad, amid high investment costs at public universities shared by the tax payers:

"The country is actually educating highly specialised scientists, emigrating to the UK, to the USA, all around the Europe. Why on Earth do they spend tax payers' money? That's why I'm pro tuition fees! Because...they need to put value on education – it's not for free. It's an investment" (I12).

Therefore, some respondents objected to such a system, where there are many thousands of students graduating each year, but there are not enough labour market opportunities during their transition from university to a satisfying employment within their direction of study. Some argued that there should be lower intake, and tuition fees could contribute to that, to avoid labour disappointment after many years spent at universities, where the popularity of long programs, with the minimum duration of five years, is the highest in Poland from all OECD countries – almost 18.0% of all graduates completed such programs.

The significance of a HE degree in Poland is well summarised by two respondents:

> *"It's a very important thing for Polish people. Polish know that they need to gain HE to achieve something, Poles know that they have to go to university to have a better job, Poles know that they need to go to uni, to have a job at all!! Polish, in order to find any type of job, even to be a sales assistant, you have to have BA or MA!* (I37).

> *"Now I think it's just a normal thing. You need to study to find work, so when I was finishing studies it was... it started then to be normal to have finished at least MA degree in Poland. It didn't matter in what studies, just to finish something. And now it's getting worse and worse, even thinking about my friends who have degrees, and they cannot find any work...because, HE means nothing at the moment... You need to have at least two or three faculties finished, and you need to know not English, but Portuguese, Spanish, these languages to find work..."* (I33).

Therefore, the promotional effect of the free market in Poland on HE in the early 1990s, which valued those who obtained university degree, guaranteed getting a well paid professional job, contributed to more than quadrupling of number of graduates at the Polish labour market within a decade from 89,000 in 1995 (GUS, 2008) to 440,000 in 2008/2009 academic year (GUS, 2011). The increase of number of university leavers lead to demand for graduate jobs, and soon begun to exceed their supply. This, as well as the economic recession of the 1990s and 2008, resulted in steeply rising graduate unemployment levels, which remained above 10.6% in 2011 (GUS, 2011). Thus, the following cohorts of graduates started observing increased competition for jobs, as well as amplified demands from the side of employers (Białecki, 1996). It became popular to enrol in not just one but a few faculties at the same time, graduating not with one but two or three Masters Degrees. Nonetheless, a HE was perceived as a sure investment for obtaining a well-paid job after graduation in the mid-1990s became a narration of the past, and new cohorts of university leavers started to face job uncertainties in Poland, which in turn started to have an influence on their lifestyle and life-stages.

Therefore, the two most important Polish graduates' motivations for migration to the UK have been highlighted, and it is argued that they convey complexity that of economic - the feeling of not having any major commitments in Poland, aspirational aspects and a life-stage at the time of making a decision on migration.

5.4.1 Lack of commitments related to life-stages

The most common reasons for leaving Poland were graduates' personal situation, including having no commitments in Poland, and a Polish labour market oversupplied with graduates, a problem that is well described by other researchers (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009; Trevena, 2011).

The time of graduating a university was considered as a summary of one of the chapters in graduates' lives which seemed to hold them back in Poland:

"I was waiting to finish my school, and then I knew I will get that papers, so I started a new stage and so why not to try the UK....so I decided to come" (I30).

Their entrance into a new life-stage was accompanied by a changing political situation - EU enlargement, and which accommodated many graduates with additional options to choose from:

> *"And I was 24 when we joined EU, and obviously it is something when you just finish your university, in the same year...and you join EU, it's like I HAVE TO GO"* (I15).

Therefore, an important variable that needs to be taken into account when discussing migration motivations are the life-course of those young educated people, and how they changed since they left their home countries. Giddens (1991:147) argues that individualism and individual choices are key values, which can disturb the marked out stages of the life-course by managing the risks through making choices, for example whether to set up a family, which is an event that otherwise would be considered by Western societies as inevitable. Furthermore, Hunt (2010) explains that post modernity has on offer a different stance towards a life-course, and a component of risk is replaced by "uncertainty and unpredictability" which derives from fragmentation of the selves following the reflective outlook on "who I am" (Giddens, 1991:5). An additional factor responsible for it is "the absence of tradition" deriving from a society that could guide individuals in establishing of their identities (*ibid*.).

This thesis shows, that for many respondents, a move to the UK initially was regarded as a break from a Polish reality, their Polish life. Botterill (2011:58) finds that mobility in such instances was viewed as alternative to a traditional life in Poland – "rather than settling down and getting married, mobility is perceived as something individual, different and emancipatory". This

research adds to this statement the fact that although mobility can be treated as an alternative to settling down, in many cases it is rather a tool for its postponement, often due to deficit of required factors that would allow for a happy settlement in Poland, such as a secure and satisfying job, and a life partner. Nonetheless, as Hoare and Corver (2010:491) reveal, the first migration destination of graduates almost certainly will not represent "jobs and labour markets for life", which may lead to further migration and mobility, to multiple destinations, which may never be the ultimate ones.

The findings of this thesis show that mobility acts as a tool for prolonging of certain life-stages of graduates, often very individualistic, but after which the need for stability and settling down, becomes one of their very important life goals. One respondent when asked about his current life aims mentioned the issue of settling down, which is easier to achieve in England than in Poland, which can be related to a mix of economic and environmental opportunities available in the host country:

> *" I believe to settle down, family, find a decent professional job and stability; and I think it's easier to achieve that here in England"* (I12).

Another person recognised different factors contributing to a happy settlement, which are linked to activities outside home:

> "*I know that to be happy at home, I have to have some stimulation outside home. It's very clear for me, because I get so dissatisfied...You cannot be happy at home, if you are not doing anything inspiring outside home, that's what I experienced"* (I5).

Often, requirements of graduates indicate their preferences of working within selected professions. However, due to the lack of possibilities of entering the labour market in Poland within their chosen areas, or even maintaining of their employment and seeing opportunities for further development, they feel inclined to search for such prospects elsewhere:

> *"Well...I don't really know why I left...I was just like...hmmm...I think I had that theme that I cannot go on like that and this job of being a teacher forever...and I had like a major panic attack about doing the same thing forever"* (I13).

In this research 11 graduates arrived in England as single, and met their life partners there. Thus, at the time of interviewing 27 respondents were in relationships (married and unmarried), and 10 respondents had children. Additionally 16 respondents indicated that they were in an informal relationship when they migrated, and three respondents were married at the time of their migration to England. Further 11 respondents were single at the time of an interview. The results concur with White and Ryan (2008) findings, where they describe Western Europe as a kind of marriage market for young Poles, who find their spouses abroad. As in case of their research, newly met life partners were predominantly of Polish origin, what also accords with my findings. Only 7 of those in relationships, formed mixed nationalities relationships, where partners, in all cases men, were from Germany, Canada, America, Wales, and England.

In addition, one female respondent strongly criticised Polish men, as well as the traditional Polish life model, which was not to her taste. Therefore, for her, the motivation for migration was connected to a possibility of finding of a partner abroad, but also another push factor was the labour market in Poland.

> *"I think that Polish men don't deal well with the cultural change, and I also think that Polish women are really beautiful, well educated, and very smart, intelligent, but not Polish men, unfortunately. I'm just talking about the general tendency [...]I also don't like this traditional way of thinking about relationships, and that yet again connected to men, there are these traditional roles divisions are still kept in Poland. And I wouldn't like this kind of life. You know, getting married, having children, and work 8hours a day, and then just watching TV, and do nothing. And of course the labour market, it's still pretty bad"* (I4).

Overall, there was no differentiation in motives for migration of those who were single or in a relationship. Most of them felt that they had no commitments in Poland:

> *"And if you think about it, you have no commitments, no children, no boyfriend, no husband, no commitments as such, you just want to take the chance, take the opportunity, and do something with your life"* (I11).

> *"When I refer to the time when I emigrated is when I came to England after my graduation, in 2004, it was like I had nothing that kept me back in Poland"* (I14).

"It was spontaneous. It was a need for adventure, money as well, experience of something new, and the legends that were in the air - about the UK. Also the feeling of not having any ideas, of what to do with your current situation in Poland" (I3).

Using the example of participants interviewed, it can be argued that a recent traditional Polish model that appeared with emerging free economy in Poland, consisting of obtained HE leading to satisfying employment and finally setting up a happy family, has been lost in economy transformation, and market uncertainty. That and a political situation of the EU enlargement, directed graduates to postponement of a traditional route to settling down, triggering enhancing and prolonging of the individualistic life-stage, which does not follow the traditional model, but opens different paths for obtaining the elements of it across not only Poland but the whole Europe.

A completion of their first stage towards obtaining professional jobs, which was graduation from universities, provided them with the feeling of being free, having no obligations in Poland. The sensation correlated with a graduate labour market situation, of which respondents had a broad knowledge due to their peers' experiences as well as their own observations, often acquired through work during their studies. The understanding of what can be achieved in Poland and factors contributing to succeeding in finding of a good employment are well described in Trevena's (2010) research outcomes, which highlights that graduates struggle with nepotism and corruption. Her research unfolds the two main components that influenced graduates' decision on migration to London rather than establishing themselves in the Polish labour market: the "flows" of the labour market itself and insufficient earnings. Similarly, this research highlights a strong economic reason for migration, which is related to graduates aspirations and hope for enhancing their personal capital (Tomer, 2003; Brown and Hasketh, 2004), however which can be just a phase in their migratory journeys. As Bond *et al.* (2008) argue, with time graduates start putting environment suitability for family formation ahead of economic motivations. As this thesis argues further, Polish graduate migration is linked to their life-courses, and during their departure from Poland, the most important driving components were economic-aspirational motivations, strongly uphold during the life-stage of transfer from university to employment.

5.4.2 Economic - aspirational factors

The importance of factors such as having a completed degree from universities, and either not being able to find a job in the area of interest, or not having a fulfilling job back in Poland has been recognised as a common motive in graduates' decision making. For some, it was just an observation of their older colleagues who graduated Polish universities, and their struggle to find professional jobs.

In majority, respondents wanted to avoid an instant downgrading of their skills and knowledge in Poland right after graduation, so they were carefully observing the life scenarios of their older peers who graduated a few years ahead of them. Often the decision on migration came before graduation, as respondents wanted to avoid the struggle with jobs in Poland, or aspired to acquire more skills and then potentially have better chances for employment in their home country:

> *"[...] so Poland just joined the EU, and situation on the Polish labour market was really, really bad then. I've seen people going to universities, and getting jobs in supermarkets and things like that. So probably it was something I wanted to avoid"* (I14).

> "*After I graduated the uni, I don't know why but I had that in my mind that I will come to the UK to learn English, earn some money, get the experience, and that I will get back to Poland to do some more courses, and training and that I will start working in Poland"* (I35).

Therefore, the prevailing elements of their decision on migration were: a need of change and further development which will not be blocked at some stage of their career development in Poland, but also lack of ideas of what to do in Poland in terms of a labour market and how to live their lives there, which is also connected to the type of education they have gained, and skills acquired. They often underlined that they had nothing to lose, and they just wanted to go abroad. After graduation, some respondents wanted to work in their profession, but after failing of an initial trial of finding something suitable, the alluring escape to a different place, in a new country, starting something new became an option:

> *"It was like a challenge, to try something else, and I couldn't find a good job which I wanted to do in Poland, so I thought that I will try something new, and then see how it goes"* (I17).

> *"I couldn't find the job for donkeys over there, whatever I was doing. I've had the best diploma in uni, but they still told me that the place which could employ in sort of pedagogy wouldn't have me, so I didn't even apply, there was just no point"* (I25).

"I tried to find some proper job connected to my studies, which is quite difficult. I didn't really search hard enough...and then I came here" (I27).

Some of them indicated that after graduation they worked in Poland, often in jobs that were related to their education, however, these were only short term contracts, or the conditions were not satisfactory. What they wanted was a normal life, a rewarding job, with a decent salary, a work place where they would be treated as a person, with all their rights. Another problem that some graduates had to face was moving back in with their parents after completion of their universities, as they did not have sufficient funds to support themselves.

Also those who lived with their parents could not afford moving to another city to commence work, for the reasons of expensive housing and low salary, which is a subject of White's (2010) research. She argues that for young Poles it was not possible to achieve the independence of their parents in Poland and her findings show that material incentives combined with the wish to be independent, made a vision of migration, or even 'an escape' from Poland, an alluring option. Similarly, in this research, graduates mentioned the issue of moving back in with their parents, which was not in their intentions:

"I've been there for 5 years (university), and after that I couldn't find work, so I came here[...]I didn't have much choice really, because after university when I graduated I had to come back to my parents to live with them, and I have been there for the whole summer, for 3 months...but to be honest I've been looking for work longer, because you know that you graduate so you are just ready to find something" (I29).

The subject of independence of parents mentioned in White's (2010) research can be treated as a physical location change, and connoted with shifting to another phase of graduates' lives. Because that scenario was not feasible in Poland, the possibility of it in England started becoming an established route by previous cohorts of young educated Poles:

"Really, I was thinking to start searching for jobs in Poland, but I decided to run away from Poland as I was still young, and thinking that many people go abroad, so why not to try maybe for one year, and see how the people live here, and I've got nothing to lose, because when you feel that your parents are supporting you can always come back" (I30).

An often mentioned issue by graduates, is a well researched notion of "normality" in Polish narratives of migration by Galasińska and Kozłowska (2009b), which they define as "having enough, making ends meet with even modest pay" (Galasińska and Kozłowska, 2009b: 96). Authors highlight a direct correlation between little earnings and decent living conditions, containing everyday human activities related to food, clothing, entertainment, housing and transport (*ibid*.). Similarly, Botterill's (2011) research portrays young Polish individuals' search for normality in Scotland, for whom Poland has limited opportunities for upward social mobility, and where life is associated with a "struggle", in contrast with an "easier" life in Scotland. This research confirm that the search for normality occurs among Polish graduate migrants, who seek out fairer treatment at work, appropriate payment for their work, and a job security.

> *"I just want a decent job for the right money and I want to be treated as a person and living our lives, normal lives without worrying if it is enough to live the life [...] I had a job which was maybe not the worst but it wasn't a job which I was proud of, because I've been thinking that I was cheated on there by my employer"* (I21).

> *"Actually I was earning that money, and it was still not enough and my parents had to give me some had to pay for the school, and I didn't like it [...]and I wanted to reverse the situation"* (I30).

> *"I wanted to have a job security and things like this and I didn't have it. That's why I left Poland"* (I21).

Also, graduates referred to the deficiency of money, which can be earned but often does not allow living their lives as they would hope for:

> *"I've got a job, many hours, I taught a lot, and I kind of was tired [...] In terms of money, I could earn some money, but then it was not enough to do different things in life, for example to travel. I told you that I like travelling. So, if I am going to live like this, every day so hard, and I have peanuts, then I do not want that..."* (I6).

Such scenario is contrasted with the financial "easiness", or a "good life" in England and the whole UK, which can be achieved by having any type of job, whereas in Poland one would have to work in highly-skilled jobs in order to experience a good life, but becoming employed in such jobs has been articulated by one respondent as very difficult:

"It's easier financially; even from these poor under skilled jobs you could have a good life. But having a job with equivalent of some qualifications means a very good life. Whereas in Poland, you need to have a job with your qualifications to just have a good life. I think that's the difference. So even if you are here in under qualified job, the pay is close to qualified jobs in Poland. And I think it's much easier to get under qualified jobs here, than top jobs in Poland" (I15).

"Now two times a week I play football, I've got time for the other classes, I work only for 4 times a week, so it's not like in Poland - working for 6 days in a week...and now I still have got time for everything here, and I can pay my bills, so it simplifies your life a lot, so..." (I30).

Additionally, the easiness of being able to migrate, open borders, and their need to experience something new, to take a breath of different (fresh) air, that of Western Europe, and to check the opportunities that living in another country entails were important factors. Respondents often refer to migration to England as a free choice, an adventure with a hope to experience something new, but above all to taste a normal and interesting life, which is linked with financial security:

"*Just like that...boredom and curiosity...main motivation was: 'what will you be doing here sitting like this – go! My friend from university was encouraging me, go!"* (I1).

"I always wanted to go abroad, to see how it is, to gain some experience" (I32).

"I think migration at the first place is an adventure, and for me it is an adventure [...] the second place will be living our lives, normal lives without worrying if it is enough to live the life- so this is the main reason people are coming here" (I21).

Overall, the responses indicate that graduates lives resemble a "choice biography" (Nilsen and Brannen, 2002b), which is an individualised mechanism for living one's life. The core aspect of individualisation (Beck, 1992, 1994), is becoming an active agent in choosing and re-designing of own life-course, and Polish graduates have shown strong agency in migration decisions. Such migration had multiple underpinning motivations, which could be clustered into aspirational and economic reasons, for which structural and cultural arrangements of a historical era they grew up in Poland both enabled and restricted their human agency on the local labour market. Following Hutchison (2007), unequal opportunities of such historical arrangements left some with more

options than others, and this has been recognised on the example of Polish graduates, who derived from various familial backgrounds and geographical locations in Poland, having experienced previous mobility induced by their parents or schools, or whose social networks extended to contacts abroad.

One of the most important aspects in their agency is their response to changes, and recognition of life-stages. Often, brought up in graduates' responses was graduation at universities in Poland, which marks the end of one stage and commencement of another. Additionally, the socio-historical conditions of free mobility and work in any European member countries provided opportunities for individualisation of life-courses, which became executed in particular after migration to England. For some, life-courses and career trajectories were planned beforehand; others only after arrival in England started from scratch a creation of their professional paths, with a varying starting point in time.

Therefore, depending on the economic situation experienced in Poland, ideas for one's life, their aims and ambitions, but also knowledge of Polish and British labour market realms contributed not only towards motivation for migration, but also commencement of a new life-stage after arrival. For some it was a professional continuation of gained education in Poland, others implied a switch between professions, and another group remained in basic skilled jobs to undergo awakening a few years after migration. These findings are elaborated in Chapter 6.

Another important element in migration is not only a choice of a country, but also a place, region, and smaller scale area where one would stay for shorter or longer period of time, commencing a new life-stage, and which may influence their view of home and a sense of belonging. Therefore, it is worth looking at the reasons graduates migrated to the East Midlands region in the first place, as opposed to a global city - London, and what was the role of their agency in choosing of the region.

5.5 The destination raffle – the East Midlands

Most of respondents did not study a map of England in details when making a decision on migration; neither had they the feeling of any potential differences between cities, north-south division, or variations of accents across the UK. The main reasons for choosing the East Midlands, as one respondent stated, were beyond their initial agency:

"I didn't choose it, it has chosen me – since my friend migrated here first, and I moved in with him afterwards" (I1).

The decision of coming to England is a one form of migrants' agency. However, often omitted in studies on migration, is individuals' choice of a particular place, gaining the knowledge of the place prior arrival, and experiencing the place upon the entrance. Graduates' migration to the region seems to be related to nodes of contact, "strong and weak ties" (Jordan and Duvell, 2003), for example pre-arranged employment, chosen university courses, and friends who arrived before them, rather than deriving from the characteristics or attractions, or "a bundle of amenities" (Whisler *et al.*, 2008:63) of the region. However, some graduates chose the cities based on certain criteria, which was both related to the prospects of gaining of employment, and further education:

"...because of the size of the city and also the programme and requirements of the university. I didn't know Nottingham at all, I've never been here before, so for me, it was just a name – Nottingham...the name and the population. And I thought, OK, that's fine, the size is decent, for that I could find work if I wanted, and I didn't know anything about East Midlands at that time" (I4).

Graduates' agency in choosing a place when deciding to go to the UK to work in a pre-arranged job was limited to the area: England, where the specific places of residence were allocated by the agency staff depending on the job vacancies. Often, respondents didn't know where they would be going, until a week before departure, and gradually they got to gain some knowledge of the place, after the decision was made:

"I have not chosen Newark. What they've told me, was that you will be working in the UK, and I said I need England, I cannot be somewhere in far end of Scotland, if it's not possible for London, because I had friends there at the time, then please allocate me as close as it can be to London. And they said, yeah OK, you are going to Newark. I didn't know where I was going, I have not had that clever mind to check in postcode anywhere or something, so by the time I've got here, I've sort of acclimatised, I looked at the map, yeah, I'm here, it's like next to Nottingham. But it wasn't anything I knew before" (I24).

There were a few respondents who openly talked about the recognised amenities of the East Midlands region, before they decided to relocate. For a few persons, the East Midlands appealed

in terms of the bigger cities cluster, increasing chances of employment, and this way of thinking was particular for people whose initial arrival place in England was outside of the region, for example Bedford and London. Therefore, only for those who already experienced living in England, and were aware of the labour market conditions, thought that moving to an agglomeration would aid their job search:

> *"So I thought that Nottingham...and EM generally you've got a couple of cities sort of grouped together, so it might be easier to find a job"* (I24).

Therefore, the choice of the region within England for some often was beyond graduates' agency, but was determined by aims (job, study), or networks (friends, family). Surprisingly, graduates did not prepare themselves in terms of general knowledge about the areas, and places, but just arrived, and from then on started gaining their first impressions of the place, with their all nuances. Graduates did not know anything about the region, but were aware of the cluster of medium size cities, which they hoped could multiply their chances of getting jobs. Therefore, even though individuals were highly educated, and contained high income potential imposing "fewer constraints on relocating according to tastes and preferences" (Whisler *et al.*, 2008:63), the choice of destination was not location-specific.

Looking at the choice of destination from a perspective of an "escalator region" (Fielding, 1992:3), it "would attract young people with promotion potential and those seeking to gain such qualifications". However, in case of Polish graduates, the region did not attract to itself, in particular those who were still in Poland. The apparent interest was noticed by minority and who already were migrants residing in a different part of England, predominantly around London area, and who thought that moving to an agglomeration could benefit them with increased chances of gaining of an employment. Graduates who migrated for job purposes to the East Midlands directly from Poland often did not work according to their profession, and predominantly started with basic skilled jobs arranged prior their arrival. Therefore, there is no link between migration to the East Midlands and personal advancement of newly qualified. However, it is a step which could allow them to gain an understanding of the labour market, and familiarise with possibilities and labour market standards. Therefore, it is important to look into graduates' perceptions of the East Midlands and their life and career trajectories development, which are discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7.

Those who migrated the East Midlands to undertake university degrees present a different case. For those, the East Midlands could be perceived as an escalator region, as they moved directly to obtain qualifications. Among those interviewed, there was a group who migrated to England to study further within their field of expertise, to be able to gain such a promotional potential. However, there were also respondents who only sometime after migration to the UK decided to enrol in further training or university courses, and which is thoroughly discussed in Chapter 6. Nonetheless, it was not the East Midlands region that was the focal point in decision making of graduates who migrated for education purposes, but the university rank and requirements for enrolment. Graduates admitted that it was a friendly response from their potential supervisors and in some cases funding received that made an impact on their ultimate acceptance of a university offer.

Overall, through migrating to the East Midlands graduates made steps in their career and life trajectories, however, these steps seem to have been taken unsystematically, and were not directed by the knowledge of the East Midlands, or any particular characteristics making the region a desired place to migrate to. More importantly, the general characteristic of the cities in terms of population and size, as well as a cluster of larger cities drew the attention of minority of respondents. Thus, the phase one and phase two of the "escalator region" concept, with stepping on the escalator by Polish graduates and being take up by the escalator were not evident in case of the East Midlands.

Instead, this thesis argues, that Polish graduates migratory patterns resemble simple browsing and panning out for opportunities elsewhere. Each new place can offer a chance of gaining valuable skills or experience, a start from a scratch, or serve as a vestibule for another move. Additionally, along the mobility processes graduates enter various life-stages, shape their life aims, and make further steps in their career and personal trajectories.

5.6 Summary

This chapter argues that it is graduates' generational experience of transformation and constant changes that happened in Poland during their life span, including the collapse of the socialistic system, emergence of capitalism, further preparation for accession of Poland to the EU, and becoming a member state of the Union in 2004, which shaped graduates vantage point of the world. All events had one common feature - the change, which always present in graduates lives,

contributed to their ability to remain open for opportunities, weigh the risks and make quick, but informed decisions, to be the agents of transitions of their own lives.

This chapter directs the attention towards the qualities of the cohort of young Polish graduates, who by growing up in the light of constant political and economic alterations, from socialism to capitalism and becoming citizens of the EU, therefore living the lives of regular transformations, became accustomed to changes, what has a further influence on their motivations for migration and settlement. It has been argued, that the interviewed graduates acquired the ability to make quick informative decisions, the skill which they developed during their formative years. Through the prism of ever changing individualistic realities mirrored in major political and social shifts in Poland, including adjustment of educational systems and demands of the Polish labour market prepared young Polish graduates for the continuous rapid life transformations in a strive for their own portion of happiness. The intention is to get to an ultimate comfortable geographical location, and professional niche, where graduates would be able to settle for longer, and the road there requires strategic changes and developments within one's personal and career trajectories.

In addition, the mixes of different types of agency were the driving forces for migration to England. These include the non-discursive agency stemming from generational belonging and discursive in the form of lack of commitments in Poland after graduation, understood as being a graduate, often single or in short-term relationship with no children, free movement across the EU member states, and arising from these opportunities. It is important not to omit graduates' life-stages, their personal life ambitions and the role of agency in fulfilling their goals, contradicted with a lack of opportunities in Poland at the time of their graduation, which fuelled motivations for migration.

The semi-structured approach of this doctoral research, does not show unitary "common sense" for those living in any given place, but it follows Findlay's (1997) findings, revealing different "common senses" within diverse cultural contexts. Consequently, the sample of Polish graduates demonstrates that the graduate labour market situation in Poland was an important push factor in their decision on migration and mobility. However, other components, including a socio-historical context of their youth that shaped graduates personalities, mobility capital, life-stages and personal situation, contributed to a decision on migration to England, and continue shaping their life trajectories.

This can be illustrated by further education undertaken in England, having career aims and plans for life in the near and distant future, including those for future mobility, which are discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 8, respectively. As Findlay (1997) suggests, different places invoking cultural constructions "may produce a range of different values conducive to the long term development (or inhibition) of migration intentions". Also, Bristow *et al.* (2011:2) indicate, graduate migration is likely to be influenced by "the complex and perhaps competing "pull" forces of places where graduates grew up or studied, as well as the powerful "push" of career opportunities". Therefore, it is important to research lives of graduate migrants after they arrived in England, with a closer look at the locations they resided in after arrival. Also, graduates' ways of managing their temporariness and how the realms of living the life of a migrant influences or limits their career trajectories and enthusiasm for further migration is presented in the next chapters.

Chapter 6

Adjusting to the British labour market

6.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates career trajectories of Polish graduate migrants in England, with a focus on their skills attainment through education and work experiences both in Poland and in England, and the usefulness of a HE in the labour market advancement. It looks into constraints to development that Polish graduates encountered in their career trajectories, and the ways in which they have counteracted the progression limitations recognised after migration to England. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 1 provides the background information of graduates interviewed in terms of education obtained and social background. Section 2 examines constraints for graduates' career development in England, relating to the issue of deskilling, and sheds light on means for skills acquisition after migration to England. This section investigates graduates' aims, and motivations for enrolment into various trainings and degree courses at English universities, recognizing four different cohorts of graduate migrants who undertook any form of additional further education upon arrival in the UK. Section 3 discusses the role of a HE and further training in graduates' life trajectories. In particular, this section focuses on the usefulness of Polish and British higher and further education in career trajectories development and outlines Polish graduates' perceptions of skills acquisition at English universities. Furthermore, this section debates on decoupling of qualification and skills and contributes to the debates on who can be referred to as highly-skilled or qualified within migration literature using the example of Polish graduates.

6.2 Educational attainment and social background

According to the Polish LFS, number of highly educated Polish migrants in the UK was 24.0%, whereas in pre-accession only 11.0%, and in general every fifth post-accession Polish migrant had a tertiary degree (LFS, in: Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009). The research findings indicate that 32 of interviewees graduated from public universities in Poland, in particular those that are regarded as one of the best in the country, for example Jagiellonian University, Warsaw University, University of Poznan or University of Silesia according to Academic Ranking of World Universities (http://www.arwu.org). Obtaining qualifications from better universities may

reflect the theory proposed by Mosca and Wright (2010:13), that those who obtained a superior class of qualifications have a higher international migration probability.

In total, 36 graduated with a Master's degree, and only 4 respondents finished their education in Poland with Bachelor's degrees (Appendix 4). The debate on the quality of private education in Poland, which presents it as not having a real educational influence because of not transmitting cultural assets, therefore depriving students of chances for compilation of cultural and social capital (Nowak, 2010) has further complications for graduates' life trajectories, also after migration to England. From the whole sample, 6 persons attended mixed programmes, doing one of their degrees at private and another at public universities, and those who did both Bachelor and Master's degrees at private institutions were only 2 people.

Moreover, the fact that not many graduates of both Bachelor and Master's degree programs of private education institutions were found for the research at universities within the East Midlands or with completed degrees at any other English universities (only 2, out of 20), may indicate two scenarios. One possibility is the luck of the researcher, who did not receive many responses from such graduates, and the other option may signify that those who graduated public universities were more likely to undertake additional degrees abroad. If the second alternative is the case, it may indicate the fact that the socio-cultural capital is not passed on to students at such institutions what accords with Nowak's (2010) arguments. In addition, opportunities for mobility and development of mobility capital are hindered at such institutions, in particular at academic level, what results in lower interest in undertaking studies abroad. However, this requires supplementary quantitative and qualitative study across England or the whole UK of those who graduated from public and private universities in Poland, and made career and educational steps after migration to the UK.

Another important factor related to education of respondents, is their social background and one of its indicators - education of their parents. As this research indicated, those Polish graduates who migrated to England specifically to commence a university course derived from families where at least one parent had a HE degree. The education of their mothers was on average better than fathers, with nine mothers out of 13 holding a HE degree compared to only five fathers. This confirms Andrejuk's (2011) findings that those Polish migrants who came to London to study were born to wealthy families, particularly middle and upper middle classes, where usually both parents had university degrees, and lived in bigger cities in Poland.

With regards to the sample for this research, almost 13 graduates migrated to England with an intention to undertake further studies at universities and all of them commenced various courses. Furthermore, 19 of all respondents migrated to England the same year as they graduated their Polish university, with the most popular years being 2006 when 7 graduates migrated, then 2007 with 5 graduates, 2004 with 4 graduates, and in 2010 there were 2 more graduates who migrated right after graduation. There were 15 of those who migrated within 1-2 years from graduation.

Additionally, 17 respondents decided to embark on either a university course or other form of education after they arrived in England, including further **7** of respondents who showed their agency in undertaking English language courses, such as ESOL, among other training. Therefore, 37 of all graduates enrolled in various institutionalised forms of education after they migrated to the UK. Moreover, 6 of those whose motivations for migration were different than for study purposes, decided to enrol into a university course within 1-3 years after arrival in England. In this research there was no strong differentiation to gender in terms of further education undertaken in England; however, in terms of their motivations for migration to England, 4 women respondents combined two reasons related to each other: their friends living in England and enrolment into a university course. Most importantly, from the whole sample researched, another 11 respondents are contemplating enrolling into additional forms of training, or HE in the near future in England or in the rest of the UK.

The findings of Andrejuk (2011) show that Polish economic migrants in London do not enrol into undergraduate courses, as opposed to education migrants, who enrol in both types. Similarly, the findings of this research show that the most common type of degree was Masters and PhD, with only two persons who enrolled in Bachelor programs at English universities. Interestingly Andrejuk (2011) distinguishes two types of migrants: economic migrants, including graduates who migrated for job purposes, and educational migrants with those who completed high schools in Poland and migrated primarily to commence HE or to do their second or third degrees in London. As she underlines, such a situation where economic migrants enrol into HE after migration signifies their ambition to raise their vocational qualifications on the British labour market, which can also be confirmed in this research.

However, in case of Andrejuk's study, those economic migrants who decided to increase their academic qualifications, often thought of staying in the UK long-term and did not plan to go back to Poland. The findings of this study show that the group of Polish graduates is more diversified in terms of their intentions of return migration and links between further education and mobility, which is elaborated in detail in this chapter.

Nonetheless, Andrejuk's inclusion of graduates into two other cohorts of economic migrants, and educational migrants, depending on their motivations for migration, can be argued as oversimplified. As this research demonstrates, there are complexities of motivations for graduate migration, that of economic-aspirational, and a lack of commitments related to a life-stage at the time of making a decision on migration. Moreover, economic and educational factors may be just passing and returning stages influencing motivations of graduates' migration in times of transition from education to a professional employment, and taking the directions for their future, involving mobility. Therefore the ever changing boundary due to graduation, further career progression including additional education, would imply different motivations for mobility.

In most cases, it can be stated that migration as an event, in which a decision has been made by respondents, provided them with opportunities, but also some groups experienced constraints, which they are working on with variable intensity to overcome, for example English language fluency, intentions of further training allowing them to progress within labour market. Overall, migration as a process impacted on graduates' lives trajectories, due to the change of environment, new opportunities and restrictions, and an individual's self-concept, expectations and aspirations (Rutter, 1996), which is described further in this chapter.

6.3 Constraints on careers development in England and the issue of over-education and deskilling

Through graduates' stay in England, they learned that the focus within the graduate labour market is more on skills and experience than on qualifications exclusively, and this is visible through the culture and British society's perception of HE, where holding Masters Degree is still not as common as in Poland. One respondent shared her observations on perception on HE in Poland and in England, concluding that:

> *"Masters here are not the same as Masters in Poland**.** I didn't realise that Bachelor is the main degree here, it's like all my teachers here they've got bachelors here, they do not have Masters, whereas in Poland everybody needs to have Masters to be qualified"* (I25).

6.3.1 Lack of 'know-how' to search for professional jobs in England

On the other hand, having skills and knowledge of the British labour market has been mentioned by the majority of respondents as one of the most important assets to succeed in finding of the desired employment. At the same time, as other researchers have found (Drinkwater *et al.*, 2006; Clark and Drinkwater, 2008; Drinkwater *et al*., 2010), A8 migrants experienced very low rates of

return on their education, even a few years after their migration to the UK, which was related to holding much higher level of education at the time of arrival. What is more, as Fihel and Kaczmarczyk (2009) argue, although employment in low-skilled jobs tends to be a gateway to the British labour market, after an upgrade should follow, but this was not the case for Polish migrants.

This research suggests that one of the main reasons why Polish educated migrants prolong their stay in basic skilled jobs in England is a lack of preparation, skills, and adjustment to the system of searching for professional jobs before they migrated to England, and lack of confidence:

> *"You have to prepare yourself, you have to see how they are writing CVs, motivation letters for the UK employers, you have to think of qualifications that are going to be interesting for your future employer, and it's not like 'hop siup' (easy-peasy), you won't do it in 1 day or 2 days, you have to prepare yourself, you have to be patient, you have to know for which jobs you can apply, where you have a chance, with your degree"* (I18).

Nonetheless, this is not only about the preparation, but as Green and McIntosh (2007) recognise, there is a growing number of seemingly over-qualified people, who often do not convey appropriate levels of skills required to perform in higher skilled jobs. Furthermore, Hartog (2000) notices that over-education is generally higher in the time of transition from school to work. As this research shows, this is not only a transition from university to a labour market, but a struggle to acquire the knowledge of the new labour culture and market after arrival in a new country.

Therefore, further into play came graduates' confidence issues stemming from unfamiliarity with the system, level of competition for jobs, and for some the language barrier, which confirms other research on language proficiency as one of the most important factors for increasing chances of migrants' involvement in the labour market (i.e. Rooth and Ekberg, 2006). As Brown *et al.* (2000:25) reveal, getting and maintaining an employment depends on the "personality package that needs to be sold in a tough-entry competition for jobs", which is related to both meeting the requirements for the job, and positioning towards other job seekers in a hierarchy.

For some Polish graduates gaining a desired level of confidence to be able to position oneself among competitors was unthought-of. A few respondents indicated that it originated from a lack of confidence in communication in English, influencing migrants self-value as not deserving a

better paid position, therefore erasing themselves from the pool of seekers for better employment:

> *"Here I think it still might be this language barrier, and I believe that even though they work, they could find this willingness and time to study further here. But I think it's the confidence and language barrier"* (I38).

> *"They think that their English is not good enough...and that they are not worth more money"* (I11).

> *"People are just too afraid, they think, 'my English is not good enough, I won't stand a chance they won't accept my qualifications'..."* (I18).

Such a scenario may impact on graduates' ambitions and further actions taken after migration and either this will be willingness to improve, or remain in lower echelons of the British labour market. In particular, respondents who did not feel fluent in English had the greatest barrier for career advancement, predominantly those who started learning English relatively late towards the end of their colleges or universities, and women, often those who had young children, and who chose to concentrate on family for now, instead of pursuing their careers. Therefore, further decisions will depend not only on ones aspirations, but also a life-stage.

