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An Exploratory Longitudinal Acculturation Study with Polish Immigrant Teenagers in Ireland – Parental and Children's Perspectives

A thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology at Trinity College, University of Dublin, in fulfilment of the requirements of the award of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2013

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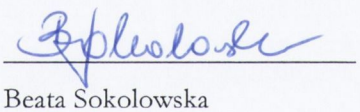

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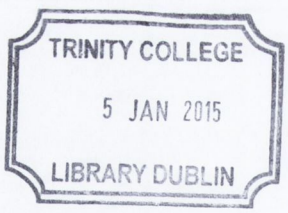

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Summary

The objective of this research project was to understand how young immigrants adjust to their new socio-cultural context, and to contribute to the existing understanding of the social phenomena of acculturation, on the example of the Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland. This included exploration of the transnational migration and socio-cultural adjustment from Polish parents and key informants' perspectives. The main aim of the research was to ascertain what it is like to be a Polish immigrant teenager in Ireland. The research was conducted by using the qualitative multi-actor longitudinal design that combined qualitative interviews with standardised measurements in order to examine the *acculturation process*.

The findings reveal that Polish immigrant parents were not aware that by leaving behind, and later uprooting their teenage children, they caused a major disruption in their lives. In addition, the experience of separation from and reunification with parents in conjunction with parental downward mobility in the host country required very dynamic and demanding family relationships. There is also evidence that sometimes relations with peers from other ethnic groups can lead to acculturative stress, negative social mirroring, and bullying. Resources to cope with challenging situations such as friendship networks and the extended family were more difficult to access due to the relocation.

This research incorporates intercultural angle to micro-level analysis, which reflects acculturation multidimensionality and transitionality. Finally, it also redresses our contemporary understanding of acculturation by focusing on the *acculturation process*.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Peter Mühlau whose assistance was indispensable throughout this research project. Warm thanks to my colleagues for their advice and recommendations – thank you – all of you and each of you. I am immensely grateful to the Polish immigrant families who shared their incredible migratory encounters. Finally, I would especially like to thank my loving family for their patience and ongoing support during the last four years.

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Chapter 1

An introduction to the sociological inquiry into acculturation of Polish teenagers in Ireland

> 'In order to ensure that [all] children [including immigrant children] attain what society wishes for them [...] we must have an understanding of children and how they develop, what factors adversely affect their progress and what factors will promote their optimum development. Gaining this understanding is the driving force behind past, present, and future research with children and crosses all professional boundaries'
>
> (Greig *et al.* 2007:6).

1.1 Background to the thesis

When I arrived in Ireland in the summer of 2006, at the peak of the economic boom known as the 'Celtic Tiger' era, the Polish language could be heard almost on every street in the Greater Dublin area. Historically, Ireland even after gaining its independence in 1921 was characterised for a long time by waves of emigration. Shortly after the introduction of the Programme for National Recover (PRN) in 1987, within a space of roughly ten years, Ireland developed one of the most dynamic economies in the world (McCoy 2006). The economic growth that turned Ireland from a poor to a rich country, at the same time moved Ireland, 'from being a country of emigration to a country of immigration' (see Wickham *et al.* 2009:82). Immigration influx naturally became part of the Irish 'Celtic Tiger' culture however:

> 'What gained a lot of public and then academic interest, was the fact that a relatively large group of Polish nationals decided to seek new opportunities in Ireland, a country that had played a very minor role on the map of migrations from Poland before the EU enlargement'
>
> (Bobek 2011:4).

In 2004, Poland, along with many other Eastern European countries, became a member of the European Union (EU)[1]. Understandably, when only three countries [Ireland, United Kingdom, and Sweden] opened their borders and labour markets

[1] The Eastern European countries were: Czech Republic; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Poland; Slovakia and Slovenia. At the same time, Cyprus and Malta also became members of the EU.

without any restrictions on the 1st of May 2004, Poles choices were taken on foot of spoken language.

The majority of entrants to Ireland tended to be inexperienced migrants, often unfamiliar with Irish culture. It is not commonly known that before the 2004 EU enlargement, many prospective Polish immigrants had a very vague idea of the geographical location of Ireland, and very little knowledge of its political and historical context (Bell 2012; Burrell 2009; Kempny 2010). However, this new migration (Giddens 2008), particularly in the context of Poland and Polish EU accession, meant that the Irish job market attracted tens of thousands of Poles. It became a new 'Mecca' for Polish immigrants, who like others, arrived here seeking economic opportunities (Dzieglewski 2010; Grabowska-Lusinska and Okólski 2008; Okólski 2010; Wickham *et al.* 2009). According to the Personal Public Service Number Statistics, Polish nationals had quickly become a significant immigrant population in Ireland. Almost 400,000 Poles, received Irish PPS numbers between 2004 and 2009[2] marking an important shift in the Irish migration profile (Table 1.1).

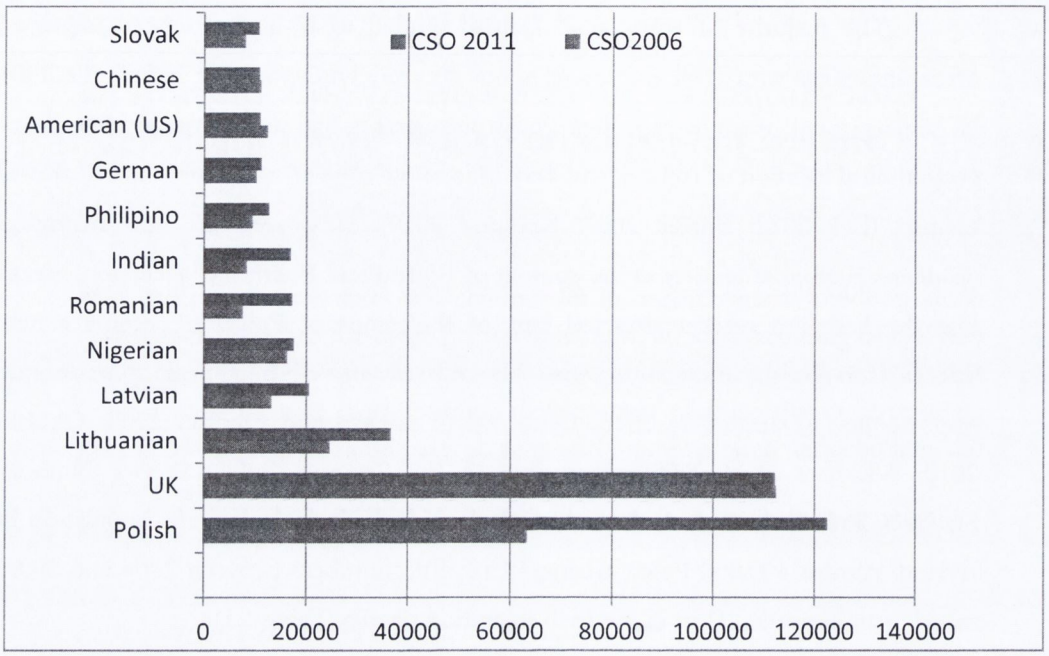
Table 1.1 Personal Public Service Number: statistics on numbers issued to Polish nationals 2000-2009

	2000	2001	2002	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
POLAND	570	2,259	2,649	3,828	27,295	64,731	93,787	79,816	93,787	42,553	13,794

A quick review of the recent data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) indicates that between 2006 and 2011, the number of non-Irish nationals increased by 29.7% (CSO 2012: 33). The increase was particularly evident among some national groups (see Figure 1.1 below).

[2] PPS statistics http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Topics/PPSN/Pages/ppsstat.aspx

Figure 1.1 Persons usually resident by nationality for selected countries 2006-2011



Source: CSO 2012

Figure 1.1 shows that the rise was particularly marked among Polish nationals, notwithstanding that the overall number of immigrant adolescent children increased by 49.7% between 2006 and 2011 (CSO 2012:34).

The post-2004 European Union (EU) enlargement influenced the migratory patterns in terms of its new destinations. This profound shift almost immediately started occupying sociological literature (see Bobek 2011; Dzieglewski 2010; Ignatowicz 2010; Kahanec *et al.* 2010; Mioduszewska 2008; Salamonska 2012; Wickham *et al.* 2009) attracting various social discourses on immigrant influx phenomena:

> 'At the moment we can only speculate whether this increase in the volume of long-term outflow migration will result in settlement emigration. This, in fact constitutes one of the most important puzzles and unresolved issues in recent debates on migration from Poland'
>
> (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009:26).

For Poles who considered migration during the 'Celtic Tiger' era, the *'Emerald Isle'* had become a land of opportunity offering abundance of jobs with generous wages, leaving immigrants better off in comparison to their Polish counterparts who stayed in Poland. Over time, a considerable number of Poles with their school-age children

migrated to Ireland. Presently these immigrant children are moving through the Irish education system (Darmody *et al.* 2012; Faas and Ross 2012).

I - the researcher, was one of those parents who availed of the EU enlargement opportunity. Afterwards my husband and my two teenage daughters followed me to Ireland, where we soon realised that adjusting to our new life was a long and stressful process because apart from family reunification, Polish émigré parents had to face a new reality, namely their own and their children's acculturation. Given my own personal experience - if I had known how difficult it would be for my children to adapt - I probably would never have decided to migrate. With only basic English, with a lack of knowledge of the host society and culture, my twins started their acculturation journey quite abruptly in the summer of 2006. Disillusioned and angry for a long time they nagged me to change my mind and to return to Poland. Disappointment was mutual. My parental strong belief that children will open their 'hearts and souls' to the Western opportunities was 'buried in ashes' within weeks. Notwithstanding this, I was reminded almost every day that they [my children] were uprooted, taken from their homeland, deprived of valuable friendships, stripped of the ability to communicate effectively, and more importantly, they did not ask for that change [migration]. Overall, nothing went as expected neither for us parents nor for our children. This transition period lasted for the whole six months affecting adversely every member of our reunited family and influencing every aspect of our transnational family life. Subsequently, an idea to find out how other Polish families with their teenage children overcame acculturation challenges had been formulated, leading to this doctoral dissertation that focuses on the dynamics of the *acculturation process* at the micro-level with social-actor oriented approach that focus on reunited families in Ireland. Polish immigrant teenagers are the main social actors in this research, entitled an *Exploratory Longitudinal Acculturation Study with Polish Immigrant Teenagers* (LASPIT) *in Ireland – Parental and Children's Perspectives.*

While examining the *acculturation process,* the LASPIT endeavours to examine the formation of social relationships, to measure the *acculturation attitudes,* and to describe *the acculturation strategies* employed by Polish immigrant teenagers along with the examination of the various forms of belongingness in the context of migrant transnationalism.

The majority of Polish immigrant teenagers involuntarily changed their social space and followed their émigré parents. Upon arrival in the receiving society they had to learn how to navigate in a linguistically and culturally different arena, which meant moving through physical (geographical) space and the symbolic space characterised by the clear distinction of 'before' and 'after' , 'now' and then'. According to the broad

literature, the notion of movement in the transnational migration context takes place not only in physical spaces. The notion of movement and its trajectory also include the symbolic notion of social space (Bourdieu 1996; Hockey and James 2003; James 1986; Reed-Danahay 2010). Because acculturation is spatialised, migrants entering new social space have neither knowledge nor competences that are represented by natives, who as the social actors are already familiar with the construct of their social context and their social space (see Lefebvre 1991). On top of this, migrants who enter their new social context are positioned on the existing hierarchy in the particular social space, which is occupied by other migrants' culture (Reed-Danahay 2010; Wickham *et al.* 2013). This approach recognises both the symbolic and the structural context within which migration occurs leaving space for the appreciation of human agency and social habitus that is broadly defined as disposition to what we like, and what we dislike (see Zontini 2010). Thus, immigrants are seen as social actors who move from one social space to another, and acculturate in a variety of contexts. Moreover, while they move from one socio-cultural space to another, they carry with them their cultural, shared repertoire of meanings that creates their distinctive cultural intimacy (Reed-Danahay and Brettell 2008) that influences the immigrants' *acculturation process.*

The new migration within the EU 'provides evidence of how international movement is enacted, beyond the traditional understanding of the migration [...] that takes place from A to B' (Salamonska 2012:7) because migrants also move across social spaces, which are always socially constructed, have social meaning and social dimension (Bourdieu 1996; Reed-Danahay 2010; Fanning 2011). The structure of social space thus manifests itself (Bourdieu 1996) and intermingles with overlapping aspects of habitus (sociology), acculturation (psychology) and capabilities (economic and social policy) impinging that regardless of cultural capital migrants have to learn how to navigate in their new settings in the societal hierarchy (see Fanning 2011). It has profound implications indicating that the negotiation of social standing triggers change through time. Such reality has implications for immigrants. Polish immigrant families and their teenage children were no exception to this - acquisition of the above-mentioned knowledge enabled them with time to understand the Irish culture and its symbols allowing them to navigate within Irish social structure.

The feelings of alienation, temporary loss of status and the search for sense of belonging often leads to the cultural clash with the socio-cultural habitus in country of settlement (see Ataca and Berry 2003; Berry 2002; Cohen 1982; Gardner 2007; Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). For this reason, psychological and socio-cultural adaptation were placed at the heart of the LASPIT research project. In the case of Polish immigrant families, Polish children very often were left behind in Poland for extensive periods

before following their parents to Ireland. It led to the emergence of an explicit dichotomy on the one hand, relationships with reunited family members had to be reconstructed, and the other newcomers had to come to terms with leaving behind loved ones who cared for them while their parent(s) migrated to Ireland. The impact of parental migration, and parental migratory decisions on children, who suddenly gain new status of 'children of immigration' (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001) bridges two fields: psychology and sociology. For this reason, it is necessary to acknowledge that while acculturation literature is often disjointed from psychological aspects of acculturation, the LASPIT research project deploys 'flexible subjectivity' (Lyons-Ruth 2004) at the interface of both disciplines – sociology and psychology.

1.2 The LASPIT research context

Focusing on micro-level analysis of immigrant attainment, it is observable that the new post-EU enlargement migration of Polish nationals differs from the great migration of Poles at the beginning of the twentieth century. While, historically, acculturation was greatly facilitated by the long hiatus in European immigration (Znaniecki 1918; Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard 2001), the migratory influx of Poles to Ireland significantly differs from the American experience, especially in the context of migratory discourses.

First, this new migration is generally characterised by so-called 'free movers' (Favell 2003) with 'high aptitude for time and space' (Corcoran 2013), a strong reliance on modern information technology, and modern and cheap means of transport. Whilst in the past Polish immigrants could seldom visit their homeland due to the high costs of intercontinental journeys, Polish immigrants in Ireland have formed visible transnational relationships between the host country (Ireland) and the home country (Poland). Retrospective accounts of migration trajectories of Polish transnational immigrants indicate that the technology advancement has created explicit opportunities that allow maintaining relationships with extended families forming transnational ties and creating interesting dynamics between Western Europe and Poland. It was an important factor because often Polish immigrants arrived in Ireland alone, leaving their spouses and children behind in Poland. However, contrary to the old migration, contemporary migrants can visit or invite separated family to the host country due to availability of cheap means of transport that even allow to return home, if necessary, within less than three hours. More importantly, factoring out geographical distance means that immigrants can maintain their meaningful relationships with the extended family, in real time, through modern technologies.

This new form of movement brought by EU enlargement reflects contemporary global economies based on flexibility, mobility, and individualisation (Corcoran 2013; Fitzgerald 2013; Wickham 2013). I hypothesised that in the context of acculturation, this new form of movement has had a significant impact on the *acculturation process*. Contrary to Polish peasants going to 'new land' (Thomas and Znaninecki 1918) in the nineteenth century in the 'one-way ticket' mode, contemporary immigrants are not physically detached from their heritage, culture and family, therefore, they are not pressurised to acculturate in a fast-forward way. Yet the ways in which immigrants are able to negotiate multiple identities and cultures are crucial for their success and their incorporation in European societies (see Crul and Vermeulen 2003; Phalet and Kosic 2006).

Polish immigrant teenagers who followed their parents to Ireland during the economic boom had to modify their outlook and adjust to their new socio-economic situation, which differentiated them from their Irish peers who, particularly during the 'Celtic Tiger' era had no experience of forced migration or unemployment (see Lalor *et al.* 2007). Resources to cope with challenging situations such as their established friendship network and the extended family have been more difficult to access due to the relocation. Thus, it is quite perplexing why so many Polish families who were often in paid employment, had respectable jobs and had their own accommodation in Poland, uprooted their teenage children, and moved to Ireland to 'start from scratch' their new life in linguistically and culturally different settings. According to (Census 2011) Poles became the largest group of non-nationals in Ireland, and Polish immigrant children have formed a visible majority within the Irish secondary education system post-EU enlargement 2004 (see Devine 2005, 2011; Darmody *et al.* 2012; Census 2011). Furthermore, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) in their 2009 report noted:

> 'Because of a lack of [...] data, very little is known [...] about [...] newcomer children or about the educational experiences of newcomer children in schools in Ireland'
>
> (Smyth *et al.* 2009:1).

This doctoral dissertation aims to fill this gap by gathering retrospective accounts from non-recent immigrants and by tracking newcomers in the real time longitudinally. It is aimed to produce insights into how and why the *acculturation process* is formed and experienced *in time* - retrospective, contemporary (Thomson *et al.* 2003) and *space* - social and geographical (Bourdieu 1996; Reed-Danahay 2010), by Polish immigrant teenagers, and their émigré parents. Thus, this dissertation contributes to a

better understanding of the acculturation phenomena.

The rationale for the inclusion of acculturation as phenomena in the LASPIT research project has been justified by virtue of the fact that acculturation is deeply embedded in the socio-cultural construct and has an obvious impact on most human behaviour (see Sam and Berry 2006). Subsequently, immigrants often find themselves in a veritable crossfire of social and psychological forces (Kosic 2006). This poses the fundamental question as to what degree entrants should acculturate into the host society:

> 'The call for immigrants to give up their language, to leave their culture behind, and to acculturate in a fast-forward way has unanticipated consequences [...] immigrant youth need to be able to continue bonding with and not to alienate from their parents and relatives'
>
> (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008:372).

Notwithstanding this, issues of otherness, cultural diversity, context, time and cultural fit (Dion and Dion 2001; Nguyen 2006), along with children's agency (see Kuczynski 2003) influence acculturation and require further investigation. Wimmer (2008:972) outlines that cultural diversity and cultural distinctiveness in the context of ethnic boundaries are the outcomes of the classificatory struggles and negotiation between actors situated in a social field. Therefore, the LASPIT research pays particular attention to the degree of Polish immigrants' emotional investment, and their social, familial, and schooling context. It endeavours to create a snapshot of migration from Poland to Ireland following the EU enlargement in 2004, with a special focus on family reunification, investigating how migration with teenage children shapes Polish immigrant livelihood in Ireland and how this influence newcomers' identities.

In the past, various sociologists who studied acculturation as a social construct (e.g., Sam and Berry 2006) paid particular attention to interaction between various groups of immigrants, and the receiving society at the group level. The LASPIT aims to look at acculturation from the perspective of Polish individuals, seeing the *acculturation process* through individual lenses, capturing acculturation experiences and challenges posed by migration reflected in the employed *acculturation strategies*. This approach is based on the understanding that people function as individuals, regardless of being embedded in a group(s) (see Bourdieu 1996; Liddy 2013). However, it should be acknowledged that at the same time, individuals operate within a relational and hierarchical realm that legitimize certain models of behaviour and social practices that encompass complex relationships among identity, ethnicity and inequality (see King-O'Riain 2006).

1.3 The rationale for the LASPIT research project

Capturing acculturation experiences of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland is important for several reasons: the LASPIT research project gives a voice to a particular group of Polish immigrant children. There is a lack of data on integration experiences of Polish youth in Ireland, who numerically became the largest cohort of immigrants in Ireland. Noticeably, the presence of immigrant children and the issues faced by Polish reunited families in Ireland was somehow omitted by the contemporary scholars researching new waves of Polish post-accession migration. Secondly, there is a dearth of scholarly data describing how Polish immigrant families with teenage children acculturate and what coping strategies they employ to various acculturative stressors related to the intercultural contact posed by transnational migratory experience. Thirdly, I was given a unique opportunity to study acculturation of Polish teenagers along with an on-going 'ethnographic case study' (Merriam 1988) based on the observation and participation in the daily life of my two acculturating teenage daughters.

It should also be acknowledged that at the early stages of the LASPIT research project the economic situation all over the world had changed with the recession affecting European countries in particular (Hyman 2011). The Irish economic downturn started in 2008, and the economic crisis noticeably affected all social structures, the Irish education system, immigrants, and their offspring (Darmody *et al.* 2012; Krings and Moriarty 2011). Rapid economic shift 'from boom to bust' positions the cohort of the LASPIT interviewees on the very interesting time scale, given that the majority of Polish immigrant teenagers were enrolled in the secondary schools during the 'Celtic Tiger' era (between 2004-2008) but were about to graduate from and leave their secondary schools during the economic downturn (2008-2014). By accessing both the recent immigrants and those who arrived in Ireland at the beginning of the 'Celtic Tiger' era, interesting insights into the life on emigration of the first-generation of Polish immigrant families in general, and acculturation in particular during the time of boom and recession can be gained.

1.4 Aims and objectives of the LASPIT research project

The primary goal of this research is to contribute to the existing understanding of the acculturation phenomena by examining the *acculturation process* at

the micro-level based on the longitudinal study of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland. What do we really know about Polish teenagers' strategies? How does the language barrier and social demands for smooth assimilation create distinctive conflict for personal and identity development? What are their acculturation pathways? How do they respond to culture clash? Do boys and girls experience acculturation differently? What obstacles and opportunities do they encounter? How do they cope with and learn from them? Finally, how does it all fit into acculturation? To underpin the aforementioned questions, the LASPIT research project is guided by the following over-arching question: what is it like to be a Polish immigrant teenager in Ireland in the context of cultural fit that focuses on the individual's orientations and attitudes to fitting in culturally. Specifically, the research aims to capture the *acculturation process* describing in detail the structural and cultural contexts within which Polish newcomers have to operate. This includes a convergence of cultural and behavioural repertoire development derived from 'the second culture acquisition' (see Rudmin 2009). Because there are various approaches to studying acculturation, the paragraph below provides a short overview of the LASPIT methodology (for more details see Chapter 3).

By considering the experiences of Polish immigrants, particularly Polish youth in their new 'nested context' (Thomas and Znaniencki 1918) 'patterns of attachments' (Lyons-Ruth 2004) between young individual's own personal culture, and the wider multi-faceted social context over time are endeavoured to be captured. In this regard, the concept of the nested context is perceived as horizontal and vertical interconnections and dependencies in the mesosystem around the child's agency (see Bronfenbrenner 1979). In this context, examination of acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers in multicultural Ireland is aimed at testing Berry's acculturation paradigm.

1.5 Researching acculturative experiences of Polish teenagers – an overview of LASPIT methodology

This sub-section explains briefly, why the longitudinal design based on qualitative approach was chosen, and how it benefited the LASPIT research project. Moreover, because the culture clash and the second culture acquisition are the focal point of this research, it is imperative to explain briefly how culture as a concept is understood in this research, and why Polish newcomers are defined as immigrants rather than migrants (see Chapter 3).

In order to find out what is it like to be a Polish immigrant teenager in Ireland in the context of cultural fit, a qualitative panel study that allowed for tracking acculturative changes in time and on an individual level was employed. Such design allowed for the creation of a unique relationship based on the mutual trust between the interviewer and the interviewee (see Rubin *et al.* 2005). Whereas statistical data can show the patterns, it is unable to capture the depth of the responses gathered from Polish respondents during face-to-face qualitative interviews. Qualitative research gains insights into respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and choices. It helps the researcher to enter the private worlds of subjects and to uncover their inner perspectives in a way they feel comfortable with (see Gordon and Langmaid 1988). More importantly, the qualitative interview is 'also a remembered account of embodied experience of necessity of representation' (Hockey and James 2003:78). Salamonska (2012) argues that the use of primary data sources on both the qualitative and the quantitative side is very demanding, when time, cost, and intensive expertise are taken into account. I decided to employ the longitudinal exploratory qualitative panel research because a qualitative longitudinal approach constructs 'contextualised snapshots of processes and people' (see Farrell 2006), and the LASPIT research project is about Polish immigrants' attitudes, motives, and the *acculturation processes.*

Drawing on my own acculturation encounters, I hypothesised that immigrant youth have unique personal characteristics, and carry an exclusive set of their own experiences, and therefore acculturate to a different degree (see Chapter 8). Moreover, because acculturation is a *process* not an outcome, thus, the socio-cultural context and individual characteristic (e.g., age, gender, and language proficiency) should influence the *acculturation strategies,* and the formation of *acculturation outcomes.* Subsequently, the LASPIT research project re-contextualises Berry's (1997) fourfold acculturation paradigm.

1.5.1 Defining Polish newcomer students

In the field of sociology, the difference between 'migrant' and 'immigrant' has been already conceptualised. Jarman (2004) differentiates the terms 'migrant' from an 'immigrant' implying that the term immigrant is associated with a long-term settlement and integration while the term 'migrant' has a notion of temporariness (*ibid.*:10-11). For that reason, the term immigrant has been employed throughout the LASPIT research project in the context of Polish teenagers and their parents. The term migrant(s) however is used whenever this research refers to broad literature and statistical data on transnational migration. Furthermore, the implicit definition of a

Polish immigrant teenager adopted for the purposes of this research encompasses an individual born in Poland, who lives with at least one Polish parent. Consequently, Polish interviewees are defined as first-generation immigrants, because all of them have been born in Poland and developed a sense of Polishness prior to their arrival in Ireland.

1.5.2 Defining culture

> 'Cultures are not fixed social systems; they are constantly evolving as they maintain essential [...] traditions'
>
> (Saldana 2003:117).

For the purpose of the LASPIT research project, acculturation has been defined as a second-culture acquisition (Rudmin 2009:106). The term culture refers to shared values and concepts among people who most often speak the same language and live in proximity to each other; however understanding a culture means detecting and interpreting its sign system (see Brislin 2000; Cavallaro 2001; Douglas 1996). Following the evidence, gathered during the LASPIT research project, I argue that Polish teenagers who follow their parents to Ireland have to modify their outlook and adjust to their new socio-cultural arena. Consequently, during the transition period immigrants acquire insider knowledge about their new social context and learn cultural repertoire epitomised in the mainstream culture and expressed by specific cultural codes and symbols.

Douglas (1996:38) argues that 'symbols are the only means of communication [...] the only means of expressing value; the main instruments of thought, the only regulators of experience.' Hence, in giving shape to their new socio-cultural reality, immigrants refer to their cultural heritage and use their 'dual comparative framework' (Röder and Mühlau 2011) in order to formulate their new social standing and assess the social realm. This projection albeit through their lenses helps them to formulate adequate *acculturation strategies* and informs their behavioural repertoire. In other words, immigrants encounter habitual shift including a symbolic shift (see Hockey and James 2003; Reed-Danahay 2010) that affects their social status in the culturally diverse contexts. This shifting process embedded in the recent economic downturn, has been captured by the LASPIT research project through the employment of the longitudinal design.

A longitudinal design in the studies concerning Polish immigrants was utilised before (see Krings *et al.* 2009; Mühlau *et al.* 2010; 2012; Wickham 2011, 2013). Nonetheless, with the increasing cultural and ethnic diversity, the longitudinal data is

still rare both in the qualitative and quantitative area (Greene *et al.* 2000; Salamonska 2012), which makes the LASPIT research project quite unique.

1.6 The value of children - location of the LASPIT research project

Contemporary sociological literature emphasises geographical proximity as a prerequisite for interaction within families. As a result, transnational family practices and challenges are largely ignored (Ataca *et al.* 2005; Mazzucato and Schans 2011; Orellana *et al.* 2001; Phalet and Kosic 2006). More importantly, as argued by Haikkola (2011), there is a need for children's transnational incorporation that would focus on two aspects: the formation of social relationships, and the construction of identity and belonging that emerges out of cross-border contacts. In this context, migrant's social fields of relations or personal networks as a perspective could inform research on transnational migration in the twenty-first century (see Brettell 2000; Lin 2001; Olwig 2007).

The LASPIT research project examines transnational practices of Polish immigrant families in the transnational social space (Pries 2005) incorporating issues around acculturation and migration in social spaces constructed at the intersection of immigrants' narratives, biography, and geographical mobility. At the same time, Polish transnational families are defined in the research as families that move quite regularly between Poland and Ireland, and from time to time are separated from each other.

In line with the emerging scholarly data (see Röder 2012; Tyldum 2012), it is unmistakable that the post-EU enlargement migration is not yet dominated, but distinctively characterised by female migration. Evidence from the LASPIT research project indicates (see Chapter 4 and 5) that there is a large percentage of females (married, divorced, separated and lone-parents) who left their families for extensive periods in order to initiate the transnational family migratory process. As immigrant women, and in particular mothers, we have the added responsibility of helping our children with adjusting to socio-culturally different contexts. This includes the values of our own ethnic group and those of the society of settlement. At the same time, immigrant women face a double burden of paid and unpaid occupations, often combined with renegotiation of the power dynamic of the reunited family (Ataca and Berry 2002; Berry 2006; Mayall 2002; Suárez-Orozco 2000; Vedder *et al.* 2006; White 2011). It is a challenging and frustrating process particularly for immigrant parents who often have a very low language competency and are unable to help and support their offspring pedagogically (see Chapter 5 *Not 'fit' for Migration...*). On the other hand,

the European acculturation studies are an emerging research field because of their distinctive contextual characteristics and cultural diversity in East-Central and Western Europe (see Phalet and Kosic 2006). Why, however is acculturation of immigrant children so important?

From a sociological view, there is a scarcity of research about immigrant children's acculturation experiences in Ireland. From a societal point of view, the future of society lies in the hands of their children; therefore the well-being and the welfare of all children including immigrant children constitutes an important ramification for contemporary society in the context of transnational migration (see Kağıtçıbaşı and Ataca 2005; Sam and Berry 2006). Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, as argued by Orellana *et al.* (2001) it should not be forgotten that children help to constitute and reconfigure transnational social fields and transnational practices, which shape the contours of particular childhoods. On top of this, predominantly immigrant children experience a particular constellation of changes that have lasting effects upon their development (see Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). Thus, it is important to capture the acculturation experience of newcomers, in order to provide a better understanding of the dynamics of acculturation in the multicultural contexts (Dana 1996; Sam and Berry 2006).

Writing about *our* life on emigration allowed for the employment of the reflexivity approach – a core feature of our contemporality and modernity (see Giddens 1991; Hockey and James 2003) - that deepened the findings. The word *our* has here a dual connotation because it reflects not only my experiences but also it has a broader meaning as it incorporates the retrospective reflections and encounters of us, a particular group of Polish parents who as immigrants live, work and bring up our children at the intersection of Polish cultural heritage and Irish culture. Acculturation exposure alters us, makes us different. We are still Polish families but we differ from the other Polish families not marked by the migratory experience (e.g., many of us, Polish females chose to migrate changing a delicate balance within households usually dominated by male-breadwinner scenario).

In addition, as the author of the LASPIT research project, I would like to explain that dualism of being a Polish immigrant parent and the researcher brings another dimension to this research project. Acculturation does not end abruptly. Immigrants continuously encounter multivariate acculturation experiences, which are relatable and more understandable as acculturation progresses in time. However, like in my case, my acculturation choices are not entirely mine, because as a wife and a mother my decisions interrelate with and influence all members of my transnational family. Subsequently, 'social and psychological forces' (Kosic 2006), culture clash,

societal expectation of 'fitting in' culturally, along with the parental responsibility of ensuring continuity of Polish heritage culture makes life as an emigrant remarkably tricky.

1.7 Reflexivity and the LASPIT research project

The distinctiveness of the LASPIT research project is manifested through the employment of the reflexivity as a research method. As Rudmin puts it:

> '...acculturation researchers who are themselves experiencing acculturation could reflect on their own research on acculturation in light of their own experiences of it. There are no standardized methods for phenomenological self-reflection, and there is no surety of success. But the prospect of insight might lead to new directions worth pursuing...'
>
> (Rudmin 2010:310).

