

**Negotiating the transition to adulthood: the
experiences of Polish young people in rural
Northumberland**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the everyday lives and experiences of young Poles aged sixteen to twenty-four who are living and growing up in Northumberland, rural north east England, as they make their transitions to adulthood. Transitions to adulthood are always complicated and complex. Since the 1970s traditional pathways into adult life have become less standardised, heterogeneous, differentiated and elongated, and it has also been argued that there is an increase of individualisation across cohorts, with individual agency serving a greater role in shaping the lifecourse (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Jones, 2009). The young people who took part in this research migrated to Northumberland from Poland, with their families, after European Union enlargement in 2004. Existing research has developed a clear and nuanced picture about those Poles who migrated to the UK after 2004 (e.g. Burrell, 2009). However, very little attention has been paid to the perspectives of those young people who migrated with their families. Based on fifteen interviews with stakeholders (e.g. school teachers and community members), and forty interviews and eleven lifegrids with the young Poles, this research makes sense of how the experience of migration to the UK has influenced how this group of young people think about themselves, and in what ways this then shapes the choices and decisions that they were making on their transitions to adulthood.

At first it could be assumed that there was something quite ordinary about the transitions to adulthood the young Poles were making; they could be mapped onto those discussed by the stakeholders in the first phase of the research and documented in the existing literature. However, the young Poles' transitions were more complex than this. The young Poles frequently made reference to the sacrifices that their parents had made in order to provide them with opportunities. There was an expectation that they would do well at school and go on to university. However, some of the young Poles felt that the experience of migration constrained their transitions. The age that they migrated from Poland impacted on their experiences. Many of the young Poles played significant roles in their families, for example being expected to act as translators when parents spoke little or no English. They felt these experiences made them more mature in relation to their peers. Some of the young Poles talked about their Polishness being an asset or employable skill as they made their transitions. I explore how the young Poles constructed and negotiated their identities in their everyday lives, and through particular events, drawing on examples

from Christmas, the Polish Saturday School or on return visits to Poland. Overall, the thesis demonstrates that Polishness and the experience of migration exerts a strong influence over their identities and lives as they make their transitions to adulthood.

Dedication

This PhD is dedicated to Gerry Jones, an instrumental stakeholder and advocate of this research, who sadly passed away on Sunday 23rd October 2016. Gerry was dedicated to social justice and the wellbeing of others, and had a commitment to making Northumberland a fairer and more compassionate place in which to live. When I first met with Gerry in July 2014 his personality was infectious, and I feel very grateful to have met and worked with such a kind and encouraging individual for a significant part of my PhD. Gone but never forgotten.

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Contents Page

Abstract	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Table of Contents	ix
List of Tables and Figures	xii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	
1.2 Young Polish Migrants	
<i>Youth geographies</i>	
<i>Transitions to adulthood</i>	
<i>Northumberland</i>	
1.3 Research Questions	
1.4 Methods	
1.5 Outline of Thesis	
Chapter Two: Transitions to Adulthood	12
2.1 Introduction	
2.2 Youth and young people	
2.3 Youth transitions: education, employment, housing and relationships	
2.3.1 Education	
2.3.2 Higher education	
2.3.3 Employment	
2.3.4 Housing	
2.3.5 Relationships	
2.3.6 Section summary	
2.4 Rural youth transitions	
2.5 Youth transitions and government policy	
2.6 Youth transitions and post-socialist states	
2.7 Concluding Remarks	
Chapter Three: Polish Migration to the UK and Rural Life	40
3.1 Introduction	
3.2 Geographies of Polish Mobility to the UK	
3.3 Children, young people and families	
3.4 Identities: Understanding Migration	
3.5 Rural life	
3.6 Concluding Remarks	
Chapter Four: Researching young Poles in Northumberland	60
4.1 Introduction	
4.2 Part One: The Research Process	
4.2.1 Study Area	
4.2.2 The Research Participants	
Stakeholders	
Young People	
4.2.3 Access and Recruitment	
4.2.4 Compensation, reward or incentives?	

- 4.3 Part Two: Research Design
 - 4.3.1 The Approach
 - 4.3.2 The Method
 - 4.3.3 Semi-structured interviews
 - Stakeholder semi-structured interviews
 - Young people semi-structured interviews
 - Follow-up semi-structured interviews
 - 4.3.4 Lifegrids
 - 4.3.5 Research diary
 - 4.3.6 Data analysis
- 4.4 Part Three: Reflexivity, Representation and Positionality
- 4.5 Concluding Remarks

Chapter Five: Living and growing up in rural Northumberland 96

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Educational experiences
- 5.3 Employment
 - Apprenticeships*
- 5.4 Housing
- 5.5 Relationships
- 5.6 Mobility
 - Public transport*
 - Cars*
- 5.7 Concluding Remarks

Chapter Six: Education and Employment: Family, Friends and Teachers 135

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Family
 - Parents expectations or ambitions of the young Poles*
 - Parents' experiences of employment in the UK*
 - Siblings*
 - Family members in or from Poland*
- 6.3 Friends
 - Support from friends*
 - Reciprocal friendships*
- 6.4 Teachers
 - Teachers as listeners and advisors*
- 6.5 Concluding Remarks

Chapter Seven: Negotiations of Polishness and the experience of migration 164

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Being Polish in Public
 - School*
 - Work*
 - Nights out*
 - Shopping with certain family members*
- 7.3 Strategies to become invisible
- 7.4 Practices in the young Poles lives
 - Catholicism*

	<i>Polish Saturday School</i>	
	<i>Making family</i>	
	<i>Food</i>	
	<i>Christmas</i>	
	<i>Return visits to Poland</i>	
7.5	Place Attachment	
7.6	Concluding Remarks	
	Chapter Eight: Conclusions	197
8.1	Introduction	
8.2	Answering the Research Questions	
8.3	Contributions to Knowledge	
	<i>Youth transitions studies</i>	
	<i>Youthful Polish migration</i>	
	<i>Conceptual contributions (transitions, rurality and identity)</i>	
	<i>Methodological</i>	
8.4	Future Research Directions	
8.5	Concluding Comments	
	Bibliography	215
	Appendices	243
	Appendix A: Letter translated to English	
	Appendix B: Berwick Migrant Support Group Leaflet	
	Appendix C: Parent/Guardian Information Sheet	
	Appendix D: Young Person Information Sheet	
	Appendix E: Stakeholder Information Sheet	
	Appendix F: Stakeholder Consent Form	
	Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Consent Form	
	Appendix H: Young Person Consent Form	
	Appendix I: Young Person Consent Form – Follow-up Interview	
	Appendix J: Interview Schedule with Stakeholders	
	Appendix K: Interview Schedule with Young People – First Interview	
	Appendix L: Interview Schedule with Young People – Follow-up Interview	
	Appendix M: Briefing Note for Collaborative Partner and Stakeholders	
	Appendix N: Full Ethical Assessment Form	
	Appendix O: Fieldwork and Travel Risk Assessment	
	Appendix P: Lone Working Protocol	
	Appendix Q: Data Management Plan	

List of Tables

- Table 1** Northumberland – Percentage of non-UK born youth (16-24 year olds)
– 2011 Census England & Wales
- Table 2** Group One sample – Job role and location in Northumberland
- Table 3** Demographic information of Group Two
- Table 4** Breakdown of Research Methods

List of Figures

- Fig 4.1** Map to show the geographical location of Northumberland and its communities (Source: Northumberland County Council, 2014)
- Fig 4.2** An example of a poster designed for the recruitment of young people
- Fig 4.3** Copy of letter sent to young people who had previously attended Polish Saturday School in Berwick (formally Seahouses)
- Fig 4.4** Example of completed lifegrid activity
- Fig 8.1** Note included with a completed lifegrid returned by one of the participant's

Chapter One

Introduction

It is over a decade since Poland joined the European Union along with nine other states. At the time the UK, Ireland and Sweden were the only three countries to offer the nationals of accession states unrestricted access to their labour markets. In the UK there was already an existing Polish community that was formed after the Second World War, during the Cold War and during the political transformations of Eastern Europe in the 1980s and 1990s. Poland's accession to the European Union (EU) in 2004 led to an increase in migration from Poland to the UK (Burrell, 2009). The number of Polish nationals in the UK increased from 94,000 in 2004 to 831,000 in 2015 (which was 9.7% of the total number of non-UK-born residents in the UK at the time) (ONS, 2016). This was an increase of 737,000. The 2011 Census found that there were 579,121 Polish-born individuals living in England and Wales alone (ONS, 2011).

1.2 Young Polish Migrants

Early predictions anticipated that young single Poles would migrate, however there has also been a significant family migration from Poland, who form the majority of migrant flows (White, 2009). Figures estimate that there were 433,000 Polish families¹ living in the UK in the first quarter of 2016 (out of a total of 29.9 million families) (ONS, 2016). This increase in family migration is reflected in the increase in the number of Polish children and young people in the UK. Research showed that the total number of dependents rose from 8,525 to 44,120 between 2004 and the second quarter of 2007 (Home Office, 2007). The Labour Force Survey suggests that in 2008 there were approximately 170,000 Polish-born children living in the UK (Pollard et al, 2008), and that they are now the biggest non-English speaking group in British schools. In April 2011 the number of Polish-speaking students in primary and secondary schools reached 16,305 in London alone, an increase of 103% since 2006

¹ Polish families are defined as those whose head of family was born in Poland. This is a somewhat crude way of identifying Polish families, as it excludes those where other members of the family are Polish, but it allows for broad comparisons of family structure between the Polish-born population and the population as a whole (ONS, 2016).

(Moszczyński, 2011). Despite high numbers in London, the Polish community is dispersed across the UK. Increases in the number of Polish pupils have also been witnessed in many other cities around the UK including for example Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle (Ryan et al, 2009; Sales et al, 2008). White's (2010) study with Polish migrants from the small towns of Grajewo and Sanok concluded that initially many of the parents perceived the decision to migrate with children as irrational and extremely risky. However as the likelihood of returning began to fade and migrants developed networks with other Poles, some of whom had already brought children with them to England, many parents decided to take this risk (White, 2010). For those who have a secure and comfortable financial position in the UK, return migration to Poland is often seen as an incredibly precarious move (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010; Ryan et al, 2009). Many Poles appreciate various aspects of the British education system and believe that it is a more meritocratic environment than in Poland (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010). However existing evidence suggests that a significant number of Polish parents lack fluency in English (Moskal, 2014; Tkacz and McGhee, 2016). This not only complicates their access to employment opportunities, but also influences their ability to participate in their child's education (Moskal, 2010; Sales et al, 2008).

My academic interest in this study emerged while working at a hotel in Otterburn, a village located 30 miles north west of Newcastle. There was a group of young Poles who had migrated with their families, and were living and growing up in the local village. These young people were then attending the first and middle schools located nearby. I began to develop an interest in their lives and experiences, particularly as they became teenagers and made choices and decisions about their futures. However these young Poles did not end up taking part in my research as they were all still younger than sixteen at the time of my fieldwork.

The motivation for this study emerged due to a paucity of research focusing on the lives and experiences of this group of young people. All of the young people who took part in my research were born in Poland. They had all had some experience of attending school in Poland. This meant that the young people faced the challenges associated with making the transition into the British education system. As a result, their experiences may differ from those of children that were born in the UK. Added to this, they all migrated at different ages, some at first or middle school age, others at high school age, and others towards the end of high school. This provided me with

the opportunity to explore whether or not the age that they migrated from Poland had an influence on their transitions to adulthood.

Through this empirical research it is my intention to unpack these young Poles' lives and experiences, and to develop a more holistic understanding of the ways in which being Polish and the experience of migration contribute to shaping the nature and geography of their youth transitions. This research documents their everyday lives and experiences, and explores their identities and senses of belonging across both Northumberland and Poland. The research aims to contribute to public debates on migration and Europe, and provide relevant information for policy makers and practitioners that work with young Poles who have settled in Britain.

It is important to note that this research was conducted from September 2014 to January 2016, before the EU referendum in the UK. The referendum result has resulted in much uncertainty around the rights of EU citizens, including Poles, who are living in the UK (Northumberland Gazette, 2017a). This means that the experiences and lives of the young people who took part in this research are increasingly important to study and understand, making sense of their everyday geographies and senses of belonging.

Youth geographies

This research engages with and contributes to literatures in youth geographies, while also acknowledging the wider debates around transitions to adulthood. Since the 1990s young people's geographies have emerged as an important and lively subfield of human geography (Jones, 1999; Matthews and Limb, 1999; Skelton and Valentine, 2008; Valentine, 1999, 2003). However, the approaches, positions and research priorities have shifted and changed in recent years (see: Holloway, 2014; Robson et al, 2013). While the origins of this subfield are contested, interest in the practices of young people can be traced back to those who were working in the Chicago school of sociology, and the subsequent research that has emerged from this (Allan, 2012). Generally, the study of young people's lives has had a longer history in disciplines such as sociology and cultural studies compared to human geography.

Evans (2008) provides a useful overview of the geographies of young people, linking these with debates about transition and their engagement with public space. She also suggested potential future directions for young people's geographies, building on existing trends in the literature. She points out that most of the existing work in young people's geographies has tended to focus on young people that are aged between sixteen and twenty-five.

It has generally been feminist and social and cultural geographers who have helped to take young people's geographies forward, alongside the work in children's geographies (Ansell, 2017, 2009; Hopkins, 2010; Hörschelmann, 2011; Skelton and Valentine, 2008). Recent contributions draw attention to the significance of the urban (Hörschelmann and van Blerk, 2011), the rural (Leyshon, 2008; Panelli et al, 2007), and the place of scales, themes and sites (Hopkins, 2010) in young people's geographies. The place of the body is also significant in research with children and young people. The contested bodies of children and young people are increasingly evident in the ways that youthful bodies are governed and controlled, and provided with access to particular locations, institutional contexts and social settings (Hörschelmann and Colls, 2010).

The current thesis attempts to build on this research and fill a gap in knowledge by understanding the ways and the extent to which the geographies of the young Poles are embedded in their lives and experiences as they make their transitions to adulthood. While there is a long history of the study of young people's lives in disciplines such as sociology and cultural studies, as discussed above, there are not a broad range of sophisticated studies that unpack the complex spatialities of young people's lives.

The transnational aspects of children and young people's migration have only recently been acknowledged. Previously, children and young people have been treated as the appendix of transnational family mobility that was driven by adults (Emond and Esser, 2015). This research breaks from this culture by drawing attention to the experiences of young Poles' transnational migration, focusing on a group of young people that have so far received little attention in the study of youth and migration. The aims of this research are to explore the transitions to adulthood of young Poles aged sixteen to twenty-four who are living and growing up in Northumberland following migration with their families, and the ways in which being Polish, the experience of migration and living and growing up in Northumberland

contribute to shaping the nature and geography of their youth transitions. This thesis offers an analysis of the young Poles' experiences and aspirations through grounded empirical evidence. It examines their understandings of what it means to be Polish, and the ways in which these are negotiated as part of their everyday lives and through certain practices. The empirical chapters are structured to consider three key aspects of their youth transitions – living and growing up in Northumberland, the role and influence of family and social and support networks, and negotiations of Polishness and the experience of migration – to help understand and make sense of how these contribute to and influence the choices and decisions that the young Poles' are making about their futures.

Transitions to adulthood

Chapter Two expands on previous youth transitions research and explores how it informs this study. I acknowledge that the youth transitions literature is relatively diverse, but I only touch upon aspects of this research within my thesis. In sociology there has been a long tradition of research on the transitions to adulthood. Transition is the process of moving from one stage to another. In youth studies, this refers to the period of physical and social change that falls between the life course of childhood and adulthood (Heinz, 2009). Traditionally this has been interpreted as a unidirectional and linear process. Traditional sequences often involved a move from education to work, followed by leaving home and then marriage and family formation. Today these events may occur in ways that are less regular, structured and predictable. Young people may leave the parental home for education, employment or to move in with a partner, but later these moves may reverse, sometimes even on several occasions (Jones, 1995; Henderson et al, 2007).

Furlong and Cartmel (2007) present an overview of the many contemporary transitions to adulthood. Since the 1970s there have been sharp and significant changes in the nature and experiences of transitions for young people. The duration of the transition has lengthened, the number of alternative routes has increased, and the process seems to have become more hazardous and uncertain. For young people their choices appear to have multiplied, and the sense of responsibility for success or failure has become increasingly personal and individual. There has been persistent youth unemployment since the 1980s following deindustrialisation. This

has been documented in studies of youth transitions in disadvantaged working class areas (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). However, youth transitions research now focuses on additional transitions, such as extended transitions faced by longer education and uncertain employment opportunities (Skelton, 2002), including the importance of biographical (Henderson et al, 2007) and cultural approaches (Woodman and Wyn, 2015). Transitions to adulthood are often considered to be comprised of various interconnected 'life course landmarks' (Hall et al, 2009). The transition to adulthood is generally understood as an important period in the lives of young people when normative expectations suggest that young people should receive a certain level of education, acquire employability skills, secure employment, form relationships, become a parent and live independently (Arnett, 2007). Education is widely considered a prerequisite for gaining access to employment (Ansell, 2017). Being in employment and economically independent has frequently been understood as one of the most important markers of adult status (Arnett, 1997; Hopkins, 2010). Henderson et al (2007: 29) found that for the young people in their study 'thinking of themselves as adult was related to their feelings of competence, and the recognition that they received that competence'.

More recently, Furlong (2017) considered young people's lives across various spheres of social life, including: education, labour markets, leisure and politics. There is a real need to draw attention to the ways in which young people are making their lives under new conditions such as the Great Recession and the subsequent financial austerity (Furlong, 2017). In August 2014 at least 1.8 million zero hour contracts were in use in the UK (up from 1.4 million in January 2014), with 34% of all zero-hour contract workers being aged sixteen to twenty-four (ONS, 2015ab). Young people have to negotiate a set of uncertainties that were less prominent in the lives of previous generations (Furlong et al, 2016). In summary, the new realities that confront young people are complex and varied.

This research is geographically located in Northumberland, rural north east England. Existing youth transitions research has focused on the transitions to adulthood of young people in urban areas of Tyneside and Teeside (Hollands, 1997; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Nayak, 2006). This results in little being known about the lives and experiences of young people in Northumberland, as they make their transitions to adulthood. This research seeks to make sense of the young Poles' transitions to adulthood in the context of living and growing up in rural Northumberland, adding to

existing research with rural youth (Argent and Walmsley, 2008; Culliney, 2016; Gibson and Argent, 2008; Glendinning et al, 2003; Leyshon and Bull, 2011; Matthews et al, 2000).

Northumberland

Northumberland is geographically the sixth largest county in England, with an area of 5,013km², but with a population of approximately 313,000 people, it is the least densely populated (63 per km² compared with 302 in the North East and 406 in the rest of England). Northumberland's seven largest towns are Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth, Cramlington, Hexham, Morpeth and Alnwick, which are set within extensive rural areas and uplands. 49% of the population in Northumberland live in rural areas compared to 18.8% in the North East and 18.9% in England (Know Northumberland, 2015). 16 areas of the county are ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in England, with 18.6% of children aged under 16 living in poverty. While this figure is similar to the national average, it masks the high level of poverty and deprivation in some defined areas of the county, where almost 2 and out of every 3 children live in households that are dependent on out-of-work benefits (Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board, 2016).

This research took place at a very particular moment in time. Austerity has meant that many of the services in Northumberland were being withdrawn (Northumberland Gazette, 2017b). The cuts have hit the poorest people and places the hardest, with those least able to cope with service withdrawal bearing the brunt of service reduction (Hastings et al, 2015). In England local authorities lost 27% of their spending power between 2010/11 and 2015/16, and some services have saw a cumulative cut of 45% (Hastings et al, 2015). Northumberland County Council faces £6million cuts in 2017-18, and a total of £36million up to 2020 (Northumberland County Council, 2017a). This is contributing to rising inequality.

As discussed above, from 2004 there were high levels of Polish migration into the UK. At the most recent Census in 2011, 97.2% of residents in Northumberland were born in the UK, but this figure drops to 95% for those aged 25 to 34. 1.2% were born in other European countries, and 1.6% stated that their country of birth was outside Europe (ONS, 2012a). In 2011 there were 129,000 foreign-born residents in the North East of England (5% of the total population). Newcastle upon Tyne had the

highest proportion of foreign-born residents (13% of the population). The North East showed the smallest increase in the population of foreign-born residents at 2%, and remains the region with the lowest proportion of foreign-born residents with a figure of 5% (ONS, 2012a). The inward migration of people from European Union Accession countries to areas such as Berwick and Alnwick mean that children from these groups now constitute 3.7% of the entire pupil population (Northumberland County Council School Census, 2015).

The table below shows the demographics of young migrants in Northumberland:

% of population (all ages) who are non-UK born	2.82
% of immigrants born in EU14 (16-24 year old)	29.33
% of immigrants born in Accession (2001-2011) (16-24 year old)	24.97
% of immigrants outside EU (16-24 year old)	45.70
Number of non-UK born youth (16-24 year old)	733
% of youth (16-24 year old) population who are non-UK	2.38
% of youth population (16-24 year old) who are EU-born (EU14 & Accession)	1.29
% of youth population (16-24 year old) who are non-EU born	1.09

Table 1: Northumberland – Percentage of non-UK born youth (16-24 year olds) – 2011 Census England & Wales

1.3 Research Questions

To fulfil my research objective of exploring how being Polish, the experience of migration and living and growing up in Northumberland contributed to shaping the nature and geography of the young Poles' youth transitions, I devised a set of research questions. These provided a framework to explore the perceptions and experiences for the young Poles. The questions that frame this research are:

1. What are the young Poles' choices, aspirations and feelings about their future education and work lives?
2. How, and in what ways, do the young Poles' family, social and support networks influence the choices and decisions that they are making about the future?
3. What are the everyday geographies and senses of belonging of young Poles who are living and growing up in Northumberland?

1.4 Methods

The thesis is based on an empirical study of young Poles aged sixteen to twenty-four who are living and growing up in rural Northumberland following migration with their families. The research design is wholly qualitative and consists of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from across the county; and then semi-structured interviews, a lifegrid exercise and a follow-up interview with the young Poles. This approach enabled a comprehensive and richly textured analysis of the young Poles experiences and lives. My research sample consists of two groups:

Group one – Gatekeepers and community members – this included school teachers, professionals at the council, local authority careers advisors, staff at the college, and community organisations, such as the Berwick Migrant Support Group and Polish Saturday School in the county. 15 individuals took part in semi-structured interviews

Group two – 20 young Poles' aged sixteen to twenty-four who experienced migration between Poland and the UK or Northumberland with their families

The methods allowed me to gain an understanding of what is particularly *rural* or *Polish* about their youth transitions. It has also helped to contextualise the research focusing on the particularities of Northumberland as a county. In Chapters Two and Three I present a rationale for choosing to focus on a group of young people who are living and growing up in a rural area as they make their transitions to adulthood, and in Chapter Four I present a detailed breakdown of my research sample and the research methodology.

1.5 Outline of Thesis

This chapter has situated the study within the current research landscape. It has contextualised the project briefly in terms of Polish migration to the UK and youth transitions, and begun to outline the key themes that are investigated through this research. The literature review in **Chapter two** will further situate the study and expand upon youth transitions research. The chapter will reflect on some of the youth transitions that young people make and how these are very different today than in the past. **Chapter three** draws attention to some of the existing research on Polish migration to the UK, examining some of the previous studies on children, young people and families. The chapter situates identities and belongings in the context of

Polish migration to the UK and rural life. Chapters two and three both expand upon the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the study.

Chapter four provides a detailed account of the methods used in this research. I begin by providing details on the recruitment strategies and key demographic information on the stakeholders and young Poles, and then discuss each method in detail. Research was carried out in two phases. The first involved semi-structured interviews with fifteen stakeholders. This included educational and council staff, alongside local volunteers. Through these interviews I was able to gain context on Northumberland and make sense of the transitions that young people in the county make. The second phase involved semi-structured interviews, a lifegrid exercise, and then follow-up interviews ten to twelve months later, with twenty young people. These methods allowed me to discuss their feelings, choices and aspirations about their futures, and the social, cultural and personal factors that contributed to their decision making. I then reflect on the ethics of doing research with young Poles and my own positionality and experiences in the field.

Chapter five introduces empirical accounts from the young Poles' everyday lives and experiences, as they made choices and decisions about their futures, in the context of living and growing up in rural Northumberland. The chapter argues that there was something quite ordinary or standard about their youth transitions. The broad sequence of youth transitions to adulthood follow the model of school/education > work > marriage and house/flat > family and career. On their journeys into adulthood many of the young Poles' aspired to migrate out of Northumberland to cities that are located nearby. However, what was also striking was the profound attachment that many of them had developed towards Northumberland. While at first it could be assumed that there was something quite ordinary about their transitions, the young Poles' transitions were more complex than this, with them having to negotiate their Polishness and experiences of migration.

Chapter six discusses the role and influence of the young Poles' family, friends and teachers, exploring how these different agents contribute to shaping their youth transitions, particularly in terms of education and employment. It reveals how the choices that they are making on their transitions are shaped and influenced by a web of relationships that they then have to negotiate. The young Poles relationships were geographically stretched across Northumberland and Poland. The age that the young Poles migrated from Poland was an important influence on the relationships that they

had with friends and teachers in Northumberland. In this chapter it is argued how support is an important part or aspect of their youth transitions.

Chapter seven discusses how the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness and experience of migration. The experience of migration is an important part of their youth transitions. Living and growing up in Northumberland, following migration, changes the connections that they have to Poland. Reflecting on a number of events or practices in their lives it prompts the young people to reconsider and re-evaluate their attachments to different people and places. Through this chapter I draw attention to how the young Poles were negotiating their identities in their everyday lives. This research highlights the diverse and wide variety of experiences that there are. The experience of migration influences the young Poles identities and further complicates their transitions to adulthood.

Finally, **Chapter eight** presents the main conclusions of the research through drawing together some of the key overarching themes that span across the three data chapters, taking account of how the three positions of being Polish, the experience of migration and living and growing up in rural Northumberland intersect and contribute to shaping the nature and geography of their youth transitions. This chapter also highlights some of the limitations of the research, touches on emerging findings that warrant further exploration and makes recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two

Transitions to Adulthood

2.1 Introduction

The young Poles who took part in this research were all living and growing up in Northumberland, with their families, following migration as part of their childhood. This chapter examines existing research on transitions to adulthood across both the UK and Poland. It begins with a short summary to explain how youth and young people have been understood. This helps to justify why I worked with twenty young people aged between sixteen and twenty-four. I then examine some of the previous research exploring transitions to adulthood across education, employment, housing and relationships. Much of the existing research has focused on the lives of white working class young people who are living and growing up in urban areas as they make their transitions to adulthood. The chapter then focuses on rural youth transitions, youth transitions and government policy and youth transitions and post-socialist states. I discuss existing theories and research to situate the study and establish the key concepts and research questions.

2.2 Youth and young people

As a starting point, it is important to discuss how youth has been conceptualised in the literature. This will help to justify why I worked with young Poles that were aged between sixteen and twenty-four. The ways in which youth is understood vary greatly across space and time (Ansell, 2017). The period considered as youth has progressively become extended and fragmented (Valentine, 2003). Much of the current youth transitions research has paid attention to the prolonged period in young people's lives, including increasing/prolonged participation in higher education, limited job opportunities, rising aspirations and long periods of interdependence (Ansell, 2017; Furlong, 2013; Punch, 2002). This growing complexity also affects family and community life, which makes personal life less predictable (Furlong et al, 2011).

Evans (2008: 1663) has written that the dominant definitions of youth can be broadly divided into two ways. Youth can be understood in terms of 'chronological biological

age', and can also be defined 'as performative, a quality of way of being, denoting behaviour, and state of mind and body (e.g. energy and 'youthful appearance')'.

In considering chronological biographical age, Valentine et al (1998) note that youth generally refers to people aged between sixteen and twenty-five. Furthermore, young people have also been separated into different categories, ranging from young adolescents (ten to fourteen), teens (fifteen to nineteen) to young adults (twenty to twenty-four).

Definitions based on age often draw on those that are used for legal purposes. These include the ages at which young people can drink alcohol, earn money, join the armed forces or consent to sexual relations. It is important to note that these legal classifications are, to a large extent, variable, context-specific and gendered, and are often at odds with other conceptualisations based on alternative age markers, and conceptions of childhood and youth based on performance and performativity (Valentine et al, 1998).

Despite their importance for legal purposes and access to resources, age-bound categories of defining youth have been criticised because they dismiss the varying meanings and experiences of age, that are linked to socio-cultural and socio-spatial factors (Skelton, 2002; Wyn and White, 1997). Furthermore, such inflexible categorisations can bring about an understanding of youth that is delimited 'in between adulthood and childhood', which dismisses the idea of youth as a stage in its own right (Evans, 2008; Skelton, 2002).

An alternative set of understandings of youth are based around ideas of performance. Childhood is generally associated with play, frivolity, freedom, innocence, dependence and lack of responsibility (Evans, 2008). Much of the youth studies research has contributed to a focus on the 'problems' of youth, describing these problems as 'at risk', 'troubled' or 'troubling', especially in relation to social problems, such as teenage pregnancy, school dropout and exclusion (Griffin, 2001). The problems of youth are framed within larger social problems that are seen as subsidiary to or a component of these problems. However, geographers of children have made valuable contributions by arguing that the construction of young people as 'risky youths' creates the danger of dismissing young people's agency, and of not considering youth as a period in its own right (Evans, 2008; Skelton, 2002). More importantly, this geographical work has been particularly important in contesting the

assumed homogeneity of definitions of childhood and youth by emphasising the importance of space and spatio-temporal variations in the use and meanings of these terms (Evans, 2008). Valentine (2003) argues that the typical definition based on performative youth is between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, which is at odds with the legal definitions of adulthood, which is eighteen in the UK.

The processes of transitions between childhood and adulthood, depends and differs across and within societies and cultures over time (Hörschelmann and van Blerk, 2012). Langevang (2008: 2046) has claimed that youth is both 'a shifting social position and a fluid process', while Arnett (1998, 2000) coined the phrase 'emerging adulthood'. This describes what he sees as a distinct and liminal stage in the life course that he argues extends from the late teens to the mid-to-late twenties and is historically contextualised in contemporary industrialised cultures. In this stage he argues that young people undergo separation-individualisation processes, in particular from their families and other primary groupings, to establish a sense of who they are as 'an independent, self-sufficient individual' (Arnett, 1998: 313). Definitions such as these emphasise the varying meanings and experiences of age that are linked to social factors. Age-bound categories of defining youth have been criticised for overlooking such factors as they dismiss the varying meanings and experiences of age that are linked to socio-spatial factors (Skelton, 2002; Wyn and White, 1997).

In this research young Poles were identified as those who were aged between sixteen and twenty-five. However, the performative aspects are also incorporated as the young Poles were asked about their own individual interpretations of adulthood. In this research I was careful not to impose age upon the young Poles' experiences, instead encouraging them to talk about issues that were important to them rather than using pre-determined 'age appropriate' discussion points.

2.3 Youth transitions: education, employment, housing and relationships

This research uses MacDonald and Marsh's (2005: 31) definition of transition: 'the pathways that young people make as they leave school and encounter different labour market, housing and family-related experiences as they progress towards adulthood'. According to Henderson et al (2007: 18) these pathways are undertaken at different 'developmental stages' that occur from childhood to independent adulthood.

During the 1980s research on youth transitions began to grow (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). Much of this research has been concerned with understanding how the reshaping of the socio-economic landscape affected young people's life chances. Youth transitions studies aimed to shed light on structural inequalities which determined the life courses of typically white working class youth. This section makes sense of some of the existing youth transitions studies, in relation to education, employment, housing and relationships.

2.3.1 Education

The declining availability of high quality employment for unqualified school leavers, as well as the growing demand for a skilled workforce, contributed to the rapid expansion of post-compulsory education (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). Post-16 educational pathways have been shaped by social class (Griffin, 1985; McRobbie, 2000). McRobbie (2000), in a study of working class women, found that many did not expect to continue with education, and that those who did faced barriers including attending inferior schools, pressures to work outside of school, and fewer parental resources than their middle class peers. Recent efforts aimed at widening participation in post-compulsory education have disproportionately benefited middle class young people (Henderson et al, 2007; Reay, 2006). According to Margo and Dixon (2006) such young people are 50 percent more likely than their working class peers to stay on in post-16 education.

Edwards (1997) has noted the deep divide that characterises post-compulsory education into two distinct streams of academic and vocational learning. Academic post-16 routes (A-levels) remain the domain of middle class young people (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005), while working class young people often choose vocational courses that aim to support their employment aspirations (Hemsley-Brown, 1999). Vocational training courses have been identified as reproducing gender stereotypes, with young women typically enrolling in hair and beauty, childcare and health and social care courses, and young men in construction, carpentry, bricklaying, electrical wiring and plumbing (Millar, 2010; Wallace and Kovatcheva, 1999). These typically lead to jobs that are often low paid, low status and insecure. Vocational courses were created as an alternative to academic pathways, but they are often regarded as being of an inferior quality (Furlong and

Cartmel, 2007). They have also been criticised for promoting unrealistic expectations about employment prospects and transmitting inaccurate notions of exciting careers (Aapola et al, 2005). Lawy et al (2010) found that actual training experiences can be perceived as disappointing when compared to imagined futures. This is also supported by MacDonald and Marsh (2005) who observed that the potential benefits of youth training contrasted starkly with their actual experiences. This highlights the differences in the transitions that young people make.

In addition to vocational training, the modern apprenticeship scheme was created to provide some young people with hands-on practical training, combined with the possibility to earn money. Despite its popularity, the scheme has been criticised for exploiting young people (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). Often, apprenticeships have failed to ensure an adequate commitment from employers (Green, 2015; Steedman, 2005). The apprenticeship programme is particularly weak in sectors without a history of offering apprenticeships, for example retail, customer service or childcare (Fuller, 2016; Fuller and Unwin, 2009). Furlong and Cartmel (2007) have argued that better run schemes by larger organisations select the better qualified trainees, this then leaves the less qualified young people to then often be trained in those contexts where the chances of employment are virtually nil.

There are differences in the educational transitions of young people in different countries. In terms of accessing training, it is generally agreed that many other European countries have a better history of offering much stronger systems of vocational preparation, than what is the case in Britain (Evans, 2000). Comparisons are often made with the robust system of apprenticeships that exist in Germany (Bynner, 2012). In Germany, around two-thirds of an age cohort undertakes an apprenticeship by the time that they are twenty-five, while in Berwick (a town in Northumberland where a significant number of the young Poles who took part in this research were living and growing up) around a third do so (Wolf, 2011).

2.3.2 Higher education

The increased uptake of post-compulsory education has resulted in the expansion of higher education (HE) (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). By the end of the 1980s the number of young people that were staying on in education had begun to exceed 70%; this figure was compared to less than 50% through most of the preceding

decade (Bynner, 2001). By the end of 2014, 88% of sixteen and seventeen year olds were in full-time education, compared to 74% in the first quarter of 2002, and there had also been an increase in participation in full-time education among eighteen to twenty-four year olds (Powell, 2017). At the time of writing this thesis it is unclear what the long-term impact of recent changes will be; these changes include the raising the age at which schooling is compulsory, continued increase in the number of Academies (schools run independently of local government supervision), and the addition of new forms of post-sixteen education (including Free Schools, University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools).

Reay et al (2001; 2010) found that working class and minority ethnic students are more likely than white middle class students to attend 'new' (post-1992, former polytechnic) universities, rather than 'traditional' (older, more elite) institutions. Leathwood and O'Connell (2003) found that while 'new' universities have successfully expanded participation, they are often denigrated in public and political discourses as providing education of an inferior quality. Furlong and Cartmel (2007) argue that graduates of former polytechnics often face poorer employment prospects.

Henderson et al (2007: 101) use the concepts of localism and cosmopolitanism as interrelated elements of 'economies of mobility', to understand the ways in which the meaning and value of mobility is being transformed by young people, contributing to new opportunities for some and new vulnerabilities for others based on gender and class. Henderson et al (2007) showed that it was a common expectation among young people that they would move away from their local area in those families that had previous experience of geographical mobility or who had the resources to support mobility taking up educational and employment opportunities outside of their local areas. Henderson et al (2007) showed how young women reported a traditional preference to stay in close proximity to their mothers, and a similar preference for 'localism' by young men from poorer families with limited educational and employment options, making them vulnerable to disadvantage.

Decisions about where to enrol for higher education can be influenced by localism (Henderson et al, 2007), and issues related to fitting in (Reay et al, 2001). Since the Coalition Government (2010-2015) removed the cap on tuition fees in 2012 university charges have risen significantly, with many universities now requiring over £9,000 a year in fees. The sharp rise in tuition fees for 2012-2013 initially led to an overall reduction in the number of applications for higher education, but the Independent

Commission on Fees (2014) reported that application rates among eighteen year olds in England had since recovered. However, the Commission did express concern that: 'The gap in application and entry rates between the most and least privileged students has not narrowed substantially, and remains unacceptably wide. This is particularly true for the most selective institutions, with almost 10 times more privileged than disadvantaged students entering the 13 most selective institutions' (Independent Commission on Fees, 2014: 5). Previously low-income students may have been eligible for means-tested grants. The Conservative Government (2015-present) abolished grants for student nurses and midwives, and those young people from low-income families. Students from families with an annual income of £25,000 or less had previously been eligible for a full grant of £3,387 a year (an amount that barely covered the cost of rent in some cities) (O'Sullivan, 2016). However, under the new dispensation young people are now offered more loans to cover their extra costs. Reay et al (2001) have noted how costs may encourage tendencies among less affluent students to choose universities near to their family homes to avoid accommodation costs. Henderson et al (2007) found that community connections and support can serve as negative social capital, binding young people to communities, which can in turn limit their future employment prospects. While HE destination can also be shaped by strategies for escape, few young people from disadvantaged communities are likely to have access to the practical means to pursue this (Henderson et al, 2007).

In the UK context a move away from home for university is common. Smith et al (2014: 5) have argued that 'the contemporary national and international spaces of education are prominent anchors essential makers of social and cultural identity and training grounds for the future of social and spatial mobilities in the lives and aspirations of young people'. Smith and Sage (2014) have noted how 11.1% of all sixteen to twenty-four year olds moved across a regional border in 2008. Migration is becoming a more normative social practice that is tied to 'sought-after' educational experiences (Smith et al, 2014). Smith et al (2014) reflect on how and whether increasing youth unemployment and the changing nature of higher education sector will impact on youth migration patterns. The numbers of young adults that are accessing higher education is growing but while research has drawn attention to those that are moving away from rural regions to go to university, less is known about what happens after graduation (Smith and Sage, 2014).

In order to support themselves financially young people are increasingly dependent on paid term-time work around their studies (Purcell and Elias, 2010). However, it is those students from less affluent families and minority backgrounds that work the greatest number of hours (Callender, 2008; Purcell and Elias, 2010; Reay et al, 2001). Henderson et al (2007) suggest that education and employment can become competing goals, and that term-time working can negatively impact on academic engagement and performance.

This section has examined the key themes from the literature around young people's experiences of secondary, further and higher education. This suggests that the widening of post-compulsory education and training has increased choices for young people on their transitions to adulthood. It has acknowledged some of the research that has drawn attention to some of the differences between class and rural and urban young people as they make their transitions in terms of education. Young people's educational pathways lay the foundations for their future employment prospects. It is important to note that not all young people pursue post-compulsory education. Some seek entry into 'accelerated adulthood' in the labour market by becoming independent earners, the domestic sphere by 'settling down' with a partner or through starting a family of their own, or simply prioritise leisure by 'staying forever young' through partying (Henderson et al, 2007).

2.3.3 Employment

There has been an increase in insecure and casual working in the UK. There is a growing concern that the UK labour market is moving towards more low paid, less secure and more exploitative forms of employment. This has created uncertainty for young people (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). The number of individuals who are working in part-time, temporary and insecure forms of employment have increased. This growth in precarious work is demonstrated by the increased use of zero-hour contracts. By 2014 there were 1.8 million zero-hour contracts in the UK (ONS, 2015b). 34% of all zero-hour contract workers are aged sixteen to twenty-four (ONS, 2015a). From October to December 2014 more than 1.7 million employees in the UK were employed in some form of temporary work. This is an increase from 5.5% in 2008 to 6.5% in 2014 (TUC, 2015). Added to this, over half of employed graduates

are in non-graduate roles, and this figure is a significant increase since 2007-2008 (ONS, 2013).

Uncertainty in the post-industrial labour market causes deep anxiety for young people, irrespective of their social background (Henderson et al, 2007). MacDonald and Marsh (2005) note how the young people in their study held hyper-conventional attitudes towards securing employment, despite the low-waged and insecure nature of the work that is available. However, their school-to-work transitions often became 'a dispiriting sequence of knock-backs, let-downs, false promises and dead ends' (ibid: 209). Henderson et al (2007: 24) observed that the young people had 'high levels of anxiety about whether [they] are 'doing the right thing''. Anxiety results from notions of individual responsibility and accountability, combined with a sense of vulnerability and lack of control (Walkerdine et al, 2001). Narratives of self-blame remain prevalent, even among those young people who lack the required resources and networks to achieve success (Aapola et al, 2005).

Bynner et al (1997) observed three distinct employment pathways among the young people in their study. Some were *getting on* (high flyers with educational qualifications and personal circumstances that enabled them to take advantage of the new occupational opportunities of the 1990s to achieve success). Others were *getting by* (those with few educational qualifications and limited to insecure, low waged employment opportunities). The rest were *getting nowhere* (minimum school age leavers without qualifications who were at a higher risk of insecure employment or unemployment, and characterised by early entry into domestic careers including parenthood). The white working class young people in MacDonald and Marsh's (2005) study commented on how they were 'getting by and making do'.

There has been the disappearance of a distinct youth labour market (Henderson et al, 2007; Macguire, 2010). Youth employment has changed significantly. In a 1982 Department of Employment research paper, 23% of young people stayed on at school post-16 in Sunderland, 60% in St Albans and 40% in Leicester. Department for Education figures for 2016-2017 found that learning participation is 85% in Sunderland, 95% in Hertfordshire and 97% in Leicester. In England the figure for sixteen and seventeen year olds in learning is 89%. The 1982 study divided the types of jobs available to young people into six groups. These included: semi-skilled and unskilled manual (male); semi-skilled and unskilled manual and sales (female); skilled manual (male); skilled manual and clerical (female); white-collar careers

(male) and white-collar careers (female). Since this report many new occupational groups have emerged, while others have disappeared completely. The decline in the numbers employed in manufacturing, and within manufacturing the automation of many tasks that would previously have been done by younger workers, has particularly affected the semi-skilled, unskilled and skilled routes into employment. The growth of the service sector has also led to an increase in jobs occupied by young people, such as in the fast food industry (Bivand, 2012). While this affects all young people, the difficulties of finding work are particularly acute for working class young people, or for those who lack qualifications and for those who are living in areas that have been adversely affected by de-industrialisation (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). In the post-industrial context, the work available for young people is predominantly in lower-tier services, in the hospitality and retail sectors (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Roberts, 2011). These jobs are often low-skilled, low-wage, part-time and insecure. The lack of skilled, semi-skilled and professional work means that there is little or no possibility for progression or upward career mobility (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Roberts, 2011). The increase in flexible employment practices has further intensified the exploitation of young workers as such arrangements tend to exempt employers from legal obligations to provide sick pay, holiday pay or superannuation (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007).

In this context, young people's transitions have become increasingly fragmented (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007), fractured (Bradley and Devadason, 2008) and protracted (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). There have been calls for new approaches to understand the labour landscape that young people are navigating since traditional analytical approaches based on historical social class definitions are now outdated. Standing (2011) has argued that a new class of workers, 'the precariat' has emerged. Their employment opportunities are characterised by insecurity, low wages, lack of protection within the workplace, limited opportunities for skills development and few possibilities for upward mobility (Standing, 2011).

Early youth transition studies focused on school-to-work transitions (see, for example: Willis, 1977; Roberts, 1984; Brown, 1987; Hollands, 1990). Often, these studies focused on young white working class men, as they were strongly represented among the unemployed (Griffin, 2011). Historically, education, employment, relationships and family experiences have been seen as being shaped by social class and gender (Winlow and Hall, 2006). These provided 'points of

reference' and 'route maps' for young people to follow into adulthood (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). During this time, women's roles in the labour market were considered 'temporary'. They were expected to become wives and mothers (Griffin, 1985). It therefore comes as no surprise that early youth transitions studies have been criticised by feminist scholars for ignoring the experiences of women. The context in which young people make their transitions to adulthood has changed since the 1980s, reflecting the altered labour market landscape. This includes the dismantling of traditional industry, the growth of the service and information sectors and increased participation of women in the workforce. The collapse of the youth labour market following the decline of traditional industry, and the emergence of new employment sectors has resulted in increased competition for fewer jobs, and a growing demand for a skilled and qualified workforce (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). Higher and further education opportunities have grown as discussed above. However, the rising costs including higher tuition fees and the shift from grants to loans may reverse this trend.

Traditionally, young people's biographies have been theorised as predictable and linear, largely determined by their position in society (e.g. dependent on gender, social class and ethnicity). Winlow and Hall (2006: 18) wrote how 'being born male or female into a clearly delineated class culture provided the practical context for biographies guided by relatively clear values, meanings and practices that constituted a stable identity and helped individuals make sense of who they were and where they were going'. However, it is now argued how the changed socioeconomic landscape has led to the proliferation of new risks and opportunities that require young people to engage with individualised, reflexive projects of 'self-making' as they make their transitions to adulthood (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991). Beck (1992: 93) suggests that in post-industrial 'risk society', individuals become 'the producer of his/her own labour situation and in this way of his/her social biography'. Giddens (1991: 28) argues that individuals employ a calculative attitude to engage in 'a reflexive project of connecting personal and social change'. In other words, life chances are the result of an individual's reflexive responses to both opportunities and risks. Reflexivity is thus often interpreted as the agency that individuals employ to shape their own destinies (Brannen and Nilsen, 2005). Du Bois-Reymond (1998) coined the term choice biography to describe how young people reflect on the available options to justify their decisions.

Pollock (2008) has argued that education and employment remain central to understanding young people's life chances, particularly in the current socioeconomic and political context. Education is understood to directly influence young people's life chances, while employment circumstances underpin access to money to then take part in leisure, consumption and independent living. The present research took place at a very particular moment in time. The contemporary socioeconomic and political context in the UK has resulted in rising poverty and inequality, alongside the Government's austerity agenda. This means that the lives and experiences of young people who are living and growing up in rural Northumberland, as they make their transitions to adulthood, are increasingly necessary to study and understand. The contemporary context make understanding youth transitions in Northumberland important, while there is a lot of existing research on standard transitions, we now live in a time where those standard transitions no longer apply. This section will now move on to look at the housing and relationship transitions that young people make.

2.3.4 Housing

Another transition that is documented in the literature is the transition to independent living. Generally, young people are leaving home later with increasing numbers returning to live at home for periods after their study before leaving home finally. This is possibly related to the trend towards delayed entry into the labour market. There has also been an increase in the number of young people that are homeless (Clapham et al, 2014). Many studies have noted how housing and domestic transitions are central to the attainment of adult status (Clapham et al, 2014; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Hoolachan et al, 2017; Molgat, 2007). This was often associated with marriage, and closely interlinked with having a family (Holdsworth and Morgan, 2005). This can be connected to Arnett's (2014) argument that young people associate adulthood with self-sufficiency and independence from their parents. In Europe there has been a growing number of young people becoming home owners (Doling and Ford, 2007). However, young people's housing transitions today are taking place in a very different housing market to previous generations of young people.

The supply of housing is failing to keep up with ever-increasing demand and has led to a crisis of affordability. Growing numbers of young people are living in the private

rental sector and the shortage of housing means that rental prices are increasing faster than wages. Between March 2011 and March 2014 the cost of renting had increased by 7% (ONS, 2015d). Median earnings for eighteen to twenty-one year olds grew by 2.3% and 3.3% for twenty-two to twenty-nine year olds (Family Resource Survey, 2014). This means that rent is taking up an increasing proportion of young people's incomes, and fewer properties are affordable for young people. There is less social housing stock and more people living in the private rented sector or owning their own homes.

It is widely recognised how the steps towards independent living are no longer predictable and linear. Leaving the parental home is now a more complex transition than it was for previous generations. Trends in marriage, household formation patterns, the demand for higher levels of educational achievement, later age of entry into the workforce, the changing structure of the labour market, changing housing markets, reformation of welfare provisions, shifts in societal expectations about the transition to independence, greater individual choice and changing parental expectations and attitudes about young adult behaviour and parental support have all influenced the transition out of the family home (Billari et al, 2001, Iacovou, 2004).

Furlong and Cartmel (2007) have noted how housing transitions have become more fragmented. They are invariably influenced by a range of factors, including family relationships and obligations, higher education pathways, family conflict, non-familial relationships, the onset of parenthood, financial resources and changes to social welfare entitlement (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Heath, 2008; Henderson et al, 2007). Heath (2008) has noted how young people are increasingly dependent on their families of origin. While overall young people live with their parents for longer periods than has historically been true, there is some classed variation. In this respect, middle class students often leave home at a younger age to attend university, while working class young people are more likely to live at home with their parents for longer periods (Henderson et al, 2007; Heath, 2008).

Hoolachan et al (2017) have drawn on qualitative data to consider the phenomenon of 'Generation Rent' in the perspective of youth transitions and the home.

'Generation Rent' is a term used to describe those young people that are increasingly living in the private rented sector for longer periods of their lives because they are unable to access home ownership or social housing. It is argued that many young

people face difficulties in the settling process, as they have to negotiate insecure housing, unstable employment and welfare cuts that force them to be flexible and mobile. This results in young people feeling frustrated, as they struggle to remain fixed in place to 'settle down', and benefit from the positive qualities of having a home. It also shows that young people who are living in expensive and/or rural areas find it particularly difficult to settle down.

Independent living, including home ownership, has become a normative aspiration, yet it is increasingly unaffordable for many (Heath, 2008). For young people, moving out of the family home no longer guarantees leaving home permanently (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). Henderson et al (2007) have noted how young people's living arrangements fluctuate between independence and autonomy, and relationship, interdependence and care. In the youth transitions and government policy section of this chapter I reflect on some of the recent changes that have been made to housing benefit for young people.

2.3.5 Relationships

Entry into relationships is a key dimension of young people's transitions to adulthood. These can then serve as a precursor to independent household formation, including marriage and parenting. In many studies the examination of relationships focuses primarily on getting married and/or settling down. Henderson et al (2007: 136) note how couple relationships take 'increasing prominence in the young people's narratives over time, often representing critical moments and providing motivation in their lives'. They identified three tendencies with regards to relationship formation. These are: fusion (preference for intimate couple relationships), autonomy (either single or in casual relationships, prioritising academic or professional achievement) and being uncommitted (preference for extended, 'fun-filled' youth, viewing relationships as a threat to this) (Henderson et al, 2007). These tendencies may shift with time, and are not mutually exclusive, but they reveal diverse approaches to relationships which underpin subsequent transition stages, including settling down, getting married and becoming parents.

Historically, for women, marriage was a source of financial security (Henderson et al, 2007). However, recent changes mean that 'a lack of good job opportunities and unemployment make [working class] men appear less attractive as prospective

husbands and fathers' (Henderson et al, 2007: 137). This marks a shift from attitudes observed by McRobbie (2000: 163) during the 1970s and 1980s that, despite high male unemployment, 'the idea of the male breadwinner remained in the background as a distant hope'. This was because the white working class women in her study did not consider themselves as breadwinners. Due to increased opportunities for educational advancement and financial independence, young women can now be breadwinners and marriage is no longer an economic necessity (Griffin, 1985).