Although women interviewed claimed that it was their choice to focus on families, and postpone their career for a few years time, to the moment when children commence education, the response below shows different picture. It demonstrates that women only potentially have a choice, because the price of their decision is high, and the options are between two highly important for them aims: self-development and family. Thus, looking after children became a topic that was mentioned by a few graduate mothers, whose children were not in a schooling age yet, therefore the constant attention and lack of time for career building, forced some women to postpone or take a slower pace with their further development:

> *"Before my first child, it was just perfect, I felt that I was realising myself in my profession, not on the highest level, but I was doing what I liked doing, and I think that if I stayed there for longer, then I think I probably I would be able to do some extra courses, but now...well, I wouldn't like to leave my boys for the whole day with someone else to look after them, I'd like to spend my time with them. I probably would have much better job, but I think at this moment I'd like to concentrate on my children"* (I36).

In some instances the situation may be reversed, where graduates arrive in England overconfident having their qualifications and expecting to find jobs easily, meeting with a different reality, which also derives from lack of previous preparation, and knowledge of the labour market and one's position towards other candidates for desired jobs:

> *"So language problems, lack of confidence, or overconfidence, because sometimes they come to the UK thinking that I've got a degree and I'm going to smash the world. The job offers are going to come to me, in hundreds that I do not have to do anything..."* (I18).

6.3.2 External constraints

Additionally, there are external constraints for direct development in England for Polish graduates. A few of them are mentioned by Salaff and Greve (2003). They include British people's perception and employers' lack of information to assess foreign credentials, as well as institutional structures blocking immigrants' ability to use their talent and skills, which leads to education under-utilisation. Other authors also find a problem of general ignorance towards HE, as well as a clash of habitués of Polish graduates working in basic skilled jobs between their co-workers and customers (Trevena, 2011). Trevena (2011) argues that there is a groundbreaking difference between working-class persons and Polish educated migrants. Such a clash is being visible particularly within work places, where graduates interact with co-workers and clients on a daily basis, but they cannot find a common ground for satisfactory communication. Trevena (2011) finds that lifestyles and interests of two groups are dissimilar, with lower class British having poor knowledge and interests related to television and shopping, lacking concern for further development. On the other hand, for Polish graduates, gaining new knowledge and self-development constituted the most crucial components of lifestyle and identity (*ibid*.).

In this research, a few respondents mentioned that they found themselves in various work environments where the fact they were qualified to Masters Degree level was discounted on the social and work grounds, and which also stemmed from social class disparities:

> *"I felt good with my education levels, so I can this mental comfort, but people here are disinterested what education you have done in your life. That's my perception anyway. It depends maybe where, because...well, definitely in a restaurant nobody will ask you where you have graduated and what..."* (I37).

> *"And being told that I've got Master degrees was irrelevant! They didn't have that kind of scale of horizon; they didn't know what studying means. So telling them, that I've done MA*

degree, it was like telling them, I don't know...that I've got a driving licence. So it was like a piece of cake, "what are you on about"? That was quite sad, but then, on the higher level, you could see how impressive it was for British people, to know that I've got that MA. So I think it was this class division that affected the perception of somebody being educated" (I10).

This research findings confirm and supplement Trevena's (2011) research on class belonging of Polish graduates working in menial jobs in London, and also suggests that working environment, in particular, where the majority of employees hold no HE degree, often perceived by some graduates as deriving from lower social classes, is a significant constraint in making their first steps towards their career aims in a labour market that is new to them. The impact is most strongly envisaged in migrants' self confidence in the labour market, which is not growing, but often retreating. Also, the fact of social disregard of their qualifications has an impact on graduates' awareness of possible routes towards upgrading of their skills and qualifications. Overall, it contributes to the delay of graduates' development within their preferred areas.

Therefore, access to information on how to alter their work situation, re-evaluate their current skills, and find about those that they still need to work on in order to move to more satisfying jobs may be restricted because of the work environment and not having other networks within British society who could help them to get informed:

"They may have too little information, on what else they could do, how they could change it, the current situation, and also they may not know where to look for this information" (I40).

Nonetheless, some graduates even though they could use in a work environment a margin of their university knowledge gained in Poland, one of them felt constrained in a different sense. She found herself using the knowledge but not gaining anything new, not expanding within particular field, leading to stagnation of knowledge and skills at a certain level. Therefore, it is not only the fact of finding an employment relevant to ones qualifications, but above all having a scope for further development, that one would value as useful for their own career and personal progress:

"*I have knowledge about it, and I can use it, I'm teaching now the history of EU, but that's pretty much it. I'm not expanding in that field"* (I10).

Another person did not feel her skills were underutilised, but she did not find any opportunities within the company to use her full potential. Therefore she experienced lack of challenges in a work place, which could prove to be stimulating of her personal capital development:

"I did feel that I wasn't maybe using the full potential that I had, I was willing to go up the ladder a little bit..." (I23).

Although deskilling is about the ability to get decent jobs in the first place, this research shows that the deskilling was most often mentioned by persons who worked in an environment where they did not interact with other educated people, often worked within working class people (Trevena, 2011), did a basic job for an extended period of time, or jobs that do not allow for expansion of knowledge and development of new skills, which proved to be more important that utilization of university gained knowledge:

"Now.....I feel like I do not have any skills!! Almost like I have not graduated, never been to the uni, and I generally feel like a physical worker with a secondary school only....As I work on that level, and I meet people every day on that level. So, now I am scared that after such a long break of working in the office, I may struggle with finding myself in an office environment again! After such a long break...it is 5 years now" (translation from Polish) (I37).

This accords with Eade *et al.'s* arguments that "working below one's qualifications and de-skilling – however sometimes bitterly felt- is acceptable as long as it is for a short time and other forms of capital are acquired during that period" (Eade *et al.*, 2007:12). However, in most cases graduates did not perceive working in a job where they do not use the knowledge gained at their university, as deskilling. They treated it as a different job, providing them with various experiences, and skills, adding up to their confidence and local labour market knowledge, and therefore reducing their perception of over-education for undertaken jobs, which accords with Allen and Velden's (2001) stance on strong relation of over-education and experience.

As other authors find (Bills, 2004), "over-qualification", that is an excess of educational qualifications relative to those the jobs require (Green and Zhu, 2008) can be apparent or genuine (Chevalier, 2003). In case of majority of respondents, they were aware of working in jobs that do not require their qualifications, and they were not using any university knowledge gained at those. However, they felt satisfied with the fact that they have made a small step towards a greater goal of getting to their desired occupations, or labour market status. The genuine over-education could not be purely noticed, as graduates became aware of missing skills at the new to them realms of the British labour market. At the same time, graduates were not satisfied with the match between qualification and a job, as they were aware it is not their

ultimate work destination. They aimed for something that they enjoy doing, are interested in, and can develop in the work place.

Even though some graduates encountered problems for their development, they did not give up, but looked for available possibilities. Those migrants have also found other mediums for personal capital acquisition, for example volunteering. Such a finding can be linked with Green and Zhu's (2008) research, who argue that over-qualification is not paired with skill underutilization, and that graduates working below their qualifications can nonetheless make use of their skills. Additionally, as in case of Polish graduates, it was not only using one's skills that was important to graduates, but gaining new ones, even though they were not related to their gained at university education.

This can be associated with graduates "personal capital" understood as "an individual's basic personal qualities" (Tomer, 2003) and individualism (Beck, 1994) which allows designing one's life for different life-courses, making people active agents of their lives. What is more, Brown and Hesketh (2004:220) argue that being an active agent, it is to work on one's life in a way of "individual employability rather than intrinsic human experience", and that is envisaged in Polish graduates attitude towards undertaken jobs after arrival in England.

To give an example, one of respondents searched for help in various organisations supporting development of young and adult persons who are in between careers, which can mark one of the undergoing transitions of this graduate. As she concluded, through making action towards finding out about potential routes to the desired occupation, she felt as she made a tiny step towards her life aims. Therefore, following Mason *et al.* (2003:10), it is not only work experience that leads to development of employability skills, but an engagement activities associated with specific "communities of practice", and in case of this respondent volunteering, searching and being in contact with people who can inform her about the requirements for the job of her interest, what made her a step closer towards her dream occupation:

> *"I'm constantly searching for the organisation, or a person who will show me the way, give some advices, or directions, generally help me [...] where I can ask, and tell them: 'listen that's what I know, that's what I've got, that kind of skills, that kind of qualifications, please tell me what I can do in this country'[...] But on the other hand, I know already more into which direction I should go now, and this is good, but I know that there are lots of constraints [...]I started doing some voluntary work, and I know that this is a tiny step, but I have made it"* (I17).

Therefore for some, not using their knowledge and skills did not equal loosing it, but above all it was gaining the understanding of a different environment and culture, which ultimately enriched their personal capital with additional experience. The importance was based on gaining the qualities of working in a different culture, among various groups of people, and in another language, and for many such experience was regarded as an entry phase, that could allow them to acquire the cultural standards to be able to gain labour market confidence and expand their personal capital. That accords with Trevena's (2011) findings on Polish graduates in London, who employed in low skilled jobs perceived it as a period of comprehending of new reality, new norms and rules of social life in the UK, which takes time. Trevena (2011) argues that graduates in her research perceived the period of working below qualifications as a characteristic of the initial stages of migration, and treated it as a time of finding their way within another system, which was also the case of graduates in this doctoral research.

Likewise, many respondents did not feel that they were wasting their time at different jobs, as although they were not using their knowledge gained at university, they were exposed to various other challenges, allowing them to learn new skills. Similarly, in Anderson *et al.'s* (2006) study, highly educated migrants who performed basic skilled jobs did not treat them negatively. Even though they found the work hard they claimed that they were learning new skills, in particular language, communication and organizational.

In this research, one person concluded that even though she knew that she was overeducated for the type of undertaken job, it involved different cultural settings; therefore she treated it as another 'job experience' in her life:

> *"At some point, I knew that the job I was doing was below my qualifications, but because it was a different country, different people, totally different system, and then I could always say – it's another job experience"* (I18).

Furthermore, the majority of graduates perceived it as a transition period, which was not going to last forever, as they planned to move on. Therefore, this thesis indicates that such situations were treated as phases in their life-courses, which follows Hutchison (2007) interpretation of a life-course, during which each person experiences a number of transitions, or changes in roles and statuses. This way the time spent in employment that did not require their Polish university degree, was by some respondents not only perceived as a step to a different job, but also it was a planned phase:

"I didn't feel I was like wasting my time completely, because although I wasn't using my degree, I was gaining other skills. So that was a possibility at the time. No, I didn't feel it was a complete waste of time because I never felt that it is going to be like that forever. It was kind of manageable; I planned this situation to last for a while" (I14).

Overall, graduates felt that they have made some progress in their career trajectories since they have arrived in England, indicating that sooner or later, they got to the place they were aiming to, or feel that they are taking steps forward, towards their aims. Therefore, they were able to recognise the stages in the process of going towards their ultimate goals, which often consisted of less and more active periods of their life, bringing them closer to a desired occupation or a life situation:

"I eventually found a job where I kind of applied my skills that I gained at university, so well...it took a few years, but now I finally got there, so..." (I14).

Overall, it is interesting to research graduates' routes after migration towards life situations in which they could feel in agreement with, where their life aims and ambitions are partially or mostly fulfilled, in both terms: career and personal life. In particular, various experienced constraints and opportunities, which may shed light on the process of graduates' life-courses transitions, access to the higher echelons of the British labour market, settlement or longer stay in one location or further migration elsewhere.

At the same time, it is important to look into issue of graduates' motivations for higher and further education in England, which can provide some more understanding of the agency of graduate migrants in constructing their life-courses within England. Additionally, such a focus may help to identify aspects on how migration affects decisions on further higher and any other type of education, work and career trajectories of the recent university leavers.

6.4 Employability and skills acquisition in England

Most graduates showed that they work hard in their first jobs in England, and although some felt that their full potential and knowledge from a Polish university is not being used, they were optimistic in acquiring new skills not related to their education. The major problems for graduates became evident when they started feeling that they are not gaining any new skills or knowledge within the workplace. In the process of getting to know the value of skills and experience in the British labour market, graduates' responses to those scenarios were various. The more adventurous respondents searched within their occupations in England links to their

interests, and asked employers to give them the opportunity to do additional tasks, which involved learning new skills within their areas of interests:

> *"I was asking managers and senior members of staff that I want to be involved in physio area, as that's what I'm interested in [...]but of course that was only a small per cent of my work, and my main duties was to support people with their daily living, sort of personal care, food, things like that"* (I35).

One respondent described her struggle and successful ending when seeking an employment in her profession, which involved trying to get as much skills and experience as possible, including voluntary work, and additional training:

> *"I've been trying to find a physio assistant job for a long, long time, even when I was working in my first job. I started to look for that job, so, I was sending applications, but with no reply, or with negative reply. When working in my current job, I was trying to gain here as much skills and experience as possible, and among others, I've done that voluntary job as a gym instructor, I've done that moving and handling training, and I was moving and handling instructor here, and that helped me to gain that skills, that extra skills and that's how I was trying to find a new job...it wasn't easy. But I think that thanks to experience and training, all these courses, and of course uni in Poland, that helped me to get a new job as a physio assistant"* (I35).

Thus, the majority of Polish graduates realised that it is not only a degree that becomes important in searching for employment, but also having work experience and skills which are emphasised by many Higher Education Career Services in the UK and Dearing Report (1997), such as: communication skills, being able to be flexible and adaptable, to work in teams, and to manage own development and career.

Other research on graduates' employability suggests that the first degrees form "a basic minimum", and during which other extra-curricular activities should form a top up of the human and personal capital package prepared whilst at university (Brooks, 2009:338). Therefore, the role of graduates agency, and the ways they 'manage their employability' (Brown *et al.*, 2000), or "convert their cultural resources into personal capital" (Brooks, 2009) should be looked into. Especially, of importance are the routes to professional employment of graduate migrants, whose first degrees are achieved in their home countries.

This doctoral research indicates that the majority of Polish graduates, similarly to some respondents in Brook's (2009) study, use various routes to upgrade their skills upon arrival in the UK, and believed that further education and/or training after completion of their first degrees become one of the most important forms of employability management. They showed an agency in their employability management, with the examples of further professional training at universities and other institutions, some changed their interests and career orientation, and followed up with further training, or volunteering opportunities.

Graduates interviewed showed different motivations for engagement with higher or further education in England, and it is perceived as one of the ways of their employability management. For some, commencing a postgraduate degree in England became a break from a less dynamic and not offering enough in terms of development work places. For others, enrolling into a university course has not always been a response to a less interesting situation at the labour market after migration, but a continuation of development decided upon before their move to England. Therefore, looking at graduates' agency and the ways they acted on their employability skills and career trajectories after migration, four different types of graduate migrants were distinguished and characterised further in this chapter.

In consequence, it is important to look into the issue of graduates' motivations for higher and further education in England, which can allow for better understanding of their agency in life-courses constructing in a host country. Additionally, such focus may help to identify aspects on how migration affects employability, and graduates decisions on attending higher and any other type of education, influencing work and career trajectories in England. As the Dearing Report (1997, paragraph 9.18) stresses, "those leaving HE will need to understand how to learn and how to manage their own learning, and recognise that the process continues throughout life", and such a standpoint can be observed in the example of Polish graduates in England.

From the cluster of those who undertook some form of higher or further education in England, the analysis of the empirical data allows three main groups to be differentiated. Additionally, a cluster of those who want to do extra courses or training in the near future, and who either did some form of training in England, or for who, it would be their first one, has been distinguished from within all three groups listed below (Figure 3):

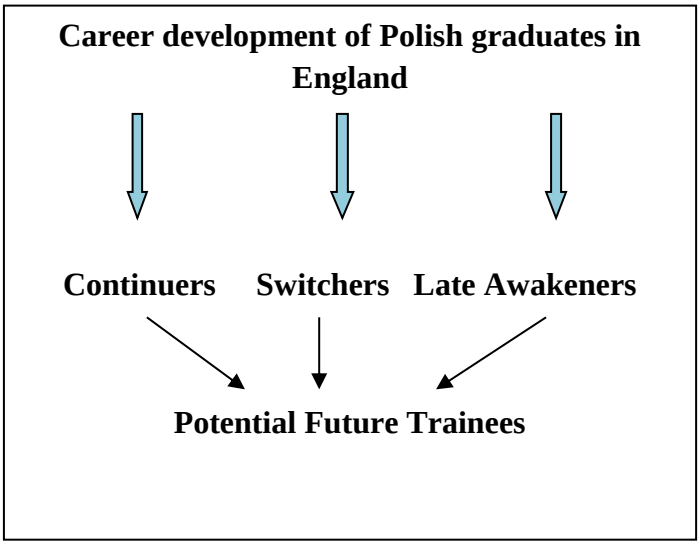

Figure 3. Career development of Polish graduates in England

6.4.1 Continuers

The first group consists of those who remained in a similar field to what they studied at Polish universities, through undertaking additional education in England, related to their initial subject of interest, and often finding an employment within their profession. This group comprises 19 respondents and is named as **"Continuers".**

Continuers most often searched for university based degrees in the UK before they migrated, and for the majority of respondents from this group, study was a motivation for migration, and a reason for prolonging their stay in England (Appendix 8). One respondent recalls his transition from being an Erasmus student in England, to being offered a PhD, an opportunity that he decided to take:

> "*In a moment when I graduated, I was offered a research student position. I would say that this was an opportunism...[...] it was a smooth transition from Erasmus to PhD"* (I2).

Similarly another respondent migrated to do her MA in England, which was her main motivation, mainly because of the nature of the subject which she always wanted to study:

> ***"****Because I somewhat always wanted to do something culture related, film related [...] so a film, a degree in film was like a dream to do it. So when I saw that degree, thought...OMG, it's like perfect!"* (I13).

Upon completion of the course the same respondent was offered a PhD position at the university, which she accepted. As she recalled:

> *"I really enjoyed being a student, and I somewhat thought – why not?"*(I13).

A few respondents admitted applying for PhD positions in a few countries, but being eventually accepted in England. The role of funding was a prevailing component for choosing universities:

> *"I applied at many more, but this was the one that accepted me, and gave me some money. Otherwise I wouldn't have come, I could not afford"* (I6).

Therefore, the role of high aspirations and interests, strong graduates' agency, and searching for the best value for money options before they migrated are the characteristics of this cohort.

In terms of subjects studied, the 'Continuers' were predominantly graduates of English language teaching and literature courses, engineering subjects and medical and therapy studies (i.e. physiotherapy). Within this group there were also those who graduated within any discipline, and decided to continue on a PhD level. Then, the subject of study did not matter. Therefore, among a few there were graduates of subjects such as Electronics of Microsystems from Poland who continued his education on a PhD level within photovoltaic systems, and a respondent who did Masters in American Studies in Poland, continued her education at MA level in Hollywood Studies, and then moved to doing PhD in a similar subject. Another respondent graduated with MA in Economics in Poland and did professional training in Accounting in a college in England.

In particular, those who obtained degrees in Poland in areas of physical therapy and medicine continued further education within these areas, both at universities as well as undertaking professional training. One respondent obtained BSc degree in Physiotherapy in Poland and enrolled into Masters Course in Sports Sciences in England, whereas three other Masters Degree graduates of Physiotherapy in Poland undertook various professional training, including a range of NVQ training, fitness instructor courses, and many more specialist preparation. Another graduate of Polish university with MSc in Pharmacy, undertook PhD in Pharmacy in England, and a person with MSc in Optics enrolled into PhD within similar subject.

There were only a few graduates who had a pre-conceived idea of doing a degree abroad, predominantly on higher levels, such as a PhD, which constituted their objective, a dream. For some it was a disappointment in the attitude of supervisors and opportunities for self-development within the Polish university that forced them to think of studying abroad:

"*After my MA, I started my PhD in Poland but I was doing that part time, but my supervisor wasn't very...hmm how to say that...he is very good, he was perfect for an MA, but for PhD I needed more support...and basically he told me to come back in 4 years with the thesis. And I got kind of lost, so...Then I though well...first of all, I can leave, finally, and maybe it will be worth to look for something somewhere else. And then I started looking at different universities, mostly in the UK, and Holland"* (I16).

Others did thorough research on the systems of studying at a PhD level in Poland and in other countries, and based on that they developed an idea that they do not want to do a PhD in Poland:

"I've seen the situation and compare a situation of PhDs abroad and in Poland and I decided that...well PhD was my kind of natural decision. I knew straight away that I want to do a PhD, and when I decided to go to the university, and I, just after the Erasmus, realised, well, not realised, it's just confirmed myself in a decision that I don't want to do a PhD in Poland" (I7).

However, yet again, their interests in doing a PhD abroad were related to their gained so far education and graduates of this group did not consider subjects that were not within their categories of interest. This shows that education at Masters and PhD levels in England was well thought through, and when perceived as beneficial for ones career development – the decision on enrolment was made.

The Continuers also constituted the largest group of those who both did not work during their studies nor after graduation in Poland, with almost half of this group, and those who worked in jobs that were related to their education gained at Polish universities, with another 42.0% of respondents from the group of Continuers. Among them, there were also graduates who sampled full-time and part-time employment both in Poland and in England, and who felt disinterested in the subjects that they studied, or jobs undertaken. What they often considered was finding an occupation which required not only their currently gained skills, but predominantly allowing learning of the new ones.

Therefore, they came to England for a complexity of reasons; however, only after some time they realised that they need another change to broaden their horizons. This did not mean starting from a scratch, but above all expanding into a neighbouring field, going forward with knowledge and skills, taking advantage of the acquired skills upon which they looked reflectively, and working on missing ones. Their goal was a profession that requires a mix of already acquired

human capital, and new skills, which graduates need to work on in order to succeed in the recruitment process, and finally, employment that offers further learning and development.

> "*Because when I came here I was also teaching here, English as a foreign language. That was interesting but I found it boring. I also worked as a recruitment specialist in a recruitment company for events and IT specialists. But I found that boring as well. So while doing that job I was already thinking of doing something else. And I was trying to figure out what would be my dream profession, where I could combine my skills, my education, all years of hard work. So it sounded ideal for me to go into interpreting, and translation"* (I10).

For this cohort, entering a HE in England, or any other form of training fulfilled the role of a bridge between studied courses in Poland and a desired job in the UK or elsewhere. Deciding on doing a university course in England, graduates hoped to gain missing skills, whilst multiplying their chances of finding an employment in a similar domain, interrelated with their subjects studied in Poland. They approached it strategically, making an assessment of what skills they have already got, things that they are good at, and things that they enjoy doing, showing strong agency in developing their career trajectories within specific areas. As a result, and sometimes due to help of other people providing feedback on their performance, they were able to find another occupation which was linked with their previously gained knowledge and skills, but which could offer a new area for development, not discarding their human and personal capital acquired to date. This way, graduates were able to make transitions into a new occupation, which seemed relevant to their life situation, and for which they already felt prepared for in terms of personal capital, and not only qualifications:

> *"I looked at my skills, what I'm good at, experience and everything, and where could that be required, and I realised that being an interpreter would be a great solution. Because I also like driving and meeting new people, and my job requires that on a daily basis. So that's how I found out, what my dream job is"* (I10).

Also, changing an environment and meeting new people was a common response for doing a degree in England:

> "*Because it was something new, and got the ability to meet new friends, and much more varied group of people than you would normally meet [...] So, it's just to do something else"* (I8).

This indicates that personal relationships are also important, and the social connections and networks that get created are one of the aspects of anticipated gains from a HE in England.

In terms of graduates' career aims and dream occupations, fields within which they would like to work, matched their gained education in Poland and further education acquired in England. The Continuers were able to narrow down their preferences to specific areas, and only two persons could not objectify their ideal occupations. There were two reasons for this: one respondent has not thought of it yet, trying to complete her PhD project first and then to make a decision and another person felt unsure about continuation of a career as an engineer. Due to gaining experience in this profession, and continuing education at a doctoral level, she got to understand advantages and flaws of this career, leading to double thoughts on the subject and occupation.

Overall, Continuers have undergone transitions; however, these were gradual and within the field of their studied subjects in Poland. It can be perceived that they made use of what they have got so far, whilst working on missing links to move to their aimed areas of employment. Some of the graduates from this cohort felt overeducated for their positions. Nonetheless, in most cases it did not last long, as they acted upon it with a speed and strategy, to make the best use of their acquired qualifications and skills, all the time balancing the requirements of their aimed jobs, and increasing their skills to succeed in an employment process. Therefore, Continuers can be viewed as those who experience over-education the least, remaining within their areas of interest in terms of occupations and further education, in Poland and in other countries after migration.

6.4.2 Switchers

The second group form the **"Switchers".** These are graduates who undertook additional studies and other training in England that is not directly related to their HE obtained in Poland, but linked with their past or current employment or their new interests developed after migration, or subjects that they have always wanted to study, but realised this at later stages of their HE in Poland. This group consisted of 12 respondents (Appendix 9). The Switchers' education and career trajectories proved to undergo more drastic transformations than of Continuers.

One of the examples is a respondent who did an MA in History in Poland, and after migration, she decided to do an MA degree in Diplomacy, which could open the doors to working as an advisor to politicians, or in other places such as an embassy. The reason for choosing a different subject of study was related to personal interests and a hope for a broader scope of employability within her area of interest.

"*Diplomacy? Because, I've got a dream: I would like to be some sort of advisor for the top politicians. So I wouldn't like to work in this first row, but to work behind them. I thought of House of Lords if we go to London, or some Polish embassy, even not Polish, can be any other"* (I5).

Another respondent studied administrative law in Poland, but commenced an MA course in Psychology after migration to England explaining that his interests and employability were paramount in such a decision:

"*I wanted to increase my employability, I am interested in the field, and you know, I guess...to keep myself busy...Like brain wise, just sort of keeping my brain working"* (I3).

Therefore, both graduates showed a constant drive to learn, and management of their own development, which is one of the main important capabilities listed in the Dearing Report (1997).There were other graduates who based their decisions on studying another subject purely on their interests, for example one of them did a BA in Polish philology, and migrated to England to do English literature and history, mainly for the reason of his interests:

"I wanted to study English history, or literature, so England is the best place to go and study those subjects, and that's the best language experience" (I22).

One graduate of an MA course in teaching English had already a pre-conceived idea of pursuing a HE in England, but her main dilemma was the subject of her study. Her work colleagues helped her by providing honest feedback on her general skills and aptitude, used in a job in England, which was not related to her university education, suggesting certain areas where she could use them:

"I did have it in my head that I kind of wanted to do a degree, but obviously the degree that I chose the idea of it came a bit later when I started work, and the work gave a bit more different experiences, and at work somebody actually suggested to me, 'oh you are doing this one now, you will be good in social work!" - so that's how I kind of started thinking of this degree" (I23).

Another person, who holds a Masters in Pedagogy from Poland, took her life experiences of being a migrant and helping other Polish migrants to translate documents, open bank accounts, and that gave her satisfaction, confidence and an interest in pursuing this type of activity further.

She enrolled herself in DPSI course (Diploma in Public Service Interpreting), which could allow her to take it a step further, to become a professional interpreter:

> *"I was doing interpreting since the day I came here. I was helping with opening people's bank accounts, I was responding to police calls in the middle of the night...well it wasn't 'interpreting' because nobody paid for it, but then I thought – why not?[...] the potentialities there are, I'm going to be an interpreter, I want to do that, I want to work as an interpreter"* (I25).

Therefore, for Switchers, a stay in England proved to be a transition space and time. Due to living in England, they were more exposed to the possibility of changing directions in their career trajectories, which would match their new or indeed holding for a long time interests in various subjects. Those graduates remained open, and experienced working and living in England significantly contributed towards decisions on undertaken additional courses in England, and influenced on the nature of studied subjects.

Therefore, Switchers can be perceived as those who made more drastic changes in their lives and above all career trajectories, which happened predominantly after migration to England. Therefore, one of the major differences between Switchers and Continuers is the fact that the career transition of the former was not part of a grand master plan before migration, as in case of majority of Continuers. They underlined a few most important motivations for studying in England, such as an increase in employability, doing something with their lives - a decision that was meant to increase their confidence in the labour markets, and often came after they felt trapped in monotonous and dissatisfying jobs. Therefore, this doctoral research shows that even though Switchers were experiencing over-education, they acted to move out from the pattern, often by changing the scope of their occupational interests followed by gaining new skills and qualifications that would enhance their employability at the British labour market.

In terms of their career aims, Switchers had a broader scope of potential occupations that they would like to do in the future than Continuers, which could be described as plans A, B, C and so on. They looked for opportunities where they could use their skills gained through past employment and received education, predominantly of that received in England.

Most respondents classified in this group undertook employment in Poland during their studies and after graduation which was not related to their field of study, and predominantly these were jobs requiring basic skills, such as working in a bar, or doing data entry in offices. Only one

respondent from this group found an employment according to his profession after graduation in Poland. Another two found employment according to their interests, rather than education gained, and the jobs have involved having a certain set of higher level skills, for example to be a graphic designer.

The pattern prevailed after migration to England. For some, the experience within the lower sector of the Polish labour market, allowed Switchers to start employment in England within similar fields. Such findings on Polish graduates overeducation can be supported by the study of Dolton and Silles (2003), who uncover that first employment after graduation shed the light for the future graduate overeducation for two reasons. The first one is obsolescence of the skills, which become difficult to re-cover, and secondly difficulties in 'trading-up' to more demanding jobs, as a first employment experience in a lower-grade job may signal to employers, graduates' low ability or motivations.

In the case of Switchers, they found themselves overeducated for doing various jobs in Poland and in England, which however supported their migration, and allowed for a smooth transition from Polish to the British labour market. Only after some time spent in England, depending on their personal circumstances and changes encountered in their lives (i.e. finding a partner or becoming redundant from a job), or due to various opportunities allowing for discovering new strengths and interests, influenced graduates career directions. Overall, it is their human agency that proved to introduce transitions in their career trajectories after migration.

One respondent underlined that the first job that he was offered in England was due to his experience in a similar field in Poland:

> *"I had a job in Poland, at the time when I moved to the UK. I worked for a Danish electronic company and they had their factory in Szczecin, they produced miniature speaker and microphones, for mobile phones and also for hearing aids. And thanks to that job I was able to get a job in London, in mobile phone repairs"* (I31).

The job that he was doing was not according to his qualifications, as he was a graduate of History; however he was interested in the subject. Since then he became redundant from two more companies; however, every time he has been transferred to another place where he could develop his interests within the field:

> ***"****Because our company in London went bankrupt, they transferred us to another branch in other large city in East Midlands, and after that this company went boost, during this crisis,*

and I found a job in another one. First it was in TV repairs, and then laptop repairing. So this is what I'm doing right now [...] computers are my hobby, so I think it's a nice job, I like it" (I32).

Another respondent recalls the reasons her career has changed. It was due to the influence of her new partner, who worked within a similar field:

"Because this was when my career was changing as well. He was a teacher, and said, why you don't just start working in a school, as a TA, teaching assistant...just apply. And I have applied" (I11).

Therefore, the start of employment after graduation both in the home country and abroad has an influence on further career advancement. This thesis argues that those who commenced work within areas related to their qualifications, or moved to the UK to continue education within similar field, progressed quicker towards their preferred occupations. On the other hand those who started working in basic skilled jobs, which is the case for most respondents classified to the cohort of Switchers, often continued working in similar occupations after migration. Thus, the findings accord with Dolton and Silles (2003:204) study on graduates, whose over-education in their initial employment is statistically significant for over-education in the future. This research reveals that for those who worked in jobs that did not match graduates' gained qualifications, it took longer for them to progress. What is more, the progress was often related to a drastic change of areas of interest and qualifications, which conveyed reflective management of skills acquired to date, with recognition of gaps and weaker points on which one should work more, and finally leading to a shift in occupations. The Switchers commenced employment in Poland and England that was not related to their gained education. However, they proved to be more flexible and open to new possibilities, not afraid to take new directions in their career trajectories, even though they often felt overeducated for their first employments after graduation and migration.

Overall, the majority of interviewed graduates, having sampled work environments which they did not find satisfactory, or job specifications not allowing for their development, acted reflectively on their lives, in order to progress, which was a common feature for both cohorts: Switchers and Continuers. The difference between the Switchers and Continuers is that the first cohort aims to progress to a starting point of their new area of interests, in most cases unrelated to their previously gained education, but more often connected with their sampled both in Poland and England employment. The Continuers transition is within their already established career route, and involves gaining new skills to advance within their chosen field in the labour market.

Although Switchers commencement of employment was less successful at first than that of Continuers, for them migration was an inspiration for a true career and life transformations, proving their openness to opportunities and ability to think and act constructively and reflectively with their gained skills. Thus Switchers, being already aware of a hardship of the labour market, demonstrated greater flexibility, whereas Continuers often followed the plan marked out before their migration to England and presented as one-directional for their career trajectories.

Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that Polish graduates' dynamics of career development is related to two main factors: the type of graduated subject and graduates' experiences of first longer term employment both in Poland, and in England, which often influenced their interests and career paths. Although additional HE and any other type of further education, mobility and planning fuel the dynamic process of changes, which can occur at any stage of graduates career and life, those who graduated engineering, technical, science and medical courses had the highest prospects of remaining in a similar field. On the other hand, those who did social sciences and courses that are not relevant to a local labour market, such as Polish administration, Polish philology tended to have more vibrant paths of their careers, with wider opportunities on the one hand and a pressure for re-qualification on the other. Those migrants were predominantly members of Switchers cohort.

On the whole, both cohorts used strategy in their career development. However, Switchers allowed for more opportunism in their career pursue, where migration of Continuers seems to be more purposeful, related to their career plan already initiated in Poland.

6.4.3 Late Awakeners

The third cohort consists of those who studied only English language in England, such as ESOL, with 6 respondents classified to the group of **"Late Awakeners".** The cohort was named as such due to respondents' weaker self confidence in England and a lack of proficiency in English language skills, resulting in undertaking jobs not requiring their gained university education in Poland, and remaining within these for longer. Most of the respondents from this group enrolled in English language courses at some stage of their stay in England, both privately and through colleges, and some were subscribed at the time of the interview. They also aimed to attend other training related to their interests, or their previously gained education, once they feel confident with the level of their English skills (Appendix 10).

This group consisted predominantly of women, aged 30 and above, who commenced their education of English language relatively late, usually at university, whereas the majority of respondents commenced their English language education either in primary or secondary schools. Although the findings of Clark and Drinkwater (2008) and Chiswick and Miller (2008) show that the ability to become proficient in another language declines with age at migration, this study shows that the year of commencement of English language studies in general had an influence on migrants' confidence in communication and participation in lower segments of labour market for longer. There was no relation of becoming a parent and delaying career development in England in this group, as only two women had children. Graduates' response to their weaker language skills were twofold: some decided to start English education in England right after arrival, at the same time working in basic skilled jobs, others made this decision after a few years of living and working in England.

> *"Years are passing by, I'm getting older and basically I know that there is no time for me...so yes, I'm thinking about studies in the UK. I'm right now in the middle of doing of an English course I'm just trying to Polish my English. So, I'm doing some courses about basic skills, about all the grammar and writing, to achieve a one good level, and then I can think of going to university. So for now I'm focusing on the language"* (I21).

Those who did or were doing English language courses in England, their main assumption was to improve at least their language skills, which would be a ticket to further training that they are hoping to pursue in the future:

> *"Whenever I try to apply for a course at the college, the priorities had persons that had the knowledge of English, with the ESOL Level 1 as a minimum. I wanted to attend one course... it was tourism, and unfortunately they said that I have to have this Level 1 English done, and the priory have younger persons, who were finishing schools here in the UK. So now, I need to try and do the language again. I decided to give my baby to a nursery as I need to do this Level 1. And then I will be able to do more"* (I38).

Some respondents experienced perpetuating stagnation of their career in England due to the constant low level of their English skills. They felt comfortable in a basic skilled job, for example working in a factory, where they did not have to communicate in English too often, as most of the staff spoke Polish. In addition to that, they struggled with confidence issues to go further, which forms a closed circle:

"*I've got a job that I've got at this moment, and to be honest it's a sort of comfort and laziness, and I am aware of that. It's just I've got this certainty that I've got this job, and I know that I ought to change something, but I still have this blockades, language ones, and it's just hard for me"* (I39).

Working in such environments as factories or on production lines, where graduates were interacting mostly with British working class (Trevena, 2011), graduates complained that they could not develop their English skills, because of different interests in conversation subjects. In addition, due to the long term of remaining in one working place, they could not find anything new to learn, or skill to acquire. At this stage they started thinking of the situation as unbearable, which provoked a strong need to change it:

My IQ is dropping down tremendously. I work with English people who cannot talk ...actually have conversations on any subject!! They can talk only about soap operas, and nothing beyond that. They don't know anything...[...] I feel like in a different world, I start feeling stupid! It's horrible" That's the reason I have to change a job!" (I37).