The notion of reflexivity as a research method is a recent tool in sociology (see Galindo 2011; Richardson 2000). Reflexive research acknowledges the presence of the interviewer in the research (Foster 2005; Etherington 2004). The dichotomy of my position in the LASPIT research project is pivotal for acknowledging and representing voices of the 'researched' in scholarly fashion (see Eder and Fingerson 2002; Hill 2005; Etherington 2004). Thus, it is crucial to acknowledge the existence of power imbalance and diverse power dynamics existing in various contexts, and my own subjectivity in the research process (see Bjleveld and van der Bjleveld 1998; Etherington 2004).

Immigrants' orientation and navigation in their new social space provide insights into acculturation, at the same time allowing me - the researcher to reflect on my own position in this research project. My own set of experiences derived from being an immigrant mother with two acculturating teenager daughters, positions me as an insider in the research field and this somehow unique position requires careful consideration.

1.7.1 Insider/outsider dichotomy and the notion of reflexivity

Regarding the concern expressed by many scholars at the inner or outer position in the research, my own standpoint enhanced by my experience might shed

some light on the issue. My own set of acculturating experiences that started in summer 2006 incorporating my twin children's encounters, positions me as an insider, effectively enabling me to get more in-depth understanding of issues discussed. Because insiders have greater linguistic competence than outsiders - they can blend in more easily; they are often informed by their own experience, therefore they are not ashamed of showing empathy and understanding (see Plat 1981; Naples 1997) notwithstanding that they also get more authentic, some might say valid results (Rudmin 2010). By virtue of being informed by my own experience, I became equipped with the cultural context necessary for understanding various nuances and sensitive issues that became known during the LASPIT research project. The reflexivity approach has increased the openness and trust between the interviewees and me – the researcher. The socio-reflective approach fostered employment of the insider or outsider perspective, depending on the context, and the nature of the interview. However, for some scholars, reflexivity as a method might have a notion of some epistemological concerns in terms of objectivity.

Admittedly, the shifting nature of the insider/outsider perspective enables examination of gathered data from the internal and the external perspective. In terms of my dual position in the research, it should be noted that regardless of being the researcher, I have also been acculturating along with my sample. Thus, it can be argued that the inner perspective is more subjective because it entails my own acculturation experiences, my perception of the research setting and the research field influenced by my own projection of acculturation derived from my own daily experience with my two acculturating daughters. However, this dual comparative framework incorporating the inner/outsider perspective provides interesting insights into the teenagers' world – their social reality in which they are immersed, allowing for 'deeper recognition of the power dynamics that infuse ethnographic encounters' (Naples 1997). Thus, the objectivity of the LASPIT research project has been enhanced through dynamics between my unique position in the research derived from my personal level of relationship with the field - I was an independent researcher who entered the field in order to learn how other Polish immigrant teenagers acculturate in their new social arena. Concomitantly, empirical narratives continually (re)constructed my personal narrative providing me with a sense of identity and encouraging a specific ethical conduct on my part (Foster 2006; Saldana 2003; Sokolowska 2012a). Because of my inner status, neither was I questioning or interrogating. I was there to obtain necessary information and to ensure that the non-invasive approach will leave my underage participants better off and create a positive environment that empowers and gives voices to children.

Despite the fact that 'an increasing number of social scientists have realised that they need to interact as persons with the interviewees' (Fontana and Frey 2005), the researcher's standpoint as a participant in the research has not been acknowledged properly yet (see McCracken 1988). Therefore, there is a need for a reorientation in current research towards that recognising the position of the researcher within the qualitative approach (see Kirkman 1997; Naples 1997; Rudmin 2010; Taylor 2011). Acculturation of Polish teenagers in Ireland as a longitudinal project is driven by particular aims and objectives set in dynamic social context. Consequently, each research participant's action is inextricably rooted in social and cultural contexts, and what an individual researcher observes and interprets is rooted in his/her social context. Hence, it would be imprudent not to acknowledge that the researcher is just as much a part of the social setting as the participants (see Saldana 2003).

1.7.2 Reflexivity as an ethical tool

The process of reflexivity captures an array of strategies. A reflexivity approach as a method in social research is embedded in cultural references that encompasses plurality of cultural domains (see Naples 1997; Fook 1999). Guillemin and Gillam (2004) propose to look at reflexivity from a new angle arguing that 'the notion of reflexivity as an ethical tool is very recent and has not been presented yet. The notion of reflexivity encapsulates and extends the concerns of procedural ethics, [hence, reflexivity is understood as] a helpful conceptual tool for understanding both the nature of ethics in qualitative research and how ethical practice in research can be achieved' (*ibid.*:263). The reflexivity approach de-stigmatises the nature of the accessed sample and separates it from non-ethical issues, since interviewed individuals are not the only ones engaged in the process. Thus, contemporary researchers are encouraged to use self-reflection as a tool to deepen their analysis (Fook 1999; Naples 1997). For these reasons, reflexivity is seen as an essential method to tease out the dilemmas within qualitative inquiry (see Galindo 2011; Gullemin and Gillian 2004). There is however a clear distinction between personal and epistemological reflexivity: while, personal reflexivity refers to how our values, experiences, beliefs, and wider aims in life and social identities shape our research; the epistemological reflexivity concerns the issue of conducting the research. It attempts to identify the foundations of knowledge and the implications of any findings: how our assumptions about the world and knowledge shape the course of research: the questions we ask, methods we choose, what we write, and what are the implications of these choices (Galindo 2011; Maton 2003).

Additionally, reflexivity helps to achieve credibility by the reflective analysis of how the data was collected and interpreted during the research as a process of knowledge construction. As Sandelowski and Barroso put it:

> 'Reflexivity is a hallmark of excellent qualitative research and it entails the ability and willingness of researchers to acknowledge and take account of the many ways they themselves influence research findings and thus what comes to be accepted as knowledge. Reflexivity implies the ability to reflect inward toward oneself as an inquirer; outward to the cultural, historical, linguistic, political, and other forces that shape everything about inquiry; and, in between researcher and participant to the social interaction they share'
>
> (Sandelowski and Barroso 2002:222).

In this doctoral dissertation, the reflexivity is embedded in the respective chapters, annotated observations and conclusions, acknowledging my unique insider/outsider position in this research that shaped this qualitative inquiry concerning acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland.

1.8 Contribution to knowledge of the LASPIT research project

Admittedly, a considerable amount of research on the new migration post-EU enlargement has already been undertaken incorporating various approaches to the study of the migratory influx from Central and Eastern Europe. However:

> 'As various ethnographers have demonstrated, transnational practices have become a habitual part of life for some immigrant groups[...] but these practices, and social fields, have mostly been studied with economic, [and] labour [...] at the forefront. Furthermore, research on the transnational family, [...] and intimate relations assume that adults are the key social actors; children, with a few important exceptions are largely invisible'
>
> (Orellana 2001:573).

As the relative salience of the first generation's transnational ties and practices has been recognised (Haikkola 2011; Portes and Rumbaut 2001), our understanding of first-generation children's transnationalism in comparison to their émigré parents is

rarely present in the academic literature. Although there are indications that the acculturation of adolescent immigrants is a particularly difficult and dynamic process with utmost importance for the social and psychological well-being of the teenagers and their future integration in the host country (Eyou *et al.* 2000; Mason 2004; Olwig 2007; Phinney *et al.* 2001; Saldana 2003; Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008); there are only a few studies in Ireland which scrutinise young immigrants' socio-cultural adjustment (viz. Curry *et al.* 2011; Gilligan *et al.* 2010; Smyth *et al.* 2010) and none of them is longitudinal. Moreover, these studies, being informed from the perspective of acculturation and cross-cultural psychology, tend to describe the change in variables associated with assimilation but fail to examine the *acculturation processes*. Very little research data has concentrated on the socio-psychological experiences of immigrant teenagers in Ireland. Furthermore, it is rare to find systematic, longitudinal efforts that examine the *acculturation strategies*, measure *the acculturation attitudes* over time, and determine how the formation of the *acculturation outcomes* are influenced. The LASPIT research project is about, and with, Polish immigrant children. It endeavours to provide insights to the transnational life of Polish reunited families in the context of the *acculturation process*.

The LASPIT research project widens our knowledge of migratory perspectives of youth, addressing many gaps in our understanding of migratory teenagers' *modus operandi* in an acculturation context by following Polish immigrant teenagers for almost two years. Whilst this research focuses mainly on socio-psychological experiences and socio-cultural adaptation of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland, other people such as siblings, parents, and teachers are also considered, in line with the integrated multi-actor research design.

1.9 Layout of the thesis

The layout of this dissertation does not follow the standard format. The structure of this thesis reflects the approach of studying acculturation within its dimensionality and domain specificity using diverse research techniques. **Chapter 1** entitled *An introduction to sociological inquiry into acculturation of Polish teenagers in Ireland* contextualises post-EU enlargement Polish migration to Ireland outlining the rationale, background and the context to the LASPIT research project. This chapter also delineates the insider/outsider dichotomy and the notion of reflexivity through the prism of ethical quandary of research with underage participants. **Chapter 2** entitled *Researching culture - from acculturation to interculturalism - introduction to the phenomena*

under the study scrutinises acculturation phenomenology in a broad literature in the context of immigrant adolescents. This chapter highlights the context of acculturation in terms of scholarly perspective on acculturation phenomena in transnational socio-historical milieu in which we live. Through investigation of the psychology of acculturation with a particular focus on the *acculturation process*, this chapter outlines the gaps in the literature and provides the conceptualisation of interculturalism as a useful framework for testing Berry's theorem in the LASPIT research project.

LASPIT research design and methodology - it is a title of **Chapter 3**, which details the research methods employed by the LASPIT research project. This chapter explains why a combination of mixed methods was chosen and how they were employed and perused. It is followed by a description of data collection method and acculturation measurement methods. This chapter also explains why 'not everything that is legal is ethical' (Saldana 2003).

Chapter 4 entitled *New migratory pathways of Poles* investigates reasons behind migration bridging the gap between migration, culture, and gender. Through the exploration of the historical context of transnational migration of Polish nationals, this chapter sketches the sociological context of migration post-2004 EU enlargement, which was a watershed moment in the history of contemporary migratory patterns in Europe. This chapter delineates the peculiarities of both the origin and destination context relevant for the acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers. Using data from the interviews with Polish émigré parents, the research draws a real picture of motives and choices behind certain migratory decisions outlining the complexities of contemporary transnational migration with teenagers. Finally, it illuminates the socio-psychological context of migration offering first class background to various types of migratory patterns of Polish families and conflicting expectations prior and post-migration.

White (2011) argues that we still possess quite limited knowledge of our understanding of transnational migration and immigrants' engagement in the host country. Thus, **Chapter 5** entitled *Not 'fit' for migration - discourse on parental migration with teenage children* provides unique insights into the choices made by the reunited families. Choices derived from lack of language competence and the host culture knowledge. In this chapter, I question the capacity for social engagement of Polish immigrant parents. This is followed by a brief description of the structure of the Irish educational system at second level in the context of Polish immigrant teenagers, who neither can avail of parental pedagogical support nor can they count on effective ongoing support offered by their Irish schooling system.

Within **Chapter 6** entitled *What is it like to be a Polish immigrant teenager in Ireland?* Polish teenagers' narratives are presented chronologically and topically. Drawing on the LASPIT data, this chapter exemplifies the *acculturation attitudes*, *acculturation strategies*, and *acculturation outcomes*.

'Before' and 'after': cross-case study and longitudinal analyses of change over time in the context of acculturation presents analyses at the aggregated level in **Chapter 7.** Acculturation and change over time is examined through cross-case study analysis, enriched by the comparison of empirical narratives with the quantitative output obtained from the on-line Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) questionnaire. **Chapter 8** entitled *Key Findings, discussion, and limitations of the LASPIT research project* returns to and reflects on the initial research question and the LASPIT research project objectives. It is followed by an assessment of the meaning of the results through the evaluation of the *acculturation process*. In this chapter, limitations of the research are acknowledged. This final chapter contains the main conclusions and recommendations of this research project.

In summary, the LASPIT research project draws on the diverse experience of the sampled group comprising Polish immigrant families, and collective expertise of the key informants, namely Polish and Irish teachers. Therefore, it is aimed at professionals working with young people, parents, and scientific environment interested in the inward flows of migration, particularly because there is a need for intercultural attitudes and awareness among young people and those who work with them (Lalor *et al.* 2007) in order to help them all to adapt to cultural diversity.

Chapter 2

Researching culture - from acculturation to interculturalism - introduction to the phenomena under the study

> 'Acculturation is a universal human experience, and all acculturation researchers should perhaps themselves reflect on their own experiences in light of their own research efforts. It is hoped that the field might thus move forward in multiple directions, such that the diversity of the paradigms and findings reflect the diversity of the phenomena'
>
> (Rudmin 2010:309).

2.1 Introduction

Theoretical approaches to the study of acculturating adolescents and identity theory formation take prominent position in the broad literature. Whilst psychological, biological, and sociological viewpoints provide useful perspectives to explore and understand adolescence, each is constrained by its disciplinary boundaries (Dreyer 1980; Lalor *et al.* 2007). Polish immigrant teenagers undergo the *acculturation process* in parallel with the period of adolescence. I argue in this chapter that for the proper examination of the experiences of young Polish immigrants, the LASPIT research project should be underpinned by a holistic approach that takes into account the dualism of two different processes: 1) adolescence and identity formation and 2) second culture acquisition in the intercultural context.

The approach to the literature review has been taken in the context of the LASPIT research project objectives and the research context, incorporating a systematic critical evaluation of the literature. The following objectives have been identified for this research project:

- To establish what already is known about acculturation and identity formation
- To identify gaps in what already is known and establish how this research project can further contribute to the body of knowledge

This chapter begins with a brief analysis of acculturation based on the literature relevant to the phenomena under the study. It provides an overview of the existing research on culture, acculturation, and youth theories giving rationale for the employment of the ecological, holistic model in this research project. The key point of

this chapter is based on an understanding that acculturation is about the second culture acquisition and should be examined at the individual level (Rudmin 2009). However, it also conceptualises culture as not fixed, homogenous, and static variable. Quite contrary – culture is perceived as a multivariate phenomenon that encompasses 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007) and hybridity in all areas of human life. This sets the context for this doctoral research.

Arguably, the change of socio-cultural context enriched by transnational family experience profoundly influences the *acculturation process*, bringing the research towards the intersection of acculturation and interculturalism: a 'delicate dance over continuity and change' (Alam 2012:3). This dance however, does not happen in the vacuum – it has various partners, namely 'acculturative stress' (Berry 1997), 'ambiguous loss' (Boss 1999), 'negative social mirroring' (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001) that as Schumann (1986) points out, cluster into a single variable – the psychology of acculturation.

Since the LASPIT research is based on combined data derived from my own children's acculturative encounters, and from the data obtained from the exploratory longitudinal study with Polish immigrant teenagers, psychological aspects of migration are perceived as a profound part of acculturation. In my view, this approach marks an awareness of the interrelatedness and overlap between sociology and psychology in the context of acculturation. New entrants during their *acculturation process* navigate in and between, culturally distinctive social spaces. Social space shapes our thoughts, it influences the way we interact and sometimes it can constrain us (Lefebvre 1991). Equally, occupiers of social space are constantly exposed to social and peer pressure. (Douglas 1996).

Interaction of the individuals takes place within two social dimensions; one of them is order – the symbolic system, the other is pressure – the experience of having no option but to consent to the overwhelming demands of others (Douglas 1996) similar to the idea 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do.' Arguably, transnational migrants in our globalised world are not 'relatively blank subjects who passively receive [the cultural repertoires because it would assume] a unidirectional flow of a singular culture' (Bragg and Manchester 2011:12). Therefore, contemporary scholars acknowledge cultural diversity. Through the employment of a multidimensional perspective on diversity, both in terms of moving beyond 'the ethnic group as either the unit of analysis or sole object of study' (Glick-Schiller *et al.* 2006:613), and by examination of experiences of transnational migrants we can better understand the nature and complexity of contemporary 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007) in multicultural Ireland.

Unfolding acculturation and identity through the narratives of Polish teenagers indicates that newcomers, upon arrival in Ireland, lose their insider status and become outsiders. Only with time, were they able to change their ascribed new position of 'strangers' to 'settlers or almost insiders' (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). During this process acculturating individuals, in order to make sense of their new social reality, '...can reject a cultural value at one point in their lives and accept it at other times' (Brislin 2000:19). Moreover, in the process of learning their new culture, newcomers also evaluate the system of values and patterns of behaviour characteristic of Irish social structures. The assessment of their new social landscape takes place constantly, forming, and redefining their coping strategies and the whole *acculturation process*. Thus, in negotiating their social standing, immigrants navigate between two axis: social space (horizontal) and social hierarchy (vertical) in the process extensively described in literature and called assimilation (Hirsch 1942), acculturation (Berry 1997), deculturalisation (Ogbu 1983), reculturalisation (Klep 2001) or enculturation (Kolikant 2008; Walsh *et al.* 2008). As evidenced, the construct of acculturation and its definition is widely described in the literature, however it is characterised by the lack of consistency.

2.2 Definition and conceptualisation of acculturation and interculturalism – situating the debate

The Oxford English Dictionary (third edition) 2010 – defines 'acculturation' as adoption and assimilation to different culture, while Sam and Berry (2006) summarise it as the meeting of cultures resulting with changes. Furthermore, acculturation is perceived as a developmental process whose goal is the acquisition of cultural competence in the host society (Berry 2001; Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). To some extent, the acculturation concept has been synonymised with assimilation and/or the concept of deculturalisation or interculturation (Berry 1997). Whilst, deculturalisation is defined as a process of eradicating, of stripping away the culture or abandoning aspects of one's own culture, and replacing it with aspects of another foreign culture (Ogbu 1983); reculturalisation Klep (2001) is manifested by thought and language that have a power of their own to mediate, encase, and influence behaviour. By contrast, enculturation is defined as 'the process of becoming skilful in using tools [...] behaviours [...] values that are part of the culture of one's own group' (Sam 2006:420), enabling individuals to become functioning members of their society (Walsh *et al.* 2008). Moreover, enculturation sets a context of boundaries and correctness that dictates what is, and what is not permissible with that society's

framework (see Kolikant 2008). Thus, '...continuous contact during childhood with one's first-culture results in enculturation [which is] a life-long process because we continually encounter new aspects of our own culture as we age…' (Rudmin 2009:4).

Debatably, both enculturation and acculturation are considered 'to be learning processes that are likely to facilitate [...] professional and social adaptation' (Sam 2006:420). These concepts explicitly entail the change and new knowledge acquisition in the broad sense. It is clear that acculturation directly refers to culture. Moreover 'acculturation is concerned with "culture" and [...] it is difficult to tabulate or define all aspects of a culture, especially the invisible, inferred, psychological aspects' (Rudmin 2009:4). Broad sociological literature leads us to the conclusion made by Berry *et al.* (2006) that the acculturation phenomena takes place at two distinct levels: the group level and the individual level. At the societal level acculturation denotes cultural diffusion, i.e., transfer of cultural norms, values, behaviours, and technologies from one society to another; however at the individual level, acculturation denotes second-cultural acquisition, therefore it concerns individual-level phenomena (Rudmin 2010), and this interpretation of acculturation was known even in ancient times (Sam 2006).

Historical contextualisation delineates that acculturation is rooted in antiquity; the history of Western civilisation is also a history of acculturation, perceived as an ancient and probably universal human experience (see Rudmin 2003). The coining of the word acculturation in 1880 is accredited to Powell (Sam 2006). Powell defined acculturation as the psychological changes induced by cross-cultural imitation. Hall (1904) argued that second-culture learning is similar to first-culture learning. Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) proposed the first psychological theory of acculturation. Drawing on the study of Polish immigrants in Chicago, Thomas and Znaniecki, illustrated three forms of acculturation corresponding to three personality types: Bohemian (adopting the host culture and abandoning their culture of origin), Philistine (failing to adopt the host culture but preserving their culture of origin), and Creative-Type (able to adapt to the host culture while preserving their culture of origin). Although acculturation as a term is now commonly used in the scholarly literature 'its meaning and operationalization within the social sciences still remains elusive [...] In its simplest sense acculturation covers all the changes that arise following contact between individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds' (Sam 2006:11). The initial conceptualisations of acculturation focused on psychological and sociological processes mainly at the individual level (Rudmin 2009). However in 1936, a committee of the US Social Science Research Council adapted Redfiled, Linton, and Herskovits; formal definition of acculturation that explains:

> 'Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups'
>
> (Redfield *et al.* 1936:149).

The above-mentioned definition, which introduces acculturation as a group-level phenomena with (acceptance, adaptation, and reaction) was heavily criticised for its omission of an individual-level phenomena. Therefore, Rudmin (2009:4) strongly advocates that 'research which seeks to understand individual level processes needs a corresponding definition of acculturation, [...] defined as second-culture acquisition...' Rudmin's definition directs the focal point of acculturation research to an individual implying that acculturation equals 'assimilation in its biological meaning of ingestion, digestion, and incorporation' (*ibid.*:2009). This approach is echoed by Reed-Danahay (2010) who describes acculturation as a process of inhaling a dominant culture, of digesting dominant food, and of drinking host water as a part of the *acculturation process* (*ibid.*). On the other hand, the classical definition of acculturation points out towards contact between two or more cultures as a prerequisite of change (Sam 2006). In 2004, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) defined acculturation as the progressive adoption of elements of a foreign culture (ideas, words, values, norms, behaviours, institutions) by persons, groups, or classes of a given culture[3]. However, as noticed by Sam (2006:11), this definition 'overlooks the fact that acculturation could also entail "rejection of" or "resistance to" cultural elements.' Berry (1997) tends to stick to the term acculturation when referring to cultural and psychological processes associated with the change of the cultural context. This approach is not unique – others scholars (Saldana 2003; Phinney *et al.* 2001; Veder and Horenczyk 2006) also prefer acculturation as a more accurate terminology when referring to the adjustment of an individual in the new socio-cultural context. To complicate matters, the term assimilation is often used interchangeably with the term acculturation.

The Oxford English Dictionary (third edition) 2010 - defines 'assimilation' as participation in cultural integration. Ryder *et al.* (2000) notices that the concept of acculturation as assimilation has informed much of the research on cultural change. Here acculturation is seen as continuing across generations until, eventually, the descendants of immigrants are culturally indistinguishable from the dominant group. Despite defining assimilation as the process by which a person adapts to and assimilates the culture in which he/she lives (see Hirsch 1942), unusual and atypical patterns of assimilation, particularly acculturative experiences of immigrant children,

[3] http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/IML_1_EN.pdf

questioned unidirectional and irreversible 'melting pot' (Zangwill 1925) and 'straight-line' (Warner and Srole 1945) classical assimilation theories forcing sociologists to re-visit their earlier conclusions. This created another plethora of research with the emergence of new theories. To cite but a few: 'antagononistic acculturation' (Devereux and Loeb 1943); 'beyond the melting pot' (Glazer and Moynihan 1963), 'spatial assimilation' (Massey and Denton 1985), 'second generation decline' (Gans 1992), 'unmelted pot' (Mollenkopf 2005) with the recent introduction of 'segmented assimilation' theory (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001)[4]. For this reason, contemporary scholars view assimilation and acculturation as two distinctive processes. Whilst theoretical debates are useful for empirical research, the fact is that the concept of assimilation suffers on empirical grounds (see Faas 2010) because in its nature it assumes cultures are separate, static, and mutually exclusive.

By contrast, the term interculturation encompasses 'la psychologie interculturelle' (Belkaïd and Guerraoui 2003), and it is mainly associated with the French literature being defined as the set of processes by which individuals and groups interact when they classify themselves as culturally distinct (see Berry and Sam 1997). Advocates of the interculturation model emphasise that it concentrates more on the construction of cultural diversity and the formation of a new culture in the context of cultural contacts, and the relationship between immigrants and host country (Denoux 1992). Ireland for example adopted intercultural approach. In the Irish context, interculturalism is understood as a two-way process that essentially involves:

> 'Interaction, understanding and respect. It is about ensuring that cultural diversity is acknowledged and catered for [...] It further acknowledges that people should have the freedom to keep alive, enhance, and share their cultural heritage'
>
> (Guidelines on Interculturalism 2009:3).

Thus, interculturalism generally refers to cross-cultural dialogue and challenging self-segregation tendencies within cultures, moving beyond mere passive acceptance of a cultural diversity (see Nagle 2009:169).

[4] For the full synthesis, see Alam, M. F. (2012) Bracing for and Embracing Difference in America's Majority Minority Metropolis: Bangladeshi Immigrant Children Coming of Age in New York City, *British Journal of Social Work*, 1-20.

2.3 Acculturation dimensionality and interculturalism

The LASPIT research project focuses on the second culture acquisition in the multicultural context. Therefore, it is imperative to evaluate not only the conceptualisation of interculturalism and acculturation theories but also the issues and perspectives at stake. Thus, this section presents a canon of theories, studies, and findings that address the conceptualisation of acculturation and interculturalism phenomena including the critical approach.

Researching cultures means researching all its tangible and intangible aspects. Some scholars argue that culture is a product of experience between various social groups, and newcomers should be taught it (see Schein 1985; Warner and Srole 1945). While others (e.g., Faas 2010) asserts that immigrants should not be expected to eventually assimilate into the host society. In the field of sociology, the acculturation concept has been widely studied (Horenczyk 1996; Horenczyk and Tatar 1998; Kang 2006; Sam and Berry 2006; Ryder *et al.* 2000; Rudmin 2010; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001).

Acculturation dimensionality prevails in the acculturation research providing two acculturation models: the unidimensional and the bidimensional. While the unidimensional model presupposes that acculturation takes place along a single continuum with the loss of some aspects of the heritage culture and the adoption of some aspects of the mainstream culture (Gordon 1964), the bidimensional model perceives the above domains as two different dimensions. The unidimensional model describes acculturation as the process of moving from one cultural identity (e.g., ethnic identity) to the other (e.g., mainstream cultural identity) over time by passing through assimilation stages in progressive fashion (Gordon 1964). The unidimensional model is often called an 'assimilation model', 'bipolar model' (Kang 2006) or 'straight-line assimilation' as it assumes mutual exclusion of the two cultural identities (Sam 2006). Although the strength of the unidimensional model is its straightforwardness, its parsimony also makes the model vulnerable to criticism (Alam 2012; Alba 1990; Alba and Nee 2003; Glazer 1993; Kang 2006; Portes and Raumbat 2001; Rudmin 2006; 2008; 2010). It is even argued that the continued use of a unidimensional approach could provide an incomplete, even misleading, picture of acculturation (Ryder *et al.* 2000), because this model does not allow ethnic minorities 'to hold full-blown bicultural identities' (Kang 2006). Therefore, the bidimensional model quickly became a popular alternative.

The most widely researched bidimensional approach to acculturation has been John Berry's acculturation framework (Rudmin 2010; Ryder *et al.* 2000) based on the concept of four distinctive acculturation outcomes (Berry 1997; Berry 2002; Eshel and

Rosenthal-Sokolov 2000; Berry *et al.* 1992) that allows analysis of aspects of people's acculturation, and offers a summary view of their predominant reaction to acculturative pressures.

Berry's acculturative outcomes are based on the quadrants defined by mainstream culture and heritage dimension, which are then assessed with separate subscales. *Integration* involves maintaining cultural heritage while endorsing intergroup relations. *Assimilation* involves relinquishing cultural heritage and adopting the beliefs and behaviours of the new culture. *Separation* involves maintenance of heritage culture without intergroup relations. *Marginalization* involves non-adherence to either old or new culture (Ryder *et al.* 2000; Sam 2006). Berry (1997) outlines that acculturating individuals are faced with two fundamental questions: "Is it of value to maintain my cultural heritage?" and "Is it of value to maintain relations with other groups?" Attitudes toward these two questions guide the individual's adoption of a particular acculturation strategy, and 'conjointly determine cultural orientations' (Kang 2006:671). Thus, acculturation:

> 'Proceeds according to the degree to which individual simultaneously participates in the cultural life of the new society and maintains his or her original identity. The simultaneous participation and maintenance of the two cultures may lead to four different outcomes which Berry called assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization'
>
> (Sam 2006:19).

According to Berry, and his acculturation theory, 'in any intercultural situation, a group can penetrate (or ignore) the other, and groups can remain culturally distinct from (or merge with) each other' (Berry 2002:617). A growing body of acculturation literature sets acculturation in the context of cultural diffusions that in consequence lead to different *acculturation outcomes*. Cultural diffusions take place at two distinctive levels: societal level and individual level (Berry 2006; Redfield *et al.* 1936; Sam 2006). On societal level: Redfield *et al.* (1936) distinguished three possible outcomes: the assimilation of one group by the other; the merger of the two cultures, and a reaction against cultural diffusion and cultural change (*ibid.*:152). On an individual level, Berry (1997) distinguished four possible outcomes, which he terms interchangeably acculturation outcomes, strategies, or attitudes.

I disagree with this view, and for the purpose of the LASPIT research project the *acculturation attitudes* [defined as measurable, positive or negative evaluation of people, events, activities, ideas], the *acculturation strategies* [defined as actions designed to achieve a particular goal or set of goals], and the *acculturation outcomes* [defined as a

result, a consequence, something that follows from an action/actions] will be treated as completely separate albeit innately connected elements.

Although Berry, and other scholars (e.g., Berry 1997; Ryder *et al.* 2000; Watanabe *et al.* 2006) have made important contributions to our understanding of acculturation; inconsistent and inconclusive findings mean that Berry's paradigm, based on the 'typological approach' (Kang 2006), has been heavily criticised by contemporary researchers (Koneru *et al.* 2007; Lara *et al.* 2005). All this critique however pertains largely to the American context. As outlined in Chapter 1, this 'new migration' differs from the 'old migration' described by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918). Contemporary Polish immigrants travel a minimum twice a year between the home and the host country. More importantly, they maintain regular contact with their families and friends through the means of modern technologies. This networking occurs in 'real time' bridging the gap between the geographical distance and social spaces. All these innovative features of the 'new migration' mean that Polish entrants into the Irish society are not physically detached from their heritage culture and family; therefore, they are not pressurised to acculturate in a fast-forward way. For this reason, Berry's fourfold paradigm would be worth applying in the LASPIT research project.

According to Rogler (1994:706), a more simplistic version of the acculturation concept has been proposed in the American literature that encompasses 'the changes in the immigrants' cultural beliefs and values toward those of the host society.' This is counterbalanced by Suárez-Orozco *et al.* (2008) who argue that acculturating and re-acculturating migrants shape social and cultural identity in the host country and in the areas of return. Other scholars often see the acculturation paradigm as a normative imperative against foreigners, legitimating migrants' exclusion from the broader social context (Phalet and Kosic 2006). All these ideas have a notion of culture conflict, resistance, multidiversity and cultural diffusions.

Globalisation of the contemporary world challenged the assumption of culture with the introduction of polarisation as a response to differentiation (see Stevens 2007), and contesting the acculturation concept with a view that presently, acculturation should be examined alongside socio-economic change and within social structural issues (Bhatia and Ram 2001; Greenman and Xie 2008; Hermans and Kempen 1998; Sakamoto 2007; Rogler 1994; Wimmer 2008). Subsequently, sociologists have the opportunity to focus on the construction of cultural diversity and explore the richness of the phenomena under the study. Yon (2000) describes culture as elusive, open text providing repertoire of meanings rather than an already-written script that must be followed. Applying this conceptual framework to interculturalism

in the Irish case, particularly in the context of this research project, will allow for examination of the second culture acquisition by Polish immigrant teenagers taking into account dynamics of acculturation and intercultural context.