Marriage rates have been declining in Britain over the last few decades, while rates of cohabitation has risen (Beaujouan and Ní Bhrolcháí, 2011; Berrington et al, 2015). Beaujouan and Ní Bhrolcháí (2011: 9) observed that 'marriage without first living together is now as unusual as premarital cohabitation was in the 1970s'. Divorce rates doubled in England and Wales between 1970 and 2011 (ONS, 2012b). This suggests that there are fewer financial incentives to remain in unsatisfactory marriages (Aapola et al, 2005). Nevertheless, divorce rates stabilised in the 1980s and have since declined, perhaps because young people are getting married later (Beaujouan and Ní Bhrolcháí, 2011).

Nayak and Kehily (2008) have noted how the traditional nuclear family has been reconfigured and a range of alternative family forms have become more common. There is a greater freedom now to have non-traditional nuclear families and non-traditional non-nuclear families (Cutas and Chan, 2012; Weeks, 2007). Despite the growing trend towards non-traditional families, several studies have shown that young people across social class backgrounds maintain conventional views towards relationships and wish, eventually, to settle down (Heath, 2008; Henderson et al, 2007; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). Most young people held longer term expectations of a partnered future (Henderson et al, 2007).

Becoming a parent is another significant transition in the lives of young people. The young people in MacDonald and Marsh's (2005: 130) study talked of wanting to secure the 'foundations of stable employment, financial security and a home' before having children. However, MacDonald and Marsh (2005) also highlighted a paradox between normative perspectives on parenthood and actual lived experiences of parenthood. Historically, England and Wales have recorded some of the highest teenage pregnancies in Europe, although ONS (2015c) reports a notable decline in recent years. In 2013, the conception rate among women under the age of 18 was 24.5 per thousand, this figure compares with 27.9 per thousand the year before

(ONS, 2015c). Henderson et al (2007: 148-149) found that the young women in their study believed that 'becoming a mother was an important a measure of "success" as was gaining a degree and securing well paid work'. The emotional and financial challenges of parenthood should not be underestimated. Without access to affordable childcare or family support, teenage mothers can struggle to complete education and access employment, which makes it more difficult to escape poverty and social welfare dependence (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005).

In the UK, the Civil Partnership Act 2004 and the Marriage Act 2013 are important legal, social and historical landmarks (Barker and Monk, 2015). The Civil Partnership Act 2004 allowed same-sex couples to obtain essentially the same rights and responsibilities as civil marriage, while from March 2014 legislative change has enabled the marriages of same-sex couples. The Civil Partnership Act had the intention to provide 'parity of treatment' between registered same-sex couples and spouses in terms of legal protections. Seven years after the first civil partnerships, the Coalition Government (2010-2015) began consulting on introducing same-sex marriage in England and Wales. Same-sex relationship recognition has become a key site of political contestation. It is fiercely opposed by many, but are also represented as a victory in a legal reform process that commenced with the decriminalisation of homosexuality. Barker and Monk (2015) provide a review of the first ten years of civil partnerships and the introduction of same-sex marriage, bringing together scholars from a range of backgrounds, generations and disciplines. Since 2002, same-sex partners have also been able to jointly adopt. This was particularly striking because other European jurisdictions that had created registered partnership provisions had done so with several exclusions relating to parenting, including prohibitions on joint adoption without any comprehensive recognition of the relationship between the same-sex parents who were adopting the child (Barker and Monk, 2015).

2.3.6 Section summary

This section has focused on some of the existing research on transitions to adulthood. Transitions to adulthood have becoming increasingly characterised by 'false starts, backward steps, unpredictability and circularity' (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005: 35). Du Bois-Reymond and Lopez Blasco (2003) described these as 'yo-yo

transitions'. It can be difficult to identify start and end-points (Dwyer and Wyn, 2001). There is a growing tendency among young people to 'remain in a state of semi-dependency' (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007: 10). This has resulted in some arguing that the concept of transition has lost its relevance, and alternative ways of conceptualising this period of young people's lives have emerged.

Alternative conceptualisations include 'emerging adulthood' which aims to shift the focus from what young people are becoming to what they are by capturing 'intangible and psychological criteria for adulthood'. This includes 'accepting responsibility for one's actions, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent' (Arnett, 2014: vi). Others have argued for the 'generation approach' which argues for the need to understand 'how each generation is located within its social, political and economic milieu' in a way that 'take[s] account of, but go[es] beyond, the framing and defining actions of the state' (Wyn and Woodman, 2006: 497). While I agree with the aims of these approaches, I am in agreement with MacDonald and Marsh (2005: 31) who argue that the criticism of transition rest on 'a narrow and largely outdated picture of the nature of transition studies'. More recent transition studies have not only acknowledged the altered context, but also broadened the focus of transitions, arguing for a more holistic understanding of the interconnected spheres of young people's lives. Many of these include the conventional areas of education and employment, as well as housing, relationships, family formation, health, leisure, consumption and criminal 'careers'.

By conceptualising transitions as pathways, rather than trajectories, it allows for a shift in the focus of investigation (Bradley and Davadason, 2008; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). Trajectories imply 'linearity and impetus', whereas pathways 'can meander, fork or peter out' (Bradley and Davadason, 2008: 133-134). It is my argument that 'pathways' capture more accurately the fragmented nature of many young people's transitions in the contemporary context. By studying pathways, rather than trajectories, it emphasises the current processes, which are clearer and more apparent than the end goal. It is through a study of pathways that I aim to make sense of the holistic nature of the young Poles' transitions to adulthood.

Several researchers have drawn attention to the limited range of young people that youth transitions research has thus far focused on. Studies have typically focused on those young people that are NEET (Not in education, employment or training), the high flyers or the missing middle (MacDonald, 2011; Roberts, 2011, 2013). France

(2007) and MacDonald (2011) feel that youth researchers should turn their attention to the 'ordinary kids', the 'missing middle', the mainstream, that have been marginalised in transitions research. However, it is through this research that I aimed to focus on a group of young people who have been previously overlooked in youth transitions research by working with a group of young Poles that are living and growing up in rural Northumberland, in order to understand what is particularly Polish about the transitions that they were making, and how their experiences of migration contribute to shaping the nature and geographies of their youth transitions.

2.4 Rural youth transitions

Much of the existing youth transitions research in the north east of England has been located on Tyneside (Nayak, 2006; Hollands, 1995, 1997, 2015) and Teeside (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007). This results in very little being known about the lives and experiences of young people who are living and growing up outside of these regions, in a more rural part of the north east. This section takes into account existing studies that draw attention to rural youth, to discuss how this informs my own study.

Cuervo (2014) noted how the last two decades have seen a significant growth of research concerned with young people in rural areas, much of it in the context of Australia. Australian youth tend to leave their rural towns and regions in search of new opportunities and experiences that are elsewhere. This includes pursuing education, locating work and experiencing different lives (Argent and Walmsley, 2008; Gibson and Argent, 2008; Glendinning et al, 2003). Argent and Walmsley (2008: 142) have described this as the 'bright lights syndrome' which refers to the attractions that young people desire instead of the dull rural living. Matthews et al (2000) found that the personal experiences of young people may contrast with the rural idyll. This results in them feeling detached, bored and isolated within their local communities. Quality of life may also contribute to young people migrating to metropolitan areas (Glennndinning et al, 2003). Leyshon and Bull (2011) documented how young people in rural England feel 'more at home' in urban areas.

Early research by Shucksmith et al (1994; 1996; 1997) into disadvantage in rural Scotland identified processes of exclusion, marginalisation and disadvantage operating differentially in many rural areas. Both labour and housing markets were

instrumental in generating inequality and exclusion. Many of the participants commented on how there were restricted opportunities for well-paid, secure employment or affordable housing. At the same time, these markets allowed affluent households to move into rural areas. Young people were identified as having the fewest opportunities available to them. Cartmel and Furlong (2000) found that rural youth are more likely to experience social exclusion than urban youth due to their inability to access basic amenities, including health services, education and employment. Rural transport can be a barrier for young people accessing opportunities, only partially mitigated by uneven access to private transport (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000).

Culliney (2016) conducted a longitudinal analysis on the effect of rural-urban migration on labour market outcomes for young people in Britain. This research found that overall earnings in rural areas are higher, although young people in rural areas are paid less than their urban counterparts. Rural areas tend to lack higher education opportunities. Stockdale (2002) highlighted that education may trigger the initial motivation to migrate out of rural areas, while a lack of suitable employment opportunities may prevent them from returning. Research has highlighted how young people who are in rural regions generally suffer from poorer choices in education, job training facilities and employment opportunities, than their counterparts in urban areas (Ansell, 2017; Jentsh and Shucksmith, 2004; Punch, 2004; Vanderbeck and Dunkley, 2003). Smith and Sage (2014) have increased our knowledge about those young people that are moving away from rural regions to go on to university, but only at the time they are moving and not later after graduation.

Stockdale's (2002) research on out-migration from rural Scotland has found that the age of migration can vary from the late teens to the early thirties. Social and family networks play an important role in migration decision making. Similarly, Drozdowski (2008) found that the previous migration of older siblings or a family history of migration can result in young people out-migrating from rural areas. Stockdale (2004) called for policies to make rural communities more attractive to encourage young people to stay, or to attract return migrants to rural areas.

This section has demonstrated how young people typically out-migrate from rural areas in the search for education and employment opportunities. Despite there being some research on the lives of young people in rural areas, none of this existing research has been attentive to the lives and experiences of young Poles who are

living and growing up in Northumberland, rural north east England. In the present research I aim to understand the transitions to adulthood of the young Poles, in the context of living and growing up in rural Northumberland, exploring about what is particularly rural about the transitions that they are making. In the next chapter of this thesis I look at some of the ways that rural life has been conceptualised.

2.5 Youth transitions and government policy

The young Poles were all living and growing up in the UK following migration with their families. This section examines the governmental policies in the UK, in the context of transitions to adulthood.

At the Labour Party Conference in 1996, Tony Blair announced how there were to be three main priorities of his first government – ‘Education, Education, Education’. The Conservative Governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major, in the years before Labour’s 1997 victory, had begun to make considerable changes to the education system, creating a system that was led by market forces: ‘to be achieved by parental choice, establishing central government control over the curriculum and assessment, further eroding the powers and responsibilities of local authorities, teachers and their trainers, demanding accountability from individuals and institutions, especially universities, and encouraging selection under a rhetoric of diversity’ (Tomlinson, 2005: 60).

Conservative interest in reforming 14-19 education was built on by the New Labour Government (Tomlinson, 2005). In a similar manner to the Conservative Government, New Labour believed that education was the main way of dealing with societal and economic problems that were linked to poor job prospects. In *Is New Labour Working?* (1999) the Government commented on the need to build ‘a world class education system’ where all children could achieve their potential: ‘By giving everyone a good education-including the capacity to be creative we will open the gateway to work for every young person, we will lay the foundations for a successful economy and we will liberate millions of individuals from the agonising sense of low self-esteem and low confidence that has sapped the energy and damaged the lives of so many people in previous generations’ (Blunkett, 1999: 8-9).

The principle that reform to vocational education in the UK was desperately needed was acknowledged by the Coalition Government (2010-2015) who accepted the recommendations that were made in the Wolf Report (2011). Wolf (2011) argued that many vocational courses do not equip young people with the qualifications and employability skills for a successful pathway into higher education and employment. This then results in large numbers 'churning' back and forth between education and short-term employment. Instead, she recommended that academic and vocational programmes should be genuinely 'fit for purpose', that better quality information should be provided about the different options that are available, and that the current system of vocational education in England should be dramatically simplified. The report set out twenty-four specific recommendations in order to achieve these goals.

An Apprenticeship is a combination of employment and training with the apprentice obtaining a nationally recognised qualification upon completion. For young people apprenticeships can serve as a pathway into work learning transferable skills in the workplace and can help young people with their first step on the job ladder. Hodgson and Spours (2013) reported that the Coalition Government (2010-2015) increased the supply of apprenticeships by 100,000, but only a minority of these involved sixteen to nineteen year olds. Concern emerged about the extent to which these would improve employment opportunities for young people, especially in the context of a depressed youth labour market.

More recently, a report by the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility (2016) has said that those young people who do not go on to study for A-levels and a university degree are prevented from then going on to access the 'best' jobs. Instead, it has suggested that young people should sit their GCSE exams when they are fourteen years old. They should then go on to learn skills that are needed for their careers. The report cites Switzerland and Germany as being countries that operate successful and respected systems of both vocational and academic pathways into employment. The five recommendations that the report makes include: stopping the national curriculum at the age of fourteen, instead of the current age of sixteen, moving away from the age of sixteen being the cut-off point at which young people then embark on the wrong path; provide independent careers advice; that the government should help with greater collaboration between schools, colleges and employers; and the appointment of a Cabinet-level minister to take responsibility for the transition from school to work (The Select Committee on Social Mobility, 2016).

In July 2015, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne announced that the UK government would increase the statutory minimum wage for all staff that were aged over twenty-five, and referred to this as the 'national living wage' (D'Arcy and Finch, 2016). From the 1st April 2016, this new mandatory pay for workers that were twenty-five and over was initially set at £7.20 an hour. This was an increase of 50p relative to the current National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate.

In relation to housing, David Cameron and George Osborne considered abolishing housing benefit for those aged under twenty-five. In a speech Osborne said: 'There are plenty people listening to this programme who can't afford their own home, but there are people on benefits who can get housing benefit under the age of 25'. According to a report by homelessness charity Crisis (2013) almost 1 in every 12 twenty-four year olds had recently been made homeless. It seems inevitable that abolishing housing benefit for this group would exacerbate this situation. Young people have experienced the greatest reduction to welfare benefits. Hoolachan et al (2017) notes how these reductions, along with the insecure labour market, has left some at risk of greater stress and hardship, forcing them further into poverty.

As noted in an earlier section of this chapter there has been the emergence of 'Generation Rent'. The growth of the private rental sector reflects the broader processes of neoliberal welfare state restructuring that has gathered pace in the UK, and internationally, since the 1980s (Hoolachan et al, 2017). These processes have reduced the welfare safety-net for citizens, requiring them to instead take responsibility for their own life outcomes through the market (Forrest and Hirayama, 2009; Hoolachan et al, 2017; Kemp, 2015; McKee, 2012). In 2010, the UK Coalition Government announced a raft of welfare cuts. These have left many low-income households struggling to pay their rents and other housing costs.

During this research many of the services in Northumberland were being withdrawn or reduced. Cuts have affected young people and Connexions is an example of this. Connexions was a UK Government information, advice, guidance and support service for young people aged thirteen to nineteen (up to twenty-five for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities), created in 2000 following the Learning and Skills Act. There were Connexions Centres located around the country and they offered support and advice on education, housing, health, relationships, drugs and finance. Connexions is funded by local authorities who then rely on central government for funding. Local authorities face a difficult decision as to how they

distribute their cuts. The UK government should have done more to protect services that help young people towards suitable education, employment and training. However, many Connexions services have had their budgets slashed. This has meant that they have been forced to lose staff and reduce the help and support they are able to offer young people.

In Northumberland Connexions centres closed in Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth and Hexham. From April 2012 it became the responsibility of Northumberland Council's Employability and Skills Service to work with those young people aged sixteen to nineteen who were not in education, employment or training. Local authority careers advisors expressed concern that Connexions had a distinct presence on Northumberland's high streets and was a well-known brand; while the new National Careers Service with its online resources and national call centre is less well-known among the young people they worked with, and many of these young people preferred to talk to someone face-to-face than over the phone (Local Authority Careers Advisor, Berwick: Interview).

2.6 Youth transitions and post-socialist states

The research participants in the present research were Polish and were all living and growing up in Northumberland, following migration from Poland, with their families. In this section I draw attention to some of the literatures and research that has explored the transitions to adulthood of young people in post-socialist states. This will help to provide some insight into the lives of the young Poles' parents. Many of the young Poles' parents would have been experiencing their own transitions to adulthood during or around their country's transition from Communism. This section helps to gain a sense of the cultural norms, practices or understandings that may have travelled with them to Northumberland from Poland, and how these may shape or influence the young Poles' transitions to adulthood.

Analysis of some Eastern and Western European countries showed that age-status transitions were strongly standardised under communist modernisation. The main events of the transition to adulthood took place in more predictable ways than in Western Europe (Wallace and Kovatcheva, 1999). The standard socialist trajectory included finishing education, employment, marriage, leaving the parental home and childbirth. The Eastern bloc had strong social institutions which dominated the

predictable routes from school to employment, leaving no room for individual action and preference, but at the same time offering security and protection from cradle to grave (Nagel and Wallace, 1997). The collapse of Communism in 1989 led to a slow but radical change in social structures. The education and labour markets became open almost overnight and young people started experiencing the risks of unemployment, as well as the pleasures and the needs of making choices. Roberts (2003) argues that although the changes that happened in Eastern Europe were sudden and were not similar to anything previously seen, the experiences of young people in post-communist countries can be explained by Western concepts and paradigms. He argues that 'post-communism youth's new condition is not structureless or chaotic' (Roberts, 2003: 489) but 'rather, the structures are simply different than those encountered under communism and in the West' (Roberts, 2009: 94).

Roberts (2012) has argued how the political transitions created new forms of biographical transitions. In the 1990s young people in Poland were thrown sharply from the certainty of the previously firmly structured and strictly controlled transition patterns of the state-socialist society, into the sea of risks and uncertainties of a market-regulated society. In post-communist countries there are now five typical career options in the new labour markets. These include: employment in the substantial Westernised private businesses, public sector employment, self-employment, employment in small private businesses and non-employment (Roberts et al, 1999). Roberts (2010: 9) has argued that 'in some respects, post-communist countries have become leaders ... the conditions in these countries are the conditions in which the west is heading'.

Stenning and Hörschelmann (2008) showed how post-socialist transformation is a long unfinished process of change. Stenning (2005a: 115) conducted an in-depth study of post-socialist everyday lives in Nowa Huta, Poland and found that 'in discussing the remaking of everyday lives, the increasing feeling of dislocation, insecurity and immobility recurred again and again'. Stenning (2008) has noted how people have had to learn to live with and negotiate markets which were underdeveloped, inaccessible, corrupt and unregulated. Negotiating these has often meant having a greater reliance on close-knit, horizontal networks of social ties (Rose, 1998). Reform has not simply produced a reversion to the past. Instead, post-socialism must be seen as a partial, hybrid, multi-linear social formation, which

contains elements of pre-socialism, socialism and 'Western' capitalism simultaneously (Buraway and Verdery, 1999; Stenning, 2005a, 2005b). Stenning (2005a) identifies a shift in the representation of workers and working-class communities in Poland from 'veneration to denigration', which she sees as resulting in part from the continuing influence of the socialist past in the post-socialist present. Workers are 'othered' because of their privileged position and inextricable connection with the old regime. On the other hand, she also links the changing position of the post-socialist working class to wider social shifts echoing those taking place in Western societies, namely the 'end of work', the rise of identity politics in place of politics of representation and individualisation (Stenning, 2005c). These shifts and their impact on working-class identity are seen to have been particularly strong in post-socialist Poland, as workers have been deprived of their living and of any serious political representation, while at the same time being pitted against one another in a contracting labour market. Kideckel (2002, 2008) in research with miners and industrial workers in post-socialist Romania found that processes have brought about an 'unmaking' of the post-socialist working class, as the forms of social, material and symbolic capital that had underpinned traditional forms of working-class identity are pulled apart.

Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2005, 2007) conducted research with young people growing up in the former Eastern Germany to show how individual lifecourse transitions are experienced in and through postsocialist transformation. Working with 101 young people aged between twelve and eighteen, they conducted focus groups, discussions, short questionnaires and interviews as well as drawing on diaries, photography and other methods in order to engage with the young people's views and experiences. This research draws attention to the multiple spatial scales through which transitions are experienced and produced. Globalisation has different influences on the local lives of young people. Some people reject global forces, while others are open to what globalisation offers them.

Young people were likely to engage with global mediascapes through television and radio, as internet access tended to be restricted depending on parental income or on parents granting permission (Hörschelmann and Schäfer, 2007). Television remained the main mechanism for accessing different lifestyles and images, with many identifying Anglo-American television programmes as being the most popular. The young people talked about the idealistic images of America presented through

television programmes, with some criticising such representations in order to distinguish themselves from others who viewed these programmes in a less critical way. Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2007: 1864) argue that these programmes extend 'young people's geographical horizons and lead to greater knowledge of distant people and places'. Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2007: 1869) comment on how 'young people's immersion in the globalising world is highly uneven and depends strongly on where they are placed in relation not just to economic but also sociocultural resources'. They also argue that age and gender are important factors in shaping how young people negotiate and encounter the global. Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2005: 239) conclude:

'On the one hand, we hope to have shown that young people, like the girls in this study, are differentially positioned in the local/global networks that, to a large extent, set out their present and future life options. On the other hand, however, we have sought to demonstrate that the young people, through their everyday socio-cultural and spatial practices, can incorporate the global very literally into their personal identities and/or reject it by drawing a tight line around their daily activity space'.

In the narratives of East German youth Hörschelmann (2008) found a pronounced discourse of self-reliance. The 'entrepreneurial Self' is a subject, a tool of governance, not just of individual subjectivities, but through the individual, of the larger state, economy and civil society (Hörschelmann, 2008: 143). Individualisation has become a normative discursive construction. People are tasked with taking responsibility for their own life paths and transitions. Those transitions that might formally have been taken for granted are now framed as individual choices (Hörschelmann, 2008).

Kovacheva (2001) and Hörschelmann (2011) stressed that the post-socialist societal transition for those born in the late 1970s and early 1980s took place in parallel to their key biographical changes. Burrell (2011a: 414) writes how the generation of Eastern Europeans that have come of age since the 1990s have experienced key transitional moments in their own lives, alongside rapid and dramatic societal change 'young people in the 1990s therefore had to negotiate a potentially destabilising 'double transition', personal and national, temporal and spatial, as the first generation to venture into adulthood in a new regime with new rules, expectations and indeed freedoms'. Burrell's research considered how the changes were represented in the

participants' accounts reflecting on the opportunities that were offered by the liberalising economy and more open borders, and the uncertainties and anxieties that underpinned their memories and experiences of this time. While some of the changes were exciting, the young people had to learn new strategies to navigate the post-socialist worlds, often struggling to find confidence in the new socio-economic environment that was forming around them.

In many cultures education is important and seen as being crucial for upward mobility. By obtaining a good education it allowed people to progress economically and socially in the society. Unemployment in post-communism remains a predominantly youth phenomenon. On the eve of EU accession, unemployment in Poland reached its post-communist peak of 20.6% (Główny Urząd Statystyczny [GUS], 2009). This meant that unemployment was a major push factor for migration to the West. After 2004, unemployment declined nationally, but five years later it was still high in some parts of Poland, particularly in the north. In the Grajewo county registered unemployment was 18.4% in July 2009, compared with a Polish average of 10.8% (Urząd Pracy Podlasia, 2009). Despite an unprecedented post-1989 educational boom, including the dramatic expansion of higher education, both unemployment and underemployment have rapidly increased in Poland, particularly among young people. This manifested in the necessity to leave Poland in order to lead a 'normal life' (McGhee et al, 2012). In research with those who arrived into the UK in their late teens and early 20's, Heath et al (2015) found that the experience of migration from Poland had opened up opportunities for Poles, particularly for those that were younger. Migration had allowed them to access transitional experiences that may have been impossible or difficult for them to achieve if they had remained living in Poland. It had also allowed them to live with a partner outside of marriage. This research argued that by moving to the UK it facilitated the freedom to live a life of one's own.

2.7 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has set out the concepts and research that are relevant to the study of the lives and experiences of young Poles as they make their transitions to adulthood. Transitions to adulthood are typically focused around education, employment, housing and relationships. However, it is widely recognised that the transitions for

young people today are less linear and predictable than they were for previous generations of young people. Part of the distress of the current generation is that the normativity remains while the means of achieving the transitions has disappeared. Most of the existing studies of young people in the north east of England have been in the urban areas of Tyneside (Hollands, 1995, 1997; Nayak, 2006) and Teeside (MacDonald, 2011; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). This has resulted in little being known about the experiences of young people who are living and growing up in rural Northumberland, particularly as they make their transitions to adulthood. In the present research I attempt to fill this gap in knowledge, by exploring the everyday lives and experiences of young Poles who are living in and around the rural towns of Northumberland.

I aim to consider how being Polish, the experience of migration and living and growing up in rural Northumberland intersect and contribute to shaping the nature and geographies of the young Poles' youth transitions. This now leads on to my second literature review that contextualises Polish migration to the UK and existing Polish migration research, drawing on some of the research with children and young people, and conceptualises rural life, bringing into sharp focus identities and senses of belonging.

Chapter Three

Polish Migration to the UK and Rural Life

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature around Polish mobilities to the UK and rural life, to contribute to understanding the experiences of young Poles who are living and growing up in Northumberland as they make their transitions to adulthood. The first section contextualises Polish migration to the UK and explores some of the research that examines and maps the geographies of Polish migration, identifying gaps in knowledge, and situates the study in rural Northumberland. The second section examines existing research with children, young people and families. The chapter then explores identities in the context of migration research and young migrants' identities. This helps to locate my own research within current debates on migrant children and young people, and their identities. The final section examines how the rural has been conceptualised in existing literature. These sections help to situate my interest in the young Poles' identities and senses of belonging, particularly in the context of their experiences of migration from Poland, and living and growing up in Northumberland. This research makes sense of how the young Poles are negotiating their identities as they make their transitions to adulthood.

3.2 Geographies of Polish Mobility to the UK

While the migration of Polish people to the UK increased after Poland joined the European Union in 2004, this was not 'a zero point of departure' (Garapich, 2008: 128). The current populations of Polish migrants in the UK have developed in line with four notable migration movements – the post-war refugees, Communist regime émigrés, pre-2004 transition migrants, and EU accession migrants (Burrell, 2008a).

The first key movement of people was that of post-war refugees. This movement typifies how 'the very existence of a Polish population in Britain is testament to the ruptured relationship between Polish migrants and the Polish national territory' (Burrell, 2003: 325). The traumatic experience that they had shared gave rise to an active diaspora, 'a population created predominantly by war, invasion and occupation' (Burrell, 2003: 324), whose members shared a relationship to Poland characterised by loss and fear (Burrell, 2006).

The second key movement was that of communist émigrés. Thousands of Polish Solidarity dissidents migrated to London as a result of the martial law imposed by General Jaruzelski in the winter of 1981 (Garapich, 2008). This migration was facilitated by the substantial diasporic structures set up in the UK at the end of World War Two, and because London was the home of the government-in-exile. However, it was still a movement fraught with difficulties. The political divide of the Cold War period made migrating difficult and strained transnational activities. Letters could be monitored and censored, as could telephone calls, although these were expensive and required sufficient access in Poland. Furthermore, returning across the border was generally unpleasant (Burrell, 2008a). However, despite this, visiting Poland was a less daunting prospect than for post-war refugees, as they had experienced Communist Poland prior to departure. These relationships with their homeland were maintained to an increasing degree as transnational technological links improved with time.

The fall of Communism in Poland in 1989 gave rise to the next key movement, with departures from Poland found to be much easier than the previous two migration movements. Recession and unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, served as further rationales for migration. However, immigration to Britain was still controlled by strict visa requirements. This resulted in short-term economic migration, especially in the time preceding Poland's accession to the EU, where this strategy was used as a way of coping with the forthcoming transition (Igllicka, 2001). A large Polish labour force began to spread across western and southern Europe following the opening of labour markets after the fall of Communism (Burrell, 2008a). For these particular migrants technology allowed them to have extensive and diverse transnational connections with the homeland, more so than any previous movement.

The fourth movement, which is the focus of my own research, is migration to Britain following Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. With accession, this meant that the unfavourable conditions for Polish migrants seeking work abroad, which characterised the pre-accession period, were lifted. This allowed for large scale migration of 'postsocialist actors' and their legalised access to labour markets that were previously inaccessible from socialist national boundaries (Datta, 2009: 354). Cheaper travel facilitated migration to and from Poland, whilst developments in mobile phones, text messaging, email and internet permitted an 'ongoing dialogue' with those who had remained in the homeland (Galasinka, 2010: 310).

The presence of Polish community networks of former migrants helped channel the new flows of migration to familiar and well-trodden destinations. London is the most commonly cited destination for Polish migrants, drawing large numbers of international migrants due to its status as a capital city with economic opportunities and relative ease of access. This has meant that London has been the research site for many Polish migration scholars, with work in sociology, anthropology and human geography (Datta, 2008, 2009; Drinkwater et al, 2009; Ryan, 2010; Ryan et al, 2009). However, researchers have also analysed migration patterns beyond London focusing on other urban areas including Leicester (Burrell, 2003), Liverpool and Manchester (Pemberton, 2009), Glasgow (McGhee et al, 2013), Belfast (Kempny, 2010), Leeds (Waite et al, 2008) and Newcastle (Stenning and Dawley, 2009). It has been argued that the geographies of mobility for Polish people are changing, and in the post-accession era there has been a growth in migration to and from rural areas making a distinctly different geographical distribution of Polish migrants in the UK (Flynn and Kay, 2017).

These changes have been linked to programmes such as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers scheme, the improvement of transnational employer networks that have linked rural regions in Poland with those in the UK, as well as improved transport links and low cost flights between certain regions (Burrell, 2011c; Stenning et al, 2006). Empirical work has focused on rural migrations from villages and small towns to rural locations in the UK, for example the South West (White, 2011) and rural Scotland (Trevena et al, 2013).

Post-accession migrants have moved to a larger number of different areas of the UK than previous groups of migrants (Pollard et al, 2008). Scotland and the North East of England have witnessed a proportionally higher influx of foreign-born people since 2008 (Reid and Miller, 2011). Research has focused on the geographical dispersion of Poles throughout the UK and their impact on receiving regions. De Lima and Wright (2009) explored the growing numbers of EU8² nationals in the Grampian region of Scotland. In 2002/2003 only 20 people from EU8 countries applied for a National Insurance Number (NINo). This number increased to 3,010 in 2005/2006

² EU8 migration is a common term used to describe the eight new member states (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) that were acceded to the EU in 2004. They are grouped separately from the other two states (Cyprus and Malta) that joined in 2004 because of their relatively lower per capita income levels in comparison to the EU average, and their particular political and economic backgrounds as post-socialist states.

with Poles being the largest group in rural Grampian. In Scotland 69% of EU8 nationals were employed in mainly low-skilled jobs in hospitality, agriculture and food processing, and more than 80% earned less than £6 per hour (Jentsch et al, 2007). More than half the participants in the research had degrees or diploma level qualifications, but they were undertaking semi-skilled or unskilled work.

McGhee et al (2013) have researched the housing situations of Polish post-accession migrants in Glasgow. Participants were often living in low-demand housing in areas of social deprivation. However they were willing to compromise believing that the social housing in Glasgow was better than living in cramped, extended-family households in Poland. Participants contrasted their current lives to the lives they would have lived back in Poland. They described Poland as being a place where they could barely make ends meet, in stark contrast to which the UK was much more affordable. Although half of the participants were well educated (degrees or A-level equivalents in Poland) and had better standards of employment in Poland than in the UK, their accounts of life in the UK are shaped by a “revision of normality’ through the everyday practices of shopping, living and earning’ (McGhee et al, 2012: 724). Even though the participants were working below their professional qualifications, the majority preferred the way of life in the UK, describing it as being ‘more normal’ than life in Poland.

Similar findings have been found in a study of Eastern European migrants in the north east of England. They were primarily employed in the low-paid, low-skilled sector. Stenning and Dawley (2009) demonstrated that 30% of registered EU8 workers worked as ‘process operatives’ (i.e. factory workers), and the next largest category was cleaners, domestic staff, kitchen and catering assistants. Local and regional employers ‘appear to be advocating, implicitly if not explicitly, the employment of migrant workers to maintain and reinforce the regional low-skills profile, and to delay investment in workforce development and training, enabling and encouraging the region to compete around cost-competitiveness’ (Stenning and Dawley, 2009: 289). Waite et al (2008) argued that the Polish community in Leeds seem to fill a gap in semi-skilled or unskilled sectors of the labour market where employers have difficulties recruiting workers from the local population. This study concluded that a large proportion of EU8 nationals are overqualified for the jobs that

they are doing. This is confirmed by local employers, who also praise the 'Polish work ethic'.

The over-qualification of Polish migrants is echoed in studies on the EU8 population in Peterborough and Liverpool (Scullion and Morris, 2009ab). In Peterborough the percentage of Polish migrants that held an undergraduate or postgraduate degree was 17% (Scullion and Morris, 2009a). In Liverpool 37% of the Polish participants had graduated from university (Scullion and Morris, 2009b). 27% of the participants in the Liverpool survey were employed in the top three occupational levels in Poland (e.g. managers and senior officials, professional occupations, associated professional and technical occupations), this number falls to 11% in Liverpool, while at the same time the percentage of Poles that were working in elementary occupations increases to 58% (Scullion and Morris, 2009b).

Datta (2009, 2011) has examined the experiences and practices of Polish construction workers in London. She found that Polish builders were in a marginalised position at the lower end of the labour hierarchy. However, in their visual narratives the participants constructed themselves not as marginalised but as superior to the English builders due to their versatility, sophistication and work ethic.

Janta et al (2011ab, 2012) explored the experiences of Polish workers in the tourism sector. Half of the participants in their sample held a university degree, and one in five were studying at a university in Poland and were coming to the UK to work during the semester breaks. Janta et al (2011b: 1337) argued that the relationships with multi-national co-workers were understood to be contributing to 'a sense of cosmopolitan citizenship', and that low-status work was seen as a form of investment that may underpin further upward labour mobility once linguistic, social and cultural capital were developed.

Dustmann and Frattini (2014) showed that European labour migrants played an important role in driving forward the UK's economy. EU8 migrants made a large net fiscal contribution to the UK's economy. This was due to many of them being young and healthy single workers, working full-time without much unemployment, and they paid their taxes, taking far less out of the state than what they put in.

Polish migration research is a vibrant area of academic research and there have been a number of doctoral studies that address gaps in the literature by exploring and mapping the geographies of Polish migration (Botterill, 2012; Callender, 2012;

Clements, 2014; Kaczmarek-Day, 2013; Ramasawmy, 2014). However, there are still unexplored places in the UK and there remains a lack of empirical work on the geographies of young people who have migrated with their families. This thesis responds to these gaps by exploring the lives of young Poles in rural Northumberland, and how their experiences of migration contribute to shaping the nature and geographies of their transitions to adulthood. The rationale for Northumberland was fuelled by a gap around young Poles in rural areas. Also, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, much of the existing youth transitions research in the north east of England has taken place in urban areas. This results in little being known about the lives of young people in rural Northumberland as they make their transitions to adulthood. As a result, rural Northumberland is a unique place in which to explore the transitions to adulthood of young Poles.

All of the young people that took part in my research had been born in Poland, and experienced migration to the UK with their families after 2004. Burrell (2011b: 9) has noted that '[t]here has been considerable public and academic interest in this migration, signalling that the influx of Polish people into the country has been one of the key migration 'stories' of the decade'. Qualitative research has explored a range of issues including transnationalism, ideas about settlement and return, gender relations, family practices, education, ethnicity and belonging (Burrell, 2008ab; Garapich, 2011; Stenning and Słowik, 2011; White, 2011). The research outlined above provides valuable insights into understanding the experiences of recent Polish migrants to the UK. Previous research highlights how the experience of migration is complex, highly individual and made up of a very particular set of experiences. However, as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, very little is known about the lives and experiences of those young Poles who migrated with their families, particularly as they make their transitions to adulthood, and how the experience of migration contributes to shaping the nature and geographies of their youth transitions.

3.3 Children, young people and families

White (2010) explored different aspects of family migration using the concept of livelihood strategies. This research found that Polish parents hoped to make a better living in specific places, while taking account of what is both feasible and appropriate.

Decisions about returning to Poland were often made on the basis of comparisons between local livelihoods (e.g. London v Sanok, not England v Poland). Based on her findings, White (2010) rejects the argument about large-scale return migration to Poland as most families, especially those with school-aged children, would seem to prefer to stay in England rather than disrupt their children's lives by returning to Poland.

Similarly, Ryan (2011: 80) has investigated Polish family migration to London, with a particular focus on how families 'may be split, reunited and reshaped through the process of migration'. Participants in her study talked about the separations and split families being part of their economic migration project, and the majority were planning family reunifications.

Alternatively, Lopez Rodriguez (2010) has researched another aspect of family migration focusing on the interaction between schools and Polish families. She argues that the reproduction of social class does not seem to affect Polish families to the same degree that it impacts on English families. The study argues how the Polish migrant mothers have a meritocratic mind-set believing that the UK is a land where anybody with talent and the will to work hard can make it.

Botterill (2014) studied Polish migrants in Edinburgh and those who had returned to Poland. She is critical of the false dichotomy between 'family' on the one hand and 'individual mobility' on the other, because it fails to take into account the central role of the family in the process of mobility itself. Botterill (2014: 233) argues 'the family performs ideological, practical and affective roles that shape individual mobility across the lifecourse'. In particular, she points to the three ruptures: 'moving out' of family life via mobility, 'keeping in touch' with the family while away, and 'coming back' to the family and associated responsibilities. Mobility represented new opportunities and freedoms from which 'habits of home are recalled as an immovable irritation' (Botterill, 2014: 238).

As a result, the family is not a sealed silo in which social relations are internally determined and played out. Instead it is embedded in a wider political economy which has its own drivers and determinants. Also, there are powerful 'narratives of return' that are 'guided by gendered economic rationalities for care in later life, and unwillingness to "sacrifice" familial intimacy for household gains' (Botterill, 2014: 240).

Tkacz and McGhee (2016) focus on the educational aspirations of fourteen to sixteen year old Polish boys who attend British secondary schools. The study explores how the Poles aspirations are shaped by their experiences of migration and how these are negotiated between the parents and children. It looks at how these young Poles' attempt to realise their aspirations and how they deploy certain resources. Tkacz and McGhee (2016) found that Polish parents display a level of agency that is comparable to white, British-middle class parents (see, for example: Lucey and Reay, 2002; Reay, 1998).

Sokolowska (2016) has noted how the understanding of first-generation children's transnationalism in comparison to their parents is rarely present in academic literature. These concerns were also shared by White et al (2011) who argued that first generation migrant children are largely absent from existing research. Instead, research tends to focus on the lives and experiences of second and third generation migrant children.

Studies have drawn attention to children's and young people's experiences of growing up transnationally (Sime and Fox, 2014ab). It is recognised that children and young people's belonging is dynamically constructed. Sime and Fox (2014a) explored how children perceived old and new friendships following migration. This research provided an understanding of the changes that migration brings to family dynamics and roles. It provided an important understanding of the children's everyday practices. The authors argued that migrant children are disadvantaged post-migration and developed their own strategies to mitigate the impact of migration on their lives. In the present research I open up space to think about the experiences of young people who have migrated from Poland with their families.

Valentine et al (2008) argued that migration has a profound impact on individuals' identities and senses of belonging. There has been a small but growing body of work that has drawn attention to these aspects in relation to the lives of young Poles. Moskal (2010) explored their schooling, home relations, language issues and belonging. In another study Moskal (2011) focused on transnationalism and the role of the family in the migration process. Trevena (2009; 2012) has investigated the role of the school in Polish migrants' settlement and integration into Britain. Children and young people develop multiple strategies to manage and cope with their experiences of migration (Moskal, 2014, 2016; Moskal and Tyrell, 2016; Ní Laoire et al, 2011; Sime and Fox, 2014ab). Moskal (2015) has focused on children's and families'

transnational relations and identities after migration. This research has provided important insights into the Polish children's lives, examining their senses of belonging and identities. Moskal and Sime (2016) focused on language use by Polish migrant children aged five to seventeen who have migrated to Scotland. This research understands the role that language plays in how children make sense of their identities. It is argued that language is central to their everyday lives and identities. Polish young people comprise a distinctive new migrant group in the British education system (Pollard et al, 2008). The present research aims to provide important analyses of their lives and experiences, particularly in the context of their transitions to adulthood.

Research has focused on the ways in which children experience migration at different scales and in different contexts (Moskal and Tyrell, 2016). Moskal and Tyrell (2016) address a gap in the literature on the ways in which children may be involved in migration decision-making in their families. They analyse the migration experiences of those children who moved with parents, children who moved after a delay and those children who never moved at all but whose parents and/or siblings have moved. Moskal and Tyrell (2016) found that for some children it was difficult to make new friends and cope without siblings and/or parents. Friendships in their migration destinations were important for the children to cope with the experience of migration. Ryan and D'Angelo (2011) found that children find it easier to make friends with people from their own national or ethnic groups, or those that had also experienced migration. It is argued that future research must take into account the impact that migration has on the relationships that migrant children have with their families (Moskal and Tyrell, 2016).

Young people develop strategies in order to foster a sense of belonging (Ní Laoire et al, 2011). According to Ní Laoire et al (2011: 9) their home may be 'here or there, or both, or nowhere, or shifting and contingent'. Moskal (2015) found that some of the young Poles had developed a strong sense of belonging and attachment to their new localities in Scotland. They also maintained connections to Poland through phone calls, internet conversations and holidays to Poland, but these can result in different levels of attachment and detachment (Moskal, 2015). Moskal's (2015) research makes an important contribution by considering how mobility can shape a young migrant's sense of place and influence their homemaking practices in their everyday lives.

Moskal (2015) examines children's understandings of home among transnational families in Scotland. This research demonstrated the social nature of the young Poles' senses of belonging. Some of the children were connected to their families and co-ethnics, while others felt increasingly disconnected. Moskal (2015) concluded that future research must take into account the impact of migration on the relationships that children and young people have with their families. As a result of Moskal's research I became interested in the young Poles' everyday lives and experiences, and how the relationships that they had with their families and friends shaped and influenced their transitions to adulthood.

Increasing attention is being paid to the lives and experiences of children and young people who migrated from Poland with their families. This research has developed a clearer and more nuanced picture about the lives and experiences of these young people. This research has emphasised the challenges that young Poles who migrate to the UK with their families face, particularly in relation to language and their families lack of familiarity with the UK's education system. This thesis pays attention to the lives and experiences of young people who migrated to rural Northumberland that have been previously overlooked in existing Polish migration research.

~~It is through my research that I aim to make sense of the young Poles experiences of migration from Poland, and add to a gap in knowledge by understanding how their particular experiences contribute to shaping and influencing their transitions to adulthood. Much of the existing research with young Poles who have migrated with their families have focused on those young people living in urban areas in and around Scotland and London. This results in very little being known about the lives and experiences of young Poles who are living and growing up in other areas, particularly rural areas. This led me to focus on a group of young Poles in Northumberland, rural north east England. Previous research has drawn attention to the young Poles identity negotiations. In this research I was interested in understanding what was particularly Polish or rural about the young Poles' transitions to adulthood, and how they were negotiating their identities on their transitions.~~

3.4 Identities: Understanding Migration

Mobilities has gained prominence in the literature with the announcement of a 'new mobilities paradigm' (Cresswell, 2010; Sheller and Urry, 2006). Cresswell (2010: 18)

noted that migration theory and research positioned movement as one place pushing and another pulling people, commenting that 'despite being about movement, [they were] really about places'. Increased mobility means that migration raises interesting questions about how places are constructed and experienced, particularly in a globalising world (Farrugia, 2015). Geography becomes even more important as people move across several spaces forging new relationships, maintaining connections and challenging boundaries (that are both real and imagined) which separate 'us' and 'them'. Spaces are understood to exist on all geographical scales, from the home to transglobal connections (Massey, 1994). This particular research examines the importance of place and migration in shaping the young Poles' transitions to adulthood.

It has been suggested that identity should no longer be understood as stable or fixed (Mercer, 1990), but instead is socially-produced and fluid (Hall, 1990). Hall (1996: 4) argues that 'identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and cultures in the process of becoming rather than being'. The critical point is that identity is not 'who we are' but how we are represented and what we could be. Giddens' (1991: 53) understands 'self-identity' in relation to an individuals' biography, and suggests that while this continues to presume continuity across spaces and times 'self-identity is such continuity as interpreted by the agent'. This particular research explores how the young Poles' are negotiating their experiences of migration and identities on their transitions to adulthood, making sense of what is particularly rural or Polish about their transitions.

To make sense of the distinctions between migrants' past and present identities, Hall (1995) used the metaphors of roots/routes to describe the complexity of identity negotiations. As an individual moves through spaces their identities are influenced by their experiences of migration (Hall, 1996). Hall (1995) notes that the notion of routes offers an 'open' way to describe culture. It is a conceptual framework that imagines belongings as fluid and not spatially fixed. The notion of roots is presented as an 'umbilical cord' connecting people to their culture of origin, a link to guide people back to where they belong, but is ultimately identified as a linear conceptualisation of culture (Hall, 1995). One approach in migration studies that uses the roots/routes extensively is research that explores 'transnational communities' (Vertovec, 1999, 2001).

Transnationalism refers to the unique and complex belongings of people who are dispersed across a variety of geographic boundaries and may have connections to several places that they identify as home (Clifford, 1994). Studies have focused on the transnational connections that are preserved across national borders. Burrell (2003), in a study with the Polish community in Leicester, demonstrated what while maintaining contact with Poland was ingrained in participants' everyday lives, transnational connections were not deemed to be as important to discuss as the migration experience itself. Research into migrations has examined how individuals assume and construct different identities, being influenced in several ways.

Eade et al's (2007) typology considered the differences between Polish migrations. These were based on the migration strategies demonstrated during interviews and participant observation. They are careful to point out that behaviour is fluid and changes over time. Eade et al (2007: 10) argue that it is important to understand participants' biographies in shaping their positioning within the research's typology 'respondents overwhelmingly constructed their class position in terms of their perceived life chances and plans ... in terms of the opportunities that lay ahead rather than occupational or economic position held at the present'. Eade et al's (2007) typology is useful in exposing the differences between Polish migrants.

Previous research on Polish identity has explored a range of issues. Ryan (2007) explored identity negotiation and construction processes in the context of transnational migration. However, the negotiation of ethnicity, class (Garapich, 2016), identity politics (Datta and Brickell, 2009), and the constructions of identity by shopping and eating habits (Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009) and ethnic identity (Ryan, 2010) have also been examined. Whether research is concerned with ethnicity, class or eating habits, it is widely acknowledged that the lives of those that migrated have been varied and complex.

Kosic (2006) explored how Polish migrants understood themselves as migrants, workers and individuals living in a foreign country, investigating their identity negotiations focusing on ethnic and national characteristics, but also drawing attention to personal and professional aspects of their lives. Kosic (2006) makes sense of the way that migrants construct their identities in particular contexts on a variety of levels including environmental conditions, social conditions and particular constraints. She advocates listening to migrants' individual experiences. This research is useful as it understands the relationship between migrants' social

identities in particular contexts and the ways that migrants construct their identities in particular places.

Vertovec and Cohen (1999) define four main features of transnational populations. These include: the opportunity to have multiple identities and multiple localities, the globalisation of kinship ties, the growth of remittances and the disintegration of boundaries between host and home societies. These link closely to Bauman's (2007) observations of 'solid' to 'liquid' modernity. Bauman (2007) writes that the modern state's power to act is now moving to the politically uncontrolled global, while politics (the ability to determine direction and purpose of action) is unable to be effective on the global as it remains local. These insights demonstrate the tensions that exist between the ideas of roots and routes, in that the plurality that engaging with routes offers may be at the demise of national borders and boundaries (Hall, 1995). These are important ideas for this project that will influence the young Poles' choices and decisions.

Social identity is a growing area of research. Today's society has been conceptualised as late modernity, fluid modernity or postmodernity. It has been argued that social identities have become increasingly problematic given the demise of full employment and rising affluence, together with the emergence of risk, uncertainty and insecurity (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2000). Giddens (1991), Beck (1992), Lash (1994) and Bauman (2000, 2004) have focused on the construction of self in late modernity since it is argued that increasing individualisation means that human identity is a task that is under continual construction, with actors having responsibility for this.

Bauman (2000) has argued that in late modernity communities are becoming increasingly short-lived and fragile, so that any sense of belonging that individuals experience is likely to be transitory and fleeting, and any attachments formed to a community are likely to be easily discarded (Bauman, 2004). Bauman (2000: 37) argued:

'communities are formed that are fragile and short-lived, scattered and wandering emotions, shifting erratically from one target to another and drifting in the forever inconclusive search for a secure haven: communities of shared worries, anxieties or hatreds – but in each case 'peg' communities, a

momentary gathering around a nail on which many solitary individuals hang their solitary individual fears’.

These feelings are also echoed in the work of other sociologists who write about the loss of a sense of historical continuity and the decline of traditional community life with the emergence of more individualised ways of being (Giddens, 1991; Lash, 1994). Lasch (1980: 5) argued that late modernity contains a ‘spiritual crisis’ where people are quickly losing a sense of belonging to a succession of generations and are starting to live for themselves rather than for wider community or family-orientated goals. Giddens (1991) noted that self-identities are actively constructed consisting of constant questioning and reconstruction of self, amidst a plethora of choices. Bauman (2004) has argued how in late modernity attachments have become more fluid.

It is through this particular research that I aimed to unpack and understand how the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness, experiences of migration, everyday geographies and senses of belonging in the context of their transitions to adulthood.

To summarise, identity is best understood as a process in which one’s sense of self and connections to place are negotiable and subject to change. For the young Poles the experience of migration may have meant that they have moved from a space of familiarity, to a space that they understand as being ‘strange’. This will result in the transformation of the young Poles’ identities. Roots and routes are particularly useful in describing a range of negotiations that migrants experience. Through this research it is my aim to understand how the young Poles experiences of migration contribute to influencing their transitions to adulthood.

Young Poles’ identities

Ansell and van Blerk (2007) noted how research with young people has been interested in identity. Geographical studies of identity have focused on categories of gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, age and disability (Vanderbeck and Dunkley, 2003). Young people have been shown to define themselves in complex ways (Skelton and Valentine, 2003). Migration may enable children and young people to create a new identity for themselves. This experience can be either positive or negative:

'Migration, then, is not simply a case of moving from place to place, or of uprooting contexts and identity. Rather, it involves becoming part of a place. It involves not just settling, but settling in, where place and identity interact in daily activities and social relations. Our young research participants had no desire to retain an identity as migrants – indeed, a migrant identity was quite negative' (Ansell and van Blerk, 2007: 27).

Negative experiences can be particularly marked at the beginning of the migrant journey, as the process of leaving home for the first time can be emotionally difficult and overwhelming (Ansell and van Blerk, 2007). Through this particular research I wanted to understand what the young Poles' experiences of migration had been, and how these were then contributing to shaping and influencing their transitions to adulthood. The notion of self-identity will be highly individual to how the young Poles make sense of their transitions to adulthood (Ansell and van Blerk, 2007; Giddens, 1991) and how they make sense of their experiences of migration.

Ní Laoire et al (2011) have explored the migration experiences, identities and belongings of migrant children from a variety of backgrounds in Ireland. This research aimed to understand their worlds from their own perspectives, allowing the participants to identify and discuss issues that were important to them, offering new perspectives and understandings. The methods that they used provided the children with the space and time to communicate the complexities of their lives (Ní Laoire, 2016). This research has argued that migrant children who move as part of families play varying roles in family migration decision making, and actively forge places in the world for themselves in contexts of mobility and rupture. Children's (and adults') experiences of migration are also shaped by the intersecting structures of family, social class, state, citizenship and migration regime within which they move and settle (Ní Laoire et al, 2011). The research draws attention to the problems faced by migrant children. Accents were used by peers to construct them as 'not belonging'. Some of the children had been bullied, and many of them had developed very complex strategies to ensure that they would 'fit in'.