Therefore, it is not to say that graduates from this group gave up on improving of their life and career situation. They kept the will of further development, which has been delayed for various personal and external reasons, including their level of confidence and knowledge of English. The language level of respondents from this group was very low, and hence the only available possibility for them was to undertake basic jobs. This turned out to be a closed circle, where they struggled to improve their English language skills, because of working with other Poles, and working class British. In addition, working long hours, which significantly limited their participation in a British society outside of the working environment, did not provide graduates with a chance of self-development.

Therefore, for some, the awakening envisaging chances for development in England came later, when they noticed that other Polish graduates are investing in their careers and are making progress. They started to realise that success for Polish in England is possible, what became an encouragement. They wanted to try it themselves:

"Then my point of view has changed a bit, as I've realised that you can develop in this country! And I felt free in here. I started seeing that Poles develop themselves here, they go to universities, they work in the offices, and I started thinking, that why not? That I may be able

to do the same, achieve the same. But this is only after 5 years, this realisation that I can achieve something in the UK" (I37).

What is more, graduates undergo realisation, that there are many more ways to live their lives after migration, that there are options which can help them to build up their biographies with a reflexive outlook on "how I am to live" (Giddens, 1991:9). It appears as if this group undergoes awakening in the new reality, an apprehension that they can improve their career and life situation by taking appropriate steps. Those are English language credentials and skills which are prerequisites to do professional courses and training that they are interested in, helping them to find employment in preferred jobs in England or elsewhere. It also appears that Late Awakeners found themselves at a life-stage that was shaped by a particular social context, which cannot be accounted by a biological cycle (Hunt, 2010). Recognising the ramifications of the phase, graduates were also able to distinguish their character flaws, environmental and social constraints which led them to stay in those for longer. Furthermore, Late Awakeners recognised that an English course is a required step on the ladder towards their aims, which they just started or are continuously working on. That accords with the findings of Rooth and Ekberg (2006), which show that proficiency of language of a host country increases chances of migrants involvement in the labour market, and fluency ensures stronger upward mobility, than only their educational achievement from the home country.

6.4.4 Potential Future Trainees

Within all three groups, of Continuers, Switchers and Late Awakeners, there were respondents who still were thinking of some additional form of education and training for the near and longer term future. Those skills and knowledge seekers and investors constituted a group of 11, and named as "**Potential Future Trainees".** This group is particularly important from the perspective of individuals' ability to be flexible, and open for further transitions, be it acquiring new skills, or missing skills to be able to move to another occupation, or even a new destination country where these would be beneficial in terms of finding of an employment.

One interviewee started thinking of doing some additional courses, while searching for jobs in England within her area of interest:

"While searching for jobs in market research, I was looking at various diplomas too in that area, and that's something that maybe I will do one day. Well, I've never thought of going to university as a full time anyway. If anything, I would do only degree level courses, but all like

self-study basis, so I wouldn't have that expense. When I looked at it, it was like 2000 pounds. So it's not 9000...that is slightly better!" (I14).

She argues further that she already has got a Master degree, and she does not need another one, and that her attendance in any further education is only for the purpose of gaining skills, rather than credentials:

"I've already got Masters so do it just for the sake of the title doesn't really interest me that much. As I can always call myself Master. If I ever go to university, or any other form of education, it will be purely for skills, rather than for titles" (I14).

The issue of gaining skills became apparent for many graduates. Another respondent was looking into skills rather than knowledge, when thinking of doing an additional course at university or elsewhere:

"*I'd like to do some course, which would be beneficial for me, not in a sense that I will just finish it, but some course that will allow me to gain some skills"* (I21).

Within this group, there were a few respondents who were considering returning to Poland, and strictly with their plans, further training and education were interrelated. Some of them have already decided that they will try to go back to their home country, after having done everything they could in order to prepare themselves for their return. This also can be seen as strategic, and a form of agency, trying to make the best of the situation. Therefore, they aim to do courses and additional training within their areas of interest, in order to multiply their chances of getting a desirable job upon return to Poland. However, there were some respondents interested above all in credentials, rather than skills, claiming that they are already skilled within the subject but need a written confirmation of having those skills:

"We've got one year, and during that time I'm going to do some courses which will help me in Poland [...] Probably, it will be some technical qualifications, things that I can do but I haven't got a paper for, like CAT programming, these kind of things. Maybe...some qualifications on paper, that I can be a quality inspector. This kind of thing... Just to have it, in case" (I27).

The decision to do particular courses is also dictated by the trends and appreciation of certain diplomas from England within the Polish labour market. Another respondent is planning to go back to Poland, to start her life there again, and she became aware of required qualifications and

skills in Poland through maintaining contacts with her Polish friends, who gave her advices for her preparation for return. Additionally, she is interested in the English educational system, and would like to attend a course to be able to compare her experiences:

> *"I'm thinking now about some courses, it's a PR or spokesman. Because we are going to go back to Poland next year [...] I want to touch this English system of education, so I think it's a good idea. And I have a friend in Poland, and they work in PR, and they said that the best school of PR is in the UK, and that they use this system in Poland. And the same is with spokesman"* (I26).

Another graduate planning to return to Poland considered undertaking additional training, before the ultimate move back, explaining that the reasons are predominantly financial, personal interest and hope in gaining of a job within a preferred area:

> *"We think to come back, and I would like to finish studying, and to complete full personal training course, actually I've got a personal training done, but there are some extra courses to complete and after these courses I would like to teach in Poland. I would like to gain qualifications here, because it's easier for me because of the financial reasons, and then I would like to get a job in school where I would be teaching young students who would like to start with fitness"* (I30).

Similar perceptions were noted in the response of another graduate, who planned to go back to Poland within half a year, and decided to do additional training during that time to improve his chances of getting a job in Poland upon his return. He believes that his Masters degree in History is not enough to secure a good job in Poland, and he aims to do training that is recognised around the world, and provides him with some technical skills:

> *"I'm going to attend Network Administration CISCO course...because that's quite a good option, and the only possible decent qualification to obtain in half a year, and this qualification is well regarded around the world [...]It improves my chances in getting a job. Otherwise I'm still just a history MA, which in Poland is not a good start"* (I31).

A different respondent still considers doing additional study to re-qualify; however, he aims to stay in England. This decision derives from undertaken jobs in England, which are within different profession to what he was educated in Poland. The new qualifications would allow him to gain more knowledge, skills and provide with perspective of an upgrade within his current employment:

"I'm still thinking about that, I'm thinking about undertaking nursing studies, to change my qualifications and get higher in what I'm doing at this moment" (I28).

Therefore, there is an ongoing motivation to gain more skills, which can enable graduates an upgrade in the labour markets, within preferred areas. As a result, the strong agency and making the best of graduates' situation in England, is a feature not only of those who aim to stay in England for longer, but also those who plan their return to Poland. Also, the four mentioned cohorts show that they use migration as a strategy and a form of agency, which does not refer only to the single event of moving to another country, but above all the continuation for some, or initiation of changes in life and career trajectories for others. Thus, the transition from university to a professional employment proceeds differently for various cohorts. It involves additional studies, further education and training outside of the university, including English language courses, or even work in basic skilled jobs, which nonetheless provide graduates with missing skills on the newly arrived at British labour market.

Overall, the trajectories of all cohorts can be seen as consisting of "long term patterns of stability and change [...] involving multiple transitions" (Hutchison, 2007:15), which occur at various times. The moments of stability are not always desirable, or aimed for, as may involve a temporary stagnation within an employment or life situation, such as in case of Late Awakeners.

The transitions, on the other hand, are strongly noticeable in the case of Switchers, and are being prepared for by Late Awakeners. Nonetheless, the transitions in Switchers life and career trajectories, where a strong agency is manifested, were not immediate, but occurred sometime after migration to England. A contrasting situation is present with Continuers, whose agency of career development was applied before they migrated, and maintained while abroad. However, the majority of Continuers were still in education, and within a few years' time the latest they will face adjustment to a labour market, which might prove to be successful within their preferred employment, or they may follow the steps of Switchers.

Therefore, all three cohorts use human agency in their life-courses construction, and the life-courses of each individual undergo transitions. The most prominent transitions after migration in terms of career trajectories were experienced by Switchers, who have shown strong human agency in the shaping of their life-courses after migration (flexibility, reflectivity on gained skills). Conversely, Continuers can be seen as those who experienced the fewest transitions, as they remained within their chosen career areas, and their agency in shaping their life-courses has been strongly observed before they have migrated to England (searching for courses and jobs

related to their current qualifications, before migration). The Late Awakeners are more similar to Switchers, and their delayed agency in further development is on the way to catching up with the other cohort.

In terms of over-education of graduates, following Dolton and Silles (2003), it proved to be a dynamic process in particular for Switchers, on which Late Awakeners are working at, and some Continuers experienced and may find themselves in after completion of their English University and other training.

There were also graduates who did not feel they were overeducated, as they underlined they aimed to gain some skills, even though they were not using their qualifications. This is aligned with Green and Zhu's (2008) findings, showing that over-education is not linked with skill underutilization, thus taking up jobs below qualifications by graduates, led to making use of their skills, and as in the case of Polish graduates, they were acquiring new ones too.

Thus, it is not only a transition from a university to employment, but above all the whole range of multiple career transitions within the labour markets in Poland and in England, with different roles of human agency of graduates, for some reinforced before and for others after migration, involving entering HE and other training in England. Lastly, the division of Polish graduates into four differentiated cohorts can be applied to any other group of graduate migrants, entering the labour market in their home country or abroad.

Overall, the three groups of Polish graduates: Continuers, Switchers and Late Awakeners, provide a clear message, that of an on-going learning, and willingness to improve their skills, gain new ones, whilst remaining persistent in doing so, and not settling in basic skilled jobs:

> *"I just really want to focus on this career, I started as junior, so I've got steps to go higher, and higher. You know, gain new qualifications, skills, so this is my plan for the next at least 2 years"* (I29).

> *"I just want to work in my profession, so that's what I'm trying to do, step by step, which is not easy, but step by step I'm trying to get a job as a qualified physio*" (I35).

They are determined to find employment within their profession, and they are conscious that although the process is slow, and often involves many negative responses, they do not give up:

"I'm very hard bitten, and I will be seeking and looking for the jobs, so yeah I'm really stubborn, hard bitten and determined..." (I30).

At the same time, the research indicates that the migration of Polish graduates to England has not been solely for economic reasons (i.e. Drinkwater *et al.,* 2006), although these played a role in it. Instead, it shows that it is more structured, involving graduates' ambitions, personal interests, as well as a need to gain new skills which will be used in professional employment, and which have not been acquired by most graduates at their home universities. Therefore, human capital acquisition forms a large part of Polish graduates mobility, yet for some it is planned and included in the reasons for migration, for example migration for study purposes, or brain-training (Balaz and Williams, 2004; Balaz, 2004). Others absorb it along their life-course, and as argued by Kennedy (2010: 455), experiences after migration prove to be much more significant to graduates life trajectories than their earlier decisions made.

This research suggests that graduate mobility across Europe involves chances for their development at any time, regardless of their primary motivations for migration, whether it has been planned ahead or decided after a few years of staying in another country. It also agrees with King and Ruiz-Gelices (2003), that mobility, especially among young and educated people, became a way of expressing their aspiration to construct a personal life-course.

6.5 The impact of higher education and further training on graduate life trajectories

The multiple life trajectories of Polish graduate migrants in England have been exposed to times of stability and transitions (Hutchison, 2007), yet their agency in re-designing their life-courses formed a key role for their further development. With the often mentioned higher and further education after migration to England, graduates career trajectories have often undergone phases of employment and education, which all constituted a form of transition from university to a professional employment. Employment undertaken often did not allow graduates to use their knowledge gained at universities, but provided with opportunities of learning about other areas of work and to gain new skills, not thought of before. Often, such employment led to development of new interests, and directed graduates' further development towards new subjects – and in many cases re-entering HE to study a new subject.

Some graduates have never sampled working environment but migrated to the UK to continue their education at Masters and PhD courses. Others undertook other professional training, related to or unrelated to their previously gained education in Poland, and there were some who still are

thinking of getting back to university or doing extra curriculum courses. This indicates that the career trajectories of graduates are diverse, but they all have a common feature – the need of further development, for which they refer to universities, private and governmental organisations providing training, as well as informal group activities.

As a response comes universities' activity in advertising of their degree courses, along with the transferable skills, and a focus on employability of graduates. Some universities within the East Midlands region promised a gain of "a vocational knowledge of global competitiveness in a rapidly changing world" (Loughborough University), or "an innovative approach to enhancing the employability", with "innovative career planning modules, which focus on developing students' awareness of their subject-specific and transferable skills and a reflective approach to learning" (University of Northampton). After all, "employers rate our graduates highly and a degree from Nottingham is of considerable value in the marketplace" (Nottingham University).

Another outcome of this doctoral research indicates that the impact on graduates' perception of their employability skills after attending a HE in England was positive. Within the group of 19 graduates, who graduated English HE institutions, only one respondent graduated a university outside of the East Midlands. First of all, respondents recognised immediate differences between the two systems of higher education, with a stronger emphasis on skills and practical appliance of knowledge in England which was highly valued by Polish graduates. In particular, the most often quoted outcome of attending English universities by Polish graduates was confidence gained in the labour market.

6.5.1 Graduates' perceptions of the value of Polish and English higher education in their career development

Polish graduates' interests in doing extra HE and additional courses in England can be explained by the nature of education gained in Poland – that is a broad knowledge, rich in theories, but disadvantaged with employability skills. Due to their living and working experiences in England, they got to understand the value of professional skills in the local labour market.

The experiences of studying at Polish universities was pictured as useful for further development in the lives of interviewed graduates, providing them with a strong foundation (Appendix 11):

> **"***Polish system gives you a marvellous background and foundation, there is a huge emphasis for a theoretical knowledge"* (I9).

"In Poland, the scope of material, the knowledge that we need to learn is very broad, and often some issues are only briefly introduced, which of course has also its advantages, because when you get back to some subject, you know that you have heard of it somewhere before, but not in great details, but you have the idea anyway" (I2).

The main reason for this was knowledge that is passed on to students of the more prestigious public Polish universities. Other educational institutions, private schools, have been strongly criticised as those that do not require much effort to be put in the studies, and where the education level is much lower. Finally, the requirements of the Polish labour market portray employees as expecting graduates to have HE completed in order to be considered for merely basic skilled jobs:

"In Poland almost every job requires HE! I don't know why...for what reason...but because of that a lot of graduates from private HE institutions, and some of the public ones too, they do not have skills, and the knowledge!" (I31).

On the other side of spectrum there is availability of a HE, with some educational institutions offering degrees perceived as of lower value:

"G*oing to university is easy, there are so many public and private ones, which you can afford or not, but you can just go and you don't really have to study very hard to finish university. Let's just say that!"* (I17).

This is in line with Żuk's (2010) findings on the unbalanced quality of the developing industrial education in Poland, with the education passed on to students at private and some public institutions argued as weaker, where students do not multiply cultural and social capital (Nowak, 2010). It can be argued further in the example of this research, that knowledge of mobility, especially at academic level has not been well developed among those graduates, and the outcome is reflected in number of graduates recruited for this research, who graduated predominantly from one of the best and in general public universities in Poland. Therefore, this thesis recommends further research within the area of HE achieved in Poland and not only decisions made on migration, but also career development after arrival in the country of destination.

Amid biased levels of HE at private and some public institutions, the majority of graduates point out that the general emphasis at Polish universities is knowledge and theory, whereas learning about employment skills is almost nonexistent in that system:

"What you get is a wide knowledge, but Polish education system does not give you any skills. And at that time, to get the job in Poland it was like they wanted CV in French, to work in a shop" (I15).

Such a way of preparation for a labour market of students at universities, made some respondents think that they were not skilled to do the job that they gained qualifications for:

"The subject, that I've chosen, was very hard basically. It was more about theory than practical things. So I thought I'm not skilled at the job I should do. I didn't feel skilled enough" (I21).

When compared to education gained from universities in Poland to those in England, graduates emphasised a focus on skills, and practical application of knowledge and theories at English HE institutions, and often learning about theories by doing things in practice. Thus similarly as in Cranmer's study (2006:182), increasing employment–based training and experience supported graduates *"in the transitional stage into employment":*

"I really liked the practical approach in Westminster Uni. It felt like you learn a lot of theory by doing things [...] it was focused on a practical way, and it felt like they put your hands on tasks, rather than just giving you theory" (I10).

Another respondent explained that the knowledge that is passed on to students in Poland is much broader, which does not make you a specialist within any discipline, unlike at English universities:

"In Poland you get a little bit wider knowledge but might be a little bit lower level this knowledge, comparing to specialists in the UK" (I27).

The majority have noticed that theory and practical activities are more balanced than at Polish universities, what has effects on their first and later employments. However, the limited scope of knowledge makes students less able to re-qualify - in case their interests and life paths change. This however is not a problem for the interviewed cohort, as they have gained a broad knowledge from Poland, and the education in England has been treated as a preparation for more specialised area of work, within narrower sectors, which were deliberately selected by graduates:

"In the UK, the practical and theoretical parts are paired, and students here receive less workshops, but more tools, which is beneficial for immediate commencement of employment

after the degree [...] So England concentrates on application of the knowledge into real life. But in terms of –re-qualification in the UK, I reckon they are less flexible as in case of Poland" (I2).

One of the advantages of having broad knowledge is flexibility that can be applied by graduates when they wish to re-qualify, or continue their academic and professional development. Respondents believe that broader knowledge gained from Polish universities is helpful when changing occupations, as it provides a wider choice:

"We have a greater ease to get used to changing conditions, because of the broader education received from the secondary school and then during the education at university where we receive a significant amount of knowledge, broad knowledge from within the field [...] Graduating from a Polish university, I had a very good education and knowledge which was giving me a flexibility and easiness of further work on and development of my qualifications" (I2).

Thus, graduates ability to feel comfortable in changing conditions derive not only from the socio-historical times they were brought up, but also because of the type of education, and system that has existed at that particular times – knowledge focused.

Overall, respondents can see the benefits of a broad knowledge, and the advantage of Polish universities over English with regards to that, however at the same time they recognise that there is not enough attention on skills at the majority of Polish universities:

"The thing is also in the nature in our education system in Poland. We get lots of knowledge, and not so much skills" (I14).

"I think theoretically, it's better to do it in a way in Poland, because you get more knowledge, but you don't get practical skills" (I16).

Unfortunately, as many graduates indicated, such knowledge gained is not applied to real life scenarios or put into practice:

"The person that graduates Polish universities is very well prepared in terms of theories but not so much in application of these into real life" (I2).

"In Poland I felt like I was being thought a lot of theory, which later on I was not able to use in a real life. It's because I have never had that training to realise that I can actually apply it to a real life" (I10).

Therefore, most university leavers felt that they had to learn everything from scratch in their first employment. Some of them complained that after 20 years of an on-going education, they were left in the labour market with no real experience that could be applied in searching for their preferred employment and applied in there:

"I sort of went to primary, then lyceum, then to university, and it's 25 years of studying, and then I ended up in the labour market without any experience" (I3).

"In Poland when you graduate from the university, you go to your very first job, you start learning things from the scratch. You are not using any of the knowledge that you gained during your education. So what is the point? So what's the point, spending 5 years wasting your time, kind of memorising things and then forgetting them?" (I6).

Another respondent observed that even at technical universities, there is too much theory and not enough practice:

"At technical universities in Poland, you only learn the theory, but then in professional life you need practice, and then you learn from the beginning actually" (I31).

One of the most important reflections on graduates their skills and knowledge was the importance of activity outside of universities, where one respondent could acquire other skills:

*"*A: *What about skills? Did you gain any skills at the uni in Poland?*
I27: *NO. What type of skills?*
A: *Any...that you can use in life...work...?*
I27*: Not at university, more in private life, doing things, helping people or something. At uni I got a proper knowledge, how to measure things, or calculate things, but not practical, manual skills"*.

Such a stance accords with Mason *et al.'s* (2003) concept of gaining employability skills through "communities of practice", and above all the role of graduates' agency in participating in extra-curriculum activities, outside of university, therefore showing individualism in re-designing of the life-course.

Above all, majority of graduates felt comfortable having graduated from Polish universities in the first place, with broad knowledge, not only in their field of study, but also about the world, and other disciplines, which they would not experience and learn in England otherwise:

> "*While here, it's more focused, kind of narrows down, so you get more specialised, you know in your subject[...]So really we get people who know what they are doing. It's not like a general knowledge"* (I11).

Recognising the narrowness of the HE preparation in terms of the knowledge in England was only possible due to previously experienced education at Polish universities. For some, the possibility of comparison raised criticism towards both systems, with a shortage of skills after graduation from Polish universities, and lack of broad knowledge upon completion of a HE in England.

Some graduates complained that although they do gain skills at English universities, they specialise in a small area. This is beneficial for finding employment within a specific field, however less applicable for the future transition into other subjects. Also, they argue that the English system supports the culture of knowledge ignorance:

> *"I think, because they don't require that much, there is not that much of pressure on students...it's more...'I know what I want to know, but I don't want to know this, so I'm not going to learn that'...so this is a sort of ignorance supported by the system"* (I20).

Even though the English system shows flaws for them, it allowed graduates to specialise in one area, in which they made conscious and mature decisions, unlike when they were in their teens in Poland and still unsure of which direction they would like to go:

> "*In Poland, it's a very common picture that people after A levels still have no idea what they are going to do in their lives"* (I2).

The specifics of the courses, such as the duration, became important aspects when deciding about enrolment. The education in England was perceived as more dynamic and shorter, what had positive connotations for graduates:

> *"Here it is a bit different. It's shorter than this. Here it's much more practical, it happens more quickly"* (I3).

Therefore, the acquisitions of skills that can be applied to graduates' current employment exercised in England, and sustain further development, or which could support their re-qualification, became one of the main reasons Polish graduates decided to do additional degrees. Such graduates' behaviours show strong agency and individualisation in the art of gaining employability skills.

6.5.2 Skills gained at English universities

Overall, the engagement of universities in England with the labour market proves to be more influential on development of employability skills, and such approach and experience of the English universities has been pictured by Polish graduates interviewed. In terms of skills that graduates gained at English universities, those mentioned as the most important were to sample and to learn about their future employment, which was achieved due to various practical exercises outside of the class rooms, which agrees with the findings of Mason *et al.* (2003) and Cranmer (2006). Those researchers found that employment-based training and experience, as well as sandwich placements, and 'communities of practice' which share knowledge and experience, where members learn from each other, have the greatest impact on the labour market skills development. This doctoral research finding confirms that English universities allowed Polish graduates to obtain such awareness and practical skills, required in their preferred labour market occupations:

> *"In England, I remember we used to do lots of art for the community, lectures for the community or different sort of settings, so it give us the feel of what work is really like, you don't concentrate on the theory itself"* (I23).

The same respondent provided a variety of examples of how she gained knowledge about the job that she would like to do after the university, as well as awareness of diverse set of skills required to be employed within that particular profession, and for which the university in England was preparing her to do:

> *"We would be going out and about, meeting different organisations, seeing how they work, and then the second year was totally focused on practise, so I was in the uni once a month maybe. So the whole year was literally out, I was like working full time in different set of settings, so that was a good experience, and it does prepare you really! You still get an idea of what the work is really about"* (I23).

Due to differences in teaching at universities in Poland and in England, Polish graduates were able to list skills that they have underdeveloped while doing their university courses in Poland. Some of the commonly mentioned skills included giving good quality presentations, the ability to write concise reports, development of critical and practical thinking, searching for information, team orientated work, and above all more employability skills, and approach to skills development, being objective towards requirements for various jobs positions, what covers some of those mentioned in the Dearing Report (1997):

> *"In England, a good thing is that there is a lot of practical stuff to learn at the university, so you gain like the ability to give good quality presentations, ability to write concise reports. Also, I think, team work is better, they put more attention on...well, the team work oriented stuff is better, more focus on that"* (I7).

> *"When it comes to comparing, most of my modules were based on team working (in the UK), which didn't happen that often at my old uni, maybe one course or module with team working, but maybe not even that, really"* (I19).

> *"...and more practical thinking as well. As far as I've seen, students get less to do, but they teach thinking and searching for information, which is quite important in the times we are living in"* (I7).

In addition, some pointed out that attending university in England built up a confidence and knowledge of how the labour market works, and how they are supposed to perform in order to be noticed by a potential employer, and what skills are sought within different professions (Appendix 12):

> *"I think you get much more support here, you learn how to be prepared for professional life, how to put yourself out there on the job market"* (I16).

> *"So they show me the skills, and show me the ways I should be doing certain things in order to get into the proper environment, so this is precisely set to help me in the future. So that's good. They sent me also to conferences, so basically I learn how to speak, how to present, how to convince people to my project, so that's one thing. These are the practical things. They tell you what skills you have to have to be successful in whatever you are doing. This is what I feel is like"* (I20).

Therefore, such practical support at English universities, helping graduates to recognise and develop new skills required to increase their chances of success at the labour market within specific professions, has been highly valued by Polish graduates, and mostly brought up in their responses:

> **"***I think you have much more skills here, after you've completed your course, your degree"* (I6).

The majority of people interviewed felt dissatisfied with the knowledge content of their course curriculums at English universities; however, some of them observed development of other skills through the attendance of a degree course in England, such as interaction with people, and language:

> "*Oh, it was a pleasant distraction, it was a new experience, I learned quite a lot regarding the language, interacting with people, but when it goes for educational experience – then no"* (I18).

Overall, compared to the education gained at Polish universities, the degrees from English universities can be viewed as supplementary. Polish graduates of public universities and some from private HE institutions have gained a broad knowledge in Poland, providing them with ability to remain flexible within the labour market, and to re-qualify when necessary. However, the limited attention to skills attainment that could be readily applied in employment has been often mentioned by respondents. Stemming from this is their strong demand for skills acquisition in England. Graduates used various institutions, from universities to other training organizations, to gain them. It has been often underlined that they enrolled in various courses, not for qualifications only, but above all skills, confidence and knowledge of the British labour market and expected from them performance in order to be employed in their areas of interest.

On the whole, the researcher observed that those who studied in England compared with those who did not used different language in terms of their career development, often underlying their increased employability skills. Graduates were able to mention a range of other skills that they gained at English universities, including good quality presentations, ability to write concise reports, development of critical and practical thinking, being objective towards various job positions, advanced language skills as well as learned to interact with other people from various backgrounds. Above all, the university made them aware of the skills required for their aimed professions, and prepared graduates in terms of recruitment process.

The resources invested and knowledge gained at Polish universities was perceived positively by most of the respondents, as well as providing them with the thorough basis for their further development. One of the advantages of having a broad knowledge is the capability of being flexible, and which has been applied by some graduates, in particular for the cohort of Switchers when re-qualifying into another professions in England. Similarly the main bonus of the English HE system was attention to skill, and practical appliance of theory in life, giving them confidence and knowledge of the labour market within narrow areas of their academic education.

Thus both systems of HE complement each other, and graduates although take longer to find their place within the labour markets of which they could feel content about, they continue to learn during their life-courses and act reflectively on acquired skills. Such a practice may indicate that those individuals are prepared for the life-long learning, and their life and career trajectories are settled within constant need for development, which on the one hand derives from their aspirations, and from the other constant competition from other graduate job seekers. Such a situation refers to the research on individualisation (Beck, 1992, 1994) and a "choice biography" (Nilsen and Brannen, 2002b), which leads to "manufacture and self design" (Beck, 1994), which in a tough graduate job market can influence the successful transition from university to employment.

This doctoral research indicates that multiple transitions occur in graduate migrants career and life trajectories, and individualisation as an act of agency in graduate migrants' life-courses helps to re-design and re-create their life and career paths. The role of a HE in England and any further education in such processes should not be underestimated, as many have returned to university, and others undertook additional professional courses outside of academia. The finding points out, that learning through employment, volunteering and commonly practiced further and HE within the country of immigration form a valid aspect for career development of graduates. As this research showed, Polish graduate migrants follow the pattern of life-long learning, and self-design of their life-courses.

Furthermore, all graduates interviewed were asked about their opinions on their skills and qualifications levels before and after migration. The majority of them stated without hesitation that they did lack certain skills for performing professional jobs within their gained qualifications, and they have expanded them in England, which can contribute to the debate on the classification of highly-skilled and highly-qualified, in particular with respect to graduate migrants.

6.5.3 Highly-skilled or highly-qualified? – graduate migrant' perceptions of their skills and knowledge attainment

The perception and self-assessment of graduates, who are classified as highly-skilled by some (Iradale, 2001; Cancedda, 2005) and as having only general skills by others (i.e. Salt, 1997), provide insights for the definition formation of highly-skilled.

The findings of this doctoral research show that graduates differentiate skills and qualifications as two different assets, and often by qualifications they assume a dry knowledge gained at university, and when talking about skills, they underline the practical application of that knowledge. Thus, the fact of graduating and holding a diploma, as well as all the theoretical knowledge gained at university – they refer to qualifications, but not skills, predominantly for the reason of non-application of this knowledge into real life. Once that knowledge becomes used in practice, it can be referred to as being highly-skilled. Respondents were asked if they consider themselves skilled or highly-skilled, as well qualified or highly-qualified:

> *"I would say I was really well qualified in terms of theoretical knowledge, because my education in Poland was more kind of broad, but in terms of practical skills, I was rubbish [...]So things like writing abstracts, like you know, practical skills – applying for grants, sending abstracts, applying for funding, so all this wasn't there at all! So theoretically, I was well prepared, but that's it, but the other stuff was like...you know. In the UK they can talk about themselves, they are self confident, they know how to present themselves, how to sell themselves, and I was like not even close to where they were"* (I16).

Therefore, a graduate can be highly-qualified, which is understood as having a degree in a particular subject with the acquired knowledge on the subject matter, but their perception on being highly-skilled comes with the application of that knowledge into real life scenarios, a job that they have been trained for. Therefore, a graduate with no work experience is predominantly highly-qualified, but only potentially highly-skilled or a "specialist" within that profession:

> *"I can say that when I graduated with two Masters I was highly educated or qualified, my horizons expanded, but I could not call myself a specialist in those domains. You can become a specialist through further work"* (I8).

As a result, graduates often pointed out that they were highly-qualified, but inexperienced, therefore not highly-skilled:

"I was well qualified but inexperienced person [...] I don't think I was particularly skilled" (I5).

"I think that knowledge wise I was overeducated, but I didn't have that many practical skills, which were like ready to apply in a work that I would like to do" (I14).

"I felt highly-qualified, I had my degree, and a lot of people in this country does not have a degree, and they don't really pursue that. Once I started working and meeting people, hearing that they are doing jobs without actually any qualifications, you kind of feel that you are highly-qualified [...]In terms of skills themselves, I did feel quite skilled" (I24).

"I knew that I had a university degree, I felt like, yes, I am highly-qualified. I do have masters" (I25).

It is worth noting that it was mostly after migration to England when the majority started thinking in terms of skills and not qualifications, as it has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, when discussing a HE in England. To some extent, their perceptions of qualifications devalued after migration to England, as experience and relevant skills became more important, which they did not have:

"Because everybody is saying that Polish education is so good, and you are just amazing, and then just you start doing something and you learn the most. And then you realise that you are really not that amazing. I think I was just wearing my pink glasses when I was migrating, and then I just became more realistic" (I19).

"I know more about life in the UK now, but on the other hand it made me to realise that my chances are not as good as I thought earlier. So maybe it was a confidence, or maybe it was just a dream, I would say I was more than sure that I will be successful with my career..." (I17).

There were respondents who worked during their studies in Poland, and some in occupations relevant to their degree course. As an example, there was one respondent who when migrating to England, considered herself as highly-qualified and skilled for doing a particular job that she did in Poland, and found a similar one in England:

"It depends on what kind of skills. When it goes for job skills, I was considering myself highly-qualified, because I was already working at the university, as admin, starting my first

year, so basically I was coming to the UK with 3.5 years of a real job experience, plus my language wasn't perfectly fluent, but I had this confidence of communicating" (I18).

However, after she migrated, she recognised gaps within her skills, which she was able to develop further, both at university and jobs in England. Thus, she learned the common phraseology, and became skilled at a general interaction with and understanding of needs of people coming to England from various cultural backgrounds:

"So, I learned to communicate in a common language, not in a language that I've learned from the books. My vocabulary was lacking then in words, common words, that were used on a daily basis [...] So, language and basically dealing with international students, people from other countries" (I18).

Most of all, graduates felt that developed interpersonal and language skills after migration to England, both at university and work environment, as well as in everyday life through the interaction with people with various backgrounds, coming from different cultures, which is still not that common in Poland:

"I was definitely developing some new skills. Because in Poland I've never had the opportunity to meet people who are so different to me, different cultures, different languages, different traditions [...] I would say language skills, definitely, because I've never had an opportunity to practice it, different accents, different sort of phrases people use, different expression some of the people use" (I24).

Some argue that it is not only the language, it is the whole cultural background, beginning with a sense of humour, and attitudes towards work of British people that they acquire by living, studying and working in England, and all that comes with time:

"Definitely...it's not only language, but it's also how to deal with people, you just learn so many things... about people, how they think, their mentality, their sense of humour, so you just gain these skills by living among them...yeah, but it's the same with work" (I29).

There are other examples of skills that graduates developed not only at educational institutions but also through life and work experience:

"I think I've developed quite a bit, I guess I've forgotten some of the knowledge like book type of knowledge that I've gained from the university, but some other skills like, well I've

mentioned my English, that's obvious, but my IT skills got improved, especially in my current job, so yeah, I think that my IT skills improved big time" (I15).

Above all, knowledge about the culture of behaviour in the labour market, beginning with searching for jobs, knowledge of requirements, and self awareness of marketable skills gained, which can be applied in particular professions and self-confidence are some of the most important ones which can be partially learned with time spent in another country. Not being aware of the mechanisms of the labour market delays graduates advancement and fuels frustration:

"...because the UK was a completely new country for me...I've never known how educational system works here, and if I have any chances to do what I would like to do, and what I have to do to be successful... [...] I don't feel very confident and I think that's the problem" (I17).

Amid discussions on who can be named as highly-skilled (Salt, 1997; Iradale, 2001; Pollack and Solimano, 2004; Chiswick *et al.*, 2005; Csedő, 2008; Samers, 2010), there is no general consensus on the definition of highly-skilled. This research contributes to those debates, showing that graduate migrants who obtained at least a degree from Polish universities before migration, and had no work experience or a limited one within their professions, were able to call themselves as qualified or highly-qualified, but not highly-skilled or skilled, recognising major gaps in practical skills. Thus, graduates' perceptions of being highly-skilled are linked to application of knowledge gained at university in a work environment.

Therefore, differentiation of graduates with professional job experience, and graduates without such experience is a vital one, and should be considered in further research on highly-skilled migration scholars. This research agrees with Csedő's (2008) categorisation of highly-skilled migrants, and their division into highly-qualified and highly-skilled, with being highly-qualified forming a first step towards being considered as highly-skilled. Such a stance also follows Salt's (1997) perception of graduates as those with high level of qualifications, which does not imply having a high level of skills.

Moreover, as life and career trajectories evolve with time, often depending on the agency of graduates interviewed and acquired skills though employment, and/or further university and other training. Their activity within various sectors distinguishes them from those who have not had such experiences, and obtained university education only. Polish graduates observations that

their level of skills before migration to England indicate, that the general knowledge acquired at universities in Poland was not enough for them to consider themselves as highly-skilled:

> *"Because during my MA course in Warsaw there was no emphasis on professional development whatsoever [...] you have no other transferable skills, which they totally emphasise here in Nottingham [...] I think that now I feel like options are endless. I feel like I can go anywhere, work anywhere. And I think that at some point I will have a really exciting job, which I don't think I would be able to have if I just stayed in Poland [...] now, I would have this strong conviction that I can compete for good jobs, with people from all over the world. If I had it only from Warsaw, I don't think so. Sadly to say, but I don't think so [...] I would say there is like a huge immense increase like in self value"* (I13).

Therefore, the differences in perception of who can be called highly-skilled and highly-qualified by graduates can be initiated by the impact of the diverse systems of education. At Polish universities, graduates acquired predominantly theory, but not application of this knowledge in jobs within their graduated subjects, therefore missing out on such skills acquisition. A few graduates indicated that it was only during and after completing English university courses that they felt highly-qualified and highly-skilled. Thus, graduates' self assessment of their skills and qualifications levels, and stemming from this differentiation between skills and qualifications, should form the basis of further research on graduate migration. Also the fact, that different education systems influence graduates perception and confidence in referring themselves to as highly-skilled and highly-qualified. This should be looked into, as it may indicate general disparities in education, what can have an impact on future career and life trajectories of graduates, and their abilities to overcome constraints on their ways to preferred employment.

In other words, the concept of highly-skilled should not be assessed from the point of view of completed education, which is also significant but above all being highly-skilled and highly-qualified is a personal observation of individuals concerned, which should not be underestimated in the research on graduate migration as a subset of highly-skilled migration.