2.4 Dynamics of acculturation and interculturalism

Exposure, contact and participation in multicultural contexts, creates an intercultural space within which 'cultural boundaries, and social relationship are developed as the integral part of acculturation' (Berry 1997). However, globalisation and contemporary cultural diversity means that newcomers do not navigate only between the heritage and the mainstream culture. For instance, Hart (2002) in his study on Palestinian refugees in Jordan noticed that newcomers developed integration of a new kind – refugee children develop their own creative vision of integration drawn from their particular context. Faas (2010) found that Turkish immigrant children favoured the heritage culture and its values at home while the mainstream culture was preferred outside the domestic environment. In addition, he (*ibid*) observed that acculturation preferences and attitudes fluctuate across life domains, while Briman and Trickett (2001) noticed that acculturative change does not take place at the same rate along a single continuum. In Ireland, immigrant children are exposed to intercultural context. During their *acculturation process* newcomers assess their new socio-cultural landscape and make informed decisions on what aspect of cultures they want to acquire. Moreover, acculturating individuals exhibit different attitudes towards both cultures at different times and in specific situations - this highlights multidimensionality and dynamics of acculturation (see also Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2004; Faas 2010).

2.5 Psychology of acculturation in intercultural context

The LASPIT also examines psychological adaptation of Polish newcomer children, because in my view it is an important aspect of the acculturation constructs, often omitted in the acculturation research. By definition, every Polish immigrant in Ireland belongs to the pool of Polish immigrants and shares certain group characteristics, but only individual sets of experiences can shed more light on the *acculturation process* of immigrant Poles in the Irish intercultural context. For instance, anecdotal evidence suggests that Poles as a group of immigrants in Ireland are perceived to be well integrated. This general picture cannot specifically point towards the acculturation encountered by individual entrants; therefore more lessons that are

valuable can be learned from accounts of acculturative experiences that entail psychological adaptation, which can be obtained from studying acculturating individuals. As Berry puts it:

> 'Psychological adaptations to acculturation are considered to be a matter of learning a new behavioural repertoire that is appropriate for the new cultural context [...] often accompanied by culture shedding or culture conflict, sometimes by acculturative stress, more often called culture shock'
>
> Berry (1997:13).

Consequently, the LASPIT research project endeavours to establish if Polish teenagers experience acculturation stress, and if they do, what kind of factors (stressors) affect their *acculturation process* and how do they cope with them.

The concept of acculturative stress was first introduced by Berry (1997) who defines acculturative stress as a response to various environmental stressors caused by changes in the cultural context, which exceed the individual's capacity to cope, because of the magnitude, speed, or some other aspect of the change (*ibid.*:9). Others (Lueck and Wilson 2010) conceptualise acculturative stress as the decrease in mental health and well-being of ethnic minorities that occurs during the process of adaptation to a new culture. Because acculturative stress is presumed to be an inevitable aspect of acculturation, it is even sometimes used as a dimension of acculturation (Rudmin 2009). Undoubtedly, acculturative stress is also induced by social and environmental issues, migratory grief, cultural dislocation, as well as demands for a shift in social roles and customs (Abdulahad *et al.* 2012; Caplan 2007; Casado *et al.* 2010; Mena *et al.* 1987). More importantly, in the recent literature on psychological adaptation to acculturation, a distinction has been drawn between psychological adaptation, socio-cultural adaptation and economic adaptation (see Searle and Ward 1990). Psychological adaptation refers to a set of internal psychological outcomes including a clear sense of personal and cultural identity, and the achievement of personal satisfaction in the new cultural context. Socio-cultural adaptation is a set of external psychological outcomes that link individuals to their new context (coping with family life, work and/or schooling contexts). Economic adaptation refers to the degree to which economic well-being is achieved in the new socio-cultural arena. Each type of adaptation is different although they all are 'related empirically' (Berry 1997). Acculturation is also inseparably linked with migration. Therefore, contemporary researchers are required to take into account the fluidity of the *acculturation process* along with the emotional investment. Discursive dimensions of emotions have been explored as dynamic processes that bridge the domain of the individual and the social

(see Mascolo 2009). For that reason, discursive dimensions of emotions have also been incorporated into the LASPIT research project. Associated with the main stream of immigrants, rather than individuals, Polish teenagers have to learn how to navigate in their new social context, which is characterised by the power dynamics of a highly competitive schooling environment. Hence, this dissertation touches on psycho-sociological aspects of acculturation viz: negative social mirroring; acculturative stress; ambiguous loss; which are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of how it feels to be a Polish teenager in Ireland. Because migration inevitably involves feelings of dislocation, difficulty communicating and most significantly, leaving behind loved ones (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008), the *acculturation process* would not be completed without acknowledging the concept of ambiguous loss (see Boss 1999).

2.5.1 Polish immigrants and ambiguous loss

Boss (1991) argues that ambiguous loss is encountered when a loved one is psychologically present and physically absent, triggering the feelings of hopelessness, anger, sadness, and even guilt intensified by the absence of a public arena to express all feelings. Ambiguous loss is closely related with the migratory process because of the various losses immigrants encounter over time (Boss 1999; Mena *et al.* 1987). Separation is one of the factors that significantly contribute to psychological stress.

Migration is about decision taking and *a priori* means separation. For many Polish teenagers migration was a very complex process embedded in various psychological experiences related to parental migratory decisions and arrangements. While the adults are aware of the rationale for migratory decisions and can come to terms with it in their own time, children exposed to such encounters are more likely to experience ambiguous loss. On top of this the loss of friendship(s) and peer reference groups, which, particularly during adolescence are of significant importance (see Erwin 1998) can be perceived as irreplaceable.

Ambiguous loss has been identified as the most serious issue faced by migrants and the loved ones left behind in the country of origin (Boss 1999). Migratory resettlement affects our well-being; it destabilises our sense of belonging, especially when acculturating individuals experience alienation, marginalisation or social exclusion (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). These additional stressors can be countered by the individual's own ability and interpersonal skills that are part of a teenager's cultural competence construct. Increased self-esteem and well-being of immigrants has become another dimension of acculturation often evoked in literature and referred to as the immigrant paradox.

2.5.2 The immigrant paradox

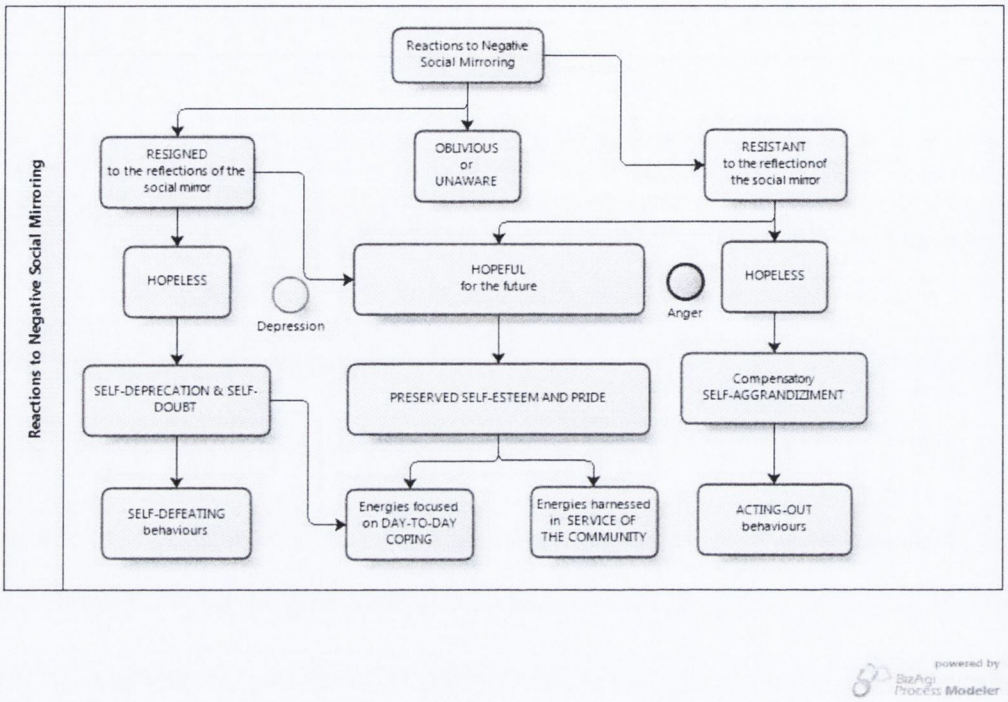
For the purpose of the LASPIT research, the immigrant paradox will not be investigated; however, the literature review pertaining to acculturation phenomenology would not be completed without a brief outline of the immigrant paradox.

In a nutshell, the immigrant paradox is a concept defining paradoxical patterns across acculturation outcomes (including improved minority physical and mental health, psychological adjustment, and academic performance), ages, ethnic groups, and national boundaries (Nguyen 2006). The association between acculturation and the immigrant paradox is well-established (Franzini *et al.* 2001; Hallowell 1942; Palloni and Arias 2004; Sam and Berry 2006; Berry *et al.* 2006; Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008; Stimpson and Urrutia-Rojas 2007). However, due to inconclusive findings pertaining to the immigrant paradox, academics (e.g., Rudmin 2009; Sam 2006) do not share a coherent view.

2.5.3 Negative social mirroring

Building on Winnicott's (1971) theory that the child's sense of self is profoundly shaped by the reflections mirrored back by significant others, including peers, schooling environment, and society in general a paradigm for examining the negative social mirroring was introduced by George De Vos and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco (2001). In a nutshell, the theory is based on the assumption that when the reflective image is generally positive, an individual is able to feel and believe in his/her own competence and worthiness, but when the reflection is generally negative, it impinges on an unblemished sense of self-esteem (see Winnicott 1971; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). Diagram 2.1 illustrates the most common reactions to negative social mirroring.

Diagram 2.1 The most common reactions to negative social mirroring



Source: Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001)

As outlined in Diagram 2.1, some factors play significant roles in the *acculturation process,* and therefore can affect newcomer's behavioural repertoire and identity. Racist stereotypes, labelling, non-recognition or misrecognition can lead to the negative social mirroring, and even positive mirroring provided by parents cannot compensate for the distorted reflections that children encounter in their daily lives (*ibid.*:99). Thus, it can be argued that the negative social mirroring influences the *acculturation process.* Other scholars (Buddington 2006; Potocky-Tripodi 2002) who researched both self-esteem and psychological adjustment in the context of acculturation found that the issue of belongingness and self-esteem are intertwined. In the LASPIT context, there is another overlap derived from the fact that acculturating teenagers at the same time undergo the process of adolescence that significantly influences this period of their life. As Lalor puts it:

> 'Adolescence and youth is an inherently interesting time of life. It is a time of energy, dynamism [...] uncertainty, awkwardness, and a searching for one's niche in society. In this period of tremendous physical, cognitive, emotional, and relational changes, the fundamental shift from child to adult takes place…'
>
> (Lalor *et al.* 2007:1).

Turner (1992) argues that all human agents are subject to some common processes, which although they have biological and psychological foundations, are necessarily social in character because they are embedded in the social realms (*ibid.*:35). Adolescence is one of them.

2.6 Theorising adolescence and youth cultures in the context of acculturation and interculturalism

Contemporary sociologists pay particular attention to the social construct of adolescence and youth culture - a social category that is widely recognised in the world. The shift from childhood to adulthood is a distinct phase of life, enriched by a very specific period characterised by the constellation of biological, cognitive, and psycho-sociological changes (*ibid.*). As demonstrated by contemporary science, biology strongly influences individual social attitudes and behaviour (Lewis and Bates 2013). Hence, Marcia (1980) and Erikson (1968) in general define adolescence as a distinct period of development in the life of each individual characterised by different stages and profound transitions. In the broad literature, there is however, an agreement that biological markers along with socio-cultural factors influence the changes that arise during the adolescence period and these markers change over time and across cultures (Brownlee 1999; Leadbeater 1996; Lalor *et al.* 2007).

2.6.1 Sociological theories on youth

A review of sociological youth theories indicates that contemporary researchers draw on the insights of sociologists and psychologists, which is visible in almost every theory on adolescence viz: Piaget's theory (1973) on cognitive development, Kohlberg's theory (1976) based on moral development, Hughes *et al.* (2004) theory on gender differences in information processing. These theories however have been heavily criticised in terms of their methodology, gender equity, and employment in less advanced societies (Gilligan *et al.* 1990; Murphy and Gilligan 1980).

The Oxford English Dictionary (third edition) 2010 defines 'puberty' as the period of a person's life during which their sexual organs develop and they become capable of having children. The typical puberty period encompasses physical, physiological development and psychosocial development. While there is a broad literature on the development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics including brain development, very little data explains impulsiveness and unpredictability in teenage behaviour. As sociologists, we are more interested in

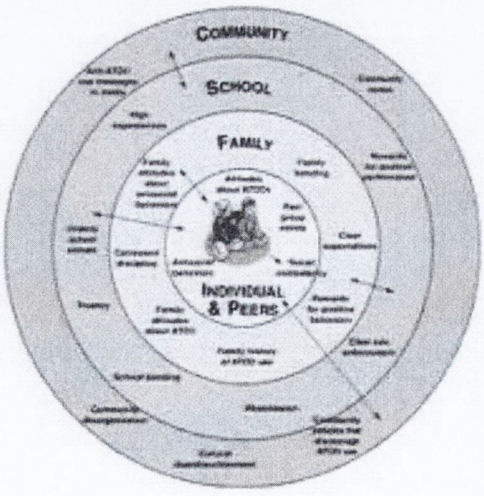
psychosocial (identity) development; however we can happily draw on the insights of science that provide a more comprehensive understanding of adolescence. Brain development in teenagers does not happen to a schedule. A brain that is not fully developed in the puberty period can be the source of unpredictable changes in teenage behaviour (Brownlee 1999). This perspective along with other 'socio-cultural factors that also influence the onset of puberty' (Lalor *et al.* 2007:24), lead towards an understanding of the socio-emotional identity formation stage of adolescent development. The most popular theories on youth identity development have been formulated by Erikson (1968), Marcia (1966, 1980) and Berzonsky (1989).

Eriksonian theory outlines that each young person endeavours to achieve a conscious sense of being a separate and unique individual; however, this cannot be achieved without interrelations with parents and peers who take part in the process of identity formation. Marcia (1966; 1980) shared the same ideas as Erikson that ego identity is the result of a crisis of awakening through exploration and experimentation also passed in progressive fashion. At present, the identity formation concept is being repositioned and many scholars (Huebner 2000; Lalor *et al.* 2007) consider that shifts in Marcia's ego identity typology represents normal, developmental changes.

Another perspective on identity formation was proposed by Berzonsky (1989) who conceptualised personality typologies classified in terms of styles rather than stages. Identity formation á la Marcia or á la Erikson attracted considerable critique for their limitations in the sociological context of migration mainly because of a lack of focus on the holistic approach to each young individual. Other major criticisms concern the validity of different stages in identity development and the fact that the theories focus more on the outcome of the process than on the process of identity formation (Franz and White 1985; Kerpelman *et al.* 1997). Reflecting on identity consciousness and cultural identity formation for instance, Huebner (2000) outlines that teenagers try to establish their identity by answering the main question – who am I? He (*ibid.*) argues that teenagers with 'secure identity' know where they fit in the world but they need to establish their autonomy in order to become self-sufficient in society. Given the fact that that period of adolescence is connected with biological development, other researchers, like for example Freud (1958), focused on psychodynamic theory of adolescence. Similar, Blos (1962) perceived adolescence through the prism of human sexuality that triggers identity development including sexual identity. Despite various controversial ideas about adolescence, there is an agreement that adolescence is 'a pivotal period for establishing future life trajectories' (Leadbeater 1996).

Adolescence as construct confronts a continuously changing social context. Thus, the Eriksonian theory of continuity and sameness in identity-making needs to be updated to embed the complexities of experiences in this era (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). Moreover, these theories present identity as a static, fixed product achieved through different phases. By contrast, other scholars (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Jenkings 1996, 2004; King-O'Riain 2008; Sword 1996) challenge these views, perceiving the discourse in identity formation, particularly in the context of transnational migration. Adolescent children of migrants face more complex tasks, because they also have to negotiate their identity between the culture of society in which they live and in which they had been raised (see Gilligan *et al.* 2010; King O'Riain 2008; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). Therefore, in response to the demand for more coherent, broader approaches, ecological (Bronfenbrenner 1979) and focal theory (Coleman 1997) have been introduced. Focal theory concentrates on the psychological transitions from childhood to adulthood including the social and psychological nature of parenthood in the nested context, while the ecological theory comprises a holistic approach. Bragg and Manchester (2011) argue that the ecological theories have appeared as a metaphor in a range of academic writing in order to highlight questions of intercultural context and wider social environment beyond the school context because they are inadequately addressed.

2.6.2 Researching adolescents: identity and holistic approach



The ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) acknowledges a holistic approach towards adolescence. Each young individual is deemed to have his/her own 'personal culture' that develops in the multi-faceted social context. The young person is influenced by the period in which she/he lives – the chronosystem - that can be impacted upon any time by political and social structures resulting in social change. The macrosystem incorporates socio-cultural imperatives, namely beliefs, values, attitudes and social contexts (school culture, neighbourhood environment, social mobility, etc., can influence a young person's development). The microsystem consists of interrelation contexts with family, peers,

and teachers or other persons important in one's life. The exosystem refers to factors and institutions that may indirectly influence one's life (by providing/withdrawing support). The relationships between the above-mentioned systems was coined the mesosystem by Bronfenbrenner.

Contemporary literature views identity formation as a complex process that confronts a continuously changing social context especially in light of global migration. Bronfenbrenner's ecological paradigm takes a holistic approach encouraging researching adolescents in their natural settings, and to be more sensitive to the many different levels, and the wider intercultural context. Acculturating teenagers face more multifarious tasks along with dealing with mainstream identities and with the existence of peer-pressure operating at the micro level (Cebolla-Boado and Medina 2011; Darmody *et al.* 2012; Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2012). Advocates of identity formation (Phinney 1990), especially ethnic identity, delineate that an achieved identity indicates positive self-evaluation, self-esteem and positive relations with family and peers in a given context. In terms of personality concepts, contemporary scholars are divided into three groups. According to Kosic (2006) relativists, for example Markus and Kitayama (1998), assume that the construct of personality can have different meanings in different cultural contexts. Absolutists (McCrae and Costa 1997) hold the view that personality is not affected by cultural dimension. By contrast, Universalists such as Berry (2002), argues that there are some common personality traits across culture but that they are influenced by behavioural display.

The widening gap between an assemblage of emerging ethnic identity and acculturation theories requires taking into account intercultural context. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's ecological paradigm that acknowledges dynamics of processes within nested contexts studied in the natural settings adequately caters for the needs of the LASPIT research project. Such design means that the LASPIT research project collects children's narratives concerning their family, their household composition, daily activities pertaining to life on emigration and, naturally, their schooling environment. In this context, the LASPIT research project encompasses the following elements: *process* [acculturation]; *person* [Polish teenagers, their parents and key informants]; *context* [intercultural Ireland as a case study], and *time* [a retrospective, temporal dimension of experience, turning points and further plans] which underpin Bronfenbrenner's view of the ecological model.

2.7 The gaps in the literature and the research hypothesis

The review of conceptual models of acculturation within migration context indicates that the conceptual and theoretical information presented in this chapter highlights acculturation complexity. However, these studies informed from the perspective of cross-cultural psychology tend to describe the change in variables associated with acculturation but usually fail to examine the *processes* together with the socio-cultural contexts accounting for variation in the *acculturation outcomes*. Acculturation does not take place in a social vacuum, rather it unfolds itself within the context of intra-and inter-group relations (Liebkind 2001; Nguyen 2006). Therefore, contemporary researchers widened their line of inquiry by renewing their interest in socio-cultural adaptation broadened by interculturalism of our globalised area along with negotiation of interactive aspects of individual's own cultural milieu (Alam 2012; Gerardo Marin *et al.* 1987; Ward and Kennedy 1999; Rabikowska and Burrell 2009; Rumbaut 2008; Sakamoto 2007). In the children's studies, it means incorporation of transnationality of children's perspective along with the formation of social relationships; children's networking and the construction of identity and belonging that emerges out of cross-border contacts (see Haikkola 2011). Based on the existing research, examination of the *acculturation process* of Polish immigrant teenagers should take into account the intercultural context, child's agency, schooling context, and the cultural diversity. This will allow me to test Berry's theorem in the contemporary, culturally diverse Ireland, and to see if it stands up.

Consequently, the LASPIT research project builds on Rudmin's description of acculturation that encompasses acculturation as the second-culture acquisition with acculturative motivations, attitudes, learning, and changes measured through the employment of bilinear scales (as per Berry's model). It outlines how Polish immigrant youths navigate in and between intercultural contexts and adjust individually to new economic and social imperatives.

Chapter 3

LASPIT research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline methodological approaches to the LASPIT research project. The previous chapters provided an overview of the existing acculturation paradigms. As mentioned in Chapter 1 – this project is exploratory research aimed to capture experiences of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland. By observing how newly arrived Polish students develop strategies and adjust to their new social arena, and how this is reflected in the unfolding of their social relations and cultural boundaries, the research aims to capture the *acculturation process* in their new social context.

The LASPIT research project is informed by the unique setting afforded by my dual role: I am a researcher, and at the same time, I am a social actor actively engaged in the *acculturation process*. Through the employment of the participant observation method in the qualitative research (see Ehrenreich 2001; Dewalt and Dewalt 2002; Toynbee 2003), I have been able to observe and describe the complexity of the *acculturation process* of my two Polish immigrant daughters in their natural settings enriched by the nuanced appreciation from Polish newcomers' narratives (see Agar 1996 - formal and informal interviewing). This atypical approach informed the LASPIT research project from the inner, reflexive perspective shaping an interesting construct of acculturation discourse, and at the same time 'enforced' compliance with the widely understood ethics (Beauchamp 1994; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Mayall 1994).

There has been a growing interest in ethical guidelines that can assist empirical inquiry involving minors because of the ethical issues that involve children's participation in the broadly defined research, especially nowadays where there is an increase in demand for children's voices to be heard (Morrow and Richards 1996). Yet, critical evaluation of ethical consideration in theory and in practice is not readily apparent in sociological literature (Dana 1996). Therefore, in the second part of this chapter, methodological and ethical issues while interviewing children arising from both the LASPIT research aims and research context are discussed.

3.2 Introducing research methodology for the longitudinal acculturation study with Polish immigrant teenagers

Post-accession migratory movements of Poles to Ireland and the UK have been broadly described in the literature, but the acculturation experiences of children of immigrants from the perspective of Polish youth living in Ireland, have to date not been explored. Following an extensive review involving scholarly publications in Polish and English along with Irish and Polish Census figures, suitable data collection methods were chosen to capture the primary and secondary information.

In general, initial information was obtained via preliminary informal inquiry derived from my own acculturation experiences, and from the Polish community comprising Polish immigrant families. Supporting information was gained via primary research namely qualitative interviews enriched by the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) questionnaire. This chapter explicitly explains which tools were used for the assessment of the acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland in accordance with common research methodology employed in social sciences (Berg 2009; Bryman 2012; Christensen 2002). The primary research has concentrated on the investigation of the *acculturation process* of Polish teenagers in the Irish context, with an extensive literature review of acculturation measurement paradigms operationalised through various approaches to the phenomena under study in order to provide a solid foundation for the LASPIT research project. The evaluation started with the review of the literature in the domain of existing research paradigms in qualitative approaches reviewing participant observations, ethnography, and grounded theory (Charmaz 2006; Strauss and Corbin 2008) along with qualitative longitudinal panel research (QLR). By interlinking various approaches to the study of acculturation phenomena, it was endeavoured to develop improved research methods for studying acculturation.

The primary goal of the LASPIT research project is to find out what it means to be a Polish immigrant acculturating teenager in Ireland, and to identify obstacles to and factors involved in the *acculturation strategies* of integrating in the school and wider social environment. Do Polish teenagers in general experience a warm welcome and acceptance, or neglect and rejection? What strategies do they develop in order to adapt to a new environment, in which 'being popular and accepted is very highly valued' (Leadbeater 1996). The main objectives of the study are to:

- Map the process of migration, family re-unification and adjustment of recently migrated Polish teenagers in Ireland and the problems and obstacles they encounter.
- Describe acculturation experiences of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland

(based on the accessed sample) longitudinally from both time and a contextual perspective.

- Identify possible gaps in the acculturation area of research, and document contributions of the LASPIT research project to current knowledge with suggestions for future directions.

In order to answer the research questions posed, the study employed a longitudinal qualitative panel.

3.2.1 The LASPIT and the qualitative longitudinal research

The paradigm of qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) is broadly discussed in literature, taking more and more prominence in the field of sociology (Layte 2011; Kemper and Royce 2002). Yet, qualitative longitudinal studies are 'relatively new methodology' (Salamonska 2012), which conducted in time allow for the 'exploration of the temporal dimension of experience' (Moriarty 2013) i.e. process, dynamics, time and change, continuity, transitions and turning points (Saldana 2003). The QLR is conducted for two main purposes; 1) to capture the depth and the breath of participants' life experiences [here diverse acculturative encounters of Polish immigrant teenagers along with the process of family reunification in Ireland]; 2) to capture participant's change through long-term immersion in the new socio-cultural setting (Sztompka 1993) [here Polish immigrant teenagers in intercultural Ireland].

A key focus of the LASPIT research project design is based on the qualitative approach including a longitudinal qualitative panel study, enhanced by participant observation in their natural settings. Qualitative longitudinal research is particularly suitable for examining the *acculturation process* through its attention to context and particularities. It examines change and texture over time, along with acculturation as a process in the social context (Holland *et al.* 2006; Neale 2003). The qualitative study however attracts some criticism because not only that the sample is very small, but it is characterised by the lack of systematic data collection, gaps in knowledge etc. (Mazzucato *et al.* 2011). The LASPIT in Ireland endeavours to bridge the gap in the current knowledge of the post-accession migration of Poles (Bobek and Salamonska 2010) though the data collection of migratory experiences of Polish children captured across time. As Thomson *et al.* (2003) puts it:

> 'What distinguishes longitudinal qualitative research is the deliberate way in which temporality is designed into the research process making change a central focus of analytic attention'
>
> (Thomson *et al.* 2003: 185).

Longitudinal research brings to the fore the interplay of the ways in which migration is constructed across different time points (Millar 2007). Furthermore, the longitudinal dimension of the LASPIT research project has equipped the study with the opportunity for continuous research in the same community of Polish immigrant families over time (three waves of interviews over 24 months), generating 'rich, detailed, textured data about acculturating individuals across time' (Holland *et al.* 2006). It also allowed for the follow-up approach that comprised returns to sites of previous research, evaluation and tracking, and the life course research across generations (Moriarty 2013).

At present, it is evident that one-time measures of *acculturation attitudes* are uninformative (Nguyen 2006; Rudmin 2010). The longitudinal design of the LASPIT research project aims to bridge this gap and utilise the LASPIT research design in order to gain a better picture of the *acculturation process*. Finally, individual longitudinal panel studies are invaluable because collection and use of longitudinal data is recognised as a key tool for informing the discipline of sociology and policy (Layte 2011).

3.2.2 Qualitative interview while researching children's experiences

The interest in the employment of qualitative interview translates into a growing body of qualitative research because academics are increasingly interested in hearing people's own stories that enable them to provide rich context and insights (Rubin *et al.* 2005; Saldana 2003; Seale 2004b). Qualitative interviews have many advantages, enabling the interviewer to ask follow-up questions, if necessary, to gain a better understanding of the presented point of view and encountered experience. There is also more scope for picking-up on non-verbal clues such as body language, in order to obtain a richer picture. However, these theoretical assumptions translate into completely different processes when the research involves children (Greig *et al.* 2007). The employment of qualitative interviews defined as conversations in which a researcher gently guides an interviewee in an extended discussion is suggested as a non-invasive approach (Rubin *et al.* 2005). This form of interview not only helped to uncover children's experiences and to illuminate the complexity of the *acculturation process* in the Irish context but more importantly, it facilitated practical application of the LASPIT research project that 'recognises the reality of studying child participants in the further pursuit of knowledge' (Greig *et al.* 2007:4). This particular style allowed following-up on gaps, omissions, enabling interpretation of the elicited data with its whole background – body language, the timbre of voice, silences etc. For these

reasons, the employment of the qualitative interview served as the most effective and approachable form to explore Polish teenager's world in a non-invasive way.

Qualitative approach based on the non-confrontational style allowed entrance to children's vibrant and nuanced world. In this model, questioning style reflected the personality of the interviewer, recognising both parties involved, treating the interviewees as equal partners with their own rights[5].

As the author of this research, I was equipped with the interview guide but decided to let the conversation flow if the particular respondent approached the subject from a different angle. For the large percentage of interviews carried out from autumn 2009 until autumn 2011, the non-confrontational style suited best, especially when it was clear that the conversational partners were to be re- interviewed. Usually some time was spent with each interviewee in order to develop a relationship by introducing the topic and the aim of this research, and by focusing on common experiences. When the *Informed Consent Form/Volunteer Form* was explained, accepted, and signed by the guardian and the respondent; the permission to use a voice recorder was sought. Interestingly, nobody objected to the use of this tool, so I could rely on the voice recorder exclusively.

In order to engage each social actor in the interviewing process, usually the first part of the conversation began with an open-response question enabling the respondent to introduce the understanding of the topic and elaborate on it. All the themes related to the research project were 'intentionally introduced' (Rubin *et al.* 2005) to Polish teenagers. Because the majority of the interviews were conducted in the Greater Dublin area, there is a prevalence of quotations from this geographical region (apart from one focus group in Co Kilkenny[6]). One set of focus group interviews were conducted in Co Kilkenny in April 2010 with six Polish teenagers providing an interesting dimension to the initial findings around context (smaller Polish community in rural Ireland) and interactions with peers.

Sometimes questions and prompts that were working fine with some Polish teenagers had to be adjusted to suit the individual situation of the young social actors, who were for example from a household with an absent father. I was usually aware of the familial situation of my interviewees because the child's parent provided this knowledge in advance, usually during an initial telephone conversation. Therefore, the preliminary conversations with Polish teenagers' guardians were of utmost

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[5] Sokolowska, B. (2012) 'Not Everything that is Legal is Ethical' Irish Journal of Anthropology. Special Issue: Interviewing Ireland 15(1) Spring/Summer.

[6] In 2009 I - the author of this research was contacted via email by the Polish artist who lives in Kilkenny and who encouraged me to test my hypothesis in a different set-up and area of Ireland.

importance. One of the main objectives was the depth and richness of acculturation experiences sought in qualitative interviews with the full recognition and acceptance that 'each conversational partner has a distinct set of experiences, a different construction of the meaning of these experiences and diverse areas of expertise' (Rubin *et al.* 2005). Hence the questions were worded differently depending on the type of interviewee (adult parent, teenage girl aged seventeen or adolescent boy aged twelve) enabling me - the interviewer to receive 'the time, thoughtfulness and openness of the conversational partners helping them to understand their own experiences [...] making the interview rewarding, leaving the interviewees better off' (*ibid.*:34). Some of the conducted qualitative interviews were later followed-up by telephone conversation and this level of engagement helped to develop trust that was necessary for further exploring of acculturation aspects entailed in teenagers' daily lives. Overall, each interviewee had an opportunity to answer the questions from his/her own perspective and in his/her own words.

Elaborating on the term 'my experience' it is necessary to stress that each individual young Polish immigrant described what he/she encountered, and how it influenced relational engagement at school, with reunited family, and with other peers. Polish respondents lively articulated how those experiences of the past and of the present have shaped and re-shaped their behaviour, affecting their identity, influencing their *acculturation process*. It is argued that the context of reception in the receiving society [here Ireland] accompanied by the following reference points: 'then' and 'now', 'from-to' details the complexity of the acculturation journey outlining the process of change (Saldana 2003). At the same time, the shifting nature of the insider/outsider perspective enabled an examination of the gathered data from both an internal (immigrant Polish parent) and external perspective (researcher). Moreover, the synthesis of the qualitative context indicates that the findings are generally in line with the outcomes obtained from the employment of the quantitative tool, which strengthened the overall findings.

3.2.3 Quantitative component in researching acculturation of Polish teenagers within the Irish intercultural context

It is argued that the quantitative approach can be helpful in assessing the external validity of a qualitative research study. Thus, the quantitative component can serve as a specific tool for gaining an 'appreciation of the scale of the external validity of the issues investigated qualitatively' (Seal 2004; Rubin *et al.* 2005). It was one of the

reasons why the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA questionnaire) was utilised by the LASPIT research project.