Punch (2007), in research with young Bolivian migrants, illustrates the connection between migration and identity formation. The young people in Bolivia faced limited economic opportunities in their everyday lives and were to an extent forced to assume migrant identities before leaving home. However, many willingly sought the benefits of migration, viewing the experience as being beneficial to their local

community, while also 'facilitating their transition to adulthood' (Punch, 2007: 96). This demonstrates the possible connections between the experiences of migration and youth transitions for young Poles who are living and growing up in the UK.

The way that people make sense of their identities are influenced by time and space. Space and place are significant to the process of identity construction. The young Poles' identities are likely to be highly individual. In this research I will attempt to make sense of the young Poles' identity negotiations, particularly in the context of their experiences of migration from Poland, and living and growing up in rural Northumberland. This leads on to the next section of this chapter that explores how rural life has been conceptualised.

3.5 Rural Life

The young Poles who took part in this research were all living and growing up in rural Northumberland. Geographers have led a major re-conceptualisation of the rural (Halfacree, 1993). 'Rurality' is defined as a social construction which includes the 'words and concepts understood by people in everyday talk' (Halfacree, 1993: 29). Rural belonging cannot simply be equated to whiteness. The English rural landscape is a landscape of privilege that promotes and defends the dominance of particular white identities, those who possess 'unmarked whiteness' (Hubbard, 2005: 53). Rural geographers, such as Askins (2006, 2009), have attempted to disrupt the image of the countryside as a homogenous white space that is free from racial conflict.

Research has demonstrated how 'rurality' is heterogeneous, multiple, dynamic and constructed (Cloke and Little, 1997; Little, 1999). This literature has drawn attention to how issues such as class, gender and ethnicity are ignored in assumptions about monocultural, pure and static rural society (Cloke and Thrift, 1990; Little and Morris, 2005; Philo, 1992). These studies have emphasised the connectivity and mobility between rural and urban places, the influence of wider social, cultural and economic contexts on rural realities and the existence of a urban-rural continuum rather than a dark and fixed opposition between urbanity and rurality (Boyle and Halfacree, 1998; Halfacree, 2009; Halfacree and Rivera, 2012). Woods (2005: 10) has argued that 'whatever academics might say about the difficulty of defining 'rural areas' there are still millions of people who consider themselves to be 'rural' and to live in 'rural areas', and to follow a 'rural way of life'".

Cloke (2003: 1) notes how 'rurality is idyllic, we are told. You can't get away from it. The long fingers of idyll reach into our everyday lives via the cultural paraphernalia of video, television, arts, books, magazines, toys and traditional practices ... Almost without realising, it seems we learn to live out these knowledges in perception, attitude and practice'. He goes on to add how 'knowing the rural through idyllic representations, then, not only hides social problems such as poverty and homelessness, but also establishes a political and cultural expectation of orthodoxy which actively seeks to purify rural space from transgressive presences and practices' (Cloke, 2003: 3). Woods (2011: 9) has argued how 'Rurality is an imagined entity'.

Rye (2014) has noted how the role that international migrants play in constructions of ruralities, both through their experiences and understandings of the rural, and the ways in which they contribute to and draw on rural structures, communities and economies have received relatively little attention. The young Poles in this research were all living and growing up in rural towns around Northumberland. I became increasingly interested in whether or not they saw themselves as rural youth, and what was particularly rural about the transitions that they were making. I wanted to understand how and in what ways the young Poles were attached to rural Northumberland.

In relation to rural youth Panelli (2002) developed five dimensions of negotiation which describe the complex and dynamic strategies that characterise young people's rural lives, and capture their experiences of inclusion, exclusion as well as forms of negotiation. Her dimensions of young people's rural life include a more 'global sense of place' that acknowledges influences and effects that go beyond the actual space of the rural community, which helps to understand the impact of wider power relations on young people's everyday lives. These strategies of negotiation include:

- *Negotiation of rural knowledge*: this refers to young people's construction of own meanings of rurality, which are built on their experiences, social relations and discourses that are embedded in and can also be connected with links that go beyond the rural area. I willingly acknowledge that it is important to listen to the young Poles' own perception and meanings of the 'rural', as they might differ from the adult-led discourses of 'rurality'.
- *Negotiation of rural work*: in reference to young people as workers this dimension highlights the 'broader social, cultural and spatial relations which

they are engaged' (Panelli, 2002: 118) and refers, for example, to gender specific expectations and work patterns, spatial access to job opportunities and so forth.

- *Negotiation of rural social relations*: this dimension captures the social relations that constitute young people's rural experiences including family, peer, gender and age-related relations that 'shape young people's experiences of schooling, work and future lifestyles in or beyond rural settings' (Panelli, 2002: 119). It highlights young people's personal and emotional bindings to their rural environment and the effect on their present and future life that includes for example migration pattern.
- *Negotiations of political areas*: this refers to experiences of exclusion and/or inclusion and participation within social and political institutions, community bodies and so forth and young people's responses to this. In this context empirical research has highlighted that young people often do not feel included in political processes of decision-making (Matthews et al, 2000; Matthews, 2001).
- *Negotiation of rural space*: This dimension covers the field of young people's construction of places and spaces that matches their lifestyles. This might include specific places within and beyond the rural community, including, for example 'hyper realities' (Laegran, 2002) that are accessed through the internet (Panelli, 2002).

Leyshon's (2008) study on rural youth in the UK offers valuable insights into how they form attachments to place. He considered passive and active processes in young people's experiences of belonging and non-belonging (Leyshon, 2008). Leyshon (2008: 21) argued that youths' identities were 'fluid, temporal and constantly evolving' and were linked to their sense of place. This sense of place, that is also fluid and evolving, informs spatial practices and movements (Leyshon, 2008). Tyrell and Harmer (2015) interviewed young people who had moved from an urban to a rural environment examining their experiences of place as these young people had lived in both environments.

Through this particular research I am interested in how the young Poles are negotiating their transitions to adulthood in the context of living and growing up in rural Northumberland, and how and in what ways they see themselves as rural youth.

3.6 Concluding Remarks

Young people have complicated interpretations of their own sense of self and progress (Bauman, 2007; Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991). Post-modernity and globalisation are said to cause an increasing complexity to the identities of people, especially for those that are 'on the move' (Bauman, 2000, 2004) and entangled in global families (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2013). Through this particular research it is my aim to make sense of the complexities of the young Poles lives and experiences. I focus on their everyday practices, in order to make sense of their identities and senses of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 1997), in the context of their transitions to adulthood.

Chapter Two demonstrated how transitions to adulthood for young people today are multi-layered and multi-dimensional. This chapter has aimed to provide a framework to understand the experiences of migration and living and growing up in rural Northumberland through a critical appraisal of identities. This particular research aims to make sense of the young Poles' everyday lives and experiences, to understand what it means to be Polish in Northumberland, and how the young Poles' Polishness affects their transitions to adulthood. This research aims to explore and make sense of how the young Poles connect to and relate with people and places.

The young Poles' parents would have arrived into Northumberland or the UK with a specific set of beliefs and practices embedded in their lives. These may then be passed on to their children. I was interested in exploring how the young Poles' families and social support networks were shaping their transitions to adulthood.

This chapter has considered identities in relation to experiences of migration, providing a framework to understand the experiences of young Poles in Northumberland. It has located my own research within existing research on transnational childhoods and young migrants' identity negotiations. I have outlined how migrant children's identities have been conceptualised in existing social science and migration research. Previous research has shown how traditional views on migrant children and their families are contested. Migration is a social process. It is no longer thought of as being a simple journey from 'a to b'. Instead it is much more complex than this. Much of the existing research has been with the young Poles' parents. This means that the lives and experiences of the young Poles who migrated

with their families remain relatively under-explored. It is through this research that I hope to fill this gap in knowledge.

Before exploring the empirical material (Chapters Five, Six and Seven), the next chapter outlines the methodology for this research.

Chapter Four

Researching young Poles in Northumberland

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have shown that at present relatively little is known about the experiences of young Poles who have moved to the UK with their families. This project seeks to address this gap through an in-depth exploration of young Poles' lives and experiences. This chapter discusses the research approach and methods taken to investigate the transitions to adulthood of young Poles who are living and growing up in and around the rural towns of Northumberland. Part one sets out the research process. This includes a description and background of the study area, research participants, and details of access and recruitment processes and issues. Part two is an explanation of the research approach, methods of data collection and analysis. I set out the epistemological foundations for the research design, provide a justification of the approach and discuss the rationale for each research method used in the project. Part three reflects on the everyday issues of the research and how I negotiated particular dilemmas related to personal reflexivity, representation and positionality.

4.2 Part One: The Research Process

4.2.1 Study Area

Northumberland sits between the city economies of Newcastle and Edinburgh. It is a large and diverse county, incorporating market towns such as Morpeth and Hexham, post-industrial communities including Blyth and Ashington, and rural villages. It has an area of 1,940 square miles, but a population of only 316,000, most of whom live in the south east and central areas of the county (Northumberland County Council, 2014). The county operates a three tier education system (first, middle and high schools) given that there are a large number of remote small villages. This meant that small village schools were needed to ensure the health and well-being of children aged six to nine, as long travel would make these children's days very long (Local Authority Personal Advisor, Berwick: Interview).

Northumberland Ordnance Survey General Map



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Figure 4.1: Map to show the geographical location of Northumberland and its communities

(Source: Northumberland County Council, 2017b)

In recent years Northumberland's economy has grown more slowly than the national and regional economies (Northumberland County Council, 2014). The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2015-2025 sets out a vision 'to deliver a prosperous Northumberland founded on quality local jobs and connected communities' (Northumberland County Council, 2014). The long-term ambition is to create 10,000 new jobs in the county up to 2031. Tourism and culture businesses are a major part of Northumberland and the council wishes to focus on improving the quality and productivity of these sectors. A significant minority of people do not have the skills or qualifications they need to take advantage of opportunities locally or externally, and there are pockets of deprivation featuring hidden poverty across the county, especially in the south east. An economic priority of the council is to support the sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (Northumberland County Council, 2014).

However, stakeholder interviews revealed how major investment is needed in transport, mobile and broadband connectivity, and particular priority should be given to dualling the A1 North of Morpeth and re-opening the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line passenger train services. Jane Walker (2014: Interview) claims that it is also significant that the county does not have a university or a premiership football club. Local Authority Personal Advisors argued that Northumberland needs to introduce a living wage, targeted employment programmes for those residents disconnected from opportunities, support skills development, provide opportunities for young people including apprenticeships, and ensuring the workforce meets business requirements.

While Northumberland has little history of in-migration, The Common Camp in Morpeth housed 300 young Polish families, and a small number of other nationalities including Italian, Estonian and Ukranian, following World War II. This was one of approximately 50 resettlement camps for members of the Polish Resettlement Corps (PRC) which were established in 1946 for those 160,000 who wished to remain temporarily in Britain while their homeland was under Soviet control (Wójcicka, n.d.). According to 2011 census data 3,027 people in the county speak another language, and of these 597 speak Polish. The wards of Berwick East and Berwick North are home to the largest number of Polish speakers (Northumberland County Council, 2013a). In 2013, 123 pupils in the county's schools identified as being Polish (Northumberland County Council, 2013b). The number of Polish pupils in the county's schools had for the first time overtaken that of the Traveller community, who

were previously the biggest group. In a region which historically has not seen much in-migration, the recent Polish influx called for adaptation on the part of schools and teachers.

The young Poles who took part in this research were broadly located in three areas of Northumberland: the North of Northumberland in Berwick, the South East of Northumberland in Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Morpeth, and the West of Northumberland in Hexham (see page 61 for a map of Northumberland).

Berwick is the Northernmost town in England. It is located 2.5 miles South of the Scottish border. The Census in 2011 recorded Berwick's population as 12,034. In 2008 a civil parish and town council were created. Approximately 60% of the population are employed in the service sector. This includes shops, hotels and catering, financial services, government activities and health care. Meanwhile approximately 13% of the population is employed in manufacturing, 10% in agriculture and 8% in construction. Some of Berwick's current or recent economic activities included salmon fishing, shipbuilding, engineering, sawmilling, fertilizer production, malting and the manufacture of tweed and hosiery. Berwick is a twin town with Trzcianka, Wielkopolskie in Poland.

The South East of Northumberland includes some post-industrial communities such as Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth but also some market towns, for example Morpeth. Ashington is located 15 miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne. At the 2011 Census it had a population of 27,764. It was once a centre of the coal mining industry. At the 2011 Census Bedlington had a population of 18,470. Again, it was a former mining town and is located 10 miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne. Blyth lies on the coast and is approximately 13 miles north east of Newcastle upon Tyne. At the 2011 Census it had a population of 37,339. The main industries that helped the town to prosper were coal mining and shipbuilding. The town was seriously affected when these industries went into decline, but it has undergone regeneration and redevelopment in recent years. Morpeth is a historic market town with a population of 14,017.

Hexham is a market town in the west of Northumberland. In 2011, it had a population of 11,829. There are a number of smaller towns and villages around Hexham. Newcastle upon Tyne is approximately 25 miles to the east.

4.2.2 The Research Participants

Overall, 35 people took part in 55 interviews and these formed two groups of participants.

Stakeholders

Group one consisted of 15 gatekeepers and community members. These interviews helped to gain context on Northumberland, the lives of young people as they make their transitions to adulthood and the differences they saw between the young Poles and other young people in Northumberland. This group included school teachers, local authority careers advisors and community organisations, such as the Berwick Migrant Support Group and Polish Saturday Schools in the county. I conducted semi-structured interviews with fifteen individuals who I felt would provide scale and context to my research. Table 2 shows the job role and location of each individual that I interviewed. These individuals were based across the county of Northumberland in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Bedlington, Ashington and Morpeth. These interviews reflected on Northumberland as a county in terms of local labour and housing markets; educational and training opportunities and pathways that are available to young people; the services and advice they receive, and any barriers all young people, and young Poles in particular, face as they navigate their transitions to adulthood. These interviews were incredibly useful to reflect on Northumberland as a county given the economic recession, current austerity measures and changes to service delivery.

Table 2: Group One sample – Job role and location in Northumberland

Job Title	Location in Northumberland
Polish Saturday School Provider	Berwick/Howick
Polish Saturday School Provider	Blyth
Assistant Head Teacher	Bedlington
Assistant Head Teacher	Bedlington
Assistant Head Teacher	Berwick
Assistant Head Teacher	Berwick
Local Authority Personal Advisor	Berwick
Local Authority Personal Advisor	Berwick
Local Authority Personal Advisor	Bedlington
Local Authority Personal Advisor	Blyth
Volunteer at Migrant Support Group and Citizens Advice Bureau	Berwick
Volunteer at Migrant Support Group	Berwick
Language Tutor	Berwick and Ashington
Senior Manager for Vulnerable Groups at Northumberland County Council	Morpeth
Senior Manager for Employability and Skills at Northumberland County Council	Morpeth

Young People

Group two consists of 20 young people aged sixteen to twenty-four who have experienced migration to Northumberland from Poland and who were interviewed twice. ~~Young people are often associated with the chronological age range of 16-25, the life stage between childhood and adulthood (Valentine, 2003; Kehily, 2007). Given the long-term and recessionary changes in the economy, contemporary young adults face a transition to adulthood that is distinct from previous eras. There is a delayed transition to adulthood for many young people (Côté and Bynner, 2008). Many young people do not subjectively feel like an adult, even though they have achieved some of the markers associated with an adult status (Arnett, 2000; 2014). Arnett (2000: 469) calls young adulthood, especially the period between eighteen and twenty-five, 'emerging adulthood', because it represents a period of 'independent role exploration', including career exploration.~~ I decided to draw on sixteen to twenty-five year olds as part of this study. However, I was unsuccessful in accessing anyone aged twenty-five that met the criteria for my research. As a result this study draws on the experiences of young Polish migrants aged sixteen to twenty-four. Those aged sixteen may be leaving school and making decisions about further study or training, those aged eighteen may be finishing further education or training and entering the labour market or applying for university, while those nineteen to twenty-four may be

studying, experiencing the local labour market, potentially making the transition to independent living or even becoming parents themselves.

This group participated in initial meetings, semi-structured interviews, a lifegrid exercise and then follow-up interviews ten to twelve months later. The follow-up interviews are a particular strength of this study, allowing me to make sense of the contexts and nuances of their transitions.

Northumberland is a large and diverse county. It was important that I involved as many young Poles from across the county, in order to offer a rich understanding of the lives of the young Poles who are growing up in the area. In the context of my study, the young people had been living in the UK for between eight and ten years. Eleven of the young people were located in the North in Berwick-upon-Tweed, four were in Bedlington in the South East, two in Blyth, one in Morpeth, one in Ashington and one in Hexham. Unfortunately I was unable to secure the involvement of a gatekeeper in the 'West' of Northumberland. This may explain why I was only able to secure the engagement of one young Pole who was living and growing up in this area of Northumberland. Table 3 presents a demographic breakdown of the main sample of the young people involved in the project.

Table 3: Demographic information of Group Two: Young People

Pseudonym	Age at first interview (years)	Location in Northumberland	First interview	Follow-up interview	Lifegrid Exercise
Kacper	18	Berwick	✓	✓	✓
Izabel	18	Berwick	✓	✓	✓
Ania	18	Berwick	✓	✓	✓
Ola	16	Berwick	✓	✓	✓
Adam	16	Berwick	✓	✓	✓
Edyta	18	Berwick	✓	✓	
Rafał	18	Berwick	✓	✓	
Tomasz	17	Ashington	✓	✓	✓
Gosia	22	Berwick	✓	✓	✓
Danka	24	Berwick	✓	✓	✓
Piotr	23	Bedlington	✓	✓	
Magda	19	Berwick	✓	✓	
Kasia	18	Berwick	✓	✓	
Bartek	23	Blyth	✓	✓	
Agata	18	Morpeth	✓	✓	
Dawid	19	Blyth	✓	✓	
Dominika	18	Hexham	✓	✓	✓
Filip	18	Bedlington	✓	✓	
Jakub	16	Bedlington	✓	✓	✓
Emilia	16	Bedlington	✓	✓	✓

Note: The young Poles have all been given pseudonyms in an effort to protect their anonymity.

4.2.3 Access and Recruitment

My research sample was derived through a process of snowball sampling, from key contacts introduced to me during the first year of my research by Northumberland County Council, my collaborative partner. The first phase of the research involved semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, who subsequently provided access into schools and local community organisations that support Polish migrants and their families. These stakeholders also legitimised my research to the young Poles and their families. This meant that I was able to gain their trust far quicker than if I had approached them directly myself. For example, the Berwick Migrant Support Group and North East Polish magazine 2B allowed me to post about my research on their

Facebook pages. This yielded no participants. However, on a trip to Edinburgh with the Berwick Migrant Support Group, the co-ordinator Gerry Jones introduced me to a number of young Poles and their families. From this I was able to arrange a number of meetings with the young people who were willing to participate in the research, highlighting the benefits of having a legitimising contact. Through these initial meetings I could meet with the young people and introduce myself and the project. The six young people that I initially met with introduced me to others, including school friends, and younger and older siblings, who would be suitable.

Initially I spent a lot of time designing information sheets (see Appendix) and posters (Figure 4.2) for my research. Every information sheet and poster included the Newcastle University and Northumberland County Council logos. I assumed that this would make the research look more professional and consequently encourage engagement (Save the Children, 2014). I provided copies to stakeholders at interviews, along with my contact details. I also placed an advertisement in two Polish shops and the library in Berwick-upon-Tweed, and also the libraries in Alnwick and Bedlington.



Cześć

Calling Young Polish Migrants

PhD researcher seeks young Polish migrants aged 16-25 growing up in the towns and villages of rural Northumberland to take part in a short interview for the project.

The researcher, Sean Gill, is based at Newcastle University in the Geography department.

Through this research it is hoped to better understand the lives of this group of young people. The project adds to what is currently a small research field much in need of a contemporary investigation.

Participants ideally need to have moved to Northumberland with parents or carers after the EU enlargement in 2004.

They will be asked to take part in an interview which will be recorded, unless otherwise agreed. The interview will be taken in confidence and pseudonyms will be used in the final write-up. Participants will have the option to opt out at any time, and they may later decide to withdraw any quotations taken from the eventual transcript.

Interviews will be conducted at an agreed place.

Please contact Sean Gill at:

Email: sean.gill@ncl.ac.uk

Phone: 07774040452

NORTHUMBERLAND
COUNTY COUNCIL



Figure 4.2: An example of a poster designed for the recruitment of young people

This method was unsuccessful and I was unable to recruit any Polish young people using this route. Rather than the young people not being interested in the study, I can only assume that they were afraid to get in touch with me directly themselves, had no means to do so or did not see the poster.

After meeting with Beata Kohlbeck of Mohr Language Support who delivers the Polish Saturday School in Berwick-upon-Tweed, she agreed to pass on information sheets for the project to previous students of her Saturday school, and other Polish families that she knew across the county. This resulted in me meeting with three

young people. This again reinforces the importance of having contacts within the community.

03 listopad 2014

Drodzy uczniowie,

zwrócił się do mnie z prośbą pan na studiach doktorskich na uniwersytecie w Newcastle, którego badania są skierowane do młodych Polaków żyjących w Nortumbrii. Sean Gill jest bardzo miłym młodym człowiekiem i zbiera dane do swojej pracy doktorskiej. Potrzebne mu są wywiady z Polakami w wieku 16-25 lat, bo chciałby się dowiedzieć, jak układacie sobie życie w tej części Anglii. Podobne badania zostały już zrobione w Londynie i na terenie Szkocji, ale nikt do tej pory nie interesował się polską młodzieżą w terenie poza dużymi miastami. Byłabym wdzięczna gdybyście przeczytali jego załączony list, pokazali go rodzicom i skontaktowali się z Seanem w celu umówienia na rozmowę.

Bez Waszej pomocy trudno mu będzie pracować na projektem. Myślę, że zrozumiecie tą sytuację i będziecie w stanie mu pomóc. Jeżeli macie jakieś pytania na ten temat, mój kontakt e-mailowy i telefoniczny zamieszczony jest na dole.

Pozdrawiam serdecznie,

Beata Kohlбек

Dr Beata Kohlбек, bkohlбек@mohrlanguagesupport.org.uk
01665 720521

Figure 4.3: Copy of letter sent to young people who had previously attended Polish Saturday School in Berwick (formally Seahouses)

(See Appendix A for Polish to English translation)

In Northumberland there are a range of established community spaces to support the young Poles and their families. These include the Berwick Migrant Support group (information leaflet Appendix B), and the Polish Saturday School located in Berwick. I will focus on these community spaces in Chapter Seven. These organisations were

instrumental in introducing me to young Poles and their families. My collaborative contact at Northumberland County Council put me in touch with a contact at Northumberland College, who subsequently put me in touch with the lead volunteer at the Berwick Migrant Support group, and the person who runs the Polish Saturday School. These were very valuable contacts in accessing a wide range of young Poles in Northumberland.

4.2.4 Compensation, reward or incentives?

In youth research it has become increasingly common to offer some sort of financial inducement to benefit young people for their involvement (Heath et al, 2009; Hill 2006). When designing the methodology for my research I considered offering the young people a financial incentive, as a token for their time. However, I feared that if I offered the young people money in advance, they may just engage in the project exclusively for this, and tell me things that they may think that I want to hear (Hopkins, 2010). Also if I were to reward the young Poles after they had taken part, I may find that other participants may wish to take part once they found out that there was a reward (Heath et al, 2009). At first uptake for the project was slow. Young people were agreeing to meet with me but subsequently cancelling due to work commitments or because they felt tired. This was totally understandable. The pressures they had on their time quickly became apparent. I initially felt a sense of disappointment, and spoke with Gerry Jones at the Berwick Migrant Support Group about this, as I wanted to remunerate the young Poles for their time. Gerry felt that a £10 Eldon Square gift voucher would be appropriate for the young Poles involvement in both interviews for the study. While McDowell (2001) paid cash to the young men in her study, I agreed with Gerry in that a voucher for a local shopping centre would be more appropriate (Heath et al, 2009), especially as many of the young Poles were very reluctant for me to buy them hot drinks or snacks during meetings, instead preferring to purchase their own. Sime (2008) discussed using gift vouchers as tokens of thanks, while Alderson and Morrow (2011) noted how payment may lead to embarrassment or misunderstanding between researchers and those that wish to help with the research. At the end of the research I provided the young Poles with a personalised thank you card and included the gift voucher inside. This was something that I felt both the young Poles and I would be most comfortable with. All

of the young Poles were appreciative of these with them calling, texting or emailing to express their gratitude.

4.3 Part Two: Research Design

4.3.1 The Approach

My research is grounded in interpretative social science. As a result I have used only qualitative research methods. Through my research I did not seek to make generalisations about the young Poles' experiences and aspirations for the future, and the thoughts, feelings and comments of the stakeholders. Instead I seek to make a series of interpretative claims based on empirical evidence and inductive reasoning. Qualitative research methods attempt to explore the subjective meanings of research to respondents and participants through a range of methods developed to interrogate and reveal subjectivities. I chose this approach because I was interested in the experiences of these young people since migrating to the UK and Northumberland, and what their aspirations were for the future. I was also interested in what factors shaped the nature and geography of their futures. A qualitative framework allowed an in-depth interrogation of these factors, exposing their nuances and the inter-relatedness in each individual's biography.

Previous Polish migration research has drawn on qualitative interviews. In researching the lives of young Polish migrants in Britain, who were born between 1975 and 1985, Burrell (2011a) drew on fifteen in-depth and fifteen shorter semi-structured interviews to learn about the impact post-socialist Poland had on the transitions of these young people. The young people had experienced lifecourse milestones in the post-socialist period, leaving school at some point in the 1990s or early 2000s. This research explores the young migrants' memories and experiences of this time. Burrell (2003) also drew on interviews with those who migrated to Britain after the Second World War. Interviews were conducted in two stages. The first stage drew on a life-history approach where participants were encouraged to talk freely about their lives, followed by a series of questions related to a range of themes including history, war, women, community, communism and contact with Poland.

Again the popularity of interviews as a research method is shown in the key monograph *Polish Migration to the UK in the 'New' European Union* (Burrell, 2009)

where six of the ten empirical chapters make use of the method in their research. The research in this monograph explores a range of issues around this contemporary migration flow including the personal stories of migrants, their experience of living in Britain, the decision to migrate or stay, social networks between both countries and their identities.

Other research includes Datta (2009) exploring the everyday cosmopolitanisms of 24 East-European construction workers. This used qualitative inquiry and analysis where participants were invited to take part in a two stage interview. The first was a semi-structured interview where participants were asked to discuss their experience of migration and living and working in London. Participants were then provided with a disposable camera to take pictures of places which they would like to discuss or show as part of their life in London. The second interview was initiated through these photos which provided non-textual narratives of the participants' experiences. It also meant that the conversation could include places that may not have been part of the first interview. White (2010, 2011) has conducted interviews with women in England and Poland to examine why young people migrate to Britain and considers migration as a family livelihood strategy. Similarly Ryan et al (2008) draws on interviews with 30 migrants and three focus groups to explore individual experiences of migration and how participants accessed, formed and used networks, and how these changed both temporally and spatially.

Given their use in prior studies, qualitative research methods were deemed to be appropriate with the young Poles in order to learn the stories of their experiences and lives (Cresswell, 2003; Dowling et al, 2016). Through these methods I was able to explore their memories of Poland, experiences of migration to Northumberland, and determine how migration shapes the nature and geography of their youth transitions. As the transition to adulthood takes place over time, I felt it was important that I incorporated a follow-up interview. Henderson et al (2007) studied the lives of 100 young people across five different research sites as they made their transitions to adulthood. Participants were followed over a ten-year period from 1996 to 2006 and drew on biographical interviews. Through these interviews researchers hoped to gain an understanding of developments in the young people's lives across five different fields (education, work, leisure, consumption and domestic – family, relationships, care) as these were sites where the researchers felt young people could begin to develop adult identities. In my study the young people were re-interviewed ten to

twelve months after their first interview. This is a particular strength of my study, enabling me to make sense of and understand how they were negotiating their transitions. In initial interviews I was able to gain a picture of the young people's experiences of migration and the aspirations that they had for future work and study. The follow-up interviews allowed me to learn how their lives were developing or had changed, the outcomes since the previous interview, and to more closely understand their experiences of Polishness and migration in the context of their youth transitions.

4.3.2 The Methods

In my research I used a multi-method approach which consisted of:

- 1) Semi-structured interviews with community members/stakeholders
- 2) Semi-structured interviews with young people
- 3) Lifegrids

This combination of methodologies reflects a commitment to traditional methods in qualitative enquiry, for example semi-structured interviews, but also draws on newer and more innovative methods such as lifegrids. I felt that the more traditional methods would be augmented by the inclusion of lifegrids as a creative method, and that the multi-method approach would enhance the methodological rigour of the project. These methods also fit with my research questions, and are suitable to my own personal communication skills and style. I prefer to talk with individuals on a one to one basis, and I felt more comfortable with such methods. I also felt that these methods would not take up too much of the young Poles' and stakeholders' time, and that they may even enjoy the interview experience. The lifegrid activity would allow the young people to reflect on the interview and think about anything that they may have missed. Table 4 presents a breakdown of the research methods according to the location of the participants in Northumberland. The following sections will provide a discussion of the rationale for choosing these methods, and the practical issues associated with each. I will expand on what these methods are and how I made them work later in this section.

Table 4: Breakdown of Research Methods

Method/Location in Northumberland	Semi-structured interview with Stakeholders/Community Volunteers	Semi-structured interview with young people aged 16-24	Lifegrid	Follow-up semi-structured interview with young people aged 16-24
Berwick	7(1)*	11	5	11
Ashington	(1)*	1	0	1
Bedlington	3	4	3	4
Blyth	2	2	1	2
Morpeth	2	1	1	1
Hexham	0	1	1	1
Total	15	20	11	20
Timeframe	September 2014 – December 2014	January 2015 – March 2015	January 2015 – March 2015	September 2015 – January 2016

(Note: 1 Stakeholder worked across both Berwick and Ashington and provided context on both areas)

4.3.3 Semi-structured interviews

As methodological tools of qualitative research, interviews developed out of the interpretative tradition. First and foremost they are a way of communicating and learning various forms of information from groups and individuals (Byrne, 2004). They are useful for exploring the attitudes and values of individuals. The flexible structure and the use of open ended questions are more likely, than more rigidly structured techniques such as surveys and questionnaires, to provide access to participants' interpretations of events, their perceptions of phenomena, and the meanings they attach to this phenomena (Byrne, 2004). Another advantage of this approach is that it allows for issues of a sensitive nature or complex phenomenon – such as experience of migration and aspirations for the future – to be explored in a sensitive manner, enabling the interviewer to potentially open up dialogue that will produce a fuller account (Byrne, 2004; Dowling et al, 2016).

Semi-structured interviews were deemed the most effective form of interviewing. I rejected structured interviews as they would be inherently rigid and inflexible (Cohen et al, 2007). With a semi-structured interview I was able to produce a guide encouraging stakeholders and young people to open up and talk (Hörschelmann, 2011). Semi-structured interviews offer a balance between structure and flexibility (Gillham, 2005). The same questions are asked of each participant but they are open and flexible in their nature. This meant that I could adapt to each participant. The ordering was flexible and I could follow up on any interesting areas or concerns and interests that were expressed (May, 1997). Within this flexibility I maintained rigour by keeping a focus on the original questions. This ensured that there was a specific focus on the research topic, which guarded against letting the method rule the question (van Manen, 1997).

Stakeholder semi-structured interviews

My collaborative contact Jane Walker, Senior Manager for Vulnerable Groups at Northumberland County Council, played an important role in ensuring the success of this research, especially at the beginning of the data collection process. I conducted an initial interview with Jane. After this interview the questions were refined before conducting interviews with other stakeholders from across the county. She helped me to establish links with a number of organisations and gatekeepers, including a

contact at Northumberland College who subsequently put me in touch with the Berwick Migrant Support Group, a contact from Employability and Skills at the Council, and a number of school teachers from across the county. Jane was also able to provide school census data, which was collected in the January of each academic year. This enabled me to then establish links with those schools that had Polish pupils. I was also aware what year group these particular young people were in, so that I could identify if they would be eligible to take part in the research. Jane was also able to supply historic data so that any older young Poles could be potentially identified.

I conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews with a range of people. These included Polish Saturday school providers, school teachers, local authority personal advisors, community organisation volunteers and senior managers at the council as detailed in table 2. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an understanding of the lives of young people growing up in the rural towns and villages of Northumberland as they made their transitions to adulthood. Through these contacts I was able to reach young people for my research. For example, following a meeting and semi-structured interview with Gerry Jones of Berwick Migrant Support group I was invited along to their annual Christmas market trip to Edinburgh, and weekly meetings at Berwick community centre, where I could secure the involvement of young Poles for the main phase of the research.

The interviews with the stakeholders helped to provide contextual information on the lives of young people living and growing up in Northumberland. Questions focused on the support all young people receive, whether they feel support across the county is consistent, how the recession has affected young people in Northumberland, what pathways are available to young people post-16, apprenticeship and employment opportunities available locally, and what differences they see between the young Poles and other young people. It was also useful for me to hear their views in relation to the current austerity measures, and how changes to service delivery were impacting on vulnerable young people as they navigated their transitions to adulthood. Each of these interviews lasted between 1 and 2 hours.

Young people semi-structured interviews

The main phase of the research involved semi-structured interviews with the young Poles. These interviews provided a fuller and richer set of data than using structured closed questions (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). The young people were able to talk about their experiences and aspirations for the future in a comfortable and non-invasive way. Building rapport with the young people was important which would allow them to be comfortable in opening up to me. Kitchin and Tate (2000: 219) assert that 'genuine trust must... exist between the interviewer and interviewee'. I engaged in the social worlds of the young Poles from September 2014 to March 2015, meeting with many of them weekly. Before the point of asking the young people to take part in a semi-structured interview for the study, I had seen or met with the young people at least four or five times. Spending this time with the young people meant that I could explain the study thoroughly and leave enough time for the participants to ask any questions that they may have had, while also gaining an understanding and appreciation of their experiences and everyday lives.

In all of the interviews, rapport building was successful. In fact in the first few meetings with the young people I was surprised at how open and relaxed they were. They were very willing to talk about and share their experiences. In initial conversations with the young Poles they would ask lots of questions about me, my life, university and the project. All of the young Poles I approached were interested in the research. I hoped that through these initial meetings we could get to know each other and build a reciprocal relationship. Developing mutual trust was of paramount importance. Consequently, I tried to spend as much time as possible with the young people both prior to and after the interview, depending on their availability. The semi-structured interviews are complemented by these earlier informal conversations and observations which were noted in my research diary, and will be discussed in a later section. This research diary was incredibly useful for earlier meetings where there was no audio recording.

Brockington and Sullivan (2003: 59) write how 'some people's worlds are hard and unpleasant to experience'. Two particular situations stand out during my fieldwork. The first when a participant revealed how he was bullied at the age of eight when he arrived at primary school. He described how he was stigmatised and felt that he was discriminated and excluded as he was Polish and spoke little or no English. This was a particularly emotional and distressing time for him and has left a marked impact on

his identity. His mother was working long and unsociable hours at the time, so he felt unable to talk or confide in her. Although he speaks excellent English, and has been in Northumberland for ten years, all of his friends are other Poles who have also migrated. On another occasion, an 18 year old revealed how he was gay and felt that he could not tell some of his family due to the fear of not being accepted. On both occasions I told the young people that it was important to seek help and advice through the appropriate channels, and that I was always there if they wanted to talk, but my ability to help could only reach so far. I continually reassured the young people that what they discussed or disclosed to me would remain confidential, and that pseudonyms would be used to protect their identities and remain anonymous.

At first I conducted pilot interviews with two of the young people (one male aged 18 and one female aged 16) based in Berwick-upon-Tweed. This allowed me to test the interview questions and their ordering. I also shared the interview questions with Jane Walker and Gerry Jones to gather their feedback. Following this, the interview schedule was refined before meeting with the other young people for a semi-structured interview. The interviews with the young people focused on their past, present and future. The following thematic guide was used: personal characteristics, important events or activities, educational transitions, friendships, family, role models, plans for the future and any future challenges that they could see.

When meeting with the young people for the first time socially I framed our conversations around:

"I am trying to find out about your life and how things have developed in your life. I became interested in the Polish community whilst working at a hotel in Otterburn, Northumberland, a village 30 miles North-West of Newcastle airport, where there was a number of Polish staff living and working within the hotel, and in the local village. I became interested in the lives of the young people in particular, who migrated to Northumberland with their families after 2004, and what their experiences have been and how their lives are developing. You are the expert of your life, and this is an opportunity for you to share your experience and story, and I thought you could help me to understand.

I hope to do two interviews and a short exercise, on your own, in the week following the first interview. There is no obligation at all to take part. You don't have to. Obviously I would love it if you would as I'd love to hear your story but

you don't have to. You may decide to take part in the first interview but then later decide that you don't want to take part anymore and withdraw. Again, that's totally fine. I've drawn up an information sheet and consent form. Please take these away with you and read over them and if you have any questions at all drop me a text, call or email".

Through telling the young people about my experience of working with Polish migrants at a hotel in Otterburn, I believe that it showed my appreciation of the community, and led the young people to open up and become inquisitive, while also gaining their trust.

Elwood and Martin (2000) argued how the interview location must be carefully considered and assessed. Participants might feel more empowered in their interactions with researchers when they are given the choice of interview sites (Elwood and Martin, 2000). I was also mindful of their advice that interview locations can produce particular power dynamics that can affect the interactions and relationships between researchers and participants. For example, participants might not feel comfortable in certain locations and might therefore be reluctant to speak freely about highly sensitive or personal issues. In this research interviews took place at a location where participants felt most comfortable. They were usually conducted in homes, schools, workplaces, libraries, cafés or community centres. The university campus was inconvenient for many of the participants. Instead they preferred to meet with me in their home town. An appropriate place was always chosen that emphasised privacy, comfort, was quiet and free from distraction. The interview process would commence with an attempt to create a relaxed and informal atmosphere by engaging the participants in small talk. Topics usually included asking participants what they had been up to since we had last met, or so far that day, or even as mundane as the weather. A common warm-up topic concerned my struggle to get there due to the ongoing road works on the A1 motorway, and how it frustrated me that it was only a single carriageway North of Morpeth. Before beginning I would give the participants a short overview of the interview's themes, stress how they were free to opt out of the research at any time, or if there were any questions that they did not want to answer, then they did not have to. I also encouraged the young people to ask me any questions that they had, at any point during the interview. Each of the interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 2 hours.

The questions I had designed encouraged and allowed the participants to speak freely of their experiences. I feel that the environment I created was both friendly and supportive. I was genuinely interested in these young people's lives, and the stories that they were sharing with me. At the end of the interview I reminded the young people that they could contact me at any time should they have any questions. I also asked if they would be happy to take part in a follow-up interview for the research in approximately ten to twelve months' time, or to provide me with their mobile number should I have any further questions. I managed to collect mobile numbers for eighteen of the young people, two of the young Poles said that they did not own a mobile phone. I was also able to collect email addresses for all of the participants.

Follow-up semi-structured interviews

Ten to twelve months following the first interview with the young people I met with them again to complete a follow-up interview. The key reason for including a follow-up interview as part of this research was that it provided me with enough time to build and establish rapport with the young people and was an ideal opportunity to learn how their lives were developing since the last interview, and focus on how being Polish and the experience of migration was significant to their identities and transitions. Initial interviews with the young Poles were designed to gain a detailed picture of their lives and experiences, wider aspirations for the future and what shapes these plans. At the interviews I could follow-up anything interesting that was noted in my research diary. Follow-up interviews allowed me to gain an understanding of how their lives changed over time. It also minimised the risk of 'retrospective re-construction' – where young people reinvent their stories of the past to fit with the present – something that has been recognised as a problem in previous youth transition studies (Henderson et al, 2007). For example, if someone had wanted to study a particular course at university, but did not get the exam results that they needed and had to then study another course, they may suggest that this was what they had wanted to do all along. In both interviews I attempted to get the young people to look into and think about the future, reflecting on what they would like to be doing in 5 years, 10 years and 20 years' time. In the interviews this was a challenge for some of the young people. It also allowed me to make sense of the young Poles particular experiences at moments or points on their transitions, allowing me to more fully understand what was particularly rural or Polish about their youth transitions.

Following the first round of semi-structured interviews with the young people, these were transcribed and analysed, alongside the lifegrids, and key themes identified.

One of the major challenges in conducting longitudinal research is retaining the sample throughout all of the stages (Henderson et al, 2006). For this reason I made a conscious effort to ensure that I had more than one set of contact details for each of the participants. This meant that in the event of someone moving home, or changing their mobile number, I would still be able to reach them. In the period between the two interviews I remained in contact with many of the young people, sending them regular text messages, making phone calls to see how they were, and wherever possible meeting them for lunch or a drink. I also made a Facebook group and invited the young people to join this. I had hoped that this may be a space where the young people could share their stories, and the paths and journeys they were making on their transitions to adulthood. However, this group was less successful than I would have hoped.

Facebook has increasingly become part of everyday life. Unsurprisingly, given the relationships that I developed with many of the young people and the stakeholders, many of them added me as a friend on this social media site. It was a difficult decision to make whether or not to accept their friendship request. This was something that I feared and discussed very early on with my supervisors, so that I knew what to do should this situation arise. One suggestion offered to me was that I could make another Facebook profile, and then accept them to this second account, but I was left wondering how the young people would think and feel if they found out that I was using two profiles. They may then feel that our friendships or relationships were artificial and become upset. Therefore I made the decision to decide what to do when the situation actually arose. Given the rapport that I had established with them through the early meetings, and the first round of interviews, I felt that I had no choice but to accept any friendship requests that I received. Having the young people as friends on Facebook was very useful when securing the follow-up interviews, and many of them sent messages to me on Facebook to make these arrangements. They were all very keen and enthusiastic wanting to share their stories and experiences, and I believe this explains how I managed to secure a 100% retention rate for the follow-up interviews.

4.3.4 Lifegrids

Thomson and Holland (2004) designed a lifeline methodological tool to understand the young people's aspirations, expectations and plans for the future. Participants were asked to predict their situations on a number of discrete elements. These included housing, education, work and relationships, in a certain time – in three years' time or at 25 and at 35 (Thomson and Holland, 2004: 17). This enabled the researcher to make sense of how their plans developed or changed over time, and identify 'critical moments' in their biographies (Thomson et al, 2002). For each of their participants Webster et al (2004) produced a grid in relation to their education, training and employment; family and housing; leisure and social networks; and crime and drug use transitions between the ages of 5-13, 14-16, 17-19, 20-23 and 24-25.

Building on this work, and to complement the interviews with the young people, I asked them to complete a life-mapping and 'critical moments' activity. This was a two page document printed on A3 paper. One page had a life-mapping grid asking the young people to reflect on their lives a year ago and now in relation to five transition aspects: employment and education; family relations; friendship groups; links to Northumberland; and links to Poland. The young people were asked to write some thoughts, comments or reflections in each of the boxes. The second page introduced the young people to critical moments. At the top of the page the young people were given some background as to what critical moments are, and at the bottom was a table with some examples. They were then asked to provide details of the three most important critical moments that have occurred in their lives to date. At first I was unsure as to how this method would work. However, it has generated some very interesting data and insights. It seemed to be successful and was an opportunity for the young people to reflect on the interview, and think about anything that they may have missed. Through this activity it allowed the young people to think about their lives and the significant events that have occurred.

Previous research making use of life grids has asked participants to complete it prior to an interview (see for example: Parry et al, 1999; Berney and Blane, 2003). Instead I asked the young Poles to complete this straight after the first interview for the study. I did not want to put the young people off meeting me for an interview, if they did not have the time or felt uneasy about completing it. It was a useful methodology as they could think over the interview and anything that they may have missed. They were asked to complete the grid in the week following the interview, and provided with a

stamped addressed envelope in order to post this to me. The grids were printed on A3 paper so that they would have sufficient space in order to complete it. Participants were informed that they could continue on separate sheets of paper should they need to, or could even use post-it-notes, the decision was entirely up to them.

The following pages include an example of a completed lifegrid returned by one of the participants.

Name: _____ Age: _____ Location: Berwick upon Tweed

Year ago	Employment/Education	Family relations	Friendship groups	Links to Northumberland	Links to Poland
Year ago	Year 12 at Berwick Academy. No Job. Studying psychology, business studies, science and health and social care.	I got on well with my mum + stepdad. Being different living in a different country to the rest of my family made us distant from each other. Definitely decreased on seeing them since moved here.	Happy with my friendship group however not as happy as now. Had good friends, but a lot of fallouts + arguments. Still stayed friends with some but definitely not as close as we used to be.	Didn't like living in Northumberland at all. There wasn't enough opportunities for 16 year olds. However I don't think I looked well! felt negative about living here because of all the bored nights and nothing to do.	Haven't visited Poland in years however still in contact with family through Skype and social media. Used to attend the Saturday Polish School at about 14/15 but quit after some time of not enjoying it.
Now	Year 13 at Berwick Academy studying health and social care, science and business studies. Applied for universities to study events management. Part time job at a local pet store. Not a lot of hours a week because of school but a great enjoyable experience.	Mum + dad got divorced, parents live in different countries so its hard to stay as close. Sister got pregnant which is bringing us together a lot. Don't see my family often, its been about 5/6 years since last seen them including my dad. Drifted apart a lot.	Different friendship group as to last year. Found great friends at my last year at school. We love to hang out together and go shopping listen to music or just gossip. Out of 8/9 of us only 2 are Polish including me.	Found way more things to enjoy at Northumberland. However its not good for someone who wants to go for a life. Going for walks really increases your knowledge about Berwick because the places you see are beautiful.	Still in contact with family through Skype and social media. Still haven't visited Poland, been about 6 years now. But I don't want to visit due to quite bad memories.
	In this column, can you say a little bit about your employment/education situation? Do you have a full-time job, or are you in full-time education? Do you have a part-time job? Is this permanent? What has your experience been? What type of work is this, who did you work for and how many hours did you work?	Could you say a little about your family relations? Do you get on well with your parents, siblings etc. Have these relations changed since moving to the UK? Do you feel closer or more distant from your family? How often do you see your family? Has this increased or decreased? Do they have certain ambitions or expectations of you?	Could you say something about your main friendship groups? Are they Polish or British-born? What are your main interests you participate in with friends (e.g. clubbing, cinema, sport, religion)? Who were your main friends at school and when did you establish these friendships? Are you happy with your friendship networks?	Could you say something about your experience of growing up in rural Northumberland? How have you felt living here? Please be honest. Do you think there are enough opportunities? Are there any occasions when you have felt negative about being here?	Finally, could you say a little here about how and in what ways have you maintained contact or a connection with Poland? How often do you visit Poland? Do you value these links? Did you attend a Polish Saturday School in Northumberland? How and in what ways was this useful?

Critical moments are specific events or circumstances that have important consequences for people's lives and identities. Critical moments can be formal events such as moving school, leaving university or starting a new job. However, other life events such as a parental divorce, falling out with a best friend, the death of a grandparent or passing your driving test can also be influential too (see the table below).

Thinking about the past five years of your life, what would you say are the three most significant critical moments that have occurred in your life?

1. changing friendship group. - became better friends with a few people and started to hang out more as a group. Always there if I need any help and wouldn't change them for anything. Hoping to stay friends for ever.
2. Parents splitting up. - After being separated for years they finally got a divorce. knew it was coming someday however its hard to get through it when the time actually comes.
3. Death of grandmother. - The only grandparent I knew, we were really close therefore it was a hard time for me. Didn't attend the funeral because I didn't feel emotionally stable so was a really hard time for my family.

Some examples of critical moments

FAMILY	EDUCATION	DEATH AND ILLNESS	MOVING	LEISURE AND CONSUMPTION	RELATIONSHIPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being kicked out of home Parents splitting up Disclosing abuse Mother/Father remarrying Falling out with step parent Parental unemployment Disowned by mother/father 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sitting GCSE exams Choosing GCSEs Failing GCSE exams Dropping out of school/college Excluded from school Bullying at school Changing/leaving school Starting college Careers advice Conflict with teacher Influence of a good teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Death of a parent Aunt committing suicide Loss of a baby Diagnosis of dyslexia Diagnosis of chronic illness Death of grandparents Depression TROUBLE Getting caught taking drugs ('busted') Getting arrested Getting pregnant Father going to jail Getting into drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving town Moving house Moving country rites of passage 18th birthday 21st birthday Passing driving test 'Coming out' Getting engaged Religious conversion Getting first job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being involved in gay community Joining amateur dramatic society Starting to go to the pub Going clubbing Getting a mobile phone Getting a car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New boyfriend Falling out with best friend Making new friends Being excluded from friendship group Changing friendship group Breaking up with girlfriend Girlfriend going to university Sexual experience

(Thomson et al, 2002: 341)

Figure 4.4: Example of completed life grid activity

4.3.5 Research diary

Gibson-Graham (2004: 417) argues that 'what the field has become for us is a place of the encounter, not with the other but with the unconceptualized. What is unthought enacts its creativity, it passes our senses, it awakens our slumbering perceptivity, it participates actively in generating new thinkings'. Reflexive fieldwork prompts a more conscious encounter with multiple aspects of the research space that nevertheless acknowledges the situatedness of the researcher. A research diary is a melting pot for all the different ingredients of a research project – prior experience, observations, readings, ideas and a means of capturing the resulting interplay of elements.

Schatzman and Strauss (1973: 105) allude to this function when they refer to the researcher's notes as 'the vehicle for ordered creativity'. The purpose of keeping a research diary is to facilitate the research process through recording observations, thoughts and questions as they happen. I then used these later as part of the analysis to stimulate reflective thinking. My diary also included information about my research encounters – details and observations from travel, interviews and informal interactions.

The research diary is distinct from report or academic paper writing. It captures something of 'the real inner drama' of research 'with its intuitive base, its halting timeline, and its extensive recycling of concepts and perspectives' (Bargar and Duncan, 1982: 2). This is often hidden in final published accounts. In the field I felt it was necessary to keep a detailed research diary that was personal to me. This helped to document the history of the research as it unfolded and any particular events or experiences. Through this diary I was able to keep a note of what happened, how I reacted to it, establish what I learned and consider what I might take away from that particular event or experience. Not only did I record notes on what I did day to day in the field in practical terms, including who I met with, what they said, notes from discussions or useful conversations; I also included details on ideas I wanted to remember or follow-up on, questions that I may want to explore or discuss or find out more about, reports of observations and events, and any ideas or directions I felt that the research was taking.

Research diaries are much more than a catalogue of content and data recorded during an event (McGuinness and Simm, 2005; Phillips and Johns, 2012). Instead the research diary is a tool to encourage reflexivity. I used my research diary as a space to reflect critically on field encounters and the research process, thinking over

my experiences in the field (Glass, 2014). At first I found this a challenge. I found it difficult thinking how and what to write about from my experiences, but I persevered making sure that I left enough time for regular reflection and note-taking of my encounters, and experiences at schools, colleges, workplaces and community centres. Recordings were framed around describing, interpreting, evaluating and contextualising and I did this for each day that I spent in the field (Glass, 2014). Entries in the diary were made shortly after the interview, usually when I returned to my car, or, if possible, in a solitary moment in a café. I took notes describing the participants, their reactions and feelings during the meetings, trying wherever possible to capture the exact phrases and statements, nonverbal clues and behaviours such as gestures and posture. These notes were useful when transcribing the interview and later analysing the data. The notes in my diary were useful for early meetings with the young people, where there was no audio recording and questions were asked 'in the moment'. I tried to keep these conversations in my memory and make a note of these in my research diary. This information was subsequently included at the start of the transcripts, and I could reflect on what was said and discussed. These notes were something that I continued throughout the research, reflecting on the interview, particularly as to what was said and why this might be the case. Early notes provided assistance when designing the follow-up interviews.