6.6 Summary

This chapter has shown the labour market adjustment of Polish graduate migrants after arrival in England, including their career trajectories development, motivations for higher and further education, and perception on their acquired skills and qualifications. In total 36 of the graduates interviewed enrolled into various institutionalised forms of education in England. According to

the recognised career trajectories patterns, the scale of transitions and fluctuation in studied courses, obtained further training and aimed professions three main clusters of graduates were differentiated: "Continuers", "Switchers" and "Late Awakeners", and the fourth group comprising of collectively gathered members of those three cohorts, and named as "Potential Future Trainees".

The group of "Continuers", the largest of four, comprised of 19 graduates, who remained in a similar field to their degrees in subjects gained in Poland, attending further education in England and commencing professional employment within their initial profession. Another group, "Switchers", consisted of 13 respondents, and they undertook additional studies and other training in England that is not directly related to their HE gained in Poland, but often linked to their past or current employment or their new interests developed after migration. The members of this group underwent the most drastic transitions within their work and education trajectories of all cohorts.

Finally, the third group "Late Awakeners" consisted of those respondents who attended English language courses only, and who remained for longer in jobs not related to their gained education, interests, or in any form not helping them with fulfilling their life aims. This group included 6 of all interviewed, and consisted predominantly of women above 30 years old who started learning English language relatively late. The members of the fourth group, the "Potential Future Trainees", were still thinking of doing additional form of education in the near and longer term future. Therefore, the differentiated groups shed the light on intentional and unintentional post-migration employment (Smith, 2004), highlighting that graduates' participation in the labour market within the areas of their choice often depended on family background, and further education undertaken in England. Nonetheless, many graduates experienced constraints on their employment choice, which derived from the English language level, lack of knowledge of the British labour market, for some also confidence and ability to search for desired jobs and to sell themselves in the selection processes. However, one of the most interesting elements influencing graduates labour market involvement was an approach of taking steps in their lives, career and mobility, which underlines that for majority life is planned and experienced in phases, with multiple transitions within them, often involving working in places that form a medium in getting to where graduates would like to be.

Overall, the transition from university, through migration to a professional employment follows different patterns for various cohorts, whose members nonetheless reach for some form of further education in England. These include English language courses, or even work in basic

skilled jobs, which as some indicated, did not encompass before migration. Therefore, graduates' career and work trajectories include varied activities, with agency and an individualistic approach playing a prime role.

However, after the initial mobility steps for Polish migrants, such as arrival to different cultural and labour market standards, and despite having good knowledge and theoretical background of their studied subjects, they lacked the tools to sell themselves in the British labour market. This contributed to their over-education at work places, even though they were aware of it, they were not afraid to take this step back to be able acquire required personal capital or a certain standard. Polish graduates worked hard, showed perseverance and willingness for further development. Therefore, the majority did not feel deskilled, as their positions in jobs below their qualifications were treated as temporary, and graduates were heading towards their goals.

Even though they did not use their qualifications immediately, in the most basic jobs they experienced gaining other skills, which they considered useful. The employment where ones do not use their qualifications was not linked immediately to deskilling by those graduates, but formed the medium, or steps towards obtaining their aims and goals. However, the breaking points appeared with time, or with the lack of possibilities of further development within such employment. This in particular was visible when graduates eventually become bored of doing the same job, or when they noticed that there is nothing new to be learned in the workplace. Some graduates' career trajectories underwent more drastic transition periods than others, making it difficult to establish if actual deskilling took place.

There has been much written about young educated Polish migrants working under their qualifications in England, both from the geographical and economic points of view (Drinkwater *et al.*, 2010). Most arguments were based on human capital obtained measured in language skills and credentials, but such studies have often lacked depth in terms of graduates' background and their life aspirations, which could be expected from a cohort of young and educated. This chapter adds to such literature, focusing not only on graduates' human capital, but above all their subjective assessment and usefulness of skills and qualifications gained at various educational institutions, placements and employments. It also shows graduates' life aims and objectives, and the role of their agency in influencing their life trajectories. Thus, by including this personal component, it became possible to understand better Polish graduates' decisions for work undertaken in England, their enrolment into English Universities, and any other form of training within other educational institutions.

Furthermore, the chapter highlights that the HE systems in England and in Poland provided graduates with two different sets of advantages in terms of skills and knowledge. Polish universities provided graduates with a broad knowledge, and English universities the ability to apply the knowledge and theories into practice, thus boosting graduates' confidence within an area of studied subjects at the labour market. This is a prime discovery, stressing that Polish graduates who were educated at public universities, and sponsored by Polish tax payers money, obtained broad knowledge, which in most cases did not have an immediate application within the Polish labour market. However, such wide knowledge gained became nourished and channelled down by doing additional courses at the English universities. Such universities, in comparison to Polish ones, appeared as more labour market oriented, and more specialised, providing graduates with missing skills to feel more confident in applying for jobs within the graduated subject at the British and other labour markets, including Polish.

On the whole, this chapter shows that graduates not always can be named as highly-skilled, and the link is between the HE provisions of labour market skills within the studied subjects, which overall act as a confidence booster for graduate migrants trying to find their ways in the labour markets. This chapter demonstrated that there is discrepancy between perceived skills and qualifications gained which impacts on graduates' self-classification of being highly-skilled and highly-qualified. Thus, this study contributes to the debates on who can be referred to as highly-skilled within migration literature, arguing that the majority of Polish graduates perceived themselves as highly-qualified, however admitting to not having adequate skills to perform jobs within their studied subjects, either in Poland or in England. With changing perceptions from highly-qualified when migrating to England to highly-skilled and qualified during and after graduation from English universities, or any other further education institution indicates, that application of knowledge into real life scenarios practised widely at English universities added confidence and adjusted graduates consciousness as being highly-skilled in the labour market, and able to "*compete for good jobs, with people from all over the world"* (I13). This could be perceived as a step in their career positions, becoming more aware of their own skills, and the job market competition.

Overall, this chapter looked at factors which encourage and limit Polish graduate participation and integration into the British labour market. This in turn influences geographies of graduate mobility within Europe, in particular because of the recently observed trend across 27 countries of the EU, that of the decline in youth cohorts who are the future of the global workforce. Therefore, it is vital to maintain the skills and abilities of those with tertiary education, migrating

between EU countries, and issues like the constraints and opportunities for brain-training and circulation within the EU and beyond ought to be looked at in detail. Another aspect related to brain circulation of Polish graduates is their perception of the destination places, and whether these support their career developments, and their establishment of feeling at home, and which is presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

The effects of destination place on Polish graduate migrants' geographical mobility

7.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the significance of place in post-migration events and graduates' perceptions and attitudes to place(s) and people in England. The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1 scrutinizes the role of the East Midlands as a potential place for graduates' social escalation, referring to the concept of escalator regions, and suggests a new category: a place fulfilling the role of a "stepping-stone" in graduates' life trajectory, which relates to ideas such as 'mobilities' (Urry, 2000) or 'network society' (Castells, 2000). Section 2 debates the meaning of home for Polish graduates, and home construction after migration to England. It looks into different categories of home which are envisaged and constructed by Polish graduates after migration, depending on their marital status and longevity of attachments formed. Section 3 discusses the issue of potentiality of obtaining British citizenship by Polish graduates, as a means to achieve a greater freedom of mobility. The section examines the motivations behind such decisions, and discusses the issue of the decoupling of citizenship and identity and its usefulness in graduates lives.

7.2 The East Midlands – an escalator region or a stepping-stone?

Migration in itself is a transformation for an individual; however, living in a new location can have an impact on further career and life trajectory development, providing certain opportunities and constraints. Destination locations in a scale smaller than a country, for example the regions or cities that Polish graduates migrated to, can have an influence on their subsequent career and life development. Therefore, it is important to look into graduates' perception of locations (cities and regions) of migration, with reference to communities within those places, as well as other attributes, for example size, location, or cultural entertainment. The observations may provide a better understanding of the role of different locations on graduates' social mobility and the various attachments they form. In fact, the study of graduates' perceptions of destination cities within the East Midlands, or other locations visited in the UK, activities undertaken in such areas, as well as further plans for mobility may shed light on the function of place in graduates'

life trajectories. A few of the questionable roles of the East Midlands region in Polish graduates' lives are its influences on graduates' social escalation, home creation or motivation for further mobility.

7.2.1 The East Midlands - an escalator region?

This research's objective is not to discuss whether the East Midlands is an escalator region on a more general level, nor to critique the concept itself, but to study if it functions as such for the group of Polish graduate migrants, and it refers to a broader literature on the issue of mobility and stepping-stone habitus (Bourdieu, 1984).

The concept of the escalator region, introduced by Fielding (1992:3), follows the idea that "migrating from one region to another, individuals 'step off' one escalator and 'step onto' another", and advance in career trajectories. From the definition of the escalator region suggested by Fielding, the three stages had to be satisfied to call the region as such. Within the first stage the region should attract many young people with promotion potential after graduation, which is referred to as "stepping on the escalator". During stage two, individuals achieve accelerated upward social mobility, or "are taken up by the escalator", and during the phase three, they "step off the escalator", and out-migrate, which usually occurs at later stages of individuals' lives.

The findings show that the majority of young and ambitious Polish migrants arrived in the East Midlands directly from Poland. Only seven respondents moved to the East Midlands from other places in the UK that they migrated initially to. Among those, four persons moved from the south of England, cities such as: London, Bedford and Luton. One person moved from West Midlands. Moreover, only four persons have changed their location within the East Midlands, with three persons moving in to Beeston, two of which resided in Nottingham city initially, and one in Derby. The majority of respondents after migration to the East Midlands remained there, with 28 persons living in one location in the region throughout their entire stay in the UK. The prolonged stay in one location in England by the majority of graduates, who were predominantly single and childless, corresponds with White's (2011) findings on Polish mothers in the West of England, who stated that they would not consider moving to a different destination in the UK, asserting that they would remain where they were. Even though majority of graduates remained in one location in the East Midlands, they kept the option of moving to another location open. However, they thought of new places and referred predominantly to other English speaking countries, which is described in detail in Section 8.4.

Furthermore, Fielding (1992:3) suggests that the young and ambitious "combine an energetic pursuit of career advancement within their fields of expertise with a judicious use of spatial differences". As it can be noted in case of Polish graduates, the motivations for their migration to England were related to economic-aspirational factors, but also marital status and lack of commitments in Poland, as was discussed in Section 5.4. However, as the Section 6.4.2 informed, they do not always migrate to advance in their fields of expertise, but often they change their career directions after migration. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents interviewed stepped on to a conveyer belt of further education and training in the East Midlands, which can provide a form of advancement within their field of expertise or a new area; though, it does not provide them with an accelerated escalation in the British labour market.

Instead, Polish graduates browse and try various options, employment and education, and undergo career trajectory transitions. Therefore, work and education experienced after migration enables graduates to make small steps to a level where they can pan out for better opportunities within the region and elsewhere. It is a time spent on reaching certain standards, including cultural, language and employment skills that will allow them to make further career and life steps, and which may include additional migration and mobility beyond Europe. Nonetheless, the prolonged stay in the East Midlands, in the first location the majority of interviewed migrated to, may indicate *"a temporary attachment"* (I2) of those who graduated in their home country and shortly after migrated to another.

Such a thought of the East Midlands as a brief point of reference in graduates' life trajectories, where they pursue social advancement in their daily lives, at the same time contemplating further migration, may indicate what Samers (2010:10) describes as a belief in a "temporary sense of permanent" or "permanent sense of temporary". In this instance, King's (2002:93) a "myth of return", referring to migrants who are torn between the desire to return to a home country, and the desire or need to stay, could be re-evaluated as a desire to move to another place, and the need to obtain required skills or to complete projects started in the region. Nonetheless, the majority of graduates refer to a potential further migration, often beyond Europe (Section 8.4), and treat the region as a "base" for their current and future life activities and decisions.

7.2.2 The East Midlands – a stepping-stone with temporary attachment

This research argues that Polish graduates pursue ***stepping-stone migration***, and that migration to the East Midlands is only one of the steps graduates have undertaken that have an impact on their life and career trajectories. In particular, this was the case for those who were single or in short term relationships that treated England as a temporary place. The majority of respondents thought of it as *"a nice transitory place"* (I10), *"a temporary attachment"* (I2), or a current *"base"* (I23). Consequently, the research looks at graduates' patterns of mobility and migration, overlying to broader scholarship on mobility, such as Shellar and Urry's (2006) "mobility turn", from vertical or social mobility to "'horizontal' mobility, a space of networks and fluidity rather than fixed space and time" (Botterill, 2011:49; see also: Urry, 2000; Castells, 2000). Moreover, it relates to Bourdieu's (1984) ideas in terms of a stepping-stone habitus, which neither is a result of free will, nor determined by structures, but rather interplay between the two over time. This leads to the focus that a stepping-stone habitus is not fixed or permanent, but can be changed under unexpected situations, and as Bourdieu (1984:170) elaborates "without any deliberate pursuit of coherence […] without any conscious concentration".

For many of the graduates, the East Midlands was the first place they lived on their own, learning to be independent. It can be seen as a place where they reach certain standards, gain the missing skills that will allow them to advance in their preferred careers, and also to move on to other locations; however, staying longer in the East Midlands is not excluded. Therefore, the East Midlands may just be a "stepping-stone", and after fulfilling its main role for each individual, they can step to another one(s).

As one respondent pointed out, England for her is a transitory target, allowing for certain aims to be achieved in her life. Thus, living in the East Midlands can be seen as temporary, and transitory in terms of attachment; however, there is no label of "final destination" (Samers, 2010) assigned at the end of that period. She illustrated her life in the East Midlands in terms of temporariness with no dates set and with an open ending. The time spent in this place allowed her to progress, and to learn to be independent:

> *"I think it's a transitory destination that helps me to progress, to achieve certain standards, helps me to learn independence being independent. I would like to see it as a transitory place* (I10).

Following Savage *et al.* (2004), if the individual's life story, and therefore the reasons for moving to a new place, harmonises with a chosen place, then it will lead to a creation of a sense

of belonging. This is the case the East Midlands and its attributes such as centrality of location, affordability and well developed connectivity opening up more life and career opportunities for graduates. For graduates interviewed, place attachment was formed in relation to the perceived main attributes of the region, including:

- Centrality of location within England:

"I think it's a great place, East Midlands. It's in the middle of England so it's close to everywhere. It's a good location, it's not too cold, not too warm" (I33).

- Good connection to the airports and to other parts of Europe:

"You cannot complain about it, you've got an airport quite close which is nice, some other cities around, Nottingham, Derby, so it's all right" (I23).

The perceptions on connectivity were the most often heard from graduates who resided in Nottingham including Beeston, Northampton, Loughborough, Leicester and Northampton. Respondents underlined great connection to the airport within the region – the East Midlands Airport, and relatively good access and closeness to other airports based outside of the region, for example Birmingham Airport, Doncaster Airport, Luton Airport, and Manchester Airport.

- Affordability of living:

"*Well, actually, I talked about it to my friends, and we agreed that we like this region, because it's kind of self-contained. You've got everything that you need, it's close to the airport and in comparison to London, it's much cheaper"* (I6).

Therefore, the attractiveness of the region lies in its attributes: centrality, connectivity and affordability, which support Polish graduates' behavioural goals (Williams *et al.*, 1995), contributing to the formation of place attachment. This thesis reaffirms that the place attachment creation of Polish graduates in the East Midlands was possible due to the specifics of the region supporting transition of graduates into labour market, becoming independent of their parents and forming longer lasting relationships. As Hay (1998:19) argues that for those who were aged 20-35, their attention was on matters of livelihood, during which they undergo an intense period of adjustment. Thus, a life-stage of having graduated from university, being open to life and career

opportunities, seeking further skills acquisition and job opportunities, as well as considering setting up own families can be seen as a turbulent and fast-paced period in life of a graduate. Therefore, living in a place that reflects the personal transitions of graduates, offering affordable commencement of a new life, great connectivity to other places supporting graduates' mobility and further migration in order to achieve personal and behavioural goals, as this thesis suggests, may induce a place attachment for that particular life-phase.

All in all, this thesis argues that Polish graduates felt attached to the functionality of the East Midlands for the matters of livelihood. Nonetheless, they treated it as a temporary place attachment, recognising shortcomings of the region for later life stages, when the development of sense of place becomes the most pronounced through setting up their own home and family (Hay, 1998). As White (2011:22) underlines, it is parents' own "preconceptions about acceptable family livelihoods" that make them attached to places, what may indicate that Polish graduates did not perceive the East Midlands as an acceptable place for the next life-stage, that of family formation. As one respondent summarised:

"*I don't know what future will bring, what choices I will make, but if I could choose, but I can't, than I would choose another place to bring up my family"* (I10).

Overall, the perception of interviewed graduates, who were predominantly single and childless, differs to what White (2011) discovers about Polish mothers' experience of place attachment in England and Poland, who felt rooted in just one location per country. There were two reasons for their sense of anchoring in England. The first one referred to their husbands and particularly children stronger ties with the place. The second was the attractiveness of the cities in which interviewees resided: Bristol being acclaimed as the 'best' to live in by its residents, and Bath known as a world tourist attraction and World Heritage Site, that made respondents to feel attached to those places.

7.2.3 Social classes and the creation of place attachment

After migration to various cities and towns in the East Midlands region, graduates started building up their feelings towards them, often relating to the size of the city, communities that inhibit them, and members of which they see and interact with the most often in their daily routines. A few respondents have noticed different social classes in particular cities and towns

they migrated to. For some, the feeling of dominance of certain classes influenced their liking or disliking, feeling comfortable or enjoying living within certain areas.

This research shows that the experience of different classes in places of graduates' everyday lives, and in particular, the working class, understood as members having no HE and therefore expressing a different worldview to graduates, created a lack of communication, and prevented them from creating bonds, and a sense of belonging to a place. Overall, graduates' feelings towards those places became negative, and formed a constraint for feeling good in certain areas. It is worth noting that the constrictions did not refer to the nationality of people, but above all to the level of education. Therefore, both, the level of education and class, were important factors.

As it is discussed further, graduates did not identify with any of the classes in England, loosely positioning "somewhere in the middle", yet recognising people from lower social strata and on average not getting along with them due to the educational barriers and different outlook on life. One respondent explained her perception of inhabitants of Northampton as predominantly working class, residing mainly in the town centre, making her feel that this was not her place, not because of nationality, but their social background including level of education. The influence of lower social class inhibiting Northampton made her feel that she does not belong there:

> *"It seems that you are surrounded by people who lack any perspectives in life, lack ambition, many people here live on benefits, it is certain generalisation, I know, but I think the class that you can see in town centre is quite representative, that lower class [...] That doesn't mean that I disrespect or disregard lower classes, but I just feel like this is not my town [...] I just feel that I don't belong here. Not because of the nationality, but maybe because of my social background more than anything"* (I10).

Another respondent noticed the dominance of the working class in Alfreton. She painted a very negative picture of the town, where she did not feel good, there was no stimulation for her development, and the place seemed to be untidy and stagnant:

> *"It's a village, there is nothing going on, people do not develop, you cannot see people who are educated, it's a typical village, where all people work in a factory, and maybe one in 500 has some degree. It's an ugly village, houses look terrible, typical poor Britain, working England – perfect picture. Women cannot dress up, they do not look after themselves, they*

wear pyjamas on the streets, to pick up children. It looks just awful! It's not the class which I would like to live within...it's not this level, not at all!" (I37).

There were respondents who overall perceived Nottingham in a negative light, and did not feel content there. The main reasons were a lack of cultural entertainment that this large city can deliver, as well as the community and different classes with which they did not associate with:

"Nottingham is just a working class town, factory workers and students only. And it's dirty, it's ugly and its cold, you know, emotionally cold, I simply do not like it" (I4).

"*We discussed it with my husband millions times why we don't feel good here (Nottingham)[...] I just don't think it's attractive, or stimulating. Culturally nothing happens here, people have very narrow horizons. I don't think it's an interesting place"* (I5).

"I cannot see like higher class in Nottingham, or especially living in Beeston (where I live). So Beeston is just like working class or like lower middle class" (I13).

Therefore, the dominance of a certain social class within one location, contributed to the feeling of not belonging. Most of the time it was a lack of perceived stimulation coming from the city's under-development on the one hand, and level of education, visual appearance, behaviour, and language usage on the streets of both residents as well as co-workers, what created the feeling of not fitting in. However, as other studies show, on the one hand it takes time to get used to a place, and form a place attachment (Hay, 1998; Markova and Black, 2007; Osipovič, 2010). On the other hand, place attractiveness is also an element that is commonly acknowledged in the process of developing a sense of belonging (Kaczmarek-Day, 2010; White, 2011).

This research adds to the argument of the role of place attractiveness in attachment formation, and the issue of the different social classes that inhabit a place, which can push graduates away or draw them in to certain areas. The most common things that pushed respondents away from their current places of stay in the East Midlands was simply getting bored of the place which is connected to a lack of cultural stimulation, the aesthetics of the place itself, as well as feeling of belonging to the place which was strongly related to the dominating social classes living in that place, often perceived in terms of their obtained education and levels of aspirations:

"A: *So what is that pushes you away from here?*

KH*: Lack of culture and cultural stimulation"* (I5).

The prevailing image of the working class as well as a lack of architectural attractiveness of the city serves as a disincentive to remain in the location. One of respondents started perceiving Lincoln as a poor town and unattractive city, and he struggled to find any good reasons to stay in the city:

> *"Lincoln is not a very good place to live, because it's for the first not the most beautiful place, second point, it's a poor area. I don't know, although I cannot find any proper reason why I should stay here permanently"* (I27).

However, other features, such as location of the cities, their medium size, and good connection with bigger cities and airports, and for some connections with Polish communities served as the basis for "finding their place", and their stay:

> *"I never liked huge cities, and the option that I'm going to Lincoln, which is a bit smaller, and from the matter of time, I think I did make a good choice, because I like this city very much [...]I think I found my place in here. And the fact that I can help Polish community, by working as a teacher in Polish supplementary school, that's another good advantage for staying here"* (I28).

Furthermore, graduates discussed the advantages and flaws of the cities within the East Midlands region. Their arguments were often based on their preferences, and comparisons to other cities in the UK, predominantly London. Most of respondents resided in the following cities within the East Midlands: Nottingham and Beeston area (13), Loughborough (11), Lincoln (8), Leicester (3), Alfreton (2), Northampton (2) and one person in Newark.

Amid personal preferences, and particularities of the cities, there were a few main themes that respondents mentioned the most often: the size of the cities, their geographical location and connections to main cities including airports, the cost of living and cultural attractions. Therefore, a separate subtheme has been created to provide more detailed graduates' view on the cities within the East Midlands, as well as factors that contribute to feeling content or dissatisfied with living in those locations, and which may influence their feelings of home and belonging and highlight their willingness to move to other places.

7.2.4 The main five: Nottingham, Beeston, Loughborough, Leicester, and Northampton

The medium to small size of the cities was perceived as one of its most important advantages. Graduates liked the size of Nottingham, which allows functioning without the significant rush of London, as well as it does not share London's living costs. Furthermore, the geographical location of Nottingham, being in the middle of England, proved to be a cherry on top in respondents' expectations and ranking of functionality and liveability of Nottingham as a city:

> *"I like the city overall. I don't have any objection, I wouldn't change it into any smaller or bigger city, I think that the size is right"* (I38).

> *"I really like Nottingham, it's not too big, not too small"* (I24).

> *"After a year of living in London, I was tired of it, it was too busy for me. Nottingham, and now Lincoln...the size of those cities suits me well..."* (I33).

> "*It's not too big, not too small, it's not London, it's reasonably cheap, it's in the middle of England"* (I12).

Other important factors mentioned by another respondent, are connections that Nottingham has with Poland including flights as well as Polish communities established in the city:

> "*I think that Nottingham is very well connected to Poland, there lots of Polish communities here"* (I12).

There were contradictory responses in terms of the city's development and opportunities for individuals in Nottingham. Some recognised that there are possibilities to be active, volunteer, and the job prospects are optimistic:

> *"Here are things happening, you've got a lot of places where you can volunteer, which is a great thing for me because I like volunteering, and regarding job opportunities there are job opportunities, even though people say there are problems but...not really"* (I24).

Nonetheless, there were graduates who noticed a lack of development, and dynamics that they expected of a large city. One respondent, after living there for three years, noticed stagnation and

a lack of initiative for new cultural establishments. The waning of the novelty of arriving in a new place, as well the fact that the city does not seem to produce enough new stimuli, pushed this graduate away from Nottingham. This is also linked with youth ability to move, and the feeling that they can move:

> *"It's boring, seems too small for me [...] I just feel like I've explored everything, what's to explore here. That's why I just cannot wait to move! So, Nottingham doesn't seem to be exciting anymore. And also it doesn't change, it hasn't for like 3 years...I don't know...I don't think there is any new place, to go place on the going out map"* (I13).

Some respondents felt satisfied with living in Beeston. It is a small town just outside of Nottingham, which typically is regarded as a suburb of Nottingham. Above all, it is predominantly a student area. Generally those living within the area of Nottingham and Beeston felt happy with the geographical location of the city, allowing for an easy commuting and travelling to other places within the country, as well as general living conditions and available services:

> "*It's quite a good place to stay and go to another one. So it's really good if you want to go north, you can reach Yorkshire within an hour, with a car. So it's not a problem"* (I8).

> *"I love Beeston, I live in Beeston. I rarely go to the city centre of Nottingham. Like I've got everything I need, in Beeston"* (I6).

Similarly, Loughborough scored high among graduates in terms of its geographical location and connections to major UK cities: London, Birmingham, Manchester, as well as airports which are located in those areas. The location allows for effortless travelling to nearby larger cities, like Nottingham, Leicester or Derby, either for shopping or entertainment.

> ***"****Loughborough is nice because it's close to everywhere. If you want to go to London it's an hour and a half on train, Leicester is around, Nottingham, Derby is a round. Even Birmingham is not too far. So it's in the centre of everywhere. So during the weekend, when I'm fed up with Loughborough, can always go to Nottingham, or Leicester, or wherever. So it's quite nice, quite easy to escape Loughborough"* (I22).

"You can get from here everywhere, the connections here are good, like trains, near here you've got the airport" (I32).

"It is a really good place, there is a really simple connection with London, Nottingham, and by itself it is not a bad town, because of students' life - it's quite rich" (I19).

On the whole, most of the respondents who migrated to Loughborough, considered the town as a nice, comfortable place, where they had everything they needed:

"Loughborough is very nice. It's a small city, but a nice one. You can get everything in here, visit lots of places, meet people, I like it. I enjoy it. It's not very expensive" (I32).

Amid a lack of variety of cultural entertainment in town, respondents highly valued Loughborough for its size, being in walking distance to all amenities and services, as well as being an inexpensive city to live in. Additionally, there is a small Polish community, which was mentioned by one respondent:

"Loughborough is a very cosy place, a small town in which not much is going on. But that's good. Living here is pleasant, everything is in a short distance, there are plenty of things you can get to just walking, you don't need to take a bus etc. So that's a perfect place for living" (I21).

"We prefer quiet town, here you can get easily everywhere, it has a small Polish society, it's not as big, and as expensive, as other cities...So I think it's a really good place" (I33).

Another city within the East Midlands – Leicester was liked by graduates for its excellent geographical location, allowing effortless communication with other bigger cities in the UK, as well as airports:

"You know, it's like in the middle of everywhere. It's close to London, to Manchester, the area is nice. Yeah, I really like it. I mean I could move somewhere else, but I guess I could stay here and be happy" (I16).

"You've got an airport quite close which is nice, some other cities around, Nottingham, Derby, so it's all right" (I23).

Nonetheless, the city itself does not have too much on offer in terms of cultural entertainment, although the size of it is fit for purpose:

> *"Size wise it's all right, it's not a too big city, not too small, but in terms of what it offers, it's quite limited, in terms of like cultural things most of the time"* (I23).

Similarly to those who resided in Nottingham and Beeston area, Loughborough and Leicester, graduates were satisfied with the geographical location of Northampton, being central and having an easy access to major cities, as well as airports. For those graduates the location was important as they felt mobile and could travel within and beyond the UK extensively:

> *"I just feel very happy in the outskirts where I live. With the easy access to all the big cities around"* (I10).

> *"It's not bad actually, you know. If you think about it, it's a great spot. Northampton...it's a half way between Birmingham and London, great spot! So you get on the train, and in an hour you are in London, in an hour you are in Birmingham. Location wise it's brilliant because we travel a lot! [...] Luton is good because it's about an hour away, and then we love to go from Birmingham because it's a great airport. So that's a brilliant location"* (I11).

However, similarly to those who lived in Nottingham or Leicester, those graduates did not treat this place as their final destination. As another respondent mentioned, the problem of a different outlook on life of local communities, limited ambitions and a lack of drive to advance makes the place less attractive, and hence graduates are thinking of their future geographical mobility to areas that provide such stimuli:

> *"I wouldn't like to stay in England. I think, it's a different mentality here. I kind of strive for something higher, and maybe more cosmopolitan. I would like to be surrounded by people who are ambitious, who have certain drive in life. Whereas here, most of my Northamptonshire friends who are all English, you can see that they are very happy with what they've got, and they are hardly ever keen on making any changes for getting better. And I think, this is a mentality of Northamptonshire really. Once you live comfortably to some extent, you get used to it; you don't feel like you want to get better. That's what I don't like"* (I10).

Therefore, even though those five cities and towns: Nottingham, Beeston, Leicester, Loughborough, and Northampton, were highly valued for their centrality of location, sizes, as well as affordability, they lacked one important aspect for interviewed graduates at these stages of their lives – like-minded people, who are ambitious and striving to escalate within their career and life trajectories. The role of social class in network development was also noted by Gill and Bialski (2011:242), who reveal that the dynamic network formation is affected by the socio-economic status of migrants, and often refers to instrumental networks of acquaintances rather than genuine friendships. Moreover, researchers argue that an outlook on the socio-economic categories of migrants is important as "class continues to be a factor that impacts on the lived realities facing migrants" (*ibid.:* 244), affecting life chances, social interactions and aspirations (Eade *et al.,* 2007). Similarly, in the case of Polish graduates, the dynamic network formation after arrival in the East Midlands, with a perceived lack of ambitious people striving to go higher in their career and life trajectories, may be due to the time-frame allowed for network creation and type of employment experienced (Trevena, 2011). Often close personal attachments of those with high socio-economic status evolved from organisational ties over time (Gill and Bialski, 2011).

7.2.5 Why not London?

Most of the respondents, when discussing opinions on their current location, referred to London. Although the majority of them found it attractive in terms of cultural entertainment, it proved to be a too busy place to live in, too noisy and above all too expensive, which overall contributed to the statement of one graduate:

> *"I think that London is too big, and too busy, and too expensive to live. So, it's not really worth it"* (I13).

There were more graduates who experienced London, either through their education in the capital, or short visits for leisure or business purposes, and who could not cope with the dynamic of this city life:

> *"I would never live in London. I feel so tired, knackered, shattered to death when I go to London...after the whole day, I just have enough. It's like a machine, you don't fully exist. Beautiful place, but it's too much"* (I11).

Another respondent admits that she enjoyed the atmosphere of London; however, this is an experience of coming to the city centre, and not having to live in the outskirts, which would give her a different impression of London:

> *"I enjoyed my studies there, all the atmosphere, of London, but I think only because I knew that I don't have to live there. Maybe if I was very rich, I could afford living in central London that would be a little bit different. Once you have to live in Zone 3 or 4, it changes the perspective; you don't even live in London anymore. But you still have all the hustle of commuting"* (I10).

Overall, London is an attractive and inspiring place for graduates, but the majority preferred to go there for short trips, rather than to reside in the city, which is linked with the costs of living, the hustle of commuting and the feature of the city being too noisy and too busy for them:

> "*I love London! But then, it's expensive. So I guess, it's good to be here [...]I've been there so many times, I know that every time I will find something new, something interesting, museums, and all the concerts"* (I6).

> *"London was full of attractions, but too busy, too noisy"* (I33).

Moreover, graduates' lack of interest in living in a global city, such as London, may derive from their "identity as small town to small town migrants and their dislike if cities such as London", which White (2011:22) recognises in her study on Polish migrants in the West of the UK. In fact, in this research, the majority of respondents were from small to large towns in Poland, which are nowhere near the size of London. Moreover, White (2011) mentions another important feature in Polish migration to the UK after 2004, that of ease of travelling, which does not have to involve flying from the capital of Poland, Warsaw, to London, and can be done without a visa, with an identity card only. In parallel to European enlargement, the development of the communication infrastructure between larger cities of the regions, both in Poland and in the UK, allowed for a direct connection between "regional centre to regional centre, avoiding capital cities" (*ibid.*:22). Similarly, Burrell (2011b) notes the importance of the relative ease of travel between Poland and the UK in testimonies of the post-accession Polish migrants who resided in the Midlands. In particular, the role of low cost air flights "became a defining feature of this migration movement", which even though allows for direct connections to different parts of Poland, yet is

characterised by anxieties of travelling, with restrictive luggage allowances and "pushing and shoving" to board Ryanair planes (Burrell, 2011b:1023).

Additionally, the level of education obtained may have an influence on graduates' perception of place. To illustrate this, Fomina (2009:1) indicates the existence of "parallel worlds" of Poles in Bradford, in the UK. She divided Polish migrants into two cohorts, experiencing places differently: educated, upwardly mobile, confident Poles who live in "one world" and less successful Polish immigrants who are "stuck in one place". Similarly, Polish graduates interviewed in the East Midlands, may be located in one place within the region, yet, with all the perceived mobility possibilities offered by the great connectivity of the region, it may well be a *"bus stop"* where graduates *"have done things while being here; there was always the thing - to try this and that..."* (I3). Therefore, while waiting for another bus to arrive, graduates did not stay still (Bissell and Fuller, 2011), or in other words, for the bus to come graduates had to act, rather than simply sit and wait.

Overall, this study has highlighted that Polish graduate migrants in their "everyday geographies" (Cloke *et al.*, 1991), that is places where they live, work, study and spend free time, developed an understanding of the new locations. Graduates got to know how those places work, what are the predominant communities inhibiting certain areas, the distances between meaningful places outside or within the city or region boundaries. However, the commonly mentioned attachments of young and often single or in short term relationships graduates were not to the cities within the region. It rather was the well-developed communication infrastructure between cities in the region, and links to larger cities within the whole UK, including an easy access to the airports. Therefore, this thesis argues that when living in the East Midlands, graduates can experience accelerated potentiality of mobility within England, the rest of the UK, and to other places in Europe and beyond. At the same time, graduates have to act on their career development, and do not stay still after migration, as described in Section 6.4.

The role of location and centrality was decisive for the majority of graduates in their level of satisfaction from living in the East Midlands. In particular, Nottingham and Beeston, Loughborough, Leicester and Northampton were highly valued for such a feature. Also, important facets were the size of the city, and available cultural activities. However, in terms of making new attachments, graduates encountered various constraints, predominantly with the dominance of various social class communities inhibiting those spaces and with which graduates

did not associate with. This was preventing them from attaching to any particular place and allowing the feeling of belonging to ignite.

On the whole, the attachments created to the East Midlands region were based on a place's functionality for the life-stage graduates found themselves in. This encompassed an easy communication between larger cities, regions and airports within the UK offering unrestricted access to potential career and life opportunities elsewhere, and affordability of living, allowing for making a head start to independent life after graduation. This signifies that the identification with places (Giuliani, 2003) was predominantly based on mobility possibilities that are offered by the region, showing that the East Midlands may be just a "stepping-stone" in their life trajectories. Thus, the functionality of the East Midlands as a place lies in bridging graduates' previous lives in Poland with their future life-stages, which may take different directions due to migration to this region, the employment and education experienced, potentially broadening their scope of choices. In other words, the East Midlands as a stepping-stone allows them to pan out for other possibilities within the region's boundaries, the whole of the UK, Europe and beyond, but does not provide a rapid social escalation for Polish graduate migrants.

In addition, the "place attachment" to particular cities within the East Midlands was not developed among majority of graduates interviewed, which was related to a general dissatisfaction with perceived predominating social classes inhabiting those cities, their perceived level of education, as well as aesthetics of the cities, and the level of cultural entertainment offered. This, however, might be still related to time spent in the cities, and changing perceptions as they get to know new location.

What is more, their life-stage appropriate "place attachment" to the region may impact on graduates' perception of home. Therefore, another issue related to belonging is feeling at home, and the ways Polish graduates constructed their home after migration to England.

7.3 Graduates' constructions of home after migration to England

The value attached to the places graduates have migrated to, such as allowing for the easiness of mobility within larger cities across the whole UK, and connection to airports enabling them to access different parts of the world, predominantly Poland, may provide a different definition of home in graduates' lives.