3.2.4 Rationale for employing mixed methods of data collection in the LASPIT research project

Some researchers have begun to recognise the value of mixing qualitative and quantitative strands in sociology (Salamonska 2012). Qualitative studies were used initially to enhance the quantitative portion of the study because a dependence purely on one method may overlook the socio-cultural construction of the variables, which quantitative research seeks to correlate (Ku and Aung 2007; Seale 2004b; Silverman 2006). As Holland puts it:

> 'There is much potential for collaboration between qualitative and quantitative approaches to longitudinal research. It has been suggested that existing and new longitudinal studies would benefit from the addition of qualitative elements; and that there is potential for purposive sampling within existing longitudinal studies in order to provide samples for qualitative inquiry'
>
> (Holland *et al.* 2006:3).

Qualitative in-depth interviews are usually employed in the first instance 'to uncover experiences' (Ku and Aung 2007). Gathered data later helps to develop specific questions in a quantitative survey distributed to immigrants (Holland 2006). This approach was replicated in the LASPIT research project. Subsequently, the quantitative element facilitated the LASPIT research project by revealing patterns of the *acculturation process* that were examined and compared with the data obtained through a qualitative approach. Hence, the quantitative component [the self-completion of on-line VIA questionnaires] worked as a perfect tool complementing the qualitative techniques while exploring acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland.

In addition, the quantitative component has been well-suited to the context of acculturation research as it has contributed to the production of a valuable piece of information – statistical data about acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland captured over time. This justifies the employment of two different methods of data collection called mixed method, which is defined as:

> 'The class of research where the researcher mixes and combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study'
>
> (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004:17).

Therefore, the LASPIT research project incorporates a combination of open and standardised data collections, which was developed using qualitative and quantitative approaches. While face-to-face qualitative interviews, aided by interview guides and quantitative tool such as on-line VIA questionnaires were crucial to measure acculturation attitudes, the corresponding conversational interview style particularly suited the chosen age group of Polish underage participants. Quantitative component helped to encapsulate the main findings and answer a lot of 'what' questions, while qualitative approaches highly sensitive to contextual issues helped to answer 'why' and 'how' questions (Holland *et al.* 2006) and explore in depth what it is like to be a Polish immigrant teenager in Ireland.

3.3 Thoroughness, accuracy, believability and credibility in the LASPIT research project

The employment of mixed methods throughout the LASPIT research project enhanced its validity, credibility, accuracy, and believability.

Rubin *et al.* (2005:70) defines 'thoroughness' as the process of investigating all the relevant options with care and completeness. It entails testing out alternative explanations, and talking about them with interviewees who have different backgrounds and perspectives. Sometimes it means digging back in time to tell a story from the beginning or looking for missing parts of narratives. The longitudinal design of the LASPIT research project allowed for the preparation of the follow-up questions, which on many occasions shed more light on important acculturation aspects that have not emerged during the initial interview. Moreover, the fact that the Polish interviewees came from various socio-demographical backgrounds, along with the fact that the sample was quite evenly spread in the Greater Dublin area provided various perspectives. At the same time by virtue of closeness and accuracy of representing what the interviewees said or getting across the meaning of what the interviewees said, creates as argued by Rubin *et al.* (2005:71) a description and explanation of the research setting where participants in the research recognise and acknowledge the presented description of 'their world'.

The majority of Polish adult respondents were referred to the research through the snowball sampling method. Naturally, the longer referral chain in snowball sampling, the greater is the ratio of referrals to potential informants. It enabled

reaching different members of Polish immigrant society in terms of gender, education, and background. However, the network occurred also accidentally. A Polish immigrant woman from County Kilkenny read about the LASPIT research project on the TCD website[7] and initiated the contact. This spontaneous encounter resulted in a very vivid, dynamic focus group with six Polish immigrant teenagers aged thirteen to twenty from Kilkenny. As the researcher, I was personally interested why the Polish émigré parents granted the interview. On numerous occasions they just wanted to help. Most interviewed Polish parents believe that their experiences will help other Polish immigrant families.

In general, interviews with parents were developed to elucidate some data on the issue around migration, its influence on the family left behind in Poland, and finally to shed more light on the reunited family composition and the *acculturation process* here in Ireland. Interviews with parents were conducted in a conversational style. Polish parents were usually interviewed on site, when I arrived to talk to their children. Sometimes at the parents' request, they were held elsewhere. Usually the teenager's parent(s) were interviewed for a while before I interviewed my underage individual, and later a synopsis of what was obtained from both sides was compiled and crosschecked. Most often, it was an immigrant mother who chose to give an interview, but on numerous occasions, it was a father. Each interview was unique and granted insights into parents' reactions to the problems they confronted - typically the language barrier, worries for their offspring, time conflict with work demands - as a reflection of their adaptation to the Irish culture.

The Polish language is still spoken on a daily basis in Polish migrants' homes, especially among those who live here with their reunited families (Census 2011). For practical reasons interviews were carried out in Polish in order to facilitate Polish respondents who have not acquired the English language yet, and to capture different nuances that are often best expressed in the mother tongue. Interviewees' own language may often reveal a through-line operant in their lives (Saldana 2003). At the same time, the qualitative researcher is both egalitarian and understanding, concerned to elicit the unique perspective that each person is imagined to possess (see Seale 2004a). Therefore, in terms of accuracy and translation concerns, all interviews with Polish immigrant teenagers and their parents were conducted in the Polish language, and I ensured the validity of translation - putting the elicited findings in context.

Firstly, Polish immigrants, regardless of age, do not use the term 'to migrate'; instead they employ more colloquial words *wyjeżdżac, wyjechać* (go away). However, a verb *to migrate* was used in quotations from the interviews, in order to contextualise

[7] http://www.tcd.ie/sociology/postgraduate/current-students/

narratives and make it understandable for English speaking readers. Secondly whenever Polish immigrants referred to the term 'here' *tutaj*, they meant 'in Ireland' and 'there' or 'in Poland' *tam, u nas*, which was translated to 'in our country, in Poland'. Each interview has been treated as a unique resource describing acculturation experiences of Polish youth in Ireland.

In the context of the LASPIT research objectives, the interview is treated as a site for the observation (see Rubin *et al.* 2005; Saldana 2003) and gaining of particular knowledge of issues surrounding acculturation. Interviews with Polish immigrants have taken place in a variety of settings and included face-to-face engagement, phone conversation, and email contact (these two naturally have their own limitations because they do not allow for observation of the body language and behavioural reactions).

Believability means demonstrating that the researcher has not been deceived by the interviewees (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). To avoid being misinformed, not only were young Polish respondents interviewed but also their parents' projection of acculturation experiences was obtained, thus enhancing the key informants' views. Through the employment of this method, data obtained from Polish parents and key informants served to counteract limitations – 'concurrence and disconnection of the self-reported data' (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). Yet, the main points of reference in the LASPIT research project were immigrant teenagers' views enriched by parental perspectives.

Sociologists advocate that credibility is best demonstrated through transparency and it means that a reader of a qualitative research report is able to see the process by which the data were collected and analysed including the conscientiousness of the researcher (Bryman 2012; Patton 1990; Rubin *et al.* 2005). For the purpose of the LASPIT research project Polish participants were recruited to the study via the employment of the snowball sampling, which allows for accessing hard-to-reach populations (Seale 2004b). In principle, the selected sample should relate to the research objectives, and the nature and the context of the study (Palys 2008). Thus, the employment of the snowball sampling was a useful strategy to access Polish immigrant teenagers who could not otherwise have been accessed directly, because of a strict ethical code adhered to throughout the LASPIT research project[8]. Despite some limitations attached to this sampling method, the credibility of the LASPIT research project was achieved through thoroughness, sensitivity in questioning, and a careful analysis of both qualitative and quantitative output. Similarities of results

[8] Sokolowska, B. (2012) 'Not Everything that is Legal is Ethical' Irish Journal of Anthropology. Special Issue: Interviewing Ireland, 15 (1) Spring/Summer.

derived from these two different approaches serve to strengthen the overall research findings presupposing confidence in credibility of the LASPIT research project. Moreover, the research was impossible to replicate because it adopted a purposeful approach, where each interview was treated as an individual case study, which is a unique feature that treats 'the object (case) as a whole' (Verschuren 2013). Finding interviewees with the relevant, first-hand experience is critical for making convincing results (Rubin *et al.* 2005). Thus, the LASPIT cohort was selected, and included only a particular subset of informants: Polish immigrant teenagers, born in Poland, aged twelve to twenty.

In addition, first-hand empirical narratives from Polish reunited families significantly increased the credibility of the research, providing invaluable information, and rich, textured data. Thus, by scoping different perspectives this unique approach has enhanced the credibility of the LASPIT research project.

3.4 Conception of time and change in the multi-actor qualitative panel study

It has been argued that only panel studies based on a qualitative model are able to access the fluid and often highly situation-specific experiences, understanding, and perceptions that mediate the ways in which people deal with and respond to socio-cultural change (Henwood and Lang 2003). In order to answer the research questions and capture 'microsocial interactions' (Seale 2004a) of the acculturating Polish immigrant teenagers, the LASPIT research project employed a qualitative panel study. Retrospective research designs are ill-suited to study processes of identity-formation and psychosocial adjustment because these processes undergo a permanent process of re-definition and re-construction. The LASPIT research project therefore follows a prospective, longitudinal design, aimed to interview Polish immigrant teenagers three times during this research project, about every seven months, starting as soon as possible after their arrival in Ireland. A qualitative panel study particularly suits this research as it generates rich, detailed, and textured data (Holland *et al.* 2006) and it facilitates:

i) connection between social factors influencing adjustment and real experiences of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland because qualitative longitudinal panel studies 'are highly sensitive to contextual issues, and can illuminate important micro-social processes, such as the ways in which people and children subjectively negotiate the changes that occur

in their lives at times of personal life transition' (Henwood and Lang 2003:49);

ii) encapsulation of knowledge of the migratory journey, reunification process and acculturation encounters of Polish immigrant families with teenage children, capturing transition moments, coping strategies and other intangible aspects of the *acculturation process* (see Saldana 2003);

iii) investigation of how immigrant children's everyday attitudes and actions are embedded in patterns of socio-cultural change because of qualitative investigations characteristic sensitivity to context (see Holland *et al.* 2006).

As mentioned above multi-actor qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) that combines open, qualitative interviews was specifically chosen as the research method for two sets of reasons. Firstly, as indicated by Rubin *et al.* (2005) a qualitative interview enables the researcher to elicit depth and detail about the research topic. Secondly, the three foundational principles of QLR, which are: Duration: Long period of time (Saldana, 2003), Time: Retrospective, Contemporary, Prospective (Thomson *et al.* 2003) and Change: Transition, Trajectory (Millar 2007) enabled the LASPIT to examine acculturation as:

> 'A process, which takes place over time, and which results in changes [because] it is really only possible to observe change when the study design is longitudinal [...] and incorporates the measurement of change, between two or more points in time'
>
> (Sam and Berry 2006:135).

Saldana (2003) asserts that 'a minimum of nine months of fieldwork is suggested for educational study to be considered longitudinal' (*ibid.*:4), therefore, having chosen the research topic, a four-year plan for the LASPIT research project was prepared. Initially, a big question mark over the accessibility of Polish immigrant teenagers was left, primarily because of the ethical concerns (see Sokolowska 2012a). Secondly, any advertisement was out of the question due to the limited personal budget (all the LASPIT fieldwork was self-funded). Eventually, I decided to contact a director from one of the Polish schools in the Greater Dublin area. This particular person very soon became my first 'seed' through whom the first referees' phone numbers were obtained, and then through the employment of the snowball sampling (SBS) a qualitative panel study of 34 young Polish individuals, including my twin

daughters, was conveyed. However, it should be acknowledged that the design of this research has not been purely inductive because there was an assumption based on my acculturating twins encounters that Polish teenagers may experience acculturation stress and that they might find it difficult to acculturate 'in a fast-forward way' (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008).

In terms of conception of time and change, it has been acknowledged that time is a cultural, individually interpreted construct experienced differently by different nations all over the world (see Agar 1994; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Time is also data (Saldana 2003). Culture change along with individual change due to the *acculturation process* can only be noted and assessed when two sets of data are compared over time using the same people (Sam and Berry 2006). Acculturation as a process is multi-dimensional, fluid, and contextual. For that reason, the empirical design of the LASPIT research project has a longitudinal dimension, enriched by quantitative tool allowing for direct comparison of two separate sets of data captured in 2010 [T1] and in 2011 [T2].

Since time is contextual, and our social actions and flow of events are contextual, change is also contextual and multifaceted (Fullan 1999). Having acknowledged that change has dimensional properties, such as rate, direction and degree of impact, and can occur in stages and phases, and can also be examined in terms of sequences or shifts in the nature of interactions (Saldana 2003; Strauss and Corbin 1998), the meaning of change should be flexible during research emerging as a final definition after the gathered data is analysed (Saldana 2003). Thus, following ethical approval of the LASPIT research project, the data collection method was undertaken as follows:

1) Phase one

The sample of Poles was endeavoured to be recruited using chain-referral sampling based on linkages between the parents and their children. Having a basic network of contacts with parents who have children in the relevant age brackets provided the initial 'seeds' for varied sampling in terms of areas, schools, age and gender. First, the required information about Polish schools was obtained from the internet website[9]. The former director of a Polish school in Dublin North was contacted, becoming the first "seed" of the snowball sampling. Through the employment of the snowball sampling with the generous help of the four 'seeds' 34 Polish immigrant teenagers including my twins were recruited to the LASPIT research project. Each participant

[9] http://www.dublin.msz.gov.pl/en/dublin_ie_a_33/polish_schools_in_ireland

was provided with an Informed Consent Form outlining the research aims and objectives, the envisaged benefits, and the right to confidentiality. All participants were assured that participation in the LASPIT research project was voluntary. A written Informed Consent Form/Volunteer Form was ascertained from each participant (parent and child) before engaging in the qualitative interview.

2) Phase two

In-depth qualitative interviews were used to collect data from Polish immigrant teenagers, their parents, and the key informants. The structure and the nature of each interview was guided by the research objectives. During the first year, the LASPIT research project concentrated on mapping the migration and describing the resources of recently migrated Polish teenagers in Ireland, focusing on the incoming realities of the newcomers and their reunification with families. Qualitative interviews conducted with Polish reunited families in Ireland helped to establish why the interviewed respondents arrived in Ireland, who decided to come first, and what kind of arrangements took place to allow parent(s) to migrate and what was the impact of migratory decision. In addition, acculturation experiences in Ireland and re-acculturation issues of the short-time returners were explored. Conveniently, key informants were endeavoured to be interviewed at any time during the two-year field work, collecting retrospective information about programmes aiding Polish children in their new schooling environment, and obtaining general information about the pedagogical support for newcomer students.

3) Phase three

During the second wave of interviews that started around summer 2010, LASPIT concentrated more on the gaps and follow-up questions. Respondents were asked about changes in their school life and in their domestic life. The interviewees were asked what food they like or started to like in Ireland, what kind of music they still listen to and how residing in Ireland influenced their cultural taste. 'By asking for detail, you encourage the interviewee to provide the specifics that enable you to understand the unexpected' (Rubin *et al.* 2005: 130). Overall, the second wave of interviews provided insights on patterns of social interactions with peers within researched acculturation typologies.

4) Phase four

For the purpose of the LASPIT research project, a quantitative tool called the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) was adapted. The adapted VIA questionnaires were distributed via a SurveyMonkey engine link to all 34 Polish immigrant teenagers initiating the quantitative part of the LASPIT research project.

Because acculturation 'is a double-barrelled phenomena' (Berry *et al.* 2008) the VIA questionnaire consisted of a set of questions pertaining to the heritage and the mainstream culture. The VIA was nested annually to observe the *acculturation attitudes* over time. Detailed analysis of the findings based on a ten-item visual analogue scale (VAS) index measuring acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers were compared with demographic variables and the findings from the qualitative interviews. The third wave of interviews took place during this phase. Saldana (2003) outlines that:

> 'The final exit interviews have a special notion of value because they are not only opportunities for closure or assessment, they are also researcher's opportunities to see whether the absence or presence of particular phenomena or data have shaped interviewees, [in this case Polish immigrant teenagers] course of actions across time'
>
> (Saldana 2003:124).

Thus, the last interviews carried during the third wave were of the utmost importance apart from closing the fieldwork of the LASPIT research project. While it is quite common to reward respondents financially, all LASPIT participants (Polish teenagers, Polish parents, and the key informants) agreed to take part in the research on a *pro bono* basis. After the research fieldwork, a *Certificate of Appreciation* was issued to all Polish teenage respondents.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling frames of recently arrived Polish immigrant teenagers were not available at the time when this research was commenced, therefore a chain referral sampling, also known as a snowball sampling was chosen. As explained before, Polish children are considered hidden because of the ethical reasons regarding their accessibility. Therefore, in order to access this particular sample with the required characteristic it was decided to use a network of chain-referral sampling to meet research aims and objectives guided by instrumental approach to ethical tools underpinned by Saldana's (2003) assertion that 'not everything that is legal is ethical'.

Snowball sampling as a method has a particular value because new referrals are based on certain criteria and referral accessibility based on the notion of trust and obligation. For pragmatic reasons, the LASPIT only considered Polish immigrant teenagers in the Greater Dublin area. The snowball sampling has come under considerable criticism (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981; Fink 2000). However, with care in

selection, [not every referral is used] and avoiding personal bias, snowball sampling can still be a useful method, particularly if there is no other way of reaching the target population. It has been acknowledged that some biases were introduced through the agencies of socialisation (i.e., 'seeds') while some were mitigated by the fact that the vast majority of informants were potentially strangers to me - the researcher. Moreover, the chain-referral sample comprised four different 'seeds' in terms of background, socio-economic status, and location that reduced agencies of socialisation. Overall, the chain referral sampling as a method facilitated addressing the main research question of what it is like to be a Polish immigrant teenager in Ireland but limited the findings in terms of generalizability.

During the first wave, a qualitative interview with at least one parent of the underage respondents was conducted. The second wave of interviews with non-recently arrived migrants, were scheduled in the next seven months dated from the first interview. This method supported exploration of the *acculturation process*, and helped to document the everyday life of Polish immigrant teenagers in the transnational context.

3.5.1 Recruitment process and attrition rate

The LASPIT research project aspired to follow at least eight to ten newly arrived Polish teenagers for two years of their new life in Ireland in order to capture their *acculturation process*. Taking panel attrition into account it aimed to interview between eight to ten Polish teenagers who arrived recently in the first wave in order to secure a sample of eight young Poles who could be followed over the whole period of this research. At the same time, qualitative interviews with non-recently arrived immigrant children were conducted in order to assess if the rapid change in the economic climate influenced the *acculturation process*.

The targeted population of non-recently arrived immigrants were interviewed only once throughout the LASPIT research project. The total qualitative panel study comprised 34 young Polish individuals. Taking panel attrition into account it was decided to interview as many young Polish volunteers who fulfilled the research criteria, as possible. However, during the recruitment process, which started in autumn 2009, it became apparent that the majority of referees were not recent immigrants. Thus, the total sample consisting of 34 teenage participants was divided into two sub-groups: recently arrived Polish migrants aged from 12-20 were solely assigned to the longitudinal part of the LASPIT research project that consisted of three waves of one-to-one qualitative interviews. This sub-group consisted of eight

participants. The second sub-group was larger and consisted of twenty-six Polish acculturating teenagers aged from 12-20 with the average length of time in Ireland accounted for 3.5 years in 2009. Informants from this group were interviewed only once during the first wave. The LASPIT research project aimed for gender balance, but as indicated in Table 3.2 Polish immigrant girls outnumbered Polish immigrant boys in proportion 10:7 [58.82% to 41.18%]. Later, in-depth qualitative interviews with all 34 Polish teenagers were triangulated with Polish émigré parents' perspectives. Visualisation of the recruitment process was mapped (see Diagram 3.1 below).

Diagram 3.1 Recruitment of Polish teenagers (through SBS)

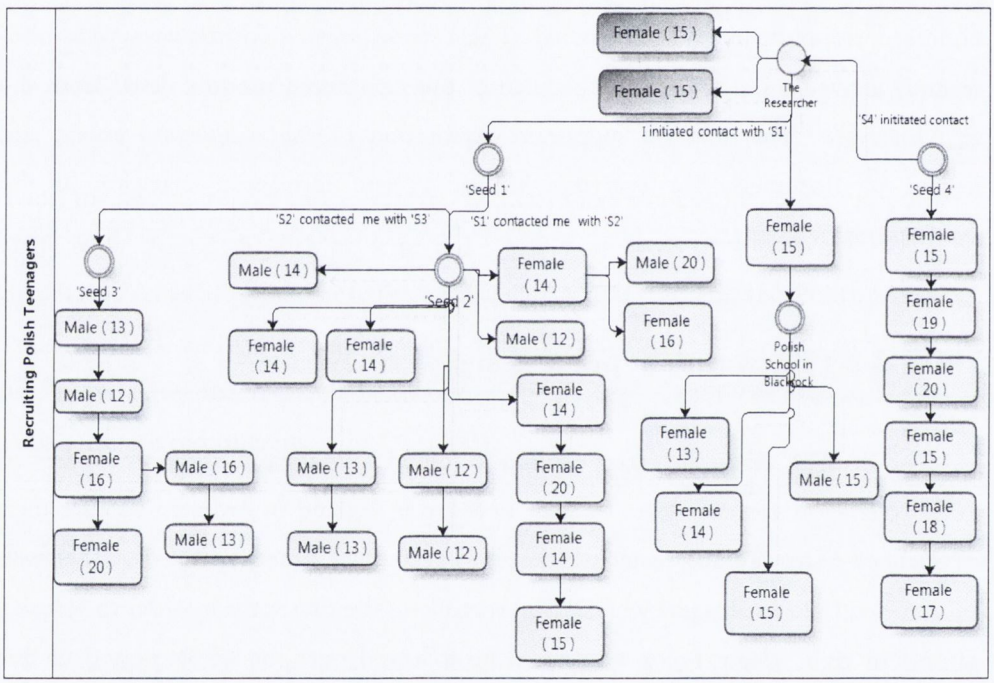

Diagram 3.1 illustrates the LASPIT snowball sampling process viz: four Polish immigrant teenagers were recruited through a Polish Saturday School based in Blackrock Co Dublin; twenty-seven were recruited via the employment of the snowballing with the generous help of the 'four seeds'. The two participants flagged in red are the researcher's daughters.

The longitudinal part of the study began with eight recently arrived Polish immigrants. During the academic year 2009/2010 the longitudinal sample size was eight representing an attrition rate of 0% annually. However, during 2010/2011 one of the recent immigrant teenagers tragically passed away. The longitudinal sample size therefore was reduced to seven participants. Among non-recent newcomers, the attrition rate was zero.

Apart from the qualitative interviews, due to over-representation of Polish immigrants in the Greater Dublin area, I also participated in Polish Saturday School lessons; I attended Polish mass, a Polish funeral, Polish festivals, and special events for Poles and about Poles in Dublin. In terms of other social activities, I was privileged to attend less formalised events such as afternoon tea in Anna's house, a birthday party in Jolanta's house, Christmas Eve in Hubert's place 2010, and Easter brunch in Malwina's house. Overall, the participant observations let me - the researcher stand back, observe, and see Polish immigrant family life and their experiences through their eyes and from their perspective. Such relatively frequent contact with Polish reunited families provided me with valuable insights into the topic and themes important in the everyday life on emigration. Moreover, it enriched the reflexivity approach and bridged the gap between my insider knowledge and socio-cultural practises of my native counterparts. Amongst many questions, I was particularly interested in the following issues:

- How do Polish teenagers perceive retrospectively parental migratory decisions?
- Separation as a part of migratory experience
- How do Polish teenagers with limited language, function in groups of potential strangers?
- How are Polish teenagers as newcomers socialised into groups?
- What obstacles do Polish teenagers face, and how do they cope with them?
- How *acculturation attitudes* of Polish teenagers in Ireland changed over time?

3.5.2 Demographic characteristic of the LASPIT cohort

Diversity was key for this research; therefore, Polish teenagers from a different economic background, from different parts of Poland, of different age, gender, and of different domiciliary origins were interviewed (see below Table 3.1).

By accessing such a broad range of participants, acculturation encounters were examined from different angles and though many lenses, all of which contributed to a better understanding of immigrant teenager's acculturation experiences.

Table 3.1 Age, gender, time of habitual residence, and separation timeframe

Name	Gender	Age bracket	County of residence	Habitual residence in Ireland	Number of siblings	Child separation with parent (s)	English language proficiency upon arrival
Adam	M	15-17	Co Wicklow	3 years	1	8 months	none
Agnieszka	F	12-14	Co Kilkenny	3 years and 5 months	1	6 months	more than basic
Andrzej	M	15-17	Co Dublin	4 years	0	9 months	none
Ania	F	12-14	Co Dublin	1 year and 6 months	2	1 year and 8 months	intermediate
Arkadiusz	M	12-14	Co Kildare	3 years	1	1 year	basic
Basia	F	12-14	Co Dublin	2 years	1	1 year	none
Daniel	M	12-14	Co Wicklow	4 years	0	3 years	very basic
Dominik	M	12-14	Co Dublin	4 years	0	8 months	none
Dorota	M	18-20	Co Kilkenny	3 years	1	1 year and 6 months	intermediate
Ewa	F	12-14	Co Dublin	4 years	0	N/A	basic
Fabian	M	12-14	Co Wicklow	7 years	1	5 months	none
Grażyna	F	12-14	Co Dublin	2 years and 5 months	0	6 months	very basic
Grzegorz	M	12-14	Co Dublin	3 years	1	2 months	none
Iza	F	12-14	Co Kilkenny	3 years	0	6 months	advanced
Jolanta	F	18-20	Co Kilkenny	4 years	1	6 months	advanced
Julia	F	15-17	Co Dublin	3 years	0	1 year	basic
Kasia	F	15-17	Co Kildare	9 years	1	N/A	none
Klara	F	12-14	Co Dublin	2 years	0	1 year	very basic
Klaudia	F	15-17	Co Kilkenny	4 years	1	6 months	advanced
Kornelia	F	15-17	Co Dublin	Over 3 years	1	3 weeks	basic
Lidia	F	12-14	Co Dublin	4 years	3	3 months	none
Maciej	M	18-20	Co Dublin	3 years	2	3 months	intermediate
Malgorzata	F	15-17	Co Dublin	Over 3 years	1	3 weeks	basic
Marek	M	12-14	Co Dublin	8 years	1	3 months	none
Marta	F	18-20	Co Dublin	Almost 2 years	2	1 month	none
Michal	M	15-17	Co Dublin	1 year and 6 months	1	6 months	intermediate
Michalina	F	15-17	Co Kilkenny	3 years	0	7 months	intermediate
Patrycja	F	15-17	Co Dublin	1 year and 6 months	1	4 years	none
Paweł	M	12-14	Co Wicklow	1 year and 6 months	1	10 months	none
Przemek	M	12-14	Co Dublin	3 years	0	1 month	none
Sylwia	F	18-20	Co Dublin	1 year and 6 months	1	2 years and 1 month	more than basic
Teresa	F	12-14	Co Wicklow	2 years	0	3 years	basic
Tomasz	M	12-14	Co Dublin	Almost 3 years	0	10 months	basic
Tosia	F	15-17	Co Dublin	4 years	2	1 month	none

For the purpose of further analyses, the LASPIT cohort was divided into three age group categories. Table 3.2 illustrates age brackets division by gender and volume.

Table 3.2 LASPIT cohort breakdown by age and gender

Age bracket	12-14	15-17	18-20	Total
F	9	8	3	20
M	9	3	2	14
Total	18	11	5	34

3.5.3 Distribution and domiciliary origins of Polish respondents in Ireland

Table 3.3 (below) demonstrates geographical distribution of Polish teenagers in the Greater Dublin area outlining the coverage of the LASPIT research project. Polish teenage participants as detailed below were recruited from various Dublin districts, and surprisingly despite employment of the snowball sampling, they were distributed quite evenly in the Greater Dublin area. In terms of precise localisation by county: twenty-one Polish teenagers were distributed in the Greater Dublin area, five in Co Wicklow, six in Co Kilkenny, and two in Co Kildare.

Table 3.3 Domiciliary origin of Polish teenager population recruited for the LASPIT research project (34=100%)

Greater Dublin area	County Kildare	County Kilkenny	County Wicklow	Total
21	5	6	2	34

3.6 The LASPIT research project and acculturation measurement methods

In order to ascertain the *acculturation attitudes* of Polish immigrant teenagers, adequate measurements were employed after a critical appraisal of acculturation scales and measurements used in other research studies. According to Ryder *et al.* (2000), various dimensions of acculturation can be measured by combining results from heritage and mainstream subscales. Therefore, in this chapter, it is argued that a bidimensional model accompanied by the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA

questionnaire) is well-suited as a measurement method because it divulges independent measurements corresponding to heritage and mainstream culture.

Acculturation researchers are 'flooded' by different scales and measurements (see Rudmin and Ahmadzadeh's 2001). Interestingly, Sommerlad's scale based on a Likert measures was adopted by Berry (see Sommerlad and Berry 1970). However, as noted by Rudmin (2009), the *Deculturation construct* now called *Marginalisation* was not measured. Berry (1970) explained that 'common sense and pilot work indicated that such an outcome was not chosen by anyone' (*ibid.*:180) despite the fact that *Marginalisation* forms an integral part of Berry's fourfold paradigm. Other scholars also significantly contributed to our better understanding of the acculturation measurements (Ryder *et al.* 2000; Taras 2007; Zane and Mak 2003). However, not a single approach allows addressing all the important measurement issues and each have their strengths and weaknesses (Rudmin 2009; Sakamoto 2007). Unquestionably, good attitude scale should consist of a minimum of six questions – attitude statements, with which the respondent is asked to agree or disagree (see Seale 2004b).

3.6.1 Limitations and critique of various acculturation measurements

The empirical operationalisation of acculturation theory is problematic. Opponents of the unidimensional model of acculturation argue that it shows a coherent pattern of external correlates, while advocates of the bidimensional measure reveal independent dimensions corresponding to heritage and mainstream culture identification, arguing that the bidimensional model is a more valid and useful operationalisation of acculturation (Dere *et al.* 2010; Ryder *et al.* 2000; Watanabe *et al.* 2006). Arends-Tóth, and Van de Vijver (2006) evaluated one-statement, two-statement and four-statement methods finding major convergence in the final results but concluded that a bidimensional model that employs the two-statement measurement method provides a more detailed picture of acculturation.

According to Sam and Berry (2006), acculturation measures are categorised as culture-specific or culture-general. Measuring occupational, educational, or generational status as a proxy may not be effective, as it does not provide the level of detail that is needed for an adequate understanding given the multi-layered nature of acculturation, adequate assessment should be based on more than one indicator (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2006). The most widely used acculturation indicators

are values, ethnic identity, *acculturation attitudes*, and behaviour (Berry 2006; Ryder *et al.* 2000; Rudmin 2010).

Acculturation researchers, who examine the integration of heritage and mainstream cultural identities, often use scales that focus on the domains such as behaviours and cultural values (Chung *et al.*, 2004; Suinn *et al.* 1995). This approach came under criticism in terms of reducing the multicultural and transnational realities of individuals to 'a thin slice of cultural-being' (Sakamoto 2007). To avoid this simplification, the LASPIT employed a mixed method, which allows for longitudinal comparative analysis of empirical data with the self-reported data. More importantly, it has been argued that migration from one's own heritage culture due to country relocation may result in the modification of self-identity to accommodate new experiences within the host culture; thus the *acculturation process* is more comprehended when heritage and mainstream cultures are examined independently (see Glynis 2005). For that reason, gathered data pertaining to Polish heritage was examined and compared separately[10].

Although empirical tests of bidimensional models generally support the relationships among various variables such as psychosocial adjustment, connectedness to family and culture, and the experience of acculturation specific and non-specific variables, most lack the longitudinal component that would allow a justifiable measurement of acculturation claims (Damji *et al.* 1996; Berry 2006). The LASPIT fills this gap through its design that comprises longitudinal comparison of quantitatively and qualitatively gathered data.