Using reflexivity allowed me to actively consider my own subject position from the outset of this fieldwork. Wakefield (2007: 344) defines reflexivity as the 'constant regard for, and critique of, our own practices'. Within my diary I confronted and considered the unexpected and uncomfortable events that occurred while I was in the field. This was a valuable tool for me to manage the differences that existed between the participants and myself, while I was removed from my regular context and support networks. In practical terms reflexivity allowed me to consider how I experienced the interview encounter myself. I recorded observations on myself as the research was taking place, making notes on my own emotional state (e.g. feeling happy or angry). This helped me to consider what this revealed about my own assumptions, values or beliefs and how these impacted on the research. Through the research diary I was able to record my concerns that may have been lost or not considered. It provided me with the space to think about my values as a researcher.

The making of notes and the writing of research diaries is not often discussed when researchers report on their studies. As Burgess (1981: 75) notes 'while [researchers] indicate that part of their research activities involves writing notes and keeping diaries, they do not tell us, in any detail, about how these diaries may be established and maintained'. I found the research diary useful not only to reflect on the practices and findings of the day's research activities, but to reflect more holistically on the research experience, my emotional and physical wellbeing and general reflections and observations. It was an invaluable space where I could let off steam and reflect on my own emotions in the research, and my personal experiences that would have otherwise been forgotten.

4.3.6 Data analysis

These methods were selected on the grounds that they would provide the stakeholders and young people with the opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts, feelings and comments. The transcription of all interviews during the period of fieldwork meant I was able to take note of themes and concepts that would generate a more formal derivation of codes upon return. Upon completing the primary analysis I produced an impressions and initial results document which was fed back to the participants. I wanted to encourage a more 'active' dissemination process (van Blerk and Ansell, 2007). As a result each of the participants were contacted to discuss the preliminary results and offered the opportunity to give their feedback. I also provided them the opportunity to arrange a final meeting to discuss the feedback. Leyshon (2002: 189) argues that providing feedback 'in the form of discussing transcripts and findings, can be a very positive part of the research process'. By engaging with the participants in this way it meant that I could make sense of their accounts and avoid misinterpretation.

As part of the analysis I drew on grounded theory. Codes and concepts have been drawn out of the data rather than imposing particular theories or hypotheses prior to collecting the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Kitchin and Tate (2000) discuss a variety of approaches in analysing qualitative data. Based on this framework, the first stage of analysis was to fully transcribe the accounts, and note ideas to ensure initial thoughts were documented. These were also taken from my research diary. Through the research diary I could reflect on my own personal

identity and how this shaped the data collection and analysis. The thoughts, feelings and comments that were recorded within this were useful when transcribing and analysing the data enabling a fuller and more in-depth analysis (Berger, 2015; Valentine, 2007). Transcription was a time consuming but rewarding exercise (Crang, 2001). It allowed me to become intimately acquainted with the discussions. Wiles et al (2005) highlight that when interpreting it is important to consider who is speaking, as well as how they are speaking, to ensure that accounts are contextualised. The second stage was to categorise the data using 'thematic coding', organising events into themes (identity, home, school to work, university, family, friends, teachers etc.), and focussing on 'analytic induction' rather than statistical techniques (Crang, 1997). The themes that I identified were shared with participants when disseminating in order to gather their thoughts. A report outline was produced that helped to reflect on what had been shared by the participants in the research and gather thoughts on particular themes (Crang, 2001). The third stage of analysis was to identify common links between the themes. The final stage of data analysis was in the writing of the research. Further relationships between concepts were identified leading to the refinement of theoretical claims. It is through this analysis that my arguments were formed.

In formal analysis, data was coded using both computer software and freehand methods. The interviews and lifegrids were transcribed in Microsoft Word and subsequently imported into NVivo10 software, a data management and analysis programme. This software was used to store, manage and open-code the data. As some of the young people were involved in several research techniques, I ensured that all of the data on any participant was organised in a personal folder. The transcripts were analysed alongside the research diary which contained notes on hesitations, silences, tone of voice and emotional expression from the interviews, as well as my own reflections.

4.4 Part Three: Reflexivity, Representation and Positionality

One of the first stages of the research project required me to negotiate the Ethics Code and Procedures of Newcastle University (2014). The information that was provided to the Newcastle University Research Ethics Committee formed a valuable stage of the project (see Appendix M). As highlighted at a number of points during

this chapter, spending long periods of time with the young people posed key challenges for me as a researcher. Thomson and Holland (2003a) argue that in longitudinal qualitative research projects, ethical issues can become magnified as the researcher spends more time with the participants, and gets to know more about their lives. The assurance of approval instilled a confidence that permeated throughout the research when dealing with ethical issues. Added to this, in August 2014 I applied for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (previously Criminal Records Bureau – CRB check) through Newcastle University. This certificate was made available to both the stakeholders and young Poles throughout the research.

Before the data collection took place, participants' consent was obtained.

Stakeholders and young people were provided with information sheets, and where stakeholders felt it was necessary the young Poles' parents were also provided with information sheets. Beata Kohlbeck included information sheets for the young Poles' parents with the letter that she sent out. These allowed for an informed and voluntary decision as to whether or not they would like to take part (Alderson, 2000; Bryman, 2004; Sime, 2017). These information sheets included information on the purpose and rationale of the project, the methods employed, the time involved, and the potential for risk and discomfort (Hay, 2003). To achieve a high standard of ethical practice, the consent of participants was re-visited throughout to ensure a sense of control over the information that was shared. The participants were continually reminded that they were free to withdraw from the research at any stage, or did not have to answer any questions that they did not want to (Matthews and Tucker, 2000; Sime, 2017).

At the interviews the young Poles were asked some quite personal questions that had the potential to be quite upsetting. I was very clear that the Dictaphone could be turned off and we could end the interview at any time. One of the young Poles did get quite upset at the very end of an interview, however they wanted to continue talking with the Dictaphone turned off, and another young Pole requested that we did not discuss certain topics, but was happy to talk about others. At every stage of the research I complied with the young Poles requests. This was very important to respect their privacy, and I did not want to come across as being intrusive. On a number of occasions during the analysis and writing up the findings I had to make a considered judgement about what to include, and if some things were best left out, remaining confidential (Cloke et al, 2004).

Due to the close-knit nature of the communities, I avoided talking about the interviews with the stakeholders in general, and did not tell others who had been interviewed, unless they had already informed each other. I was also careful not to share any information learnt during the interviews with anyone else; all information was kept strictly confidential. As discussed earlier, the young Poles were informed both on the consent forms and information sheets, as well as verbally, that all matters discussed would remain confidential, and that pseudonyms would be used to protect their identities and remain anonymous.

Within academic literature a key debate is the extent to which an 'outsider' can enter an 'other's' 'lifeworld'. Mullings (1999: 337) argues that 'a researcher's knowledge is therefore always partial because his/her positionality (perspective shaped by his/her unique... attributes), as well as location in time and space will influence how the world is viewed and interpreted'. Mullings (1999: 340) in weighing up the benefits of being an 'insider' or 'outsider' of the group a researcher wishes to study asserts that 'insiders': 'have an advantage because they are able to use their knowledge of the group to gain more intimate insights into their opinions. By contrast, 'outsiders' argue that by not belonging to a group of the study they are more likely to be perceived as neutral and therefore giving information that would not be given to an 'insider'".

From the outset, it was crucial to acknowledge that the researcher's positionality has influenced how the research was constructed, the types of accounts shared, and how these experiences were interpreted. Skelton (2001: 89) describes positionality as: 'things like our race and gender... but also our past experiences, our levels of education, our sexuality, our age, our ableness, whether we are a parent or not. All of these have a bearing upon who we are, how our identities are formed and how we do our research. We are not neutral, scientific observers, untouched by the emotional and political context of places where we do our research'. There are many layers of identity which intersect to influence people's accounts.

My positionality as a researcher undoubtedly played a role in the construction of the young Poles narratives. In the research I attempted to create an open and relaxed environment where the young Poles felt comfortable sharing their stories related to their experiences, being Polish, and the aspirations that they had for the future. Positionality is an important consideration for any qualitative researcher, and it was important for me to reflect on the dynamic between myself and the interviewees. In my fieldwork diary I made explicit my positioning as a young, white, male and

importantly, English researcher. Being English, and a young person myself was met with different expectations and prompted different responses from both the stakeholders and the young Poles. I tried to navigate and work with the various assumptions made about my role and identity that were unpredictable and ambiguous. Through my own experiences, in this and previous research, I was well aware of how diverse the interview dynamic could be.

My inability to speak the Polish language meant that I was at some distance from influencing the research. By learning about the Polish culture and acquiring some basic Polish language skills through attendance at a beginners Polish language class at The Language Centre in Newcastle, this helped me to acquire some Polish, and showed my commitment and interest in the young Poles lives (Smith, 2003). My inability to speak or understand Polish was never a source of shame. Instead, it often became an icebreaker with the young Poles, as I would complement them on their ability to communicate in Polish. Many of the young Poles would then empathise with me about how the Polish language was difficult to learn. Some of the young Poles then shared experiences of how they felt that they did not use their Polish as much as they used to and felt as though they were losing it.

Another important aspect of my positionality is cultural background (Skelton, 2001). In doing cross-cultural research there were a number of complexities and contradictions to overcome. It is argued that any doubts or dilemmas are an important part of achieving an effective and sensitive cross-cultural project (Skelton, 2001). Nationality and mobility intersect and interact in shaping the researcher-participant relationship. The experiences of growing up in different national spaces are important. As a researcher, I had no previous experience of moving to and living and growing up in a different country. When I first met with the stakeholders and young Poles to discuss the research, they were particularly inquisitive about my motivations for the research. Through these early meetings my positionality was scrutinised by the participants. This allowed them to ask questions about my own experiences and helped to develop 'a shared positional space'. These are known as 'areas where the situated knowledges of both parties in the interview encounter, engender a level of trust and co-operation' (Mullings, 1999: 340). My positionality in terms of nationality and mobility may have helped the young Poles to frame their accounts, by sharing experiences that were important to them, rather than these being defined by me as the researcher. By being explicit with the young Poles about

my positionality, experiences and knowledge I felt this encouraged them to go into greater depth and detail about their lives and experiences. In some respects, I could be considered an 'outsider' and in others an 'insider'. I feel that these positions are fluid and change depending on the circumstances. I am in agreement with Dwyer (1999) in her arguments that the position of an 'outsider' to the Polish communities does not render the insights shared of little worth, but rather provides an alternative and unique lens through which Poles in the UK can be viewed.

McDowell (1992: 399) observed that there must be 'recognition of the positionality of the researcher and her/his subjects and the relations of power between them'. It is inevitable that the researcher will hold a certain degree of power over the research encounter, and the way in which narratives are interpreted and the knowledge that is constructed. However, there were also times during the research where I felt powerless. This occurred when stakeholders or young Poles declined to take part in the study. In addition, during the interviews I made a conscious effort to create an open and relaxed environment to encourage the flow of conversation. The young Poles regularly asked questions about my own life and experiences. At many points during the research I could relate to Palriwalas' (1991: 32) claim that during the data collection she felt as though she too was being 'thoroughly researched', as she was asked questions about her own life, and hopes and aspirations for the future. When the young Poles asked me questions I was always very open and honest with them, hoping that this would help to build their trust in me (Cloke et al, 2004).

Kitchen and Tate (2000: 219) comment on how 'when researching people from marginalised sections of the community, feminists would argue that traditional interview methods maintain and reinforce cultural power relations'. When I was deciding on what methods to use as part of this research, it was very important to me that these methods would empower the young Poles, so that they would feel comfortable opening up and sharing their experiences with me. When I was analysing the data, the circumstances in which specific accounts were shared were considered to ensure that the experiences were not taken out of context. An important feature of the analysis was to open up avenues of communication with participants to discuss results and actively listen to their feedback.

In social science research, feedback and dissemination has received increased attention (McDowell, 2001; van Blerk and Ansell, 2007). I used a feedback and dissemination strategy that promoted inclusion. Firstly, I provided detailed feedback

from the analysis, and gave the participants the opportunity to discuss and comment on this. I contacted participants via email to share the results and responded to any queries that they had. For some participants, once they had been provided with the feedback, a follow-up meeting took place. Through these meetings I was able to gather further feedback. For Northumberland County Council, my collaborative partner, I have produced a two-page briefing note summarising the research and its findings. I am also willing to provide them with case studies and a copy of the thesis. This two-page briefing will also be emailed to all of the young Poles and stakeholders, and a copy of the thesis will be made available at their request.

4.5 Concluding Remarks

To conclude this chapter, this study has drawn on research in two phases. The first was semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. The second included semi-structured interviews, lifegrids and follow-up interviews with young people. This was in an attempt to provide a rich account of different individual experiences, contexts and interpretations of the transitional experiences of young Poles who are living and growing up in and around the rural towns of Northumberland. The approach I took enabled a wide range of voices to be heard. From a researcher point of view, the interviews were both interesting and exciting, each from a unique perspective. It was clear that as the young people's stories unfolded there were many similarities yet subtle differences. The transition to adulthood takes place over time. The decision to therefore include follow-up interviews is a particular strength of this study, allowing me to understand how the young Poles lives developed, particularly as young people's lives can change a lot in a short period of time, as will be evidenced in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Chapter Five

Living and growing up in rural Northumberland

5.1 Introduction

This first chapter analyses what transitions the young Poles were making in the context of living and growing up in rural Northumberland. At first it could be assumed that there was something very ordinary or standard about the young Poles transitions in terms of education, employment, housing and relationships. They were entering full-time work, beginning to learn to drive when they turned seventeen, were staying on at their school's sixth form or going on to Northumberland College or university outside of Northumberland. Many of the young Poles also shared aspirations to move out of Northumberland in the future. According to the stakeholder interviews in the first phase of this research, the young Poles' transitions could be mapped onto those of other young people that were also living and growing up in rural Northumberland. However, it is my argument that being Polish and the experience of migration complicates their transitions to adulthood.

~~This chapter analyses what transitions the young Poles were making in the context of living and growing up in rural Northumberland. Existing youth transitions research, as documented in Chapter Two, has focused on school-to-work, school-to-further and higher education, relationships and housing. Much of this existing youth transitions research has focused on the lives and experiences of white working class youth, who are living and growing up in urban areas. This results in relatively little being known about the transitions of young Poles, particularly in the context of living and growing up in rural Northumberland. In this chapter I examine what transitions it was that the young Poles in this research were making.~~

~~At first it could be interpreted that there was something very ordinary or standard about the transitions that the young Poles were making in terms of their education, employment, housing and relationships. They were entering full-time work, beginning to learn to drive when they turned seventeen, were staying on at their school's sixth form or going on to Northumberland College or university outside of Northumberland. Many of the young Poles also shared aspirations to move out of Northumberland in the future. According to the stakeholder interviews in the first phase of the research, the young Poles' transitions could be mapped onto those of other young people that were also living and growing up in rural Northumberland. However, it is my argument~~

~~that being Polish and the experience of migration complicates their transitions to adulthood.~~

The first section explores the young Poles' experiences of going to school in Northumberland, and their further and higher education transitions following their GCSE studies. I then move on to look at the young Poles' experiences of work, where some of the young Poles were entering or were already in full-time or part-time jobs. I then focus on their transitions in terms of housing and relationships, before moving on to discuss their mobilities in the context of public transport, learning to drive and car ownership. The sections in this chapter help to explore and understand the transitions that the young Poles were making. It is important to note that the young people who took part in this research were all living in and around the rural towns of Northumberland. None of the young Poles were living out in rural villages. This meant that many of the young Poles were located close to amenities.

5.2 Educational experiences

This first section explores the young Poles' experiences of going to school in Northumberland, and what transitions they then went on to make in terms of their education.

The majority of the young Poles were positive and content about their experiences of going to school in Northumberland:

"I enjoy school. I've got a good set of friends. They are all helpful and supportive and we look out for each other"

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

"I was happy at school, definitely happy. I wouldn't change anything"

(Edyta, 18: Berwick – first interview)

These young Poles were both younger than some of the other young Poles who took part in this research when they migrated to Northumberland from Poland. Most of the young Poles who took part in this study made the transition into first and middle schools in Northumberland. First schools take in children between the ages of five and nine, whilst middle school take in children between the ages of nine and twelve. Many of the school teachers who participated in the research were positive about the young Poles that attended their schools. These stakeholders commented on how

these particular young people were doing well, had made lots of friends and were well respected by both staff and their peers:

“I think they are just like all the other kids here. They are good lads and are doing well”

(Assistant Head Teacher, Bedlington)

“Yeah they really wanted to help and get involved with activities over the summer. They helped with our charity events and days out in the local community and stuff. All the young people that got involved got awards for doing it. They get on well with everyone. They are well liked and got lots of friends”

(Assistant Head Teacher, Berwick)

School allowed the young Poles to make friends and feel like any other young person their age in Northumberland. Some of the young Poles reflected on the initial challenges and obstacles that they encountered and consequently had to negotiate and overcome:

“When I came here everything was new. I had to learn a new language and make new friends. I’ve proved I can do it though”

(Ania, 18: Berwick – first interview)

“Yeah it was hard at first but I just kept at it making sure that I made friends and learnt the language”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – first interview)

The young Poles experiences appeared to be quite normal but they were complicated by the need to learn a new language and become familiar with their new social environments. However, they all seemed to be very positive about their school lives. A number of the young Poles were involved in making a contribution to wider school and community life, with involvement in volunteering days and entrepreneurial courses or events after school.

Other young Poles who took part in this research were less positive about their experiences of going to school in Northumberland. Two particularly strong examples of this were shared by Bartek and Danka:

“School in Northumberland wasn’t a very good experience for me to be honest Sean. I never really wanted to go. I arrived here a lot later than some of the others, like my sister. I couldn’t keep up with the work we were doing in class and stuff. I don’t think it’s that I couldn’t do it. It was just the language. It complicated stuff for me”

(Danka, 24: Berwick – second interview)

“I never really knew what was going on at school. It wasn’t that I couldn’t do the work cos I know that I could, but it was the language. That was the main problem ... there was this one group at school they’d always call me names and take the mick out of my accent. It just made everything so much harder and I couldn’t wait to leave and just get a job”

(Bartek, 23: Blyth – second interview)

These young Poles both migrated into Northumberland when they were older than the other young Poles who took part in this research. When these two young Poles arrived into Northumberland they had to cope with and manage the transition into local high schools. High schools take young people between the ages of twelve and either sixteen or eighteen. This may account for some of the differences in their experiences of going to school in Northumberland. The other young Poles who took part in this research made the transition into first and middle schools when they arrived into Northumberland, and seemed to have more positive experiences of going to school in Northumberland.

Following their GCSE’s many of the young people in Northumberland decided to remain at their school’s sixth form and undertake further study:

“A lot of our young people return after their GCSE studies. They aren’t ready to move on and leave us just yet”

(Assistant Head Teacher, Bedlington)

“Our young people typically remain in some form of education following school whether that means coming back here to the sixth form or going on to the college down the road”

(Assistant Head Teacher, Berwick)

The positive experiences that the young Poles had of attending their school appeared to influence many of them into returning to their local schools for their sixth form studies:

“When I finished my GCSEs I came back. It was the right thing for me to do at the time. All my friends were there and the teachers were helpful and supportive with me. I already knew the school and staff so that helped. It made things a lot easier”

(Ania, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Emilia was motivated into returning by the positive relationships that she had with her school teachers:

“I enjoy school. The teachers are friendly and supportive. That’s probably one of the main reasons that I’ve come back”

(Emilia, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

Following their GCSE studies, for those young people that wish to go on to study for A-levels it means either returning to their school’s sixth form, or moving or commuting to Newcastle College’s Sixth Form. The College in Northumberland only offers Level 3 vocational courses, and Level 2 for those wishing to repeat this study. For the young Poles these initial experiences of going to school in Northumberland were important in shaping their educational transitions. All of the participants had some experience of going to school in Poland. This meant that they then had to manage with making the transition into the British education system. Those young Poles who had negative experiences of going to school in Northumberland discussed how they could not wait to leave and enter paid work, for example Bartek and Danka, while those young Poles’ that had positive experiences of going to school typically returned for their A-level studies commenting on how they were influenced by the positive relationships that they had with their teachers and peers. The role and influence of the young Poles’ social and support networks on their transitions will be explored in Chapter Six.

The majority of the young Poles remained in Northumberland following school going on to do further studies; but it was after these studies that they expressed a desire to migrate out of Northumberland, particularly if they wanted to go on to university. During the first phase of the research with the stakeholders it was apparent that the young Poles were navigating the same educational transitions as any other young person in Northumberland. There seemed to be something quite ordinary about their transitions. However, being Polish and the experience of migration were important in shaping and influencing these transitions, with the young Poles having to negotiate the language and their new social environments. I will continue to discuss and unpack this further through these empirical chapters. As noted in Chapter Two higher and further education opportunities have grown for young people in the UK. I now move on to take account of some of those young Poles that went on to college and university, and what their experiences had been.

After school a number of the young Poles in the research had decided to go on to college. Some of the young Poles were currently studying at college, while others talked about college courses that they had previously taken part in.

Adam who was living with his family in Berwick was studying Sport at Northumberland College's Ashington campus:

"After school I came to college to study sports. I enjoy college. I've got a good set of friends and my tutor is really friendly and good fun. He makes sure that all the work and stuff gets done but always has banter which is good. It makes it feel a lot less like school ... I enjoy going to college. I know it's a really long journey but I'm comfortable and happy there. It's good"

(Adam, 16: Berwick – first interview)

Rafał also went on to college following school but decided to remain in Berwick so that he could still be with his school friends:

"College felt like the right thing for me to go on to do. Some of my friends from school came here too ... This made me more confident that I was making the right choice and it was important to me that I could still be with them"

(Rafał, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Adam and Rafał were two examples of young Poles who went on to college following their GCSEs. Again, this suggests that there appeared to be something quite ordinary about the transitions that the young Poles' were making in terms of their education, as many other young people their age who are also living and growing up in Northumberland would also be going on to study at college.

Rafał mentioned how some of his British friends from school were going on to college and it was important to him that he could still be with them. Friends were important to the young Poles. Particularly important to some of the young Poles in this research were those friends that understood their lives and situations, and had been through similar experiences to them following migration from Poland. These then influence the transitions that the young Poles go on to make. In Chapter Six I explore the role and influence of the young Poles' family, friends and social support networks on their transitions to adulthood. Also important to note is how Adam talked about his journey from Berwick to Northumberland College's Ashington campus being "really long". I will discuss the young Poles' mobilities in Northumberland in a later section of this chapter.

During the first round of interviews with the young Poles, many of them that were attending sixth form or college were in the process of making decisions as to whether or not they would then go on to university following these studies. If they were to apply they then had to decide on what course it was that they would study, and which institutions to apply to as part of this application. Other young people at the young

Poles' sixth forms and colleges would also be making the same decisions. Susan Kent, an Information, Advice and Guidance Advisor for Northumberland County Council shared the following insight regarding young people in Northumberland who made the transition to university:

"There's no university here in Northumberland. If you want to go on to further study and get a degree young people have got to be prepared to commute to Newcastle each day, and well that can be expensive and takes a lot of time, or they are left with no choice but to leave the areas that they are living and growing up in. If they do relocate out of Northumberland then it's highly unlikely that they'll ever return. I mean, do you blame them? Would you want to come back here to a place where there are so few opportunities? I mean it's only the other week that there was only one new job advertised and there's definitely more than one person here looking for a job"

(Susan Kent, Information, Advice and Guidance Adviser, Berwick)

This supports research on rural youth in Australia where they tend to leave their towns and regions in search of new opportunities and experiences. This includes education, employment and to experience different lives (Argent and Walmsley, 2008; Gibson and Argent, 2008; Glendinning et al, 2003).

Many of the young Poles felt it was necessary to leave Northumberland following their sixth form studies so that they could then continue with their education. Ania was a particularly strong example of this:

"My mother doesn't understand why I would want to leave Northumberland. She doesn't seem to understand. I mean you have to move out of Northumberland if you want to get on in life. There are no decent jobs here. I sent off my UCAS last night and my mum reluctantly gave me the £23 so that I could send off my application. She wants me to do well and get a good education and a good job but then at the same time she doesn't understand why I'd want to leave here ... I think it's important for me to leave so I can be on my own and stuff. Being at home just makes everything more complicated"

(Ania, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Izabel reported:

"After sixth form I've got no choice but to leave Northumberland for what it is that I want to do. Northumberland doesn't have the course or degree that I want to study"

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – first interview)

By going on to university the young Poles felt that it would prepare them for their futures, particularly when it came to them entering the labour market:

*“Going on to university will help me to get a good and professional job.
Something that I’ll be proud to say that I do”*

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – first interview)

Similarly, Agata shared:

“A degree is important. Especially if you want to go on and get a good and decent job”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – first interview)

These narratives capture how many of the young Poles felt following their sixth form studies. There was something very ordinary about the educational transitions that they were making. Following their GCSE studies, many of the young Poles decided to stay on and continue with their studies at sixth form. However, if they wished to go on to university, this meant moving out of Northumberland. They reflected on how Northumberland does not have a university, and many of them felt that the careers that they would want to go on to do would not be available in Northumberland in the future. This resulted in them planning to move elsewhere. Other young people in Northumberland would also be faced with making similar choices and decisions on their transitions. By going on to university the young Poles hoped that they would be taken more seriously. They discussed how they felt that this would open-up opportunities for them and provide the possibility for upward mobility (Standing, 2011).

In Ania’s account her mother was attempting to act as a barrier to her moving out of Northumberland. She did not understand why she would need to move out of Northumberland for her university studies. Ania talked about the strain this then put on their relationship, and her ability to easily make a move out of Berwick. This particular example shows how family can act as a barrier to relocation, and therefore be a barrier to education and employment. Some of the young Poles discussed how they were reluctant to leave their families, especially in those families where their parents spoke no English. This meant that they then relied on the young Poles to act as translators. This then provided them with a reason to potentially remain living in the same area (Spielhofer et al, 2011). Other young Poles’ parents encouraged the young Poles to move out of Northumberland seizing new opportunities. In Chapter Six I focus on the role and influence of the young Poles’ social and support networks, and how these then influence on the transitions that they were making.

Izabel discussed how she needed to migrate out of Northumberland for the particular course that she wanted to study at university. It was following their sixth form studies that many of the young Poles expressed a desire to move out of Northumberland. This would then allow them to have independence, achieve additional qualifications, or as many of them commented “to get on in life”. While university would provide the young Poles with independence, in the same ways that it would for any young person, the young Poles felt that by going on to university away from Northumberland it would provide them with more freedom with regards to their identities. This would then allow them to learn more about themselves and who they are. In Chapter Seven I explore how the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness as they made their transitions to adulthood.

The young Poles felt that it was important to migrate out of Northumberland in their educational transitions. The transition to university was used as an opportunity to relocate, believing that this would then enhance their lives in the future. In the final section of this chapter I discuss the attachments that many of the young Poles also had towards their local towns and communities. This then created some complexity and ambiguity over the choices and decisions that they were making, and I often wondered if they may inevitably return to Northumberland at some point in the future.

From the interviews with the young Poles it was evident that they thought by going on to university it would prepare them for their futures in the labour market. At sixth form they saw university as being a form of “training” that would prepare them for future employment. They felt that a degree would make them more credible and that they would be taken more seriously by future employers. However, in their initial few weeks at university the young Poles quickly realised that a degree alone would not be enough. It was important that they also developed the practical skills, knowledge and work experience that future employers would look for:

“It’s important to have a part time job around your studies as well. It’ll give you more experiences that will help you in the future and I guess it proves that you can manage your time effectively”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – second interview)

“I’m not in uni that much. Everyone on my course is talking about looking for part time jobs. Some have managed to transfer their part time jobs from back home here. I’m going to look for something. It will give me money and some extra experience for my CV that will be helpful in the future for job applications”

(Ania, 19: Berwick – second interview)

By the second follow-up interview for the study, three of the five young Poles that had applied to go on to university had all migrated out of Northumberland to their new places. At the second interview these young Poles had all been living in the UK for a significant period of time. At the follow-up interviews I was interested in understanding how the young Poles were negotiating these new environments and what their experiences had been. These young Poles felt that migrating out of Northumberland, on their own and to new places, would allow them to discover more about themselves. The young people talked about the personal motivations of moving to Liverpool, Sunderland and Stirling in the context of “growing up” and “being more independent”, or as they described “finding out more about who I am”. Ania had moved to Sunderland to study an Extended Programme course as a route on to an Events Management degree, Izabel moved to Stirling to study Business Management, while Agata had moved to Liverpool to study Maths. The following quotes capture their initial experiences of university:

“I was a bit nervous at first. I wasn’t really sure what to expect. It was a bit of a shock at first especially moving from a small place like Berwick to Sunderland. I think you know I was a bit worried that I wouldn’t fit in and make friends and stuff. I guess I thought a lot about when we first moved to Northumberland from Poland and how I’d cope and manage but I proved that I could do it then”

(Ania, 19: Berwick – second interview)

These sentiments were also shared by Izabel:

“Yeah I was definitely nervous. I kept thinking about whether or not I’d be to cope or manage and especially meeting new people for the first time again. But honestly everyone was in the same situation. I really shouldn’t have been so worried or worked up about it all. They’ve all been really friendly and supportive which has really helped. I’m not sure that I could of done it without them. This experience is helping me to find out more about myself and who I am as an individual. It’s been good”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Ania and Izabel both described how “everyone else was in the same situation” and this suggested ordinariness in their experiences. Like Izabel, Agata was also positive about the relationships that she had built with the new people that she was living with at her student accommodation:

“University is great. It’s given me so much more freedom. I have made lots of new friends and that’s just in the first couple of months of being here. I get on

great with the people that I'm living with so that's really helped me with settling in and stuff. I know I can trust them and if I want or need anything then I can just ask. Everyone is just so nice and supportive. I guess we are all in the same situation and going through the same things together so that's been quite nice"

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – second interview)

At first the young Poles' fears centred on whether or not and how they would cope or manage, and whether or not they would fit in (Reay, 2001). It is important to note that these young Poles were all interviewed in December 2015, approximately three months after starting university. This may have provided them with the time to settle into university life. They were all very positive about their experiences of moving out of Northumberland to a new place. It had allowed them to meet new people, develop their confidence and learn more about who they are.

Izabel and Agata both referred to how the young people that they were now living with in their student accommodation were all "in the same situation". This suggested that there something ordinary about their transitions and experiences at university, as they felt no different to the other young people that were around them. These positive experiences could potentially be explained due to these young Poles migrating from Poland when they were younger. They had all been living in Northumberland for a significant number of years before making their transition to university. The young Poles commented on how "everyone has moved from home and knows no one here". However, the young Poles are potentially at an advantage because they have experienced similar situations before when migrating into Northumberland from Poland. Through their earlier experiences they had learnt to be adaptable and to fit in. For the young Poles going on to university normalises their earlier transitions.

By going on to university outside of Northumberland, and making the move out of the family home, it had provided these young Poles with increasing independence away from their families, in the same ways that it would for many young people. This experience had allowed them to become more independent from their families, and to learn more about themselves. For these young Poles they felt that it had been a positive experience for their identities. In summary, while there was something ordinary about the educational transitions that the young Poles' were making, their age of migration can potentially explain some of the differences in their experiences. This will be discussed further in the subsequent empirical chapters.

The work of Reay (2001) is particularly relevant to these young Poles' experiences and how they were negotiating their identities at university. Reay (2001) highlights the process of disidentification among some working-class and minority ethnic students within certain HE institutions and the forms of middle-class belonging and attachment made available through those institutions. Reay (2001: 337) underlines the way in which working-class HE applicants engage in complicated practices of 'trying to negotiate a difficult balance between investing in a new improved identity and holding onto a cohesive self'.

Through Reay's research she was interested in the different kinds of emotional investments shaping working class students' transition from further to higher education, and those dimensions that inform class feeling – the place of memory, feelings of ambivalence, inferiority and superiority and the distinctions and markings of taste. According to Reay (2001: 339) a central problem facing working-class students as they enter HE institutions, especially the pre-1992 'elite' ones, is the 'problematic of reconciling academic success with working-class identity'. This is because being aspirational and working class often demands having to negotiate competing sets of pressures and seductions based on distinct forms of class identification – being aspirational might involve a risky process of 'losing oneself'. It is Reay's argument that formal educational institutions and practices are structured in relation to a middle-class imaginary, where middle-class values are treated as the norm, while working-class students are constructed through a deficit model which positions them as lacking aspirations, information or academic preparation. The young Poles, regardless of their backgrounds, highlighted the importance of seizing opportunities: becoming mobile and moving out of Northumberland and going on to university to study for a degree, believing that this would open up opportunities for them in their futures. The young Poles felt that a degree would allow them to demonstrate their abilities and talents and they appeared to be very open regarding the opportunities that university life provided them with.

Through my reading of the literature I became increasingly interested in the experiences of those young Poles' that went on to university and how they were negotiating their identities in these new places and locations. The young Poles discussed how they felt that their identities were being reshaped and reworked at university. This is something that I will unpack further in Chapter Seven. In Chapter

Seven I examine how the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness and experiences of migration as they made their transitions to adulthood.

The follow-up interviews were incredibly useful as it was through these I could make sense of and understand the transitions that the young Poles were making over time. During the first round of interviews five of the young Poles were applying to go on to university. By the second follow-up interview for the study they had found out if they had got on to the course that they wanted to do. The three young Poles' experiences highlighted above were from young Poles that had already moved out of Northumberland for their university studies. Also, by the point of the second follow-up interviews, other young Poles had left jobs, while some had finished college. This meant that the follow-up interviews were useful to monitor and make sense of the young Poles' progress and experiences as they made their transitions to adulthood.

In this initial section I have focused on the young Poles' experiences of going to school, sixth form, college and university, and how living and growing up in Northumberland influences the choices and decisions that they then make, or in some cases had already made, on their transitions. Following their GCSE studies at school, the young Poles then made a number of educational transitions. For young people in Northumberland their educational transitions are founded on either going on to their school's sixth form, Northumberland College which has campuses across the county in Ashington, Kirkley Hall, Hexham, Blyth and Calcroft Farm in the Coquet Valley or continuing their education by going on to university outside of Northumberland. At first it could be interpreted that there was something quite ordinary or standard about the educational transitions of the young Poles. However, it is my argument that being Polish and the experience of migration complicates these transitions to adulthood. This is something that I will draw attention to in the remainder of this chapter, and unpack further in Chapters Six and Seven. In the next section I pay attention to the young Poles' transitions to employment.

5.3 Employment

This section draws attention to the transitions that the young Poles were making to employment. It is my argument that their experiences and transitions in relation to employment were similar to those of other young people who were living and growing up in Northumberland. However, as noted in the previous section, it is also my

argument that being Polish and the experiences of migration add another layer to their transitions. Some of the young Poles saw their Polishness being an asset as they made their transitions to employment, others felt that the experience of migration had opened up opportunities for them, while some of the young Poles felt that their Polishness and experience of migration constrained their transitions.

Bartek, who moved into Northumberland when he was fourteen years old with his parents, was the oldest of the young Poles that took part in my research to migrate between Poland and the UK. When he first arrived he knew very little English. During the first interview he talked at length about his experiences of securing his first job working in a local bar. While Bartek was quite negative about some of his previous experiences (e.g. going to school in Northumberland, see above), he was very happy with what he had achieved and was optimistic about the future. Before securing this job opportunity he felt that his Polishness and experience of migration constrained his transition to employment. However, the job that he was doing had allowed him to make new friends that he then socialised with outside of work. He enjoyed the challenges that his job provided him with. Thinking into the future he shared aspirations to become a manager. It was clear that his job had helped him to develop and build his confidence, something that he felt had initially suffered when he first moved into Northumberland from Poland. However, it was quite striking how positive Bartek was about the future. At both interviews he was happy with where he was in his life and what he had achieved.

Kacper was an example of a young Pole who changed jobs during the research:

“Kacper: I’m not sure if I’ve mentioned but I’ve changed my job since we last met. I’m not working at the factory anymore. I was getting sick of the really early starts every day and then some weeks I wasn’t needed so I got no hours or work. Now I’m working mornings on a reception and night times in a bar. It’s good to chat and meet people. Both jobs are very social.”

Sean: At the first interview you mentioned wanting to work in an airport?

Kacper: Yeah. I’d love to work in the airport like in security or as an immigration officer. That would be my dream. I mean they are both really good jobs and are something that I’d be proud and interested in doing.”

(Kacper, 18: Berwick – second interview)

It was quite striking how optimistic, encouraging and positive the young Poles were about their experiences of employment. Henderson et al (2007) noted how uncertainty in the post-industrial labour market causes deep anxiety for young people, irrespective of their social background. However the young Poles in this research were positive about their lives and situations in comparison to the lives that they would have been living back in Poland, reflecting on the experiences of their cousins or other relatives in Poland. As noted in Chapter Two, MacDonald and Marsh (2005: 209) noted how school-to-work transitions have become 'a dispiriting sequence of knock-backs, let-downs, false promises and dead ends'. The collapse of the youth labour market has led to increased competition for fewer jobs and a growing demand for a skilled and qualified workforce (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). However, it was surprising how optimistic and positive the young Poles in this research were about their experiences and futures. These young Poles' experiences connect to Lopez Rodriguez's (2010) findings that Polish mothers have a meritocratic mind-set of believing that the UK is 'a land where anybody with talent and the will to work hard can make it'.

All of the young Poles that were in full-time education had part-time jobs around these studies. These jobs were usually on an evening or at weekends. The hours that they worked each week ranged from four to up to twenty hours a week. All of those young Poles who were working part-time were employed in the service sector in shop or bar work, in restaurants, fast-food outlets or as glass collectors in local bars.

Tomasz lived in Ashington but his part-time job was in Newcastle:

"The snack bar means that I only get work on match days every fortnight when they are playing games at home but that works for me. It means that I'm not working too much around my A-levels and stuff. I got some extra work over the Christmas helping to serve food at the Christmas parties and stuff. It was good to earn some extra money. When I'm eighteen it means that I can legally serve alcohol to people and I've told them that I'd like to be trained on the bar. That will hopefully mean that I can pick up some extra hours here or there or be to look for a job somewhere else with that work on my CV ... It's helped me to meet more people from all over Newcastle. A lot of the other people that work there are at sixth form, college or uni. It's good. I enjoy it"

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – first interview)

Dominika was also positive about the friendly interactions that she was able to have with others in her local community through her part-time work:

“I work in a shop every Sunday morning. It’s only four hours work but it’s a good experience and I enjoy it. Everyone’s friendly and stuff”

(Dominika, 18: Hexham – first interview)

For the young Poles, paid part-time work was important for them to feel “normal” and “like other people their age”. The young Poles hoped that having paid part-time work on their CVs would make them more credible in their future job applications. The young Poles discussed how these jobs were incredibly important to them. They allowed them to grow as individuals and to have some financial independence from their families (Arnett, 2000). Izabel discussed how her part-time job provided her with extra money so that she could then afford to go out and take part in leisure activities with her friends. Ania talked about how her part-time job allowed her to have friendly interactions with others who lived in her local community and this was important to her. It was clear that the young Poles in my research were negotiating these new local environments.

The changing nature of the youth labour market, and the increased participation of young people in post-16 education over the last two decades has led to the increased growth of part-time work for sixteen to nineteen year olds that are involved in full-time education in the UK. Howieson et al (2006) found that significant numbers of full-time students have part-time jobs around their studies. Smith and Green (2005) argue that high school student’s paid part-time work experiences are likely to provide more effective means to understand work and working life than can be received through school organised work placements and work experience.

Part-time work provided the young Poles in this research with increased responsibility, enabling them to grow as individuals and to have some financial autonomy from their families. This was important to them as it allowed them to feel more grown up. They discussed how they used this additional income so that they could then go out and purchase their own clothes, undertake leisure activities with their friends, and be able to afford mobile phone contracts or additional driving lessons. However, the majority of the young Poles indicated that they did not take on part-time work purely for financial reasons. Instead they liked the independence that their jobs provided them with. They also generally enjoyed the work that they did and they hoped that their experiences of part-time work would help them to access future employment opportunities. Part-time work provided the young Poles with the ability to

grow as individuals and to feel proud of their achievements. Through part-time work the young Poles were able to build friendships outside of school.

Another significant and interesting aspect of the young Poles' transitions to employment was how some of the young Poles interpreted their Polishness as acting as an asset or employable skill. An example of this was shared from Danka who had set up her own cleaning business:

“At first I felt that being Polish and migrating here did not help me in the ways that some people think that it should, by getting a degree and a good job and stuff but I’ve got to be honest being Polish has really helped my cleaning business. One woman said to me ‘yeah I knew you’d be reliable and hardworking when someone said that you were Polish. It meant that I could just trust you to get the job done’ and she always goes on how this was really important to her. I know that some people might take offence to this but I just laugh it off. It’s quite funny really and at least its helped me to earn money”

(Danka, 24: Berwick – second interview)

In relation to Poles and other Eastern European workers there are a number of recruitment stereotypes, these include that they have marked physical strength and endurance, and they can be expected to deliver a good and reliable performance at work (King et al, 2016). Several studies have documented Central and Eastern European migrants as being ‘white, European, and hardworking’ (Parutis, 2011). This has provided these migrants with a competitive and social advantage over other migrants, especially those that are perceived as culturally and ‘visibly’ different. Shubin et al (2014: 467) pointed out that Latvian recruitment agencies imagined an ideal lesser-skilled worker, someone who does not need a ‘big head’ (i.e. brains) but rather ‘big feet’ for filling ‘wellington boots’ to work in agriculture or construction.

In summary, the young Poles were positive about their experiences towards paid work. There were examples of the young Poles being flexible with some of them changing their jobs during the research. They discussed how their jobs had allowed them to meet others that were in their local communities, or further afield in the case of Tomasz who was working in Newcastle. Some of the young Poles talked about how they felt their Polishness and experience of migration constrained their transitions to employment. This was something that they then had to overcome. Those young Poles that were in education had part-time jobs around their studies. These were important for them to feel normal and they hoped it would make them more credible in the future. Danka who set up her own cleaning business talked

about her Polishness acting as an asset or employable skill helping her to generate work.

Apprenticeships

Following their studies some of the young Poles decided to go on to do an apprenticeship. In 2014/15 there were 194,000 young people aged under nineteen undertaking an apprenticeship (IPPR, 2016). This further suggests that there was something quite ordinary or standard about the transitions that the young Poles were making.

Apprenticeships had served as a route into the local labour market. These opportunities provided the young Poles with the hands-on experience that they required, allowing them to gain skills and knowledge. They hoped that this would then allow them to succeed in highly regarded and skilled occupations. In Northumberland these have traditionally been in crafts such as masonry and carpentry, and more recently in engineering and technological industries. Since 2010, an increase in funding has seen more than two million apprenticeships taken up. The 2011 Census found that 4.6% of those aged sixteen to twenty-four in Northumberland had an apprenticeship, which was higher than the national figure of 2.6%.

During this research two of the young Poles were enrolled on an apprenticeship. These young Poles were positive about their experiences:

“I got on that printers apprenticeship that I was telling you about the last time we met. It’s canny. One of my friends from boxing works there too”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

For Filip the apprenticeship provided him with further study and work experience:

“I’m working at an IT company. I really enjoy it. Everyone’s supportive. I get an extra qualification and it’s given me experience. Something that I didn’t really have before”

(Filip, 18: Bedlington – second interview)

While these two young Poles were positive about their apprenticeships, one of the older young Poles who had been on an apprenticeship in the past was less positive about his experience. Piotr discussed how he felt that he was exploited by his employer as he was regularly told that he had to work extra hours which was unpaid.

He felt that because his employer knew he was Polish and had migrated from Poland that he then took advantage of him. This resulted in tension between him and his manager, and their relationship then broke down. Piotr learnt about another job opportunity where he could earn more money, and the hours of his shifts would be better. Piotr's experience was an example of where apprenticeships were not positive for all young people. This resulted in Piotr leaving his apprenticeship early and finding alternative work elsewhere.

Dominika had looked into potentially going on to do an apprenticeship following school, but this would have meant commuting over a significant distance, and this was something that she would not have been able to afford to do:

"I looked into some of the IT apprenticeships that were on offer, but there wasn't anything located nearby. They were all in different parts of Newcastle and I couldn't afford to move there or travel to where they were each day so I just gave up into looking at that as an option. It wasn't going to be possible for me."

(Dominika, 18: Hexham – second interview)

These young Poles' experiences would be similar to those of other young people that were their age who were also living and growing up in Northumberland. Again, this suggests that there was something quite ordinary about the transitions that the young Poles were making.

As part of Filip's and Jakub's apprenticeships they attend courses at Newcastle College. Bedlington is located in the south east of Northumberland, and is arguably better connected to Newcastle. This means that they can easily commute in and out of Newcastle, in comparison to say a young person who is living in the north of the county around Berwick for example. In a later section of this chapter I will focus on the young Poles' mobilities. For those young Poles that went on to do an apprenticeship they hoped that these would serve as a route into a well-paid job in the future. They shared aspirations for them to then become financially independent from their families. It also appealed to these young people that they were earning while they were still learning.

To summarise, the sections in this chapter have highlighted that for the young Poles who are living and growing up in Northumberland their transitions could be mapped onto those of other young people their age who were also living and growing up in Northumberland. Their transitions are tightly linked to their availability of post-school

educational and employment opportunities that are within their local communities. A lack of educational and/or employment opportunities in their local areas meant that they were often left with no choice but to migrate out of their rural communities, particularly if they wanted to go on to study for a degree at university. Many of the young Poles were faced with making a decision as to whether or not they would migrate out of their communities or remain and face a declining and precarious rural labour market. However, the young Poles transitions are more complex than this. Being Polish and the experience of migration adds another layer to their transitions. In the following section I examine some of the young Poles' housing transitions and the aspirations that they had for the future in terms of becoming independent home owners, even in the cases of those young people that were currently renting.

5.4 Housing

Moving home or moving to independent (or semi-independent) housing from the family home is another important transition in the lives of young people. In this section I explore some of the young Poles' experiences and the aspirations that they had for the future in terms of their housing. The transitions that the young Poles' were making in terms of housing could be interpreted as being quite normal and standard, however being Polish and the experience of migration influenced some of these experiences and aspirations. Some of the young Poles talked about how the experience of migration from Poland had opened up opportunities for them to become independent homeowners in the future. This section will unpack and discuss this further.

Some of the young Poles aspired to move out of their family home and into a home of their own in the near future:

"I'd like to move into my own place. I'd like my own space. I really need to start looking into it all properly"

(Kacper, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Whereas others reflected on their housing transitions further into the future:

"In say like 10 years time I'd like to think that I'd bought my own home and had a mortgage and stuff"

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – second interview)

"I'd like to think that I could own my own house at some point in the future"

(Adam, 16: Berwick – second interview)

Tomasz talked about where he was living with his parents at present:

“We live in an upstairs flat. It’s always quite cold and damp. Our neighbours who live downstairs are always quite noisy. They’ll often wake us up through the night. In the future I want to live on an estate like the one that’s up the road from where we are living now. The houses there they’ve all got nice front gardens, driveways and garages and look a lot nicer and newer from the outside. They are like what I’d say were proper family homes and nothing like where we are living at the minute. That’s what I want to work hard for and get in the future”

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – second interview)

This demonstrates how the young Poles hope to improve their lives and situations. The young Poles hoped to benefit more fully from the experience of migration.

Danka reflected on her housing transitions and related her decision making to her Polishness:

“The family is important to Polish people. I guess this was sort of one of the reasons that it was important to me that we moved into somewhere that was near to my mum. She has done a lot for me so it’s important that I’m there for her when she needs me too”

(Danka, 24: Berwick – second interview)

Danka was the second oldest young Pole to migrate between Poland and Northumberland. This may explain some of the differences in her experiences in relation to her younger sister Ania. Danka was remaining in Northumberland, ran her own cleaning business and become a parent during the research, whereas her younger sister Ania was remaining in education and going on to university to study for a degree and believed that migrating out of Northumberland away from her family would allow her to learn more about herself.

For the young Poles the establishment of an independent home is linked to independence and responsibility, which are associated with becoming an adult. Molgat (2002, 2007) has noted how moving out of the family home is associated with a sense of autonomy and independence. The young Poles saw buying a home as linked with becoming an adult. This would demonstrate financial independence and responsibility which is needed to meet the costs of running a home. Again, at first these housing transitions could be interpreted as being quite ordinary or standard. However, being Polish and the experience of migration also has an important bearing on these transitions with Danka talking about the importance of being close to her

family, and Tomasz aspiring to improve his situation from where he was living with his family at present. In their homes the young Poles talked about how they were negotiating Polish practices that were located in their families. In Chapter Seven I explore some of these practices and how the young Poles were then responding to these.

5.5 Relationships

Three of the young Poles that took part in this research had established long-term relationships. As noted in Chapter Two the linear transition that is associated with partnering has followed a path based on being single, meeting a potential partner, developing a relationship, engagement, marriage and then having children. In this section I will explore some of the young Poles' experiences of intimate relationships.

Danka was in a relationship with someone who had also experienced migration from Poland:

"I feel happy and comfortable. I've got a good partner who works hard and we are obviously expecting our first child"

(Danka, 23: Berwick – first interview)

However, Gosia's partner and his family were from Northumberland:

"I met my boyfriend when I was at college. He's a big part of my life. He's always been really supportive and that's really helped me"

(Gosia, 22: Berwick – first interview)

This was also the case for Piotr. His partner and her family were also from Northumberland:

"I like it here a lot. I have my friends, my Polish friends and then my English friends and then my fiancé. She is from Northumberland. I would definitely say that this is my home now. She would kill me if I said anything different"

(Piotr, 23: Bedlington – second interview)

For Piotr he discussed how his relationship had acted as a bridge to new friendships. Although he still had Polish friends, he also had friends that were 'local' to

Northumberland through his partner. It was through this that it resulted in him feeling at home in Northumberland.

The idea of having a committed relationship was important to the majority of the young Poles:

“In the future yeah I definitely see myself having a partner and my own little family. That’s all part of growing up right?”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – first interview)

Gosia believed that becoming a parent would be a massive responsibility. This was something that she could not imagine herself taking on for a considerable length of time:

“At the minute I wouldn’t be ready to become a mam, and not that I could or would want to be. Becoming a parent is a huge responsibility. In the future in the right circumstances then yeah I definitely want kids but that’s not now. I’d want to be in a place where I could support my child and that I could ensure that they’d have a good life. I guess it’s also important that you are in a place in your life where you’d be happy to become a parent”

(Gosia, 22: Berwick – first interview)

In relation to becoming parents the young Poles reflected on their own lives and experiences, and particularly their own upbringings. Many of the young Poles migrated from Poland with only their mothers. They were all aware of the considerable difficulties and responsibilities that this had entailed for them. For the young Poles becoming a parent had a strong association to being an adult.