The perception of home on the one hand may be the comfort of possibility of movement and mobility, which can be referred to Berger's (1984) conception of home where movement forms its centrality. As Rapport (1994) stresses, home can be constructed out of the routines and set of practices, and in repetition of habitual social interactions. As a consequence, places chosen by graduates in the East Midlands may provide them with a whole new set of feelings of home, in any of the locations they regularly travel to, think of, remember, and inhibit. Alternatively, they may develop a "place-polygamy" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002:25) which allows feeling at home in many places. Overall, as Wong (2002:170) summarises, "the concept of home is always evolving and under construction", therefore it is worth observing of how graduates approach this issue after migration to England.

7.3.1 Debating and creating homes in England

Most respondents associated the meaning of home with *"a place where family is located"* (I1), or "*a place where I grew up"* (I2), making it a combination of attributes, that of people, a place and feelings towards them.

Nonetheless, there was a language issue associated with the word home. The most important attribute of home for majority of respondents was family. It is not the place, but people that make home, and because of family members' location preferences, and their short or longer stay in certain places, graduates located home where their family members were at a given time:

> *"Well, I associate home not really with the place. I associate home with my people. So home could be everywhere, where my people are, which family is"* (I7).

> *"I'd say, my home is where my family is. I'm talking about my husband and my child. So that's more about people than a place"* (I24).

Similarly, another respondent indicated that home for him means *"warmth, friends, feeling at ease, being able to be yourself [...] it's not about the place; it's about people and interactions with them, and how they make you feel"* (I3).

Consequently, most respondents highlighted the importance of the feeling of love in constructing the meaning of home. They underlined the role of heart in defining where ones home is. Some individuals simply mentioned their partners due to whom the meaning of home can actuate. The

place they were going to live did not matter in defining it, as homes for them were their husbands or wives, making them feel at the right place, secure and loved:

"I think, I would say, the home is there where the people that love you are" (I30).

"Home is where your heart is – they say. Probably family that's what it means to me" (I10).

Above all, the meaning of "home" did not have temporariness bounded to it. Something can become home, only when one feels that it will last for longer; it can be a place, where staying for longer will allow feelings to develop, and connections to be made with a location, or a relationship, in particular a family formation, which on its own involves a deep structure of feelings and emotions between partners.

Overall, graduates' responses enabled better understanding of their construction of home, with a strong marital status attached to ones perception on where their home is, and what forms its basis. In that sense, three main categories of home creation were identified among graduates interviewed (Figure 4):

Creation of home		
Married or in long term relationships		**Single or in short term relationship**
Purchased property	**Renting accommodation**	**Renting accommodation**
Home as a family and place	Home as a family	Various temporary attachments Living in "a studio"
Long term to permanent in one location	Long term to permanent in multiple locations	Short to long term, multiple locations - a transition life-phase?
Two homes in England and in Poland	Two homes in England and in Poland	Stronger connection to home in Poland

Figure 4. Categories of graduates' home creation

The findings show that the association with home can be created through two means: the purchase of a flat or house in a preferred location, and/or the establishing of a strong relationship

with a partner, often related to a decision on marriage. Among respondents interviewed, 11 were married. The only respondents, who purchased accommodation in England, were already married, in total four people. Such a move transformed the temporariness of their stay in England, into a longer term commitment, but for some it did not imply permanency. It shows however, that entering the property market in England for graduates became possible only when they conjoined their finances. There were no single or in short term relationship respondents who purchased an accommodation in England. Nonetheless, there were many more respondents who thought of possessing of a property on their own, which would make them feel more at home, than just renting it:

> *"I've been living here for 6 years now, and I still do not feel like this is my home. Until I have something on my own, I do not mean renting it, and then I could say that this is my home. Here I am still renting"* (I38).

7.3.2 The effects of being married or in a long term relationship

For those who already purchased accommodation in England, the situation of feeling at home changed. Although it provided them with the need of looking after it, and having the freedom of re-designing it, making it according to their liking at the same time, it did not imply that they would stay in the place for their entire life:

> "*It feels home, finally! We bought an apartment last year, and since we bought it I started decorating it, bit by bit, and it feels home, You can put that nail in the wall, you can do it wherever you want, and it feels home now [...] But it doesn't necessarily mean, that we want to live there till the end of our lives"* (I11).

One respondent with a mortgage and accommodation in England, caught herself saying that she was "*going home to Poland"* with a visit, and when she was there, she was saying, that she was "*going back home to the UK"*. Such dualities of homes, where both homes were perceived through the prism of feeling at home, have not been recognised among many of interviewed graduates. Predominantly it was in case of those who were in long term relationships or married and living together in England. Therefore, the creation of home though purchase of a property should be further looked into, and especially the comparison of the feeling of home for single and for those who are married or in longer term relationships. Multiple or dual homes are highlighted in research on transnational migration, where a growing number of persons live dual

lives, speak two languages and make a living through continuous contact across borders where their multiple homes are located (Portes *et al.*, 1999).

Those who linked home with family and people in general, perceived it as mobile, whereas those with purchased properties got to know the neighbourhood better, felt more connected to the community, and having something on their own, a place to get back to, made them feel at home in a more stationary way. Also, those whose perception of home was built through the prism of the feelings towards their closest ones, for example partners, there was no hesitation in changing of the locality, and those graduates felt less bounded to locations.

Those who were married but rented an accommodation in England still could refer to it as their home. However, they did not feel permanency towards this location. As one respondent explained, that even though the place can be referred to as "their own", having a feeling of "normalcy", it was created with the thought of being temporary:

> "*That's our place at the moment. That's our home, but we know that it's only temporary. We try to live as normal, as you can see we try to live as in a normal house, not being with hundreds of Poles in one house. That's the home we want to create, and that's what we've done. But it's only temporary"* (I33).

Another respondent who rented a property with her husband noticed that she has two homes, with the one in England being an active one, which is linked with transnational migration and having multiple homes (Portes *et al.*, 1999; Vertovec, 2009). However, she also referred to the state of time "at the moment", which implies a potentiality of change, and involves temporariness:

> *"Yeah, it's my second home, that's right. The first one is in Poland, the second one is in here, as we have our lives here, our world, so yeah. It's my life actually! At the moment it's my life...It's a big part of my life"* (I35).

This indicates that Polish graduates do not de-link themselves from their home country, but they keep and nourish their linkages to their place of origin, as research on transnational migration has demonstrated (Glick-Schiller *et al.*, 1995; Itzigsohn *et al.*, 1999). Similarly Burrell (2009) advocates that Polish communities in the UK continue to maintain transnational links with their countries and regions of origin. The role of time spent in the UK and links created and

maintained with Poland have an impact on migrants' perception of home, which Ignatowicz (2012) pictures as migrants being confused about what constitutes home. This ambivalence resulted in not feeling at home anywhere, or having a clear competing feeling of having a home in the UK and in Poland, and belonging to both countries. On the contrary, this research on Polish graduates in England, shows distinctions between those who were in long term relationship, and those who were single or in short term relationships, and the impact of rented and purchased property on their shifting perception of home and belonging. Those who were married or in longer term relationships had a stronger sense of having two homes, in Poland and in England. This sense of being at home in England intensified once graduates purchased a property. On the other hand those, who were single or in short term relationships, predominantly renting accommodation, regarded their spaces in England as "studios", where they were re-creating their current lives, yet emotional imaginings of one's home oscillated around their family home in Poland.

7.3.3 The "studio-home" of graduates

The majority of Polish graduates did not feel that their home was in England, which was closely related to their marital status, not being the owners of properties, as well as not having long lasting friendships in their place of stay. For those respondents, who were single or in short term relationships, and lived in rented accommodation, home has taken on various meanings in both countries: materialistic in England and emotional in Poland, temporary attachment in England and a distant feeling and memory of permanency in Poland.

Also, graduates' presence in those two worlds was perceived differently: the place of stay in England as their reality, where their independent and transformed new life is based, and the home in Poland being their holiday and home, where their family is located. Only a few graduates longed for the reconnection of their home in Poland with their present day activities, and usually, those persons were thinking of returning to Poland. Others saw barriers for such a physical reconnection, which was related to their feelings of freedom and fulfilling their life aims and goals in England, which were not possible in Poland. For example, one graduate associated England with freedom for development, and self-creation. For her, Poland was a family home, but England became the place where she could pursue her dreams, and where these became achievable:

"My family, the closest one is back in Poland. I like going with a visit, but I wouldn't like to live there though [...] it's economic situation and the feeling...I felt trapped in Poland, like I couldn't spread my wings. Any ideas that I had, I felt always like it would be harder to achieve certain steps, or not as fast as I would get it here. And here ever since I arrived here, including the holiday time, I felt like if you have a dream, you have a target and you want to achieve it – it's achievable!" (I10).

Thus, there was a tier between family, and personal fulfilment among the group of graduates who were single, and their life in England was established on temporariness, and which may turn to be just a life-phase. This group considered their home still to be in Poland, but their reality was not there anymore. What is more, some graduates could not see the possibilities for their own development in Poland at the present. Therefore, they chose to create their own spaces which are based on temporariness, and which may last as long as they continue working on their short or longer term projects. They often referred to Poland as a holiday home, lacking at the same time their share of its ownership, and input in constant creation and maintenance.

Graduates' own created spaces in England did not have the feeling of home. Instead, they had structural, logical meanings, rather than releasing strong emotional capital. It was a physical place, almost an office for graduates' life-courses re-design or re-creation, a base which contained everything needed for graduates' life development during the undergoing life-phases. At the same time, graduates felt at home and not at home in those spaces, which reaffirms other studies on home and belonging i.e. Al-Ali and Koser (2002) who argue that transnational migrants undergo the feeling at home, which is intertwined with a feeling of not being at home. In this doctoral study, the researcher noticed that respondents from this cohort, often referred to "home in the UK"; however after asking for further explanations, graduates became more reflective, and corrected themselves, that it is not what they call home, but rather a temporary base, where they feel good nonetheless. Such a perception of their new locations, can be related to the feeling of "being a migrant" unable to define the existence of one's "true home" in a geographical and cultural sense (King, 2002:93).

However, the temporary locum in the East Midlands was often associated with material things accumulated over the period of time spent in England. One respondent reflected on his life, that he migrated to England with only a rucksack five years ago, and now his rented house comprised of home equipment, various tools, motorbike and a car among others:

"I think that the word home described this place perfectly. Because all the belongings which I have at home are mine, and when I moved here I got surprised that I accumulated so much after only those 5 years in here...5 years ago I had a big rucksack and that was all when I moved in here...and now we've got lots of tools, car, motorbike, pushbike...and that's from this economic point of view" (I28).

Some could not call their place of stay a home. They mentioned that it is just living in a foreign country, and discovering new things about oneself, thus becoming more conscious of the self, being able to re-define own self:

"*I wouldn't call it home. I like it, I'm enjoying my life here, but it's not home. I'm a foreigner living in a foreign country. It's exciting, I like it, I love that, to explore new places, and meet new people, and you are also discovering different things about yourself, but it's not home"* (I6).

Therefore, the inhabited spaces could not be referred to as home as defined by Matthews' (2002) as a place where "one best knows oneself". Instead, this research shows that those are spaces where one is getting to know oneself better, or even more, to re-create oneself. Thus, graduates' places of stay in England became personalised studios of self re-creation, rather than a fixed and "still centre outside one's moving self" (Rapport and Dawson, 1998:27). Also, such places allow for very individualised home and self-creation, which may remain invisible or irrelevant to others (Rapport, 1995), as one respondent described designing of his own biography, and getting to understand himself more:

"Normally, I'm trying to create my world. Day by day...I feel more and more comfortable with myself, so..." (I9).

In general, England was considered as a place of living, where new habits develop, and new routines are created. However, it has not got the meaning of home, as Berger (1984) suggests, mainly because of the temporariness feeling attached to it, including short term friendships:

"It just a place of living, but not home" (I32).

"It's a place where I live, hahah....I can't say it is my home, but there is a place for me, and I ...it took me a long time to get to the point where I am now. It is a long process" (I29).

"Here, I have friends too, but these are 'short term friendships', you can feel it" (I39).

Thus, England for the majority of respondents is based on temporariness, which cannot be described as home; however it has certain aspects associated with feeling at home. They mentioned emotions such as: *"comfort, silence, feeling good, and security"* (I6), and above all being present, active, have an ordinary life, allowing for development and actions bringing happiness. Thus, the creation and feeling at home depended on graduates' priorities, aims in life, as well as routes they decided to take to achieve these.

In fact, the majority of graduates admitted that England is their life, the reality for them, whereas in Poland there is only their family, and some have a few long term friends. After period of a good and happy time spent on visiting Poland, graduates felt bored, felt the need of going back to their lives, to being active again. They felt tired of being on holidays; they felt the need to have their routines back:

"It's about that I have nothing to do there right now. I don't work there, and I don't study there. So I think I don't have life there, apart from my friends and family. And of course the moment comes that I want to do something. I don't want to sleep until 12 o'clock, or do nothing for the whole day. I'm getting bored like when you are on holiday, that after a while you just need to do something, you cannot lie on the beach for the whole month" (I4).

Another person noticed that Poland stopped being home for them, but became a place of nice visits, and a "*family time":*

"I feel it's not my home anymore. But I feel it's a nice time to catch up with everybody. It's like nice family time for me. Nice visit. Nice trip" (I10).

Similarly, another respondent expressed his perception of a family home in Poland, as a place where he goes on his vacation:

"My family home is back in Poland, and that's the place where I'm going for my vacation" (I21).

Some graduates underlined the cycle they undergo throughout a year, which begins with starting to miss their family and friends in Poland, then visiting them, with a first week being enthusiastic, but with time the feeling is fading away. Graduates become bored, and want to get back to their own lives, until the next time they start missing their families, and the process continues:

> *"I'm doing that, let's say I travel once in 3-4 months, it feels ok, it feels ok I've done it, I've been there for a week, and usually after a week or two I get fed up with certain things, and I want to get back over here. And the cycle starts again, 4 months later I want to go back home to visit my parents and it goes on like that"* (I22).

There were many more respondents who observed that Poland is not their home anymore, but a general "*holiday home"*:

> *"It's like a place where you go on holiday year after year, which you know, but it's not a place where you live. It's not your home anymore [...] We are like on a proper holiday in an exotic place. We visit pubs that we used to go when we were students there, but they are not our pubs anymore, they're not our restaurants – it's all holiday home"* (I12).

However, respondents felt happy when visiting their childhood homes:

> *"I'm usually happy. Poland is holiday for me, Poland is my parents, Poland is good food, somewhere where I'm happy"* (I4).

This way, for some graduates, the feelings they have after they get back to England were connected with the end of holidays, and a return to a reality in England:

> *"So, I usually feel sad that my hols is over, and I'm back to the reality. Because now the time spent in Poland is only hols, so it's a nice time, but if we worked there it would be completely different. Because holiday is always a nice time, so it's not like a real life in Pl when we go there, it's just hols, so it's nice but of course the reality would be different there"* (I35).

During his visits, one graduate noticed changes that took place in his parents' house, and which evoked a major shift in his perception of the home. After his parents replaced his old bed on

which he used to sleep from his childhood, with a new sofa, he felt that this is not his home anymore:

> *"Our parents decided that they do not need this bed, and they replaced it with a sofa, and from that moment I started feeling that it's not my home. I can be a visitor over there, stay for a week or two, or even three and there will be no problem, but I don't feel like it's my home. It's my parents' home"* (I28).

These examples illustrate that the meaning of home has one more element to it than a family, or own house. Above all it is individuals' present day activity, their input in the daily creation of their spaces, including friendships and relationships, which influence the construction of home. The majority of interviewees, who were single and rented accommodation in England, commenced the process of home creation, finding themselves in a phase of transformation, with starting their independent lives, and arranging their spaces for the feeling of comfort and security. Within the process, the impact of the economy and the labour market, as well as the prospects for one's development, the feeling of freedom and possibilities formed one of the important aspects of their own home foundation.

However, at this stage, the created space can be named as a "studio" which allows for daily activities to take place, plans to be made, and where one is able to rest, and to continue re-designing and re-creating one's own life trajectories. Such places form an important part of graduates identities formation, yet, they do not contain the full meaning of home, as the attachments formed do not present as long term or permanent. Nonetheless, such places may constitute a different sense of home, to which graduates are in the process of getting used to, developing feelings towards, along their life trajectories and biographies progression. This links with Waldinger and Fitzgerald's (2004:1180) explanation of transnational duality, that "neither settlement nor the severing of home country ties is inevitable". Instead, transmigrants build and maintain various linkages "here and there", and expand "the range of home" (Glick-Schiller *et al.*, 1995:52), and as a result some undergo the feeling at home, intertwined with a feeling of not being at home (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002).

Overall, the East Midlands region may be a stepping-stone for graduates who are single and in informal relationships, and a home constructed by graduates in that place is not the result of transnational effects only, but also being in transitional life-stage, from university to labour market, and towards starting their own families. The feeling at home in England may appear with

time, or with making a decision about entering a new life-stage, that of family creation, and/or staying for longer in England.

Therefore, another important aspect related to the time of stay in England, and of home creation, is the obtaining of British citizenship. Many respondents interviewed spent more than 5 years in the UK, and such a length of time is required to be considered for permanent residency, and twelve months after issuing such documentation, migrants may apply for British citizenship.

7.4 British citizenship and acquisition of a UK passport

Aside from education, work and living space, not only England, but more broadly, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, has something more to offer to young and mobile Polish graduates, who stay for more than five years in England – a citizenship. As this research has shown, half of the interviewed sample has been in the UK for 5 years or longer, with further 15 staying in the UK from 3-4 years at the time of the interview. Even though they spent one fifth of their lives in England, their responses indicated that they feel and identify with Polish culture and language; however, they respect and learn about the British. At the same time, only three respondents were in the process of applying for permanent residency, or had already received the document, and aimed to apply for the UK passport as soon as the required period of time elapsed. Overall, graduates did not feel the need to become British, but becoming the owner of the passport was alluring for other reasons, which were related to further mobility, respect when crossing international borders and the feeling of security in case of potentially disturbing international political situations.

7.4.1 The decoupling of citizenship and identity

The majority of graduates interviewed stated that they do not think they could ever feel English or British, and receiving the UK passport would not change that:

> *"I don't think I will ever feel English. And I don't find that as a problem. I simply am not English, and I'm not ashamed of being Polish. I was ashamed of being Polish, when I moved here. But I think I went through that transition process, and I reached a point when I'm proud of being Polish. Well, maybe not proud, but just indifferent really. But receiving a British passport, I don't think it will change the way of thinking of who I am. Definitely will not make me more British"* (I10).

"*I wouldn't like to give away my passport, as I'm quite proud to be Polish, and I don't think I will ever feel like British. Like proper British"* (I11).

Another person felt a strong connection with her Polish identity, and in relation to the possibility of gaining British citizenship, she did not show her interest in it:

"Oh, never. I'm glad I'm Polish" (I4).

There were respondents who thought of applying, but the reasons were various. This respondent would rather look at benefits, than the idea of making her feel British if she decided to obtain British citizenship:

"It crossed my mind long time ago, and if I went for it, I don't know what kind of benefits are there. I would look at the benefits, what it would actually help me with. But it wouldn't make me feel more British or something! I think it would just be another paper, something that you will get it wouldn't matter to me that much" (I23).

Nonetheless, being brought up in Poland, British citizenship would not mean more than just a piece of paper for another graduate. Therefore her identity would remain Polish. However, if she recognised any direct benefits for her, she would apply for this 'piece of paper':

"But also, because I was brought up in Poland and I spent 20 years of my life there, which are the most important years of your life, so the British passport would be only a piece of paper, because I don't think I am ever going to be British [...] I don't know, it would be just a piece of paper, and if I see benefits of having it, maybe I will apply" (I14).

Also other persons did not feel the need to become British:

"It's not that I want to be British, I don't want to give up my nationality and hold British passport, I don't feel that need" (I17).

"I've never thought about it. At the moment I don't have any reasons why I would like to become British" (I34).

There were more respondents who stated that they would not like to apply for British citizenship, as the one below, because they did not feel British:

*"*A: *So what about citizenship, would you go for a British one?*
I18: *No. Because I'm not feeling like a British citizen, and if I have to choose between any other country, I would choose my home country. I'm proud of being Polish, so why should I change it? And well, I wouldn't have a problem going to the USA without visa, while being a British citizen, but besides from that...".*

However, there were also respondents who thought of acquiring citizenship, in case they decided to stay in England for longer, as they would like to identify with this society. Nonetheless, this was seen as a distant future:

"I'm not sure if I want to stay here, but, if I stay here, I would probably want to do that, just to maybe identify with this society. I just don't want to stay here all my life and not feel like part of it. Because I think this is a sort of disaster, when you go abroad, and you can't just adjust" (I20).

Similarly another respondents thought of applying for it, but only in case she decided to stay in England for longer, and to engage more with British society, but she did not need it right now. This shows that respondents still felt outside of society, not belonging, but seeing a potential of belonging, through making a decision to stay in England:

"If we decided to stay here then for sure we would apply. If we were to live here for longer, and be active in this society, then yes, but at this moment we still don't know, so, I do not need this to anything right now" (I38).

For some, belonging to British society was seen as occurring in the distant future; however, citizenship is thought to help one respondent to achieve this:

"*Hmm...I'm not really sure why...because this place is my home, and will become my home even more. And I will start living here like other people around me, I will have like my own house, a job here, a car a dog, probably a cat, my little one is studying in an English school, I would really be a part of this society. I'd like to get this citizenship"* (I24).

On the whole, as one person summarised, he wants to become British, which would imply being a Polish origin subject living and working in Britain. For him, having a citizenship does not imply nationality, and he would perceive himself as Polish-British, which would be one aspect of Britishness:

> *"I want to settle down in Britain, I want to be British. I want to be a British subject, of Polish origin, living and working in Britain. And I like the concept of Britishness. It implies citizenship, but it does not imply nationality. So it can be Scottish – English, or Irish- British, or Polish- British"* (I12).

On the whole, the majority of respondents did not feel British and acquiring a British citizenship would not change that fact. They would still feel Polish, even having the UK passport. As one respondent stated, through getting a passport one can become British, but "*it is wrong to say I am British"* (I16). Graduates mentioned they did not need to become British, having strong connections with their Polish national identity which was influenced by being brought up in Poland and simply not feeling British. Thus, stemming from this were the reasons for not applying for a British citizenship. In these terms the results confirm Osipovič's (2010) findings that Polish migrants doubted if they would ever feel British culturally and in relation to linguistic heritage, and expressed strongly their Polish national identity.

However, there was a minority cohort of respondents who see British citizenship as a tool that would allow them to fit in more within the British society, if they decided to stay in England for longer. They were hoping for identification with British society but they see it occurring in the distant future. In addition, the decision on the timing of applying for citizenship was diverse. On the one hand, respondents thought of it as happening in the future, as they did not feel the need for it or value of it right now, and were still unsure whether they want to stay in England for longer. They aimed to apply for citizenship, once they had made that decision.

On the other hand, there were graduates who had already decided that they wanted to stay in England, and that citizenship was an expected decision stemming out of it. They did not see themselves as British, but as being of Polish origin living and working in England, and for whom the British citizenship would not imply nationality. Therefore, having obtained British citizenship, the sampled Britishness would be from the perspective of Polish-British, and identifying as Polish, due to their formative years spent in the country. Thus, the finding confirms previous work on decoupling of identity and citizenship (Isin and Wood, 1999), where

migrants who obtain citizenship of the host country, do not stop the feeling of attachment to their homeland. Overall, what the majority graduates wanted from British citizenship was *"just a convenience of having it, but not having a sense of belonging*" (I10).

7.4.2 The strategic acquisition of a UK passport

The decoupling of citizenship and national identity, as in case of Polish graduates in England, moved towards other affiliated notions of citizenship, referred in other studies as "instrumental citizenship" (Ip *et al.*, 1997), or "pragmatic citizenship" (Mavroudi, 2008). The majority of respondents who thought of applying for British citizenship, and those who were planning to do it, or in the process of applying for permanent residency, stated that obtaining of UK passports would be for administrative purposes mainly:

> *"And I think that the only reason that I'm considering that passport might be from administration point of view – it might be helpful while travelling, like to the USA, etc. So it's just a convenience of having it, but not having a sense of belonging*" (I10).

Another respondent introduced her future plans, which involve further mobility, and work in another country, in a profession where being a native speaker of English would be perceived not only as advantageous, but potentially as a requirement. Therefore, in order to be considered for a job, she would like to have two passports, and to present her the UK one for the purpose of employment. This concurs with Waters (2009:637) argument that citizenships lubricate business and heighten opportunities. Also, such forward thinking of graduates shows a strong strategy in pursuing their life aims, and designing their career trajectories:

> *"The only reason, why I need this passport, is because I need to go to Abu Dhabi, or to Dubai. Because what they want, if you want to teach in an international school there or even in their school, they want you to be a native English speaker. And if I show them my European passport, Polish passport, they will say, hold on a minute...But on the other hand, I'm not sure, because, I will have British qualifications, but just to play it safe, I would like to have British passport as well... And for visa reasons...as a Polish citizen I need to have visa to work there, while western countries like Canada, Americans, British, they don't need visa. So you know it would be just nice to go, that's why I need this passport. Not for any other reasons"* (I11).

Overall, there were more respondents who thought of their work goals, and potentialities the British citizenship could bring in these terms. Another respondent mentioned that British citizenship increases chances of mobility, and therefore work possibilities around the world:

> *"Because, it will allow me to pursue my goals, which I do not know what they are but anyway...I think that having a British citizenship opens you an access to many different countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada etc. and common wealth countries. That's a big chunk of places to go and visit. British citizenship and passport are one of the most recognizable in the world, so it does improve your chances of mobility, you know... work wise etc."* (I3).

The usefulness of a UK passport in the labour market has been noticed by another graduate, who observed that employers' initial feel was to employ British person over Polish:

> *"It's quite useful on the market especially in the position that I am looking for, I think. At least the initial feeling it's easier to recruit British than for Polish. People would be interact on this initial basis easier with the British rather than with Polish"* (I8).

Another respondent admitted that if she was to go for a British citizenship, it would be because she would like to go to Australia, and with a UK passport she would not have to apply for visa. She mentioned both countries, America and Australia that she would be willing to go to in the first instance, however not excluding other options:

> *"Although, the only reason why I would want to have a British passport was because if you are a British citizen you don't have to get a visa to go to Australia. That would be the only reason, why I would be considering a British passport. For me it's like either Australia or America. But they are again, just like one of many, many options, so..."* (I13).

Another person thought of applying for it, however decided to gave herself some more time in England, to make sure that this is her final destination, before she applies for it:

> A*: So would you go for British citizenship/UK passport?*
> I16*: Yes, if I can have both citizenships, Polish and English and it is possible. But I wouldn't like to do it quickly, I would like to stay here for a bit longer to sure that this is my final*

destination in a way. Then I think I would apply for it. Because it would be easier probably in some legal, and that sort of stuff.

A*: So what would be the main reasons if you were going for British citizenship?*

I16*: To make your life easier in a bureaucratic sense.*

There were other graduates who thought of British citizenship as a helpful tool, which could be used in various scenarios. One respondent mentioned the potential case if she lost a job, British citizenship would give her priority over other nationalities in getting a new one. However, it would not make her feel British:

"I thought of it, only in case of a scenario if at some point I have lost a job in the future, then this would help me to get a new one, or that I could receive benefits...but I will never feel British. It's a no way" (I40).

Another person pointed out pragmatics of having a British citizenship, such as a pension, and this would form the basis of his application for the document:

"So, if I was to decide to obtain a British passport, it's only because pragmatic reasons, i.e. if I was to get a better pension here, or legal help [...]And for me these are only pragmatic reasons, and nothing above it" (I2).

Nonetheless, one of the most commonly mentioned benefits was increased mobility, as mentioned by another respondent, travelling in particular to the USA, and Canada would be one of the greatest advantages of the citizenship:

"AS: oh travelling, yeah! Travelling...definitely. Like to the USA, Canada, and some other places, definitely" (I24).

Above all, respondents thought of gaining of British citizenship, but at the same time, they recognised a constraint in terms of costs, as well as no immediate need for it. This is why the majority of graduates left it as an option, which can be used at a later time. This can be seen as thinking of further travelling, and in particular extending the possibility of unrestricted mobility outside of the EU, which could be exercised and decisions made anytime in the future:

"Yeah, I thought about it, but I don't know if it's really worth doing it, as apparently it's quite pricey. And as a EU citizen I've got similar rights as anybody else. So I don't know. Maybe. In the future [...] I don't know...maybe if I wanted to go to Australia, or the US, if I had an English passport it would be easier to get there, I don't know..." (I29).

There were many more other respondents who indicated that the primary purpose of British citizenship is for travelling purposes:

"Even for stupid travelling for holiday, let's say Australia – you make up your mind and your go with a British passport, and from Poland such a scenario is not possible. You have to go through lots of formalities" (I1).

"I believe it's a bit easier to travel all over the world with British passport than with Polish. I think that's the only one reason. You know, the fact it will be easier to travel to NZ, Australia or USA, or Canada, it's just that" (I28).

Also, the threats associated with travelling around the world, for example in case of abduction, it is thought to be dealt with by a British government, rather than Polish. Therefore, as one graduate pointed out, this would be another reason to have a UK passport when travelling:

"Sometimes I think what would happen if I was kidnapped by somebody, and which government would take what actions and care of me. And that would be much better if that was a British government, because Polish government wouldn't do much about it" (I15).

Another person perceived it as tool that could potentially make travelling around the world easier; however he has not seen it as an urgent paper to have:

"I'm not sure if there is a need for it. If I do this, it will be only because of travelling, because it's easier sometimes with British passport, than with a Polish one. And that would be the only reason [...]And going to the States....of course! There would be London embassy, then all the payments for visa which is pretty expensive, and then all the travelling, costs to London...[...] But I wasn't thinking about it at the moment. Maybe sometime in the future" (I19).

There were more respondents who thought about obtaining of a British citizenship; however, the majority of them were not rushing into making a decision. The main reason for doing it would be travelling, for example to the USA:

> *"I have thought about it, but for the time being I'm just putting that thought away because of other things that are going on at the moment, so I'm not trying to be focusing on that yet. But I have thought about that, and if the timing is right I might do it...[...] Just for the idea of getting to the America without any problems!"* (I20).

Conversely, some graduates noticed that they just do not have the need for it, and such need would appear in case of war, or for various benefits:

> *"You know it's different if I had a need to have it for example because of war or something, then it's different"* (I4).

Other values of a British citizenship could be seen as insurance and protection for the future:

> *"It's always good to have, let's say – a protection. I am a Polish citizen, so..."* (I22).

The British passport would form a protectionist role in case of wars, allowing for re-settlement. Also, in terms of the future, the passport was imagined to potentially have an impact on pensions and legal advice. There were two more respondents who mentioned the case of war, and a UK passport fulfilling a protectionist role:

> *"My husband has thought of it more than me. He said something like, 'if there was a war in PL, so I would have British citizenship and I take you and our children and we go for example to the UK" and we settle there"* (I39).

> *"Because it might be easier in the future, for children, or maybe some 3rd world war …it might be easier"* (I27).

On the other hand, there were respondents who thought that there were better ways of spending money, than on a UK passport. One respondent at the stage of her life, being married and having a baby, she does not feel the need to spend money on British citizenship, and she believed that for their needs of travelling, they could use Polish passports effectively:

"I don't feel there are benefits of that in terms of travel – we can go anywhere anyway. At this stage of our lives it's just a waste of money, as it costs over 1000 pounds. There are better ways of spending a grand than on British passport" (I14).

There were some persons who could not see the benefits of having it, showing that they were less interested in mobility outside of the EU, and also because they believed, that they can travel with their Polish passports, and this should not constitute major problems. In addition, one respondent believed that without British citizenship, she has the same rights in the UK as any other citizen, therefore having it would not change anything in her current life:

"I can travel without Polish passport across the EU, and I'm not planning to go to the USA for a very long time. With a current law in the UK, I have a right to retirement, and to benefits, as every other citizen here. And I don't need an additional paper that will give me additional rights, which I'm not going to use at this point" (I18).

Also, another person stated openly, that she is not aiming to go to the US now, so she does not need a British citizenship:

"I'm not aiming to go to the USA, so I do not need British citizenship" (I39).

Overall, obtaining British citizenship was purposeful, and it only referred to material benefits as opposed to gaining intrinsic values and identity. Among others the most common reason for which graduates were in the process of applying, or considered doing this, was for potential usefulness of UK passports. Graduates perceived UK passports as able to aid their further mobility outside of the EU, as this would generally increase chances of mobility and therefore some work possibilities around the world. Some respondents thought of acquiring American passports, which would provide similar features, and either were related to having an American partner, or hold previous experience of living in the USA.

There was also a graduate, who pointed out the most important role that British citizenship, or even American in this case could bring, which is increasing the dynamics of one's mobility:

"Well, I mean British or American one, make the dynamics, or movements across the world, so...but that's not my aim. If I stay here, why not to change it, it's not going to change my

Polish roots anyway. But it's going just to ease my ways, or ease my dynamics, ability and mobility [...] I would only apply for the British passport to improve my mobility and changing countries. If I had to go...yeah in a case of changing places" (I9)

Another person showed her interest in having American citizenship, which is related to the fact that her partner is American, but also her willingness to travel more and hence an American passport would be useful. Therefore, she did not feel interested that much in a UK passport:

"No, if anything ....American one because my bf is American, so this is like the only thing I would want to have. So just like to have joint citizenship, just because I would want to be travelling working, but no...not the British one" (I13).

Also, having either of those two passports was thought to provide better treatment at border controls, and smoother service:

"*It's easier for Western European countries. Life is easier for them. So having a British passport helps you i.e. if you want to travel to America. You don't need to go to an embassy and have a ridiculous conversation with and official asking you how much does your mother earn and so on"* (I6).

Thus graduates who personally experienced the difference in treatment, or had relatives or friends who did while travelling, those individuals had a broad picture of superiority of Western passports over Polish ones. One respondent indicated, it was not a great problem to travel worldwide on a Polish passport, but service and treatment in the national embassies abroad, was better for British nationals, than at Polish embassies:

"*I've been travelling everywhere in the world, and using a Polish passport is not a problem. But, for example in China, I think that treatment of British customers, because the support British give to British people in China was better than Polish embassy would give. So this is an idea of getting a better service abroad"* (I8).

Furthermore, graduates valued highly their mobility and perceived greater freedom with having no added tourist visa restrictions to Commonwealth countries, but they were not rushing into obtaining of UK passports, pushing the time of making an application into the future. Even though they considered upgrading to allow them to get unrestricted mobility throughout the

whole world, they looked at their present-day lives, and refereed the high price of the passport versus their immediate needs for mobility outside of the EU. The majority could not state when they would like to go travelling, assuming the potentiality of it happening in the future. Therefore, obtaining of a UK passport is an alluring option for increasing the dynamics of their mobility. It was perceived as a pricey step, which overall is likely to be taken in the future by those who crystallise their further mobility plans.

Above all, acquiring of a UK passport can be looked at as gaining freedom of mobility choices outside of the EU, which does not require formal and administrative preparations, but can be done ad hoc. Therefore, a UK passport could be an additive to the movement rights exercised within Europe, to the Commonwealth countries that British nationals can travel as tourists without major restrictions. However, on this basis there seems to be a clash of perceptions and actions within this cohort. In the first place, graduates hope for further mobility outside of the EU, but not hastening with applications for a British citizenship that would potentially ease their financial and administrative mobility restrictions (i.e. visas). This indicates that the majority of Polish graduates do not have clear plans of such mobility; nonetheless, they keep this option open, which is further discussed in Chapter 8.

7.5 Summary

This chapter discussed different ways of belonging, perceptions of home and attachments formed within the East Midlands. The chapter showed that constructions of home, belonging, and attachment to places are based on a few factors, including the location of towns or the cities graduates migrated to, connections with other cities and the social class dominance in their living area.

Furthermore, the chapter drew attention to escalator regions theory (Fielding, 1992), signalling that the East Midlands does not act as an escalator for Polish graduates. Instead, the function of the East Midlands may be perceived as a "*stepping-stone"*, a transitory place, or a "temporary attachment" in life trajectories of graduates who were single or in short term relationships, what can refer to a broad scholarship on mobility turn (Shellar and Urry, 2006) and stepping-stone habitus as found in Bourdieu's (1984) thesis.

There are a few features that can make a region a stepping-stone, as recognised in the case of Polish graduates. The primary aspect is geographical and administrative centrality of the place,

containing middle size cities, well-developed and quick connectivity within the cities in the region and the rest of the country, and airports, which increases the potentialities of graduates' mobility and further migration. Another aspect is affordability of living, and using cultural and communication infrastructure, which altogether allows the place to act as a stepping-stone to another one(s). In other words, a stepping-stone place allows for trying various activities, panning out for other options, but is not directed at rapid social escalation, forming only a transitory role of catching up with possibilities in graduates' life trajectories.