Because acculturation measurements are closely linked to acculturation theory, it was proposed to employ Berry's bidimensional model. By using the *'two-statement measurement method'* (Berry *et al.* 2006) acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland is going to be assessed by using two separate scales: one representing orientations towards the heritage culture and the other representing orientations towards the mainstream culture, which perfectly fit Berry's acculturation framework (Figure 3.1below).

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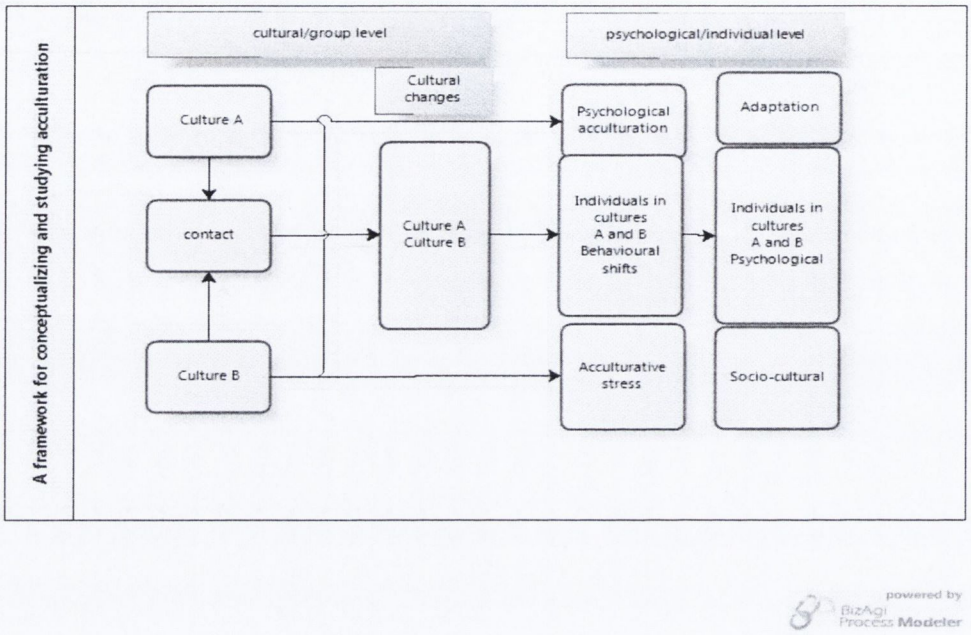
[10] (Polishness1 to Polishness2 - Graph 7.4 pp222). While the data reflecting attitudes towards the Irish culture was also examined and compared independently (Irishness1 to Irishness2 - Graph 7.5 pp223). Polieshness1 outlines the data on attitudes towards the Polish heritage culture in summer 2010, and Polishness2 in spring 2011. Irishness1 shows attitudes towards the Irish culture gathered in summer 2010, and Irishness2 sketches attitudes obtained in spring 2011.

Figure 3.1 Berry's acculturation framework



Source: Berry *et al.* 1992.

On the other hand, the choice and the implementation of the acculturation measurements method required acknowledging its limitations. The broad literature suggests that a study of the association between the heritage and the mainstream dimensions of acculturation whilst theoretically interesting has its own limitations (see Arends-Tóth, and Van de Vijver 2006; Sakamoto 2007). For example, Polish respondents may interpret the questions in a different way or may only answer one part of two-statement questions. Therefore, the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) was refined and carefully adapted to the needs of the LASPIT research project in order to make it more comprehensive and understandable for Polish immigrant teenagers. More importantly, its quantitative output was later compared with qualitative output obtained from participant observation, which incorporated formal and informal interviewing.

3.6.2 Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) as standardised measurement in assessing acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland

The Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) is a useful tool, which assesses heritage and mainstream acculturation via a bidimensional acculturation measure. Thus, it is an effective instrument for studying acculturation in other ethno-cultural groups (Ryder *et al.* 2000). The Vancouver Index of Acculturation is a visual analogue

scale (VAS) index measuring acculturation by comparing different variables. In the original form the VIA covers diverse aspects of heritage and mainstream culture, assessing acculturation of each individual based on the answered questions covering the following topics: traditions, marriage, social activities, entertainment, behaviour, practices, values, humour, and friends. For the purpose of the LASPIT research project the original Vancouver Index of Acculturation based on the ten VAS item scale was refined and tailored in order to reflect the aims and objectives of the thesis (see Appendix 7). A visual analogue scale (VAS) - is a psychometric response scale, which is applicable for questionnaires. The VAS is a measurement instrument for subjective characteristics or attitudes that cannot be directly measured. When responding to a VAS item respondents specify their level of agreement with a statement by indicating a position along a continuous line between two end-points. This continuous aspect of the VAS scale facilitated the measurement of the *acculturation attitudes* of Polish immigrant teenagers over time. In the VIA questionnaire unfavourable statements are scored "1" for 'strongly disagree' and favourable statements are scored "10" for 'strongly agree'. Total accounts of statements provided information on the *acculturation attitudes* towards the mainstream and the heritage culture.

All 34 underage respondents were administered the VIA questionnaire. The entire questionnaire was approximately a couple of minutes in length. Understandably, the LASPIT qualitative part helped to inform the re-design of the questionnaire by offering 'a researcher greater sensitivity in framing questions' (Seale 2004b) related to acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers in the Irish context. The frame of reference of adapted VIA questions was found to be comprehensive and clear (based on the voluntary feedback from the pilot study).

3.7 Analysing acculturation dynamics and change over time

Admittedly, longitudinal design is a tool to track change over time at the individual level (Saldana 2003; Salamonska 2012). The focal point of the LASPIT research is acculturation examined through individual trajectories that have occurred because of change of socio-cultural setting. The change within longitudinal study is grasped though the analyses of turning points and transitions, which are often not clearly definable (see Hockey and James 2003; Salamonska 2012). As Millar puts it:

> 'Transitions are not necessarily fixed, discrete and clearly definable events [They] may be interpreted very differently from different standpoints in time

> [...]. Developing our understanding of the meaning of transitions is an important part of the research agenda for longitudinal qualitative research, and would provide a complement to [...] quantitative work ...'
>
> (Millar 2007:535).

In terms of a comparison of dynamics and change over time, Saldana (2003) suggests:

> 'To extract and compare the researcher's observations through time in order to generate more in-depth descriptions of 'how', 'how much' and 'in what ways' on the time scale, where 'then' and 'now' clearly indicate the track of time and point to change, track previous influences and describe effectively current conditions allowing for more nuanced analysis of change through time'
>
> (Saldana 2003:76).

In order to capture the sheer complexity of multifaceted acculturative change over time longitudinal output from two rounds of the on-line VIA questionnaire was carefully compared with the longitudinal qualitative data, followed by discursive and topical analyses of detailed case studies and migratory stories of Polish immigrant teenagers.

3.7.1 Analysing case studies and migratory stories through discursive and topical analysis

In the context of the LASPIT research project each Polish reunited family involved in this research project is an individual case study. Case studies are recognised as a serious research method, defined as:

> 'As an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used'
>
> (Yin 1984:23).

The process of inducing theory from case studies has been widely tested. The particular features of this process such as a within-case analysis are unique to the inductive case-oriented process. The case study enables development of a testable and empirically valid 'resultant theory' (Eisenhardt 1998). Additionally, the case studies are complex because they involve multiple sources of data and produce large amount of data for analysis. Thus, it is argued that case study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research (Soy 1997). The case study allows for

examination of the specific phenomena and it is well suited where it is impossible to separate the phenomena's variables from the context, as is the case with the acculturation research (Merriam 1988). More importantly, case study illustrates how and why the change occurred in an individual case (Saldana 2003) which is the focal point of examining the *acculturation process* of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland.

The LASPIT research project is also anchored in discursive analysis – a coordinated pattern of words, values, and beliefs, times and places in here and now (Galasiński 2004). These analyses are enriched by the examination of life stories that cater for a retrospective account and temporal dimension bridging certain acculturative points in time and space. Life stories have long been employed in the migration research (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918-1920; Gardner 2002; Bobek, 2011; Salamonska 2013). Life stories generate 'contextualised snapshots of processes and people' (Farrell 2006) particularly in the longitudinal design, which the later allows 'to investigate the intersection of different times associated with different analysis level' (Salamonska 2012).

Furthermore, the LASPIT research project employed the topical analysis approach for conducted interviews and for the purpose of the identity research understood as a dynamic, contextual entity that involves the ongoing process of negotiation (see Jenkins 1996, 2004). This approach allowed the LASPIT dataset to be evaluated over time with a view of identity as an ongoing process. Concomitantly, topical and discursive analyses helped to focus on how elements have been sequenced, why some elements were evaluated differently from others, how the past shapes perceptions of the present, how the present shapes perceptions of the past, and how both shape perceptions of the future.

Salamonska (2012) states that the longitudinal dataset allows investigation of change over time at an individual level and at the aggregate level. Dynamics and change of the *acculturation attitudes* on the aggregated level towards the mainstream and the heritage culture are presented in Chapter 7, while dense empirical and topical analyses are provided in Chapter 6. Thus, both chapters complement one another.

3.8 Interviewing children - ethical consideration

Problematising acculturation of juveniles opens an interesting debate not only for acculturation issues but also for ethical issues, since it involves research with underage participants. This paragraph focuses on tangible ethical aspects that emerged during the preparation of the LASPIT research project, which involves research with minors, thus it was imperative to ensure its compliance with the ethical guidance

(Beauchamp 1994; Homan 1991). The LASPIT research proposal underwent the procedure for ethical clearance based on the Research Ethics Code by the TCD Ethical Committee. Despite applicability of the widely known golden rule stating that 'the researcher is obligated to behave in a courteous and ethical way' (Rubin *et al.* 2005:79), substantial steps were taken to ensure that deep consideration of ethical issues was employed during the LASPIT research project.

3.8.1 Social research and ethical consideration in theory and in practice

The Chambers English Dictionary (1998) defines 'Ethics' as the science of morals, which is concerned with human character and conduct: a system of morals or rules of behaviour. The ethical issues in social research however, were also influenced by various theories and philosophers (Beauchamp 1994; Seale 2004b). More importantly, in recent years, many ethical guidelines have been developed to ensure non-harmful research practice. Therefore, when an empirical inquiry, particularly with underage participants is taking place, the ethical considerations are seen as one of the most important elements of the whole research.

Nowadays ethical issues in social research have many dimensions. Morrow and Richards (1996) scrutinise existing ethical guidelines via their usefulness and applicability while conducting research with children (see also Greene and Hogan 2005), while Guillemin and Gillam (2004) focus on 'procedural ethics' usually entailed in ethical committee discretion and 'ethics in practice' associated with the issues that may arise while conducting social research. In particular 'ethics in practice' can cause ethical dilemmas in terms of confidentiality, researcher's approach, and ethical obligations (*ibid.*:263). It is easier said than done – because how can one be sure that a potential underage interviewee does not feel that he/she is being 'used'? Allard (2007) argues that 'all that is needed to ensure that the young people are being empowered rather than exploited [...] is a genuine desire to listen to what young people have to say' (*ibid.*:3) - but is this enough to ensure ethical conduct compliance?

3.8.2 The multiple research strategies in empirical inquiry with underage participants

Admittedly interviewing children poses many challenges. Alderson and Morrow (2004) recommend employing multiple research strategies concentrating on interactive research methods. Brzezińska and Toepliz (2007) extensively researched

the multiple research strategies with children, which resulted in tabulation and comparability of research method and techniques from the child's, and the researcher's perspective. Having examined the advantages and disadvantages of each approach from both perspectives, Brzezińska and Toepliz (2007) concluded that semi-structured, and in-depth types of interviews seem to be the most beneficial for both partners of qualitative inquiry (see Appendix 5). Therefore, for the purpose of the LASPIT research project, as a legitimate alternative to a semi-structured type of interview – a qualitative interview was chosen without hesitation. Each young Polish respondent had the opportunity to tell his/her own story but I was in charge of timekeeping and of questions asked. The fact that I - the interviewer was equipped with the guide did not constrain the natural flow and ensured that chronological aspects of the migratory journey and the *acculturation process* were captured.

3.8.3 Qualitative interview and ethical approach in practice during the LASPIT research project

It has been argued that qualitative interview, particularly with minors involved, creates obligations because children deposit a part of themselves, an image of who they are, and trust that you will not violate their confidence or criticise them (Harrison *et al.* 2001; Morrow 2004; Rubin *et al.* 2005). Therefore, an ability to show emotions and empathy especially while the underage person reveals something personal is key to building trust and openness needed so much in explorative studies (Rubin *et al.* 2005).

The exploratory LASPIT research project examines how young Poles who experienced 'dependant migration' (Zontini 2010), define and relate to acculturation experience paying particular attention to the degree of emotional investment. Different scholars have investigated how emotions can be theorised to fashion a better understanding of acculturating individuals in the context of transnational migration (Aronowitz 1984 ; Boss 1991; Damji *et al.* 1996; Svaŝek 2009), however the issue of how to ensure that 'non-invasive, non-confrontational methods that might help to avoid undue intrusion and diminish power imbalances' (Alderson and Morrow 2004) remains. So how can the scholars ensure that the issue of children's rights is addressed in their research?

The first LASPIT findings reveal that interviewing underage participants poses many challenges (e.g., insider/outsider role, power disparities) is a demanding task to handle. Therefore, the qualitative interview specifically chosen as a research

method was well suited because it involves the 'extensions of ordinary conversations where respondents are partners in the research project rather than subjects to be tested or examined' (Rubin *et al.* 2005:12). More importantly, a qualitative approach enables a richness and depth in understanding of the issues explored without breaking the ethical conduct (see Brzezińska and Toepliz 2007).

The LASPIT comprised three waves of interviews with acculturating Polish teenagers. Each wave was based on the *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix 1) obtained from parents, and on the *Volunteer Form* (Appendix 3) signed by underage teenagers confirming that 'depending on the context and the complexity of the judgement, children of most ages are capable of making decisions concerning what they want to do' (Thompson 1992:60). In line with the Declaration of Helsinki (1964), Informed Consent Forms were introduced and explained to each Polish respondent. Both parents and children were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. This ethical approach has been employed based on understanding that:

> 'The child's competency to consent to research participation should not be regarded as an inflexible limitation deriving from the child's age [...]. Children from a surprisingly early age can understand basic elements of the research process, and their role within if this information is presented in an age-appropriate manner'
>
> (Thompson 1992:60).

Drawing primarily from the qualitative data obtained during the LASPIT research and echoing Saldana (2003), I argue that children are 'the social actors of research, in their own rights' (Alderson and Morrow 2004) and have a right to say 'no' not only to particular research questions but to the overall research process. Legally the Informed Consent Form gives us - the researchers - a green light to 'go ahead', but from an ethical point of view children - as underage social actors should be also asked for their permission to participate with an option to say 'no'. If this option is chosen, in my view, a child's/adolescent's/ teenager's decision overrides the parental decision expressed on the informed consent form (see Sokolowska 2012a).

In addition, following common ethical practice, all names were changed to pseudonyms to protect respondents' identities and ensuring their anonymity. Hence, all participants were assured that all information given by them will be confidential and that care would be taken to ensure that they will not be identified at any stage of the research nor in further publications. The permission to record each conversation was obtained individually. Furthermore, whenever the LASPIT research project took place on school premises, I was fully aware of the clause *in loco parentis* and extra

precaution had been taken to ensure that the place and time of the interviews were suitable for young informants. In addition, the aim of the LASPIT research project was always explained clearly and unambiguously, and any questions from the underage informants were answered before proceeding with the qualitative interview.

During the first wave of this qualitative inquiry, Polish teenagers were asked very personal questions and it was entirely up to me to handle this carefully in order to avoid putting any pressure or stress on those being interviewed. However, as with every face-to-face encounter, there are issues of ethics and power disparities. Subsequently, my position as the interviewer was defined from the beginning as 'a supplicant dependent on the good will of the respondent' (see Stacey 1969). Another challenge that emerged quite soon was to encourage potential informants to talk and elicit the information that might be very important at the exploratory stage in order to a gain better understanding and preparation for the second wave. Young informants were asked about their own experiences, personal feelings and the *acculturation strategies* employed. At the same time, all posed questions, which were formulated clearly and unambiguously, were left to the underage respondents' discretion, thus posing substantial challenge to my interviewing skills. Hence, I had to ensure that all informants answered the main questions, relevant to this research in spite of the fact that each respondent had their own story to share.

3.8.4 Additional concerns regarding research with minors

It is commonly argued that social research with underage participants is more demanding, in terms of approaching the subject and in terms of the relationship with the young research informants (Alderson and Morrow 2004). Ethical involvement concerns the nature of developing the relationship with young respondents particularly within a qualitative approach but also the potential effect on children after the researcher has left the field of study (Brzezińska and Toepliz 2007; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Rubin *et al.* 2005). Therefore, for the purpose of the LASPIT research project, the approach of working with children, not on children, was adopted. The shift in stress from research 'on' to research 'with' has implications for the ethical conduct of social research since it emphasises that children are competent and knowledgeable informants (Alderson 1995; Alderson and Morrow 2004; Brzezińska and Toepliz 2007; Seale 1999). However, despite the attempts made to explore the best way to approach and interview children and to ensure non-harmful research practice, it may be difficult to define the ethical issues, and to find a balance between ensuring that the rights of individuals are respected, while the potential contribution serving the greater good is achieved (see Seale 2004b).

3.8.5 Handling power disparities – instrumental approach

In terms of children's rights, one of the major ethical challenges for anyone who works with underage informants is 'the disparities in power and status between adults and children' (Alderson and Morrow 2004). It is arguable, which is the best way to achieve a positive and safe interviewing environment, where the interviewee is unduly affected by the disparities in power. However the imbalance caused by the polarisation between the interviewer and a minor can be equalised by positioning children as real partners, who are permitted to say 'no', because they have been informed in advance that they have a right to do so. As the author of the LASPIT research project, I employed the non-invasive method including the child's right to withdraw from the study regardless of parental wish. Practically, it means that the child's decision overrides the parents' preference for the child to participate (see Morse and Richards 2002; Saldana 2003).

3.8.6 Challenges and reflexivity in the LASPIT research project

One of the anticipated challenges in the LASPIT research project was a personal acceptance by the interviewees. I decided that introduction should come from a member of the researched group, because such introduction increased the acceptance of the researcher as a trusted group member (see Whyte 1993). This technique permitted a disclosure of information about the social network of the recently arrived Polish immigrants. My dual status as an immigrant mother and as a visiting researcher fostered positive relationship with other Polish immigrant parents and their offspring. My dual identity was easily accepted because of my Polish nationality and my personal background, which resonated with the ample issues related to the *acculturation process* for us - Polish nationals in Ireland. Moreover, the reflexivity allowed me to position myself in the overall research picture and in my biographical nested context because:

> 'the inner landscape of the researcher is not a narcissistic exercise, but rather an exploration into the culture and society that lives within us, those unconscious and intangible dimensions buried in our subjectivity that are the results of our socialization process...'
>
> (Galindo 2011:15).

The employment of reflexivity was of utmost importance because, reflexivity as a method in social research is embedded in cultural references that encompass the plurality of cultural domains and helps the researcher explore deeper, giving a sense of direction and reflective understanding of the phenomena under the study (Fook 1999; Galindo 2011; Griffiths 1995; Naples 1997).

3.9 Pilot study

Saldana (2003) recommends a short-term pilot study as 'a preparatory investigation before the actual longitudinal project begins, particularly if the project will extend across several years' (*ibid.*:21). Technically, three pilot interviews were conducted with the researcher's daughters and a Polish immigrant boy [David] aged eighteen in 2009. This allowed testing of the *Informed Consent Form*, and the questions to elicit responses. Obviously, all those three respondents were aware that they were participating in the pilot study, and were willing to give feedback on their experiences.

The preliminary analyses of the data from the pilot study, along with the anecdotal evidence allowed a primary synopsis of the acculturation dynamics indicating that immigrants as social actors co-exist in multiple contexts. For example, David demonstrated the willingness to function cross-culturally, primarily by acquiring English, and then by improving his proficiency in Spanish because he met a nice Spanish girl in Ireland. Although he has been living in Ireland for about two years, he was still 'in between' by being Polish at home and 'Irish' around his Irish peers. Preliminary findings from the interviews with my daughters both aged fifteen at the time, verified the observed at home daily routines and rituals; opening an interesting debate of to what extent immigrants should acculturate in the receiving country. Concomitantly, an informal inquiry within the Polish community revealed a deep interest in issues surrounding the *acculturation process*. The main research question of what it is like to be a Polish teenager in Ireland deeply resonated with the respondents.

3.10 Conclusions

Under various topics in this chapter, it was endeavoured to cover acculturation methodology, different acculturation measurement methods, and ethical approach employed in the LASPIT research project. As set by the literature review, acculturation is seen as a complex, multifaceted process. Therefore, it is acknowledged that while this research has been widely informed by Berry's acculturation theorem,

the LASPIT project itself is an empirical investigation carried out in Ireland, exploring Polish immigrant teenagers socialisation and interactions within a dynamic intercultural society. The need for culture specific appropriate acculturation assessment encouraged the employment of the Vancouver Index of Acculturation, which after some emendations to the researched context, functioned as a comprehensive instrument for assessing the *acculturation attitudes* of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland.

Chapter 4

New migratory pathways of Poles

4.1 Introduction

Studies indicate that the recent rapid immigration of a diverse group of immigrants with children posed additional challenges in the receiving countries across Europe (Busch 2012; Curry *et al.* 2011; Darmody *et al.* 2012; Devine 2005). Therefore, 'with a great variety of its national, ethnic cultures and institutional arrangements, Europe constitutes an interesting natural laboratory for studying contextual variation and dynamic change in acculturation' (Phalet and Kosic 2006:332). Given that the LASPIT research project is about acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers, it is necessary to outline briefly the historical context for the mass migration of Poles for three reasons. Firstly, historically, migration has been an important part of Polish tradition (Bobek 2011; Grabowska-Lusinka and Okólski 2009; Thomas and Znaniecki 1918; Triandafyllidou 2006). Secondly, migration of Poles is set in its own context. Finally, Ireland and particularly the Greater Dublin area had become a popular destination for Polish migrants after the 2004 the EU accession, setting the specific context of Poland as a sending country and the pull of Ireland as a new destination (Salamonska 2013; Mühlau *et al.* 2010). Therefore, in this chapter, I discuss migratory shifts in historical and political contexts.

The first part of this chapter focuses solely on transnational migration of Poles. It contextualises the LASPIT research project by providing the historical background of migratory movements of Poles. This is followed by an overview of the current body of research that explored the post-accession experiences of Polish immigrants to Ireland and the UK indicating reasons for migrants' mobility to the West. Later this chapter delineates substantial differences between typical Polish immigrants and Polish émigré families because despite a plethora of migratory literature on Poles, the migratory uprooting experience in the context of dependant migration is still poorly understood. Through examination of motives, distinctive household decisions from a gender perspective and the local contexts – the necessary background for the acculturative journey of Polish immigrant teenagers is provided.

4.2 Transnational migration of Poles - historical context

Emigration from Poland has a long history, and outward migration has been a significant feature of the country's development (Burrell 2009; Grabowska-Lusinka and Okólski 2009; Thomas and Znaniecki 1918). Whilst the waves of migration in the nineteenth century were mainly economically driven, the post-Second War World migration was a long-term migration placed in the political and emotional ramifications of exile (Burrell 2006; Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann 2004). Thus, unsurprisingly, migratory movements were registered during late 1940s and 1950s but another massive Polish outflow is dated to 1989 – when over two million Poles left their home country (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005; Korys 2003). Following the end of the Communist regime in Poland, officially dated to 1989, Poland has entered a long phase of political, economic, and structural changes (see Burrell 2009; Iglicka 2010; Kempny 2010). Social transformations that took place in post-communist Poland have led to high unemployment, and resulted in the formation of a new underclass particularly in the Eastern part of Poland (Kempny 2010; Zinovijus 2012). Subsequently, many of those previously employed by the state on agricultural land owned by the state, could not find a place for themselves in the new socio-political system, and chose migration as a way out (White 2009; 2011)[11].

The collapse of the Communist regime positioned Poland on the transformative pathway characterised in its early stage by the continuing increase of unemployment reaching, according to the Central Statistical Agency (GUS) over 18% in 2002, with some locations having an unemployment rate of 20.6% in 2004 (GUS 2009). Notwithstanding Polish aspiration to change its current positioning from being perceived as one of the Eastern countries to being middle or central (Hagen 2003), no amount of European rebranding could disguise the underlying inequalities among European citizens within the EU entity (Burrell 2009). High unemployment rates, and a high poverty level of Polish society with over 12% of Poles living below the subsistence level (GUS 2005) contributed to a specific post-communist context, which was manifested by the outward migration, which gained momentum when Poland joined the EU (Salamonska 2012; Trevena 2011). It is important to delineate that despite the collapse of the Communist regime, out-migration before EU enlargement was still an 'irregular one' (Okólski 2010) predominantly in the form of short-term and seasonal movements rather that settlement migration (Irek 2012; Kempinska 2007).

[11] Dataset from the sample selected from the South-East part of Poland (see White 2009 and 2011).

Moreover, analysis of the Polish Labour Force Survey (LFS)[12] clearly indicates that historically, Germany, USA, and Italy were the most popular Polish migratory destinations (Grabowska-Lusinska and Okólski 2008). In 2003 in a nationwide referendum, the Polish electorate approved EU membership, which came into force on 1 May 2004. EU enlargement triggered unprecedented migratory movement viz: from about 2,000 Poles in Ireland (CSO 2002) to around 70,000 (CSO 2006). Hitherto new migratory targets replaced popular migratory destinations of Poles positioning Great Britain and Ireland as the top destinations (see Kaczmarski and Okólski 2008).

Overall, Poland is still considered an emigration country, with migration 'playing a vital role in Polish society' (Kempny 2010:26); however while historically Poles also migrated to escape the socio-political reality, nowadays we have the prevalence of economic motives (Irek 2012; Mühlau *et al.* 2010). More interestingly, the 2004 EU enlargement reinforced the Polish influx to the Republic of Ireland and the UK offering an interesting post-accession research field.

4.3 Migratory influx of Poles to Ireland: push and pull factors

This EU new migration is characterised by geographical proximity and the legal EU status that enables Poles along with other EU members to move back and forth (Dzieglewski 2010; Salamonska 2012). Due to both:

> 'enhanced freedom of movement and technological changes, many [*migrants*] leave their home countries with the very vague plans on how long they will be away [...]. The duration of "staying abroad" is constantly redefined and migration, therefore, cannot easily be described by the "old-fashioned" concepts of short-term and long-term'
>
> (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009:23).

Whilst all of us would agree with this opinion, there is a divergence of reasons and factors attributed to the migratory influx after EU enlargements. The post-accession empirical research (e.g., Rabikowska and Burrell 2009; White 2011) delineates high unemployment as one of the reasons for Polish outward migration. Salamonska (2012) however, states that despite the high unemployment rate, one interesting but largely overlooked fact is that many post-accession immigrant Poles

[12] The Polish Labour Force Survey (LFS) has been organised in Poland since 1992. It is based on quarterly rotation groups targeting the population aged 15 years and above.
http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/index_ENG_HTML.htm
http://www.ilo.org/dyn/lfsurvey/lfsurvey.list?p_lang=en&p_country=PL

worked in Poland before migrating. Kaczmarczyk and Okólski (2008) also reported this fact, and the LASPIT data reflects it too. It unequivocally highlights that not only high unemployment but also particularly low wages and 'living' below respectable standards set a specific post-accession migratory context. As White (2011) puts it:

> '...maintaining a reasonable standard of living is viewed as "bread" not "coconuts" and, for many people, low wages in Poland do not ensure what is felt to be a reasonable standard of living. Hence [post-accession unprecedented migration of Poles is derived from] their aspiration to live "normally" or have a "decent" standard of living'
>
> (White 2011:65).

Lack of perspectives, low wages, unfavourable economic situations of specific geographical areas became a trap for the large social groups who became economically redundant – all these contributed to the outward migration of Poles within the EU (Bobek 2011; Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009; Kempny 2010). This is why some contemporary scholars coined the post-accession outward migration of Poles as a 'bread migration' (see Zinovijus 2012). Within reach for other migratory reasons, the legal situation on the labour market in the receiving countries emerged as another important aspect (Kawecki *et al.* 2012). Free legal movement within the EU should not be underestimated because:

> 'Whereas border-crossing in the EU are nowadays captured for Polish people within the framework of free movement, it still remains important, whether their job abroad is documented-registered with the authorities and therefore included in the social systems at the destination...'
>
> (Elrick and Brinkmeier 2009:50).

Understandably, in light of the legal aspect of free movement within the EU, many view migration as an opportunity to accumulate money, gain experience, and fluency in English (Dzieglewski 2010; Travena 2011; Wickham *et al.* 2009). Not surprisingly then, when the UK and Ireland enjoyed economic prosperity and provided unrestricted access to their labour markets, all this created a boosting context contributing to the pull factors (see Kempny 2010; McCoy 2006; Okólski 2010).

In summary, as discussed above among many migratory reasons the lack of perspectives in particular was the most common reason for migration. Migration culture of post-accession Poles is complex and in some respects contradictory because it is derived from the local livelihoods, insecurity on one hand, and the desire to live a decent life on the other (White 2011). From this perspective the legal mobility within

new EU borders along with the attractiveness of the Irish and British labour market that offered financial gains in a relatively short period could hardly be resisted and subsequently resulted in the predominance of labour migration (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008; Wickham *et al.* 2009; White 2009). According to Central Statistical Agency (GUS) the estimated number of Poles staying abroad for more than two months boosted from circa 1 million at the end of 2004 to 2.3 million in 2007 (GUS 2008). This unprecedented migratory influx, particularly to Ireland and the UK was caused by the universal need to live a decent life (see Burrell 2009; Kempny 2010; Wickham *et al.* 2009) and Polish émigré parents have not hesitated to articulate it.

4.4 Social mobility of Poles in the context of post-accession migration

As illustrated in different statistical sources (GUS 2007; CSO 2006, 2011; LFS 2007), Polish EU accession became the most important stimulus in Poland's contemporary history, however the distinctive nature of the socio-demographic profile of Polish migrants is probably one of the most significant features of population movements (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009). In general, the socio-demographic profile of Polish immigrants in Ireland is quite distinctive. Not only is the large percentage of the outflow migration characterised by the relatively young age of immigrants: 72% are aged 20-29 and 16% are aged 35 and above[13], but as indicated in the broad literature, the educational profile of the post-EU accession immigrants has shifted significantly, implying that this new migration is dominated by well-educated Poles, which at the practical level means that 'every fifth post-accession migrant has a tertiary education' (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009:30).

According to the data derived from the Polish Labour Force Survey, the percentage of Polish migrants in Ireland with tertiary education was 22% (LFS 2007). This observation was also confirmed by other academics (Garapich and Osipovič 2007; Mühlau *et al.* 2010). Therefore, it is argued that by comparative standards, the human-capital of immigrants in Ireland has been exceptionally strong but many of them experienced downwards mobility by being employed in jobs that were not commensurate with their skills and education (Byrne *et al.* 2010; Fanning 2011). The large percentage of Polish immigrant population in Ireland with high educational credentials, experience downward mobility, concentrating in the secondary sectors of receiving economies - predominantly construction, agriculture, cleaning and hotels (Bobek 2011; Kropiwiec and King-O'Riain 2006; Mühlau 2011; Wickham *et al.* 2011).

[13] See Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009:30

This evidence is in line with the research in the UK involving Polish workers (see Trevena 2011). The post-accession migration of Poles however is not homogeneous.