Poland is a country with a very homogeneous population. The vast majority of people are white, ethnically Polish and Catholic. According to the recent census, approximately 99.7% of the residents in the country hold Polish citizenship, 94.8% declare Polish as their national identity and approximately 87.2% declare Catholic faith (GUS, 2013). The Catholic Church remains dominant in Poland, social diversity is low and there remains a national perception of an ‘ethnic collective’, rather than a political community. Until quite recently, LGBT people have been largely invisible to the heterosexual majority in Poland. In Poland LGBT people have been ostracized for blurring of the gender dichotomy (Godzisz and Pudianowska, 2016). At the same time, same-sex relationships are portrayed as ‘inferior’ to heterosexual relationships. In the parliamentary debate on registered partnerships on 24th January 2013,

Krystyna Pawlowicz asserted that Polish society 'cannot fund a sweet life to unstable, barren unions' of LGBT people (Godzisz and Pudianowska, 2016). According to Graff (2010) in Central Eastern Europe homosexuality is seen as a Western European 'import' which is incompatible with national norms.

Two of the young Poles in this research identified themselves as being gay. Both Kacper and Filip talked about the benefits of being gay in the UK in comparison to what their experiences would have been back in Poland:

"People in Poland can be quite backward in the way that they think. It's more liberal here. People are very open minded. It's almost like anything goes. My mam liked that and it's one of the main reasons that she decided to move here from Poland"

(Filip, 18: Bedlington – second interview)

This sentiment was also shared by Kacper:

"I am happy that I am accepted for who I am here in England. The people in Poland are very narrow minded. Being gay would not be as accepted there which is just stupid. You can't be your true self and well that's not good for anyone. I'm glad that my mum took the risk and escaped from there"

(Kacper, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Kacper talked about how he was using a gay Polish dating website in the hope of locating a Polish partner. At the second interview he had recently been on a date in Edinburgh with someone that he had met from this website. These young Poles refer to Poland as being "backward" and "narrow minded". In contrast they talk about England or the UK in terms of being "very open minded" and having an acceptance towards LGBT people.

In terms of relationships there were a variety of experiences. Some of the young Poles were in relationships with partners who had also experienced migration from Poland, some aspired to have Polish partners, while others were dating partners who were 'local' to Northumberland. Other young Poles talked about how they were not actively seeking a partner at the present time and were instead concentrating on their studies. However, many of these young Poles hoped to be in relationships in the future. The two young Poles in the research who identified as being gay contrasted their lives and experiences to ones that they would have lived back in Poland. It was

also significant that two of the young Poles became parents during the research. It could be argued that there was something quite ordinary or standard about the young Poles' transitions in terms of their relationships. They were going on dates, entering relationships and becoming parents. However, being Polish and the experience of migration were also important aspects of their relationship transitions.

5.6 Mobility

Another important theme to emerge from my analysis was the young Poles' mobilities. Rural transport can be a barrier for young people. This can be mitigated against by having access to private vehicles, allowing young people to then access opportunities (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000). The young Poles reflected on public transport and its availability, and how this then shaped and influenced their transitions in the context of living and growing up in rural Northumberland. The young Poles were all living and growing up in different areas of the county. As noted earlier, Northumberland is a large and diverse area. Some parts of the county are arguably better connected to other areas that are located nearby, for example Newcastle, whereas other parts such as north Northumberland around Berwick are located a significant distance from Newcastle and Edinburgh.

During the first phase of the research, with the stakeholders, there was a recognition of how good transport links were important in order to attract new businesses into Northumberland and develop existing ones:

“Good transport links are necessary if we want our businesses here in Northumberland to thrive”

(Senior Manager, Northumberland County Council)

Susan Kent, an Information, Advice and Guidance Advisor based in Berwick commented on how the poor availability of public transport meant that many young people that she worked with wanted to leave Northumberland:

“We need better rail connections here. It's why so many of the young people that I work with say that they want to move out of here”

(Susan Kent, Information, Advice and Guidance Advisor, Berwick)

The following section reflects on the young Poles' experiences of buses, trains and learning to drive.

Public transport

During the first phase of the research stakeholders had some anxiety over the future of fundamental bus services that young people need to access in order to take up opportunities that may be located elsewhere in the county. The Assistant Head Teacher at Berwick talked about how the bus service in Berwick that connected the area to other parts of Northumberland was at threat of being withdrawn:

“There’s talk that the x15 bus, I think that it leaves at 6.10am from Berwick and goes down to Alnwick might be taken away. People are quite rightly irate and very concerned about this. Some of the young people from here use this service in order to get down to Northumberland College each day. It could cause some real problems and issues for our young people here”

(Assistant Head Teacher, Berwick)

Edyta who lived in the north of Northumberland in Berwick talked about the limited bus service that operated to Northumberland College’s Ashington campus:

“If you miss that bus well you are screwed. You wouldn’t make it into college on time and that would just cause more problems. This was one of the reasons why I just looked at the college courses offered in Berwick”

(Edyta, 18: Berwick – first interview)

This resulted in Edyta deciding to take up a course at Northumberland College’s Berwick site, close to where she lived with her family. This connects to previous research documented in Chapter Two where young people in rural areas suffer from poorer choices in terms of education, job training facilities and employment opportunities, in comparison to those young people that are in urban areas (Ansell, 2017; Jentsh and Shucksmith, 2004; Punch, 2005; Vanderbeck and Dunkley, 2003).

However, other young Poles were left with no choice but to become mobile and travel out of Berwick for some particular courses that they wanted to study at college. In fact Adam, who was Edyta’s brother, commuted between Berwick and Ashington each day. In his lifegrid he wrote:

In Northumberland transport can be a real issue for people.

(Adam, 16: Berwick - lifegrid)

At the follow-up interview I asked him to elaborate on this:

“Living in Northumberland is great but we do have our fair share of problems too. I have to travel a significant distance to get to college each day. It means that I can’t really go out and socialise with the others who are on my course as a lot of them live in other places here in Northumberland. I find that a bit annoying and frustrating at times”

(Adam, 16: Berwick – second interview)

Kacper talked about how he was reliant on a work colleague who drove so that he was able to travel into work:

“The buses don’t run for when my shift starts. You need a car. I have to get a lift to work each day. I pay her petrol money each week”

(Kacper, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Huby et al (2009) have noted how this can have a beneficial impact or instead create a demoralising sense of dependency.

Where the young Poles were located in Northumberland was important to their mobilities. Those young Poles that were located in the south east of the county could more easily travel in and out of neighbouring areas, such as Newcastle, in comparison to those young people located in the north of Northumberland. Bus services in the south east tended to be more frequent and journey times were shorter. One of the young Poles in the research who was living in Ashington had a part-time job in Newcastle city centre. This was possible as journey times were shorter as there was an express bus service operating to Newcastle from close to where he lived with his family. He carefully budgeted for the cost of a ticket so that he could afford to travel in and out of Newcastle for his shifts:

“Sean: Your part time job is in Newcastle city centre, but how do you get there? How do you find getting there for your shifts?”

Tomasz: Yeah it’s ok. There’s an express bus that runs to Newcastle. It runs from up the road. It’s a set fare for a day ticket. Some people would probably have the attitude like ergh why bother and stuff but I’ve made it work for me. It’s helped me to meet other young people and I enjoy it. It’s been good for me”

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – first interview)

All of the young Poles’ who took part in the research talked about the challenges associated with public transport in Northumberland, but it was typically those young Poles who were living in the north of the county, in and around Berwick town centre, who could be described as feeling more isolated. It has been noted how Tyneside attracts people from Northumberland as a source of employment, education and

cultural activity and retail. To a far lesser extent the north and west of Northumberland are influenced by the Scottish Borders, Edinburgh and Carlisle (Senior Manager, Northumberland County Council: Interview).

Getting to Newcastle on the train should be straightforward with regular train services operating on the East Coast mainline through Berwick town centre. However, some of the young Poles discussed the difficulties that they encountered in accessing this train service:

“The last train from Edinburgh to Berwick is at 7pm. We would never be able to go there for a night out and get the train back. We are left with no choice but to stay over, but places to stay in Edinburgh on a Saturday night well they are just really expensive. It means that we usually end up not bothering”

(Magda, 19: Berwick – first interview)

Kasia talked about the cost of train travel:

“The trains can be so expensive. Even if you’ve got a young person’s rail card. They aren’t really affordable for young people, even though they’ll say that they are. I don’t think that they actually understand”

(Kasia, 18: Berwick – first interview)

In this research many of the young Poles’ concerns in relation to trains were focused around the availability and cost of them. The young Poles discussed how trains were not affordable for young people. These challenges and issues were not just unique to the young Poles, as all young people in Northumberland would be navigating these on their transitions to adulthood, further supporting that there was something quite standard or ordinary about the young Poles’ transitions to adulthood.

A campaign has been set up by Rail Action Group East Scotland for a local train service between Berwick and Edinburgh (RAGES, 2017). Local councillors are very keen for a late evening service from Edinburgh to Berwick. They feel that this later train service is very important and would be beneficial to local people. During my fieldwork the last train from Edinburgh to Berwick was 9pm Monday to Friday, while on a Saturday this last service was at 7pm. It is hoped that a later train service would help to boost tourism and also help Berwick to become a commuter town. This is particularly important for those young people that are struggling to find work locally. Growing the tourism sector in Berwick will lead to job creation in the area for local

people. If this service was also subsidised, it would make it more economical for local people to then use and access (RAGES, 2017).

The narratives drawn on above are from those young Poles who were living in the north of the county, in and around Berwick. However, these issues in relation to the young Poles' mobilities were not just unique to those young people in this area, other young Poles' located elsewhere in Northumberland talked about how their areas were also affected by poor train services:

“There’s a train that runs between Hexham and Newcastle. It’s not the best. Everyone complains that it desperately needs money spent on it and that it should be much quicker than what it is, but I guess it’s better than having nothing. It gets you there. I do think that they should make it cheaper for young people though”

(Dominika, 18: Hexham – first interview)

Agata also reported:

“A lot of my friends are annoyed about the trains. It’s ridiculous how much you are expected to pay while you are still studying. They should make it free for all young people”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – first interview)

Ian Yarrow an Information, Advice and Guidance Advisor located in Blyth commented:

“They’ve been campaigning for the reopening of the Ashington-Blyth Tyne line for over ten years. It’s about time they got cracking. Easier access to good quality public transport is needed for everyone, not just the young people. I think they’ll be very surprised at how popular it will be”

(Ian Yarrow, Information, Advice and Guidance Advisor, Blyth)

A report by Northumberland County Council found that by reintroducing passenger services it could boost the economy by up to £70 million, with more than 380,000 people predicted to use the line every year by 2034. Commuters would be able to travel between Ashington and Newcastle in approximately 38 minutes, with several new stations built along the route. The line would also connect to the existing Tyne and Wear Metro system, and include waiting facilities, parking and connections to cycling and walking routes (Northumberland County Council, 2016).

Both the stakeholders and young Poles discussed the barriers associated with transport for people who are living in Northumberland. Transport was something that all people in Northumberland had to negotiate. This suggests that there was

something quite ordinary or standard about the transitions that the young Poles were making. They were navigating the same issues regarding their mobilities as any other person in Northumberland would. Some of the young Poles felt that they could overcome these barriers by learning to drive.

Cars

Another aspect of the young Poles' mobilities was their experiences of learning to drive. For young people, learning to drive is an important rite of passage as they make their transitions to adulthood. Young people tend to begin learning to drive as soon as they turn seventeen, the legal age in the UK (Merriman, 2012). A car is 'a mechanism for the management of privacy' and mobile subjectivity (Carrabine and Longhurst, 2002: 194). The car facilitates sociability (Carrabine and Longhurst, 2002). Having access to a vehicle to drive around in and show off at social get-togethers can be a source of pride and social-esteem (Graham and White, 2007). According to Redshaw, young people talk about having 'the freedom to go where they want, which all create a greater sense of control' (Redshaw, 2001 cited in Thomas and Butcher, 2003). Youth is a time for developing interests and independence and car culture meets these needs (Graham and White, 2007). During this research many of the young Poles shared aspirations to want to learn to drive, and in the future they hoped to have their own private cars.

During the first round of interviews Izabel and Tomasz were both taking driving lessons. They shared their experiences:

"I'm learning to drive at the minute. There's so much to learn and think about. I passed my theory test a couple of weeks ago. My instructor said that it's important I plan and think about what's going on and coming up ahead on the roads and stuff. He's said that I should be ready to take my practical test soon ... I'm not sure that I'll get my own car straight away. I'm not even sure if I'll go on my dad's insurance. We haven't really talked about that yet. I do think that it's important that you can drive in the future. It opens up more opportunities for you, and you don't have to rely on public transport and stuff like that"

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – first interview)

"I'm interested in cars. When I'm older I'd like to have my own project car, something that I can work on at weekends ... I think it's important that you can drive, especially if you want a good job ... There's just so much that you have to pay for like lessons, tests, provisional. It all adds up. My family gave me some money for my birthday so I've been using that to pay for it"

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – first interview)

By the follow-up interview for the research Izabel and Tomasz had both passed their driving tests:

“It felt so good passing. I mean I don’t have a car yet but at least I know that I can drive if I ever need to in the future for like work and stuff. I’ve got all the paperwork ready”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – second interview)

“I passed first time. How great is that? I was so happy. I was really chuffed that I’d did it ... I don’t have a car yet. I couldn’t afford one at the minute but in the future I’d like to have my own”

(Tomasz, 18: Ashington – second interview)

Tomasz talked about the costs involved in learning to drive, with paying for driving lessons, theory and practical tests and provisional licence applications. Izabel talked about how it was unlikely that she would go on to own her own car in the short-term, but she had aspirations to have her own car at some point in the future. These young Poles’ accounts suggest that there was something relatively standard about their transitions to adulthood, with them learning to drive when they turned seventeen.

Many of the other young Poles who took part in the research talked about driving. Ania and Kasia both expressed a desire to learn how to drive, but felt that they could not afford it. While Magda talked about how car insurance is unaffordable for young people. This meant that she could see no point in learning to drive, because even if she did pass her driving test, it was unlikely that she would be able to afford to run her own car. Gosia discussed how she lived close to her place of work and this meant that she did not need a car, as she could easily walk to and from her job each day. Other young Poles discussed how they would need a car in the future. This would mean that they could then access and apply for other job opportunities outside of their immediate areas:

“In the future I’d like to be able to drive and have my own car. It would mean that I could then apply for other jobs that I probably wouldn’t even look at or consider at the minute as it would be too stressful thinking about having to rely on public transport by getting the bus to and from work and stuff”

(Bartek, 23: Blyth – second interview)

Danka was the only young Pole in the research to have her own car:

“Yeah I needed my own car for my business to work. It’s a struggle paying all the bills, especially the car insurance. Some of the prices that I was getting last year were just ridiculous. It’s not affordable for young people. You’d end up finding a fair price and thinking ah well that’s ok I will go with that one but then they’d put stupid interest on if you want to pay for it monthly so it ends up costing a lot more than you originally thought that it was going to be. One of my customers mentioned that there’s some new cover where the cost is based on how well you drive. I didn’t know about this before. It might be something to look into in the future”

(Danka, 23: Berwick – first interview)

All of the young Poles were in agreement that learning to drive and running their own car would be very expensive. The young Poles discussed how they were only earning low wages and this meant that their incomes did not provide them with the capacity to be able to afford this. To obtain a full car driving licence candidates must pass both a theory and practical test. Provisional licence applications cost £34 if applying online or £43 if submitting by post. The theory test costs £23 and practical test £62 (Direct Gov, 2016). These payments are before the young people factor in the cost of private driving licence tuition.

Figures show that the numbers of young people aged seventeen to twenty with full driving licences have decreased since the 1990s. In 1995/97, 44% of those aged seventeen to twenty held a full driving licence, compared with a figure of just 27% in 2004 and 31% in 2013 (Department for Transport, 2015). The number of car practical tests that were conducted in January to March 2016 was 12.4% lower than in the same quarter in 2008. For the young Poles in this research it was only those who had received some financial help or support from their parents or families who were able to afford to learn to drive. However, I found that even for those that had been learning to drive at the first interview, and had then passed their driving tests by the follow-up interview, they did not go on to then own their own car, as this was financially out of reach for them in their current circumstances, but it was something that they aspired to in the future.

In rural areas transport can be a more severe problem given the scarcity of public transport. Those young people who are living and growing up in rural areas are particularly hard hit as the lack of regular public transport leaves them with no alternative to driving.

This section has explored the young Poles’ mobilities and the obstacles that they encountered as they made their transitions to adulthood. Some of the young people

had managed to overcome the challenges that have been highlighted in this section, but these opportunities were not open or available to all of the young Poles. Those young Poles that did go on to learn to drive were reliant on the financial support of their parents and families. Other young people who are living and growing up in Northumberland would be negotiating the same issues. This suggests that there was something quite ordinary or standard about the young Poles' experiences as they made their transitions to adulthood. Given the obstacles that the young Poles had to negotiate while living and growing up in Northumberland, particularly in relation to their mobilities, it was quite surprising how they felt about Northumberland. In Chapter Seven I explore examples of where the young Poles were attached to and expressed a belonging towards Northumberland.

5.8 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have analysed and provided an important understanding of the transitions that the young Poles were making in terms of education, employment, housing and relationships, in the context of living and growing up in Northumberland. At first it could be interpreted that their transitions could be mapped onto the existing ones found in the literature (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). It is for these reasons that it could be assumed that there was something quite ordinary or standard about the young Poles' transitions to adulthood. Following their GCSEs they were staying on at their schools sixth form, going on to Northumberland College, taking on part-time jobs around their studies, in full-time employment, shared aspirations to become independent homeowners in the future, had partners and two of the young Poles became parents during the research (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007; Henderson et al, 2007; Hoolachan et al, 2017). Many of the issues I have raised in this chapter, in terms of access to and the availability of educational and employment opportunities, public transport and local facilities are not unique to the young Poles, all young people in Northumberland would be negotiating these on their transitions to adulthood (Jentsh and Shucksmith, 2004; Vanderbeck and Dunkley, 2003). However, it is my argument that the young Poles' transitions are more complex than this. I have drawn on a wide range of voices to make sense of and understand this complexity. I argue that being Polish and the experience of migration adds another layer to their transitions.

For some of the young Poles they discussed how the experience of migration from Poland had opened up opportunities for them as they made their transitions. They had been able to remain in education by going on to sixth form or college and then university. The experience of migration from Poland had opened up the opportunity for the young Poles to have aspirations to become independent homeowners in their futures. These opportunities would not have been as readily available to the young Poles if they had remained in Poland and were making their transitions to adulthood. There were many examples of where the young Poles compared their lives and experiences to ones that they would have lived or encountered back in Poland. The young Poles drew attention to the stories that their parents or family members and friends back in Poland shared with them. However, for other young Poles in this research they felt that the experience of migration constrained their transitions to adulthood. This was the case for those young Poles in Northumberland who migrated from Poland when they were older. These young Poles left education at the first opportunity and went straight into employment. They discussed how they felt unable to catch up to where their peers at school in Northumberland were at. The age that the young Poles migrated from Poland was an important factor in influencing their experiences as they made their transitions. These young Poles felt that those who migrated from Poland when they were younger, at first or middle school age, were in a more fortunate position when it came to making their transitions. They felt that they did not have access to the same opportunities as these younger Poles when making their own transitions. Polishness was also an important aspect of the young Poles' transitions. Some of the young Poles saw their Polishness as being an asset as they made their transitions. For these young Poles they saw Polishness as having certain values, commenting on how they were more adaptable and hard working in relation to their peers who were not Polish, and that their Polishness meant that they should go on to acquire a certain level of education by going on to university and obtaining a degree.

For those young Poles that went on to university outside of Northumberland they discussed how this experience had provided them with increasing independence away from their parents and families, allowing them to learn more about themselves and their identities. At university these young Poles felt at an advantage because they had experienced similar situations before when migrating into Northumberland from Poland. Through these earlier experiences the young Poles learnt to be

adaptable and fit in. The transition to university normalised these young Poles' earlier transitions.

To summarise, this chapter has made an important contribution by exploring the transitions the young Poles were making in terms of education, employment, housing and relationships while living and growing up in Northumberland, and how they are negotiating their experiences of migration and Polishness on these transitions. It is my argument that these experiences make the young Poles' transitions more complex. At various points in this chapter I have acknowledged the role and influence of the young Poles' social and support networks, and the influences that these have on their lives and experiences, particularly in the context of making their transitions to adulthood. Some of these young Poles talked about how their parents were less familiar with life and the opportunities available to them in Northumberland or the UK as they made their transitions, and found their friends and teachers to be more reliable and supportive. This leads on to the next chapter that considers how the young Poles families, friends and teachers influence their educational and employment transitions.

Chapter Six

Education and Employment: Family, Friends and Teachers

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the young Poles' relationships and support networks, as well as their aspirations for the future in terms of education and employment. The young Poles are active agents in creating their own lives, and were making their own choices and decisions, but they are also part of a wide range of social networks, including their immediate and extended families, friends, peers and teachers.

Social networks and relationships are crucial parts of everyday life (Rigg, 2007). They can comprise of groups or individuals connected at different levels, including family, friends, religion, gender, social class and disability (Cieslik and Simpson, 2013). Punch (2015) outlines the key role of relationships in shaping youth transitions. Social networks and relationships are often understood through social capital, but this is defined and understood differently across disciplines and contexts. Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988, 1990) and Putnam (2000) have been widely used, critiqued and developed to examine the reciprocity, trust and resources in social networks and relationships, and the impact of these on people's life chances, opportunities and assets (Cieslik and Simpson, 2013). Social capital can be defined as 'the social "glue" or "fabric" that holds or knits people together and, in doing, creates societies' (Rigg, 2007: 51). Existing research into the role of social capital in education shows that strong ties within the family and school influence what transitions young people then go on to make (Butler and Muir, 2017). Irwin (2009) has highlighted how family support is important for individualised youth transitions. These networks can have a positive or negative impact on the young Poles' transitions to adulthood.

'Habitus' has been employed in order to capture the location of the individual within social relations in a way that avoids reducing either to the determination of the other (Bourdieu, 1977). The family is perhaps the most important source of resources for young people, and economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital are transmitted through parental practices, practical support, social networks and aspirations (Bell, 2001). These resources are likely to facilitate social reproduction. Attempts at achieving social mobility require young people to renegotiate the resources that they are available to them. This may involve rejecting forms of adulthood that they see around them, disentangling themselves from the values of their family and wider community, and propelling themselves into uncharted territory (Ball et al, 2000; Thomson et al, 2003b).

For the young people in Henderson et al's (2007) study the family was a major source of support as they made their transitions to adulthood. Other important social networks that provided support and resources included friends, wider kin, people in their workplaces, communities, colleges and university teachers, and members of the social services, including social workers. They also drew on support and developed networks through relationships, youth culture, the gay scene, sport and the internet (Henderson et al, 2007).

Although the young Poles encounter similar challenges to their peers on their transitions to adulthood, there were examples of where the young Poles faced additional difficulties in their social environments due to prejudice, discrimination and stigmatisation. I was interested in how this then impacted on the relationships that they had with others as they made their transitions.

Through this research I wanted to understand how the young Poles were negotiating the advice of their families, friends and teachers. This chapter seeks to unpack and understand how the different social networks influenced the young Poles' transitions in terms of education and employment. The transitions that the young Poles were making were occurring while their networks were being renegotiated and reconstructed following migration from Poland to Northumberland. I found that the young Poles' parents had certain ambitions or expectations of them. In some of the young Poles' experiences there were examples of conflicting advice, where one parent would emphasise that it was important for the young Poles to be happy, while the other parent would advocate a certain route or pathway that the young Pole should make (e.g. going on to university and studying for a degree). Siblings also influenced the choices and decisions that the young Poles were making. Many of the young people found their older siblings to be a reliable source of information, as they had recently made their own choices and decisions. Some of the young Poles reflected on the advice they received from family members who were living back in Poland or the stories that their parents shared with them. The young Poles also talked about their friends in Northumberland and Poland, and the transitions that these were making in terms of education and employment. Finally, another important relationship as the young Poles made their transitions was with their teachers in Northumberland. Many of the young Poles talked about how they were negotiating the help, support and advice of their school, sixth form or college teachers.

In this chapter it is my argument that the young Poles were negotiating multiple influences as they made their transitions to adulthood. Their networks were geographically stretched across Northumberland, elsewhere in the UK and Poland. I examine the nature of their relationships to determine the extent to which different agents (family, friends, peers and teachers) shape the young Poles' youth transitions. In the first section I critically discuss the role and influence of the young Poles' families, drawing on their parents, older siblings and relatives back in Poland, to understand how these have influenced on the transitions that the young Poles had made, or were in the process of making. In some cases the young Poles felt that their parents encouraged them into remaining in education and studying certain subjects. There were many examples from the young Poles accounts of where they found their parents to be helpful and supportive as they made choices and decisions regarding their futures in terms of education and employment. The young Poles also reflected on the transitions that their cousins elsewhere in the UK or back in Poland had made, or the advice they had received from relatives living back in Poland (e.g. grandparents, aunts or uncles). The second section elaborates on the role and influence of the young Poles' friends, and how these shaped their educational and employment transitions. Many of the young Poles admitted how they were more "open" with their friends, talking more freely about what it was that they were hoping to do in the future. The third section considers the role and influence of the young Poles' teachers in Northumberland, and how they drew on their help and advice as they made their transitions through education and towards employment.

6.2 Family

Geographers have drawn attention to the complex and varied spatial aspects of caregiving in homes, communities, public spaces and in-between spaces (Aitken, 2005, 2012; Punch 2002, 2007; Valentine and Hughes, 2011). Aitken (2005, 2012) has examined the geography of families and how children fit into the environments and political structures of their families and societies. In relation to fathers, Aitken (2012) has argued that there are lots of different practices when it comes to fathering, and despite there being talk of a convergence between parenting roles, with fathers becoming more like mothers, dad's still retain their own specific roles. He unpacks the daily emotional practices that are negotiated, contested and resisted between parents in different spaces, exploring the complex identity politics around

househusbands and MrMoms. The family remains an enduring relationship in most people's lives. Parents provide young people with emotional, financial and social support and resources as they make their transitions (Henderson et al, 2007).

In many of the interviews the young Poles talked about the relationships that they had with their parents, siblings, grandparents and cousins. It is my argument that the young Poles' families are an influential aspect of their educational and employment decision making. In all of the interviews the young Poles talked about how their families had affected the choices and decisions that they had made or were in the process of making in terms of education and employment. Some of the young Poles discussed how they felt that their parents had significant expectations or ambitions of them in relation to their futures, expecting the young people to realise the benefits of migrating from Poland. In these particular families they wanted the young people to escape the workplace marginalisation that they had found themselves in.

This section of the chapter is separated into three parts. The first looks at how the young Poles were navigating the advice and support of their parents. In this section I examine how their parents advocated that they should remain in education and often encouraged the young Poles into making certain subject choices. I then move on to look at the role and influence of older siblings. The young Poles found these to be a trustworthy relationship as they made their choices and decisions, as they had recently been through similar experiences themselves. Finally, I explore the influence of grandparents and cousins. In many cases these were living back in Poland.

Parents expectations or ambitions of the young Poles

Many of the young Poles talked about the aspirations that their parents had for them over their futures. In this section I reflect on some of their experiences.

Filip migrated to the UK with his mother, father and younger sister when he was ten years old. At the time of the research he was eighteen. They moved into Bedlington where his mother was employed as a waitress, and his father had a job working in a local factory. Filip talked about how his parents encouraged him to go on to university following his sixth form studies, but in his interview he was unsure about whether or not he would actually go:

“I felt I had to apply cos my mam and dad kept going on about it. They want me to go. I mean I’ve applied but I’m not sure that I’ll really go. I’m not sure if university would be for me. I’m maybe thinking of doing something like an apprenticeship maybe? Something that’s close to Bedlington. But my mam and dad keep saying go to university and you’ll get a good job and have a better quality of life here in the UK. But I mean they don’t really understand. They don’t know that.”

(Filip, 18: Bedlington – first interview)

Izabel included the following comment on her lifegrid:

I applied to do Business at uni. My parents wanted me to do this.

(Izabel, 18: Berwick - lifegrid)

At the follow-up interview Izabel talked about how her parents had guided her into doing Business Management at university:

“My mam is a waitress and my dad works in a local shop. Although they are sort of happy with the jobs that they do, they want something better for me and my sister. They keep saying that it’s important to go on to university and study for a degree. My mam is sick of always cleaning up other people’s shit. She’ll come home from work and say that it’s important to study hard as she doesn’t want what she’s doing for me and my sister”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Emilia’s parents hoped that in the future she would go on to get a job that would allow her to improve her quality of life and standard of living:

“They’ll tell me that it’s important to get a good job and then you’ll be to afford to buy your own home here and go on holiday whenever you want and stuff like that. But they say if I end up doing a job like they are doing now then I’ll never be to afford to buy my own home. I guess they just want the best for me”

(Emilia, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

In the young Poles’ families, education was viewed as being important and crucial for upward mobility (Standing, 2011). They felt that this would then allow the young Poles to progress economically and socially.

There were also examples in the young Poles’ accounts of where their parents tried to influence the subjects that they went on to study at sixth form, college or university. The young Poles talked about how they would sit and listen to their parents, but then ultimately make their own choices and decisions on their

transitions. After sixth form Agata went on to study Maths at university but she talked about the advice that she had received from her dad:

“Maths. I mean like I do enjoy maths but my dad he would always go on and on about it. He was like you must study and achieve in life and the only way that you’ll go about achieving is by getting yourself a good education. I often felt like he was being quite pushy with me”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – first interview)

Izabel also talked about how her parents guided her into doing Business Management at university:

“I decided on Business Management. It will hopefully be a route for me into an office job. Something that I’d be happy doing. I did my work experience at an office in Berwick. I enjoyed it there. My parents thought that it would help me in the future saying that I’d be taken more seriously and stuff ... They keep on telling me that office work is a lot less strenuous. You don’t want to be doing something that’s physically demanding”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Of the young Poles that took part in this research Danka and Bartek were the two oldest when they migrated between Poland and Northumberland. Danka migrated when she was thirteen and Bartek when he was fourteen. They both explained that they struggled at school. This resulted in them not feeling capable enough to remain in education following their GCSEs:

“My mam was a bit disappointed. She wanted me to go and get a job that was better than her. But I moved here late. I struggled at school and didn’t get the results that I’d need to go on to sixth form or college. I couldn’t see the point in repeating my GCSEs”

(Danka, 23: Berwick – first interview)

Bartek was another of the young Poles who felt that they were not capable enough to continue in education, against the wishes of his parents:

“My mam and dad wanted me to go on to college or the sixth form but I didn’t have the grades. I wanted to leave school and just get a job earning my own money”

(Bartek, 23: Blyth – first interview)

As the young Poles made their transitions to adulthood their experiences were ordinary but linked to their experiences of migration. The young Poles parents hoped that they would benefit from the experience of migrating from Poland by taking advantage of the opportunities available to them in the UK, by remaining in

education, and going on to achieve jobs that they themselves could not achieve in the UK. When the young Poles were making choices and decisions about education and employment many of them interpreted the influence of their parents as being pushy. Ultimately the young Poles' parents wanted the young Poles to be happy in the future but the distinction lay in how best the parents agreed with the young Poles about how they should go about achieving this happiness.

By migrating between Poland and Northumberland it had allowed the young Poles to be able to access transitional experiences that may have been difficult for them to achieve back in Poland (Heath et al, 2015; McGhee et al, 2012). The young Poles reflected on the stories that their parents shared with them. Many of their parents would have been experiencing their own transitions to adulthood shortly before or after Communism. This means that the young Poles' parents would have migrated into Northumberland with a very particular set of experiences and values. On her lifegrid Danka wrote:

In Poland life was a struggle. We didn't like it at all.

(Danka, 23: Berwick – lifegrid)

I then asked about this at the follow-up interview:

“My mam told me stories about how life in Poland was really difficult for her and that lots of people struggled to find work where you'd be earning a decent pay in order to survive. You would get a job working in a shop but be earning shit pay whereas in Northumberland you can get triple that pay by just cleaning offices and people's homes”

(Danka, 23: Berwick – second interview)

Ola also talked about the stories that her mother had shared with her:

“She told me how her life in Poland was pretty miserable and that it's important that I'm happy. The job that she was doing back in Poland looked good but the reality for her was a lot different. She was always very tired and they made her work really hard for very little money. Sometimes she didn't even have the money to go out and buy food. It doesn't sound like it was nice for her at all”

(Ola, 16: Berwick – second interview)

The young Poles reflected on their transitions in relation to the stories that their parents had shared with them regarding their own experiences of living and growing up in Poland. Their parents or grandparents had lived through the period of Communism, the uncertainty of the transition to Communism and Soviet domination.

This had a marked impact on their lives and experiences. Their parents and/or grandparents would share these experiences with the young Poles. A later section in this chapter explores how the young Poles reflected on their transitions in relation to the advice, support and guidance that they received from family members who were back in Poland.

The young Poles interpreted their parents as being encouraging as they made their transitions in terms of their education and employment. Gosia was one of the young Poles who talked about how her parents were helpful as she made her transitions:

“They tell me not to worry and to just do what I think is best for me ... They’ve told me not to rush into making decisions and to just enjoy life as its important to be happy”

(Gosia, 22: Berwick – first interview)

Similarly, Dominika reported the following feelings:

Sometimes I get worried about things. My family helps me the best they can though.

(Dominika, 18: Hexham – lifegrid)

“Sometimes I get a bit worried that things might not work out but my parents are supportive. They tell me to not worry and if something doesn’t work out then I can just change to something else in the future”

(Dominika, 18: Hexham – second interview)

There were also examples in the young Poles’ accounts of where they received conflicting advice from their parents. A particularly strong example of this was shared by Dawid. Dawid talked about how his dad wanted him to go on to university and study for a degree. However, he felt that his mother was a bit more supportive when it came to him making his own decisions:

“My dad’s a bit more strict about it all. He wants to be in control. Whereas my mam will sit and listen to what I’ve got to say”

(Dawid, 19, Blyth – first interview)

These feelings were also shared by Agata:

“Yeah my dad wants me to go on to university. He’s like ‘study hard and get a degree and it will open up more opportunities’. Whereas my mam is a bit more relaxed about it all. She tells me that it’s important that I’m happy and that I do something that I’ll enjoy”

Some of the young Poles interpreted their parents as being a source of pressure as they made their transitions through education and towards employment. Although it was clear from the young Poles that their parents wanted them to be happy in their futures, the distinction lay in how best to achieve this happiness. Many of the young Poles talked about how their parents aspired for them to go on to university and study for a degree. They shared stories with the young Poles about how this would make them more credible in the future, and that this would lead to better experiences of paid employment. Other young Poles found their parents to be supportive as they made their transitions, while others discussed how they received conflicting advice from their parents, with one advocating a particular route or pathway and the other, particularly the mothers in the examples above, telling the young Poles that it was important that they were happy and made their own choices and decisions.

Parents' experiences of employment in the UK

A number of the young Poles talked about their parents' experiences of employment in the UK. These experiences resulted in the young Poles feeling that their parents had high or significant aspirations for them over their futures. They wanted the young Poles to go on to get jobs that they themselves could not achieve or access in the UK. It is for this reason that some of the young Poles interpreted their parents as being pushy as they made their transitions through education and towards employment. They wanted the young Poles to go on to be high achievers. In the following set of examples I discuss how the young Poles reflected on and negotiated their parents' experiences of employment, and how this then shaped and influenced their own educational and employment transitions.

Ania was an example of where her mother and sister's experiences of employment in Northumberland resulted in her having aspirations to go on to university and study for a degree believing that this would be a route out of their situations. During the interview she reflected on her mother and sister's experiences of work in Northumberland and how she did not want to have the same experiences as them in the future. Her mother had worked in processing at the fish factory and her older sister had set up her own cleaning business. Ania discussed how a lot of the jobs

that are local to her are part-time, low-paid and seasonal and she wanted to go on to do something that would provide her with a bit more security.

In another interview Adam also shared these feelings. In fact these views were typical of many of the younger participants in the research. Adam talked about how he hoped to go on to university in the future due to his parents' experiences:

“My parents don’t really like the jobs that they are doing here. They find them okay but they want something better for me. They want me to go to university and get a degree ... My mam is sick of her boss. She’ll tell me that it’s important to study hard and get myself a good education so that I can get a good job here”

(Adam, 16: Berwick – first interview)

The job that Adam’s mother was doing caused her a degree of embarrassment, particularly on return visits to Poland. This resulted in his mother aspiring for Adam to benefit more fully from the experience of migrating between Poland and Northumberland.

Dawid’s parents also hoped for him to go on to secure a job in the UK that would allow him to improve his quality of life and standard of living:

“They want me to get a good and decent job so that I’ll be able to afford things in the future. It’ll mean that I’ll be to buy my own home and go on holiday abroad. You know stuff like that. They say that if I end up in a job like theirs then I’ll find it tough to be able to afford to buy my own home in the future”

(Dawid, 19, Blyth – second interview)

These young Poles’ accounts demonstrate how their parents’ experiences influence on the choices and decisions that the young Poles go on to make on their transitions to adulthood. The young Poles’ parents hoped that they would benefit more fully from the experience of migration from Poland. They had aspirations for the young Poles to go on to “good” or “professional” jobs in the future, where they would be earning decent wages and have favourable terms and conditions. Previous research with Polish parents in the UK has highlighted how they have certain aspirations for their children with parents prioritising education and the array of opportunities that England offers (Ryan and D’Angelo, 2011; Lopez Rodriguez, 2010). However, in this particular research I have looked at this from the perspectives of the young Poles

themselves. I found that some of the young Poles interpreted the influence of their families as pressure, while others found them to be encouraging as they made choices and decisions regarding their futures. In all of the young Poles accounts they discussed how their parents wanted them to be happy, but the distinction in the young Poles accounts lay in how to best achieve this happiness, with there often being differences between the young Poles and their parents' thoughts and feelings.

Siblings

Siblings were another valuable source of information, advice and guidance for the young Poles. When the young Poles' parents were unable to provide them with the help and support that they required, older siblings then became the best source of information and advice for them. Thomson et al (2002) has noted that the family is a major source of support for young people as they make their transitions. The young Poles in this research found their older brothers and sisters to be trustworthy and this was important to them. In some cases these relationships were more important than their parents, as they had recently gone through similar experiences. This meant that they felt that they could draw on their advice as they had recently made similar decisions on their own transitions.

A particularly significant example of a sibling influencing the choices and decisions that they went on to make on their transitions was shared by Kacper:

“My sister has been my rock. She’s been an enormous help and support for me. When I finished school I wasn’t sure what it was that I wanted to go on to do. She told me that I should maybe look into going on to college. I wasn’t really sure about what I should study or how to really go about it so she helped me a lot there. Just being friendly and supportive and just listening to me. She got me the various college brochures and came along to the open night with me ... I decided to just go on to Northumberland College in Berwick to study a Travel and Tourism course ... it meant that I didn’t have to travel far each day cos it’s just down the road and I could stay in Berwick”

(Kacper, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Later in the interview Kacper talked about how he had some interest in potentially working in an airport or as cabin crew in the future. Kacper's older sisters experiences of employment in the UK influenced this decision making. She worked with their mother in processing at the fish factory and she wanted something better than this for her younger brother. Kacper revealed how she felt that this work she

was doing was “long, hard and monotonous, with early starts and twelve hour days”. She did not want her younger brother to go on to have the same experiences.

Ola also talked about the advice that she had received from her older sister:

“Sometimes she felt that the teachers underestimated her or they were too busy to help. She found that really annoying. She’s told me that I should seriously look into maybe going on to Newcastle College to do my A-levels as the tutors there should have more time for you. Like they won’t be teaching all the other year groups as well. They’ll probably just be focusing on teaching A-level and all the students will be new to the tutors so that could be good as well”

(Ola, 16: Berwick – first interview)

This advice prompted Ola into considering going on to Newcastle College to study for her A-levels.

Dominika reflected on the support that she received from her older sister:

“I talked over what it was that I wanted to do following school with my older sister. She told me that I shouldn’t panic or worry and that if things didn’t work out then I could switch to something else if I needed to. She’s been good. She has helped me a lot”

(Dominika, 18: Hexham – first interview)

The young Poles felt that older siblings were influential to their transitions and provided them with “insider” information as they had recently made their own choices and decisions on their transitions to adulthood in the UK or Northumberland.

Older siblings of friends were also an important source of information and advice.

Tomasz commented on the advice that he had received from his friend about their older brother’s experience of going on to university:

“My friend’s brother went on to Newcastle Uni and he said that they gave him £3,000 a year for free so it’s important to do your research to see what grants and support the university will offer you. At some of the unis the funding that they give you each year is a lot more than some of the others so you’ve really got to sit and look into it all properly”

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – first interview)

Tomasz’s account demonstrates how the siblings of friends can also influence on their transitions to adulthood. The young Poles valued the advice and information of their friends (as will be discussed in a later section of this chapter), particularly from those who had older siblings that had recently gone through similar experiences.

Many of the young Poles felt that their older siblings knew more than their parents did and this was important to them. Kacper talked about how his older sister encouraged him to go on to college pursuing further study, Ola shared insights about how her older sister felt that she might receive more help and support if she went on to do her A-levels at Newcastle College and Dominika's older sister helped her to feel at ease when making her choices. Siblings of friends can also influence the young Poles transitions as demonstrated in Tomasz's account.

Family members in or from Poland

On their transitions many of the young Poles received help, support or advice from family members who were living back in Poland or living elsewhere in the UK following migration from Poland (e.g. aunts, uncles or cousins). The young Poles' relationships were geographically stretched across Northumberland, elsewhere in the UK and Poland. Many of the young Poles who took part in this research made return visits to Poland, or kept in touch with their family and friends back in Poland through Skype, Facebook and Whatsapp messenger. The young Poles in the examples below shared stories about the advice they had received from their relatives (e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins) who were living back in Poland or elsewhere in the UK.

Tomasz included the following comment as part of his lifegrid:

In Poland life is a lot more difficult for people, especially my cousins.

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington - lifegrid)

Through the follow-up interview I was able to ask Tomasz to elaborate on this comment. He talked about his cousin's experiences of locating work in Poland:

"The work in Poland is a lot more limited. My cousins have told me how they are struggling to find work. It's really tough for them. There are opportunities in Northumberland but you've got to be prepared to go out and find them"

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – second interview)

Izabel talked about the differences in the support you receive in Northumberland to Poland:

"You get more help and support here than you would back in Poland. My cousins are all struggling and they get no help or support"

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – first interview)

The young Poles frequently compared their transitions to the ones their cousins of similar ages back in Poland were also making. Tomasz made reference to how his cousin in Manchester who had also migrated with his parents from Poland was applying to go on to university following sixth form, taking advantage of the opportunities that they had available to them in the UK.

Izabel also made passing reference to the period of Communism and Soviet domination that her grandparents had lived through:

“My grandparents back in Poland tell us stories about how they had a really tough time when they were my age and growing up ... They were both really happy when they heard that I was applying to go on to university here”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – first interview)

These previous experiences had a profound impact on their older relative's lives. The young Poles' parents and grandparents were socialised into political societies that were radically different from today. This is something that I will unpack further in Chapter Seven where I discuss how the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness on their transitions to adulthood. These young Poles' accounts demonstrate how the young Poles compared their lives, experiences and situations to those of their cousins who were living back in Poland, and the advice they had received from relatives back in Poland. Through this research I demonstrate how the young Poles' relationships in Northumberland are geographically stretched across Northumberland, elsewhere in the UK and Poland.

To summarise, this section has looked at the role and influence of the family on the choices and decisions that the young Poles were making in terms of their education and employment. Some of the young Poles described how their parents were pushy and/or encouraging. There were many examples of where parents expected the young Poles to realise the benefits of migrating from Poland to the UK, and to experience social mobility. Those parents that were pushy prioritised education and aspired for the young Poles to go on to university and obtain a degree. They felt that this would make the young Poles more “credible” and that they would be “taken more seriously” in the future. Existing research has pointed to how Poles and other Eastern European migrants experience downward mobility (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010; Moskal, 2014). The sacrifices that the young Poles' parents had made by migrating from Poland placed an additional pressure on them to then achieve. The young Poles'

parents had migrated into Northumberland with a particular set of beliefs, attitudes and values. The experience of migration from Poland meant that these young Poles would be able to access transitional experiences that may have been difficult for them to achieve back in Poland (Heath et al, 2015; McGhee et al, 2012). Siblings were another important source of information and advice. The young Poles felt more comfortable discussing their futures with them, believing that they were trustworthy as they had recently gone through similar experiences themselves. Finally, the young Poles reflected on the advice and stories that they had heard from family members living in Poland or elsewhere in the UK following migration from Poland. There were examples from some of the young Poles where they compared their transitions to the ones that their cousins living back in Poland were also making.

This research has made an important contribution uncovering the complexity, multiplicity of influences and the fluidity of the young Poles' transitions to adulthood. A key finding from this research was that those young Poles who felt that they could not rely on their families for help, were then more reliant on their peers and teachers for help and support as they made their transitions. The subsequent sections in this chapter explore the role and influence of the young Poles' friends and teachers as they made their transitions through education and towards employment.

6.3 Friends

As the young Poles were making choices and decisions about their education and employment transitions friends were an important source of information, advice and guidance. In this section I unpack and discuss some of their experiences.

Miles et al (1998) argued that peer groups are important to a youth lifestyle and as a vehicle towards social identity and status. Young people establish 'reference groups' with the implicit aim of having a 'sounding board' for their developing identities (Miles et al, 1998: 83). Thornberry and Kohn (1997) suggest that peer groups exert the most influence during the adolescent years, partly because adolescents spend more time in group activities with same-age peers, and less time with their families or in one-to-one friendships. Thornberry et al (1991) highlight the reduction in parental influence with an increase in the influence of friends. The extension of the transition period between childhood and adulthood (Coles, 1995), and the dependence on the

peer group for longer periods in youth, has also 'increased the vulnerability of teenagers to the expectations and evaluations of their peers' (Coles, 1995: 593).

Friendships during the transitions to adulthood have been explained through friends' significance as guides and role models who help establish an identity (Bunnell et al, 2012; Cotterell, 2007; Worth, 2013). Added to this, friendships can be seen as context for personal development based on the quality of these relationships, as well as providing the resources that certain networks provide (Cotterell, 2007). Depending on their particular characteristics, personal relationships and the resources the networks provide can be both beneficial and obstructive to the transitions to adulthood (Bunnell et al, 2012).

This section will be divided into two parts. In part one I explore some of the young Poles' experiences of talking with their friends about the transitions that they were making or aspired to make in the future. It is my argument that friends are an important source of support. The conversations that they had with their friends provided them with space away from their parents and wider families. In part two I explore the reciprocal nature of their friendships. It is important to note that some of the young Poles were in friendship groups exclusively with other young Poles, whereas others had a mix of Polish and 'native' friends, and some exclusively 'native' friends. The age of migration and which school the young Poles attended appeared to determine these experiences. Some of the young Poles had attended schools where there were a significant number of other young Poles of a similar age, while others attended schools where there were only a few other young Poles, and they were often not in the same year group as them.

Support from friends

For many of the young Poles it was not about the number of friends that they had but the quality of these networks that mattered to them. Jakub and Agata shared:

"My main friends are [friend's names]. I don't think it matters that you have lots of friends but that they understand and get you"

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

"I don't have loads of friends but I'm happy with the friends that I do have. I know that they are always there for me if I ever need anything"

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – first interview)

Jakub and Agata talked about how they made a conscious effort to participate in social life in Northumberland and establish new friendships. Both of these young Poles made and developed friendships through their participation in sport. A common feature among many of the young Poles accounts was the generally small circle of friends they socialised with:

“I’ve only got a small group of friends but at least I know that I can trust them if I need them and that they are always there for me”

(Kasia, 18: Berwick – first interview)

“I don’t have loads of friends but I’m happy with the friends that I do have”

(Gosia, 22: Berwick – first interview)

Friends played a crucial and positive role in the lives of the young Poles, especially for those who migrated from Poland to Northumberland when they were younger. As they made their transitions to adulthood they offered the young Poles a sense of togetherness, trust and support. Izabel valued that her friends listened to her:

“It’s good that my friends will actually just sit and listen to me. Sometimes I feel like my parents will nag me... I know they just want the best for me but they don’t really listen to what I’ve got to say so that frustrates me a bit”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Ania also commented on the help and support that she received from her friends:

“My friends are just always there for me if I ever want to talk to them then I can just talk to them. They are the best. I’m gunna be pretty upset when we all go off to do our own things after sixth form. I hope we will all keep in touch and still see each other. I’d like to think we will”

(Ania, 18: Berwick – first interview)

These quotes demonstrate how friendships are important relationships for the young Poles as they made their transitions to adulthood. There were many examples of where the young Poles would talk through their options following school with their friends. At the first interview Emilia was working towards to her GCSE exams and was thinking about what it was that she wanted to do after these studies:

“After school I’m not really sure what it is that I want to do if I’m entirely honest. I’m really undecided at the minute. I could stay on at my school’s sixth form or I could go on to college or I could find an apprenticeship. There’s lots of

different options really. It's all my friends ever talk about at the minute. On a lunch time they'll all sit and talk about what it is that they are going to do but yeah at the minute I'm still a bit unsure and undecided. It's good though that I can draw on their help and advice and that I know they are there if I ever need anything"

(Emilia, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

Rafał was prompted into going to the Northumberland College open night by his friends:

"I found this building course in the Northumberland College prospectus that one of my friends had brought into school. It seemed like the best thing for me to do following school. A few of my friends were going to the college open night. It just all fell into place. It sorta felt like the right thing for me to go on to do"

(Rafał, 18: Berwick – first interview)

The young Poles valued the support of their friends. Rafał's British friends had planned to go to the Northumberland College open night so that they could learn more about the College and the courses they offered. This led him into deciding to go along to the open night with them so that he could learn more too. By going to this open night it allowed him to find out whether or not it would be something that he would be interested in doing. As his friends were making this transition he felt more comfortable and at ease going into this new environment with these friends. Rafał's friends were an important source of support for him and he hoped to remain with his friends following school. This demonstrates how friends can be an important source of security.

At school, sixth form or college many of the young Poles talked about how they would discuss their options on a break or lunch time with their friends (as Emilia does, above). Worth (2013: 108) has argued how friendships are a crucial part of school life and 'key to future abilities and resilience'. As a result, they are significant in shaping young people's transitions to adulthood. It is important to note that I recognise that the young Poles made their own choices and decisions regarding their futures, but in the accounts below I demonstrate how their friends were an important source of information, advice and guidance as they made their transitions through education and employment. They discussed how their friends were good listeners and provided them with the emotional and material support that they felt they needed as they made their transitions. Their friends listening and the advice their friends provided helped to facilitate their transitions.

Ania talked about how her group of friends supported one another when putting together their university applications:

“At school we used to go up to our form room on a lunch time and have our packed lunch together and help each other do our uni applications. There was so much that you had to sit and fill out. I missed some parts but my friend noticed it before I sent it off and they could help with some sections that I didn’t really understand ... Sunderland had the course that I wanted to do [Events Management] and a few others from my form group had also said that they were applying to go there. I’ve not been before. What’s Sunderland like? Is it an OK place? ... I feel more comfortable knowing that they might potentially move there too ... For the grades that I got last year Sunderland seemed more achievable and appealing to me. Plus it’s not too far from Berwick so if I ever want to come back home at weekends and stuff to see my mam, sister or friends then I’d be able to”

(Ania, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Tomasz also talked about applying to the same university as his friends:

“I’ve put down Leeds as a choice as someone from my sixth form has also applied to maybe go there. I’ve been to Leeds before and it seems like it’s a good place”

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – first interview)

These experiences demonstrate how the young Poles applied to go on to university with their friends and the influence that these young people had on their transitions. This advice was important to many of the young Poles and was discussed by Jakub:

“My parents think that they know everything but they don’t. Some of my friends have got brothers and sisters that have recently left school and went on to college or to do an apprenticeship and stuff like that so they know what it’s really like”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

Many of the young Poles found their friends to be more reliable than their families as they made their transitions to adulthood as they had relatives local to Northumberland that had gone through similar experiences. This advice was important to the young Poles. It is my argument that by talking to friends it provided the young Poles with the confidence and desire to then make their own transitions in terms of education and employment.