This can be linked with home creation upon arrival in the East Midlands of those who were single or in a short-term relationships, and constituted two-thirds of interviewed respondents. This chapter argued that the meaning of home conveys day-to-day activities, the constant creation of spaces, networks and relationships, which all influence the construction of home by forming various attachments. Therefore, the majority of those graduates commencing their independent lives after migration to England started the process of creation of their own homes, beginning with arranging their spaces in order to feel comfort and security. Such edifices could be called "studios" where graduates' re-design and re-create their own life trajectories, but which ultimately lacked permanency within their assembly.

Overall, the majority of graduates assessed the cities in the East Midlands low on the scale of general attractiveness, which was both related to lack of cultural stimulation, or inspiration of the cities on the one hand. On the other, it was a level of education, visual appearance, behaviour, and language usage on the streets of both residents as well as co-workers, leading to the feeling of not fitting in. Overall, the socio-cultural infrastructure of the cities halted graduates' development of attachments to those places.

However, the communication infrastructure and centrality of location allowed for growth of different types of attachments – to the easy and affordable way of commuting and travelling within the region, country and beyond, which was regularly exercised by majority of those interviewed. Therefore, the East Midlands can be perceived as a plateau, where graduates grow to certain standards to be able to compete for jobs within the labour markets in general. The East Midlands offers a strategic starting point for making a next step within graduates' career trajectories and physical move to other destinations in England and more broadly in the UK and beyond, which they can sample first during shorter holiday trips, and which would be not possible from the Polish standpoint (finances).

Living in England was also linked with a possibility of obtaining of a UK passport, which was perceived by the majority of respondents as *"just a convenience of having it, but not having a sense of belonging*" (I10). This convenience indicated its purposefulness, which in many cases signified an ease in administrative procedures with regards to mobility and further migration and better treatment at international border controls. Additionally, British citizenship was assigned with a protectionist role, and as insurance for the future (pension, legal advice, ability to re-locate in case of wars). Thus, a strong decoupling of citizenship (Ip *et al*., 1997; Mavroudi, 2008) and national identity has been confirmed in the case of Polish graduates.

As this chapter discussed in detail, respondents valued highly their mobility and a UK passport was perceived as an extension to their freedom of movement to Commonwealth countries. If they obtained British citizenship, they would not have to apply for tourist visas, as it would allow them for more spontaneous decisions. These in turn would fit in with graduates' ability to live in constant changes and make ad hoc choices, developed through their formative years.

Despite this, they did not rush with applying for citizenship. All in all, UK passports were seen as an alluring option for increasing the dynamics of graduates' mobility, yet the glamour of the UK passports has its financial price, and for some it appeared to be too high for an immediate decision. This indicates that the majority of Polish graduates do not have clear plans of such migration; nonetheless, they keep this option open, which is discussed further in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8
Graduates' reflections on migration

8.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates graduates' perceptions of their time spent in England, their life aims and fulfilment after arrival in England. It also looks into graduates intentions of further mobility, both returning to Poland and migrating elsewhere. The chapter consists of three sections. Section 2 discusses graduates life aims and debates the intentional unpredictability (Eade *et al*., 2007) and acknowledged changeability of life trajectories and illustrates graduates' reflections on their life after migration. Section 3 explores graduates' stance towards the possibility of returning to Poland, showing a group of respondents who have already decided to migrate back to Poland, and are in the process of preparation. Section 4 discusses graduates' plans for further migration "somewhere else", shedding light on locations looked-for, and the issue of gendered responses with regards to countries and regions graduates would like to stay "for longer".

8.2 Aiming for a "normal happy life" – "intentional unpredictability" or acknowledged changeability?

One of the new terms scholars on Polish migration to the UK have used is "intentional unpredictability" (Eade *et al.,* 2007), which refers to young, individualistic and ambitious Polish migrants, whose migratory patterns remain flexible, dependent on deregulated post-modern capitalist labour market. Those individuals are focused on increasing social and economic capital both in Poland and the UK, or "migrating elsewhere" (Eade *et al.*, 2007:11). This thesis agrees with Eade *et al.* (2007), that young, individualistic and ambitious Poles are adapted to flexibility and their migratory patterns follow economic outline of capital acquisition. However, as Chapter 5 argued, graduates considered economic aspects as well as their personal situation, the life-phase they were at the time, including their marital status, and commitments. In addition, in the majority of cases, graduates aspired to work according to their interests, and to have a balanced life, which could provide them with happiness.

For the majority, happiness in life was measured in various forms, often as a combination of assorted things, including financial security, family-work balance, flexibility and mobility, and

general enjoyment of life. They did not have a great drive to earn large sums of money, but the balance in life and some form of financial stability formed a priority:

> *"I always say that I would like to be happy [...] To be happy, I think it all depends on the approach to life, and some form of financial stability which I'm trying to guarantee myself through higher education, building my social position"* (I2).

> *"I'd like to have a happy and decent life, I do not expect anything extraordinary. I'd like to spend my life happily, and without any major problems..."* (I31).

> *"At the same time you want to be happy in your personal relationships, but you also want to have a good job, and be satisfied with what you are doing [...] I want to be healthy as well"* (I6).

Graduates often referred to having a "normal happy life", which was related to a lack of worries or major problems, maintaining healthy personal relationships, and being satisfied with their occupations. Such a perspective can be linked to other migration studies, and a recognised theme for migratory motivations of Polish individuals in order to be able to "lead a normal life" (Galasińska and Kozłowska, 2009b; Botterrill, 2010). This research adds to this debate, arguing that graduates had goals in life, some of them short term, others longer term, which overall lead to a common aim – that of being happy. Overall, happiness was looked up in a balance of having a happy family life, a satisfying job, and financial security. The realistic possibility of obtaining such a balance could be referred to as having a normal life.

This thesis argues that Eade *et al.'s* (2007) term of "intentional unpredictability" in migratory plans can be referred to graduates' whole life and career trajectories. However, in this instance, the unpredictability lies in routes to fulfilment of their broad ideas for life and career trajectories, which at some stage may encompass further migration and mobility, depending on decisions made. Even though graduates interviewed were aware of the unpredictability of life, it was not in their intention, but they seemed to have adapted to it. The available routes could be chosen consciously, may derive from planning or arising opportunities, or simply because graduates may be pushed to make certain decisions on their life situation, which may not be the desired ones (i.e. choices between family and career). This provides a clear picture of a balancing act between various structures met across graduates' life trajectories, which on the one hand constrain, and on the other hand enable graduates to make further steps.

Above all, there are not only structures, but also migrants' agency (Goss and Lindquist, 1995; Halfacree, 1995; Smith, 2004), which ensures that they always have some degree of freedom – some "room to manoeuvre" (Bakewell, 2010:1695). In particular, as White (2010:578) observes, "almost all young Polish migrants have more agency than do their elders", which stems from socio-historical conditions since Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. What is more, as this thesis argues, the generational factor (Mannheim, 1952; Edmunds and Turner, 2002b), of growing up during constant socio-political and economic transformations, and becoming accustomed to changes, transpired into a non-discursive aspect of human agency (Halfacree, 1995), have all influenced graduates' migratory decisions (see Section 5.2). Therefore, the role of generations as a contributing factor to non-discursive agency of Polish graduates in their migration(s) decision making indicate that graduates have greater capacity to overcome arising structures along their migratory life-courses, having grown up in the ever changing socio-economic environment of post-socialist Poland. Therefore, as this thesis argues in Section 5.2, graduates who grew up in times of transitions in Poland, and experienced constant alterations within political and social spheres are accustomed to changes and are better placed to deal with them.

This also could be referred to being in a "stepping-stone" position, where graduates are aware of the surrounding options, and choose the one that at the time provides the most overall benefits, and not only economic ones. Such forward and also reflective thinking about the rules and resources available in a given place and time reflects Samers' (2010:104) definition of human agency, which explicates knowledgeability of constraints and opportunities in pursuit of certain aims "through reflective practices". However, this also depends on the life-phase graduates are in at the time. As the research shows, the intentional unpredictability of life and career trajectories stem from the "acknowledged changeability" of life conditions, which could be understood as structures, where not only economic aspects are the primary factors but also that life-phase and marital status are closely related to it (see Chapter 5).

Furthermore, this thesis adds to Cairns' (2009) suggestion that young people's lives are becoming fragmented because of the abundance of educational choices and uncertainty in the labour market. It argues that graduates' personal life, and life-stages that graduates find themselves in, can convey such fragmentation. Therefore, as this thesis implies, the unpredictability lies in the routes to a broader image of what graduates would like do in the future. Also, unpredictability was not in the graduates' intention, but was acknowledged, and

graduates seemed to be adapted to the changeability of life, acquired through their formative years in Poland.

Therefore, it can be argued that although economic factors mentioned by Eade *et al.* (2007) are important in graduates' migratory patterns, graduates were selective in choosing opportunities, and decided on the routes towards their life aims and goals that may not maximise their economic outcome but allow for the enjoyment of life and lead to happiness:

> *"I think it is a bit like that, that the opportunity just rises up in front of me, and I just say, why not to go that way?"* (I28).

Thus, after migration they remained open to any new opportunities, but also responsive in case of unexpected occurrences within any of the spheres: family, career and personal. Graduates were prepared for unpredictability in order to achieve happiness understood as a balance between those three subject matters, above the single level of being successful in the labour market only. Nonetheless, prosperity in the labour market was one of the most important aspects of their life-phase, that of being in transition from university to employment:

> *"So maybe I can predict, plan my career, but then I think, maybe my personal life will change, and then I will change my professional drive accordingly [...] I think I'd rather stay open, and of course I have my own goals and ideas, which I will try to realise. But the point is, if my life changes, I am perfectly open to behave accordingly"* (I4).

As Cairns (2009:229) argues, young people need to be "reflexive in their educational and occupational planning, if they are to adapt to unpredictable and insecure circumstances", and the findings of this thesis illustrate that graduates are reflexive in both. Polish graduates worked towards their future having some sketch in their minds. They had broad ideas of what they wanted to do, but the routes to getting there were unpredictable and could only be planned to some extent, for example, by doing an additional university degree, or other courses in England, or gaining relevant experience in the UK. As it was shown in case of "Switchers", the change in career that is not planned can occur at any stage of their lives, and this is what "Continuers*"* yet may have to face after completing their HE, as has been elaborated in Section 6.3.2.

The majority of graduates remained open throughout their work and life trajectories for opportunities or the power of luck or coincidence in their lives, which to some extent can be predicted, even influenced, but yet again it does not guarantee life happiness:

> *"I still think that luck is important in life; luck or simply coincidence in life, whatever you want to call it, that's just something that you cannot predict; you can have influence on it, but you cannot really predict, and it's not really in your head. Here and there you can try and influence it, but it's all you can do"* (I4).

Graduates were aware of timing as well – they tried to take their own pace and not to rush things. They worked towards their future, having some idea in their minds of what they would like to do, and who they would like to become. Nonetheless, the main opportunities lay in the routes to where they wanted to be and what they wanted to do. As one "Switcher" elaborated:

> *"I have some objectives, I have some sketch. OK? It's not very erm... it's not very sharp, but it's there. I don't know what exactly I want to do, I don't have an idea how to get to those places which I want to get..."* (I3).

Overall, graduates were content with surprises, used to coincidences that alter their work and life trajectories, yet still having a general idea of what they would like to do and remembering what is important to them and what it is that they are the most interested in. This confers with Galasinska and Kozłowska (2009:172) study, who find that after 2004 Polish migration perceived space as flexible and open. In this thesis, graduates expressed that flexibility is the key component in dealing with such situations, believing that the routes that take them off the track can still deliver similar results, but from a different angle.

Such a scenario was well described by one of the "Switchers", who argued that one had to "bend", but not cross the line that will not allow one to get back to the initial aim or the idea:

> *"You need to allow yourself to be flexible, a little bit, not sort of flexible that will blow you of the course totally; but when you are blown a little bit, you bend, and come back [...] the route that you choose to pursue, the thing that I wasn't meant to do, might not be necessarily the route that is the easiest for you, there might be another route, which I do not know about yet, so you need to be flexible, use different routes to get to the centre"* (I3).

Therefore, as Chapter Six has shown, the majority of graduates did not consider working in basic skilled jobs as deskilling, which corresponds with the question on intentionality and unintentionality of different post-migration employment status and labour market participation (Smith, 2004) of graduate migrants. Respondents in this research chose unskilled occupations, which was the result of both structures in terms of not having required skills and knowledge of the British labour market, and also their empowerment, and agency in making a step forward to gain missing skills. Graduates treated such jobs as a temporary occupation, which allowed them to gain and practice skills, which were not acquired at universities. Some did not have them before their migration to England; others continued using various occupational skills which helped them with a smooth occupational transfer from Poland to England, where they searched for an upgrade.

Some graduates could not plan for more than 5 years ahead, and usually they were aware that those plans were only provisional, and the life may change anytime. One "Continuator" recognised that she still had steps to climb higher and higher in the new job that she was about to start, and after that she would consider setting up a family:

> *"I plan it 5 years ahead; I don't plan further than that. It's like 5 years and I cannot plan anymore, and still, usually those plans are usually like...ohh...it means nothing. With career, well because I just start a new job, in the end of October, so I just really want to focus on this career, I start as junior, so I've got steps to go higher, and higher. You know, gain new qualifications, skills, so this is my plan for the next at least 2 years. And then after that maybe a better job, maybe kids, yeah, family"* (I29).

Similarly "Switchers" preferred to remain open in their plans for the future, being aware that life brings changes, but this does not mean that they could not have their goals and ideas towards which they would aim to. As one "Switcher" indicated:

> A*: Do you have like a main objective in your life, somewhere you want to get to, or is it something blurred?*
>
> I4*: No, I think I rather just stay open, and of course I have my goals and ideas, which I will try to realise. But the point is, if my life changes, I'm perfectly open to behave accordingly".*

As this research elucidates, unpredictability of career and life trajectories lies in the routes to where graduates would like to get to, but it is not their initial goal in itself. Graduates felt experienced in the fact that they can plan to some extent, but those plans can undergo alterations and often cancellations. Their intention is to be happy in their lives, which for the majority means having a balanced work-family life, with enough time to maintain a healthy life-style, which was difficult to sustain in Poland. Therefore, the reasons why some graduates decided to embark on the difficult journey of migration, as well as their further considerations for migration somewhere else or settling down in any place, can be understood by looking at graduates life-phases, which include marital status, their personal life goals, and perceptions of what happiness means for them.

Overall, graduates were prepared for changes to happen in their lives, and were not planning strictly the whole process of getting to where they wanted to be, acknowledging the changeability of life, which they have learned from their early childhood and teen years in Poland. Thus, graduates' migration to the East Midlands can be seen as a multitude of steps towards happiness. Some graduates by taking various steps, of education and employment, continued learning and experiencing within the occupational areas of their choice (i.e. "Continuers"). For others, undertaken steps can be seen as "bending" on their way to achievement of "normal happy lives" (i.e. "Late Awakeners" and "Switchers").

8.2.1 Migration – continuous life learning

Another interesting aspect of migration is graduates' perceptions of and reflection on their lives after arrival to England, which is connected with graduates' initial life aims, and their achievement. Additionally, it is graduates' perception of the future, and any plans or ideas they may have with regards to further migration or taking career steps that may aid life goals. For the majority of respondents from both cohorts, "Continuers" and "Switchers", the stay in the East Midlands, and any other previous locations in England was perceived as a life learning time, taking small steps towards their life aims. However, the ways further steps were considered for the future, often lacked concrete plans. Often, graduates were still involved in doing academic projects, including nine PhD students who thought of staying in the region for the purpose of completing their degrees, and potentially gaining some extra work experience within their profession. Those graduates saw their future in phases, lasting 2-3 years, and directed by the job contracts:

" *I will be finishing my PhD within one year time [...]It depends what I will be doing next, either working, trying to combine my university and industry experience working on the verge between the university and industry, let's say knowledge exchange partnership. Because they usually last about 2-3 years"* (I10).

The stay in England was also regarded as an investment in career development, which was achieved by earning money, and paying for further education:

"It's coming true thanks to the UK. All the money, I can easily afford to pay for all these courses" (I30).

Often, the life of "Continuers" seemed to be governed by job availability after they complete their courses. Respondents from this group tended to be more focused on their desired area of work, and were more willing to relocate to other parts of the country, or the world to undertake employment within their area of interest:

"I will be applying for over a year, for all sorts of different things, so there are more than 100 applications which I've sent. At first I really wanted to stay in the Midlands area, then I thought, OK, I can go for the whole UK, and now it can be just anywhere" (I16).

"I want to finish my project, my PhD, I want to publish it, I would love to start working in academia, somewhere, it really doesn't matter to me where. Just a matter of working and doing what I want to do" (I20).

Nevertheless, it was both "Continuers" and "Switchers" who mentioned that their aims were to have a job that they would be satisfied with, and enthusiastic about waking up to every morning to work, which yet again is an example of priorities on the list towards life happiness, according to life-phases:

"To have a decent job which I'm going to like, which is not going to be a nightmare for me – 'Oh my god! I have to get up from bed, again'" (I18).

"The goal would be to wake up on Monday and have the feeling, 'ok I want to go to work, and come back home, and enjoy the evening or whatever'. Sounds quite simple but I don't think it is that simple" (I22).

Overall, respondents recognised the fact that their life was strongly related to having a rewarding job, and they felt ready for any other changes to occur in their lives, in particular for the reason of moving to another place if they lose their jobs, or any other life occurrence happens:

> *"Because you are where your work is nowadays, so if I don't have work here, something happens, I will look for different ideas, different things to do, different places to live, well I bought this house, but it doesn't mean that I am stuck in this place, I can go somewhere else and find work there"* (I29).

Another important aspect noticed among "Switchers" and "Continuers" was that they were determined to try hard to achieve something in England. Amid initial negative responses they did not give up on trying. Once they made a decision on migration, they wanted to gain something from making that step. The time spent in England did not matter as much as the activities and experiences gained from their migration, living, studying and working in different locations. For them, learning the language was the minimum gain:

> *"I just felt that 2 years is quite long...it's like Ok...but then when I come back to Poland it will be the same as I have never been here. So these two years will just...you know...what?...you know what I mean?...Because if you don't achieve anything, it's like, did you gain something? I suppose yeah...language...and everything but, well...maybe I've considered this at that point, but I haven't decided to come back, I wanted to stay. And try again"* (I29).

Therefore, graduates not having a perception of achievement in England did not feel ready to move on, or go back to Poland. So their stay indicates determination to try again and again until they benefit from decision on migration and steps undertaken afterwards:

> *"To be honest I don't know why I didn't come back! I thought, this is my aim, I want to...I think this is determination. Just to prove yourself that you can do it, you are not a loser. I will try again and again, and eventually...even if it's all very difficult, with every interview being negative, erm...negative responses from the interviews, it's always difficult. But you just try and try again"* (I29).

Switchers on average took longer to get to a place they aspired. To give an example, one respondent from the group of "Switchers" became employed by the company for which he was

applying for 3 years, and in the mean time was learning in another job position, undertook professional training, did extracurricular activities. After being offered a job within his preferred company, his next aim was to stay in his new position and seek for further opportunities and development, knowing at the same time that nothing is certain in people's lives:

> *"I tried to get a job in this place for some time, it wasn't like that at all, that I saw one job advert and I applied and I got it. NO..."* (I28).

Thus, the migration time is thought to be used to the greatest advantage with regards to learning and experiencing life which could pay off in later stages, in any location that graduates decide to go. Another "Continuator" summarised her stay in the East Midlands as her life learning and development time:

> *"So I want to use this time to the maximum, so it can flourish later on in my career life [...] this is a time for me, my PhD, meeting new people, gaining some contacts, meeting new cultures, friendships. This is my life learning time. And after that I hope that these experiences I will be able to use elsewhere [...] I think that these 5 years will allow me to gain enough experience and then to use it somewhere else...[...] So this is my development time"* (I34).

Another graduate from the group of "Continuers" also indicated that he wants to stay in England for the next year, planning to advance in his profession:

> *"I'm planning to stay here, doing my degree, trying to find some better suited job. Apart from that I haven't got any specific plans...whatever comes along; I try to make a use of it. I would like to travel more though"* (I3).

All in all, "Continuers" and "Switchers" were taking small steps towards working in their desired occupations. Those steps were not easy and often demanded determination and continuous hard work, including knowledge and skills enhancement at the British labour market:

> *"Basically I just want to work in my profession, so that's what I'm trying to do, step by step, which is not easy, but step by step I'm trying to get a job as a qualified physio [...] I want to get the experience here so basically I'm trying to work as a physiotherapist, and I hope that physio assistant job is the next step towards it"* (I35).

Such a stance also may indicate that graduates take steps towards their career advancement, after they migrated, feeling the need to achieve something, or to use their time abroad in the most effective way. When asked if they feel that they have achieved success, the majority of graduates indicated that they were on their way to achieve something in their lives, and often the first stage of that would be completion of their projects that they were doing in England:

> *"I think that a success will be completion of my PhD, which is still ongoing. I have done nothing else here, or I didn't have any other aim here in the UK apart from the PhD. For sure I have polished my English here"* (I2).

Others felt positive about the potential for achievements in the future, which is something that they were working on at the present. Otherwise, as one respondent stated, the time spent in England would have been a waste of a life-time:

> "*There is no other point for being here. I'm on my way to success all my life. I may never get there, but I'm on my way. I've heard that life is not a race, it's a journey. And I think it's very important to have a goal"* (I15).

One person who belonged to the "Switcher" cohort argued that doing jobs that she was trained for after migration did not provide fulfilment. She had other dreams and ambitions, and only their realisation could deliver the feeling of achievement. That was the reason she was doing additional studies particularly related to her interests. Therefore, graduates could be perceived as always trying to achieve more:

> *"It just drives me angry, because one person told me, 'oh you achieved a lot', and I think that I haven't achieved anything, I'm not doing something what I want to do. I don't feel any achievement, I have my dreams and this would be my fulfilment. And the fact that I'm doing a job that I'm qualified for? I don't think this a particular achievement!"* (I5).

For many, an achievement would be finding a balance between personal, family and work life. Others indicated the most important aspects for the current life-phases, for example, pursuing careers. Some individuals noticed that only due to hardship they are able to appreciate more their achievements. Therefore, as one respondent from the group of "Switchers" felt there was something more to be accomplished, amid adversities:

"If you don't go for the hard time, you should know how it feels. If everything comes too easily, you don't feel satisfied. And when I look back, I feel quite proud of myself of what I have achieved, but I know there is more out there" (I11).

There were respondents from groups of "Switchers" and "Continuers" who acknowledged some degree of achievement, their efforts put in their development and decisions they have made after arrival in the UK, including gaining further degrees or other training. As one "Continuator" said:

"I am proud of my achievements, and I know that in years to come, it will pay off, that I will have a job, not necessarily well paid, but one that I enjoy doing. Whether or not this is going to be in the academia, wherever it might be" (I13).

In addition, a graduate from the group of "Switchers" considered migration and further development in England as achievement in his life, in particular for the reasons of learning:

"If I had a chance to change my past, I still would go to the UK. I have learned so far that I would like to come here, because I know that overall experiences and people I have met here, things that I have learned" (I3).

Therefore, migration to England can be viewed as a stepping-stone, during which graduates experienced a steep learning curve, hardship in obtaining their aims, but above all, they felt that they were on the way to achieving something in their lives. Some graduates recognised accomplishment in terms of small steps made towards their major aims. Nonetheless, as some explained, life for them is a journey and they are on track to the future attainments in England or any other destination country that they decide to go. This is in alignment with Hoare and Corver's (2010:491) observation, that it is not one destination but an ongoing choice of destinations, as first destinations jobs and labour markets for life are "clearly never less tenable than now".

Also, the ever changing life trajectories of graduates, entering new life-phases, such as from a status of a student to a graduate, to the first and subsequent employments, entering a long-term relationship and setting up family present a whole new range of challenges and opportunities, which are likely to influence further graduate migration. Such transformations may be influenced not only by the "pull" forces of places where graduates grew up or studied, and the "push" of career opportunities, as Bristow *et al.* (2011) highlight, but also they may derive from

individually valued aspects, including environmental, aesthetic, family security and personal aims. This thesis reinforces the stance of the power of places, adding the relevance of agency and structure in negotiations between graduates' aims and destinations selection in their stepping-stone migration, and "bundles of amenities" of places "that people differentially value at different stages of their life" (Whisler *et al.*, 2008:63).

The last but not least aspect that is worth looking into is graduates' intentions with regards to their further mobility, potential return to Poland or travelling somewhere else, and motivations behind them. Understanding that graduates acknowledge changeability, and they are accustomed to unpredictability in their life and career trajectories, the plans and thoughts on their further mobility would also fluctuate with time.

8.3 Return to Poland

The issue of return migration, or circular migration (i.e. Samers, 2010; Vertovec, 2007; Portes, 2009; Favell and Smith, 2006) is a widely debated subject within migration scholarship. Short and medium-term decisions about the duration of Polish migrants stay abroad were researched by White and Ryan (2008), who argue that some migrants are likely to stay abroad longer than others, and based on ties and networks which link Poles in Poland to Poles abroad. However, overall, only a minority stated that they definitely wanted to stay in England for their entire lives. This thesis shows a similar outcome, with the majority of graduates interviewed thinking of either migrating somewhere else or going back to Poland in the near future, with no patterns related to the cohorts of "Continuers", "Switchers" or "Late Awakeners". This is in line with Domański's (2002) stance on young, educated generation of Poles, who are more mobile and advantageously planning their careers, strategically pursuing available opportunities abroad, and start resembling British "professionals". However, as this thesis argues further, the decisions on going somewhere else are gendered and in particular perceptions on length of stay are different for men and women with respect to preferred locations.

Overall, the issue of returning to Poland had economic fears bound to it for the majority of respondents. However, there were a few Polish graduates who thought of returning to Poland and the reasons provided were varied. Most respondents indeed kept an eye on the economic situation in their home country, and what they could do there after their return. Often, they knew someone who migrated back to Poland and failed in the labour market, or heard stories of their friends and family members who remained in Poland:

"Our parents are saying that in Poland the situation, the economy doesn't look good, and that we will be disappointed [...]Everyone says that it will be harder, that it will be difficult, to get used to a new work place and there is not only the job..." (I30)

Graduates maintained contacts by regular visits to Poland, often between 2-3 times a year, usually for major holidays (Christmas, Easter), and observed how Poland had changed, and what people said about the living conditions. Their general image of Poland was that the reality and living conditions are much more difficult than in England, and that not many friends are satisfied with their lives upon return. The inability to maintain the healthy ratio of work, family life, stable income and having free time for other activities was difficult to achieve in Poland:

"In Poland there aren't better possibilities, like you have here, like jobs, employment, having children" (I27).

"The people who live there, they are struggling, they recognise that it's so difficult, you know, most of them have jobs which don't pay bills, and all the time you are sort of stressed, to the levels that you cannot sort of smile. There is an issue how would I support myself? Working for 2000zl, having a child to rise on it, it's somehow not viable. And what would I do? I just don't have a concept!" (I25).

Despite this, some of them were thinking of migrating back to Poland. However, they had certain conditions which could accommodate their return: a decent and immediate job upon arrival in Poland, adequate salary, and moderate amount of work which could guarantee affordability of basic things supporting enjoyment of life, including having time off for hobbies:

"On condition that I have a well paid job, and I do not have to work as much as I did, and can afford certain things" (I6).

"I'm wondering about coming back to Poland, and I'd like to have a job as well, so straight away when coming back I'd like to have a job in Poland" (I21).

The majority of graduates started their adult lives in England, which equalled to living away from parents and supporting themselves financially, which was made possible by doing even the most basic jobs and receiving a minimum wage in England. Therefore, the vision of return to

Poland, and moving in with their parents because of not being able to afford living on their own in their late 20s and early 30s, at least for the start, seemed as a difficult and risky decision to make. The risks that graduates weighed up were associated with an inability to find jobs upon their return:

> *"The question is what I will do when I get back to Poland...there is no future to find a job in the town where my parents live"* (I28).

Therefore, in most of the responses of Polish graduates even if return to Poland is an option, this is a distant or impossible one for the near future. On the one hand, they would like to get back, but they can see many constraints, and the main ones being lack of opportunities for getting satisfactory employment:

> *"There is a lack of real chances for me and my profession at this moment in Poland*" (I2).

> *"I hope I will stay within Europe, maybe Germany, Switzerland, or Scandinavia, ideally Poland, but I don't think I will get a decent job there. Well...but it's an option"* (I7).

> *"I'd like to come back, one day [...] five-ten-fifteen years – depending on job availabilities"* (I9).

Others perceived Poland through the job market situation, and they did not find it encouraging for their return. The return to Poland seemed to be only a never fulfilling possibility, an option that is not likely to be executed:

> *"If I can afford to live there (Poland), or if I had a job there good enough to live there, even like how I live here[...] I would love to get back to Poland. I don't think I will, but I like to think like that..."* (I17).

A comparison between Polish and English reality, made a few respondents reluctant to consider going back to Poland, definitely in the near future. The main reason was the economic situation:

> *"Currently with the situation and the economy where it's heading in our home country, I'm not planning to go back there yet"* (I18).

"Even if I'm struggling here, if I work under my qualifications, if I earn minimum wage, I still can pay my rent, pay for nursery, afford nappies, and food and things like that. Whereas in Poland, you would have the social help really bad one, it's nearly nothing, and in my area chances for getting a job are low" (I17).

Another graduate felt relatively satisfied with her life in England, and the fear of not knowing how to start a new life back in Poland made her to postpone even the consideration of return migration. There were no push elements in her life that would make her want to migrate back to Poland:

"I'm not sure I would fit in, especially in the job market. That would be my big fear. I think things are much tougher back in Poland, and I don't think they would really appreciate the experience I get from here...so I don't know, if something is good why to change it? So if I find a good enough reason to go back, then I will go back, but at the moment probably I will stay here for a few years more, and then we will see again" (I14).

Thus, the most common strategy for the majority of graduates was the evaluation of their current situation, in which either degrading conditions in England, or considerable opportunities somewhere else could trigger their decisions on returning to Poland or migrating elsewhere. This confirms Galasińska's (2010:944) findings on the post-enlargement group of Polish migrants to the UK, which suggest that they "constructed their migration as a temporary or open-ended period in their lives". However, what this thesis adds is the fact that this temporariness in case of graduates was related to life-phases. In particular, entering into another life-stage, for example setting up a family, also losing a job, or the inability to find a job in England could be one of the unpredictable factors within graduates career and life trajectories that potentially could affect their decision making on further migration or return to Poland. Also, for some individuals, Poland remained a preferred place to go for emotional reasons, but not for practical reasons or in reality:

"I love my country, I love my family, I want to go back there, I think Poland is beautiful, but that's my heart, and my mind is saying something different" (I17).

"I wouldn't move back to Wroclaw or Poland, but I miss it" (I16).

This illustrates that having sampled independent life (White, 2006), with minimal problems for maintaining ones living in England, and being close to Polish reality at the same time, exercised through regular family visits, or through their friends narratives, graduates became aware of the conundrums for those living there, and felt unprepared, and not ready to experience similar issues. Therefore, there is no myth of return attached to graduates' reflection on their migration, and on the whole, they do not feel "torn between the desire to return and the desire (or need) to stay" (King, 2002:93). Also, some respondents still remembered the reasons why they left Poland, and even though they thought of their family home in Poland, they did not seem to want to go back there. The reasons for not being willing to go back seemed to be related to the motivations for migration to England: lack of fulfilment in Poland, and the need of trying to find happiness, understood as balancing within the three spheres: family, career and personal life. For example, one respondent did not consider returning to Poland, and in terms of further mobility somewhere else, she had no plans, but was prepared to follow the opportunities and unpredictability of life:

> *"I'm somewhat considering going home, but then I'm thinking why go home, if I already know home. I've only lived there, and I didn't find it fulfilling so that's why I left. And something tells me that if I go back, I would want to leave again. So, I'm really easy to be honest. I have no plans, whatever life brings"* (I13).

Another graduate felt that her development was constrained in Poland, and although she liked going there with visits to her family, she was aware that she would not like to experience the same as before her departure:

> *"My family, the close one is back in Poland. But I like going with a visit, but I wouldn't like to live there though [...] Economic situation, and the feeling...I felt trapped in Poland. Like I couldn't spread my wings [...] And here ever since I arrived here, including the holiday time, I felt like if you have a dream, you have a target and you want to achieve it – it's achievable! Whereas in Poland I felt that I will either struggle, or go through hell to get somewhere"* (I10).

Overall, respondents without children aimed to go somewhere else. Those with children (10 respondents out of 40) felt more stationary, choosing between England and Poland, having no immediate plans for return, or giving themselves a few more years of living in England, until

their children are in the schooling age. They contemplated returning to Poland before their children start their first education, so they can stay within one system of education:

> *"This time, just 5 years, Jake will be going to school, it's probably the time we've given ourselves to sort out everything and because we actually didn't know how much time we should give ourselves to stay here and then go back to Poland...but then we thought that it would be a good time before Jake goes to school, so..."* (I33).

Therefore, the choice was dictated by children's schooling age. When they reach that stage, they will have to make a decision of where to stay for longer: England or Poland. They did not think of other places than those two countries. This may be perceived as a moment that requires a decision to be made, but does not guarantee that the ultimate choice will be Poland. Overall, this thesis reinforces Garapich's (2006:4) findings that after 2004 Polish migrants became "well adapted transnational actors using – or at least trying the best of both worlds, keeping feet in both places". As this thesis shows, it is valid even in case of keeping oneself informed about the economic situation in the home country, which stimulates further decisions on career and migration. Nonetheless, it is not only about England and Poland, but any other locations and countries, in particular Commonwealth countries, what is discussed further on in this chapter. This thesis also supports findings of other quantitative and qualitative studies on Polish migrants in England, who are often uncertain about their future, relating to issues of staying or returning to Poland (e.g. Eade *et al*., 2007; Ryan *et al.*, 2009). However, it also stresses that there were graduates who already made their minds about further moves, and some decided to return to Poland.

8.3.1 Already decided

Those graduates who decided to return to Poland had set the dates and started preparations for such an occasion, including either further training in their professions, or desired profession they would like to work in Poland upon return, or gaining actual work experience. The majority of those respondents were included into the group of Potential Future Trainees, as discussed in detail in Chapter 6, who aimed to undertake additional training in the future. Their main motivation for further training was return to Poland, where they could multiply their chances of working within their preferred areas.

"We think to come back, and I would like to finish studying, and to complete full personal training course, actually I've got a personal training done, but there are some extra courses to complete and after these courses I would like to teach in Poland" (I30).

Those individuals, knowing the difficult realities in Poland, felt motivated to commence training in the UK for three main reasons: access, availability and having enough time to do it, due to short working hours:

"We've got one year, and during that time I'm going to do some courses which will help me in Poland" (I27).

For those graduates returning to Poland, the decision was not spontaneous, as it was in case of going to England. They were considering their choices, and prepared short-term plans, according to which they were organizing themselves for their return to Poland. Those plans included attending further professional training, saving up money, and doing all this within a limited set of time spent in England:

"But you know I need to prepare myself, it's not that I can hurry with all that, I need some preparation [...] First, to save as much funds as possible, then I'm going to attend Network Administration CISCO course...because that's quite a good option, and the only possible decent qualification to obtain in half a year, and this qualification is well regarded around the world" (I31).

There were respondents who would not mind going back to Poland, but they had a strong feeling of going somewhere else first, and then to decide where to settle.

8.4 Moving somewhere else

Some graduates indicated that they did not feel tied down to the UK as a place, and that they would not see any problem with migrating somewhere else, which could be related with further brain-training (Balaz and Williams, 2004). In fact a few indicated that they felt bored already with the place where they are staying and they thought of going somewhere else for new experiences. However, after the further world exploration one graduate was considering coming back to Poland "for good":

"I already know this place (Loughborough) I'd just like to experience something new basically. I'm thinking of a new part of the world. Maybe New Zealand [...] Basically, my plan is to go still abroad for a year maybe 2 for a contract and then just I'm thinking of coming back to Poland for good" (I19).

Some respondents admitted that their perceptions of return have changed over time. Initially, they thought of coming to England for doing a degree only, and then to return to Poland. Towards the end of the degree, their needs altered, and one graduate indicated that he would like to go "somewhere else" instead of returning to Poland or staying in England:

"At the beginning of my PhD I was thinking of coming back to Poland, but now, I'm winning towards going 'somewhere else'" (I6).

Many graduates indicated that they did not plan to stay in England permanently. They did not feel that England was their final destination and they had a strong need to explore other places:

"I don't think we will be here anymore longer; just when our aims are done we will go" (I5).

"I don't think that I will stay here till the end of my life; I'd like to go somewhere else, see other things, and this feeling is quite strong [...] I don't think this is my final destination" (I3).

Overall, they could not see themselves settling down and growing old in England:

"I'm not planning to stay here permanently, I'm not planning to get old here, to buy a house, or marry and raise my kids here" (I18).