While the growing body of research describes the migratory influx of Poles through the prism of relatively young cohort of generally well-educated people, predominantly male (Mühlau 2012; Okólski 2010), very little is known about Polish émigré parents and their reunited families. Hypothetically, migratory decision-making processes and migratory strategies should differ significantly, depending on immigrants' age, education, marital status, and personal and local context. Migratory arrangements for families with teenage children would involve more planning arrangements than that of single grown-up free-movers. Therefore, this and the next chapter describe migratory arrangements of Polish parents with teenage children, providing solid evidence that the post-accession Polish parental migration is quite atypical, and it does not fit into the common demographic characteristic of the cohort of Polish post-enlargement migrants.

4.5 Uprooting phenomenon - contextualising migratory decisions of Polish families

Family reunification, and/or migration 'with children is most definitely a break in recent practice, given the prevalence of incomplete migration in the 1990s...' (White 2011:113). The large influx of Polish immigrant families came as a surprise to the receiving countries. The influx of cheap, labour migrants, not immigrant families with their teenage children was envisaged, particularly that the large percentage of Polish immigrants actively participated in the labour market prior to migration to Ireland (Kaczmarczyk 2008; Salamonska 2013). In light of this, it was quite perplexing why so many Polish parents uprooted their children and moved to the 'unknown', where their starting position in the social stratum was significantly lower than in Poland. To understand the uprooting phenomenon we need to take a closer look at the nested contexts of ordinary Polish families who migrated with their teenage children.

Unquestionably, in the context of Polish post-accession migration, Polish immigrants' parents, like other migrants, were attracted by legally open access to the Irish and British labour markets that provided 'ample job opportunities' (Mühlau 2012:81), but their demographic profile and migratory arrangements differ significantly from quite homogenous Polish migrant cohort widely described in post-EU enlargement literature. Generally, Polish immigrant families constitute an interesting case study for transnational migratory research. Firstly, because empirical evidence suggests that while the members of each household take migratory decisions

individually, migratory strategies for the family as a unit are household strategies exercised collectively with particular focus on child welfare. Secondly, every household has its combination of assets and liabilities and goes through its own process of discussing and formulating a migration strategy (Sokolowska 2010b; White 2011). Thirdly, the LASPIT dataset points out that migratory plans and strategies are flexible and changeable.

The socio-economic origin of the Polish émigré parents interviewed in the Greater Dublin area is very heterogeneous. The sample comprises parents in their mid-forties and mid-fifties, who migrated from all parts of Poland. The majority of them migrated from the urban areas, and only a few arrived in Ireland from the rural areas. The youngest parent was 35 - the oldest 72. The subjects were brought up under the Communist regime, which had significantly affected their English language competency. The majority of Polish parents in the sample were educated up to third level, and all of them had a minimum of one child born and raised in Poland prior to migration to Ireland[14].

While answering one of the research questions about migratory decisions, Polish émigré parents in Dublin explicitly referred to their precarious economic and personal situation in their local contexts. Others saw the EU enlargement as an opportunity that should be availed of outlining that the rationale behind the migratory decision in the family context has been complex and multidimensional. Some Polish émigré parents chose independent migration, while others migrated mainly for family reunification purposes. Only three Polish families migrated internally within Ireland before settling down in the Greater Dublin area.

The LASPIT empirical narratives indicate the chain migration mode, which means that one parent pioneered and made suitable arrangements before the arrival and reunification of the rest of the family prevailed. Usually wives joined their working husbands. The family was reunited following the arrival of the child(ren). Yet the LASPIT dataset showed that the migratory scenario presented above was not envisaged. Four females admitted that they did not visualise moving to Ireland and joining their husbands. The plan was to stay with their offspring in Poland; yet the decision to bring over spouse and children was taken because of the unforeseen circumstances. For example, Jadwiga aged 40 joined her husband in 2006, because her little boy missed his father immensely, and during his short stay in Ireland, he refused to return to Poland. In another case, Salomea aged 40 who was holidaying in Ireland while visiting her husband not only discovered that the *Emerald Isle* was truly 'green'

[14] Statistical data on Polish parents' marital status, education, etc. is available in Appendix 6.

and friendly but also during her holiday she had the opportunity to discuss other available options entitled "Could we all move and stay in Ireland":

My husband arrived first in 2004, and when I came to visit him, I've fallen in love with Ireland. We agreed that next year we all come and stay in Ireland.

(Salomea aged 40, Dublin 22).

Holidays in the host country may be used by the wife to reconnoitre how the whole family could adapt their lives and make a living abroad (White 2011). Żaneta aged 38, arrived in Ireland to earn some extra money, which she intended to spend on new furniture in Poland. At that time, her husband had a contract with an IT Company, thus she agreed to stay in Ireland only for a few weeks. When she discovered that Ireland was so different to Poland, she changed her mind, and now her whole family lives in Co Kildare:

I came first about five years ago in 2005. I came only for two months – to earn extra money... but then I've fallen in love with Ireland. Everyone was so nice - greeting you on the street, smiling and keeping saying "Hello," and "How are you." I love this – it's so different than it is in Poland. I convinced my husband that we all should live here, and he 'brought' our son too.

(Żaneta aged 38, Co Kildare).

The LASPIT dataset suggests that family reunification happens for economic reasons, it can be spontaneous, but most often it happens for emotional reasons. For example, Milena aged 42 explained that the separation was too difficult to bear and that is why she decided to join her husband only a few months after he migrated to Ireland:

My husband arrived first then after six months, we joined him. It was difficult. The beginning is always very difficult – different culture, language...but at least we were together!

(Milena aged 42, Co Kildare).

Gertruda who left her daughter behind provided a similar account:

I left my daughter in the care of my relatives but at that time..., I...I had not realised, I was not aware [Gertruda sobs] *how difficult it was to be separated...*

(Gertruda aged 52, Dublin 5).

Similar conclusions were drawn by White (2011) who found that in the case of Polish immigrants, 'family reunion was unexpected, occurring more from emotional than economic reasons (*Ibid.*:113). These instances *de facto* outline how emotional attachment can trigger family reunification.

4.6 Migratory decisions of Polish transnational families: retrospective, contemporary and prospective dimension

My own personal accounts regarding family reunification echoes narratives from other Polish émigré parents who also realised that being and living together during emigration was essential for the well-being of the whole family. Emotional detachment, long-term separation including leaving my twins behind was simply out of question. Reflecting on my own experiences, as a mother of two acculturating teenage daughters, I have to admit that my children's behaviour, particularly during their transition period, was something very hard to put up with. Children often included thorny comments such as "I didn't want to come over here! You forced us to do it, so now you must do something about it" or "It's your problem!" and "You must deal with the consequences!" etc. In my twins' case, their main stress and frustrations were caused primarily by the lack of proficiency in English, which translated into communication issues at school. The lack of language contributed to social isolation and the feelings of otherness. In addition, the separation from loved relatives took its toll and increased the loneliness and tensions between parent(s) and offspring.

Undoubtedly, children particularly in their puberty time can behave unpredictably, exposing their parent(s) to extra stresses. Thus, migratory transition and teenage-hood taken together is a recipe for stress that may translate into conflict between reunited family members (Brownlee 1999; Dumka *et al.* 1997; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). Whilst the LASPIT data indicates that separation was viewed as the most difficult experience in light of which economic reasons almost ceased to exist, there is also the evidence that there is an array of migratory arrangements. Anecdotal evidence indicates that for many Polish families being parted was economically beneficial, particularly, when a husband was employed in the construction sector in Ireland, while his wife with child(ren) stayed behind in Poland and utilised their rights to the Irish Child Benefit.

After the collapse of the Communist regime, Polish Child Benefit has been means tested and many Polish parents, despite very low income, have not been poor enough to qualify. By means of contrast, Child Benefit in Ireland is not means tested[15] and itself it has become an additional source of income for Polish immigrant families, who can prove that their offspring are enrolled in the primary or secondary education

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[15] http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/social_welfare_payments_to_families_and_children/child_benefit.html accessed 24 July 2011.

in Poland or in Ireland. Taking the average exchange rate of Euro to Zloty [€1 is around 4 PLN at the time of writing], the Irish Child Benefit equals to low Polish monthly salary, becoming the second source of regular income. Child Benefit rates have been reduced starting from 2010 but still with other child allowances and social welfare benefits, they constitute an important top-up to the budget of the Irish and other transnational families.

The reality of day-to-day cost of living and problems with permanent and well-paid employment in Poland were the most often mentioned factors that attributed to migratory decisions of Polish families. Particularly females in their mid-40s complained about the precariousness of the Polish labour market. Monika aged 36, a separated mother of two teenage boys, who moved to Ireland in 2006, criticised gender inequality in the Polish labour market:

The situation on the job market is very tough... it is a disaster! Many companies advertise that they are looking for people up to 35 years of age; particularly women are affected. Even educated and good-looking woman can be turn down when her age does not agree with the company vision. Many people struggle to get by. Even if you get a job, you may still struggle to pay regular households bills not to mention mortgages, other loans, or debts. Vacation especially abroad is a luxury. Prices increases regularly, wages not. People are tired...the lack of perspectives, temporary employment for a fix period of time, insecurity, and day-to-day struggle take up all your energy... You worry constantly... how long you can live like this...

(Monika aged 36, Co Wicklow).

Similarly, White (2011) drawing on the narratives of her Polish interviewees in Sanok and Grajewo (South-East part of Poland) established that in terms of employability the situation of women over 40 years of age was very difficult, hence for female parents migration often seemed to be the only livelihood strategy remaining.

Yet, the LASPIT data points out towards instability and limited upward mobility of males in their mid-40s and 50s, particularly those without tertiary education, without fluency in foreign languages, and frequently without basic IT knowledge. Concomitantly with scarcity of permanent employment in Poland, the issue of nepotism was evoked regularly in the narratives. Predominantly, Polish parents in their mid-50s discerned the paradigm: "knowing the right people in the right places" - was a *passport* to many well-paid positions, which were often not publicly advertised (see also Trevena 2011; White 2011).

Whilst the large percentage of young Poles migrated in order to accumulate financial means, Polish immigrant parents with teenage children were also lured by the 'Goldrush labour market' (Wickham *et al.* 2009) that could offer them and their offspring a better standard of living. Daniel aged 42 recalls:

I was laid off, and as you know, you cannot get by on the Polish social welfare. I worked here and there, sometimes long hours to earn a few bobs...Every time September was coming and the school was about to start we were in a state of panic. We love our daughter so much, and it was heart breaking to watch her in her old shoes, with old books and just bare necessities. Our neighbours went abroad to the UK, to Ireland. When they came home, they arrived in a luxury car and seemed to have pots of money. They said that you have to work hard but it pays off. We decided that we have nothing to lose. We could hardly manage day-to-day expenses. Our daughter wanted to go to the secondary school in town and she was dreaming of going to the university. I felt real pain in my chest when I heard my daughter unfolding her further. I knew we couldn't afford it. We decided that we have enough, and I went first.

I knew that without the language, it'll be difficult but I'm not afraid of hard work and because it was for my daughter, I gave it a try! I overestimated myself. It took me several months to learn basic English. I tried everything but not everyone has natural gift for languages. My wife still hardly speaks English...The beginning was the worst. But beginning is always difficult. You arrive with no money and you share a room with others...

(Daniel aged 42, Dublin 9).

Polish parents along with thousands of other Poles availed of migratory routes to change their life, and the life of their children. Notwithstanding a better educational opportunity and incomparable standard of living, migration to Ireland enabled many Polish immigrant families to take regular holidays abroad. Łucja aged 39 cleans offices in Dublin for a few hours per day:

In Poland, I had a full-time blue-collar job, and I hardly made both ends meet. Here, I am a part-time cleaner, and I can afford to rent and a decent vacation somewhere abroad.

(Łucja aged 39, Dublin 1).

Łucja like many other Polish émigré parents left Poland with debts. She also shared her first accommodation with other Polish immigrants upon her arrival in 2007. At present however, reflecting on those sacrifices, she is happy that she can provide for, and take her teenage daughter to beautiful places even if she is only employed on the part-time basis as a cleaner. In Poland despite her best efforts and her third-level education, she could hardly provide for her daughter. This exemplifies economic inequalities within EU member states. Polish émigré parents' narratives unequivocally indicate that they have become exhausted with Polish economic uncertainty; that they were fed up with taking enormous quantities of overtime in order to get by.

Malwina aged 42, a mother of two teenagers, constitutes another example. Not only does she hold a Masters Degree but she has over twenty years of professional experience in the Health Care sector, too. As a nurse in Poland, she often

took extra 12hrs shifts to earn a little more than every other nurse, but it was still not enough to contribute to a daily high cost of living. In light of the on-going 'slavery' that forced her family to scrape by she took a firm decision to go abroad, which was not easy, considering Polish gendered household dynamics:

It wasn't an easy decision. But you know, like many others, we had loans...we were in arrears. I had enough. The atmosphere at home was unbearable. We were yelling at one another and our poor children had to witness this. Finally, I took a firm decision to leave Poland. I didn't want to live in such a mess any more. It was 2005. I'd very little money, I didn't speak English, but I was determined to change our life. The beginning was the worst – I hang out with some Poles who I met on my flight to Dublin. We spent the first two nights at the Dublin airport. Later somebody organised a place to sleep. I was happy until I saw the place...It was an awful room. There was a big mattress on the floor. In the evening, a few others appeared and they went to sleep between us, on this one mattress in their daily clothes. A few people were sleeping on this one mattress. We had to roll over together because we were like 'sardines in a tin'. It was a nightmare...

(Malwina aged 42, Co Dublin).

This is why it can be argued that Polish parental migration is accompanied by a discourse of parental self-sacrifice to achieve a normal lifestyle (White 2011).

4.6.1 Migratory decisions of Polish families - between Ireland and the UK

Indisputably, the UK and Ireland attracted tens of thousands of Poles. While the larger percentage of Polish post-accession immigrants chose the UK, the attractiveness of Ireland remained quite competitive due to its more favourable labour market conditions. Hence, there has been an increase of Poles with and without children in the biggest towns in Ireland (CSO 2006, Census 2011). The LASPIT research however has shed more light on the rationale behind Polish parents' migratory destination choices. It was established that some Polish parents, particularly females [including me] did some little research on the internet prior to migrating: As Bobek puts is:

> 'Historically speaking, migrants who were considering moving to another country tended to rely on the social capital that was available to them through their migrant networks [...] Nowadays potential migrants gain new access about living and working in potential living countries via the internet'

(Bobek 2011:171-72).

The role of the internet should not be underestimated in this context, because the internet substitutes the lack of local knowledge, and to some extent, it becomes a 'virtual neighbourhood' (*ibid.*). Polish émigré parents used the internet to find out and compare what exactly other immigrant parents were saying about migration with children to the UK and to Ireland in the context of schooling and integration. Information gathered from various internet forums suggested that while migration to the UK was more beneficial because of the currency exchange between the British pound sterling [£] and Polish Złoty [PLN], the social inclusion of Polish immigrant families into British society was far from desirable. Polish parents who migrated to the UK often delineated that they did not feel welcome by the British, and that their children were attending schools where white children were in a minority. Ireland on the other hand, was praised for its openness and friendliness, principally in relation to newcomer children[16].

The perception that settling down with children might be easier, was decisive at the time when the destination country the was considered, although it was not always the case. In general, as evidenced by Kawecki *et al.* (2012) only a small group of Polish parents exhibited transnational and future oriented thinking by making inquiries about the conditions of everyday life, school enrolment, and other aspects of children's acculturation in the new socio-cultural context. The majority of the Polish parents did not take the departure of all family members into account at all, and a few families considered moving together but dropped this idea. In this regard, the LASPIT dataset shows similar findings.

4.6.2 Migration, gender roles and family dynamics

> 'Connections between gender roles are predominantly important, given that migration culture is part of the wider cultural background of the sending society [...], these connections are not always obvious, and it is particularly important not to make assumptions about family reunification'
>
> (White 2011:232).

Migration creates changes within the structure of the family. It often leads as mentioned above to parental loss of status in the receiving country in association with debilitation of parental authority (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). Again, it

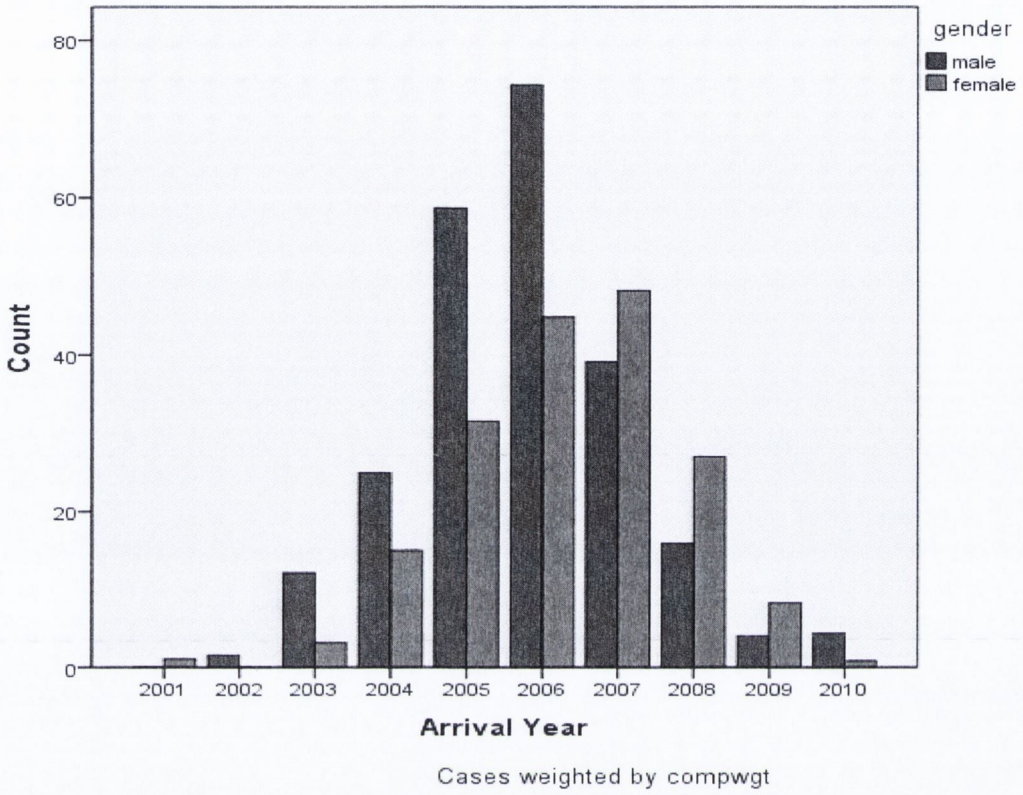
[16] www.onet.pl
www.gazeta.pl
http://zielonairlandia.pl

should not be forgotten that these changes are highly contextual, therefore may occur in one context but may not be present in another. Therefore, in order to understand acculturation of Polish teenagers in Ireland, it is imperative to delineate the context of conflicting expectations in terms of gender dynamics that set first class background for family reunification of Polish immigrants. Migratory decisions of Poles are usually negotiated and/or decided by the head of the household, hence the next section elaborates on gender perspectives in the context of the migratory culture of Poles.

Arguably, power relations and its own dynamics within each individual family affect the migratory decision and later impact on the relations of the reunited family in the receiving country. As illustrated by various scholars, in practice social dynamics of the migratory process is often characterised by the emotional choices derived from the traditional gender-roles, even if in general economic reasons trigger the migratory influx (see Bennett *et al.* 2011; Paszkowski 2006; Urbańska 2009).

The typical migration scenario in the context of post-accession migration of Polish families starts with the emigration journey undertaken by one member of the family. Historically fathers usually migrated; however, new migration is not exclusive to one gender. At present both mothers and fathers are leaving their own country in search of better economic opportunities. The international literature even suggests that nowadays mothers migrate more often than fathers do because the world's demand for service workers is constantly enhancing (Gergely 2011; Serradell 2011; Tyldum 2012; Zontini 2010). Post-accession migration from Poland has triggered migration of Polish females, who often pioneered and made suitable arrangements that allowed for family reunification later in the host country. Another important point is that 'female migration in general, and the migration of mothers in particular, was persistently overlooked in the dominant discourses of supposedly male and labour-driven migratory currents' (Pustulka 2012:162). While before the EU enlargement the outflow from Poland was disproportionately male (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009); however, according to the most recent studies (Czarnecka 2012; Grzymala-Kozlowska 2001; Pustulka 2012; Slany 2008) there is a visible feminisation of Polish post-accession migration. Incipient conclusions regarding gender balance are also visible in the Irish context (see Mühlau 2010) and the data from the 'Polonia in Dublin' study (Figure 4.1 below).

Figure 4.1 Polonia data: year of arrival by gender



Source: TCD: 'Polonia in Dublin' (Mühlau 2010)

The exact number of females who migrated to Ireland not as part of family reunification is difficult to determine (Census 2011 does not go into this level of migratory nuances). However, according to the 'Polonia in Dublin' dataset, the Dublin area is particularly attractive for women (see Mühlau 2012), who constitute almost forty-five percent of the total number of Poles in Dublin (QNHS)[17]. This visible shift has changed the delicate balance within households - shifting the economic power from traditional male breadwinner position to more equal relationships, enhancing 'women's sense of independence from their husbands' (White 2011:232). There is an assumption that a wife will respect her husband's decision whatever to stay behind or give up a job and join the spouse abroad. It has to do a lot with the gender relations in Poland. 'Patriarchy is still considered to be the main cultural force concerning gender relations in Poland, and as a result women are expected to fulfil certain gender-specific roles and follow the specific behavioural code' (Burrell 2009:168; see also Domański

[17] The Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) enriched by data from Census 2006 and 2007. http://www.cso.ie/en/studentscorner/labourmarket/whatistheqnhs/

and Przybysz 2007; Pustulka 2012; Siara 2009). Not surprisingly then, Watson (1993) identified the importance of men's image as breadwinners, head of households simultaneously usurping men's authority over their families.

With regard to traditional gender roles, Polish cultural norms make the woman responsible for the household and the good domestic atmosphere. Culturally, it is imperative for Polish women to succeed in all areas of their life: professional, social and domestic that combines traditional and model female roles (Nagel 2003; Siara 2009). It is deeply embedded in the Polish cultural heritage that Polish women are capable of excelling in all fields: being the perfect mother, being second to none in their work placements, being the perfect housewife and additionally being able to live a full life what at practical level means travelling and reading[18].

These multitasking roles have already been very demanding in the Polish context where the linguistic barrier was non-existent and where Polish mothers were employed in accordance with their experience and professional qualifications. Here in the transnational context, performing motherhood often at a distance (e.g., when children are left behind) positions émigré mothers on challenging pathways, causing a major rupture, disjunction and incompatibility of mother-role performances between the country of origin and the destination society (see Pustulka 2012).

The LASPIT research sample is not representative, but even in such a small sample visible female migration has emerged. Namely, 13 females [including married ones] took migratory decisions, and left Poland on their own, proving that males were not always the first ones to prepare 'a nest' for the rest of the family in the host country - changing the role of females in this context (see Table 4.1 below).

[18] Paraphrased from Polish journal "*My Style*" No 2 [247] February 2011:9.

Table 4.1 Visible feminisation of the new migration

Name	Gender	Age	Education	Marital status upon migration	Controls household decisions	Migratory initiator
Jolanta	F	52	tertiary	divorced	Yes	Yes
Tekla	F	50	secondary	married	No	Yes
Monika	F	36	tertiary	separated	Yes	Yes
Gienia	F	40	secondary	single	Yes	Yes
Żaneta	F	38	tertiary	married	Yes	No
Elwira	F	38	tertiary	married	No	No
Gertruda	F	52	secondary	single	Yes	Yes
Karina	F	38	tertiary	married	Yes	No
Beata	F	35	tertiary	married	Yes	Yes
Anna	F	42	tertiary	separated	Yes	Yes
Rozalia	F	39	tertiary	married	No	No
Antonia	F	45	tertiary	married	No	No
Franciszka	F	42	secondary	married	Yes	No
Ksenia	F	44	tertiary	married	Yes	No
Łucja	F	39	tertiary	married	No	Yes
Alicja	F	35	tertiary	married	No	No
Malwina	F	42	tertiary	married	Yes	Yes
Milena	F	42	secondary	married	No	No
Mieczysława	F	45	tertiary	married	No	Yes
Jadwiga	F	40	secondary	married	No	No
Elżbieta	F	50	tertiary	married	Yes	Yes
Bożena	F	40	secondary	married	No	Yes
Salomea	F	40	tertiary	married	No	No
Zofia	F	39	tertiary	single	Yes	Yes

Source: LASPIT

Elżbieta aged 50 – a dentist, with two teenage children recalls:

In Poland, I had to work like a slave. Here I just work – it makes a difference. My husband decided to stay but I liked to move on and change the way we lived in Poland. It was difficult at the beginning but it's past now. Presently, I've a good job in my medical profession, and I can help my children. This country gives them opportunities they wouldn't have if they stayed in Poland. It took some time to get organised before the arrival of children, but they are mature teenagers and they understood.

(Elżbieta aged 50, Dublin 2).

Given the fact that, since Poland's EU accession, migration as a way of living has become more acceptable, still socially 'it is not acceptable for two parents to leave their children' (White 2011), and go abroad to earn money. Reinders (2004) explains this by arguing that family transmission values, as well as gender role attitudes, are slower to change than for example adaptation to the opportunities (e.g., EU

enlargement). However, the recent quantitative study by Mühlau and Röder (2012) indicates that acculturation patterns differ between male and female. It appears that immigrants originating from countries with very traditional gender roles adapt their gender ideology to the standards of the receiving country, and the origin context loses force over time. More importantly, females tend to adjust quicker and more thoroughly than men[19].

Despite pejorative social perception, anecdotal evidence along with the adherences illustrated in the LASPIT dataset signify that Polish females were often the initiators of migratory movement providing migratory opportunities for their loved ones:

Well, I split with the boys' father, and I couldn't count on his money anymore. You know yourself how difficult it's to survive on one salary in Poland. Many people were migrating; I was so desperate that I joined the Polish crowd travelling to Ireland. It wasn't easy but I was pressurised and had no other choice...

(Alicja aged 36, Co. Wicklow).

This excerpt from an interview with Alicja exemplifies other reasons attributed to feminisation of Polish female migration (e.g., separation, divorce). On the other hand, this new migratory model bears many consequences, particularly, in the case of single mothers who opted for going abroad.

4.6.3 Sociological discourse on transnational migration with or without children in the context of Polish social conventions

Through discussion on social conventions in the context of family reunification, it is attempted to distil out several principles that guide family reunification of Polish immigrants in Ireland. Effects of migration on family structure are widely described in the literature (Czarnecka 2012; Pustulka 2012, Suárezo-Orozco *et al.* 2012). Admittedly, following Polish EU accession in 2004, extensive migration with children is a rather new observable fact; however, there is a discourse within Polish social structures about 'a fashion for migration with children' (White 2011). Evidence from the LASPIT dataset suggests that depending on the geographical dispersion and local context there are two distinctive patterns: 1) It is expected that children should be left in their familiar environment in the care of the relatives; 2) Polish families might be socially pressurised to migrate with their children.

[19] Mühlau, P. and Röder. A. (2012) Gender Egalitarian Beliefs and Europe's Immigrants, *IIIS Discussion Paper*, No. 414/November 2012:1-39.

Polish society does not look favourably on women who leave their children behind regardless of child's age. Polish media even coined the term 'Euro-orphans' [Eurosieroty] in order to draw national attention to the increased female migration post-EU enlargement (Kawecki *et al.* 2012; Pustulka 2012). Naturally, parental migration often implies a greater caring role for grandparents remaining in Poland, and this is often identified as part of the 'Euro-orphan problem' (White 2011). However, a pragmatic approach dictates that in light of a daily struggle it comes solely to a single parent to be realistic and to choose what is best for the lone parent family. Because there is an outstanding gap concerning positive aspects of female outward post-accession migration, the structure of socio-cultural and political transformations taking place in Poland calls for a change of perspectives in viewing the rules that govern family functioning (Kawecki *et al.* 2012).

The LASPIT dataset comprises only a few single parents, and all of them explicitly indicated that child welfare was paramount prior to migration, during emigration, and after family reunification. Despite migratory arrangements, all lone parents indicated that leaving their offspring behind was one of the most difficult decisions in their entire life. On top of this, many lone parents recalled that not only did they feel pangs of consciousness but also they were aware that from the societal point of view, their 'migratory arrangements were often judgemental' (White 2009). Contrary to maternal migration, it is not immediately evident what the alternative, parents with children, migration model implies about norms regarding parental and gender roles in the Polish context. Nonetheless, as argued by White (*ibid.*) migration by single mothers constitutes a somewhat separate category. Before migration, all lone Polish parents in the LASPIT sample ensured that their offspring had a good quality child-care provision guaranteed whilst simultaneously planning for a short-term separation. The data show however that the separation period was longer that initially envisaged. Zofia, a single mother aged 39, recalls:

I arrived in 2006, in summer in order to get my child from Poland and enrol her in the Irish school in September. It was my plan but the reality was different. I didn't get a job for the next three months so my daughter stayed in Poland with my parents. She arrived in Ireland next summer in 2007. I couldn't get a job because I had no previous working experience in Ireland. I was devastated.

(Zofia aged 39, Dublin 8).

This excerpt echoes many other parental narratives that delineate that the lack of language fluency and the lack of working experience in Ireland were the main barriers to occupational mobility of Poles in Ireland. Despite various obstacles, Polish émigré

parents moved 'heaven and earth' to be reunited, because the price paid for the separation was often unbearable:

I had no choice. I had to leave... but it was terrible, this isolation and separation from my daughters especially the youngest one, so much pain so many tears... [she stops covers her face with hands and cries] *I survived only one year like this and decided to bring my youngest here. Now, two of them are here, in Ireland with me...*

(Anna aged 42, Dublin 3).

Overall, during all interviews with Polish émigré parents, it has become clear that it is unavoidable to touch the psychological aspect of parental migration with or without children notwithstanding the experiential reality of migration.

4.6.4 Psychological impact of migratory decisions

The majority of Polish teenagers in the LASPIT sample had encountered being left in their home country while one of their parents migrated to Ireland. Later they came through a long and disruptive process of family reunification. Immigrant children respond in a variety of ways to their separation from family members. For some, it is a traumatic process; others find it stressful but not traumatic (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). Unquestionably, separation causes mixed emotions, and because of the ambiguity, loved ones cannot make sense out of their situation and emotionally are pulled in opposite directions – love and hate for the same person, acceptance and rejection, argues Boss (1999:62). Such emotional confusion was reflected in every Polish teenager's migratory narratives.

The LASPIT data suggests that in terms of impact of the migratory decisions, at the individual level, separation from loved ones was definitely viewed as the worst experience. All Polish interviewees in Ireland when asked about family reunification reasons asserted that they were missing each other and the separation was often unbearable for them and their children. For instance, Mieczysława's husband migrated to Ireland in 2007. Her narrative illustrates emotional and practical challenges caused by the migratory separation:

My reaction for the fact that he went first [to Ireland] *was OK, so now I'm the one who orders and gives commands!* [Laugh]*...and enjoy life! ...I had to re-furnish my life. .I suddenly had so many duties, so many things to worry about that I was too tired to go anywhere during the weekend or in the evening. I missed my husband...My husband often rang us, but I missed him so much! I often heard "I wish I had a dinner with you with the candle lights"... or whenever it was our wedding anniversary*

or another special day, I received flowers delivered to my doorstep...I was happy but every time I had the telephone conversation with my husband - I was crying...

(Mieczysława aged 45, Co Kilkenny).

Other Polish interviewed parents similarly focused on the separation impact, on the worry of the loved one who was far away, often homesick, while the rest of the family was trying to cope with the new situation on a daily basis. Many parents revealed that they only realised when one spouse migrated first, how hard it was to be parted. The psychological effect of a migratory decision, the loneliness, and odd feelings that despite the remittances "*there is so much on your plate*" (Jolanta aged 52) became overwhelming, and often overshadowed the social aspect of regular remittances.

Largely, parents of Polish teenagers view emigration as a difficult experience despite its positive aspects, perceiving partner outmigration as an emotionally difficult encounter. At the same time, all interviewed married couples clearly outlined that migration of one of the family members strengthens migrants' households in terms of the better standard of living; however, it weakens each member of the household through the psychological aspect of the separation. Moreover, migratory separation seems to induce greater involvement in daily household chores and daily problem solving – this aspect was particularly underlined by Polish wives who were left in Poland while their spouses migrated to Ireland.