A number of the young Poles were involved in sport outside of school. Jakub was a keen boxer. He talked about the help and advice that he had received from a British

friend at his boxing club who was a year older than him and native to Northumberland:

“After school [friend’s name] went straight on to get an apprenticeship. He goes to college two mornings a week ... He’s said that the place where he’s working should be advertising for the apprenticeship programme soon. I’m giving it some serious thought. He’s told me that he enjoys working there and that everyone’s pretty friendly and helpful. I’m thinking about putting together and submitting an application in anyway. I’ll definitely have a look into them once they are advertised”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

As noted in the previous section, Jakub’s parents had aspirations for him to go on to sixth form or college and then university study. However, Jakub wanted to go on to potentially do an apprenticeship so that he could be with his friends. Chesters and Smith (2015) suggest that by taking part in extracurricular activities outside of the school environment it has an influence on young people’s aspirations, as they are exposed to peers with a diverse set of values, skills and orientations.

Agata played netball outside of school and talked about the support that she had received from her team mates:

“I know that they’ve got my back and that they are always there if I need anything”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – first interview)

Similarly, Adam played football for a local team and was attending college with one of his team mates. This helped Adam to feel at ease as he negotiated everyday life and his transitions.

Bartek and Danka reported on how they remained segregated within the school environment. For Bartek and Danka they felt that their Polishness restricted their interaction with other students. Many of their friends at school in Northumberland were other young Poles. These friends were important as they understood what it was like to be Polish and living and growing up in Northumberland, and experience migration from Poland. In their accounts of their experiences they shed light on the discriminatory attitudes of non-Poles at their schools and how this affected their sense of self. They did not feel part of their peer group and clearly defined themselves as being different. In order to escape this environment they left school at the first opportunity and went on to employment. Danka reported how she sometimes

preferred to stay at home with her mother and confirmed that her education was interrupted by these frequent breaks from school.

The majority of the young Poles were satisfied with the relationships that they had developed with other young people in Northumberland. Some of the different experiences can be explained by the age that the young Poles' migrated between Poland and Northumberland. Those who migrated when they were younger tended to socialise in circles of friends with those 'native' to Northumberland and sometimes other young Poles, whereas those who migrated from Poland when they were older tended to socialise with other young Poles, and felt that the age that they migrated constrained some of their networking opportunities.

Some of the young Poles friendships were geographically stretched back into Poland. A small number of participants talked about how they had friends living back in Poland. These young Poles kept in touch with these friends through Facebook, Whatsapp messenger or Skype, and some of the young Poles saw these friends on return visits to Poland. They talked about the transitions that these friends back in Poland were making and believed that there were more opportunities in the UK and Northumberland, and that they were in a more fortunate position having a better quality of life.

Reciprocal friendships

In this section I argue that the young Poles' friendships were reciprocal in their nature. There were many examples from the young Poles experiences of where the young people would assist one another with homework, attend after school or lunchtime clubs or travel together on the bus to college. This reciprocity provided the young Poles with the material and emotional support as they made their transitions.

Wilmott (1987: 94) found that friends are based on 'their reliability as sources of help, their trustworthiness, their respect for privacy and their readiness to act as confidantes, and the pleasure they gave as companions'. Spencer and Pahl (2006) use friendship to describe relationships with partners, kin and friends, because some people call their partners, particular kin and friends 'friends' when they sum up the positive quality of their relationship. Spencer and Pahl (2006: 210) attribute a range

of qualities to friends and conclude that friendship is 'at its strongest, is based on trust, commitment and loyalty'.

Adam talked about his experiences of travelling to Ashington from Berwick for college:

"A lad that was in my GCSE PE class at school travels down to Ashington as well. We are both doing the same course. On a morning we meet at the end of my street and walk down to the bus stop together. I offered to read his homework on the bus and we both sorta agreed that it was a good idea so we do it all the time now. It passes the journey. We usually get a written exercise to do on a Monday and then have to hand it in the following week and then a summary type thing on a Wednesday for the following Monday ... We help and support each other with our college work so that's good"

(Adam, 16: Berwick – first interview)

Adam valued and appreciated the help and support that he had received from his British friends. Alternatively, Magda talked about how her Polish friends in Northumberland provided her with confidence, particularly with any college work that they had:

"I wasn't sure what to do after school. Kacper and Kasia had applied to go to Northumberland College in Berwick to do travel and tourism. I quite liked the idea of maybe working in an airport or something like that in the future, so I decided to go on to college with them ... Kacper and Kasia could help me with my homework. I sometimes struggle with my writing. I just find it really difficult. It's a challenge. So yeah it meant that we could work together and help each other with the assignments that we had and stuff ... They've been through the same experiences as me. They just get what it's all like"

(Magda, 19: Berwick – first interview)

Kacper, Magda and Kasia were three young Poles' who went on to college to study travel and tourism together:

"I'm always there for them and I know that they are always there for me if I need them. It's good that we can rely on each other."

(Kacper, 18: Berwick – first interview)

"They just get what it's been like. They understand. If I ever want to talk to them about things then they just get it. I'm there for them too. It's important that we are there for each other"

(Kasia, 18: Berwick – first interview)

In the interviews they talked about how they felt more comfortable and confident doing this together, as they could then help and support one another. The quotes above from Kacper and Kasia illustrate the reciprocal nature of the friendship. Those friends who have gone through similar experiences to the young Poles were an important part of their lives.

Edyta talked about how her friends supported her when she was applying for a job and then preparing for the interview:

“My friend was really good, she said that I should go for it and that I shouldn’t doubt myself as much as I sometimes do. She read over my CV and did a mini interview with me. That really helped. She knows that I’d do the same for her”

(Edyta, 18: Berwick – second interview)

As the young Poles made their transitions through education and employment their friends provided them with self-esteem and status that are crucial sources of identity and belonging. For these young Poles it was important to them that they could draw on their friends’ attitudes and experiences. This provided them with a comforting sense of togetherness, especially if they had also experienced migration from Poland. Friends offered the young Poles non-judgemental advice, sympathy and understanding, and this was very important to the young Poles. They discussed how they felt that they could talk more openly and freely with their friends, exploring their different options as they decided on what it was that they wanted to do in the future. These relationships provided many of the young Poles with the confidence to then make their own choices and decisions, free from the pressures of their parents.

6.4 Teachers

Another important relationship to the young Poles as they made their transitions was their teachers. Teachers have a responsibility to provide young people with physical, educational and mental support (Shaw, 1998). Ansell (2017) noted how teachers can influence young people’s educational experiences and personal development. In this section I analyse how and in what ways these influence the transitions that the young Poles go on to make. On a daily basis the young Poles came into contact with their teachers and other relevant support staff at school, college or sixth form. Moskal (2014) argued how the school is an important site that sits between the young

migrants, their families and the host society. By going to school in Northumberland it provided the young Poles with the opportunity to become more familiar with a life similar to that of those their age who were also living and growing up in Northumberland. This had provided them with opportunities to learn and become fluent in the English language and acquire UK-based qualifications. These opportunities were not as readily available to their parents. In this section I draw on a number of the young Poles' accounts to illustrate how their teachers and other relevant support staff supported the young Poles as they made their transitions through education and towards employment.

Teachers as listeners and advisors

Typically, it was those young Poles who migrated into Northumberland from Poland when they were younger who found their teachers to be an important source of support as they made their transitions.

Jakub and Agata were representative of many of those Poles who migrated from Poland when they were younger and shared positive views about the relationships that they had with their teachers:

“My form tutor was really helpful with me. He was always there if I wanted to go and see him and just sit and have a chat about things”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

“My teachers are fine. I get on well with them. I know that they are always there if I need anything”

(Adam, 16: Berwick – first interview)

Dominika discussed the support that she had received from the school's careers teachers:

“The careers person at my school was really useful and helpful with me. She helped me to put together my CV and covering letter and then went over interview questions and stuff with me. These were things that my parents couldn't really help me with so I really appreciated that”

(Dominika, 18: Hexham – first interview)

Following her GCSE studies Agata decided to return to her local school's sixth form. This decision was influenced by her already knowing the teachers at the school. She believed that this would ensure that she went on to get the grades that she was capable of in her A-levels:

"I go to sixth form at my local school. It's where I did my GCSE's. It felt like the right thing for me to do. A lot of my friends were staying on at the sixth form and the teachers already know who I was and what I was capable of so they'd push me to get good grades ... If I ever need extra help or support with my work I know that I can always just go and ask after school or on a lunch. The teachers are always there when I need them"

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – first interview)

Agata was positive about the relationships that she had with the teachers at her school. She discussed how the teachers were approachable, particularly in relation to any help or advice that she may need. Agata was an example of a young Pole who migrated into Northumberland when she was younger than some of the other young Poles in the research. This potentially explains some of the differences in her experiences.

Filip talked about the encouragement that he had received from his form tutor:

"My form tutor's really helped me. He's really supportive and stuff. That's helped a lot. He knows what he's talking about"

(Filip, 18: Bedlington – first interview)

Jakub commented on the differences that they saw between their families and teachers in relation to the help and advice they provided on their transitions:

"The teachers are more reliable. They know more than my parents do. My parents think that they know but they don't really"

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

Many of the young Poles, particularly those who migrated from Poland when they were younger and had been living in Northumberland for a significant number of years, were positive about the help and support that they had received from their teachers as they made their transitions through education and towards employment. There were many examples, as demonstrated above, where their teachers supported them to write CVs and covering letters, and provided advice on how to prepare for job interviews.

In contrast, some of the young Poles were less positive about the relationships that they had with their teachers as they made their transitions through education and towards employment. Magda shared:

“Come back to the sixth form’. ‘Come back and study for A-levels’. It’s all they’d bluddy bang on about. I mean I didn’t care. I didn’t want to stay on. I just gave up listening to what they had to say”

(Magda, 19: Berwick – first interview)

While Danka spoke of the pressures that she felt that the teachers put on them:

“It was all about English and Maths and I struggled to keep up with it all. There was just no point towards the end. I mean English wasn’t even my first language. I knew that I wasn’t going to get a C in them. I was thinking to myself ‘oh come on you’ll be lucky if you even get a D or an E’. It was so stressful. They’d always be chasing me for the coursework and stuff. I ended up getting an F but it doesn’t really matter anymore does it”

(Danka, 23: Berwick – first interview)

Not all of the young Poles were positive about the relationships that they had with their teachers. Typically those who migrated from Poland to Northumberland when they were older felt that their school teachers did not support them or address their needs. This may relate to the fact that these teachers did not receive the appropriate training or guidance to support these young Poles and their families and did not speak Polish themselves. These young Poles felt that their teachers were more interested in those young Poles that were getting good grades, and had aspirations or the capabilities to continue in education by going on to the schools sixth form following their GCSE’s.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has explored the relationships that the young Poles have with their families, friends and teachers as they made their transitions through education and towards employment. Cieslik and Simpson (2013: 80-81) argued how ‘social networks are made up of individuals and groups who are linked together through one (or more) social relationship(s). The relationships can exist at different levels from the mirco such as family and friends through to the macro complex relations such as religion, beliefs, gender, ethnicity and social class’. Punch (2015) notes how for migrants social networks and old/new relationships are important as they make their

transitions. On their transitions the young Poles were negotiating multiple influences in the same ways that any other young person would. However, it is my argument that being Polish and the experience of migration complicates their transitions and the relationships that they have with their families, friends and teachers.

Parents wanted the young Poles to benefit more fully from the experience of migration from Poland to Northumberland, with the young Poles going on to access educational and employment opportunities that they themselves could not access in the UK (Heath et al, 2015; McGhee et al, 2012). On return visits to Poland the jobs that the young Poles' parents were doing in the UK was often a source of shame or embarrassment. The young Poles families wanted the young Poles to escape the workplace marginalisation that they had found themselves in. They felt that by going on to university and obtaining a degree this would then be a route out of their current situations. Education was considered important for upward mobility (Standing, 2011). It was hoped that this would then allow the young Poles to progress socially and economically in the UK. For the young Poles, siblings were often considered to be more reliable than their parents, as they had recently been through similar experiences themselves in the UK.

The age that the young Poles migrated from Poland was important in shaping their transitions to adulthood. Those who migrated when they were older, at high school age, shared experiences of struggling at school and not feeling capable enough to remain in education, often against the wishes of their parents. These young Poles then left school at the first opportunity. They felt that those who migrated from Poland when they were younger were in a more fortunate position, having more friends in Northumberland, more opportunities open to them as they made their transitions and better relationships with their teachers and peers at school.

Those young Poles who were in touch with family members and friends back in Poland reflected on their lives and experiences, in relation to their own, as they made their transitions through education and towards employment. They discussed how the UK had more opportunities and offered them a better quality of life. For the young Poles their relationships were geographically stretched across Northumberland, elsewhere in the UK or Poland. They talked about the transitions friends and relatives who were in Poland or had also migrated to the UK were making. They felt that the experience of migration had opened up opportunities for them in their futures and it had offered them a better quality of life.

Friends were an important source of information and advice for the young Poles as they made their transitions. The conversations that they had with their friends provided them with space away from their parents and wider families. Following migration from Poland the young Poles had to make new friends in Northumberland. The age that the young Poles migrated from Poland determined the relationships that they then had with their friends in this new place. Those who migrated from Poland when they were younger, were typically part of a wider network, which included Poles and non-Poles. Whereas those who migrated from Poland when they were older tended to socialise in circles of only other Poles. Those who migrated from Poland when they were younger tended to take part in sport outside of school. It was through these activities that they were able to build and develop friendships in Northumberland. These friends then supported the young Poles through their transitions providing them with a sense of togetherness, trust and support. Many of the young Poles who took part in this research found their friends to be more reliable than their families as they made their transitions, as these had relatives local to Northumberland that had recently gone through similar experiences. Siblings of friends can also influence the young Poles transitions, with them reflecting on their experiences as they made their transitions through education and towards employment. Friends provided the young Poles with the confidence and desire to then make their own transitions.

Teachers provided the young Poles with guidance and support as they made their transitions, helping them to put together job or university applications. However, those Poles who migrated from Poland when they were older felt that those young Poles who migrated when they were younger had more positive relationships with their teachers in Northumberland. This meant that those Poles who migrated from Poland when they were younger were more at ease drawing on the help and support of teachers as they made their transitions, whereas those who migrated when they were older were less reluctant to draw on their help or advice, feeling that teachers were more interested in those students that were academically able and doing well in their studies.

Moskal (2015) found that some of the children in her research were more connected to their families and co-ethnics, while others felt increasingly disconnected. She called for future research to take into account the impact migration has on the relationships young Poles have with their families (Moskal, 2015). This chapter has

made an important contribution unpacking how the young Poles were negotiating their social and support networks as they made their transitions. It is my argument that for the young Poles in Northumberland the relationships that they have with their families, friends and teachers were important as they made their transitions through education and towards employment, providing them with help and support. For the young Poles their relationships are geographically stretched across Northumberland, elsewhere in the UK or Poland. The quality of these relationships, and the impact that they have on the young Poles' transitions, are influenced by their Polishness and experience of migration.

Chapter Seven

Negotiations of Polishness and the experience of migration

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have demonstrated how being Polish and the experience of migration are important parts or aspects of the young Poles' transitions. It is through this chapter that I aim to provide a more holistic understanding of their transitions to adulthood, understanding how they were negotiating their Polishness (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). Sokolowska (2016) noted how children's transnationalism in relation to their parents is largely absent from the academic literature. White et al (2011) expressed similar concerns. Much of the previous research has focused on the lives and experiences of second and third generation migrant children meaning that the first generation have been largely left out. It is through this research that I hoped to fill this gap in knowledge.

This chapter explores the young Poles' identities and how they are negotiating these as they make their transitions to adulthood. An important part of their Polishness is that they have Polish parents, and many of them have friends and relatives living back in Poland. Through this chapter I aim to analyse and make sense of the young Poles' complex webs of belonging and attachment, making sense of how they negotiate their identities. I make sense of the everyday positions that the young Poles found themselves in. At certain times they were at an advantage, then at other times felt that they were at a disadvantage. These positions were fluid and constantly changing. It was through this research that I aimed to understand how being Polish and the experience of migration influenced the young Poles' transitions to adulthood. It is my argument that their transitions are complicated by the multiplicity, fluidity and overlapping nature of their identities.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first reflects on the young Poles' experiences of being Polish in public, drawing on examples from school, work, nights out socialising with friends or while out shopping with particular family members. The second section explores some of the strategies that the young Poles have developed in their efforts to become invisible, and how their identities shift and change depending on their circumstances. These strategies included learning the English language and developing a local accent. This meant that they would then fit in and not stand out. However, at other times or contexts they saw their Polishness as being an asset or employable skill as they made their transitions to adulthood. This demonstrates the fluidity of their Polishness and the ways in which they used this strategically in different places/times to negotiate their everyday lives and relationships. In the third section I explore some of the practices in the young Poles'

lives that resulted in them negotiating their Polishness. These include Catholicism, attending the Polish Saturday School in Northumberland, being at home in Northumberland with their families, food, their experiences of celebrating Christmas and making return journeys to Poland. In the fourth section I explore place attachment focusing on the young Poles attachments and belongings towards Northumberland following migration. Finally, this chapter will close with some concluding remarks summarising the main arguments.

7.2 Being Polish in Public

~~Researchers have argued that social identities have become increasingly problematic given the demise of full employment and rising affluence, together with the emergence of risk, uncertainty and insecurity (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2000). Bauman (2000, 2004), Beck (1992), Giddens (1991) and Lash (1994) have focused on the construction of self in late modernity since it is argued that increasing individualisation means that human identity is a task under continual construction, with individuals having agency in the construction process. This chapter unpacks, attempts to understand and make sense of how the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness and experiences of migration in the context of their transitions to adulthood.~~

All of the young Poles reflected on their experiences of negotiating their Polishness while out in public as part of their everyday lives. This section explores how the young Poles talked about their Polishness in relation to school, the workplace, nights out socialising with friends or being out shopping with certain family members.

School

As I noted in Chapter Five some of the young Poles had positive experiences of going to school in Northumberland, while others were less positive about their experiences. This seemed to be linked to the age that the young Poles migrated between Poland and Northumberland. This section makes sense of how the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness at school in Northumberland.

The young Poles who took part in this research were all born in Poland and had all had some experience of going to school in Poland. This meant that they were born

into the Polish language but are now living and growing up in Northumberland as they make their transitions to adulthood. All of the young Poles talked about how they initially felt when they first started going to school in Northumberland. Many of these young Poles felt uncomfortable at first. Two of the young Poles talked about how they would often get very upset and would sometimes cry when they returned home from school. These young Poles found the language a challenge, and it difficult to fit into their new schools and make friends.

Izabel discussed how she felt when she was with her school friends:

“For me I do feel like I am somewhere in between. I don’t feel like a foreigner here or well I don’t know sometimes when I’m with my friends at school that were born here then I guess I do feel like a foreigner but I would say that this all changes depending on where I am and who I am with. It’s hard to explain.”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Ania talked about some of the differences that she saw between herself and other young Poles at her school:

“At school some of the other young Poles just stick together as a group. They don’t really make the effort to fit in and make friends and stuff. They’ll go and have their lunch at the 05 room [classroom] and sit there and speak to each other in Polish. I think that you’ve got to make the effort to learn the language and make other friends”

(Ania, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Previous research has drawn attention to the stereotypes and prejudices that young people can experience in relation to racism and nationalism (Devine et al, 2008). In schools, name calling is the most common expression of racism. Gosia reported:

School for me was a bad experience.

(Gosia, 22: Berwick - lifegrid)

“They’d call me names and stuff. I didn’t like it at all”

(Gosia, 22: Berwick – first interview)

Some of the young Poles commented on the differences that they saw between them and other young people in Northumberland. Emilia mentioned how she could speak two languages:

“My friends hate French and German at school. They’ll never be to talk two languages the way that I speak Polish and English”

(Emilia, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

These feelings were also shared by Jakub:

“I know Polish and English. My friends at school aren’t fluent in two languages like me. I doubt that they ever will be”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

Adam felt that this would make him appealing to future employers:

“It was another GCSE for my CV which is good when you go to apply for jobs”

(Adam, 16: Berwick – first interview)

Ní Laoire et al (2009) found that in everyday school life children do not want to be exposed as other nationals. The young Poles in this research talked about the strategies they developed in their efforts to become invisible including learning the English language, developing local accents or Anglicizing their names. However, at other times they talked about the advantages of being Polish by being able to communicate in two languages.

Research with Eastern European migrant children in Ireland found that a shared nationality was important when they were establishing and building friendships (Ní Laoire et al, 2011). In this research many of the young Poles talked about how they initially became friends with other young Poles that had also experienced migration with their families between Poland and the UK or Northumberland. Many of these young Poles were found through the Polish Saturday School or Berwick Migrant Support Group. These friends were important to the young Poles as they had gone through similar experiences.

The young Poles’ experiences seemed to be dependent on the age that they migrated from Poland to Northumberland, and the lengths of time that they had been living in Northumberland. Those who migrated from Poland when they were younger typically had better experiences of school than those who migrated when they were older (e.g. as teenagers) (See Chapter Five).

Work

In Chapter Five I noted how some of the young Poles saw their Polishness as acting as an asset or employable skill (e.g. being able to speak more than one language or being hardworking and reliable) when making their transitions to adulthood, particularly in the context of making their transitions to employment. They believed that being Polish would make them more appealing to future employers. Tomasz and Gosia shared the following insights:

“They know that people from Poland are hardworking and reliable. They can be trusted to get the job done. Hopefully that will help me in the future”

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – second interview)

“They think because you are Polish that you are hardworking and reliable. We are at an advantage when employers find out that you have moved here from Poland”

(Gosia, 22: Berwick – first interview)

These young Poles referred to the Polish work ethic. This has been noted in previous research. Datta (2009, 2011) found that Polish construction workers in London did not construct themselves as marginalised but superior to English builders due to their versatility, sophistication and work ethic.

Other young Poles talked about the advantages of being able to communicate in more than one language:

“Employers will like that you can speak both English and Polish. It’s good to be able to speak two languages”

(Adam, 16: Berwick – first interview)

As the young Poles made their transitions towards employment they saw their Polishness as serving as an asset or employable skill. In a competitive labour market job applicants feel that they need an edge. The young Poles saw their Polishness as being a quality that would make them stand out, particularly if they are bilingual and able to communicate in both Polish and English providing them with a competitive edge to other applicants without similar skills, histories or experiences. It is my argument that the identities of the young Poles who took part in this research are fluid. They were confident and comfortable in a new world, expressing a plurality of views and identities. The examples drawn on in this chapter highlight how as the young Poles moved through these particular spaces their identities were influenced by their experiences of migration (Hall, 1996).

Dawid commented on some of these differences that he saw between him and his friends in Northumberland:

“Sean: Are there any differences that you see between you and your friends in Northumberland?”

Dawid: I would say that I’m wiser than them. Yeah I’d definitely say more wiser. I think I’m a good judge of character. I can work out if someone’s trustworthy or not ... I’ve got a different outlook to them. Hopefully this will help me in the future when I go to get a job and that”

(Dawid, 19, Blyth – second interview)

Agata and Ola both reflected on their experiences of migration and how these influenced on their futures:

“Sean: You mentioned that you’ve got a different outlook but what is it that you meant by this?”

Agata: I think that I’ve got more drive than them. I’m more motivated. Moving here has taught me a lot. I have proved to myself that I can move anywhere that I want to in the future”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – second interview)

<i>The experience of migration has changed me. But in a good way. It’s hard to explain.</i>

(Ola, 16: Berwick - lifegrid)

“Moving here has made me a better person. It’s an important part of who I am. I have proved that I can move out of Northumberland to anywhere that I want to and I will be to fit in and make friends with lots of different people. A lot of my school friends won’t be to say or think like that”

(Ola, 16: Berwick – second interview)

Even for those young Poles that were negative about their Polishness at certain points in the research, at other times I found that they could be positive when they reflected on their Polishness and the experiences of migration. During the interviews they reflected on their lives in relation to their peers who had not gone through similar events or experiences. This highlights the fluidity of their identities and the individual nature of their experiences. The experience of migration had clearly impacted on the young Poles’ lives. They seemed positive about their experiences of migration and that this would help them in their futures.

Nights out

When the young Poles turned eighteen they were legally able to go out and enjoy the night-time economy with their friends. Kasia and Kacper reflected on these experiences during the interviews and how they made them think and feel. In Kasia's interviews she talked about how other drunken young people in Northumberland acted towards her and friends at a local nightclub in Berwick town centre:

"I hate it here sometimes. I can't just go for a night out and have fun and let my hair down and not worry about anything. On Saturday night we were out in Bedrocks ... Well there were these two idiots. They had been staring at us most of the night and then the more than they had to drink they thought that they would be clever and say stuff like 'urgh you Polish cunts and get out of this country because you aren't from here'. It makes me feel sick. It's pathetic. They've got no right to go on like this. I mean who are they to tell me where I can and can't live. I'm sick of stupid little comments like this. I'm fed up Sean. I can't wait to move out of here and never come back. It's got to a point where I don't want to go out in Berwick anymore cos there's always that one arsehole that will ruin your night ... I can't wait to move to somewhere like Newcastle"

(Kasia, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Kasia's experience highlights how she was upset about how some other local young people acted towards her and her group of friends on a night out in Berwick town centre. This example reveals something very particular about Berwick and Northumberland with the nature of the communities being small and everyone typically knowing one other. Additionally, Kasia had not been living in Berwick for as long as some of the other young Poles who took part in the research and this may potentially explain some of the differences in her experiences. For some of the young Poles they talked about how they had a heightened awareness of feeling and being Polish while out in public. Following incidents like this the young people drew on the emotional support of other young Poles who had been through similar experiences.

At his first interview Kacper had been to Newcastle for a night out with his friends:

"Look at my photos Sean ... Look at this video. It was such a good night. This was us dancing on stage and just having a really good time. We had such a good night. It was really fun. I enjoy Newcastle. It's so much better than having a night out here in Berwick. I like the fact that no one knows who you are so you can just be yourself ... Have you been out on the gay scene in Newcastle? What's it like? I really want to go there sometime. Isn't one of the bars called Switch or something? What's it like in there? I'm going to try and persuade my friends to go there next time we are down there for a night out"

(Kacper, 18: Berwick – first interview)

By going to Newcastle for a night out with his friends Kacper enjoyed this new place and the new social environment that it offered him. Being gay was also an important part of Kacper's youth transitions as he also came to terms with this aspect of his identity. Kacper talked about how he felt that he was able to display different patterns of behaviour. During the interviews Kacper talked about his experiences of managing various aspects of his identity. For some of the young Poles Northumberland was seen as being racist and insular, while Newcastle was more cosmopolitan. Kasia's and Kacper's stories demonstrate how their identities are multiple and fluid. It is my argument that they are an ongoing series of negotiations.

Shopping with certain family members

The young Poles talked about their experiences of negotiating their identities in particular places and spaces. When the young Poles were in the company of particular family members in their everyday lives and contexts it resulted in them negotiating their Polishness. A particularly significant and interesting example of being out shopping in public with her mother was shared by Edyta. Edyta's mother spoke no English. This meant that she had to communicate with her in Polish. In the follow-up interview she reflected on an experience where she was out shopping in public with her mother, and how others then acted towards them:

Sean: Do you ever feel different because you are Polish?

Edyta: Erm I guess when I am at the shop sometimes I would say that I feel different yeah because I'll get that feeling as though some people are staring at you and I will think to myself 'are they staring or is it just me' I mean if they are staring they've got no right to go on like this. It'll be when I'm talking to my mum in Polish cos she speaks no English. I guess because when I am out with her I've got no choice but to talk to her in Polish and then people know you aren't from here and they'll like give you that look

Sean: And how does that make you think or feel?

Edyta: Well I just feel awkward. It's just rude. There's no need for it"

(Edyta, 18: Berwick – first interview)

This example demonstrates how Edyta has a heightened awareness of the differences that exist between her mother and herself and other residents of Northumberland while being out shopping in public. For Edyta the way that her

mother dresses meant that she represented a particular identification of Polishness. It is important to understand and make sense of the young Poles' identities and senses of belonging and how these shift and change according to their circumstances (e.g. depending on who they are with and where they are).

Similar feelings were also shared by Izabel:

"I don't really like talking in Polish when I'm out in public. It's hard to explain. I don't know. It just makes me feel a bit uncomfortable. I'm not sure how to describe it. Sometimes I think I just over think stuff and it's more me than them"

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Izabel talked about her Polishness having a stigma attached to it while being out in public. In the current chapter I have tried to make sense of and understand how the young Poles felt about their identities, and the meanings and values associated with these identities, and how these shift and change over time and space, particularly in the context of their transitions to adulthood. The young Poles' bonds and connections are bound up in complex webs of inclusions and exclusions imposed by the young Poles, their families and other people who are around them. There were many different interpretations of the young Poles' Polishness.

To summarise, the young Poles' experiences that have been drawn on in this section highlight how they have a heightened awareness of their Polishness depending on who they are with in their everyday lives and contexts. It is my argument that the young Poles' identities are multiple and fluid. On their transitions to adulthood they have to negotiate these identities. Certain experiences or particular incidents, whether unintentional or malicious, draw attention to the young Poles' Polishness. This section has focused on how the young people felt about their Polishness in public in particular spaces or places, and how others acted towards them and how this then made them think and feel. Being Polish meant different things to the young Poles in this research. The young Poles' perceptions of belonging/not belonging shift and change depending on their contexts. This chapter attempts to analyse and make sense of the young Poles' identities and how they are negotiating their Polishness and experiences of migration as they made their transitions. This leads on to the next section that discusses the strategies that the young Poles applied in their everyday lives.

7.3 Strategies to become invisible

For those young Poles that experienced Polishness as a source of stigma they revealed how they developed strategies in order to protect or hide their Polishness. It is my argument that these strategies then allowed them to become invisible. These strategies included learning the English language, developing a local regional accent and Anglicizing their names³. ~~However, other young Poles, as noted in earlier sections, saw their Polishness as serving as an asset or employable skill as they made their transitions to employment. This demonstrates how their identities are fluid and very much dependent on the young Poles' situations and contexts.~~

The following young Poles expressed how they had a desire to stay away from other young Poles and instead forged friendships with other people that were local:

“If I did not understand something well I would just ask my friends from here. It was the only way that I would learn and be able to pick up English”

(Rafał, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Outside of school Agata and Jakub both played sport. This helped them to make friends and develop strategies to become invisible:

“Going to netball that helped me a lot especially with learning English”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – first interview)

“I could learn and develop my English with my mates at boxing”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

The young Poles increasingly recognised the differences that existed between them and their parents as they were becoming fluent in the English language. The language that the young Poles used shifted and changed depending on their circumstances. The young Poles' comments above relate to Devine (2009: 529-530) who found that migrant children in Ireland quickly 'pick up' Irish and that language 'was viewed as an important symbolic marker of national identity ('being Irish') and belonging'. It was through education, employment and leisure that the young Poles felt able to develop a range of friendship ties that spanned across ethno-national boundaries, irrespective of 'home' and 'host' nationalities (Favell, 2008; King et al,

³ It is difficult to give examples of this as I have given my interviewees pseudonyms but an illustrative example might be Piotr to Peter.

2016; Ryan and Mulholland, 2014). These were important as the young Poles made their transitions to adulthood.

Jakub felt like he was becoming less familiar with Polish as he did not use it as much as English across his everyday life:

“I don’t use my Polish much at all now. If I’m honest I don’t really like using it. But then if I don’t use it I’m just going to lose it”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

Those who migrated into Northumberland from Poland when they were older felt that those who migrated when they were younger were in a more fortunate position to confidently develop strategies to hide their Polishness:

“When I got here from Poland it was important to learn English blah blah blah but I arrived here when I was thirteen. It was impossible for me to get to where the other students were at in my class. The other Polish kids that came here when they were younger like my sister well I would say that they were more lucky. They had more time so that they could catch up”

(Danka, 23: Berwick – second interview)

“I failed my English GCSE. My spoken English is fine but my written English is pretty bad but that isn’t my fault. I am trying”

(Bartek, 23: Blyth – second interview)

Danka makes reference to the progress that her younger sister has made with her English. Bartek’s and Danka’s experiences highlight how the age of migration is an important aspect of the young Poles’ experiences of migration. This had implications on them being able to develop a convincing command of the English language.

Adam talked about the initial differences that existed in relation to his accent and the accents of his new friends in Northumberland:

“I just always remember really wanting to have an accent like my friends who are from here”

(Adam, 16: Berwick – second interview)

Ania discussed how developing an accent was “important” to her:

“Ania: The accent was important to me

Sean: Why? Could you tell me a bit more, how was this important?”

Ania: Well it just made me feel more comfortable and part of my group of friends here. Something a bit like that. My Polish accent would not stand out as much”

(Ania, 18: Berwick – second interview)

While Tomasz noted how family members who had remained living in Poland had commented on how his Polish accent had changed since moving to Northumberland:

“When we go back to Poland my family there will all say that my accent has changed since we’ve moved here and that I sound different to my parents. They’ll say stuff like I speak Polish but without a Polish accent”

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – second interview)

Some of the young Poles also noticed the differences between them and their older siblings and parents in terms of the accents that they had. These young Poles commented on how they were regularly told that their accent had changed. During the fieldwork I did find it quite striking how many of the young Poles spoke with a regional accent. When I asked them about this a number of the young Poles commented on how it was a way of transcending the divide that they felt existed between them and other young people that were also living and growing up in Northumberland. These findings are particularly important as Scourfield et al (2006) noted how accent is hardly considered in research.

At many points during the fieldwork with the young Poles my own accent became the topic of frequent discussions. I was born and grew up in Gateshead, south of Newcastle upon Tyne but now live in Hebburn, a small town in South Tyneside. Many of the young Poles commented on how they thought that it was a distinct accent. This was something that they quite liked and aspired to have themselves.

The young Poles felt that a distinct otherness existed based on their accents. Different accents mark out people as having different roots. Findlay et al (2007: 74) commented on how ‘accent as a marker of both positive and negative, of invisible identities therefore exposed the ‘otherness’ of many English migrants in Scotland’. Some of the young Poles shared aspirations or hopes to develop a local regional accent so that they could fit in and not stand out. By developing a local accent it provided many of the younger Poles in this research with the feeling of a sense of belonging. Some of the young Poles had Anglicized their names, particularly when they were at school. Again this helped the young Poles to fit in and not stand out.

It was through certain strategies, such as using the language, having an accent or Anglicizing their names, that the young Poles felt able to present themselves in acceptable ways. It is my argument that the young Poles' identities shifted and changed depending on their circumstances. The age that the young Poles migrated from Poland was an important factor in them feeling confident and comfortable in effectively developing and drawing on these strategies. Those who migrated when they were older, usually at high school age, felt that those who migrated when they were younger, usually at first or middle school, were in a more fortunate position as they had been able to more realistically develop these strategies to fit in and not stand out. These experiences and stories highlight the complexity of the young Poles' transitions to adulthood. Being Polish and the experience of migration adds another layer to their transitions.

7.4 Practices in the young Poles' lives

This section reflects on a wide range of practices and events in the young Poles' lives that resulted in them negotiating their Polishness. These included Catholicism, attending the Polish Saturday School, celebrating Christmas, eating certain kinds of food and making return journeys to Poland. It is my argument that being Polish meant different things to the young Poles in this research. By drawing on these practices, that are often located in the young Poles' families, it is clear that their identities are multiple and fluid. They are an ongoing series of negotiations and it is through these practices that the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness. For the young Poles in Northumberland their transnational practices and belonging inevitably impacted on their identities as they made their transitions to adulthood. I am in agreement with Hall (1996: 4) that 'identities are discursively constructed, produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices'. Miller (2003: 42) argued that identities are processual and never complete. For the young Poles in this particular research their identities are an ongoing series of negotiations.

Catholicism

For some of the young Poles in Northumberland they talked about how Catholicism was central to their personal biographies. The re-emergence of Catholicism during the late Socialist era meant that many young people had grown up with the regular practice of attending Church. It has been estimated that in the post-socialist era around 95% of the Polish population is Roman Catholic (Roney, 2013). This makes it a significant practice for the young Poles. The experience of migration has meant that for some of the young Poles in Northumberland the Catholic Church has been an important source of comfort and support for them:

Going to church in Northumberland helped me to make friends with other people who are from here.

(Izabel, 18: Berwick - lifegrid)

“You know it gave us something in common. That was a good thing”

(Ola, 16: Berwick – second interview)

Davis et al (2006) cited in Trzebiatowska (2010: 1059) found that the Church helped migrants to ‘integrate into local society’ and local parishes were a ‘continual source of support for newcomers’. The Polish Saturday School also provided activities for the young Poles to take part in. The young Poles’ experiences of the Saturday School are discussed in the next section of this chapter. Smith and Winslow (2000: 95) suggest that ‘through these organisations a cohesive identity was maintained, cemented by the bonds of common experience’. Added to this, Stachura (2004) argues that during the post-war era of political and economic tensions, the community held strong values of Catholicism. For some of the young Poles in Northumberland the Catholic Church was a valued community space.

Agata mentioned how others in Northumberland acted towards her in relation to religion:

“They think that we’ll go to Church every Sunday because we are Polish but that’s one of the main reasons why my family moved here you know to give us that bit extra freedom so that we could make up our own minds”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – second interview)

These feelings of the young Poles’ parents wanting them to make up their own minds was also expressed by Tomasz:

“My parents like the fact that it’s more open and free in the UK. You can do what you want and not have to feel ashamed or as though you are being judged. Here you can believe in God, go to Church or you might chose not to. It really doesn’t matter. No one here really cares about that. My mam said that if you didn’t go back in Poland well then people would call you a Communist and they would make you out to be some kind of bad person. That wasn’t nice for people at all”

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – second interview)

Dominika shared frustrations regarding some of the more formal Church structures and the “rules and expectations of Catholicism”. A number of the young Poles in this research were part of families where only one parent migrated with them from Poland. Many of these were single parents following divorce. These young Poles talked about how their parents migrated from Poland in order to be accepted, due to the fear of being excluded due to the rules and expectations of the Church. For some of the young Poles the experience of migration had meant distancing themselves from the expectations of Church and family in Poland.

Ola and Izabel talked about how it was important to their families that they were brought up and followed the Catholic tradition:

“If I didn’t go to Church well my family back in Poland would be ashamed of me. It’s an important part of who I am”

(Ola, 16: Berwick – second interview)

“It’s important to my family that I go to Church and follow the Catholic faith”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – second interview)

For these young Poles they discussed how there was an expectation in their families that they would be committed Catholics. However, other young Poles were more ambiguous about their relationships with Catholicism describing it as “complex” and revealed how they were still questioning their personal beliefs.

Two of the young Poles who took part in this research mentioned how they had attended Catholic Schools in Northumberland. Jakub and Emilia talked about how their parents wanted them to go to a Catholic school:

“They wanted me to come here because it’s got a good level of discipline and teaching. That was important to them”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

“They thought that it would make things a bit easier for me. I would understand what was going on a bit more”

(Emilia, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

Jakub and Emilia discussed how their parents hoped that this would ease their transition into the British education system. Jakub also discussed how it was important to his family that he attended this type of school in the UK so that he could still be in touch with the Polish faith, even if he did not go to Church in Northumberland.

Trzebiatowska (2010) observed the difference between Polish and British approaches to Catholicism. Poles are ‘incapable of overcoming religion-national identity’, the British profess more universal Catholicism, not linked to any nationality or specific historical experience (Trzebiatowska, 2010: 1069). There are tensions between British and Polish ways of practicing faith despite the over-arching universalism of Catholic rites and practices. This is clear for Polish Priests working in Britain who come by EasyJet each week, ‘Their habitus clashes with the local religious field (of British Catholics) they have entered, partly because the religious capital they deploy is determined by the needs of the consumers – the Polish laity – who expect ‘Polish’, and not apparently ‘universal’, Catholicism’ (Trzebiatowska, 2010: 1069).

Catholicism is an important aspect of the young Poles’ identities that they were negotiating as they made their transitions to adulthood. According to the young Poles narratives it is clear that both the Catholic faith and Church meant different things to them. There is a sizeable Catholic and non-Catholic community who do not participate in the formal Church structures, and many of the young Poles were negative about these structures and their expectations. For some of the young Poles they talked about how the Church had provided them with support following migration, while for others they felt that their relationship to the Church had changed or was changing following migration. Some of the young Poles talked about Catholicism being important in case they ever returned to Poland in the future, as this would then help them to adapt and fit in.

Polish Saturday School

The Polish Saturday School was a distinct space where the young Poles negotiated particular identities. This section examines the young Poles' experiences of going to the Polish Saturday School in Northumberland. In the UK there are approximately 150 Polish Catholic churches and community centres. Alongside their religious functions these provide youth groups, charity events, Saturday Schools and cultural events with the aim of 'upholding the Polish language, and Polish Catholic values and traditions' (The Polish Catholic Mission, 2005: 17). In Northumberland the Polish Saturday School is located in Berwick. Before this it was in Seahouses, a large village on the north Northumberland coast, 22 miles south of Berwick. As the number of Polish families living in Berwick began to grow, demand for the school increased. This resulted in the Polish Saturday School relocating to Berwick High School and then Berwick Community Centre, with transport provided for those families who were still living in and around Seahouses. The School is run by the registered charity Mohr Language Support who established the school so that the young Poles could maintain and develop their Polish language skills and it was hoped that it would keep the children in touch with the Polish language and culture and allow them to continue celebrating Polish traditions. Weekly sessions allow the young people to read and write in Polish, developing their vocabulary and grammar, while older young people are able to write essays in Polish and read Polish literature. They are then encouraged to sit a GCSE in Polish (Beata Kohlbeck, Mohr Language Support: Interview).

During the first phase of the research Beata Kohlbeck who runs the Polish Saturday School in Berwick talked about some of her experiences of dealing with the Polish families in Northumberland:

"You know what I found to be really interesting was that a lot of the parents wanted to know about the Polish Saturday School that was in their local area and that was often before they had even been in touch with the council's education service to enrol their child for compulsory Monday to Friday schooling. I guess this just goes to show how important it was for these parents to send their child to this ... The local authority hasn't done much at all to support these young Poles and their families to be completely honest with you Sean. It's really terrible. They've been really pretty poor and I find it quite embarrassing. When a lot of these families first arrived into Northumberland they got in touch with me and I was an important source of information and advice for them on lots of different things, pointing them in the right directions for what it was that they needed"

(Beata Kohlbeck, Mohr Language Support)

Following the interview with Beata I began to wonder what the young Poles' experiences had been of attending the Polish Saturday School, and whether the Polish Saturday School might be more important to the young Poles' parents than to the young Poles themselves. In the main phase of the research with the young Poles this assumption was confirmed by some of the young people. In relation to attending the Polish Saturday School there seemed to be three types of experiences. There were those young Poles who enjoyed attending the Polish Saturday School (typically when they were younger), others who resisted going, seeing no point (typically when they became teenagers), while others who felt that they were somewhere between these two different experiences.

The Polish Saturday School was an important space to many of the young Poles when they first moved into Northumberland:

"At first I don't know how to describe how I felt. It was hard and I was a little bit closed and guarded with people I think. I made friends with others that had also moved here from Poland through the Saturday School. That helped me a lot and really made me more relaxed about things. I think with time I just opened up more. I've got a lot more friends now and stuff"

(Ania, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Ola was an example of a young Pole who did not mind attending the Polish Saturday School:

"Yeah the Polish Saturday School was fine for me. I didn't mind going along to it when I was younger. It meant that I could practice and continue to develop my Polish. It was helpful for me"

(Ola, 16: Berwick – second interview)

These sentiments were also shared by Ola's older sister Izabel:

"I didn't mind going to the Polish Saturday School but towards the end I got a bit bored with going but my parents made me go. When we first arrived it was good cos it meant that we could socialise with some of the other Polish families who were living here. It was useful so that I could continue to keep on top of my Polish, especially cos I wasn't using it as much as I used to"

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – second interview)

For some of the young Poles in Northumberland they talked about how attendance at the Polish Saturday School was connected to their parents. Many of the young Poles had relatives and friends still living back in Poland that they were to some degree

attached to. Archer et al (2010) studied second and third generation British-born Chinese students and found that parents wanted to preserve the Chinese culture and make their children more 'Chinese' by attending these language classes.

Ania discussed how she felt that the Polish Saturday School was less important to her as she got older and had lived in Northumberland for a significant period of time:

"The Polish Saturday School yeah I mean it was okay when I was younger. I could practice my Polish especially reading and writing. But I haven't been back to Poland in over six years so it's not like I need it now whereas my mam speaks and writes in Polish every day. It's a lot different for me"

(Ania, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Similarly, Rafał reported:

"I never go back to Poland so there was no point in me going to the Polish Saturday School"

(Rafał, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Adam also shared:

"On a Saturday I just wanted to go and play football with my mates instead. The teacher at the Saturday School was strict and controlling with us. I couldn't be bothered with it. I just wanted to be with my friends instead"

(Adam, 16: Berwick – first interview)

For the young Poles the Polish Saturday School was a safe space where they could develop and maintain the Polish language. However, it was through the Polish Saturday School that the young Poles had a heightened awareness of the differences that existed between them and their parents and/or older siblings. Some of the young Poles felt that attending the Polish Saturday School complicated things for them and they described how they felt that it made their adaptation into life in Northumberland or the UK more difficult at times.

As they got older and had been living in Northumberland for a period of time they discussed how the Polish Saturday School was less important to them. Instead on a Saturday they preferred to take on paid part-time work, play sport or socialise with their school friends. Some of the young Poles mentioned that the Polish Saturday School put a strain on the relationships that they had with their parents, especially if they no longer wanted to go. It was clear that the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness and experience of migration as they made their transitions.

In this section I have examined how the Polish Saturday School impacts on the lives and identities of the young Poles who took part in this research. Through the Polish Saturday School the young Poles are exposed to the Polish national identity and can experience emotional ties with their 'nation' (Yuval-Davis et al, 2005). For the young Poles in this research it was a space where they could preserve their Polish language, developing their skills in reading, writing and speaking. It is important to note that it is my argument that Polishness is highly individual and experienced by the young Poles in many different ways. This meant that it was under constant negotiation as the young Poles made their transitions to adulthood and resulted in their experiences being more complicated. The following section focuses on how the young Poles were negotiating particular practices in the home.

Making family

The young Poles were negotiating their Polishness in their homes with parents and wider families in Northumberland. Their families all had different levels of proficiency in the English language. This then impacted on some of their experiences while being at home. Some of the young Poles talked about the tasks that they were expected to complete at home. These tasks resulted in the young Poles feeling that they had more responsibility and were more mature than their peers who did not have similar experiences:

"I'd say that moving here has definitely made me more mature. I had no choice but to grow up and become more responsible for things. It made me more determined to do well in my studies and stuff"

(Adam, 16: Berwick – second interview)

The young Poles' parents regularly called upon them to act as translators and complete tasks that they were unable to do themselves. This provided the young Poles with a recognition of the differences between them and their parents. Ania explained how migrating between Poland and Northumberland forced her to "grow up":

"It left me with no choice but to grow up quick ... I've usually got to translate stuff from English to Polish for my family. It can be stressful sometimes especially when I've got a lot going on myself"

(Ania, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Edyta shared similar experiences:

“It’s meant that I’ve had more responsibility than some of the other young people at my school. I’ve got to do a lot for my mum. Especially since she speaks no English. She makes me go on the phone and talk to people for her and stuff. Like I’ve got to sort out her tax credits or stuff with the council. I don’t usually mind but sometimes it gets a bit complicated and I don’t know the answers”

(Edyta, 18: Berwick – first interview)

The home was an important site where the young Poles negotiated their identities. They were increasingly aware of the differences between them and their parents, particularly in those families where the parents spoke no English and relied on the young Poles to act as translators. Some of the young Poles talked about how they used the Polish language in their everyday lives and contexts speaking it at home with their parents, or even with their friends or siblings. However, other young Poles talked about how they did not use their Polish as much as they used to and described how they felt as though they were “losing it”. Being Polish and the experience of migration meant different things to the young Poles in the research.

Food

Food was another important site where the young Poles negotiated their identities. Johnston and Longhurst (2012) examined the relationship between food, identity and belonging among migrants in New Zealand. This research found that migrants inadvertently made distinctions between their ethnic cuisines and the foods of others, using food as a marker to differentiate their own ethnic communities from other groups (Johnston and Longhurst, 2012). Rabikowska and Burrell (2009: 11) found that Polish shops may serve as ‘ethnic markers’ providing migrants with a sense of belonging. Burrell (2012) noted how Poles in the UK consumed traditional foodstuffs with their children to strengthen their feelings for Poland.

Rafał mentioned how his family cooked traditional dishes at Christmas:

“At Christmas my family all want to have traditional meals like bigos and Zurek but I’m not really a fan of all that. It’s not really for me”

(Rafał, 18: Berwick – second interview)

It appeared that the young Poles' parents' and families viewed Polish food as being superior, particularly at Christmas time with them wishing to make the home 'more Polish' (Rabikwoska, 2010).

Ola talked about the food on return visits to Poland:

"I always look forward to going back to Northumberland when we are in Poland. I'm not a fan of the food when we are there"

(Ola, 16: Berwick – first interview)

Izabel commented on how she preferred to eat other foods over Polish food:

"I don't really like Polish food. It's not really for me. I prefer to have pizza or pasta instead"

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Despite the young Poles leaving Poland when they were young it was clear that Poland still exerted a strong influence over their identities, particularly due to practices that are located in their families. However, over time these practices shifted and changed. Gosia and Adam shared the following:

"When we first came my mam used the Polish shop a lot but she began using it less and less with time. I think it just wore off for her. Now she only really goes when it's birthdays or special occasions, like she'll always go to it at Christmas. The Co-op and Morrisons both have world food sections so she can usually just grab Polish bits in there now"

(Gosia, 22: Berwick – second interview)

"Sometimes she will go and get us cheese or bread from the Polish shop or at Christmas she will go there and buy certain things that she wants us to have. Me and my sister aren't as bothered about it all but it's important to her"

(Adam, 16: Berwick – first interview)

Food is an important practice that results in the young Poles negotiating their Polishness. These practices are significant in their lives and have allowed me to unpack and understand the nuances of their identities and senses of belonging. This provides an important understanding of how the young Poles are negotiating a particular set of experiences and geographies in their lives, negotiating the influences of their families, particular practices of making family and Polish foods. This leads on to the next section that explores the young Poles experiences of celebrating Christmas.

Christmas

In this section I examine the young Poles' experiences of celebrating Christmas. Events like Christmas offer migrants the opportunity to create a sense of 'home away from home'. Burrell (2012) analyses Polish migrants' experiences of Christmas in the UK by focusing on the material embodiment of migrant identity through food and rituals. She stresses the emotional intensity of Christmas with its strong associations of home, family and friendship. This period of time can involve homesickness, nostalgia, the desire to uphold certain traditions and rituals, and the need to keep in contact with family and friends. Drawing on the example of wafers, by seeing, holding and smelling these it can create a shared Polishness that increases experiences of positive transnational belonging (Burrell, 2012).