Another graduate felt the need for further travelling; however, he did not exclude the possibility of staying for longer in a new place he travelled to:

"I don't feel that I am tied to a place, I can move around and there is no reason why I wouldn't be able to live somewhere else. I don't feel that I have to stay in the UK because I spent the last 5 years being here. I don't feel that I have to go back to Poland, because I was there 23 years there I've seen it, and I can go somewhere else. So yeah, I would like to travel. At the moment I think I see myself travelling for a couple of years and maybe going back to the UK. But that may change if I travel somewhere and I'd like to stay there" (I22).

The majority of graduates mentioned that they would like to live in a pleasant environment, and to find a balance in their personal, family and professional lives. For them, the choice of destination between Poland and other countries was not treated as dramatic, as one graduate said:

> *"I would be happy if I could realise my career in Poland, but also I would not feel unhappy if I was to stay in the UK"* (I2).

However, at this life-stage, the majority of graduates were interested in their labour market performance and job availability, rather than location:

> *"I think I will go wherever I will get the job, or like interesting career opportunity"* (I7).

> *"I don't mind where I live, as long as it lets me to do the job that I love"* (I10).

This is not to say that graduates did not have preferences of where they would like to live. Some respondents had requirements in terms of quality of living, culture, appealing landscape, weather, in general the feeling of visually pleasing environment, which could be related to thinking and potentially planning for their next life-phases:

> *"Thing that I'm after is the weather [...] I'd like to live somewhere where is relatively not hot, but at least mild and sunny, because I want to wear flip-flops to work [...] I'm not really driven by career options as much as just general happiness [...] have a lot of time for family life, in a nice environment and preferably landscape that is visually appealing"* (I13).

However, when talking about their future in terms of settling down, and raising children, respondents first wanted to sample living in different places before making a decision on where to stay for longer:

> *"I don't know what we will do if we have kids in the future. I know that they will speak 3 languages, but I don't know where we are going to live"* (I11).

In many cases graduates indicated that they would like to move to different places before they make their final decision of where to settle down, or stay for longer with no implication of permanency. However, as one respondent summarised, for her, settling down does not mean

becoming immobile. On the contrary, she would like to make a decision on a staying in one preferred location, but still be able to travel around the world:

> *"I'd like to move to a few places in the world to try to live in there and then decide where I'd like to kind of settle down. But I wouldn't like to just settle down and not go anywhere else!"* (I16).

8.4.1 Choice of further destination

The most challenging decision for graduates seemed to be deciding on where to go next in terms of geographical locations, which could encompass further opportunities for their life and career trajectories. They saw too many opportunities, and balancing them all being the ultimate goal they have in mind was complicated. The opportunities existed not in a single country where they were based – England, but also "somewhere else", or back in Poland. Graduates were aware of the disadvantages of the Polish labour market, and Polish salaries, which often proved not to be enough to pay all bills off, and to maintain a "normal happy life", as this financial stability in Poland is a rarity, which is a reality for majority of Polish who are living there (Galasińska and Kozłowska, 2009b). Similarly, Botterill's (2011) research portrays young Polish individuals' search for normality in Scotland, for whom Poland has limited opportunities for upward social mobility, and where life is associated with a "struggle", in contrast with an "easier" life in Scotland.

However, there is something in Poland that many graduates keep missing in England, which is a component for having a balanced life – a family and for some even friends. Thus, stepping-stone migration in the pursuit of happiness, understood as a balance within family, career and personal life illustrates that no country is perfect, and that life situations fluctuate, and the pursuit of happiness is just a journey and involves hard work throughout an individual's life.

In terms of opportunities, those who studied in England were more inclined to look for them within and outside of Europe, with the idea of going away for 1-2 years, with a prevailing preference for other English speaking countries. The reasons for going to those places was the curiosity, willingness to see something else, something different, and going to these countries was treated as individual's ambitions and plans:

"New Zealand., and Canada. The USA, but from curiosity, I have heard missed opinions. I would like to travel in the USA for some time [...] These are the plans, they are sort of ambitious, but we will see" (I3).

Graduates interviewed often mentioned travelling to other Commonwealth countries, and America, mainly because they knew the language, and they wished to experience something different. Some respondents had families in those places, others were following their partners who had their jobs offered there, and sometimes it was a common decision to go and commence a new chapter in their lives, which was considered for a limited period of time, often 2-3 years.

Also, the common feature for those considering going to other countries outside of the EU, was mentioning specific cities, where they would like to go to. Therefore, one of the respondents was thinking of going Sydney in Australia, where she had friends:

"We have a couple of options. First of all, we thought of New Zealand, and Auckland and he's got some sort of one year project, like research project there (her husband) [...] We are still thinking of Sydney in Australia, because we got friends there and it's beautiful" (I5).

Similarly, another respondent pointed out two particular places in Australia: Perth and Sydney. He researched those places beforehand, by talking to people, asking questions, and on the basis of this he built up his mental map of those cities, which he would like to visit to experience the novelty of culture and landscape:

"I'm thinking about, well first thing that comes to my head is Australia, Sydney. I'm thinking about...another city is Perth. And, I've heard conversations of people, and other people who I have spoken to about it, that those cities are pretty, and the weather is good, and culturally it's different too. Ermm Just to experience something new. It's much more relaxed there too [...] I mean...you can go there for a while, one year two years, and you may not like it all.." (I3).

Another respondent has already sampled life in one state in the USA, in Washington DC, and the positive experience of living there motivated him to go back there. For this graduate, a particular state in the USA was treated as 'an excitement', which was related with living in big cities:

"I lived in Washington DC, and I loved it, so, so probably there. But I have never been to California, so I don't know the West Coast...I wouldn't want to go to Nebraska, somewhere in the middle of nowhere, like in a Polish countryside, there is nothing happening, that's not exciting. My idea of America is excitement" (I6).

For other respondents, going to other places outside of Europe was associated with doing further training, or studies:

"....at the moment I need this time to finish these courses, and maybe, there is an option that I will go to the USA, to do some extra functional training, courses, which are very rare in the world, and not many people have them done" (I30).

"There is a chance to stay in Loughborough, there is a chance to go to USA, Australia and the Copenhagen. These are the places I have applied to. These are the countries that have the scientists with who I'd like to study under their supervision. I've already emailed them and I'm awaiting responses" (I9).

There were a few graduates who considered going to Canada, underlying the attributes such as their knowledge of language, and similarities between Europe and Canada. Some respondents talked in a general sense of going to Canada; others had a specific region, or city in mind:

"I thought... you know, Canada is nice, I could be there because it's the same language, it's not really a problem anymore" (I25).

Another graduate mentioned other places to explore, including Toronto in Canada, New York in the USA, providing reasons related to her studies and personal experience when visiting those places in the past for the first time. One of the most important aspects was indecisiveness of which place to choose to go next, as well as where to stay for longer. This respondent seemed to have a plan of staying in various places for 1 or 2 years, and then making a decision of which place to choose:

"I'd like to travel little bit more, I think I'd like to live in a few countries for a year to two years, like I'd like to live in Holland, possibly for 2 years, I'd like to live in the US, in NY for a year or so, I'd like to go to Toronto, in Canada for a year because all the woman studies are there and also NY- so that's the reason why those places. It's amazing in Canada, I love

Canada. I went to Toronto last year for a conference. So yeah, I'd like to move to a few places in the world to try to live in there and then decide where I'd like to kind of settle down" (I16).

Also, other respondents mentioned going to Canada; however, this was forward planning for retirement, indicating that she would like to remain in the UK for a foreseeable future of at least 10 years time:

"*At the moment yes, we might move when we are older, we might move to Canada, or China, or any other place. I'd like to stay here I'd say. At least for next 10 years*" (I24).

Another respondent contemplated going to two cities in Canada, mainly because she has already been there, has a Canadian husband, and generally this experience allowed her to make such a decision:

"*So Abu Dhabi, hmm...Ottawa in Canada, definitely there, or Quebec city. I wouldn't go to remote area where my husband is from, as he is from a village, in New Brunswick, and he needs to drive 60km to get to McDonalds, and the village itself counts 600 people"* (I11).

On the whole, graduates were not inclined to migrate to the countries where they could not speak the language; therefore, their main choices for going somewhere else were English speaking countries, such as the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Graduates feeling that they became familiar with the labour market system and culture in England were afraid of starting everything from the scratch if they migrated to a place where they did not speak the language.

In the case of further mobility to places where English language is spoken, graduates were prone to thinking of spending 1-3 years in those countries, and, in particular, men did not feel constrained by such a way of thinking. Therefore, the issue of going "somewhere else" may remain open throughout graduates' lives, and the decisions may fluctuate around personal and career reasons at any time of their lives, depending on their life aims and opportunities within their life trajectories. This resonates with Galasińska's (2010:944) finding, that migration of Polish individuals to the UK is an "open-ended period in their lives". Polish graduates interviewed for this research also indicated openness, and uncertainty of life-courses, which may both stem from opportunities, as well as graduates' agency. As one of the respondents indicated:

"It may happen that I will wake up one morning, and think – it's enough of being here, it's time to make another step and not a step back, just a step forward, and let's do something crazy, why not to go to New Zealand?" (I28).

In general, this thesis argues, that intentions of Polish graduates for further migration alter depending on their life-phases, opportunities, but also constraints, and conditional and unconditional human agency (Halfacree, 1995).

8.4.2 Gendered intentions to stay in Europe

In terms of further mobility somewhere else, responses were gendered. Women were thinking of staying in Europe, as they wanted to be closer to their families, and that reasoning was not as common as in the case of men who seemed to be less emotionally constrained. Such findings on gendered further migration decision making comes in light of limited to date research devoted to European women migrants, and their migration between different EU countries (Ackers, 1998), and, in particular, women from A8 countries (Duda-Mikulin, 2012). As this doctoral research shows, graduate women were more prone to making decisions on migration for 1-3 years somewhere else if they were married to foreign nationals, or their partners received a job offer in those places, which could be linked to the idea of "trailing spouses", when one partner is likely to follow the other (i.e. Cooke, 2008). Thus, for women, further mobility to other English speaking countries was a viable option, but mostly for a limited period of time. However, they already assumed that they would not like to spend the rest of their lives there for the reasons of not being able to easily visit their families in Poland. There were also women who did not mind migrating further away and staying there for longer, which formed a minority opinion amongst the respondents.

Overall, as one respondent stated, she would not mind living in various places around the world, but what she was not able to declare was the definite decision on the place of permanent destination:

"I wouldn't mind to live in Japan for a year, or Australia, try there, just to change the climate[...] if I really enjoyed there I wouldn't mid to stay there for the rest of my life. But I wouldn't say that this is the last country that I live in, I can always go somewhere else" (I29).

Nonetheless, the majority of women respondents who indicated their interest in going to some other countries that are outside of Europe, for example America, Canada, Australia, Dubai, or China, contemplated coming back to Europe at some point. Only a few mentioned Poland, but the prevailing response was generally the European continent. Their preferred place of settling down would be not too far away from their families, where the time spent on travelling and financial resources required were within their affordability. Therefore, graduates mentioned the two most important reasons for returning to Europe: common culture and closeness to Poland and family.

The importance of living close to families in Poland was important to some men, but overall, women more often mentioned the advantage of living in Europe through the prism of being closer to their families. On the one hand they wanted to travel somewhere else, but they were aware that they have strong bonds with their families in Poland, and therefore, they would not be able to stay for longer or settle down outside of the EU:

> *"I think I'd prefer to stay in Europe, because I could always travel to Poland, stay with my family for a while, so Europe I think"* (I20).

The duty of care for relatives was strongly elucidated in women responses, which concur with Botterill's (2011) findings, who argued that often it was not an expectation but their personal choice to return to their family in Poland. This finding however adds more to it, as it shows that women although compromise more in terms of their mobility patterns, in the majority of cases they do not think of going back to Poland, but they aimed to remain within Europe, so the connection with Poland, and their family town is accessible in time and financial resources. Therefore, due to the EU enlargement, and creating borderless zone for mobility of Member States citizens, Polish graduate women treated their migration, as a migration away from the parental home. Remaining anywhere in Europe with quick and relatively inexpensive communication infrastructure allowing for regular and frequent home visits, would be an example of internal migration (King *et al.*, 2008), almost as it was migration to another city within their home country. As White (2011) argues, mobility within a nation promotes "translocalism", which refers to links between locations within a single nation-state, and which in this case, the EU could be seen as such.

Thus, they did not have to live in Poland, but having the affordable options to visit families whenever it is required, could take the edge off the emotional uneasiness. This would be possible when living in the EU, and less so when further away, to give example America or Canada:

"*Canada and the USA would be definitely too far away from Poland for me, as now we can afford to go 3 times a year to Poland, and from Canada it would be not possible. And for me is important to go to Poland as often as possible to visit my parents, as they miss us as well"* (I35).

"I would never move outside of Europe. I don't want to be too far away from my family, I don't want to leave them. Especially when my parents are getting older, and I need this feeling that every moment, when they need me, I leave everything and go" (I4).

The same respondent, when thinking about Europe, perceived England as a place of her longer stay, mainly because of the English language. She underlined that although she would like to live in different countries, for example Sweden, this would involve learning everything from the scratch, beginning with the language:

A*: So does it matter which country in Europe?*
I4*: Not that much actually, no, not that much. But for sure it must be within Europe.*
A*: Any preferences for the countries?*
I4*: Well...I don't know really. Probably I will stay in the UK, because I speak English, and if I went to Norway or Sweden I would need to learn these languages"*.

Some women felt more open to the possibility of staying longer term in overseas countries; however, in this case such a perception could be related to having family on another continent, in Australia and New Zealand. Nonetheless, the fact of being far away from the place where her parents lived was pictured as one and the most important disadvantage of such a move:

"*If I found those places interesting, there is a chance that I could stay there as well. The disadvantage of this would be that it will be a very long way from the place where my parents live"* (I28).

Therefore, the majority of women could be perceived as those who were thinking of further mobility to places where they can use their language skills, but at the same time they

counterbalanced this with their feelings and emotions towards their families left in Poland. Some women were looking at the culture and attitude of the citizens; however the common point was mostly the distance from Poland:

> *"So there is no perfect country that would suit my needs, because that would be country that is close enough, I could always fly back home if I needed, and with attitude and approach which is acceptable for me. So...I was considering Australia, at some point, but it's just far away..."* (I18).

Even though some had heard good stories about living conditions in other English speaking countries, which showed the living standards in a better light than England, this Polish woman would not appreciate it as much, simply because of the inability of commuting to Poland as often as she would like to:

> *"We do realise that lives might be even better than here (in other English speaking countries), but I think these are a bit too far from Poland really. I do kind of take everything back to Poland, hehe. Even now, we only go like twice a year. Imagine living in Australia, if you went back home once a year..."* (I23).

Even though the majority of women graduates could not imagine living for longer outside of the EU, or in fact countries where the English language is spoken, however at the same time, they did not show the need to return to Poland for the family matters:

> "*I don't really plan on going anywhere else. And I don't really want to start from the bottom again, so somewhere where I didn't know the language, while I think that I've achieved something here in the UK. And to move somewhere where English is spoken would be somewhere far, far away from my family. So, I wouldn't move to the States or Canada or Australia, places like that..."* (I14).

It appears that England, with its well-developed communication of flights to Poland, may be considered as a location to be cherished for longer. Nonetheless, nothing is decided for the rest of graduates' lives and other possibilities still exist, leading to another area of concern – which opportunities to choose. As White and Ryan (2008) summarise, the Polish migration situation is evolving rapidly, and as they suggest the future will depend on not only economic and legal developments, but also on networks. This doctoral research suggests that aside of aspects

mentioned above, it is important to look at the generational background of migrants, their various forms of capital, including human capital and personal capital, as well as life aims, with an issue of ever elusive term of happiness and its pursuit.

8.5 Summary

This chapter has provided important insights on graduates' further mobility plans, indicating that there is a small group of respondents who decided to go back to Poland, and have already set the date of return. By that time of departure, they aim to do everything to prepare for commencing a new life in Poland, including doing extra training, as well as job experience, which would multiply their chances for employment within their preferred area upon return. Even though they miss their families in Poland, graduates on the contrary to their swift decision making on migration to England, took time and considered carefully the potentiality of returning to Poland.

There was a large cohort of graduates who thought of travelling "somewhere else", before they made a decision on where to stay for longer. The majority of those, considered mainly English speaking countries, for example Commonwealth countries, however for a limited period of time 1-3 years. The responses on staying for longer in new locations showed differences with regards to gender. On average, women showed stronger emotional attachments with their families in Poland, and they expressed that they would like to return to Europe after such travelling, and in general they could not imagine living too far away from their families. Therefore, the role of distance and financial resources became one of the constraints for women's further mobility beyond the EU. Interestingly, the emotional attachments to families left in Poland, did not have an influence on graduate women's need of returning to Poland, but remaining within the EU with easy access to their home town in Poland becoming one of the top priority requirements.

Overall, this chapter has shown that graduates reflected on their migration to England as a predominantly learning and development time, which for some was a continuation of their studied subjects in Poland, for others a switch into another area of their interest. Overall, graduates have shown determination to achieve something in England, which was not limited to learning the language only, but gaining other skills and work experience. The step of migrating to England, even if it did not convey as many risks associated with migration as it would have otherwise before 2004 (Galasinska and Kozlowska, 2009), became more important with time spent in the host country. After familiarising themselves with the culture and language, the labour market situation and access to opportunities for further development, graduates reinforced

their initial perceptions when leaving Poland, of not being able to *"spread their wings"* (I10) in their home country. With the time spent in England, gaining confidence, graduates felt that this is their great chance for life-course re-design, and development time, which would not be possible otherwise if they had remained in Poland.

Consequently, the pursuit of happiness, an alluring image of integrating family, career and personal life, with shares of each component based on life-phases entered, became a motive for graduates' stepping-stone migration. Nonetheless, it is questionable whether a balance within the three dimensions of human life can be not only achieved but also maintained amid various structures and individuals ability to overcome constraints and follow the opportunities. Some graduates faced the fact that a component of a family life was missing in their lives after migration. This illustrates that stepping-stone migration in pursuit of happiness may be an ongoing and unpredictable road, connecting the dots to "somewhere else", but the final geographical and social destination may never be reached, leading to a conclusion that migration is a life journey.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

This chapter outlines the merit of the thesis' conceptualisation of Polish graduates who obtained degrees in their home country and migrated to England upon completion of university courses. It stresses the importance of adjustment strategies in the migration process of graduates who moved over national borders, distinguishing between 3 groups of: "Continuers", "Switchers" and "Late Awakeners". Introducing the concept of the "stepping-stone migration" to understand graduate migration, this research contributes to wider research on the nature of graduate stepping-stone migration within EU and beyond, as one of the unintentional outcomes of EU enlargement.

9.1 Thesis concluding remarks

Fielding (1983) suggests that the chaotic concept of migration ought to be unpacked with a view of the historical and social context, so that each circumstance can be separately understood. Responding to the call made by Fielding (1983), this thesis investigates the migration of young Polish graduates, with an outlook on their socio-historical background they grew up in, which shaped their vantage point and attitudes towards mobility across Europe and beyond. Throughout the thesis, the focus has been on graduates own perspectives, which has endorsed the findings to be based on graduates' narratives, therefore allowing the detection of any important structures enabling and/or constraining graduates' spatial and social mobility and migration, as well as to indicate graduates' agency in their life and career trajectories construction. Therefore, structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), with structure defined as "rules and resources, which human agents are knowledgeable about, and which they use to achieve certain aims, albeit through reflective practices" (Samers, 2010:104), and its reference in migration theories (Halfacree, 1995; Goss and Lindquist, 1995), is relevant.

The aim of this study was to **deepen scholarly understanding of what happens to individuals who graduate in their home country and move to another, within the post-2004 EU, using the case study of Polish graduates who migrated to England.** As highlighted in Chapter 1, this aim was addressed in four main objectives. These were firstly to find out the motivations for migration to the East Midlands; secondly to look at the process of adjustment of Polish graduate migrants to the UK labour market; thirdly to investigate the effects of the place(s) of destination

on Polish graduates' career trajectories development; and fourthly, to examine graduates' intentions and plans for the future geographical mobility.

Chapter 5 responded to the first research objective, examining graduates' previous mobility history and migration motivations. It argued that graduates' generational experience of transformation and constant changes that happened in Poland during their life span, shaped graduates vantage point of the world. The common feature of all events – the ever-present change, contributed to their ability to remain open for opportunities, weigh the risks and make quick, but informed decisions, to be the agents of transitions of their own lives. This way, motivation for migration can be regarded as an outcome of the following factors: socio-historical context during their childhood and youth, family background and gained mobility capital, human and personal capital, and above all graduates' agency in choosing the best opportunities for their life-phases within the EU and beyond.

Chapter 6 discussed findings related to the second research objective. Having arrived in the UK, graduates went through the process of adjustment to the British labour market, with many undergoing a transition from a Polish university. According to the recognised graduates' career development, further vocational training HE obtained, three main clusters of graduates were differentiated: "Continuers", "Switchers" and "Late Awakeners", and the fourth group comprising of collectively gathered members of those three cohorts, and named as "Potential Future Trainees".

Chapter 7 looked into the role of place, in this case the East Midlands, in graduates' social advancement and career development, as well as their construction of home. Graduates perceived the East Midlands as a temporary attachment, a transitory place fulfilling the role of a "stepping-stone" in their life trajectories, rather than being an escalator region (Fielding, 1992). The chapter has stressed graduates' attachment to the facilities offered which can alleviate potential further mobility and migration i.e. well-developed communication infrastructure within and outside the region connecting different parts of the world, rather than to the place as one's home. This was conjoined with a great interest in obtaining the UK passports for the purpose of eased international cross-border mobility and migration, in particular to other Commonwealth countries.

Finally, the fourth research objective was responded to in Chapter 8, which focused on graduates' future mobility and migration plans and intentions, with an outlook on their

reflections on time spent in England. Predominantly their stay in the East Midlands was learning and development time, which for some, was a continuation of their studied subjects in Poland, for others a switch into another area of their interest. Graduates' main life aim was to be happy, understood as a balance within family, career and personal life. They intended to make further steps, some returning to Poland, others migrating "somewhere else", in pursuit of happiness. The steps made were also linked with life-phases, and stemming from these developing individualised needs and aims. This Chapter argued that the "stepping-stone" migration reflects fragmentation of graduates' life-courses due to various educational choices and labour market uncertainty, and is observed in the need to pursuit an elusive state of happiness.

9.2 Wider contribution to geographies of graduate migration

Castles (2008:13) calls for a conceptualisation of "migration not as merely as a result of social transformation, nor as one of its cause, but as an integral and essential part of social transformation processes". This means that the societal context in which migration takes place should not be omitted from the research on migration trends. In particular, the 21st century's fluidity and openness for changes that are observed within technology, transportation and culture, further thinking beyond borders, and physical crossing of the borders for purposes of brain-training, professional advancement or lifestyle, to name a few. However, such mobility is selective (Bauman, 1998a), with the highly-skilled leading the race for prime citizens of a globalised world that values mobility, and treats it as "the badge of a modern open society" (Castles, 2008:2). Furthermore the internationalisation of HE and rising labour market competition, which has been heightened by the recent global economic recession, requires the highly-skilled who are consciously pursuing their educational and career advancement to be mobile.

As identified by the existing literature, student and graduate migration forms a part of highly-skilled migration, which is leaving a footprint in contemporary international and internal migration flows (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000; King, 2002; Castles and Miller, 2009). The existing research about graduates pursuing spontaneous and independent movements abroad (Guth and Gill, 2008; Wiers-Jenssen, 2008; Bond *at al.*, 2010; Brooks and Waters, 2010), and in particular that of focus on the EU Member Countries (Faggian *et al*., 2007; Faggian and McCann, 2009; Cairns, 2009; Mosca and Wright, 2010, 2011; Bristow *et al.*, 2011; Conti, 2011) was predominantly carried out within Western countries and on international migration, as opposed to East to West graduate migration, across the European member countries' borders (i.e.

Csedő, 2008; Trevena, 2011). In particular, within international migration, such a focus is on individuals migrating from a home country to a new place to undertake studies, which is more related to student migration. There is a significant lack of research on graduates of home country universities, who are on the move upon completion of their degrees. In particular, the lacuna of research refers to graduates' career and life trajectories and how they are being shaped within the EU, informing on adjustment to competing powers of places, to which they migrated to with their varied baggage of human and personal capital, as well as life aims and motivations.

Given the shortage of research on migration of graduates of home countries' universities within the EU after 2004, when Poland became one of the major exporters of young and educated individuals predominantly to the UK (Drinkwater *et al.,* 2006; Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009), this research provides an important contribution to such migration scholarship. In particular, this thesis adds to the negligible number of geographical studies on graduate migration, which previously and predominantly was approached from the perspective of geography of economics within Western Europe (i.e. Faggian and McCann, 2009**;** Hoare and Corver, 2010; Bristow *et al.*, 2011). Researchers have commonly portrayed such migration as a stage process from domicile to the place of study and then for further employment (Teichler and Jahr, 2001; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003), which ultimately positioned graduates within labour migration studies, or migration in pursue of economic capital. This has its reflection in a growing interest in the geography of graduate labour in the UK, mainly because it has been seen as crucial to local and regional economic performance (Bristow *et al.*, 2011). However, as this thesis argues, graduate migration should not be looked upon from the economic point of view solely, but approached from the life-course perspective (Plane and Heins, 2003; Whisler *et al.,* 2008), which can aid a better understanding of graduate mobility. As Bond *et al*. (2008) argues, with time graduates form long-term relationships and their life motivations alter, for example, the aptness of the environment for family formation may dominate, indicating the existence of phases that graduates undergo in their life trajectories.

In the light of the requirements of a modern era of fluidity and openness, this thesis takes the existing research on graduate migration further, contributing five major findings on individuals who graduated in a home European country and migrated to another country within the EU.

9.2.1 Life trajectories

Firstly, this thesis relates to graduates life trajectories and migration to places containing a collection of facilities, that people ascribe varied significance to at different stages of their life, and which can act as "steps", "stages" or "transient countries" (Samers, 2010:10). This thesis reaffirms the significance of ever changing life trajectories of graduates after migration, their "uncertainty and unpredictability" (Eade *et al.*, 2007), and graduates' need to remain flexible with an outlook on further migration, which may be linked with entering a new life-phase (Hutchinson, 2007).

In contrary to Eade *et al.'s* (2007:11) findings, graduates of this research did not consider their migratory plans as "intentional unpredictability", based on increasing social and economic capital. The key finding of this research shows that graduate migration is not entirely economically driven, but encompasses searching for missing life elements, which could not be found in "amenities bundle" of one place (Whisler *et al.,* 2008). Graduates expressed the necessity for a balance between life's three main aspects: career, family and personal life, whose significance fluctuates at various life-phases.

The thesis also refers to the call of Whisler *et al.* (2008:63) for further research on migration patterns of highly-educated with a reference to locational choices, and "place-specific attributes that people differentially value at different stages of their life". As this thesis shows, aims and networks determined the choice of the East Midlands region. The initial knowledge of the region was minimised to the cluster of medium size cities, which graduates hoped, could multiply chances for any type of employment, becoming a starting point. Consequently, the findings show the East Midlands as a "temporary attachment" in graduates' life trajectories, what can broadly be referred to Bourdieu's (1984) habitués. The importance of the region lies in affordability and connectedness, which is fit for purpose for the transitory intentions of graduates. Thus, rather than home, or an escalator, the East Midlands offers graduates personalised studios, a space where one is getting to know oneself better, or even more, to re-create oneself, yet the attachments formed are not present as long term or permanent.

9.2.2 Generational characteristics as non-discursive human agency influence in migratory decisions

Secondly, the existing literature has identified a few examples of motivations for migration of young and educated Polish individuals, such as economic push-factors, becoming independent of parents and opportunities to gain life experience and progress with careers (i.e. White, 2010; Trevena, 2012). Analysts have however failed to address the influence of socio-historical backgrounds of graduates and their generational belonging, and how these structures interplay in graduates' life-courses construction. The suggested conceptual framework of graduates' stepping-stone migration, highlights the role of the socio-political situation during graduates' formative years, which influenced their view of the world (Mannheim, 1952; Edmunds and Turner, 2002b), and later decision making process on migration, which represents non-discursive aspect of human agency in migratory decisions (Halfacree, 1995). Also, the interaction of personal, spatial and societal changes allowed for gaining of new individualistic qualities, and to undergo double transition – personal and national (Burrell, 2011a), making graduates used to cyclical changes. Therefore, this thesis argues that growing up in a changing socio-political system of Central Europe constitutes an element not considered in migration research to date: that of unintentional human agency in the migration decision making of graduates.

Moreover, as Portes (2009:12) highlights, "migration is, of course, change and it can lead, in turn, to further transformations". Therefore, being accustomed to changes, in the first place, provided graduates with unconscious motives for action, and foremost, the manner in which those actions are taken, for example, migration without previous long-term planning or preparation. The ad hoc decisions on migration had nothing in common with "deliberations over an extended period of time, implying careful weighing of pros and cons" (De Jong and Fawcett, 1981:46), and showed no time lag between contemplating and implementing the move. Following Giddens (1984), that level of human agency could be considered as "a practical consciousness" that is "inaccessible to conscious reflection and discursive articulation" (Smith, 2004).

As a result of becoming accustomed to changes, and coping with the arising new structures throughout youth, graduates proved to be individualistic agents of their lives, they were able to make quick and informed decisions, understanding that opportunities have a limited shelf life. Therefore, the findings respond to Smith's (2004) call to provide a more sophisticated analysis of human agency, and indicate that stepping-stone migration follows individualisation in

contemporary society (Beck, 1992; 1994), which forces people to become active agents, in control of their life-phases. Therefore, this thesis complicates theorisations of highly-skilled migration, by looking into the role of structure and agency (Giddens, 1984) in migration decision making and overall in graduate migrants' life trajectories. The prime outcomes emphasise efforts in finding of graduates' share of happiness, when negotiating different life dimensions: family, career, personal life and general well-being. This is approached through manoeuvring between proliferating structures, using human and personal capital, and stresses the importance of entering different life-phases as well as belonging to social generational units.

This thesis reaffirms that interviewed graduates who grew up in times of preparation of Poland to join the EU, named by Wrzesień (2009) as a generation of "European Searchers" and described as proactive in searching for a new quality of life in Europe, hold specific traits. The findings show that graduate migrants felt a part of different cohorts within the generation of those who were born in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the examples of belonging to generational units such as: *"transformation generation"* (I6), *"European Union generation"* (I18), *"migration generation"* (I37), *"Pioneers on a large scale – with new opportunities"* (I20). Even though naming differs, the brought up by graduates titles indicate a strong influence of the socio-political changes, in particular the EU accession, when unrestricted travel across Europe became the norm, and which ultimately influenced their life-courses.

9.2.3 The labour market adjustment of graduates: "Continuers", "Switchers", and "Late Awakeners"

Thirdly, and as noted previously, the main contribution of this thesis to the scholarship on graduate migration is the multiplicity of undertaken, planned or anticipated steps, through stepping-stone migration, which can also be observed in small but strategic steps towards graduates' career development after migration. This thesis suggests existence of the three main career trajectories of graduate migrants, what constitutes truly original phenomena and, hence, a justifiable new topic of investigation. These, based on graduates' agency of their own development and British labour market adjustment, include: "Continuers", "Switchers", and "Late Awakeners". Graduates who belonged to the group of "Continuers" who predominantly migrated to England to commence postgraduate studies, derived mostly from a university educated family, confirming that migration in pursuit of a Western University degree is a form of social reproduction (Waters, 2006; Brooks and Waters, 2010c). However, there were also respondents who decided to enrol into university degree in England, whose parents did not

graduate HE, indicating that it is their own individual aspiration, and opportunity to gain qualifications to be a step closer to their aspired occupations within new labour market settings. On the whole, "Continuers'" career trajectories after migration to England remained within their general direction, planned before migration and acquired from Polish HE.

On the contrary, "Switchers", after migration to England, underwent major career transitions, and often started from the scratch within new directions. This is not to say that "Continuers" and "Late Awakeners", the third group of respondents, are not ahead of major career changes. For some "Continuers" this may happen after they complete university degrees in England, and for "Late Awakeners", having acquired language skills, they may wish to try following the path of "Switchers". Overall, this thesis pointed out that among the interviewed cohorts, there are "Potential Future Trainees", who are willing to undertake some additional form of education in the future, indicating that there is a drive for development, and the constant upgrading of ones skills and qualifications, either for the reason of change of occupations, professional upgrade, or personal interests.

9.2.4 Conceptualising highly-skilled– graduates' perceptions on skills gained

Fourthly, the findings of this thesis have relevance for a broader debate on who can be referred to as highly-skilled and qualified (i.e. Salt, 1997; Iradale, 2001), highlighting that a top-down approach in definition formation, ought to be balanced with graduates' perspectives. Following graduates' narratives, it became apparent that considering oneself as highly-skilled can stem from the level of preparation offered by universities, with Polish universities predominantly focusing on theory, and English universities on skills. Although Polish graduate migrants admitted to gaining a high standard of knowledge at Polish universities, it felt non-applicable to real life scenarios and often was not put into practice during their education in Poland. Thus, obtained knowledge was not consolidated, and in the majority of cases, graduates left universities with the feeling of not having too many skills, making them less confident in competing for the jobs and commencing employment within their studied professions. As graduates stressed, the disparity in standards and teaching systems (i.e. Dearing Report, 1997) at university levels within the EU left room for filling the knowledge and skills gaps through migration and enrolment in HE, to graduates' intentions and resources.

Therefore this thesis confirmed the decoupling of qualifications and skills, as observed within economic research (Green and McIntosh, 2007; Green and Zhu, 2008). Such decoupling gained in significance particularly after graduates' migration to England, where they could compare

educational approaches, and employment requirements, feeling highly-educated, but not skilled within their obtained degrees. Furthermore, this thesis also refers to the question of intentionality and unintentionality of different post-migration labour market participation (Smith, 2004) of graduates. Having graduated from a university implies a transition into labour market. However, graduates' awareness of lacking the necessary skills to be employed within jobs they gained the knowledge for at universities, and in particular graduate migrants' lack of confidence in the non-domestic labour market, stimulates non-discursive post-migration employment status.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that those who attended English universities and some other forms of education after migration were able to upgrade their skills. Graduates became confident in competing for jobs not only in England or the rest of the UK, but also in reaching for jobs around the world, which become evident when discussing graduates' career aims and objectives. Therefore, mobility within Europe, and also motivation and ability for constant development is paramount for the successful transition of graduates into the labour markets of Europe and beyond, and which can be seen as another example of brain circulation (Jöns, 2009). Overall, attending universities in England helped Polish graduates to understand the labour market practices, and evaluate their skills, making them more aware of what is required and what they can sell. However, the researched sample covered predominantly those who attended more prestigious public universities in Poland, raising a new question for further research: the role of socio-cultural capital obtained at different types of universities and likelihood of mobility for career development, which includes migration for training and education.

9.2.5 The future – "going somewhere else"

Fifthly, the findings expose that Polish graduates did not have clear plans for further migration, but they were preparing themselves for a wider range of opportunities, or as Eade *et al.* (2007:11) explains "returning to Poland when the economic situation improves or migrating elsewhere". This relates to Hoare and Corver's (2010) statement, that obtaining jobs for life is never less tenable than now, implying multiple destinations in migratory journeys of the highly-educated.

This thesis has looked closer into the aspect of potential further migration destinations. Graduates were thinking of going "somewhere else", predominantly to other English speaking countries, including the USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand for another few years. Linked with this was the potentiality of obtaining a UK passport, which was seen as gaining freedom of mobility choices outside of the EU, for example to Commonwealth countries, but not a form of

belonging, indicating the decoupling of citizenship from identity (Ip *et al*., 1997; Mavroudi, 2008). Having obtained British citizenship, graduates would not have to apply for tourist visas, allowing for more spontaneous decisions, which would fit in with their ability to live in constant changes and make ad hoc choices, developed through their formative years. In the course of benefits such passport could deliver, the financial price appeared to be the main constrain for an immediate pursue, reinforcing the fact that majority of Polish graduates do not have clear plans for migrating "somewhere else". Nonetheless, they keep this option, as well as becoming British citizens, open for further consideration.

9.3 Areas for further study

Overall, this thesis contributes to future research questions, particularly in the light of the global financial crisis of 2008 (Akyüz, 2010) and ensuing economic downturn high levels of graduate and youth unemployment, which are leading to new patterns and geographies of graduate migration. There is urgent need for deeper, more detailed and nuanced research to reveal the complexities and experiences of the EU, graduates migration vis-à-vis an economic climate. This is particularly evident through an increasingly saturated graduate labour market in Europe, the rising number of unemployed graduates, leading to what many are coming to call "Europe's Lost Generation" (Malik, 22/10/2012).