This dominant discourse covers experiences prior to migration as a whole family and experiences in the host country. For example, Tadeusz aged 43 who had permanent employment in Poland, and who looked after his two children while his wife migrated to Ireland, decided after four years that long-time separation was emotionally very difficult to be managed. He handed in his notice and left Poland along with his children in order to reunite with his wife. His age (mid-40s), lack of English made him unemployable. Living in the shadow of his wife who became the breadwinner only added to his sweet-bitter feelings related to the family reunification. Thus, the LASPIT empirical narratives evidently indicate that despite more money and enhanced opportunities, separation from the loved ones overshadowed positive aspects of migratory decisions negatively affecting all members of separated families. As White puts it:

> 'The prospect of remaining away for a still longer period, of unpredictable duration, becomes intolerable for emotional reasons, and this too is the time when worries about marriage break-up become more acute. Hence, the two motives to reunite are mutually reinforcing'
>
> (White 2009:78).

Arguably, certain social pressures are also contextual, and according to Polish émigré parents' accounts, they can be manifested in various ways. The issue of emotional migration escalates more in the context of post-accession migration of Poles with teenage children. For example, it is not always the society, or the neighbours that speak forth in a derogative ways; sometimes it is a close family member that pressurise immigrants.

The LASPIT dataset also provides evidence that for a child both parents are important. In one interview during the LASPIT fieldwork, it emerged that the whole family reunited in Ireland despite having different plans because a little boy missed his father so much that he could not bear being separated from him. Here we come to the common assumption expressed strongly in Polish social structures, that similarly to mothers who cannot be replaced, fathers also have their special position and they are often irreplaceable in the child's eyes, highlighting the importance of parental roles (see Bengtson *et al.* 2002). Mieczyława aged 45 who initially stayed behind with her three children [two daughters and one son] emphasised this, too:

My husband often rang us and spent lots of time talking to me and to the children...I missed my husband but it was our youngest son who missed him the most.

(Mieczysława aged 45, Co Kilkenny).

Drawing on Polish émigré parents' narratives gathered mainly in 2009/2010 it is clear that many spouses did not plan initially moving to Ireland. However, as the separation started to take its toll, migratory arrangements began to be questioned, subsequently leading to prioritisation of family reunification. In addition, the study established that Polish children were usually left in the care of relatives and despite parents' best effort sometimes reunification of the entire family took a long time, (a four-year separation period was the longest mother-child separation recorded in the LASPIT sample).

It is argued that long migratory separation results in two sets of disruptions in emotional attachments for the children – first from the parent, and then from the caregiver to whom the child has become attached during the parent-child separation. Under such circumstances, children experience disruption and commotion of their affectional bonds resulting in a variety of emotional and behavioural responses (Boss 1999; Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). It led to the emergence of an explicit dichotomy on the one hand, relationships with reunited family members had to be reconstructed particularly after a long-term separation, and on the other hand, newcomers had to come to terms with leaving behind loved ones who cared for them while their

parent(s) migrated to Ireland. There is also solid empirical evidence that the reunification of Polish children with their parent posed substantial challenges and strained family dynamics. The separation was viewed as complex and painful but immigrant mothers often emphasised that this was the only way out and they forced themselves to live through it. On the top of this, Polish families experienced dynamic and unpredictable transition periods upon reunification. Children were leaving Poland with mixed feelings, combined with excitement and emotional confusion caused by leaving their caring relatives and friends.

4.6.5 Facing new reality – Polish family reunification in Ireland

Polish parental migration to Ireland is set in its own context. However by comparative means, it is analogous to descriptive mode of Mexican parental migration to U.S. who similarly to Polish émigré parents, sustain close ties with primary and extended family members, and there is considerable movement and communication back and forth (see Orellana *et al.* 2001). While, however, Mexican families often share small apartments with other families in order to manage the high cost of living (*ibid.*), Polish post-accession migrants, particularly those reunited with their families make a big effort to secure a 'place of their own' (see also White 2011). Admittedly, the majority of Polish migrants could not afford a deposit and rent upon their arrival; therefore they relied on the shared accommodation before family reunification.

Research in the UK and in Ireland (Sokolowska 2011b; Trevena 2011) has shown that many of the Polish interviewees explained that a spouse visit to the host country came as a shock; particularly to Polish wives, who could not believe in the awful or cramped living conditions of their husbands. The evidence suggests that at the beginning of migration, money was scarce, and Polish parents had to find ways to get by and save for the first deposit. Shared accommodation with strangers is not embedded in the Polish tradition. That is why family reunification was often delayed and separation took longer than initially envisaged. Except one family, Polish émigré parents of the 34 interviewed teenagers had secured a habitable place prior to the family reunification. It is important to stress here the economic cost of securing a rented place on your 'own' involves living on a tight budget for two sets of reasons. Firstly, the cost of the accommodation in Dublin was one of the highest in Europe during the 'Celtic Tiger' era. Secondly, immigrant Poles similar to other migrants in general experienced downwards mobility, which means lower income in comparison to the natives. The LASPIT interview data indicates that the average rented

accommodation for Polish immigrant family absorbs around seventy percent of the income of one spouse. In light of 'Celtic Tiger' rocketing prices, to afford their 'own' rented accommodation and to provide decent standards of living the majority of Polish parents were 'forced' to work unfavourable hours and often juggled between two different low paid jobs.

The degradation in social status in Ireland was a bitter discovery for many well-educated Polish parents. For example, Anna age 49 holds two Master's degrees: one in Mathematics and one in Physics. Working as a Mathematician in the Polish secondary school, she enjoyed the high social status but relatively low income. In a few words, Anna commented on how her arrival in Ireland affected her social and professional status:

I was told – "fly in tomorrow" by my friend who already was in Ireland. I had 24 hours to make a decision about going or staying... it was tough. I had very little money – only €50 and it was all the money I had in Poland, and brought here. I don't have to explain how difficult it was to survive on this money. The day I went to buy a loaf of bread and recalculated the real price of it in Zlotych [PLN] *I felt tears in my eyes. If the bread here was far more expensive than in Poland, I asked myself how I was going to live... We had no money to pay rent so together with my Polish friend we slept on the floor in our workplace for 3 weeks. When we could afford a deposit, we moved to our first rented flat. At that time, there were eight of us sleeping on a one mattress in a one-bedroom apartment. I'll never forget that...when somebody wanted to change position from one side to another - we had to do it together... this is how it was. [...] Later, I found a job as a cleaner and very soon, I moved in to my own* [rented] *place. [...] I would love to teach again but first I've to acquire English...*

(Anna aged 49, Dublin 1).

Anna's story was not unique. Polish parents often expressed their dissatisfaction with the type of employment offered in Ireland but the need to provide for the family gave them no choice. The awareness and the pressure of the interrelatedness between being employable and being able to provide became the additional stressor often evoked in the parental narratives.

The LASPIT identified that upon arrival in Ireland, Polish parents whilst seeking employment in particular sectors discovered that the Irish employers had difficulties with recognition of their qualifications. Due to limited English language proficiency the majority of Polish émigré parents had no idea of the Qualifications Recognition services or of the Irish regulatory bodies that control access to certain professions. This reflects a more general pattern. Many Poles, similar to the Polish émigré parents in the LASPIT sample, reported that their employment did not match their educational achievements and professional experience (Mühlau *et al.* 2010). It

appears that the lack of language competency sometimes hindered further job perspectives:

You have to have courage to leave. There are plenty of people out there, who would love to go and improve their life but they don't have the courage do it. Moreover, they often don't speak English and have doubts… Not to mention migrating with kids… especially teenagers. In our case, this journey was an opportunity to change our misery, to pay off all the debts and start from scratch. It wasn't easy. The lack of language, the lack of the culture knowledge, and entire uncertainty associated with my arrival and transition period here in Ireland...At the beginning, when I earned my first wage as a carer at the hospital, and after converting this to the Polish currency, I was almost flying - so happy was I! For a long time it was all about earning money, working long hours, weekends, unwanted night shifts in order to repay what was due. I didn't speak English; therefore, I was unaware about certain deadlines for the recognition of professional qualifications. I missed it, and as a result, despite having so many years as a fully qualified and experience nurse, I now work as a carer in the local hospital.

(Malwina aged 42, Co Dublin).

This excerpt explicitly illustrates that despite tertiary education, 'language of country of origin is important in occupational attainment: migrants from English speaking countries show a more advantageous distribution of occupations for all migrant categories from non-English speaking countries' (O'Connell and McGinnity 2008:28). Despite possessing a higher level of educational credentials, Poles are predominantly employed far below their professional skill levels (Bobek 2011; Mühlau 2011; Wickham *et al.* 2011). However, in the case of Polish immigrant parents in the LASPIT sample, a low level of English proficiency jeopardised their better job prospects. Similar conclusions were drawn by Kropiwiec and King-O'Riain (2006) who established that the language proficiency - not skills or education played a crucial role in terms of migrants' satisfactory participation in the Irish labour market.

Occupational position influences the individual's personality and identity affecting the formation of durable divisions and social ties (see Domański and Przybysz 2007). Factually, the majority of well-educated Poles enjoyed high prestige in their host country. Now in the migratory context their social status and the cultural capital brought with them suddenly does not fit in the new social realm easily leading to a depreciation of the migrants' human capital, affecting the settlement process in the host country (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009; Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard 2001). However, even after elimination of the language barrier, the vast majority of Polish immigrants were still ready to take jobs disregarded by the Irish. Why?

Narratives from another qualitative panel study based on interviews with Poles in Ireland (see Wickham *et al.* 2009) explain why Polish immigrants, often with tertiary education are prepared to accept poor working conditions:

> 'For all our respondents, the initial rationale for moving to Ireland is primarily financial, including in particular accumulating capital in a way that would not be possible in Poland'
>
> (Wickham *et al.* 2009:85).

However, the LASPIT findings indicate that 'the lure of the Goldrush labour market' (*ibid.*) has increased immigrants disposable income at the expense of social status. 'No pain no gain' argues Trevena (2011). Evidently, these opportunities came at a price of downward mobility, but as Jadwiga aged 40 from Central Dublin asserted – "it was worthwhile":

My husband had a job for a few months, then he lost it; but even on the dole, we can still afford to go abroad. It wouldn't be possible in Poland.

(Jadwiga aged 40, Dublin 1).

To reiterate, the reunification of families is a complex issue. Admittedly, attractiveness of the Irish labour market, and life-style between Poland and Ireland played an important role in Polish outward post-accession migration. However, family bonding after migratory separation was perceived retrospectively as the most important, and this aspect mattered often more than purely economic benefits highlighting the relevance of emotional migration that led to family reunification. Moreover, parent-child relations and general interrelatedness within family needed to be rebuilt after the separation period, requiring lots of effort from both sides. In this regard, this doctoral dissertation backs up the findings of many other scholars who are introducing a new trend by bridging sociology of migration with psychological aspects of migratory decisions (Cairns 2013; Burrell 2009; Kağıtçıbaşı and Ataca 2005; Orellana *et al.* 2001; Tyldum 2012; White 2013).

Naturally, different family members experience adjustment and acculturation in their own way, and it is not atypical that some members of the same family are well integrated and quite happy while others are constantly homesick and do not feel 'at home'. Of course, these varying perceptions affect the family daily life and shape and re-shape the concept of the family reunification. The LASPIT dataset indicates that Polish fathers often emphasised that initial adjustment of their children was viewed as the most difficult part of family reunification and the settling process:

When you are taking decision that you go away [migrate], *uprooting is the last thing on your mind. There are so many things that you are worrying about that you just do not think about it. Late it hits you, like a tornado, you feel it and the worst is that for all child's unhappiness, for all the tears that are cried, for language difficulties etc. you blame yourself. My daughter cried a lot. She cried every day and we cried with her...We cried because we couldn't help her with her homework because we didn't speak English.*
We cried because she was so sad and so unhappy, and because we felt so helpless and frustrated.

(Maciej aged 47, Dublin 7).

The feeling of uprooting can influence all aspects of reunited family life. In some cases, the entire family can be so affected that return migration might be seriously considered. For instance, I was so upset and emotionally worn out upon my offspring's unsuccessful acculturation encounters (see Chapter 1) that our return to Poland was provisionally agreed. After many deliberations, we decided that if the next couple of weeks do not bring any successful developments, our family would go back to Poland. My accounts have been often echoed in the stories of other Polish immigrant parents. For example, Łucja aged 39 who has one teenage daughter, asserted:

My husband arrived first in 2006. One year later, I joined him. Later, our daughter came too. It's quite typical scenario – among my friends anyway. It's usually that one member of family migrates first. Even the childless couples followed the same scenario – first one of them arrived in Ireland joined later by the partner...Arrival of our daughter and her first two weeks at school – I consider as very difficult time for us parents and for her too. The first few weeks were the worst. Our family life was completely affected. Every evening after work, we were sitting by the table...talking, discussing for endless hours how to help her...She was crying constantly...We encouraged her to keep going by regularly saying "Please try tomorrow". Next day we kept saying: "Please, do try... only this week" etc. – it was very hard and stressful...

(Łucja aged 39 Dublin 1).

Polish émigré parents interviewed in the Greater Dublin area often disclosed how difficult it was to make a happy reunited family, particularly where strained family interrelations were exacerbated by separation and later by acculturative stress (Berry 1997). The start of the recession officially dated in 2008 only added to their overall worries.

4.6.6 From 'boom to bust' - Polish immigrant families in recessionary Ireland

The Irish economic downturn that has struck Ireland in the last few years has shaken its economic and social foundations (O'Riain 2012). Many Poles returned to Poland or moved to other destinations when Ireland went from 'boom to bust'. According to CSO data (2006), there was about 200,000 Poles in Ireland during the boom, and the latest figure recorded during the recession records a significant decrease to 115,193 Poles (Census 2011). However, the large percentage of Poles who settled down in Ireland with their families has remained here (Census 2011; Darmody *et al.* 2012). These findings are supported by statistical data from the State Examinations Commission, which indicates that there is a steady annual increase of Polish teenagers sitting the Irish Leaving Certificate and taking the Polish language as a subject (see Table 5.1).

4.6.7 Polish émigré parents in a recessionary employment market – gender perspective

Naturally, following the recession, Polish immigrants' employment status has changed (Mühlau 2011) or it has been significantly affected (Krings and Moriarty 2011). For instance, the majority of Polish male parents in the LASPIT sample were employed in the construction sector. However, the LASPIT qualitative interviews carried out between 2009 and 2010 ascertained that almost every single male parent lost his job. 'Unsurprisingly, the construction industry was particularly hard hit with almost two thirds of the job loses between 2007 and 2011(Mühlau 2012:84). Some of the interviewed males managed to secure infrequent temporary jobs. Two of them expressed a wish of returning to Poland or migrating to another country but the final decision was not made because of the parental concerns of re-uprooting already once uprooted children.

There is however another dimension of recessionary climate, which has amplified feminisation and increased employability of immigrant women, changing the delicate balance within households, and shifting the economic power from traditional male breadwinner position to more equal opportunities for females. The re-positioning of male's stand in conjunction with full-time engagement of unemployed males in domestic duties had started to occupy the public domain all over Europe, drawing our attention to the profound sociological change within the social structure at all levels (Röder 2011). These trends are of socio-economical nature, but they have important psychological consequences evidenced by the LASPIT research project. It

has been argued that social demotion of the spouse, especially, male-partner may inflict tension within the family unit and can have serious implications for gender relations in the affected households (Tyldum 2012). The literature suggests that the psychological notion of relegation seems to take a bigger toll on males.

The LASPIT data indicates that Polish immigrant women in the LASPIT sample despite the recession feel more content that their husbands or partners, and they are less likely to express the wish to return to Poland. More importantly, the LASPIT dataset indicates that Polish interviewed families, more and more rely on female income because more women managed to stay in the Irish workforce while their spouses were made redundant due to the recession. Mühlau (2012) explains this phenomenon by the skills transferability theory, outlining that 'the skills of men are more industry-specific while women have more general ["culture-specific"] skills (*ibid.*:85). Similar observations were reverberated in the international context emphasising that immigrant females tend to better accommodate themselves in jobs below their qualification than males, and often became breadwinners during recessional times (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). This radical shift naturally affected immigrant children, who had to come to their own terms with the fact that their previously full-time working fathers are now social welfare dependent, and involved in various household duties such as cooking, cleaning, or ironing.

Progressing recession that affects the whole society reinforces the questions of immigrants' position in Ireland. Following recent changes in the Irish economic climate, some émigré parents, and even Polish teenagers reported hearing or even being told that they should have returned to Poland because now the Irish need all available jobs:

I work in a shop and in general, clients are nice and friendly [...] Only recently I had one customer who asked me "Are you Irish?" and when I said "No" he turned around and went to my Irish colleague.

(Alicja aged 35, Co Wicklow).

This perhaps reflects on the overall gloomy situation in the Irish labour market, where scarcity of jobs, made even unwanted posts or previously disregarded professions desirable by currently unemployed natives. On top of this 'the State response to recession added an additional layer to the daily burden; 2010 Budget brought Child Benefit cuts, general Social Welfare cuts and income pay cuts across the board' (Nolan and Maître 2011). Malwina aged 42 recalls:

Do you remember when I told you how happy I was upon my arrival? Now after five years things have changed… The reality hit us…. €200 weekly [she refers to her husband's dole] *It's not something to cherish because the cost of living here with a family is significantly higher than back at home. People have changed, too [...] The Child Benefit payment is stopped for no reason or it's delayed because the relevant Welfare Department is understaffed or whatever… it was never the case. We depend on this monthly income, and what they are doing it's incredible! ... Majority of working Poles experience similar problems. I've already agreed to work every weekend. Sometimes I ask myself the question - Have I enough energy to deal with it? Where is my motivation coming from? I tell you, I'm under pressure. I've no other choice. I brought my family to Ireland after four hard years of being here alone, and for a while, it was OK. Then as you know, my husband lost his job on a construction site, and with the kids engaged in full time education a return to Poland is out of question. I'm very happy that after only two years, my son earned enough points to become a third level student and I hope that my daughter will pass her Junior Cert and find her place in this linguistically and culturally different environment. I know that my children sacrificed a lot... I still remember my daughter crying almost every day after school. I'm proud of them! I'm proud of what they have achieved. They count on me now and I'll support them…*

(Malwina aged 42, Co Dublin).

Concomitantly, anecdotal and LASPIT evidence suggests that sometimes the Irish are made redundant and the Poles are kept employed:

Once in the Irish pub somebody asked me "What are you doing here" and I answered: "I live here" on another occasion I heard somebody saying, "Poles should go back to Poland." On another occasion I overheard an Irish man saying to another Irish man "Hey change your surname into something Polish sounding, and you will soon get yourself a job"

(Mieczysława aged 48, Co Kilkenny).

Despite some positive 'feedback' from the labour market, joblessness, or 'hecession' (Duvvury 2011) became another fact of life, identified among many Polish immigrant families who settled down in Ireland prior to the economic downturn. Alongside it should not be understated that both genders experience the feeling of insecurity, and those who managed to stay in the employment or who secured another job started to encounter the change in terms of well-being, increased pressure, intensification of work duties and wages decrease. Jolanta aged 52 who works as a General Practitioner complained:

Current economic climate has changed so much. It affects your whole life. I can hardly believe the recent changes at my work. Not only are they pushing me into working on Sundays, but also they are paying a nominal days wages – you know as if it was Monday or any other day in the week. There are talks of taking our health cover away from us and much more. I don't like it - and the scale of

these draconian changes is going to widen...I don't know what to do... It is tough... I cannot uproot my children again and you need a few thousands euro here.

(Jolanta aged 52, Dublin 5).

The LASPIT dataset shows that the worsening economic situation forced many families to tighten their belts. It is argued that the severe economic recession, high levels of job losses and significant cuts in household income affected payment capacity in a large percentage of the households in Ireland indicating that income inadequacy rather than a high level of personal consumption is a key factor in over-indebtedness (Russell *et al.* 2011). Comparable observations were reverberated in the LASPIT dataset where the wage cuts forced many Polish families to endorse new plans of action to mitigate the income inadequacy. For example, Jolanta aged 52 decided to sub-let her three-bedroom apartment to compensate partially for the loss of €1500 from her monthly income. Another interviewed Polish family, had to refrain from their luxury holidays because their conditions of employment was altered significantly. Others have also 'tightened the belt' opting for cheaper rented accommodation as the austerity measures were implemented. My family also personally experienced financial constraints posed by the recession. For instance, the non-fee-paying secondary school attended by my twins, upon severe governmental cuts introduced a registration fee for each student attending the school effective from academic year 2010/2011. This unplanned and obligatory payment added to the overall cost of the 'Irish free education'. Other émigré parents reported that the Transition Year Programme in many secondary schools was obligatory, totalling an extra payment of €500 per child regardless of parental employment status and income. Unsurprisingly, in light of the worsening economic situation, many immigrants including Poles have considered return migration, but surprisingly, Polish families with children have stayed in recessional Ireland.

4.7 Why do Polish families stay in recessional Ireland?

Arguably, while migratory 'temporariness is inextricably linked to the idea of return' (White 2011:14), 'new communication and transportation technologies make it easier to stay connected to homelands and to keep open the possibility of return' (Orellana 2001:573). Interviews with Polish émigré parents living in the Greater Dublin area revealed that many of them are torn between staying and returning. Within this pool, there is a large group of Polish parents – 'homing pigeons' (Fitzgerald 2013) who are interested in returning to Poland, and there is also a much

smaller group that comprise émigré parents who are not interested in returning to Poland at all.

Through the data analysis that focused on the first group of Polish parents I established that Polish parents in general seem to be emotionally attached to the various places in Poland, where they grew up, built their houses, purchased apartments etc. The majority of Polish parents still keep their Polish accommodation, so they can come back to 'something'. Behind this decision is a well-known factor of modern migratory strategy: 'an open-endedness strategy' (Bobek 2011). Polish parents perceive their accommodation in Poland as an important asset, often used for holidaying purposes. Moreover, owning a property is considered an asset, a place you can always return to. Malwina, a 42 mother of two, who migrated to Ireland in summer 2005, explains:

It is awfully small by Irish standards but by Polish standards - a two-bedroom on 42 meters square in a good location with other amenities... I could get decent money for my apartment...But what's the point? I don't use it often – merely once a year but it is so handy that we have a place of our own while we holiday in Poland. Renting in the hotel would have been expensive. Working here allows me to keep the apartment at low cost. I don't pay for households bills because I don't use it, and the rent is only 400PLN (approx. €100) per month. We can consider selling in future and use this money for a house, which we would love to build on the plot we have...

(Malwina aged 42, Co Dublin).

Malwina, has been living in Ireland for the last couple years and she is very keen on returning to Poland. She indicated on numerous occasions that as soon as her two teenage children will gain independence [university degree and a job] she is coming back to Poland. Arguably, she could return now but as she asserted *"it would be inhuman to uproot my children again."* On the other hand, Malwina perceives her migratory strategy as a chance to enhance her children's job prospects, which in the long term will enable her and her husband to return to Poland to their 'own' place.

The LASPIT sample is characterised by mature parents, who often own their own accommodation in Poland because owning a place is deeply embedded in the Polish culture. Interestingly, among 'homing pigeons' there is a very small group of Polish parents, who during the 'Celtic Tiger' decided to invest in brand new residential properties in Poland. Despite the fact that the cost of housing in Poland is relatively high, some of the Polish émigré parents decided to invest in luxurious apartments in big cities. For instance, Jolanta had to drudge in Poland with two jobs to make a decent living. In Ireland, she has a full-time job, and despite owning a house in the Western part of Poland, she decided to purchase a three-bedroom apartment in

Warsaw. At the same time, she has to pay for her three-bedroom rental apartment in Dublin, provide for her daughter and her two sons. [One son is studying in Galway, and another in Poland]. Jolanta explained that she wants to be sure that *"a decent place is waiting for* [her] *when this migratory saga will be over."*

Drawing on the narrative from the second group, it is evident that Polish émigré parents who are not interested in returning to Poland, are noticeably in the minority. Experience and acculturation encounters dictate certain knowledge and validate it. Polish émigré parents are well informed about the dire economic situation in the Polish labour market. Thus, when it comes to pure financial decisions, the second group of the interviewed parents agreed that it is better to stay in recessional Ireland, than return to economically developing Poland. Conversely, parental perception of Poland with its 'poor' social policy in terms of social welfare protection plays an important role in the parental decision about staying or returning:

For twenty years we couldn't afford to go for any holidays - do you understand? And here in Ireland after the first year we went to Spain and it was absolutely wonderful! In Poland, I had to stay at home to look after my disabled child and had no money for him at all. Here he has a great childcare, he gets his weekly allowance, and I can work and earn extra money! Here in Ireland I became pregnant. Can you imagine – three children including one who is disabled an unemployed husband... Now having this new baby – healthy and lovely we consider ourselves a blessed family. Everyone loves the new-born baby, and I'm so happy...I found Ireland a country where you can live but your life is not chaotic. We don't have pots of money but enough to live a decent life... we live a better life... we are not going back to Poland...Ireland is our home now...

(Bożena aged 40, Dublin 15).

This excerpt illustrates that while many immigrants have returned to their country of origin, there are many, particularly families with children, who have made Ireland their home (see Darmody *et. al.* 2012). Admittedly, return migration is optional but it has to be weighted carefully because migratory movement has a notion of profound implication for all members of the family. The fact that the children were uprooted once constitutes a prevailing rationale to remain in Ireland until the secondary or sometimes tertiary education is fully accomplished:

As soon as my daughter finishes her education here, I return to Poland. I have a flat there and my Mother who requires more help with every year. It's more difficult now, because I could look after my Mum when I was in Poland. I cry a lot because I feel so guilty about it...She is my Mother. On the other hand, I have my daughter and all this [migration] *is for her. I want for her a much better life so she doesn't have to struggle as I did...but I'm torn...torn emotionally between her and my Mother..*

.

(Zofia aged 39, Dublin 8).

Zofia is one of the lone parents. Lone parents constitute a special case in the LASPIT sample. Not only have they one disposable income, they also solely rely on themselves in any strategic decision making. Zofia, as indicated above, is currently torn between her duties and responsibilities towards her elderly mother and towards her daughter who has nobody else, particularly in the migratory context. There is no extended family here and at the practical level these two females are not only mother and a daughter, they are also friends bonded by the nested context in which they are trying to make their new livelihood. The reality is that the vast majority of Polish parents with their teenage children are anchored in Ireland confirming that 'while there has been broad agreement on what is driving [this new] migration, the issue of whether it will be short or long-term has proved to be more complex' (Burrell 2009:9).

In terms of return migration of Poles, Krings *et al.* (2009) expressed an analogous opinion arguing that a decision of staying or going in the recessional climate is more complex because of the non-economic factors. Polish parents seem to be disposed to stay in Ireland for the sake of their children. They do not want to disrupt their offspring's lives again. This standpoint captured by the LASPIT research project, surfaced also in the academic research in the UK. Polish 'parents had pangs of conscience about having uprooted their children once, when they moved from Poland [...] and they hesitated to disrupt their lives for a second time' (White 2011:227). Thus, the decision whether to stay or to return does not comprise purely around economic costs. Emotional costs, particularly offspring emotional well-being, seems to be a key factor.

4.8 Conclusions

Contemporary migration from Poland due to its scale and dynamics has been heralded as one of the most spectacular population movements in contemporary European history with a particularly large inflow to Ireland and the UK (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009). As illustrated in this chapter, Polish post-EU enlargement immigrants perceived migration to Ireland as an opportunity to live a better life under the Euro citizen status umbrella. However, as illustrated in this chapter, unplanned chain migration also occurs for emotional reasons, which may result in unintended family reunification abroad. In addition, it has been established that contemporary post-accession migration shifts the power and changes the perception of conventional gender roles within typical Polish families towards more visible gender equity, as evidenced by the LASPIT case studies and other scholarly literature. Admittedly, transnational migration empowers women, because through migration women literally

can free themselves from specific cultural gender-related norms (Ahmed 2006). Sadly, female migration with children who are predominantly teenagers is still viewed as unacceptable strategy (Kawecki *et al.* 2012; White 2011). On the other hand, parental obligations and commitments intertwined with their physical absence due to the long working hours in Ireland have had a profound impact on family reunification, additionally challenged by Polish teenager's acculturation. Hence, not purely economic factors, but primarily emotional costs of migratory movement, influence Polish émigré parents' thoughts regarding staying or returning. Synopsis drawn from the empirical LASPIT data, along with the evidence provided by the UK and Irish scholars (Burrell 2009; Krings *et al.* 2009), indicate that despite worsening of economic conditions, the majority of Polish immigrant families will remain for a while abroad in the host countries, because they do not want to uproot their offspring again. To conclude, this chapter has shown that the migratory experience, family reunification and adjustment process is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses far more than simply settling down in the host country.

Chapter 5

Not 'fit' for migration – discourse on parental migration with teenage children

'Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely'

(Karen Kaiser Clark 2008).

5.1 Introduction

Whereas the previous chapter provided the rationale for the post-accession migration of Poles, explicitly explaining migratory reasons of Polish families with teenage children, this chapter offers interesting insights into the integrational dimension of Polish émigré parents in Ireland. The first part of this chapter describes the *acculturation process* before and after family reunification in terms of integration into the Irish social structure. It draws attention to a specific context that surrounds migration of this atypical cohort of Polish parents, aged '40s to mid-50s', who availed of the 2004 EU enlargement and became transnational immigrants. Furthermore, I will argue that their particular circumstances, namely their age, limited English language competency, and their limited disposition to adjustment in the linguistically and culturally different context positions the vast percentage of them as not 'fit' for migration with teenage children. I will explain why, given the opportunity to integrate, Polish parents have not fully embraced 'the new' and chose to stay in their 'comfort zones', which at the practical level means: a) cultivation of Polishness in all its dimensions; b) it poses a big question mark in terms of their capacity for social engagement; and c) there are implications posed for a children's agency.

The concept of a children's agency takes a prominent place in the literature (Corsaro 2003, 2011) with an emphasis on parent-child relations, a network that may often act as a resource of social and economic capital equipping children in their journey to adulthood, particularly during the transition process (Darmody *et al.* 2012). This is why, Polish immigrant parents' decisions in many ways influence their child's agency, creating specific contexts within each Polish household.

Parental choices and exposure to Polishness impact on identity formation and the *acculturation process* of immigrant children because as argued by Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2001) without a sense of cultural competence and belonging, immigrants are often left with a sense of loss. The second part of this chapter describes the

structure of the Irish education system at second-level and formal supports available for migrant students. This is followed by a description of cultural and linguistic diversity in the context of the Irish secondary school provision, with references to recent findings published by Trinity Immigration Initiative/TII (Gilligan *et al.* 2010) and the Economic and Social Research Institute/ESRI (Smyth *et al.* 2009). While the first report published by TII highlights the openness of immigrant children of different ethnic background to Irish culture, it also identifies several barriers to friendships with local students, bullying and various socio-economic disadvantages. The ESRI report provides unique account of responses gathered from almost all principals in the Irish secondary schools outlining how contemporary schools have been challenged by the influx of immigrants in terms of their preparedness to cater for the newcomer student body. Later, this chapter portrays Polish immigrant newcomer students in the Irish schools in the context of second culture acquisition, concluding that neither Polish parents nor the Irish secondary schools can adequately cater for immigrant teenage students.