Some of the young Poles took part in interviews shortly before or after Christmas. This meant that their memories of this recent event were in their minds and they reflected on these during the interview. In relation to Christmas there were a wide variety of experiences shared by the young Poles. Some of the young Poles discussed how they celebrated a Polish Christmas, while others felt that their Christmas had become or was increasingly becoming 'half and half' or a 'mix of both' with them celebrating Christmas in a more English way. This reinforces my argument that Polishness is experienced individually.

Dawid reflected on his families' experience of Christmas:

"Our family still does Christmas in a very Polish way. We have our Christmas dinner on the Christmas Eve but we eat fish and stuff and then we exchange all our gifts"

(Dawid, 19: Blyth – second interview)

A lot of the young Poles who talked about Christmas made reference to their families:

"At Christmas my mum makes an extra effort to make sure that everything is as it should be. It's really important to her that we do it that way"

(Gosia, 22: Berwick – second interview)

Ania pointed to the differences that she saw between her and her mother and older sister in relation to celebrating Christmas:

"At Christmas we always celebrate a Polish style Christmas on the Christmas Eve. This is very much Polish tradition. It's important to my mam and sister that we do it this way. We've done it every year and continued it since we moved here. Although we have never actually went back to Poland for

Christmas. Some of my friends always go back at Christmas ... Yeah we all sit around the table and eat fish and vegetables. We do not eat meat at all on Christmas Eve”

(Ania, 18: Berwick – first interview)

Izabel reflected on returning to Poland to celebrate Christmas with her family living there:

“We always go back to Poland for Christmas. It’s important to my grandparents that we go back and do Christmas properly with them.”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – second interview)

When celebrating Christmas, the young Poles reported on how their families made an extra effort to ensure that their Christmas was celebrated in a more Polish way. Many of the young Poles mentioned the traditional Polish foods that they consumed around Christmas time.

As discussed in Chapter Five, Piotr and Gosia were both in relationships with partners whose families were from Northumberland. Piotr talked about how his Christmas was a mix of both Polish and English:

“This year it felt like I had two Christmases. I guess that’s the way it’s always going to be from now on. We had Christmas with my parents on Christmas Eve and then on Christmas Day we went over to [my partner’s] parents and celebrated Christmas with her family”

(Piotr, 23: Bedlington – first interview)

Similar feelings were also shared by Gosia:

“My partner and his family are from Berwick. I had a turkey dinner with them on Christmas day. He came over to my parents’ house on Christmas Eve. It was nice. It’s worked out well”

(Gosia, 22: Berwick – first interview)

In the accounts above the young Poles compared their experiences of Christmas to their older relatives (e.g. parents and grandparents). At Christmas the young Poles parents made an extra effort to celebrate this event in a more traditional Polish way. This resulted in Christmas being an important event where the young Poles felt that they negotiated their identities. This research makes an important contribution exploring how the young Poles in Northumberland construct and negotiate their identities, particularly their sense of attachment to Northumberland, Poland, the UK and Europe. An important aspect that influenced the young Poles’ experiences was

the age that they migrated from Poland to Northumberland, and the length of time that they had been living here.

Return visits to Poland

This section explores the young Poles' experiences of making return visits to Poland, and what implications these journeys have on their identities and senses of belonging. Many of the young Poles who took part in this research made return visits to Poland for Christmas, at Easter or during the summer holidays. Return visits resulted in the young Poles reflecting on and re-evaluating their identities and attachments to people and places. It is my argument that these visits then complicated their lives and experiences, particularly in the context of making their transitions to adulthood.

Tomasz talked about how he felt his belonging towards Poland was changing as he got older:

"I usually like going back to Poland but I feel like the last time we were back things were a bit different for me. I do miss my family back in Poland. I have quite a big family but they all live back there ... it's nice when you go back and see them and catch up and stuff but last time I was there I felt like I didn't have as much in common with my friends that have stayed in Poland as like I'd normally do. I think a lot of my proper friends are now here at sixth form and my job. Last time it was just all a bit awkward and we didn't really know what to talk to each other about and stuff. All of my friends and my school is in Northumberland"

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – first interview)

These feelings were also shared by Ola:

"When you go back to Poland it makes you realise how many more opportunities there are for us here in Northumberland ... Poland isn't really home for me anymore in some ways. We are different to the people who live there. We have changed. Moving here has changed us I guess ... When I go back I just think that Poland is where I was born and spent my early years growing up. I don't think we would fit back into Poland now. People in Poland don't like that people have moved here and elsewhere to improve who they are and their lives. They don't like the fact that we've left our country and gone elsewhere. According to them we aren't proper Poles anymore. It's all a bit weird how it makes people think and feel"

(Ola, 16: Berwick – first interview)

Following migration the young Poles are part of a web of connections, relationships and flows across both Poland and Northumberland. Through return visits to Poland the young Poles reflected on how their lives had changed. They talked about how they felt different to a young person who would be living and growing up in Poland, while also noticing the differences to other young people that are around them in Northumberland. These return visits were an important event in the young Poles lives that resulted in them negotiating and making sense of their Polishness.

Those young Poles who did return to Poland talked about how they felt when they returned to Northumberland following these visits. Tomasz and Danka reported:

“Tomasz: I do enjoy going back. It’s an important part of who I am but my education, job and friends are all here now. It’s weird

Sean: You mentioned feeling different being back in Poland last time and feeling a bit awkward. Could you tell me a bit more about this?

Tomasz: I just felt better about myself when I got back here”

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – second interview)

“I guess that I just feel more at home here now because my partner, family and job are all here in Northumberland. You know, the main things”

(Danka, 24: Berwick – second interview)

Other young Poles in the research mentioned how they had not been back to Poland for a significant amount of time:

“I think I last went back to Poland say like five or maybe even six years ago now. It’s been a while. I’m not really bothered about going back to be honest”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

“My mam lives in Northumberland but my dad is back in Poland. My sisters been back to see him but I haven’t saw him for quite a long time. In fact I don’t think that I’ve saw him for like say six years now maybe. I think that my sister having a baby has sort of brought the family a bit closer together now”

(Ania, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Time was an important factor in influencing the young Poles’ attachments. All of the young Poles who took part in the research had been living in the UK or Northumberland for a significant period of time, with some of the young Poles and their families making short returns to Poland for six months and later returning to the UK when things did not work out for them.

Agata commented on how her parents felt about making return visits to Poland:

“I would say that I have a different outlook to my parents. They are definitely more Polish than I am. It’s important to them that we always go back to see our family there”

(Agata, 18: Morpeth – second interview)

For many of the young Poles they felt that these return visits were more important to their parents than to them. They pointed to the differences that they saw between them and their parents. Jakub also felt that his parents were more Polish than him:

“I’d say that my parents are more Polish than me. They were born and grew up in Poland during a very hard time. We’ve got a much easier life than them. There are so many more opportunities for us, especially being here. I guess we can’t really understand how hard it was for them back then”

(Jakub, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

Izabel talked about how she had recently been back to Poland to see her grandparents:

“Every time we go back they will sit and tell us the same stories, especially my grandma. She’s the worst for it. I will think to myself how many times am I going to have to sit and listen to this. I’ve heard it all before”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – second interview)

Kacper and Emilia also reflected on the stories that their grandparents shared with them on return visits to Poland:

“Our life here is so much better than what our parents and grandparents have had. We have so many more opportunities and that’s so good for us”

(Kacper, 18: Berwick – second interview)

“Our grandparents had a tough time when they were growing up”

(Emilia, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

Some of the young Poles mentioned how they felt that it can be difficult to communicate with their parents and/or grandparents:

“Sometimes it can be hard to talk to my grandma and grandad. You get scared in case you know you’ll say the wrong thing and they’ll get annoyed with you”

(Tomasz, 17: Ashington – second interview)

Izabel and Dawid talked about their grandparents’ identities in relation to theirs:

“For my grandparents they think that being Polish is like being awarded something. They really do love Poland”

(Izabel, 18: Berwick – second interview)

“I think well maybe not our parents but definitely our grandparents feel the most Polish. They were fighting for Poland. My grandma and grandad will always tell me stories about the wars and how they lived through them. It was a very hard and tough time for them and well they tell us how they lost everything and had to start all over again. Because of this and the way that they go on yeah I would definitely say that they feel the most Polish”

(Dawid, 19: Blyth – second interview)

For many of the young Poles who took part in this research they felt that this was something that they lacked themselves. The young Poles described how their generation had a different set of values to their parents and grandparents. Ola discussed this in relation to religion:

“Religion doesn’t really matter to me. I think that’s a big difference between our generation and say my parents’ and grandparents’ generations”

(Emilia, 16: Bedlington – second interview)

As the young Poles make their transitions they are negotiating a particular set of experiences that for some of them includes making return visits to Poland. These then make their transitions more complicated. It is my argument that the young Poles’ identities are multiple and fluid. At certain times the young Poles reported having a dominant loyalty to either Poland or Northumberland but these then shifted and changed depending on their contexts and experiences. The majority of the young Poles were fluid in their attachments accepting their multiplicities. Return visits provided the young Poles with an increasing awareness of the differences that exist between them and their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins or friends that have remained living in Poland. Although some of the young Poles reported on how they missed Poland, they discussed how they felt more at home in Northumberland now.

Some of the young Poles talked about the period of Communism and Soviet domination that their parents and grandparents lived through. During this period there were less material goods in Poland. These young Poles discussed the effects that they felt this period of time had on their parents and grandparents, including their lives, behaviours and identity constructions. When the young Poles’ parents and grandparents were young they were socialised into political societies that were radically different from today. This included situations of war, occupation, invasion, suppression, deprivation and a denial of national identity.

Although the young Poles in this research were all living and growing up in Northumberland, many of them were still connected to family and friends who have remained living in Poland. They regularly communicated with these people through Skype, Facebook and Whatsapp, and given the ease of access, some of the young Poles made regular return visits to Poland during the year so that they could maintain active attachments to these family and friends living back in Poland (Burrell, 2011c). These transnational practices contributed to and reinforced the young Poles' Polishness. Through these return visits the young Poles compared their lives and situations to their friends and cousins who had remained living in Poland. As the young Poles made their transitions to adulthood, Northumberland, the UK and/or Poland were important sites in their everyday lives, experiences and memories. Poland was interpreted by many of the young Poles as being a place for special family events or gatherings or celebrating religious holidays (Burrell, 2012). Over time the young Poles increasingly began to see Northumberland or the UK, where their local or immediate family members and new friends were, as their homes. (**move into CR?)

In this research there were many complex, and sometimes contradictory accounts of the young Poles' multiple identities. The majority of the young Poles were fluid in their attachments, accepting the multiplicities. Many of them distinguished themselves from their parents, and more specifically their grandparents. The young Poles described how their older generations were more locked into their national identities and speculated a range of reasons for this. It is important to note that this does not actually mean that these older people actually felt this way, but it was significant that this was how the young Poles chose to construct their beliefs of their parents and grandparents, differentiating themselves from previous generations of Poles.

The young people who took part in this research were all born in the early to late 1990s. They admitted how they had a very different set of experiences to their parents and grandparents, which many of them suggested explained the different expressions of their identities. This generation of young people had not lived through the particular moments that their parents or grandparents had (Stenning, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). For these young Poles the key event in their lives had been Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004, and this was a very different type of event. By migrating between Poland and Northumberland it had allowed the young Poles to

achieve things in their lives that may have been difficult for them to achieve back in Poland. Living in Northumberland provided the young Poles with a different quality and standard of life, opening up opportunities for them in their futures.

This research has identified the sense of generational differences that the young Poles see between their lives and the others around them (e.g. parents and/or grandparents). Identities are increasingly recognised as being both multiple and constructed contingently. For some, in a context that includes Europe believing that they can move around and into other European countries in the future. Identities may include a range of intersecting dimensions, including gender, age and region. A growing number of young people in parts of the EU are acknowledging at least a partial sense of European identity, alongside their national identity. European and national identities are not alternatives, but potentially complementary feelings that can be held simultaneously.

7.5 Place Attachment

Although many of the young Poles expressed a desire to migrate out of Northumberland on their transitions to adulthood, it was interesting how they talked about living in Northumberland. It was quite striking the attachment that they had towards their new local spaces and communities. Green and White (2007) found that attachment to place was a very important factor in shaping the life choices of the young people in their study. It is my argument that the young Poles' senses of belonging were multiple and fluid. This section makes sense of how they were negotiating their ties towards Northumberland.

Izabel and Ola were two sisters who took part in the research. They described Northumberland as being "beautiful" and that they enjoyed going out and exploring their local areas on a weekend with their parents and dog:

"We usually all go for a walk together on a Sunday. We call it our family time. Sometimes we will go to the local café for tea and cake or an English breakfast. Last weekend we drove to Alnwick and visited the gardens there. That was nice. I enjoyed it. There's so many beautiful places that you can go and visit nearby. It's good to get out and about and see them"

(Ola, 16: Berwick – first interview)

I think that Northumberland is a good place if you've got a family.

(Izabel, 18: Berwick - lifegrid)

Izabel's comment about Northumberland being a good place to raise a family connects to existing points that are made in the literature, where rural areas can be a good place for families, but not a good place to be a teenager or a young person (Leyshon, 2002, 2008). For these young Poles they described how Northumberland provided them with a better quality of life to Poland. In Northumberland they could afford to go out and do things as a family.

Gosia and Dominika commented on how they felt safer in Northumberland:

It's more safe here. We have a better life.

(Gosia, 22: Berwick - lifegrid)

"There's so much space and I feel safe in Hexham. It's definitely safer than where we lived in Poland"

(Dominika, 18: Hexham – first interview)

Danka, who became a parent during the research, talked about how she had no intentions to migrate out of Northumberland:

"I'm happy to be living in Berwick. It's a good place. Yeah it's got its bad points, but it's not that bad really. I couldn't see myself anywhere else now. I wouldn't want to live in a city to be honest with you Sean. It would be too busy and noisy for me. When we went up to Edinburgh the other week I was glad to come back. People here aren't in a rush and stuff. It's a lot more laid back and relaxed ... I feel happy and comfortable and that's important right ... My mother doesn't speak any English at all so it's important that she's nearby to us. It's for the best"

(Danka, 23: Berwick – second interview)

These feelings mirror those of young Poles in Scotland that have developed a strong sense of belonging and attachment to their new localities (Moskal, 2015).

The presence of the young Poles' close and immediate families in Northumberland were also important for them feeling an attachment towards their local places:

"Well my friends and family are here and that is important to me I guess"

(Ania, 18: Berwick – first interview)

The size of their communities was also important to the young Poles:

I like how everything is nearby in Berwick. It's all close to the centre.

(Gosia, 22: Berwick - lifegrid)

Some of the young Poles commented on how the majority of the people that they came into contact with in their local communities were friendly and supportive:

The people here are kind, they are very welcoming and that is important.

(Ania, 18: Berwick - lifegrid)

"You just get that impression that everyone is genuine. They want to speak and get to know you"

(Dominika, 18: Hexham – first interview)

The young Poles compared how people acted towards them on return visits to Poland, or the stories that their parents had shared with them, in relation to people in Northumberland. The families shared stories with the young Poles about how people in Poland can be "closed", "cold" or "guarded" with people who are around them. It was through the relationships that the young Poles had to friends and others in their local communities that they felt a strengthening attachment towards Northumberland. Northumberland was the site of their everyday lives and experiences.

However, for others, such as Kasia, they did not like this:

"In Berwick everyone knows who everyone is and stuff. In a big city like Newcastle or Edinburgh you wouldn't be as well known. The people here can be quite nosey. I bet it's not like that where you live"

(Kasia, 18: Berwick – first interview)

It was quite interesting that at some points of the interview the young Poles could be positive about living and growing up in Northumberland, but then at other times they were less positive about their local places. They referred to the lack of facilities or things for teenagers to do:

In Berwick there's not a lot here for young people. The facilities are pretty shit.

(Adam, 18: Berwick - lifegrid)

Emilia mentioned how she was often bored:

“There needs to be more facilities here for teenagers. There’s not a lot for us to do here. After school there isn’t anywhere that we can really just go to and you know hang out”

(Emilia, 16: Bedlington – first interview)

This sentiment was also shared by Magda who reflected on Berwick’s nightlife:

“The only place to go out here in Berwick is Bedrocks and when you go for a night out there ergh it’s just always the same people and everyone knows each other. I don’t like that at all”

(Magda, 19: Berwick – first interview)

These feelings resulted in the young Poles aspiring to migrate out of Northumberland to cities that are located nearby:

“There’s more going on in Newcastle especially for young people”

(Kacper, 18: Berwick – first interview)

“Yeah I want to move to Newcastle”

(Magda, 19: Berwick – first interview)

These experiences again demonstrate that there was something very ordinary or standard about the young Poles’ experiences, but also linked to their Polishness and experiences of migration, with them feeling safer in Northumberland and their being more opportunities than in Poland, as they made their transitions. Their narratives relate to existing findings in the literature about young people and rural areas. Woods (2005: 96) argued that ‘the rationalization and closure of both private and public services in rural communities has been one of the most visible manifestations of contemporary countryside change’. This is reflected in the young Poles’ feelings about the lack of local facilities.

By drawing on these examples it has helped me to unpack the senses of belonging that the young Poles had towards Northumberland. It was evident that many of the young Poles had developed comfortable relationships to the new places that they were living and growing up in, valuing and appreciating Northumberland in comparison to the lives that they would have been living back in Poland. However, as the young Poles became teenagers they increasingly found their rural lives to be too quiet. This resulted in many of them aspiring to move out of Northumberland to cities located nearby (Leyshon, 2011; Leyshon and Bull, 2011). Leyshon (2008) described how participants felt that their rural locales were places that did not offer

youthfulness. Leyshon (2002: 183) commented on the existence of a 'rural goldfish bowl' where young people feel constantly under surveillance by their parents and fellow villagers. This meant that they internalised the need to become mobile. However, some of the young Poles could be interpreted as having an attachment to their rural lifestyles, local communities and areas, comparing these to the decadent and dangerous urban environment by feeling safer in Northumberland.

The sections in Chapter Five drew attention to how some of the young Poles aspired to migrate out of Northumberland on their transitions to adulthood, or the problems they found with living in a rural area (e.g. poor transport and restricted educational opportunities). However, in this section I have argued that there were many examples of where the young Poles were positive about living and growing up in rural Northumberland, comparing their lives and situations to ones that they would have been living back in Poland. The young Poles had both positive and negative feelings towards Northumberland. They were navigating complex webs of belonging and attachment. For the young Poles who took part in this research there were a variety of factors that contributed towards feeling a sense of belonging to Northumberland. This included reference to the landscape, the size of their communities, the friendliness of local people and the presence of particular family members. On a number of occasions during this research the young Poles were positive about Northumberland, while at other times they were negative about Northumberland. This demonstrates how their belongings are multiple and fluid.

These sections have helped to understand and make sense of a very particular set of experiences and geographies in the young Poles' lives, in order to understand the nuances of their identities and senses of belonging. The experience of migration following Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 is a particularly important and significant event for their lives and experiences. This research has highlighted how the young Poles are negotiating their Polishness, and a very particular set of experiences as a result of migration between Poland and Northumberland, that then complicated their transitions to adulthood. Drawing on these young Poles' experiences I have reflected on their Polishness in relation to language, food, history and tradition. The sections in this chapter have understood the relationships that the young Poles have to Poland, the country that they were born in and where many of them had family members and friends still living.

7.6 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has analysed and provided an important understanding of how the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness as they made their transitions to adulthood. I found that the young Poles in Northumberland were negotiating multiple identities and this then further complicated their transitions. According to the young Poles their parents hoped that the experience of migration and transnational way of life would broaden the opportunities that were available to them in their futures. Those young Poles that maintained transnational ties constructed transnational identities. They were embedded between Poland and Northumberland. Although the young Poles' bodies were located in Northumberland, their thoughts and feelings regularly stretched back into Poland. It was through technologies that they were able to maintain connections and attachments to family and friends that were living back in Poland. According to Anthias (2009: 24) they 'live in multiplex environments and have multiple identities'. In this research the young Poles were negotiating their identities on the move, while also being transnationally active.

I have drawn on a wide range of experiences to make sense of and understand the different positions that the young Poles found themselves in. Through this research I have provided some understanding on how the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness while living and growing up in Northumberland. The experience of migration meant that this group of young people found themselves living and growing up in a new country. Throughout this thesis I have argued how the age of migration is an important factor in influencing their experiences. For those that migrated from Poland when they were older, usually at high school age, they discussed how they felt that those who migrated when they were younger were in a more fortunate position, as they had been able to more successfully develop strategies to fit in and not stand out. In this chapter I have attempted to understand and make sense of the experiences that are in the young Poles' everyday lives, unpacking and drawing attention to what happens when the young Poles are unable to fit in and do stand out.

In this research I have paid attention to how the young Poles interpret and manage their Polishness (Moskal, 2016; Ní Laoire et al, 2011). In their everyday lives the young Poles had to manage their differences. All of the young Poles talked about their experiences of being Polish in public, reflecting on instances of being out shopping with particular family members, or while nightclubbing with their friends. At

certain times being Polish was firmly engrained in their minds. Some of the young Poles in this research discussed how they learned the English language, developed a local regional accent or Anglicised their names as ways to detach themselves from the label of being Polish (Ní Laoire et al, 2011). They reflected on their lives and experiences in relation to their parents and grandparents, believing that they had a very different set of experiences and outlooks to them. Other young Poles discussed how they were proud to be Polish, particularly in the context of making their transitions to employment. They described how they saw their Polishness as being an asset or employable skill. They talked about how they were able to communicate in two languages, and that they felt more mature and confident in relation to their peers that had not gone through similar experiences. In these complex negotiations both positive and negative emotions were involved. However, it was clear that their Polishness mattered to all of the young Poles in this research.

As the young Poles grew older certain cultural practices in their families that they considered to be Polish became increasingly less important to them (Burrell, 2012; Moskal, 2015). Many of the young Poles, especially those located in the north of the county in Berwick, talked about their experiences of attending the Polish Saturday School. Experiences of attending this Saturday School were wide and varied. Some saw it as being a safe space where they could preserve their Polish culture, learn more about the country that they were born in, and celebrate different traditions and preserve their Polish language. However, I found that as many of the young Poles became teenagers they no longer wanted to attend the Polish School. Instead they preferred to take on part-time work around their studies or attend sporting hobbies with their school friends. These young Poles increasingly felt that Polishness was more important to their parents and older siblings than to them. They talked about how they felt that they had a different set of experiences. This resulted in the Polish Saturday School becoming a site of struggle and contention as they resisted going. As the young Poles grew older they increasingly saw the differences that existed between them and their parents and grandparents, and they gradually took control over how they chose to express or present themselves (Ní Laoire et al, 2011).

Christmas was an important event that many of the young Poles reflected on (Burrell, 2012). Their experiences seemed to fit into one of two positions: there were those who celebrated a Polish Christmas, while others saw their Christmas as being half Polish and half British now.

Return visits to Poland were also an important event or practice in the young Poles' lives that many of them talked about (Burrell, 2011c). On return visits to their country of birth they spent time with family and friends that had remained living in Poland. The young Poles discussed how they felt "increasingly different" to these friends and relatives. In Northumberland they felt that they had developed a positive self-identity for themselves. However, although they were building a new belonging to Northumberland, they still had an attachment to Poland, especially thinking about people and places back there; but they described how they felt that they had a different outlook and set of experiences to these people. Through these return visits the young Poles were negotiating their Polishness. Some of the young Poles in this research made regular return visits throughout the year at Easter, summer or Christmas, while others who took part in the research had not been back to Poland in over six years. There were many examples of where the young Poles maintained active attachments to their family and friends that had remained in Poland through technologies such as Skype, Facebook and Whatsapp. Some of the young Poles talked about the differences that they saw between their own identities and their relatives living back in Poland, describing how they felt that relatives back in Poland were more locked into their national identities. The stories drawn on in this chapter have highlighted the connectivity that the young Poles have to Poland through transnational practices that are often located in their families (White, 2010).

To summarise, this chapter has revealed how the young Poles are negotiating their Polishness and experiences of migration as they made their transitions to adulthood. Despite the young Poles in this research leaving Poland when they were young, Poland still exerts a strong influence over their identities. It is important to note that the young Poles all migrated between Poland and the UK or Northumberland at different ages, and had been living in Northumberland for different lengths of time. This chapter has made an important contribution by exploring how the young Poles in Northumberland are constructing and negotiating their identities, particularly their sense of attachment to Northumberland, Poland, the UK and Europe. It is my argument that these identity negotiations further complicate their transitions to adulthood. Also, this chapter has highlighted how there were a wide variety of experiences, confirming that there is no single experience of migration.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

This thesis set out to explore the everyday lives and experiences of young Poles who are living and growing up in Northumberland. All of the young people in my research migrated between Poland and the UK with their families. I considered how being Polish, the experience of migration, and living and growing up in rural Northumberland, intersect and contribute to shaping the nature and geography of the young Poles' youth transitions. Existing Polish migration research has developed a clearer and more nuanced picture of those Poles that migrated after 2004, but very little attention has been paid to the perspectives of the young people who migrated with their families. I demonstrate how the experience of migration to the UK has influenced how this group of young people think about themselves, and in what ways this then shapes the choices and decisions that they were making on their transition to adulthood. This research has addressed a major lacuna in youth transitions studies by providing a spatial lens on the transitions to adulthood of young Poles who are living and growing up in rural Northumberland. In doing so, it has made sense of the complexity of their youth transitions.

This thesis is positioned within studies of youth, migration and rural life. A critical evaluation of existing transitions to adulthood studies was presented in Chapter Two, while Chapter Three explored some of the key concepts around identities and belongings, in relation to migration and rural life. In subsequent chapters I have integrated these arguments and debates to frame and understand the individual experiences of young Poles who are living and growing up in rural Northumberland. Throughout this thesis I have made a number of arguments that I will now summarise as part of this final chapter. The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections – answering the research questions, contributions to knowledge, future research directions and final comments.

8.2 Answering the Research Questions

- *What are the young Poles' choices, aspirations and feelings about their future education and work lives?*

During the first round of interviews the young Poles were asked about what aspirations they had for the future. I encouraged them to think about, and to look into, the future to explore where it was that they saw themselves in five, ten and twenty years' time. Through the follow-up interviews I was able to unpack these choices, aspirations and feelings further. At first there seemed to be something quite ordinary or standard about the transitions that the young Poles were making, or aspired to make in the future.

In the first interviews the young Poles reflected on the challenges of living and growing up in rural Northumberland. These issues were similar to those that are already documented in the existing rural literatures, including mobilities (public transport, learning to drive and car ownership), local employment and educational opportunities, and housing (Argent and Walmsley, 2008; Hoolachan et al, 2017; Shucksmith, 2000, 2004; Thissen et al, 2010). What was also striking among all of the participants, including those who aspired to migrate out of Northumberland, was the relationships that they had developed towards the new areas that they were now living and growing up in. In their near futures many of the young Poles had aspirations to move out of Northumberland to cities located nearby. Thinking further into the future many of the young Poles shared aspirations to have partners, own home and have their own families. Three of the young Poles were in relationships, and two participants became parents during the research. Two of the young Poles began learning to drive as soon as they turned seventeen and by the follow-up interviews these young Poles had both passed their driving tests. Through the analysis and discussion presented in Chapter Five it is clear that the young Poles' transitions to adulthood are very similar to those of other young people in Northumberland, as they can be mapped onto the existing transitions documented in the literature and shared by the stakeholders in the first phase of this research. However, an important aspect of the young Poles' choices, aspirations and feelings about their futures was their Polishness and experience of migration.

For many of the young Poles there was a belief that there were more opportunities for them in Northumberland or the UK in relation to Poland. The young Poles

reflected on the transitions and futures in relation to cousins or friends living back in Poland. Those that were younger when they migrated between Poland and Northumberland were remaining in education by going on to their schools sixth form or making the transition to college, and three of the young Poles went on to university during the research. The absence of a university in Northumberland meant that those young Poles that aspired to go on to university were left with no choice but to look outside of Northumberland for these studies. The age that they migrated from Poland was important in influencing their transitions. Some of the young Poles who took part in the research, particularly those who migrated from Poland when they were older, at high school age, felt that the experience of migration constrained their transitions, with them leaving school at the first opportunity and going straight into employment. Others felt that the experience of migration had opened up opportunities for them as they made their transitions with them being able to remain in education by going on to sixth form and college, and then university. By migrating to Northumberland or the UK from Poland it had opened up opportunities for the young Poles to find work and make a livelihood for themselves. For some the economic gains and social and cultural lifestyle was a positive step towards upward mobility. However, for others the lack of access to opportunities and the challenges associated with the process of migration meant that some of their lives were still marked by poverty and immobility.

Initially it could be assumed that there was something quite ordinary or standard about the transitions to adulthood that the young Poles were making. Their transitions can be mapped onto those that are found in the literature and documented in Chapter Two. However, it is my argument that the young Poles' transitions were more complex than this. The young Poles experiences were complicated by the need to become familiar with the English language and navigating their new social environments. Being Polish and the experience of migration influenced the young Poles aspirations in different ways, believing that the experience of migration from Poland had resulted in more opportunities or constrained their experiences as they made their transitions. Some of the young Poles saw their Polishness as serving as an asset or employable skill. They talked about the advantages of being able to communicate in two languages, acquiring an additional qualification as part of their GCSEs, and felt that the experience of migration had made them more mature and confident in relation to their peers who had not encountered similar experiences before when growing up. The age that they migrated from Poland seemed an

important factor in shaping and influencing their transitions. Some of the young Poles would often question their capabilities, or feel like the experience of migration had been loaded with certain expectations that are located in their families, resulting in them have insecurities over their futures, or aspiring to have greater independence away from their families. This leads on to the second research question:

- *How, and in what ways, do the young Poles' family, social and support networks influence the choices and decisions that they are making about the future?*

Chapter six explored the young Poles' relationships and how they discussed these in relation to the transitions that they were making in terms of education and employment. From their individual narratives it was evident that they were negotiating the influences of family, friends and teachers.

Some Poles found their parents to be encouraging, while others found them to be a source of pressure as they made choices and decisions about their futures. The young Poles discussed how their parents had certain ambitions or expectations of them, wanting them to go on to university study following their compulsory schooling. Many of the parents prioritised education and favoured certain subject choices, believing that this would make the young Poles more credible and that they would be taken more seriously in the future. The young Poles talked about wanting to escape the workplace marginalisation that their families have found themselves in. Some of the young Poles talked about how the jobs that their parents were doing caused them a degree of embarrassment, particularly when on return visits to Poland. They then hoped that they would not have the same experiences in their futures. These young Poles described how their parents could often be quite pushy. Other young Poles discussed how their parents were encouraging, with them placing priority on the young people making their own choices and decisions in relation to their future education and employment. In these families parents discussed with the young Poles how it was important that they did not rush into making a decision that they might later regret, or if something did not work out for them, then they could quite easily change to something else in the future. Typically, the young Poles' parents wanted them to take advantage of the opportunities available to them in Northumberland and the UK, following migration from Poland.

The young Poles that made return visits to Poland, or kept in touch with family and friends back in Poland through Skype, Facebook and Whatsapp, talked about the advice that they had received from relatives (e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins) that were living back in Poland, as they made their transitions to adulthood. Some of the young Poles compared the transitions that they were making to their cousins around the same age. The young Poles talked about how their parents or grandparents had lived through the period of Communism and Soviet domination, and the impact this then had on their lives and experiences. Their parents and/or grandparents would regularly share their experiences with the young Poles. When the young Poles' parents and grandparents were young they were socialised into political societies that were radically different from today. This included situations of war, occupation, invasion, deprivation and a denial of national identity. Other young Poles felt that it could be difficult for them to communicate with their parents and grandparents. These young Poles felt that they had different values and attitudes to their parents and grandparents. Although the young Poles in this research were all now living and growing up in Northumberland and the UK, and were making their transitions to adulthood, Poland is still hugely significant in most of their lives. The young Poles lives were stretched across Northumberland, the UK and Poland. Under the next research question I discuss the young people's everyday geographies and senses of belonging.

Another important influence in the family was older siblings. Some of the young Poles felt that these were influential providing them with insider information and helping them to find college courses or job opportunities. Kacper talked about how his older sister encouraged him to go on to college, while Ola shared insights about how her older sister did not particularly enjoy going to sixth form in Berwick, as she felt that the teachers often underestimated her abilities. This was one of a series of factors that prompted Ola into aspiring to go on to Newcastle College for her sixth form studies, believing that it would be a fresh start for her, as all of the teachers and students would be new.

Friendships were also influential relationships in the lives of my participants. Talking to friends provided the young Poles with the confidence and desire to then make their own transitions. Kacper, Magda and Kasia were three friends that all went on to college together, to study travel and tourism. They described how they felt more comfortable and confident doing this together. It is my argument that friends were an

important source of emotional and embodied support. Those friends that had gone through similar experiences to them were an important part of their lives.

Outside of school many of the young Poles took part in sporting hobbies (e.g. Agata played netball, while Adam was involved in a football team). These were instrumental in developing and maintaining friendships. Adam went on to study sport at Northumberland College's Ashington campus (located 54 miles outside of Berwick). A friend from his football team was also going on to study the same course. This helped Adam to feel at ease. The young Poles would often complete any course or homework that they had with their friends, valuing this additional support. It was through their friends that the young Poles felt able to become familiar with the English language and their new social environments.

The third influence I explored was the role and influence of teachers. Some of the young Poles, particularly those that migrated when they were older, felt that teachers were more interested in those young people that were getting good grades. They described how they felt increasingly left out and forgotten about, as their school teachers would spend more time with the other young people. However, other young Poles, typically those that migrated when they were younger, found teachers to be helpful and supportive, as they worked out what it was that they wanted to do following school. Dawid talked about how his form tutor helped him to locate an apprenticeship in something that he was interested in doing, while Filip revealed how his form tutor helped him to find a university course and put together his application. For these young Poles their teachers were an important source of support for them, as they discussed how their parents would not have been able to help in the same ways.

To summarise, the young Poles' transitions are shaped by a myriad of relationships, that sometimes contradict one another. The data showed that there were a variety of experiences, that often seemed dependent on the age that they migrated from Poland. This then leads on to the third research question:

- *What are the everyday geographies and senses of belonging of young Poles who are living and growing up in Northumberland?*

As part of the lifegrid activity the young Poles were asked to reflect on their links to Poland and Northumberland, and provide any comments or details on these. They were also introduced to critical moments and asked to identify any that had occurred in their lives to date (Thomson et al, 2002). After analysing the first round of interviews and the lifegrids that were returned by the young Poles, I could then follow-up any interesting comments at the second interview, exploring these in more detail. At both interviews the young Poles were asked about any important events that they had recently taken part in. Many of the young Poles discussed their experiences of celebrating Christmas, or making return visits to Poland. The interviews allowed me to understand and make sense of their everyday geographies and senses of belonging. In the interviews I encouraged the participants to talk openly and widely about their lives and experiences. This resulted in textured empirical accounts that provided an important reading of how they were negotiating their Polishness and experiences of migration on their transitions to adulthood.

In the interviews the young Poles were asked to describe themselves and their own sense of identity. Many of the young people noted the sense of differences between how they felt, and how their parents and grandparents might feel. Some of the young Poles talked about the period of Communism and Soviet domination that their parents or grandparents lived through, discussing the effects that this period of time had on their behaviour and identity constructions. Other young Poles mentioned how it can be difficult for them to communicate with their parents and grandparents believing that they had different values to them.

The majority of the young Poles who took part in this research were fluid in their attachments, accepting their multiplicities. The young people distinguished themselves from their parents, and more specifically their grandparents. They described how they saw their older generations as being more locked into their national identities and speculated a range of reasons for this. It is important to note that this does not mean that these older people actually felt this way, but it was significant that this was how the young Poles chose to construct their beliefs of their parents and grandparents, differentiating themselves from these previous generations of Poles. In this research there were many complex, and sometimes contradictory accounts of the young Poles' multiple identities.

In order to gain a more complex understanding of their identities, I asked the young Poles how they felt about their identities, particularly while they were out in public, on return visits to Poland, and when they returned to Northumberland following visits to Poland. This enabled me to provide an analysis of their complex webs of belongings and attachments, focusing on how they negotiated their identities, and the character of these identities. This was especially useful given that in the contemporary world, more and more young people do not fit into conventional categories. Drawing on Hall's (1989: 73) exploration of identity, I suggest that it is not something that is done 'once and for all', but is constantly negotiated and re-negotiated. It does not remain fixed and static, but is fluid, changing and relational (Leyshon and Bull, 2011; Ralph and Staheli, 2011).

Throughout this research I have made sense of the young Poles' multi-layered and multi-sited identities. I have examined the young Poles' experiences of negotiating a variety of sites across their everyday lives and contexts (e.g. education, employment, leisure, nights out, family events or becoming a parent). It is my argument that the young Poles were negotiating multiple identities. These identities then complicated their transitions to adulthood. Drawing on a wide range of experiences I have attempted to make sense of and understand the different positions that the young Poles found themselves in. I have explored how they were negotiating their Polishness while living and growing up in Northumberland. Migrating from Poland meant that the young Poles found themselves living and growing up in a new country. The young Poles discussed how their parents hoped that the experience of migration and transnational way of life would broaden the opportunities available to them in the future. It is my argument that the age of migration is an important aspect of their experiences. Those who migrated when they were older, usually at high school age, felt that those who migrated when they were younger, typically at first or middle school age, were in a more fortunate position. They had been able to develop strategies (e.g. learning the English language, developing local accents or Anglicizing their names) to fit in and not stand out. Some of the young Poles discussed how they had been able to develop a positive self-identity for themselves in Northumberland. As they young Poles got older they gradually took control over how they chose to express or present themselves. I have also drawn attention to what happens when the young Poles are unable to fit in, and do stand out, drawing on their experiences

of being Polish in public, while out shopping with certain family members, or on a night out socialising with other young Poles.

This research takes account of the complex interplay of different dimensions and scales in the young Poles lives. I explore their experiences of constructing and negotiating their identities in their everyday spaces, lives and through daily practices, drawing on particular events, including Christmas, the Polish Saturday School or on return visits to Poland. Certain cultural practices located in the young Poles' families resulted in them negotiating their Polishness and experiences of migration. As they got older, for some of the young Poles these practices became increasingly less important to them. Many of the young Poles in Berwick talked about the Polish Saturday School. Some of the young Poles were positive about the Saturday School describing it as a space where they could preserve their Polish culture, learn more about the country that they were born in, celebrate traditions and communicate in the Polish language. However, as the young Poles became teenagers they preferred to take on part-time work around their studies or play sporting hobbies on a Saturday instead. Other practices and experiences included celebrating Christmas and making return visits to Poland. Through return visits to Poland, some of the young Poles increasingly saw their lives as being in Northumberland, with their studies, workplaces and new friends being located there. Some of the young Poles made regular return visits to Poland throughout the year, while others had not been back to Poland in over six years. Drawing on the young Poles' narratives of their experiences I highlight the connectivity that they had to Poland through transnational practices. Certain practices in the young Poles' lives served as reminders of their Polishness. However, on their transitions to adulthood these practices were placed under strain and negotiation.

I have made sense of the young Poles' particular experiences and everyday lives. The young Poles dynamically constructed their senses of belonging. Many of the young Poles were building a new belonging to Northumberland, but they also had an attachment to Poland. They regularly thought about people and places back in Poland (e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins), and were able to maintain active attachments through technologies such as Skype and Facebook.

Henderson et al (2007: 113) described belonging as:

‘... linked with a sense of place, of feeling part of a larger entity, whether family, national or even global forms of community. It implies connectedness and relationships with others, saying something about inclusion, acceptance and identity’.

This broad definition fits well with my findings. The young Poles did not link their sense of belonging to any one of Henderson et al’s aspects. Henderson et al (2007) focused on religious and political belonging, but neither of these were significant to the young Poles. Instead I found that there were many different ways that the young Poles experienced (or sought to experience) a feeling of belonging. The importance of belonging was emphasised by Kacper’s story of feeling a sense of belonging through nights out with his friends. Younger Poles discussed feeling a sense of belonging through sport and leisure hobbies. The young Poles taking part in the research who had moved out of Northumberland for university were very positive about their experiences. By moving to a new place for university, away from their families, it allowed them to search for a sense of belonging or community, sharing their halls of residence with new people. These experiences could be understood as being driven by the need to experience a sense of belonging and to be accepted.

In summary, the young Poles are embedded between Poland and Northumberland. As part of their everyday lives and experiences the young Poles are negotiating the geographies of Poland and Northumberland. The relationships that they have between these places become intertwined with the futures that they are able to imagine for themselves, and the kinds of mobilities that they are prepared to make. This research makes sense of their connections and mobilities, to argue that being Polish and the experience of migration are important parts or aspects of their transitions to adulthood. It is my argument that research must take account of the complex, multiple geographies of young people and their experiences of migration in their everyday spaces of families, homes, lifecourses, relationships and identities, that acknowledges their multiple, diverse roles, agencies and experiences. This leads on to the next section that summarises the contributions to knowledge.

8.3 Contributions to Knowledge

My project aimed to explore the transitions to adulthood of young Poles in Northumberland, and how these shape, and are shaped by, both experiences of migration and life in Northumberland. Throughout this thesis I have explored the young Poles' aspirations and feelings about their futures, and the everyday geographies and senses of belonging. In this section I summarise the contributions to knowledge that I have made through this research.

Youth transition studies

In line with existing youth studies, this research has drawn attention to the need to focus on individual voices and experiences. This has helped to unravel the complexity of the transitions to adulthood of young Poles who are living and growing up in rural Northumberland. As I documented in Chapter Two, many of the existing youth transitions studies tend to focus on only one particular transition (e.g. school-to-work). It is my argument that research must be extended to take into account the different contexts that shape the multiple transitions to adulthood of young people, particularly for those that have experienced migration as part of their childhood, and how the particular experiences of young people shape their transitions. Models of the transition to adulthood must be flexible, taking into account the different realities and experiences of young people. In this research I have highlighted how being Polish and the experience of migration complicates the young Poles' transitions to adulthood, and also make an important contribution by drawing attention to the heterogeneous character of their transitions.

I have made sense of the young Poles' experiences of living and growing up in rural Northumberland, and how this contributes to shaping and influencing their transitions to adulthood. Northumberland provided a unique place in which to unpack and understand the transitions to adulthood of the young Poles. Previous studies of youth transitions in the north east of England have focused on the lives and experiences of young people who are living and growing up on Tyneside and Teeside (Hollands, 1997; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Nayak, 2006). This means that the transitions to adulthood of young people in rural Northumberland remain under-explored.

Traditionally the transition to adulthood has been interpreted as a unidirectional and linear process, with young people moving from education to work, followed by leaving the family home, and then marriage and family formation. Today young people may leave the family home for education, employment or move in with a partner, but later these moves could reverse, perhaps even on several occasions (Henderson et al, 2007; Jones, 1995). I have considered the young Poles' youth transitions across various spheres of social life, including education, employment, housing and relationships. I also make sense of how the young Poles are making their lives under new conditions such as the Great Recession and subsequent financial austerity (Furlong, 2017). All young people, not just the young Poles in this research, are having to negotiate a set of uncertainties that were less prominent in the lives of previous generations of young people. This research took place at a very particular moment in time. Austerity has meant that the young Poles were making their transitions while many of the services in Northumberland were being withdrawn.

By paying attention to the aspirations that the young Poles have for their futures I make an important contribution to increasing work in geography on the importance of aspirations in youth transitions (see for example: Pimlott-Wilson, 2015; White and Green, 2015; Kintrea et al, 2011), by exploring the role of place in shaping the young Poles' transitions, identities and aspirations. Through this research I have opened up space for alternative interpretations of the young Poles' transitions, making sense of the connections that they have to people and places, and how this impacts on their lives and experiences.

Youthful Polish migration

This research has made an important contribution to youthful studies on Polish migration (Moskal and Sime, 2016; Moskal and Tyrrell, 2016; Moskal, 2015, 2014), by making sense of some of the practices that are at the heart of the young Poles' everyday lives and experiences. The transnational aspects of children and young people's migration have only recently been acknowledged. Previously, children and young people have been treated as the appendix of transnational family mobility that was driven by adults (Emond and Esser, 2015). Transnational practices that are in the young Poles' families allowed them to maintain attachments to significant people that have remained living in Poland. The young Poles felt that migrating from Poland

with their families had resulted in multiple intersecting identities (Ní Laoire et al, 2011). Making sense of the practices in the young Poles lives has helped me to explore how the young Poles were dynamically negotiating their identities on their transitions to adulthood, highlighting the myriad of ways that the young Poles interpret their Polishness, and the multiple and sometimes contradictory ways that this can exist for the young Poles, shifting and changing their negotiations of belonging.

The young people who took part in this research were all born in Poland in the early to late-1990s. They admitted how they had very different experiences to their elders, which many of them suggested explained the different expressions of their identities. This generation of young people had not lived through the particular key moments that their parents or grandparents have. This includes situations of war, occupation, invasion, deprivation and a denial of national identity. For these young Poles the key event in their lives had been Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, and this was a very different type of event.

Migrating between Poland and Northumberland as part of their childhood meant that the young Poles' found themselves living and growing up in a new place. They had to become familiar with new norms, behaviours and customs. I have analysed the strategies that they developed and consequently drew on as part of their everyday lives and experiences. This included learning English, attempting to develop local accents, and in some cases Anglicizing their names. The young Poles found themselves stretched across spaces and places, while also creating new connections and flows. It is clear from this research that there are a wide variety of experiences, confirming that there is no single migratory experience. These findings make an important contribution providing a nuanced understanding of the complexities of belonging, drawing on family, friends and belonging in place. For the young Poles personal experiences, memories, relationships with family and friends, culture (language and food), economic backgrounds, the age of migration and length of settlement played a role in their ability to develop attachments to places and feelings of 'being at home' (Antonsich, 2010: 647). The young Poles' transitions in relation to their senses of identity and belonging strongly indicate that there are important insights to be gathered from paying attention to the geographies of their everyday lives.

This research has drawn attention to the young Poles' experiences of transnational migration, focusing on a group of young people that have so far received little attention in the study of youth and migration, making an important contribution to public debates on migration and Europe, and provides relevant information for policy makers and practitioners that work with young Poles that have settled in Britain.

Methodological contributions

This thesis also makes an important methodological contribution to the field of Polish migration studies. It is based on innovative and participatory methods that have uncovered the narratives of youths (aged sixteen to twenty-four) with different individual characteristics (age, gender, level of education, length of time in Northumberland, socioeconomic status, and marital and parental status). I have researched these young Poles as best as I could in the timeframe of a PhD, with a first and then follow-up interview, to make sense of their lives and experiences at different points of their transitions. This helped to ensure a well-rounded interpretation of their experiences. Added to this, I included the lifegrid exercise between the first and follow-up interview; this acted as a prompt to encourage the young Poles to open up and think about their lives and experiences. The young Poles included comments on important events and their relationships to people and places. This exercise was laid out similar to an activity that they would have been familiar with at school (see pages 85-86 in methodology for a completed lifegrid). At the end of the research many of the young Poles commented on how they enjoyed taking part. In fact, the following note was included with a completed lifegrid that was returned by one of the participants:

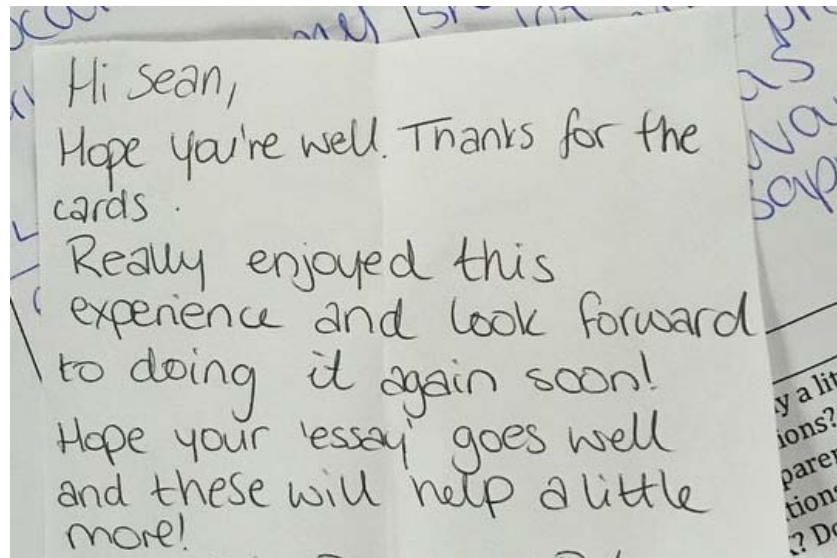


Figure 8.1 Note included with a completed lifegrid returned by one of the participant's

Towards the end of the research I asked the young Poles how they felt about completing the lifegrid exercise, comments were frequently to the effect of:

“It was good, it helped me to think about my life and experiences and made me realise how far I have come”

(Gosia, 22: Berwick)

Through this thesis I have emphasised the need to focus on individual voices and experiences, making sense of the complexity of the young Poles' transitional experiences.

8.4 Future Research Directions

This research provides plenty of scope and opportunity for further research. Some of these opportunities are identified and summarised below.

While the pathways to adulthood that the young Poles were carving out for themselves are all very different, it is my argument that they also include some similar features or aspects regarding the key role of migration and negotiating their Polishness. In this research I have shown that Polishness is central, not only in a temporal sense but as a key influence on the choices and decisions, and is of continuing importance for their current and future lives. This thesis has presented a

small yet significant picture of these young Poles' lives and experiences, but there are opportunities to ask further questions about how and why being Polish, and living and growing up in rural Northumberland, matters to the youth transitions of this group of young people. The group of young Poles that I studied could be followed on their lives into the future. I followed this group of young people on their transitions as best as I could in the timeframe of a PhD. The inclusion of a first and follow-up interview ten to twelve months later helped me to make sense of their transitions. However, this period of time could be extended further. Inventing Adulthoods followed the young people in their research over a period of 10 to 15 years (Henderson et al, 2007; Thomson et al, 2002; Thomson and Holland, 2015). This would allow for a deeper understanding of how being Polish, the experience of migration, and living and growing up in rural Northumberland, intersect and contribute to shaping the nature and geographies of their future lives.

This study was conducted from September 2014 to January 2016 before the UK Referendum on EU membership, known as Brexit. As part of EU membership countries merged their economic rules allowing people, goods, services and capital to move freely between member countries. It is unclear what leaving the EU will mean for the future of Britain's economy, and its policies and relations with other European countries. This referendum result has resulted in some uncertainty around the current status of EU citizens that are living in the UK, including Polish migrants. The potential restrictions on EU free movement that could follow 'Brexit' may limit the young Poles' ability to benefit from open borders between the UK and EU. The UK voted to leave the EU by 51.9% to 48.1%. Northumberland voted to leave the EU by 54.1% to 45.9%. Leave won the majority of votes in England and Wales, while every council in Scotland saw Remain majorities (The Electoral Commission, 2016). This is significant given that many of the young people who took part in this research were living in the North of Northumberland with their families, around Berwick. This town is close to the border with Scotland.