In particular, the concept of a stepping-stone migration where the need to search for missing life elements which cannot be found in the facilities package of one place (career, family and personal life), indicate that graduates have to be highly mobile to move through their life-trajectories. As Samers (2010:300) indicates, low income migrants, including those who are highly-skilled "may suffer from forced mobility" in search for a better life, yet being perceived by governments as "voluntary migrants".

Therefore, in the light of free movement rights across the EU on the one hand, and changing economic conditions in post-2008 Europe on the other, a key question arising from this research is to what extent graduate stepping-stone migration is voluntary, pushed (King, 2002), or perhaps forced (Samers, 2010). This also indicates that graduate stepping-stone migration is likely to be influenced by the uneven power distribution or "power geometrics" (Massey, 1993), including the complex and perhaps competing forces of places (Bristow *et al.,* 2011), leading to the question of stages at which graduates feel pushed to migrate, and keep migrating within the EU or decide to leave Europe and remain in such locations for longer. This is also pertinent to the

issue of decreasing numbers of people of a working age in the majority of the 27 EU countries, shrinking due to consistently low birth rates (Eurostat, 2010), making a cohort of young and educated Europeans a timely and valuable asset at the EU labour market. Therefore, the issue of a phantom of "Europe's Lost Generation" appearing in the numbers of steeply rising graduate unemployment, and as this research indicates, their readiness to migrate "somewhere else", being able to adjust to the new labour market conditions, ought to be envisaged in policy debates in Europe on migration beyond Europe's borders for labour market experience.

9.4 Reflections

The suggested "stepping-stone migration" of graduates is a route through their fragmented lives and is the result of the abundance of educational choices and uncertainty in the labour market (Cairns, 2009), and graduates' personal life. The "stepping-stone migration" is the epitome of graduates' negotiation between structure and agency, and their abilities to overcome constraints and choose opportunities that will deliver results within the three broad life-spheres of career, family and personal life throughout life-courses. Therefore, stepping-stone migration ought to be conceptualised as migration in the pursuit of happiness imagined as a balance between various life components. The road to happiness may be on going, unpredictable and individualised, and so the directions and duration of graduates' stepping-stone migration can never be predicted.

Although stepping-stone migration is a physical migration from one place to another, it encompasses elements of multidimensional mobility, which can be noticed, for example, in moving within and through different life-phases, which spur changes in roles and statuses within individual's life-courses (Hutchison, 2007), for example transition from university to employment. Therefore, this research adds to the debates on the "never straightforward" (King, 2002:90) boundary between migration and mobility, confirming its elusiveness, with graduates entangled in the stepping-stone migration, which intertwines different forms of mobility, or the "mobility turn" from social to spatial (Sheller and Urry, 2006). It also relates strongly to Bourdieu's (1984: 170) ideas of habitués, with a stepping-stone habitus of graduate migrants that is not fixed or permanent. All in all, the decisions on migration are strongly connected with life-courses, and any potential further migration may coincide with another phases entered, for example, setting up a family where environment suitability becomes one of important factors (Bond *et al.,* 2008).

Therefore, the thesis provides *both*: a new conceptualisation of international migrants that graduated in their home country prior to moving across the state borders; and, a theoretical contribution that emphasises how such graduate migrants adjust their career development in interchanging ways throughout their life-courses via the strategies of: "Continuers", "Switchers" or "Late Awakeners". Although this case study is clearly tied to the geographic contingencies and unintentional consequences of EU enlargement, the discussion will have wider resonance to other socio-spatial settings across the globe.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Number of Polish students at English universities 2003/04-2009/10 (HESA)

HESA Student Record 2003/04-2009/10 (restricted population)			
Gender	Region of institution	Academic year	Total
Female	East Midlands	2009/10	90
		2008/09	75
		2007/08	52
		2006/07	29
		2005/06	14
		2004/05	11
		2003/04	5
	East Midlands Total		276
	East of England	2009/10	116
		2008/09	94
		2007/08	113
		2006/07	71
		2005/06	28
		2004/05	19
		2003/04	7
	East of England Total		448
	London	2009/10	469
		2008/09	484
		2007/08	415
		2006/07	285
		2005/06	156
		2004/05	99
		2003/04	60
	London Total		1968
	North East	2009/10	29
		2008/09	25
		2007/08	33
		2006/07	17
		2005/06	12
		2004/05	11
		2003/04	9
	North East Total		136
	North West	2009/10	130
		2008/09	100
		2007/08	71
		2006/07	27
		2005/06	27
		2004/05	9
		2003/04	6
	North West Total		370
	South East	2009/10	165
		2008/09	140
		2007/08	108
		2006/07	75
		2005/06	29
		2004/05	27

		2003/04	20
	South East Total		564
	South West	2009/10	80
		2008/09	52
		2007/08	38
		2006/07	29
		2005/06	18
		2004/05	9
		2003/04	7
	South West Total		233
	West Midlands	2009/10	211
		2008/09	158
		2007/08	132
		2006/07	67
		2005/06	35
		2004/05	11
		2003/04	15
	West Midlands Total		629
	Yorkshire and The Humber	2009/10	122
		2008/09	121
		2007/08	119
		2006/07	54
		2005/06	32
		2004/05	10
		2003/04	2
	Yorkshire and The Humber Total		460
Female Total			5084
Male	East Midlands	2009/10	44
		2008/09	34
		2007/08	13
		2006/07	21
		2005/06	16
		2004/05	1
		2003/04	7
	East Midlands Total		136
	East of England	2009/10	83
		2008/09	66
		2007/08	67
		2006/07	25
		2005/06	24
		2004/05	9
		2003/04	8
	East of England Total		282
	London	2009/10	183
		2008/09	181
		2007/08	131
		2006/07	102
		2005/06	51
		2004/05	40
		2003/04	25
	London Total		713
	North East	2009/10	15
		2008/09	14
		2007/08	19
		2006/07	13

		2005/06	4
		2004/05	2
		2003/04	4
	North East Total		71
	North West	2009/10	55
		2008/09	53
		2007/08	35
		2006/07	25
		2005/06	15
		2004/05	1
		2003/04	6
	North West Total		190
	South East	2009/10	78
		2008/09	62
		2007/08	54
		2006/07	39
		2005/06	23
		2004/05	24
		2003/04	13
	South East Total		293
	South West	2009/10	36
		2008/09	20
		2007/08	12
		2006/07	13
		2005/06	8
		2004/05	6
		2003/04	1
	South West Total		96
	West Midlands	2009/10	124
		2008/09	112
		2007/08	150
		2006/07	113
		2005/06	33
		2004/05	30
		2003/04	6
	West Midlands Total		568
	Yorkshire and The Humber	2009/10	84
		2008/09	64
		2007/08	82
		2006/07	44
		2005/06	26
		2004/05	9
		2003/04	3
	Yorkshire and The Humber Total		312
Male Total			2661
Total			7745

Appendix 2. Call for respondents in English

Dear All

I'm a PhD student at Loughborough University and I'm doing a research project about Polish graduate migrants in the UK. I would like to get in touch with Polish graduates who migrated to the UK after 1 May 2004, who currently are living in East Midlands and have:

– at least a degree or equivalent from a polish university

– are currently studying or graduated from the UK universities, or are thinking of attending a university course in the UK, or decided not to do it

– are aged between 22-35 years old.

If you are one of those described above and would like to make your contribution to studies about Poles in the UK, please contact me on: A.P.Szewczyk@lboro.ac.uk.

Appendix 3. Call for respondents in Polish

Szanowny Absolwencie,

Prowadze badania na Loughborough University, w Departamencie Geografii na temat wyksztalconych Polakow mieszkajacych i uczacych sie w East Midlands. Poszukuje osob ktore wyemigrowaly do Wielkiej Brytanii po 1 maja 2004 roku i spelniaja nastepujace kryteria:

- osiagnely co najmniej licencjata na polskim uniwersytecie przed wyjazdem za granice

- obecnie studiuja, lub chca rozpoczac studia na uniwersytetach w East Midlands, badz zdecydowaly sie nie nie kontynuowac ksztalcenia w UK, badz ukonczyly jus studia w UK

- sa w granicy wiekowej 22-35 lat

Badania beda sie opieraly na wywiadach poglebionych z chetnymi osobami i dotyczyly Panstwa historii migracji do Wielkiej Brytanii. Ja takze jestem migrantka juz od 5 lat mieszkajaca w East Midlands, totez bylo by mi bardzo milo poznac inne osoby, ktore doswiadczyly migracji do Wielkiej Brytanii. Konwersacje beda nagrywane, po czym spisywane i analizowane. Miejsca spotkan bede wybierane takie, jakie pasuja respondentom najbardziej.

Badania rozpoczna sie NA POCZATKU CZERWCA 2011.

Jezeli jestes zainteresowany/a wzieciem udzialu w badaniach uprzejmie prosze o kontat na maila: A.P.Szewczyk@lboro.ac.uk.

Appendix 4. List of respondents

Respondent	Gender	Age	Graduation year	Migration year	Years in UK	Status	Degree in PL	HE in the UK FE in the UK	From	Migrated to
I1	M	28	2005	2007	4	M to Polish, 2 children	BA+MA	Not interested in doing anything	Rzeszotary	Lboro Montsorrell Lboro
I2	M	28	2007	2007	4	Polish GF	MSc	MSc Erasmus + PhD	Kielce	Lboro
I3	M	30	2007	2007	4	S	MA	MA	Tarnobrzeg	London Notts
I4	F	29	2009	2010	1	S	MA+MA (in Sweden)	MA	Szczecin	Notts
I5	F	29	2006	2008	3	M to German	MA	PGCE+ MA	Warsaw	Notts
I6	M	30	2003	2008	3	S	BA+MA	PhD	Gniezno	Notts Beeston
I7	M	27	2009	2009	2	S	MA	PhD	Poznan	Notts
I8	M	30	2004	2004	7	S	MSc	PhD	Krakow	Notts
I9	M	22	2010	2010	1	S	BSc	MSc	Ostrow Wielkop.	Lboro
I10	F	28	2006	2006	5	S	MA	MA	Szczecin	North
I11	F	28	2007	2007	4	M to Canadian	MA	DPSI + PGCE Primary	Gliwice	Birmingham North
I12	M	30	2007	2008	3	M to Polish, 1 child	MA	BA	Wadowice	Luton Bedford Notts
I13	F	28	2008	2008	3	BF American	MA	MA+PhD	Warsaw	Notts Beeston
I14	F	31	2004	2004	7	M to Polish, 1 child	MA	FE (English course, plus test)	Gubin	Hunstanton Norwich Lincoln
I15	M	31	2004	2004	7	M to Polish 1 child	MA	FE Online training	Myslibor z	Hunstanton Norwich Lincoln
I16	F	30	2006	2007	4	BF Polish	BA+MA	PhD	Wroclaw	Leicester
I17	F	30	2005	2006	5	BF Polish, 1 child	MA	FE Wants to do NVQ	Lodz	Shepshed London Shepshed
I18	F	27	2006	2006	5	S	BA+MA (did MA in parallel with BA in the UK)	BA, considers doing MA	Rzeszow	Derby Beeston
I19	F	27	2005	2008	3	BF British	MSc	PhD	Gdynia	Lboro
I20	F	28	2006	2006	5	BF Polish	BA	MA	Klobuck	Lboro
I21	M	30	2006	2008	3	S	MSc	Thinking of either HE or FE	Klobuck	Lboro
I22	M	27	2006	2006	5	GF Polish	BA	MA	Racibor	Lboro

									z	
I23	F	27	2006	2006	5	BF Polish	BA (teaching English) +BA (English)	MA Social Work	Swiecie nad Wisla	Leicester
I24	F	30	2005	2008	3	M to Polish	MSc	NVQ2	Krakow	Bedford - Nottingham
I25	F	32	2004	2004	7	Separated with South Afr., 1 child	BA+MA	DPSI (Diploma in Public Service Interpreting	Bielsko Podlaska	Newark
I26	F	30	2007	2007	4	BF Polish	MA		Chlewiska	Lincoln
I27	M	31	2004 June	2005 January	6	GF Polish	Eng		Bedzin	Lincoln
I28	M	31	2004	2006	5	GF Polish	MA	Lincoln College – ESOL LEVEL 1,2 - English	Ploty	Lincoln
I29	F	29	2006	2006	5	BF Welsh	BSc +MSc (physiotherapy)	Personal Trainer – Level 3; Kinesotaping; NVQ 1 – Customer Service	Legnica	Lincoln
I30	M	30	2007	2007	4	GF Polish	MA + 2 years private Physiotherapy	Private chool “Focus” – Fitness Instructing; NVQ2 – Health and Social Care NVQ3 – Fitness Instructor – personal trainer	Gryfice	Lincoln
I31	M	31	2004	2006	5	GF Polish (in PL)	MA	Photography – evening classes in College; aims to do CISCO CCNA course before	Ploty	London-Nottingham-Lincoln

								her gets back to Poland		
I32	M	27	2007	2010	1	S	MSc Eng	no	Nowy Sacz	Loughborough
I33	F	31	2004	2006	5	M to Polish, 1 child	MA	Did AAT2 Certificate in Accounting at Loughborough College (1 year)	Praszka	Loughborough
I34	F	25	2010	2010	1	BF Polish	BSc +MSc	PhD at Lboro Uni	Lidzbark Warminski	Loughborough
I35	F	29	2006	2006	5	M to Polish	BA+MA	NVQ2 Health and Social Care; Fintess Instructing Course; Moving and handling Instructor course	Miechow	Alfreton, moving to Nottingham in 2011
I36	F	30	2005	2006	5	M to Polish 2 kids	MA	Plans to do an online course	Jablonka	Alfreton
I37	F	33	2003	2006	5	Divorced, 1 child	ING	Mansfiled college – English course	Zubrzyca Dolna	Alfreton
I38	F	31	2004	2005	6	Polish bf, 1 child	BA	City and Guilds – ESOL – English skills for life Entry 1	Elblag	Nottingham
I39	F	31	2004	2008	3	M to Polish	BA+MA	English entry 2, entry 3, and level 1, -ESOL course	Szczerpcow (near Czestochowa)	Nottingham
I40	F	34	2004	2006	5	S	BA+MA	IELTS , Mentoring Course at Meridian Business Park	Koszalin	Leicester

Appendix 5. Semi-structured interview check-list

Part 1 – General background – LIFE IN POLAND

1. Biographical data of the interviewee
a) Could you please tell me some details about your upbringing?
b) Where were you born and how are you now?
c) Where did you grow up (which part of Poland, village/town)?
d) What jobs your parents do?
e) Do you have any siblings?

2. Question on mobility
a) Has any of your parents been staying or travelling abroad for work/holiday purposes?
b) Can you recall your first time, and subsequent times you went abroad? What circumstances were these (who did you go with, what purpose)?
c) What did you like/dislike about travelling/staying abroad?
d) What about travelling in Poland as a child and a young adult?

3. Question on education
a) Could you tell me about your education?
b) Which primary school and then college (lyceum) did you attend (private/public)?
c) Which university did you study at (name, private/public)?
d) Did you move out from your family home to a new place for the duration of the course?
e) Did you study abroad i.e. Erasmus exchange student, or full time student?

4. **Question on employment**
a) Did you work during your university course? What job was that?
b) Did you search for employment in profession in Poland after graduation?
c) Did you work after you graduation - what jobs did you do after finishing your degree/Masters/PhD in Poland? If worked, was it below your qualifications (did you experience deskilling)?

5. Question on perception of class/inequalities/divisions in Poland
a) I would like to discuss with you your ideas and notions of social divisions there. In your opinion is Poland socially divided society?
b) Do you ever think of Poland as a class society?
c) What is necessary to climb socially?
d) Where in all these divisions you see your parents/family?
e) Where in all these divisions you mentioned you see yourself, if at all?

6. Question on generations and belonging
a) I would like to discuss with you your ideas on notions of social generations (pokolenia) in Poland. In your opinion, is there a division of society with regards to different social generations?
b) If so, can you characterise those different generations?
c) Do you consider yourself belonging to any of those generations?
d) Could you characterise the generation that you think you belong to?

Part 2 – Migration and motivations – LIFE IN THE UK

7. Perception on migration/mobility to the UK
a) What was your main motivation for leaving Poland?
b) Did you have a purpose for migration to the UK, why the UK?
c) How did you imagine your life in the UK before you got here, and once you have landed compared to what you have lived through? How much your primary picture was different to reality?
d) What other places/countries did you go to (either on holiday, for work or other means) since you have migrated to the UK? Did you become more mobile since migration to the UK comparatively to when you

were living in Poland? Why yes/no? (look at the ACCELARATION IN MOBILITY among Polish migrants – AGA'S own concept).

8. Motivations for migration to East Midlands
a) OK, you are in East Midlands region now, is it your first place in the UK that you have migrated to?
b) Why did you choose East Midlands?
c) Have you been a migrant to other countries before the UK?
d) How long have you been in the UK (and in East Midlands)?
e) Is there anything that you like/dislike about East Midlands/city you live/work/study in?
f) Is there anything that holds you here/pushes you away from this area?

9. Migration path
a) What was your first occupation after arrival (did you have an arranged employment, searched for jobs while being here, came to do a course at the university, came here just to visit friends etc.?)
b) So what do you do currently (job/study/unemployed?)
c) Did you have any memorable/extraordinary/happy/other experiences within personal life/career during your stay in the UK?
d) How did they impact on you/your current situation, perception on who you are and where you are heading to (any memorable/fateful –'life changing' moments)?
e) Why this experience was important to you?

Part 3 – <u>EDUCATION IN THE UK</u>

10. Education in the UK
a) Have you thought of studying in the UK? (for those who didn't, or not studying in the UK at the moment)
b) Can you remember the time when you started thinking of attending HE in the UK? Why did you start considering this?
c) Was there any particular reason(s) that motivated you to enrol into a university course in the UK?
d) Is the fact of having a degree from the UK university (potential of having it) making you more confident? If so, in what sense (personal, career, belonging?)
e) Did you apply at any other universities/courses elsewhere in the UK or is East Midlands your first choice?
f) In terms of a subject of study, what and why did you choose to study?
g) Would you choose to study in the UK after the fee increase to £8000-9000?

11. Comparison of education in Poland and in the UK
a) Have you noticed any differences/similarities between education in Poland and in the UK? **b)** What are your feelings concerning having a first degree (other degrees) from a Polish university (are you content/satisfied with having obtained your first degree in Poland-why)? **c)** Have you noticed any benefits of having a degree from Poland?

12. English
a) When did you start learning English, did you have any private classes, or was that only at your school/university?
b) How would you rate your confidence in communicating in English language on arrival?(0 the lowest, 10 the highest)
c) Did you engage in any language courses after arrival to the UK?
d) Has it changed? How confident do you feel when communicating in English currently?(0 the lowest-10the highest).

Part 4 – <u>CAREER AND DESKILLING</u>

13. Deskilling – (fighting it?)
a) What level do you consider your skills being at? Why? Can you please **JUSTIFY** your answer (highly-skilled, skilled, low skilled)
b) Have you experienced working below your qualifications in the UK?

c) Did it matter to you (in what ways)?
d) Did you seek employment in your profession? How pro-active were you in searching for better employment/other education throughout your stay in the UK?
e) Where did you search for better employment?
f) Did anybody try to help you with searching for a better employment in the UK? Did you ask anybody/institution for help?

14. Career/personal plans - Managing intentional unpredictability
a) At this stage of your life, what seems to be the most important to you (career, personal relations etc)?
b) Do you have a life dream/main objective/ambition in life?
c) Do you think of the future**,** do you plan your life for the future?
d) Have you set yourself any short/long term goals?
e) Do you work at your life aim/goal at the moment?
f) Do you feel like you have achieved something in the UK (level of satisfaction from your current undertakings (in personal/career other aspects) in the UK from 0-10 being max)? 0.....10 max.
g) What do you consider as the greatest success so far in your life? Would it be possible without migrating?
h) Where can you see yourself in one year AND five years time? What does it depend on?

Part 5 - BELONGING

15. Question on perception of class/inequalities/divisions in Britain
a) Do you reckon Britain and also other countries are socially divided?
b) How would you describe these divisions?
c) Britain is said to be a very class oriented society. Do support this statement? Why?
d) Do you see yourself as part of this society in a context of the nation, and local community?
e) What do you reckon you need to do/achieve to become a part of this society (nation or local community)?
f) Would you like to become part of this society (nation and/or community)?

16. Question on citizenship
a) Is there any place/space that you feel that you belong to? i.e. Poland, UK, European Union, your current local town, your Polish home town, any other area/region etc? Why? How strong are these feelings? – on the scale 0-weak to 10 very strong.
b) Do you have a residence permit or permanent residence status here?
c) Do you have or plan to apply for British citizenship? Why yes / no?
d) Would you give up your Polish citizenship for the British, or would you rather hold both of them? Why yes/no?
e) To what extent do you feel a part of a British society? Which situations and spaces?
f) Does citizenship matter to you? In what way?
g) What value has got for you Polish citizenship?
h) What value has got for you British citizenship*?*

17. Home/Place/belonging
a) What does word 'home' mean to you?
b) Where would you say is your home?
c) Do you feel at home when you are back in Poland? Why?
d) Is there any place in the UK that you feel comfortable in, feel that you belong in there, or raises any other positive feelings?
e) Do you want to feel 'at home' in your current place, or is that not that important to you at the moment?
f) Is anything stopping you from feeling this? What is it?

Part 6 – LIFESTYLE AND FUTURE PLANS

18. Lifestyle data
a) What is the most important to you: career, family, travelling, studying, money etc.? How would you rate it – which would be on the first place and what would follow?

1).....
2).....
3).....
4).....
b) Do you enjoy your current lifestyle?
c) What lifestyle do you have then? How does your day to day life look like?
d) Is there anything that you would like to change in your current life? Why?

19. Future mobility plans
a) Is there any other region/city that you would consider moving to within the UK?
b) Is there any other country you would consider moving to within EU or beyond?

c) Do any of these ideas apply to you and your plans for **the next year**: (1) return to Poland, (2) stay in the UK, (3) travelling elsewhere? What motivates your choice?

d) What about the **next few years:** (1) return to Poland, (2) stay in the UK, (3) travelling elsewhere? What motivates your choice?

e) Can you list countries, to which you would consider migrating to? Why those countries?

20. Economic recession 2008
a) Has the recession affected you personally?
b) For those who migrated to the UK before 2008 - have you noticed any differences/changes affecting you directly?
c) How do you cope with them?

Part 7 – <u>PERCEPTION ON OTHER POLES & CONNECTIONS WITH POLAND</u>

21. Knowledge on other Polish migrants in the UK
a) How well informed are about other Polish migrants in the UK?
b) Who are they, and how many of them are in the UK?
c) What category of migrants would you consider yourself as (what are you in the UK for)? **d)** Do you meet/befriend other Polish in the UK? Which places/spaces/areas do you meet them?
e) Where do you find information about Poles in the UK?

22. Contacts with Poland, family ties and other ties
a) What contacts with Poland do you currently maintain?
b) How often do you go to Poland, what reasons?
c) If your family is in Poland, have they visited you in the UK yet? How often?
d) What is your marital status, and if not single, is your partner Polish or other nationality (which)?
e) Has he/she visited Poland with you yet?

23. Proud of being Polish?
a) Do you feel proud of where you are from (country, the city/area you grew up)?
b) Do you like coming back to Poland? Why?
c) Every time you visit Poland and get back from your trip to the UK, what feelings does it evoke in you (happy to be back in the UK, scared of the challenges, stressed, is this the place where I want to be)?
d) What do you like and dislike about Poland?
e) Would you encourage or discourage people to come to the UK?
f) What do you like and dislike in the UK?

Would you like to add anything else?

Appendix 6. Pre-interview surveys

POLISH GRADUATES IN THE UK 2011
Post-interview form

YOUR AGE: .....

MOBILITY

 Countries previously visited for any reason (holiday, study, work etc.) before migrating to the UK
1).....Reason.....
2).....Reason.....
3).....Reason.....
4).....Reason.....
5).....Reason.....
6).....Reason.....
7).....Reason.....
8).....Reason.....
9).....Reason.....
10).....Reason.....

 Subsequent cities, regions in the UK you moved in to since arrival
1).....
2).....
3).....
4).....
5).....
.....

 Do you have family members living abroad? Reasons?.....
In the EU.....
The USA.....
Canada.....
Other.....

EDUCATION

 Where in PL did you go to lyceum/technikum (private/public), please provide the name: .....
.....
.....
 Where in PL did you study, which university (private/public – part-time/full-time, how many years)?.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

 What subjects did you graduate, what titles have you obtained?.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

.....
.....

 Attended universities in other countries:

Which countries:.....
.....
.....
What universities:.....
.....
.....
Studied subjects.....
.....
.....

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

 Do you eventually plan to leave the UK.....

 If yes, or undecided, when would you leave?.....
1) Shortly
2) In a year or so
3) In 2 years
4) In 3 years or more
5) Up to 10 years
6) I don't know

 Where would you go?.....
1) I plan to return to the home country
2) Plan to go to another Western European country (which?.....)
3) I plan to go to Central or Eastern European country (which?.....)
4) I plan to go to North American country (which?).....
5) Don't know
6) I plan to go to other places.....

 What are the reasons for going to another place?.....

Re-contact for a short email/telephone survey a year after the interview

 Do you agree to be re-contacted in 2012?.....YES/ NO
 Preferred mode of contact: EMAIL / TELEPHONE

 EMAIL: .....
TELEPHONE: .....

Appendix 7. Students and graduates of HE institutions in Poland

Academic year	Students (both private and public)	Graduates (both private and public)	Number of private HE institutions	Students of private HE institutions	Graduates of private HE institutions	Foreign nationals students	Foreign nationals graduates
1990/1991	403 824	56 078	-	-	-	4259	425
1991/1992	428 159	59 046	-	-	-	-	-
1992/1993	495 729	61 424	-	-	-	-	-
1993/1994	584 009	64 201	-	-	-	-	-
1994/1995	682 200	70 295	-	-	-	-	-
1995/1996	794 642	89 027	-	-	-	-	-
1996/1997	927 480	115 868	-	-	-	-	-
1997/1998	1 091 841	146 318	146	226 929	22 625	-	-
1998/1999	1 273 955	174 771	158	331 483	31 995	-	-
1999/2000	1 431 871	215 423	174	419 167	52 926	5202	697
2000/2001	1 584 804	303 966	195	472 340	79 794	6563	892
2001/2002	1 718 747	342 138	221	509 279	103 712	7380	1002
2002/2003	1 800 548	366 141	252	528 820	119 806	7608	1307
2003/2004	1 858 680	384 029	274	545 956	125 966	8106	1178
2004/2005	1 926 122	391 465	301	582 112	133 970	8829	1326
2005/2006	**1 953 832**	393 968	315	620 80 0	129 227	10092	1306
2006/2007	1 941 445	410 107	318	640 313	130 844	11752	1489
2007/2008	1 937 404	420 942	324	**660 467**	144 639	13695	1774
2008/2009	1 927 762	439 749	325	659 396	154 846	15862	2210
2009/2010	1 900 014	**478 916**	**330**	633 097	157 563	**17000**	-
2010/2011	1 841 251	-	328	580 076	**169 039**	**-**	**-**

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS, 2011)

Appendix 8. Classification of Continuers

No	No	Gender	Age	Graduation year (Poland)	Graduated subjects in Poland and abroad	HE and courses attended in England
1	I2	M	28	2007	MSc Electronics of Microsystems and photonics	Loughborough University **PhD** photovoltaic systems (3rd year)
2	I6	M	30	2003	BA Teaching English and Education +MA Applied Linguistics	Nottingham University **PhD** in Linguistics (3rd year)
3	I7	M	27	2009	MA of Pharmacy	University of Nottingham – **PhD** in pharmacy (3rd year)
4	I8	M	30	2004	MSc in Geodesy and Cartography	University of Nottingham **PhD** in Space Geodesy (3rd year)
5	I9	M	22	2010	BSc in Physiotherapy	Loughborough University, **MSc** Sports Sciences – sports physiotherapy
6	I10	F	28	2006	MA English Philology, British and American Studies	University of Westminster, MA in Translation and Interpreting
7	I12	M	30	2007	MA Law	Nottingham Trent Law School, **Pgrad Dipl** in law. Now: Legal practice for 3 years
8	I13	F	28	2008	MA in American Studies	University of Nottingham, **MA** Hollywood Studies; **PhD** Hollywood Studies (3rd year)
9	I14	F	31	2004	MA Economics	English certificate; Certificate in Financial Administration; In-house training at Lincoln County Council
10	I15	M	31	2004	MA in Economics	Started Financial Advisor – online training
11	I16	F	30	2006	BA in Art History +MA in Art History Course: Culture manager	Loughborough University, **PhD** in Art History
12	I18	F	27	2006	BA Journalism and Public Communication + MA in Economy (did it in parallel with BA in the UK)	Derby University **BA** International Business Management
13	I19	F	27	2005	MSc BEng Geo-technic	Loughborough University, **EngDoc**, (4th year –last year)
14	I20	F	28	2006	BA Teacher of English	UK Loughborough University, **MA** History; **PhD** in Early Modern Writing – (last year)
15	I29	F	29	2006	BSc in Physiotherapy + MSc in Physiotherapy	Personal Trainer – Level 3; Kineso-taping; NVQ 1 – Customer Service
16	I30	M	30	2005 and 2007	MA in Economy and Private school of Physiotherapy (2 years	Private school "Focus" – Fitness Instructing; NVQ2 – Health and Social Care NVQ3 – Fitness Instructor – personal trainer
17	I33	F	31	2004	MA in Economics	AAT2 Certificate in Accounting at Loughborough College (1 year)
18	I34	F	25	2010	BSc Optical Engineering + MSc Optometry	Loughborough University, **PhD** Visual discomfort and visual fatigue during viewing 3D stimuli
19	I35	F	29	2006	BSc+MSc Physiotherapy	NVQ2 Health and Social Care; Fitness Instructing Course; Moving and handling Instructor course

Appendix 9. Classification of Switchers

No	No	Gender	Age	Graduation year (Poland)	Graduated subjects in Poland and abroad	HE and courses attended in England
1	I3	M	30	2007	BA Substantive Administrative law MA Administration	The Open university, MA Psychology (part time)
2	I4	F	29	2009	MA Philosophy +MA (Sweden) African Studies	Nottingham Trent University, MA Psychology (full time)
3	I5	F	29	2006	MA History	Nottingham University, MA Diplomacy (2 years part time)
4	I11	F	28	2007	MA Law and Administration	University of Northampton, DPSI - Diploma in Public Service Interpreting; PGCE Primary - start from Sept. 2011)
5	I17	F	30	2005	MA Polish Philology	NVQ 1 Health and Social Service; aims to do NVQ3 in child care (or similar)
6	I22	M	27	2006	BA Polish Philology	Loughborough University, MA Early Modern Writing; University of Westminster – MA Translation and Interpreting
7	I23	F	27	2006	BA Teaching English + MA English Language	Leicester University MA Social Work
8	I24	F	30	2005	MSc in Biotechnology	NVQ2 Health and Social Care
9	I25	F	32	2004	BA Pedagogy + MA Pedagogy	Northampton University, DPSI- Diploma in Public Service Interpreting
10	I27	M	21	2004	Audio Engineer	Lincoln College, Team Leader course; English ESOL 1,2; Aims to do: CAT programming;
11	I28	M	31	2004	MA Geography	Lincoln College – ESOL LEVEL1,2 – English; Aims to do: nursing studies.
12	I31	M	31	2004	MA in History	Lincoln College, Photography course – evening classes; Aims to do: CISCO CCNA course

Appendix 10. Classification of Late Awakeners

No	No	G	Age	Graduation/ migration year	Graduated subjects in Poland and abroad	Occupations during study	Occupations in Poland after graduation	Occupations in the UK	HE and courses attended in England
1	I21	M	30	2006/ 2008	MSc in Electrical Engineering	- didn't work	manufacturing (2 years)	manufacturing display units for cosmetics (1 year) - line production operator in a factory	- preparing to English Certificate exam – studying English privately - wants to do "17th edition" - Electrics Course
2	I26	F	30	2007/ 2007	MA Sociology and Theology	- worked as a journalist for a Polish radio station - academic book writer	- worked as a journalist for a Polish radio station	- cake factory - crisps factory - duck factory - opened a Polish shop (1 year) - post-lady at Royal Mail (2 years)	- did ESOL level 1 English language at college - wants to do PR or spokesman, before she gets back to Poland - wants to do further training in English
3	I37	F	33	2003/ 2006	Eng in Agro-economy; Accountancy Course	- HR-recruiter (5 years)	- manager of the bank (3 years)	- seismic cables repairer (4 years)	- started ESOL English language course at a college
4	I38	F	31	2004/ 2005	BA Marketing and Management of properties MA started but never finished	- worked as a cashier at a petrol station	- worked as a cashier at a petrol station (continued)	- small printing house worked as a quality controller (4 years) - maternity leave (2 years ongoing)	- did ESOL entry level; - wants to continue doing ESOL – English skills for life Level 1-3 - thinks of doing Masters
5	I39	F	31	2004/ 2008	BA Management MA Administration and Management	- worked in shops as an assistant	- shops as an assistant - short contract-replacement positions as an admin staff in schools	- print house – on the line (3 weeks) - mix of jobs through recruitment agencies, mostly factories (1,5 years) - works in a factory (2 years ongoing)	- did English course ESOL entry, levels 1-3, and ongoing - wants to continue learning English, to improve her skills
6	I40	F	34	2004/ 2006	BA Reseocialisation MA Pedagogy	- no information	- worked in a custody department (1 year) - worked in Italy as carer of an elderly person (1 year)	- seasonal jobs on a farm (1 year) - beauty salon, doing manicure (2 years) - receptionist at the optician (3 years)	- did IELTS English language course - wants to do Counselling for Alcohol and Drug Addicts foundation degree at university

Appendix 11. Graduates perception on HE in Poland

Polish graduates' perception on HE in Poland			
Issues with accessibility to HE in Poland	**Focus on theory and broad knowledge**	**Non-application of knowledge into real life**	**Skills gained**
- treatment of students – system not student focused - by lecturers: - sometimes antisocial behaviour - students afraid of asking questions /discussing subjects	- knowledge that needs to be acquired is very broad: - provides with solid background and foundation knowledge - replication of the knowledge and not creation of a new one – not much critical thinking involved - knowledge to pass exams only	- knowledge which after graduation is not likely going to be applied into real life	- extensive knowledge of theories - flexibility - technical skills - some gained practical skills due secured placements throughout the university course (predominantly in engineering and medical fields) - greater ease to get used to changing because of received broader education
- high number of students and graduates: – issues with access to facilities – high students intake (criticism – it should be lower) – tuition fee – studies are for free: negative – high intake; positive: students do not end up with a debt – high number of graduates out of labour market – less favourable for disabled students (old buildings, arrangements) – late start, or return to education more problematic – length of study (very long programs, up to 5 years)	- the system gives flexibility: - because of the broad knowledge students have greater ease to get used to changing conditions - ease to continue to study further	- lack of experience of labour market and skills at the end of education: - learning things from a scratch in first employment - high expectations of employers for performing basic jobs	
- Polish society's attitude towards HE: - tertiary education taken for granted; - HE perceived as a high in value by Polish society	- set programmes where students lack of autonomy in choosing courses/modules - knowledge that is often old, not changing education programme - strict rules	- much more technical – lack of non-technical skills, social skills	
- poorly equipped lecture rooms and labs, no facilities		- lack of practical application/workshops – learning abstracts: *"I've never had that training to realise that I can actually apply it to a real life"*	
- less funding available so the research goes much slower			

Appendix 12. Graduates perception on HE in England

Polish graduates' perception on HE in England		
Accessibility to HE in England and its value	**Narrowness of knowledge and focus on practical aspects**	**Skills gained**
- system students focused	- less of 'book knowledge' passed on to students - less theories and more applications into real life scenarios	- Give good quality presentations - Ability to write concise reports - Critical and practical thinking - Searching for information - Social skills and ability to interact – team oriented work, team working skills! - More of employability skills, chances for professional development (internships etc) - Skills oriented thinking - what skills will be sought by future employers
- positive attitude of lecturers towards students: - feedback - improving teaching programs	<u>Negative:</u> - less flexibility when re-qualification is sought at some stage of their lives, as they gained less knowledge	-more skills for employment, providing more options: - interesting career options - higher confidence on the labour market - better progress
- lower numbers of students – lower ratio of students per lecturer, better access to lecturers	<u>Positive:</u> - free choice of courses that match students interests and future career, rather than set by the university strict frames - more specialised in their subject - less knowledge passed on to students,	
- good accessibility to HE at any age, eased return to education at later stages of life	- creation and application of knowledge into real life	
- good facilities– universities well equipped	- focus on projects and practical aspects	
- length of study (short)	- independence in studying/autonomy in managing own workload and knowledge acquisition	
- recognition of the university in the world		
- atmosphere at university, students environment, culture - Competitiveness		

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