A Northumberland County Council press release following this result expressed serious concern regarding the future of jobs and services in the county after this decision to leave the EU. In the last nine years, an estimated £108 million of EU investment came into Northumberland. This money has helped to regenerate towns, invest in businesses, and provide support for tourism and farmers. Annually £28 million of funding comes in directly and indirectly that supports jobs in the county

council. Between 2007 and 2013, Northumberland received approximately £48 million through EU Structural Funds to support business growth and job creation, improve digital skills, regenerate communities and boost the tourism sector. Northumberland also benefited from EU funds through the Common Agricultural Policy, with farmers from across the county receiving an estimated £60 million from the Basic Payment Scheme in 2015 (Northumberland County Council Press Release, 2016). Further research is needed into the effects that leaving the EU will have on Northumberland.

The final YouGov poll (2016) before the referendum found that 72% of eighteen to twenty-four year olds backed a remain vote, with just 19% backing Brexit. This suggests that young people see the world very differently from their elders, but will inherit more of the long-term consequences of this decision. Following the EU referendum in the UK, it is increasingly necessary to study and understand the lives and experiences of the group of young people that took part in my research. Brexit is fuelling tension and racism. An investigation into post-referendum racism analysed tweets on Twitter and found that more than 13,000 tweets could be classified as being xenophobic and racist in the week following the EU referendum result (Demos, 2016). Added to this, the number of hate-crimes reported to True Vision in the weeks following the Brexit vote increased fivefold, with 331 hate crime incidents reported compared with a weekly average of just 63 (Guardian, 2016a). The Times Educational Supplement (2017) submitted a freedom of information request to all 39 of England's police forces. From the 32 that responded, 30 provided comparable data revealing that in May 2016 (in the middle of the Brexit referendum campaign) the number of police reports of hate crimes and hate incidents in schools rose by 89%, compared with the same month in 2015. The number of hate crimes and hate incidents in schools increased by 54% from May to July 2016 – covering the run-up to the referendum and the immediate aftermath of the outcome – compared with the same three-month period in 2015. During the summer and autumn terms the number of hate crimes and hate incidents in schools increased by 48%, compared with the same period in 2015 (TES, 2017). There has also been a rise in anti-Polish attacks. A particularly influential example of this was the death of Arkadiusz Jóźwik who was assaulted outside a takeaway in The Stow, Harlow on 27th August 2016 (Guardian, 2016b). Evidence suggests that there has been a rising anti-immigration sentiment building over time. In my own research, Brexit was not an issue that I considered, as

this research took place a few years before the vote, but it is certainly something that future research must consider. While my research contributes very important analyses it is facilitative of further research to understand how groups of young Poles are further excluded and marginalised following the Brexit vote.

8.5 Concluding Comments

Overall, this thesis has provided a rich and detailed insight into the ways that being Polish and the experience of migration shapes the nature and geographies of the young Poles' transitions to adulthood. I have unpacked and attempted to understand the nuances of their everyday geographies and senses of belonging. They find themselves stretched across both Northumberland and Poland, connected to particular people and places. The research has drawn attention to the multiplicity of their identities, complex relations, and the everyday processes and practices that contribute to shaping their futures. As a result, this research has made valuable empirical and conceptual contributions to geographical studies of youth, migration and rural life. Additional research is required to further uncover and understand the breadth of issues this study has identified, and it is my hope that in years to come studies of this nature will proliferate.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter translated to English

Copy of letter sent to young people who had previously attended the Polish Saturday School in Berwick (formally Seahouses) translated into English:

November 3, 2014

Dear students,

Sean is studying for a doctoral dissertation at Newcastle University, his research is aimed at young Poles living in Northumberland. Sean Gill is a very nice young man and is collecting data for his doctoral thesis. He needs to interview Poles aged 16-25, because he would like to know how you are living in this part of England. Similar studies have already been done in London and in Scotland, but no one has even been interested in Polish youth outside the big cities. I would be grateful if you read his attached letter, show it to your parents, and contact Sean for an interview.

Without your help, it will be difficult for him to work on the project. I think you will understand this situation and you will be able to help him. If you have any questions about this, my email and telephone contact is listed below.

Best wishes,
Beata Kohlbek
Dr. Beata Kohlbek, bkohlbek@mohrlanguagesupport.org.uk
01665 720521

Appendix B: Berwick Migrant Support Group Leaflet

English

At the Berwick Migrant Support Group we help migrants to find out useful information covering all areas of life in the local community.

We also offer a chance to:

- Improve English language skills - We provide free English language classes and we can also advise you about other language and educational courses in the Berwick area.
- Learn new skills - We provide training and workshops.

Opportunities to take part in:

- Social activities
- Cultural events
- Visits to local attractions

Advice and Information:

- Your rights in the UK
- Employment
- Housing
- Health Service
- Education
- Local Organisations

Every Wednesday night 6.30 - 8.15 pm



Gdzie jesteśmy
Где мы находимся
Onde estamos
Where we are



Berwick Community Centre
5 Palace Street East
Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 1HT
Every Wednesday Night 6.30 pm - 8.15 pm

Informacje, porady i możliwości
Информация, рекомендации и возможности

Informação, aconselhamento e Oportunidades

Information, Advice and Opportunities

Tel: 07938 608 153

info@berwickmigrantsupportgroup.co.uk

www.berwickmigrantsupportgroup.co.uk



www.facebook.com/TheBerwickMigrantSupportGroup

Printspot (01289) 309217



Polski

W Grupie Wsparcia Imigrantów Berwick pomagamy imigrantom znaleźć wszystkie informacje na tematy dotyczące życia lokalnej społeczności.

Oferujemy również możliwość:

- Doskonalenia znajomości języka angielskiego - oferujemy bezpłatne lekcje języka angielskiego.
- Rozwój nowych umiejętności - oferujemy szkolenia i warsztaty.

Zapraszamy do udziału:

- w zajęciach towarzyskich
- w imprezach kulturowych
- w poznawaniu miejscowych atrakcji

Poradnictwo i informacje :

- Wasze prawa w Zjednoczonym Królestwie
- zatrudnienie
- kwestie mieszkaniowe
- służba zdrowia
- wykształcenie
- organizacje miejscowe

W każdą środę
18.30 - 20.15



русский

Бервик мигрантов Группа поддержки помогает иностранные граждане, чтобы найти полезную информацию о всех аспекты социальной жизни в этом районе.

Мы также предлагаем возможность:

- Улучшение навыков английского языка - Мы предоставляем бесплатные уроки английского языка, и мы также можем сообщить вам о другом языке и учебных курсов в Бервик.
- Узнайте, новые навыки - мы проводим обучение и может сообщить вам о других возможностей для обучения.

Возможности для участия в:

- Общественная деятельность
- Культурные мероприятия
- Посещение местных достопримечательностей

Мы также предоставляем информацию и поддержку по следующим вопросам:

- Ваши права в Великобритании
- Занятость
- проблемы для дома
- Здоровье
- Образование
- Местная информация

Мы встречаемся каждый вечер
среды с 18.30 до 20.15



português

O Grupo de Apoio aos Emigrantes de Berwick oferece ajuda aos migrantes para saber mais sobre a vida na comunidade local.

Também, oferecemos a oportunidade de:

- Melhorar as competências linguísticas em língua inglesa - Oferecemos a oportunidade de frequentar aulas de inglês gratuitas e, também, damos informação sobre outros cursos de formação e educação existentes em Berwick e arredores;
- Aprender novas competências - Oferecemos treino e workshops.

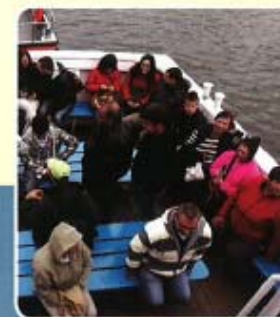
Oportunidade em participar em:

- Atividades Sociais;
- Eventos Culturais;
- Visitar atrações Locais.

Informação e Aconselhamento:

- Quais os seus direitos no Reino Unido;
- Empregabilidade;
- Morar e viver no Reino Unido;
- Serviço de Saúde;
- Educação;
- Organizações Locais.

Todas as quartas
-feiras à noite das
18h30m às 20h15m



Transitions to Adulthood: Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland

Your son or daughter is being **invited** to take part in a research study. Before you decide **whether or not** they should take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

This research will gain an insight into the lives of young Polish migrants living and growing up in rural Northumberland. It has a particular focus on how their experiences of migration to the UK from Poland, and the nature of their transitions to adulthood. It will learn of the choices and decisions they are making in terms of their school to work and school to further and higher education transitions.

There has been some research on Polish students in London and Scottish schools, however there has been no substantial research carried out on the transitions to adulthood of these young Poles, or indeed research on the transitions to adulthood of young people growing up in the towns and villages of Northumberland. I am particularly interested in how the young Poles who have moved to Northumberland with their families after 2004 are negotiating their transitions to adulthood.

Please feel free to **contact me** for further information:

e-mail: sean.gill@ncl.ac.uk

telephone: 07774040452



What does the research involve?

The research will involve some young Poles taking part in a group work exercise to introduce the research and gain some context of their experiences. At a later stage, interviews will take place exploring daily life and future aspirations. Follow-up interviews will then take place 6 months following this. Research will only be carried out if all young people give their consent.

It is up to you and your son or daughter whether or not to take part. If you do decide for them to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide for them to take part you are still free to withdraw them at any time without having to give a reason.



There will be **no financial reward** for taking part in the study. Travel costs etc. will be **reimbursed** and food and drink will be provided if the project spreads over several hours.



This research is based on a collaborative project between **Newcastle University** and **Northumberland County Council** and will be carried out by **Sean Gill** (PhD Student). Below are my supervisors contact details, please feel free to contact them with any questions.

Prof. Alison Stenning	Alison.Stenning@ncl.ac.uk	0191 208 8017
Prof. Peter Hopkins	Peter.Hopkins@ncl.ac.uk	0191 208 3924

The data in this research will be stored securely, will be treated **confidentially** and be **anonymised**. There are, however, limits to confidentiality in cases of any child protection concerns.

Please contact **Jane Walker (Senior Manager Vulnerable Groups)** from Northumberland County Council to talk about any eventual concerns of queries:

e-mail:

jane.walker@northumberland.gov.uk

telephone: 01670 622 734

Transitions to Adulthood:

Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland

Please feel free to **contact me** for further information:

e-mail: sean.gill@ncl.ac.uk

telephone: 07774040452

There will be **no financial reward** for taking part in the study. Travel costs etc. will be **reimbursed** and food and drink will be provided if the project spreads over several hours.



Transitions to Adulthood:

Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland

Please feel free to **contact me** for further information:

e-mail: sean.gill@ncl.ac.uk

telephone: 07774040452



There will be **no financial reward** for taking part in the study. Travel costs etc. will be **reimbursed** and food and drink will be provided if the project spreads over several hours.



You are being **invited** to take part in a research study. Before you decide **whether or not** to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

This research will gain an insight into the lives of young Polish migrants living and growing up in rural Northumberland. It has a particular focus on how their experiences of migration to the UK from Poland, and the nature of their transitions to adulthood. It will learn about the choices and decisions that they are making in terms of their school to work, and school to further and higher education transitions and any other transitions that are important.

There has already been some research on Polish students in London and Scottish schools, however there has been no substantial research carried out on the transitions to adulthood of these young Poles, or indeed research on the transitions to adulthood of young people growing up in the towns and villages of Northumberland. I am particularly interested in how the young

What does the research involve?

As a stakeholder you will take part in a semi-structured interview to gain context on youth transitions in Northumberland and the choices and decisions young people are faced with making. It is up to you whether or not you decide to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

Some of the young Poles will take part in a group exercise activity to introduce the research and gain some context on their experiences. At a later stage, interviews will take place exploring their daily lives and future aspirations. Follow-up interviews will then take place 6 months following this. Research will only be carried out if all young people give their consent.

This research is based on a collaborative project between **Newcastle University** and **Northumberland County Council** and will be carried out by **Sean Gill** (PhD Student). Below are my supervisors contact details, please feel free to contact them with any questions.

Prof. Alison Stenning	Alison.Stenning@ncl.ac.uk	0191 208 8017
Prof. Peter Hopkins	Peter.Hopkins@ncl.ac.uk	0191 208 3924

In this research the data will be stored securely, treated **confidentially** and will be **anonmyised** at your request (please see consent form). There are, however, limits to confidentiality in cases of any child protection concerns.

Please contact **Jane Walker (Senior Manager Vulnerable Groups)** from Northumberland County Council to talk about any eventual concerns of queries:

e-mail: jane.walker@northumberland.gov.uk

Appendix F: Stakeholder Consent Form



Stakeholder Consent Form

Transitions to adulthood:
Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland

Researcher: Sean Gill (Newcastle University/Northumberland County Council)
Contact: e-mail: sean.gill@newcastle.ac.uk
mobile: 07774040452

CONSENT FORM

I _____, agree to take part in this research focusing on young Poles transitions to adulthood in Northumberland.

I have received an **information leaflet** about this research and understand the research aims.

I understand that:

- Everything I say will be treated with complete **confidentiality**. That means that Sean will **not pass on any information** without my consent, unless he has **serious** concerns about my or anyone else's wellbeing.
- I can decide **not to take part** in the research **at any stage**. I can also just take time out when I don't feel like taking part for a while.
- Similarly, I can decide to **withdraw my data** at any time.
- I can decide myself if what I say is being **recorded** or not. I can read the **written version** of what I have said if I want to.
- All the records of this research will be destroyed after Sean has completed his research project and until then will be **stored securely**.
- I can look at writing resulting from this research before it is published.
- My identity can be **anonymised** and I can choose my own pseudonym.
- Taking part in this research will not affect the services I may currently receive from **Northumberland County Council**.

I decide that:

- I **do not** want to be recorded - I am **okay** with being recorded
- I wish to see the **transcripts** for these recordings
- I wish **to remain anonymous** - I am **okay** with my name being included

Name:

Date:

Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Consent Form



Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Transitions to adulthood: Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland

Researcher: Sean Gill (Newcastle University/Northumberland County Council)
Contact: e-mail: sean.gill@newcastle.ac.uk
mobile: 07774040452

CONSENT FORM

I _____ the (parent/guardian) agree for _____ to take part in this research focusing on the transitions to adulthood of young Poles in Northumberland.

I have received an **information leaflet** about this research and understand the research aims.

I understand that:

- Everything said will be treated with complete **confidentiality**.
- My identity and the young person's identity will be **anonymised** and will not be traceable through publications.
- Information shared with the researcher will not be passed on to others and will only be accessible by him, unless serious child protection concerns arise. The data thereby acquired will be **stored securely** and the researcher will make use of this data responsibly in his publications.
- All the records of the research will be destroyed after the researcher has completed his research project.
- Both I and the young person can **decide to leave the research at any stage** and can also simply take time out.
- Similarly, I or the young person can decide to **withdraw the data** stemming from participating in this project.
- The young person can decide about being **recorded** and can look at reports stemming from this research before being published.
- Taking part in this research will have no effect on the **services** I may receive by Northumberland County Council.

Name:

Date:

Appendix H: Young Person Consent Form



Young People Consent Form

Transitions to adulthood:

Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland

Researcher: Sean Gill (Newcastle University/Northumberland County Council)

Contact: e-mail: sean.gill@newcastle.ac.uk

mobile: 07774040452

CONSENT FORM

I _____, agree to take part in this research focusing on young Poles transitions to adulthood in Northumberland.

Age	
Gender	
Parent's highest educational qualification	
Where from in Poland	
Where living in Northumberland	
Current occupation	

I have received an **information leaflet** about this research and understand the research aims.

I understand that:

- Everything I say will be treated with complete **confidentiality**. That means that Sean will **not pass on any information** without my consent, unless he has **serious** concerns about my wellbeing.
- I can decide **not to take part** in the research **at any stage**. I can also just take time out when I don't feel like taking part for a while.
- Similarly, I can decide to **withdraw my data** at any time.
- I can decide myself if what I say is being **recorded** or not. I can read the **written version** of what I have said if I want to.
- All the records of this research will be destroyed after Sean has completed his research project and until then will be **stored securely**.
- I can look at writing resulting from this research before it is published.
- My identity will be **anonymised** and I can choose my own pseudonym.
- Taking part in this research will not affect the services I may currently receive from **Northumberland County Council**.

I decide that:

- I **do not** want to be recorded - I am **okay** with being recorded
- I wish to see the **transcripts** for these recordings

Name:

Date:

Appendix I: Young Person Consent Form – Follow-up Interview



Young People Consent Form – Follow-up Interview

Transitions to adulthood:

Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland

Researcher: Sean Gill (Newcastle University/Northumberland County Council)

Contact: e-mail: sean.gill@newcastle.ac.uk

mobile: 07774040452

CONSENT FORM

I _____, agree to take part in this research focusing on young Poles transitions to adulthood in Northumberland.

I have received an **information leaflet** about this research and understand the research aims.

I understand that:

- Everything I say will be treated with complete **confidentiality**. That means that Sean will **not pass on any information** without my consent, unless he has **serious** concerns about my wellbeing.
- I can decide **not to take part** in the research **at any stage**. I can also just take time out when I don't feel like taking part for a while.
- Similarly, I can decide to **withdraw my data** at any time.
- I can decide myself if what I say is being **recorded** or not. I can read the **written version** of what I have said if I want to.
- All the records of this research will be destroyed after Sean has completed his research project and until then will be **stored securely**.
- I can look at writing resulting from this research before it is published.
- My identity will be **anonymised** and I can choose my own pseudonym.
- Taking part in this research will not affect the services I may currently receive from **Northumberland County Council**.

I decide that:

- I **do not** want to be recorded - I am **okay** with being recorded
- I wish to see the **transcripts** for these recordings

Name:

Date:

Appendix J: Interview Schedule with Stakeholders

Interview schedule with stakeholders

I aim to interview approximately ten stakeholders to gain context on the transitions that young people in Northumberland make. I hope to interview professionals at the Council, teachers at schools and the college, support staff and careers advisors.

Hello (introduction)... Thank you for allowing me to interview you.

- Can you tell me a few things about your job?
 - What does your day to day role involve?
- What's it like for young people who are living and growing up in Northumberland?
- Could you tell me about the transitions young people in Northumberland typically make in terms of education? Do you think there are enough educational opportunities for young people in Northumberland? What challenges or obstacles do they face?
- Could you tell me about the transitions young people in Northumberland typically make in terms of employment? Could you tell me what the local labour market is like? Are there enough opportunities? Would you like to see more or less?
- What apprenticeship opportunities are there for young people in Northumberland? Do you think there are enough? Could you tell me about some of the young people's experiences that you may know?
- What support do young people in Northumberland receive as they make their transitions through education and towards employment? What support do you think young people in Northumberland need more of?
- What barriers do you see for young people as they make their transitions to adulthood?
- Do the young Poles and their families receive any additional support?
- What differences do you see between the young Poles journeys towards adulthood and other young people in Northumberland?
- Are there any aspects of the young Poles transitions that I haven't asked you about, or that you haven't had a chance to say, that you think are important and that should be included as part of this research?
- Are there any other organisations/people you recommend that I talk to?

- Is there anything you feel would be important to add for this study before we finish the interview?

Appendix K: Interview Schedule with Young People – First Interview

First Interview Schedule – Young Poles

I aim to recruit cohorts of young Poles aged between 16 and 24. I hope to work with a range of ages so I am able to understand the choices and decisions affecting their lives as they move through their educational transition and enter the workplace.

Hello (introduction)... Thank you for coming.

- Can you tell me a few things about yourself?
 - Do you have any interests, hobbies?
 - Who do you do them with, how regularly?
- In the last few months can you think of any important events or activities you specifically did?
 - For example you may have visited somewhere you wouldn't usually?
 - Or maybe someone?
 - Was there an important even which you wished to mark? Tell me more about this...
 - In a year then what would you say are your 2-3 favourite 'times', maybe a special occasion or a holiday...
 - Does one stick out for any reason?
- Educational transitions –
- About education – tell me about school.
 - What are/were your favourite subjects? Tell me more about those and why?
 - If finished school – What have you decided to do now school has finished?
 - Have you taken any classes outside of school?
 - What do you think you learnt at school which was not taught formally?
- After school, tell me about your career plans.
 - What would your ideal job be?
 - Do you have a job? What jobs have you had?
 - Where would you like to be in 1 year's time in terms of work or post-school life?
 - What might it take to achieve this?
 - What about long term? Maybe a career?
- Outside of education now, what are your responsibilities?
 - How about in the family? For example is there something that you are expected to do?
 - Or in the community? Do you perhaps volunteer, or are you part of a group, what is your role?
 - What about in society itself, what are priorities for you as a person?
- I would like to ask you about the past.
 - Can you tell me one or two events that have been key for you growing up?

- Perhaps this is growing up in a particular place, something you went through?
- What were your life goals when you were younger, say two or three years ago?
- Why have/may these have changed?
- I would now like to ask you about the future.
 - Where would you like to be in the future? Here in Northumberland? The UK? Elsewhere?
 - What do you see yourself doing in the near future maybe 3 years time? And what about the more distant future maybe five to ten years time?
 - Can you see any challenges ahead? How might you face these?
 - So what would be your main hope for the future?
- Could you tell me about your friendships.
 - What do you do in your free social time?
 - With whom, is there a certain group you meet with most often? Or perhaps more than one?
 - Where do you know these people/groups from?
 - Do you tend to spend most of your free time with people of your own age? Is there a reason?
 - What about their post-school hopes, what do they plan to do?
 - What about people of the opposite gender, in your circle of friends made up on mixed gender? Why might this be the case?
- I would like you to tell me something about your family.
 - What are your parents' main occupation(s), perhaps they had a few, what were they?
 - What do you tend to do with your parents?
 - Do you have any siblings?
 - What is their main occupation?
 - How might your parents views fit in with your hopes for the future? Have they have any influence here?
 - Tell me about other relatives you have? What role(s) have they played in your upbringing?
- What about other role models.
 - Are there any important people to you who are not family?
 - What role do they or have they played in your life?
 - Is anyone influential to you who you don't personally know? For example a leader of some kind, or even someone famous to you?
- Personal priorities and the future
- I would like you to talk to me about your expectations for the future.
 - What do you imagine your future to be like? Do you have any expectations?
 - Are there others who have influenced this? How?
 - What are you doing to achieve these expectations?
 - What do you prioritise for the future, regardless of any expectations?

- How, if you think they have, have your attitudes towards expectation and priority changed over time?
- What do you think might cause you to re-evaluate in terms of the future?
- Tell me about your life at the present time.
 - Do you have a life plan? Where do you see yourself in this today?
 - Perhaps things are not this structured for you, describe the current situation you think you are in.
 - How do you hope your current situation will change? And what will you need to do in order to change it?
 - Maybe you've talked to others about your life as it is today, who has offered guidance? Can you give a couple of examples?
- Tell me about your goals for the future.
 - Do you have one main important goal? Perhaps there are more, give two or three?
 - Earlier we talked about how ideas for the future might have changed over time, what do you think has been influential on this change?
 - For example is a person(s) influential? An event?
 - Maybe a personal change?
- Talk to me about any challenges you feel you may encounter.
 - What challenges might there be ahead regarding your future goals?
 - How do you think you will face these challenges?
 - When challenged in the past, is there something you found got you through it? For example maybe music or another release?
- Is there anything you feel would be important to add for this study before we finish the interview?

Appendix L: Interview Schedule with Young People – Follow-up Interview

Follow-up Interview Schedule with the young Poles

Thanks for agreeing to meet with me again. I really appreciate your time. It was fascinating listening to your story last time. I've met with 20 people and I have really enjoyed getting to know more about you all and your experiences of migration. First, I want to ask some questions based on your first interview. I will then ask you some questions that form the basis for the big themes of analysis for my project. It is totally fine if you disagree with anything that I do ask, or if there is anything that you don't want to answer. I am particularly interested in what your thoughts are in relation to these key themes.

- Could you tell me about some of the things that you have been up to since we last met?

Questions based on first interview

-
-
-
-
-

Transitions

- Thinking about the person that you are now, what do you think would have been different if you had not migrated and had remained in Poland?
- Could you tell me about some of the relationships that you have with people that have remained in Poland? How do your family and friends feel about you living here? Do they see any changes?
- Who are the most important people in your experiences? How and in what ways have they supported you?

Language

- How important is it to you to speak in English?
- How important is it to you to speak in Polish?
- To what extent do you think proficiency in English has on how other people feel and act towards you?
- What differences do you see between those that actively learn and speak English and those that do not?

Everyday life

In the first interviews there were some really interesting insights into the young Poles' everyday lives.

- From the first interviews it could be suggested that being part of the Polish community in Northumberland is challenging. Do you identify with this? How and in what ways?
- Could you tell me what it's like to be a young person in Northumberland? What differences do you see between here and Poland? Elsewhere?

- Could you tell me about the relationships that you have with other young Poles in Northumberland? Other people in Northumberland that haven't migrated from Poland?
- Some felt that it was difficult to build relationships, what things determine who you can or cannot trust?
- What does home mean to you? Where do you see as your home? Has this shifted or changed at all?
- Do you feel you know Northumberland well? Do you feel at home here? Are there any parts of Northumberland you don't feel comfortable going? Why?

Return visits to Poland

- Have you recently been back to Poland? Why/why not? How do you feel when you return to Poland? What do you get up to on return visits? Did you feel more or less Polish/British/neither/something else? How did you feel when you returned to Northumberland/UK?

Migration

- How did you feel when you first moved?
- How do you feel about the experience now?
- How has the experience of migration changed your views of the world?
- Do you think the experience of migration has impacted on your day to day life? How, and in what ways?
- Do you think the experience of migration has or is influencing the choices and decisions that you are making about the future? How, and in what ways?

Future

- Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
 - Where do you see yourself in ten years' time?
 - Where do you see yourself in twenty years' time?
 - Do you think you will stay in Northumberland/UK or return to Poland?
-
- Before we conclude the interview is there anything further that you'd like to add?

Full Ethical Assessment Form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH PROJECT FROM FACULTY ETHICS COMMITTEE

This application form is to be used by **STAFF** and **PGR STUDENTS** seeking ethical approval for an individual research project where preliminary ethical assessment has indicated that full ethical review is required.

A completed version of this document should be emailed to the Secretary of your appropriate Faculty Ethics Committee in the University. *Applications must be completed on this form; attachments will not be accepted other than those requested on this form. This form has been designed to be completed electronically; no handwritten applications will be accepted.*

Research must NOT begin until approval has been received from the appropriate Faculty Ethics Committee.

Section 1: Applicant Details

Applicant Name	Sean Gill
Contact Email	Sean.Gill@newcastle.ac.uk
Academic Unit	Human Geography, HASS
Applicant Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate Taught <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate Research

Section 2: Project Details

Project Title	Transitions to adulthood: Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland
MyProjects Reference	
Already has ethical approval	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Project Funder(s)	ESRC – North East Doctoral Training Centre
Other organisations involved	Northumberland County Council

Proposed Start / End Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	Start Date May/June 2014	End Date September 2016
Category	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Research Course	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate Research <input type="checkbox"/>
Preliminary Ethical Flag(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Animals <input type="checkbox"/> NHS Clinical	<input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Data <input type="checkbox"/> International (non EEA) <input type="checkbox"/> Humans Non-Clinical
Supervisor (Student Research projects only)	Alison Stenning and Peter Hopkins	
Who is responsible for the overall <u>management</u> of the research? Name & post.	Sean Gill, PhD Student	
Who <u>designed</u> the research? Name & post.	Sean Gill, PhD Student	
Who is <u>conducting</u> the research? Name & post.	Sean Gill, PhD Student	
Is this a re-approval of an existing project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Project type: Please mark the predominant nature of this project (one only).	<input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaire / Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Experiments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Observational <input type="checkbox"/> Data based <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other- define: Interviews and Participatory Research	
Has Peer Review taken place	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes By: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Section 3: Project Outline & Proposed Research methods

Project outline & aims

Briefly describe the aims of this research, including the anticipated benefits and risks. This description must be in everyday language. If any jargon, technical terms or discipline-specific phrases are used, these should be explained. Please use no more than 500 words.

This research is an exploration of the lives and aspirations of young Poles (aged 16-25) growing up in the towns and villages of Northumberland, paying particular attention to their transitions to adulthood and the geographies of these transitions. Transitions to adulthood

are always complicated and complex; the experiences for migrant youth is ever more complicated, connected to a very particular set of experiences and geographies that this research seeks to explore. The research objectives are: to investigate the everyday geographies and senses of belonging of young Poles' in Northumberland, to explore the role and influence of young Poles' family, social and support networks, and to explore the young Poles' choices, aspirations and feelings about their future education and work lives.

I intend to conduct around 8 interviews with stakeholders and 2 participatory diagramming sessions and 20 interviews with young people (aged 16 through to 25). The stakeholder interviews will be conducted with a selection of organisations that work with the young Poles – gaining insight into the contexts of Polish transitions to adulthood in Northumberland. The participatory diagramming sessions (which will ideally include around 6-8 young people in each) will explore their hopes and fears for the future, what would help them to achieve future hopes and any possible obstacles, their relationships with family and friends, and their interests and social worlds. Following this, individual interviews will access in-depth narratives around the young Poles' everyday lives, senses of belonging, role and influence of family, social and support networks and choices, aspirations and feelings about their future education and work lives. Follow up interviews will then take place six months later.

Proposed research methods (Experimental design)

Please provide an outline, in layman's terms, of the proposed research methods. Specify whether the research will take place outside of the UK or in collaboration with partners based outside the UK, and/or if research will take place using the internet. Present an outline of the method in a step-by-step chronological order, and avoid using jargon and technical terms as much as possible. Ensure you describe the key tasks including how data will be collected and used. Please do not exceed 500 words.

As noted above, this research will involve individual interviews with stakeholders, and participatory diagramming and individual interviews with young people. Stakeholder interviews will be held in the offices of the stakeholder being interviewed or in an office space at Newcastle University. Participatory diagramming sessions with young people will be held in a variety of locations depending on the group participating in the research. Likely locations for participatory diagramming sessions include high schools, university, community and voluntary organisations and youth groups. Likewise, the individual interviews are also likely to take place in similar locations and according to the needs and wishes of the young people participating in the research. With the permission of those participating, all interviews and participatory diagramming sessions will be recorded using a Dictaphone. Once collected, all data will be stored on password protected USBs, and will only be accessible by me and my supervisory team. For all of the young Poles and those stakeholders that request, all data will be fully anonymised to make sure that it is non-attributable. Material generated from interviews and participatory diagramming sessions will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The young Poles will be informed that their responses will be anonymised and non-attributable and that pseudonyms will be used for each of the participating individuals. All interviews and participatory diagramming sessions will take place in Northumberland and will involve face-to-face interaction with me; as a result I will complete a DBS (previously CRB) check before beginning work with the participants.

Northumberland County Council (the collaborative partner) has agreed to assist with access and the identification of potential participants. Access to participants who have already left

school will be managed through these contacts and others in the county (such as the Northumberland Employability and Work Service, English as an Additional Language teams, and youth workers).

- Phase 1: Stakeholder Interviews
- Phase 2: Participatory diagramming with young people
- Phase 3: Individual interviews with young people

Section 4: Environment

(Complete this section only if the project was flagged 'environment' at preliminary review.)

Please provide the locations in which your research will take place, together with the anticipated risks (destruction of habitat or artefacts/emissions, etc.), potential damage and mitigating measures planned. Please use no more than 700 words.

N/A

Section 5: Human participants in a Non-Clinical Setting

(Complete this section only if the project was flagged 'Human Participants in a Non-Clinical Setting' at preliminary review)

Participant Details

Does this research specifically target participants recruited by virtue of being (select all that apply):	<input type="checkbox"/> Students or staff of this University <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults (over the age of 18 years and competent to give consent) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children/legal minors (anyone under the age of 18 years) <input type="checkbox"/> Persons incapable of giving informed consent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People from non-English speaking backgrounds <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare recipients <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoner or parolee
Does the study involve recruiting participants through a gatekeeper?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Number of participants required for the study	28 (assuming 8 stakeholders and 20 young people (20 individual and follow-up interviews and 2 groups of 8 participatory diagramming sessions))

Source and means by which participants are to be recruited:	Northumberland County Council (the collaborative partner) has agreed to assist with access and the identification of potential participants. Access to participants who have already left school will be managed through these contacts and others in the county (such as the Northumberland Employability and Work Service, English as an Additional Language teams, and youth workers).
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Participant Information
NO

YES

Will you inform participants that their participation is voluntary?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will you inform participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will you inform participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will you provide an information sheet that will include the contact details of the researcher/team?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will you obtain written consent for participation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e., give them an explanation of the study and its aims and hypotheses)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will you provide participants with written debriefing (i.e., a sheet that they can keep that shows your contact details and explanations of the study)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If using a questionnaire, will you give participants the option of omitting questions that they do not want to answer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If an experiment, will you describe the main experimental procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant consent

Please describe the arrangements you are making **to inform potential participants**, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating in your study and the use of any identifiable data, and whether you have any reasons for withholding particular information. Due consideration must be given to the possibility that the provision of financial or other incentives may impair participants' ability to consent voluntarily. (No more than 300 words)

All potential participants will be provided with an information leaflet about the research so that they can find out more about the project. I have designed three information leaflets which can be given to stakeholders, the young people who want to participate in the

research, and the parents/carers of the young people (if the relevant school feels that this is necessary). All potential participants will be given the opportunity to read the information leaflet and ask any questions about the project before being asked if they want to participate (as which point, and if they want to participate, they will be asked to read and sign a consent form). Consent forms have also been created for parents/carers if schools or relevant organisations believe that it is necessary to seek their permission.

Participants should be able to **provide written consent**. Please describe the arrangements you are making for participants to provide their full consent before data collection begins. If you think gaining consent in this way is inappropriate for your project, please explain how consent will be obtained and recorded. (No more than 300 words)

In research with vulnerable groups informed consent needs to be addressed carefully. This means that the nature of their involvement must be explained, the aims and objectives of the research made clear, and be in terms that are appropriate to their levels of comprehension. Informed consent requires that participants understand the nature and purpose of the research, and their right to refuse to participate and to withdraw at any time during, or for any part of the study. By accessing young people through government and community organisations, their ability to refuse to participate may be compromised by the institutional framework, and therefore an opt-in form rather than opt-out form will be used.

Informed consent will be sought from the outset, and all participants will be asked to sign a consent form to indicate their willingness to participate in the research. The research will be carried out in English; although this will be most participants' second language, they will all have good competence having been educated in British schools. Nevertheless, I am aware of additional language issues in informed consent, consent forms and information sheets will be carefully translated from English to Polish and a Polish speaker will be available throughout the research should these prove to be necessary. They are employed by the collaborative partner (Northumberland County Council) so will therefore be DBS approved. As young people are involved in the research, the consent of the young people to continue their involvement with the project will be affirmed continuously and all participants will be reminded that they can withdraw from the research at any time, without having to give a reason. Participants will be informed of the limits to confidentiality: that confidentiality will not be maintained if information is disclosed which reveals that a young person is at risk of harm or is causing harm to others such as physical or sexual abuse. It will be requested that the discussion or interview can be recorded by a Dictaphone and explained that recordings will only be heard by me, and the data will be held securely and only accessible by me and my supervisors.

Please attach a copy of the information to be provided to the participant(s) to enable informed consent. This should include the 'Consent Form' & 'Participant Information Sheet' on appropriately headed paper.

Participant debriefing

It is a researcher's obligation to ensure that all participants are fully informed of the aims and methodology of the project, that they feel respected and appreciated after they leave the

study, and that they do not experience significant levels of stress, discomfort, or unease in relation to the research project. Please describe whether, when, and how participants will be debriefed. (No more than 300 words)

The participants will not be debriefed per se, as informed consent will be sought from the start. All participants will be made aware of the aims and objectives of the study from the outset. Therefore there is no need to repeat this at the end. Second interviews with the young Poles will take place 6 months following the first, at the second interview they will be asked what their experience was like as a participant. The participants will be asked if they would like to see a copy of their interview transcript(s) and invited to respond to it. All participants will be thanked for their time and reminded that my contact details are included on the information leaflet that they have to take away with them. In addition, all participants will be reminded that their participation was confidential.

Please attach a copy of any debriefing sheet that you may provide on appropriately headed paper.

Potential risk to participants and risk management procedures

Identify, as far as possible, all potential risks (small and large) to participants (e.g. physical, psychological, etc.) that may be associated with the proposed research. Please explain any risk management procedures that will be put in place and attach any risk assessments or other supporting documents. Please answer as fully as possible. (No more than 300 words)

This research presents no physical risks to participants. Although no difficulties are foreseen, those participating will be offered information on services that can be accessed for confidential advice or support should this be deemed appropriate.

Section 6: Data

Please attach a copy of your data management plan (if available) or alternatively note where appropriate: whether consent will be sought, how data will be accessed, how participants' confidentiality will be protected, and any other relevant considerations. Information must be provided on the full data lifecycle, from collection to archive. If you do not have a data management plan, funder-specific plans are available from the Digital Curation Centre. See <https://dmponline.dcc.ac.uk/>

I will implement a strong data management plan (attached) to ensure the anonymity of the young Poles and those stakeholders that request this. As already noted, consent will be sought from participants and a strict code of anonymity will be enforced. During transcription code names will be applied to both the participants and their organisation/place of work if mentioned. The key for code names will only be accessible to the researcher and two supervisors. The digital recordings and key code will be stored on two password protected USB devices, both of which will be locked in secure locations with the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology. The information will be stored for 5 years following PhD completion and will then be destroyed.

Section 7: Permissions (Inc Overseas)

Overseas: For any research conducted outside the [EEA](#) the researcher is responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. If relevant please complete the table below otherwise move on to the permissions table.

Is the research to be conducted outside the EEA ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If 'Yes' please state the location(s):	
Have the appropriate local ethical considerations been complied with and relevant permissions sought?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (awarded) – Please note in table below <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (pending) – Please note in table below <input type="checkbox"/> No

Permissions: Please use the table below to record details of licenses or permissions required and / or applied for e.g. LEA, governing body, etc along with the reference, status and the date when it was granted.

Permission / License	Award Body	Reference Number	Date of Permission	Status e.g. Granted / Pending

Section 8: Risk Considerations & Insurance

Newcastle University must have in place appropriate insurance cover for its legal liabilities for research studies. Dependent upon the nature of the research and how it is governed cover will either come under Clinical Trials Insurance or Public Liability Insurance. Please refer to the supplementary guidance "[When does the Insurance Office need to be notified of a research proposal?](#)" for clarification.

Potential risk to researchers and risk management procedures

What are the potential risks to researchers themselves? This may include: personal safety issues, such as those related to lone or out of normal hours working or to visiting participants in their homes; travel arrangements, including overseas travel; and working in unfamiliar environments. Please explain any risk management procedures that will be put in place and attach any risk assessments or other supporting documents. (No more than 300 words)

I will always inform my supervisors of planned fieldwork location and timings and will phone in upon completion of fieldwork or to inform them of any delays. Should I not phone in at the specified time, and following one hour, the emergency services will be contacted. I have attached a lone working policy that will be followed.

I will ensure that I take time off every now and again, treating myself well and being highly aware of my own emotional state. My supervisors are experienced in working with young people or vulnerable groups and will be able to support me.

Please attach a risk assessment or any other appropriate documents as required.


Section 9: Supporting documentation

Please supply copies of any applicable and documents in support of your answers. Ensure that attached files have appropriate file names.

Document	Attached
Participant consent form – 1. Young People 2. Parents 3. Stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Participant information sheet – 1. Young People/Parents 2. Stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Participant debriefing document	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questionnaire(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outline protocol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project risk assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel risk assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Original ethical assessment (re-approval only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data management plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Peer review evidence (Internal / non funded)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local permissions / licenses (non EEA)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ethical review forms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others (please list): Lone working policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Section 10: Declaration

I certify that the information contained in this application is accurate. I have attempted to identify the risks that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. I confirm that the research will be conducted in line with all University, legal and local ethical standards.

Name of Principal Investigator:	Sean Gill
Signed:	
Date:	20/06/2014

If you have any queries on this form, please contact your Faculty Ethics Coordinator or visit the website at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/res/research>

Please email or send this form to the appropriate Faculty Ethics Coordinator

For office use only:

The appropriate Ethics Committee has considered the ethical aspects of this proposal. The committee recommends that the programme/project be:

Approved

deferred (for reasons attached)

not approved

Name of Committee Member:	
Ethics Committee Concerned:	
Signed:	
Date:	

Wendy Davison

Thu 14/08/2014, 13:54

Dear Sean

Thank you for your application for ethical approval of your project "Transitions to adulthood: Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland". I confirm that Prof Andy Gillespie has approved it on behalf of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Please note that this approval applies to the project protocol as stated in your application - if any amendments are made to this during the course of the project, please submit the revisions to the Ethics Committee in order for them to be reviewed and approved.

Kind regards,
Wendy

Wendy Davison

PA to Andy Gillespie (Acting Dean of Research), Lorna Taylor (Faculty Research Manager) and Sue Mitchell (Research Funding Development Manager)

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Daysh Building, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU



Telephone: 0191 208 6349

Fax: 0191 208 7001

Appendix N: Fieldwork and Travel Risk Assessment

<h1>Newcastle University School of GPS</h1> <h2>Fieldwork & Travel Risk Assessment</h2>			
Note	<p>Travelling without appropriate risk assessment may prejudice subsequent insurance claims.</p> <p>One copy of your signed RA must be left with the GPS School Safety Officer. You must take the other signed copy with you on your fieldwork.</p>		
Project or Module Title	Transitions to adulthood: Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland		
PI / Module Leader	Sean Gill	Travellers	Sean Gill
School	GPS	Unit (Geog/Soc/Pol)	Geography
Travel and/or Fieldwork dates	May/June 2014 – September 2015	Date of assessment	12.06.2014
Fieldwork Location(s) (attach map)	Northumberland		
<h3>Emergency Contacts</h3> <p>* = required for overseas travel only</p>			
Contact overseas*			
Accommodation	Day visits only		
Emergency Services	<p>Dial 999.</p> <p>Relevant hospitals and police stations are provided below depending on fieldwork location:</p> <p>Hospitals</p> <p>Wansbeck General Hospital – Woodhorn Lane, Ashington, NE62 9JJ</p> <p>Hexham General Hospital – Corbridge Road, Hexham, NE46 1QJ</p> <p>Berwick Infirmary – Infirmary Square, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1LT</p> <p>Haltwhistle War Memorial Hospital – Westgate, Haltwhistle, NE49 9AJ</p> <p>Blyth Community Hospital – Thoroton Street, Blyth, NE24 1DX</p> <p>Morpeth NHS Centre – Dark Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1JY</p> <p>All to be contacted on 0344 811 8111</p> <p>Police Stations</p> <p>Alnwick – NE66 1UJ</p> <p>Ashington – NE63 8HD</p> <p>Bedlington – NE22 7LA</p> <p>Berwick – TD15 1DZ</p> <p>Blyth – NE24 3AA</p>		

	Cramlington – NE23 6SB Local Police contact on 101		
British Embassy*			
Insurance*	Emergency claims – Chubb Assistance: +44 (0) 207 895 3364 - provide a contact & policy number: 64811698 for UG students and 64811697 for PG and Staff. Contact NU for all claims – insurance@ncl.ac.uk Tel: +44 (0) 191 222 6520		
Newcastle University Contact (NU)	Professor Alison Stenning – Alison.Stenning@newcastle.ac.uk Professor Peter Hopkins – Peter.Hopkins@newcastle.ac.uk		
Travel and/or Fieldwork Itinerary	Various visits to schools, organisations and Further and Higher Education Colleges in Northumberland from May/June 2014 through to September 2015 as deemed necessary.		
Does this travel and activity present a significant risk to safety <i>(You must still identify all relevant hazards & risks below, even if you tick 'No'. Common hazards are suggested below, but add additional hazards if needed)</i> - Refer to the GPS Field Safety Guide and the GPS Researcher Handbook for information on common fieldwork hazards in Physical and Social Sciences http://www.ncl.ac.uk/gps/internal/safety.html - Refer to the Safety Office website for example overseas travel RAs https://safety.ncl.ac.uk/travelabroad.aspx - Refer to the FCO website for country-specific advice https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice		Yes	No
Hazard 1	Travel & Transport <i>(Think of vehicles, roads, public transport)</i>		
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field locations will be accessed via my own private car 		
Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that car has a valid MOT and car insurance Obey all traffic regulations and speed limits Always let someone know where I am going and what time I will be back Make sure that mobile phone is fully charged so that I am able to contact someone should there be any problems Always ensure have satellite navigation system and AA route printed for all journeys During each field activity carry enough money should I have to return on public transport Ensure have enough fuel to cover journey and that the car is safe to drive 		
Hazard 2	Accommodation <i>(Think of security and fire safety standards)</i>		
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		
Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		
Hazard 3	Dealing with people and cultural differences <i>(Think of safety in public places, culture, political issues, landowners, authorities)</i>		
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory diagramming and interviews will be conducted independently 		
Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any risks will be minimised by ensuring my supervisors are aware of my research schedule and checking in and out with supervisions, friend, parents or flatmate on fieldwork visits Lone Work Policy is attached and will be followed closely 		
Hazard 4	Infections and health conditions <i>(Think of food, clean water, pests, immunizations, allergies.)</i>		
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dehydration 		
Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will ensure that I have water with me to remain hydrated and carry food and biscuits to remain fuelled. 		

Hazard 5	Extreme weather conditions (<i>Consider hot/cold/wet climates, hurricane season, etc</i>)	
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unforeseen weather conditions 	
Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will check the weather forecast prior to fieldwork. • I will ensure that I pack appropriate clothing and resources. 	
Hazard	Fieldwork Activities (<i>Add more space as needed to list all activities. Eg. Interviews, focus groups, visits to companies/organisations and their regulations, lone working, water/soil sampling, coring, hazardous equipment, transporting heavy samples/equipment, and hazardous locations eg. cliffs, rivers, tides, soft sediments, volcanoes, glaciers</i>)	
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldwork activities in various locations across urban, suburban and rural Northumberland (specific locations will be submitted once these are available) 	
Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with local safety rules • Obey any directions from emergency services • See travel and transport section for further details 	
Hazard	Specific FCO advice relating to this location (<i>overseas travel only</i>)	
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Hazard		
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
	Emergency Procedures (<i>You need an emergency plan even if you are undertaking UK based fieldwork</i>)	
	Emergency plan will be to seek medical assistance as soon as possible following any incident. I will always carry my mobile phone and will either call or send a text to my supervisors should any incident occur.	
Assessor		
Name: Mr Sean Gill	Signature: 	Date 08 July 2014
PI / Module Leader / Line Manager / Supervisor		
Name: Prof Peter Hopkins	Signature: 	Date 15 July 2014

Appendix O: Lone Working Protocol

Transitions to adulthood: Young Poles' experiences of migration and life in Northumberland Lone Working Protocol

VISITS TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS' HOME, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY CENTRE OR OTHER FACILITY

Planning the visit

- Participants should be informed in advance of the purpose of the visit.
- Telephone confirmation of the meeting time and date will occur before travel.
- Route to be planned especially when the area is unfamiliar. Parking options to be considered.
- Avoid evening visits or late afternoon in winter months even to areas that I would normally consider safe.

Making the visit

- Ensure supervisors are aware of my timetable.
- Login with one supervisor before commencing the visit.
- Keep my mobile phone switched on and at reach at all times.
- Only log out with supervisor when the visit is complete.
- If during my visit I encounter any problems make sure that this is reported to my supervisor.
- If I do not log in with supervisor the database of gatekeepers' personal details will be accessed and they will be contacted to check whether or not I have arrived.
- If they can still not be contacted the police will be contacted.

CAR SAFETY

The following guidelines will be adhered to when making a car journey during the course of my research.

General Advice

- Plan route and parking options carefully. Always carry a current A-Z area map.
- Ensure car is well maintained and has sufficient fuel.
- Carry a torch for emergencies.
- Valuables should be locked in the boot and not kept on me personally. Do not carry large sums of money, chequebooks and/or credit cards unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Lock car doors and windows whilst driving but especially when stationary at a junction or traffic lights. Stay alert when stationary, particularly in areas of notoriety.
- During summer months it is preferable to use a sunroof to aid ventilation. Should I have to open my car window it is important to remain vigilant, especially when stationary.
- Do not, under any circumstances, pick up anyone in my car even if they are vaguely familiar to me or their cause seems genuine.
- Never leave car unlocked or unattended when removing items of equipment. It takes seconds for an opportunist thief to act and remove items from the car.
- Have keys ready when returning to the car. Avoid the need to search my bag for them.

Personal Safety Advice

- Should I believe that I am being followed whilst driving I should drive to the nearest Police Station (providing I know of its location) or alternatively pull into a garage, shop or public house. Call the police immediately if you feel unsafe to drive away safely.
- Should a person or persons enter my car whilst I am stationary I must remain calm, sound the car horn continuously and switch on hazard warning lights – hopefully this will attract attention. Shout for assistance as loudly as I can. Never, under any circumstances will I attempt to chase after the assailant. Despite my anger no items are more valuable than my life! Should the assailant attempt to remove valuables or goods from me I must not compromise my personal safety by putting up a struggle.

In the event of a breakdown

- Pull off the road and switch on the hazard warning lights.
- Use my mobile phone to contact my breakdown company or police as appropriate to circumstances.
- Stay in car with all doors and windows locked if safe to do so. Await assistance. Staying in the car on the hard shoulder of the motorway is not considered safe. Walk up the embankment a safe distance and wait.

- It is preferable not to agree to assistance from any well-meaning passersby unless I am totally confident of their intention.

In the event of car crime

- Report to the police and ask to be issued with a crime number for insurance purposes.

NUISANCE CALLS/HARASSMENT

- All participants will be issued with the project mobile phone number. Under no circumstances will I issue my individual personal mobile telephone number to anyone engaged in the research project.
- I will keep individual copies of telephone numbers safe to maximise security.
- If contacting a participant from home or on my personal mobile telephone, I will always prefix the participants' number with the digits 141 thereby ensuring they cannot trace my individual telephone number.

Appendix P: Data Management Plan

Data Management Plan

Outlined below is the Data Management Plan that will be adhered to in this research.

Data Collection:

All data will be collected through participatory diagramming sessions and narrative interviews with the young people and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders or relevant organisations/contacts. The researcher Sean Gill will be responsible for these. The data will be recorded through the use of a Dictaphone and transcribed by the researcher.

Anonymity of participants:

The details of participants will be anonymised. After the data has been collected, the researcher will create a key code to anonymise the data that pertains both the participant and other identifiable features, such as their place of work or study. This key code will be stored on a password protected USB drive that will only be accessible to the researcher and the two supervisors. The USB will be locked in a secure filing cabinet in the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology general office.

Data Storage:

All interview recordings will be stored on two password protected USB sticks. The master copy will be stored in a secure filing cabinet in the geography school's general office, and the researcher will retain the second copy in a set of lockable drawers in the geography school. Access to either of these USB sticks will only be available to the researcher and two supervisors. The key code which identifies which transcript pertains to which participant will also be stored on the USB sticks.

After all data pertaining to the participant has been removed from the transcripts, they will be included in the researcher's PhD thesis.

Data Retention:

Data will be retained for 5 years, after which time, the two secure USB sticks will be wiped.

Rights of participant to information

Under s. 7(1)(a) Data Protection Act 1998, the researcher is obliged to provide the participant with information about how their personal data is being collected and will be stored. The researcher has clearly highlighted this on the information sheets and will explain this to the participant before the interview.

In an attempt to go beyond the rights in the Data Protection Act 1998, the researcher will also make clear to the participant that they may withdraw from the research at any time and request for their information to be destroyed.

No more personal data than is absolutely necessary for the researcher will be obtained from the participant. The participant has the option to refuse to provide information or answer any question.