5.2 Polish émigré parents in intercultural Ireland

Arguably, it is not easy to embrace 'the new', and accept change, particularly if the largest part of one's life has been set in a country that differs linguistically and culturally from the receiving country. In this context, Polish émigré parents can be compared to 'old trees' that were re-planted to fresh soil in a new place. This 'new place' [here Ireland] offers various opportunities including a better standard of living; however, as re-planting of 'old trees' poses considerable challenges, so does the adjustment of Polish parents to their new life following emigration to Ireland. The evidence from the LASPIT research project indicates that Polish parents, in comparison to their children, feel very strongly attached to Polish culture, its heritage and traditions. Many of them keep track of various Polish events taking place locally. Additionally, they engage with internet forums and other social sites e.g., *Nasza Klasa,* which are explicitly dedicated to matters important to Poles. For example, Malwina, aged 42, not only regularly buys *Polska Gazeta* [Polish Newspaper] but she also helps Polish addicts on a voluntary basis, particularly those affected by 'hecession' (Duvvury 2011) - unemployed males affected by post 'Celtic Tiger' recession. Anna, aged 49, apart from working as a receptionist, decided to open a language-teaching centre along with a Polish school for children[20] . Poles also engage in staffing polling stations at the

[20] http://www.polskaszkolawdublinie.com/en/

Polish Embassy and engage in various events important to Poles. Subsequently, the traditional institutionalisation of the Polish community in the Irish context has been quite naturally evoked by participation in the Polish church, Polish schools, and other Polish events organised by the Polish Embassy in Dublin or by other Polish organisations. While in principle the formation of a supportive Polish community in Ireland is desirable and expected among the first-generation migrants, in the context of Polish immigrant parents this picture has a completely different dimension under the 'qualitative loop' of the LASPIT research project.

Sam and Berry (2006:106) outline that 'host culture competence is a necessary resource for social integration into the host society networks, for future academic and economic success in the mainstream society, and for feelings of being accepted as part of the mainstream society.' As shown in Chapter 4, a large percentage of Polish parents arrived in Ireland without English. Upon arrival they experienced downward mobility and exposure to various stressors related to their low cultural and linguistic competence, which naturally poses questions regarding social inclusion.

5.2.1 Social inclusion in the time of the 'Celtic Tiger' and in the time of economic downturn

Interestingly, it was not too long ago that Ireland experienced a massive influx of migrants through the lenses of a good and cheap labour force (see Zinovijus 2012). However, progressing recession has substantially changed the current picture, increasing competiveness on the labour market between immigrants and the Irish counterparts. Special attention deserves to be drawn to the fact that while the majority of Irish during early years of 'Celtic Tiger' did not experience migration and financial hardship, the majority of Polish entrants came to know what life as an emigrant means [downward mobility, significant salary gaps in comparison to the Irish counterparts, etc.]. Interestingly, Polish émigré parent interviewees who were in paid employment consider their labour participation in the Irish labour market as part of their integration. As echoed by White (2011), social aspects of jobs along with the integrative aspects of the job played a role in social inclusion into Irish society. Three quarters of Polish interviewees emphasised that they were treated very well by their Irish employers. More importantly, Polish free movers were able to save money:

Carpenters, who were working with us on a very big project in Poland were joking that the ordinary carpenters earn more in Ireland that my husband as a professional designer in Poland...He rejuvenated in Ireland: he was earning very good money and he was living with the Irish carpenters.

(Antonia, aged 45, Co. Kilkenny).

I particularly like the word rejuvenated because it precisely describes the process that the majority of Polish interviewees in Ireland underwent. Many of them, despite being middle-aged became happier and more relaxed, particularly during the 'Celtic Tiger' era, and all of them were 'singing in one voice' that they were much calmer about their children's future.

In general, Polish émigré parents have perceived integration as a mutual process viz: high awareness of Polish culture and its cities (mainly Kraków), appreciation of the quality of Polish products available in various places all over Ireland, general openness, and friendliness towards Poles. In addition, some Irish made an effort, and acquired some Polish words. All these show how minority cultures themselves influence the culture of the host society beyond the State policy on multicultural and intercultural Ireland. It also highlights that these processes and social interactions are not fixed, because cultures in which we live and operate are not fixed either (see Lentin and MacVeigh 2002). However, it is necessary to stress here that many Irish picked up on the Polish vulgarisms, and unintentionally, unaware of improperness of acquired words, presented them to other Poles in good faith.

The integration process to some extent has been affected by the geographical dispersion of Poles in the Greater Dublin area. Therefore, new Polish entrants who decide to settle down in areas where Poles had formed visible ethnic communities might not have felt so isolated and estranged. Polish children playing and laughing on the Irish streets, and the availability of Polish food in the local community each strengthened the development of Polish ethnic communities in Ireland. Another outcome of such arrangements is that Poles living in Polish neighbourhoods are exposed mainly to their familiar culture. Subsequently, they distance themselves from the Irish social structure. Polish surroundings, Polish language, Polish mass on Sunday, each served to form important social ties but the long term immurement in Polish émigré communities may lead to different *acculturation outcomes* in comparison to Poles who successfully settled down in the Irish neighbourhoods because ethnic enclaves don't always bode well for the integration into mainstream society.

5.2.2 Polish immigrant families and the culture clash

Unquestionably, direct exposure to another culture influences newcomers' habitus (Reed-Danahay and Brettell 2008). For instance, the LASPIT dataset shows a habitual change from drinking of Polish tea with lemon to the Irish regular tea, which is derived from direct exposure to Irish cultural milieu. I have also been through this habitual transition. In terms of other aspects of cultural repertoire, I learned, *inter alia*

that we need to stand further apart while speaking to each other but the most shocking experience has been associated with the Irish culture of 'slagging'. The good-natured culture of 'slagging' - it is a quite an Irish phenomenon. We - Polish immigrants – were not aware of its existence nor did we understand it. Being attuned to what is being said about us, particularly by the Irish, many of us had real difficulties in understanding why we were confronted and begrudged, usually in front of other Irish people. It took us - Poles varying amounts of time to understand that such teasing or more precisely 'slagging' has nothing to do with judgment but a lot to do with social inclusion. The LASPIT data however, signifies that almost every Polish newcomer was personally 'touched' in a pejorative sense by the Irish culture of 'slagging'. Moreover, direct exposure to the 'slagging' in case of Polish parents and their children led to the feeling of being uncomfortable, and embarrassed.

Another interesting aspect of embracing Irish culture emerges from greeting conventions. Polish newcomers, including me, required some time, to adjust to the lack of real interest behind the common Irish greeting 'How are you?', and the fact that natives are not interested in hearing the answer, and very often do not wait for the answer. From a sociological perspective, it is a very interesting aspect of acculturation, because we-Poles do not use the 'How are you?' expression as a greeting form. Generally, people we know are acknowledged only once per day, while generally we do not greet strangers on the streets. Yet, when the question 'How are you?' is posed, it carries a real meaning that translates into the genuine concern of another human being.

Naturally, exposure to another culture means that newcomers eventually are faced with questions of socio-cultural adaptation that involves modification and/or re-modification of cultural repertoire. Some Polish parents are reluctant to embrace the new culture, others are finding this new culture lacking when compared with their own values and traditions. Because cultural boundaries and social relationships are the integral part of the *acculturation process*, Berry (2001) argues that immigrants are responsible for their failure or their success in the process of acculturation. Arguably, it is an overly simplistic view, because immigrants operate in relational and hierarchical realms (King-O'Riain 2008; Reed-Danahay 2010), therefore there are also structural impediments that shape this process. The fact that some Poles have stayed tightly connected with their co-ethnics, mainly of similar occupational status, long after the settlement (see Bobek 2011) begs the question: why?

The LASPIT dataset shows that despite participation in the Irish labour market, many Poles have not fully embraced these opportunities yet, and have instead become separated. In particular, those Polish parents who arrived on their own, with

limited language proficiency, and without any job arrangements, did not advance integration progression. Lack of the English language, in particular, was perceived as a real obstacle. As Marani puts it:

> 'The moment anyone asked me anything, no matter how banal [...] my words betrayed my outsider status: my very voice gave off sounds that did not ring true, like a cracked glass. The language did not flow with ease; I had to construct each word carefully before pronouncing it, laboriously seeking the right amount of breath, the correct pressure of the lips, sounding out my palate with my tongue in search of the only point which could produce the sound I was looking for and then turning it to the right case before actually delivering it up'
>
> (Marani 2011:134).

This excerpt from Marani (2011) visualises how lack of proficiency in a foreign language can constrain the acculturating individual. The LASPIT dataset indicates that English language competency plays an important role not only in the integration process but on parental ability to support their children during the transition process, forming part of the 'cumulative disadvantage' (Darmody *et al.* 2012). The LASPIT evidence points out that a majority of Polish émigré parents were unable to support their children pedagogically, were unable to actively participate in parent-teacher meetings and other extra-curricular activities of their offspring simply because of the lack of English:

My girls will be fine, I kept saying to myself, but you know the reality - without language, I couldn't even help them with homework, they cried, I cried...I can barely speak English. The same applies to my husband. He goes everywhere, and whenever he doesn't know an English word, he uses Polish instead and he doesn't care. When I got the cleaning job I was so happy...Since then, I've been informed that they were happy in terms of the quality of my work but my English was below their expectations and that after such a long time I should have progressed. I went home and cried along the way, tears dropping down my face...For this reason I couldn't attend meetings at my daughters' school.

(Bożena aged 40, Dublin 15).

Bożena's account is one of many. It highlights above mentioned structural impediments. Bożena cannot engage with the school because of her level of English. It is not that she does not want to fit in, she simply does not have the skills, and the school is not able to accommodate her language needs.

The language proficiency of Polish immigrant parents is related not to educational status but to the age group of the interviewed respondents. The majority of Polish émigré parents have tertiary education but only two of them (see Table 2.1

and Graph 6.1) arrived in Ireland with a good command of English, because a majority were brought up under the Communist regime, where the Russian language was the daily foreign language *modus operandi* in the Polish educational system. Debatably, integration in terms of language teaching provision, is also a responsibility of the host country (NAMS report 2012)[21]. According to the LASPIT evidence, the majority of Polish émigré parents in the Greater Dublin area were offered vocational English evening classes. Some of them enrolled in English classes organised by their offspring's schools, others have chosen their own ways of acquiring English:

Primary school offered extra free English classes and it helped me a lot. At some stage the school organised a Polish day. We Polish mothers prepared some information about Poland and one of our Polish friends translated it into English. It was a great event – we talked about Polish traditions, foods. Students kept asking different questions about Poland, animals that live in our country and even about Polish words...

(Zofia aged 39, Dublin 1).

Zofia's narrative is not unique. In many places in Dublin, local schools organised free English language courses for parents of immigrant children. Many Irish schools have also organised open days and special meetings that helped to bridge the gap between new entrants and locals. Having children seems to enable immigrant women to access particular types of localised networks (Ryan *et al.* 2009; Ryan 2007). All these stimulated immigrants and gently 'pushed' them toward a new multinational community (*ibid*). Sometimes, participation in a particular event/network helped lonely Polish parents to find another Pole who offered emotional and lingual support. Arguably, Polish networks may affect social inclusion because it is easier to speak Polish and socialise with people from your own country. On the other hand, Polish acquaintances abroad play an important role in livelihoods of Polish immigrants. In Poland, people always have someone they can go to if their world is 'falling'. Here, in Ireland there are no extended families, or childhood friends. Therefore, real friendship for immigrants is priceless. Maybe the Polish community is not as well organised as other diasporas (e.g., Pilipino community) however, on numerous occasions, I have heard from my interviewees, how one Polish person helped another in getting employment, in the bank where they served as translator or simply in life, when one supported another. However, interaction between Polonia on emigration is quite ambiguous.

[21] The EU report entitled 'Study on Educational Support for Newly Arrived Migrant Children' (NAMS report 2012) was compiled for the European Commission in 2012 by Public Policy and Management Institute, Lithuania http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/migrants/report_en.pdf

5.2.3 *Homo homini lupus est* - discourse on Polish immigrants

According to many scholarly articles (e.g., Buchowski 2006; Iglicka 2009), immigrant Poles interaction with co-ethnics are portrayed according to the following principle: *Homo homini lupus est* - meaning "man is a wolf to [his fellow] man." Irek (2011) outlines that accounts presented in the contemporary post-accession literature are overstated. Garapich (2012:42) explains that 'Polish migrants seem to offer their own version of social reality out there, their own construction on what does it mean to be Polish...' The LASPIT data along with the evidence gathered by other academics (Burrell 2009; Moriarty *et al.* 2012; Trevena 2011) suggests that Polish migrants [highly skilled and with good language competency] prefer to work and live among Irish or other immigrants. Lack of trust, jealously or inappropriate and sometimes anti-social behaviour of some Poles in public is not only embarrassing but sometimes leads to intentional separation because many Poles simply do not want to be sullied by rudeness and vulgarity. Poles tend to be afraid that inappropriate, anti-social behaviour of their co-ethnics pose a threat to the reputation of Poles (see Svaŝek 2009). As noted by Garapich (2012) such behaviour may stain the reputation of the entire group demonstrating that immigrant Poles are particularly sensitive to the misbehaving issue of their co-ethnics.

5.2.4 Conflicting expectations - 'comfort zones' of Polish immigrant parents

It has been argued that immigrants are powerful intermediaries of views, values, and behaviour in the destination country (Heering *et al.* 2004). Nevertheless strong adherence to Polish culture, language and Polish traditions among Polish émigré parents may create distinctive conflict with their offspring who are expected by their parents to embrace the new culture and somehow function between the heritage and the mainstream ethnicity (see Portes 2004). The LASPIT data suggests that while in principle Polish émigré parents are willing to integrate, they also want to maintain psychological aspects of their Polishness that from a social standpoint means separation. Offered various opportunities, Polish parents reported being happy to 'be invited' to this integrational dialogue but lack of fluency in English meant that a large percentage of these parents have not advanced on social grounds.

For Polish émigré parents with their basic English competency performing at work can be a source of huge stress from the language perspective that after work

they look forward to their 'comfort zones', to relax in familiar environments that naturally consist of Polishness. Predictably then, every interviewed Polish reunited family in the Greater Dublin area, have access to Polish TV programmes, read Polish books and newspapers, and obviously they monitor Polish news on-line. It is imperative for Polish immigrant families to keep in touch with their homeland, to be up to date with political and social news. Polish TV helps to maintain Polish identity. It serves as a buffer that can reduce stress allowing for relaxation in familiar environment, with familiar voices in the background. Polishness is also maintained via the internet [*Nasza Klasa* or *Facebook* in Polish]. Moreover, Polish families often purchase low-cost deals that allow them daily telephone contact with those left behind in Poland. Polishness is also maintained by buying Polish products and cooking typical Polish meals. Above all, however, Poles tend to participate happily in the Polish mass and traditional celebrations.

Polish cultural traditions as practiced during Polish Christmas and Polish Easter, and particularly the celebration of Christmas Eve (December 24th) with its ethnic food play a vital role in maintaining Polishness abroad (Burrell 2009; Kempny 2010; Sokolowska 2011d). As Jolanta aged 52 explained:

Without homemade Polish food, white tablecloth, and without opłatek - it wouldn't be a Polish Christmas...

(Jolanta aged 52, Dublin 5).

It appears therefore that Polish émigré parents in the Greater Dublin area value their heritage tradition; however it should be noted that such adherence, particularly during important Polish festivals does not imply that it is rigid and static. There are visible shifts towards Indian or Spanish food, towards celebration of some Irish festivals but as longitudinally observed during the LASPIT research project all the changes were initiated by the offspring of Polish immigrant families. Over time, despite some initial frustrations, Polish parents have slowly formed some social ties and friendships. Slow but gradual lingual progression meant that after a number of years, Polish immigrant parents become more confident with being able to go to the bank or to other public offices mainly because their own children helped them to acquire rudimentary English, translated for them, and provided the necessary information that enabled them to function.

5.3 Embracing the new culture

The interviews with Polish parents also considered other dimensions of socio-cultural adjustment in Ireland. Almost every Polish family interviewed reported that they were 'shocked' and 'amazed' when after the initial transition period in their new social arena they gained some insight into the life-styles of the Irish particularly during the Irish 'Celtic Tiger' era. The 'culture of overspend, the culture of hangover' (Duvvury 2011), consumerism and general carefree attitude has taken Polish immigrant parents by surprise. This exposure to consumerism resulted in an interesting behaviour – immigrants Poles slowly started to build their new transnational identity based on the visual display of their economic advancement.

5.3.1 Polish immigrant families and their transnational identities

The evidence from the LASPIT research project suggests that despite experiencing downward mobility Polish immigrants aspiration to belong to the upper social strata has not been abandoned. The LASPIT data indicates that immigrant Poles make a lot of effort in creating an image of being well-off but also in transferring this 'new image' of successful migrants through geographical spaces to their old nested contexts in Poland. For instance, Polish women with carefully applied makeup, stylish hairstyles, in trendy outfits and often incredibly high heels are a common sight in the departure hall of Dublin airport. Moreover, spouses and kids accompanying them are also very well dressed and equipped with various modern and expensive pieces of technology (e.g., latest iPhones, iPods, designer sunglasses etc.) which emphasise their newly acquired status.

I was initially amazed by the literal metamorphosis of some Polish counterparts who were checking-in for their flights to Poland. Normally their greyish, tired faces now covered with carefully applied make-up along with over-dressed clothes added to the construct of their new identities. Interestingly, this new image of transnational identity based on status is not built in Poland. It is intentionally built in the host country. This carefully constructed transnational identity expressed by material aspects of the contemporary culture has yet another layer of meaning. Visualisation of material goods in case of immigrant Poles transmits very clear information to Poles who did not avail of the migratory option, especially those who did not migrate because for example, they were not interested in swapping their low paid professional role for better-paid service role abroad. Conversely, it provides decoded information - a message - indicating that regardless of the employment

status, usually in the lower strata of the Irish society, immigrants can afford designer accessories that serve as a visual proof of their economic advancement. Similar aspirations of Polish immigrants who strive relentlessly towards being perceived as people of success were also identified in the UK (see Burrell 2009, 2013).

Polish immigrants revisiting Poland are far better off financially in comparison to ordinary Poles who have their wages paid in zlotych. In addition, it is also common for Polish immigrants to spend lots of money on various gifts for their extended families. These generous gifts add on to the 'new image' purposefully built by Polish immigrants, particularly those who migrated from poor villages or small towns. It is even argued that 'material space of consumption serves as an ethnic marker, balancing the lack of formal belonging to the host community, and making a home attachment more visible and more meaningful' (Burrell 2009:211). I would go a step further by saying that there is another dimension here. Material worlds of Polish immigrants are rooted in what Garapich (2012) calls internal class differentiation, particularly in terms of access to power, wealth, education and visible display of status (*ibid.*:42). Thus, significant disparities among Poles in this regard form the behavioural rule of thumb that has become a *modus operandi* for Polish immigrant families. At the same time, it is also a way for them to preserve self-dignity. They may belong to lower social strata in Ireland, but they are rich and successful to those back home.

5.3.2 Polish émigré parents and their double standards

On the other hand, it is evident that the exposure to Irish consumerism associated among other things with the Irish culture of over-drinking (see Järvinen and Room 2007) made Polish parents more strict in terms of their offspring's upbringing leading to 'crossroads of acculturation between parents and children' (Alam 2012) particularly in the case of teenage females. This situation can lead to serious rifts between parents and their offspring:

It happened to me...It was Halloween and I went out with classmates to town...the consequences that faced me at home were pretty serious...

(Klara aged 15, 2nd wave, 25 Sep 2010).

The LASPIT research project has identified that Polish teenage girls are much more controlled in comparison to Polish boys. Herbert, aged 54 explains:

I don't care that she is eighteen! She's my daughter and as long as she lives in this house, she has to abide to what I'm saying. It is our parental responsibility to make sure that our children are

protected. Otherwise, they can get drunk, drugged and pregnant... and what then? Who will take responsibility? Who will be guilty? I don't care what other young people of their age are doing, but I do care of my children, and that is why as long as I am alive, they will not go and stay God knows where, where undoubtedly, after a few drinks they will end up in somebody's bed. I love my daughters and I don't want them to ruin their life. They have to concentrate on learning and studying.

(Herbert aged 54, Co Dublin).

Here in the more permissive Western society such a statement would immediately raise concerns about liberty and freedom of youth. However, for Poles it is derived from specific cultural pressures concerning women's physical appearance in Polish culture (Siara 2009):

> '...Men from Poland are used to the family pattern where a woman needs to fulfil all the requirements: working mother, loving wife and good cook, and in order to get married she needs to have a perfect body shape, and reputation, and she needs to represent her man really well...'
>
> (Siara 2009:178).

Boys are treated differently and this lack of gender equity based on the long traditional gender framework deeply embedded in the Polish culture, causes tension between reunited family members. In most cases, Polish female minors are heavily discouraged to go anywhere on weekend nights and only occasionally are they permitted to stay overnight in a friend's house. Polish girls are torn between parental authority and their influential peers, notwithstanding that many of them find these restrictions 'unfair' and 'out of date'. My underage participants explained that they are aware of their parent's concerns but they are smart enough to avoid risky situations, and they are not interested in engaging in potentially dangerous events. In this regard, the LASPIT findings have revealed that many Polish immigrant parents by being strict actually articulate their concern about their children's exposure to Irish culture outlining that the welfare of their offspring is imperative. As argued, it is even more visible through the gender perspective because parental double standards embedded in their Polish value system do not create identical opportunities for both genders by virtue of being more lax for males.

Parental narratives are full of parental concerns regarding female offspring welfare. Polish parents often stated that the Irish cultural norms are not acceptable for Poles in the context of uncontrolled exposure to drinking, clubbing, and free time. Contemporary academic research indicates that indeed alcohol consumption among

teenagers in the EU is geographically orientated pointing towards the cultural matrix of drinking culture across the Europe (see Järvinen and Room 2007; Zielinski 1994). Polish parents are very concerned about the Irish tolerance of the culture of uncontrolled drinking, derived from too much tolerant social conduct that supports drinking alcohol by youth (see Raundner 2001). This thread was recognised and in every interviewed Polish household steps were taken to mitigate the risk of *"...drinking and clubbing habits"* (Karina aged 38).

Interestingly, Yun Wang (2011) reported similar observations among first and second-generation Hong Kong Chinese in Ireland[22]. However, as above-mentioned, in the context of Polish reunited families due to Polish cultural norms these restrictions usually pertain to one gender only, and do not extend to the Polish boys, who generally can enjoy far more freedom outside school.

Admittedly, it is the parental role to guide and assist their children through the adjustment process. Sam and Berry (2006) outline that parents of immigrant children need to have a certain level of competence within the host culture, and they have to make choices about specific host values and behavioural patterns that they will integrate into their models of virtue. Naturally, parental choices were found unacceptable by their teenage offspring increasing the dissonance between the generations. Alam (2012) argues that immigrant children naturally engage in transition from one mode of socialisation to another, often distancing themselves from their ethnic enclave, unlike the parents, who are perpetually anchored in their co-ethnic sanctuary to validate the norms of primary socialisation. It appears that Polish teenagers' and their parents' actions and reactions are 'rooted in social and cultural contexts' (Saldana 2003), exposing the interrelationships and the complexity of nested arrangements posed by migratory decisions, which has a completely different impact on Polish teenagers, than on their parents.

5.4 Making 'home' in Ireland

We all have a right to feel safe. For uprooted Polish teenagers, who struggle to find themselves in a new social arena, 'home' has a special value with steady, familiar surroundings playing a crucial role. Whilst acknowledging that a family home helps to create a positive, relaxing atmosphere, where children can always come back to and feel safe, it is evident that it is much more difficult to re-create the atmosphere of feeling 'at home' in a host country for the following set of reasons. Firstly, tenants

[22] Ying Yun Wang (2011) *An exploration of the social and cultural experiences of first- and second-generation Hong Kong Chinese in Ireland*, paper presented at the Sociology Research Seminar series on 9 March.

can usually do very little about the 'image' of their rented accommodation. Polish émigré parents are no exception to this and face a big obstacle in making their rented properties 'home'. The general view is that without adding personal touches is it almost impossible. As established, Polish parents depend heavily on rented accommodation, however they often bring personal objects, including their own furniture [brought from Poland or purchased in Ireland] in order to maximise the sense of feeling 'at home'.

Secondly, it is important to remember that a large percentage of Polish children flew to Ireland with discount airlines. Their luggage was limited to statutory 15 or 20kg depending on the airline. Accordingly, Polish immigrant children had to make tough decisions regarding their own personal belongings. The large percentage of what they had, owned, liked, and were familiar with was left in Poland:

I was taken away from my friends, I was taken away from my school and places known to me since childhood...I left my Granny behind and on top of this I was told that I have one bag of 15kg to put in all my belongings....

(Kornelia aged 16, 1st wave, 20 December 2009).

It was particularly difficult for teenage children, who at this stage of their life had their own room in Poland, furnished and decorated according to their needs and tastes, and filled with various memorabilia of sentimental value. Admittedly, upon arrival in Ireland, the majority of Polish youth obtained their 'own' room. The truth however is that such rooms are already furnished according to the property owner's style and taste. In many cases, Polish families who tried to change the interior of the rented residential properties were informed that re-painting or hanging anything on the wall was strictly forbidden. Hence, some parents moved house a number of times, each time looking for a property where they could re-create the atmosphere of feeling 'at home'.

5.5 Polish newcomer students and the schooling context

Parents think that if they can provide food or other basic stuff that it is all! They don't think ahead of the consequences of their decisions, they don't see the implications of re-resettlement...they are not aware of the impact on children who are forced to move from their good country, and suddenly wake up in a place where they cannot communicate.

(Małgorzata aged 16, 1st wave, 16 December 2009).

As shown, Polish immigrant teenagers could not rely (apart from a few instances) on parental support while they were struggling with daily homework, while they were trying to embrace their new curriculum, and while they were learning their new cultural repertoire. Outside home and reunited family, migrant students engage with and learn how to navigate in another parallel important setting – the school. Undoubtedly, the school is their first sustained, meaningful and enduring means of participation of the new society (see Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008).

This section shows that schooling context matters. More importantly, I argue that because of the fact that Polish immigrant parents largely are not able to support their children academically as they may have done in Poland, the onus of pedagogical support rests with the schools. I am going to demonstrate however that despite various policies, Irish secondary schools are left to their own devices that shrunk significantly, since the recession hit Ireland (Sokolowska *et al.* 2013).

The next three paragraphs endeavour to describe the Irish education system, highlighting various challenges in the schooling context for newcomer students in general and Polish immigrant teenagers in particular.

5.5.1 Secondary schools in Ireland - an overview

Secondary schools in Ireland can be divided into three sectors: community/comprehensive schools, voluntary secondary schools, and vocational secondary schools. What all of them have in common is the same curriculum and assessment framework however, each have significantly different funding arrangements. The second-level curriculum is divided into two cycles: a three-year 'Junior cycle' usually catering for students 12 -15 years of age, and a two-year 'Senior cycle' commonly catering for students 16 -18 years of age. At both 'Junior' and 'Senior' level students can be 'streamed' according to ability to take exams at 'Higher Level' or at 'Ordinary Level', which has significant implications; 'Higher Level' exam results are worth double in the points system required for entry to higher education[23].

After the 'Junior cycle' students may complete the Transition Year Programme, which is not examinable and is characterised by curricular flexibility, cross-curricular initiatives, and school-community linkages. Moreover, it is an optional programme for students in some schools while it is compulsory in others and in the current recessional climate seems to be fully sponsored by students' parents.

[23] www.cao.ie

Admittedly, schools around the world, face socially and economically challenging circumstances (Potter *et al.* 2002), however, the post-2004 EU enlargement migratory influx characterised by high ethnic, and linguistic diversity has posed additional challenges on Irish schools, which were used to a more monocultural, white, Catholic student intake (Byrne *et al.* 2010). Further, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) based in Dublin, established that the educational profile of new entrants to Ireland is very distinctive. Evidence suggests over-qualification among non-English speaking immigrants however, due to limited language proficiency, parents of immigrant children are often unable to effectively communicate with the pedagogical body (Darmody *et al.* 2012).

Equally, immigrant parents lacking 'insider' knowledge of the Irish educational system are less likely than native parents to effectively negotiate access to their preferred school. In addition, access to Irish secondary schools is specifically bonded by geographical location (catchment area) and a broad regime of practices that regulate Irish schools. Unsurprisingly then, immigrant children tend to be overrepresented in disadvantaged Irish post-primary schools (Smyth *et al.* 2009). School composition and school location can affect supportiveness of a schooling environment (see Cebolla-Boado 2007) having an adverse effect on the immigrants' *acculturation process* and their future progression opportunities e.g., third-level education accessibility (see Darmody *et al.* 2012; Smyth et al. 2010) despite the general positive newcomers' attitudes towards schooling (see Curry *et al.* 2011; Gilligan *et al.* 2010).

Arguably, schooling context influences teenagers' identity formation and plays an important role in the everyday life of each student. It is in school that newcomers create and solidify social networks. Through interaction with peers and school staff, newly immigrant youth experiment with new identities and learn to calibrate their ambition, shaping their characters and setting future pathways trajectories (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). Thus, a supportive school environment is important for all students, but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds including migrant students (Baker *et al.* 2009; Darmody *et al.* 2012; Heckmann 2008; Hersi 2011). In general, a supportive and caring schooling environment is seen as a complex arrangement that assists learners in their academic and socio-cultural development (Neckerman 1996). However, 'to understand fully the reality of another, the interplay of that individual's disposition, social worlds, and economic contexts' should be examined first (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008:29). Thus, the next section endeavours to summarise the main findings of the two national studies that focused on the challenges posed to Irish education by the unprecedented influx of newcomer students.

5.5.2 Challenges to the Irish educational system posed by migration

Immigration has posed challenges for Irish schools with little prior experience of dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity (Smyth *et al.* 2009). The ESRI report 'Adapting to Diversity...' (*ibid.*) based on a representative study of 1,200 schools with twelve case studies surveyed quantitatively, focused on newcomer students defined as young people, whose parents were born outside Ireland. The pattern among second-level schools shows that newcomer students made up 2-9% within each school in 2007, and the majority of them are attending urban secondary schools. The majority of immigrant children arrived from non-English speaking countries, which created difficulties in adapting to a new environment, in socialising, and had an impact on their academic progress. Recognising the importance of parental supportiveness at an individual level as well as at the community level, it has been identified that newcomers with language difficulties required special provision, which has not always been available. In addition, lack of access to translation and interpretation services was also seen as hindering school contact with parents (*ibid.*:16). The ESRI 'Adapting to diversity...' report was soon complemented by another national study that captured immigrant children's voices conducted under the auspices of the Trinity Immigration Initiative.

The study entitled '*In the Front Line of Integration: Young people managing migration to Ireland*' (Gilligan *et al.* 2010) employed open-ended focus group discussions among 169 migrants aged 15-18. The first findings were published in 2010. Among the key findings, the report highlighted that despite a more relaxed atmosphere in Irish schools in comparison to the home country, newcomer students have experienced racism and bullying. The report acknowledged the importance of friendship with Irish students; however it identified several barriers to friendships with local students that included: perceived differences in cultural background, language and accent, differences in educational and life experience, racism and differences in attitude towards education, authority, religion, alcohol, and unfamiliarity with the 'slagging' culture. The report outlined that immigrant students appeared to attach great importance to the cultural heritage of their country of origin. Yet they were also open to influences from Irish society. In terms of housing conditions, general satisfaction was reported but it became known that immigrants' accommodation was often placed in 'rough' neighbourhoods. Migrants' parents were often seen to be too strict and over-protective, especially towards girls. Moreover, young migrants were often asked to translate and interpret for their families, a role, which they sometimes found burdensome.

These two above-mentioned studies acted as a prompt for change in the Irish educational system. At the same time, these studies also set the academic scene at the time, when the LASPIT encroached on its first wave of the fieldwork in autumn 2009. Naturally, this research project has a completely different character. It is a small but longitudinally designed exploratory research project, which focuses exclusively on Polish immigrant teenagers and their reunited families.

5.5.3 State approach to educational support for newcomers

At national social policy level, it is recognised that Ireland is a diverse society and that people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds enrich the social fabric (Bryan, 2010). A common European motto 'United in Diversity' promotes multiculturalism and interculturalism. Both concepts are dynamic and are defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation as follows:

> 'Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance of these cultures. Intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and a sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creative understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups'
>
> (UNESCO 2006:17-18).

Problematising multiculturalism, integrationism, cultural differentialism and exclusionism in light of transnational migrations opens up an interesting debate for conceptual clarity in the area of acculturation studies (Kosic 2002, 2006; Phalet and Kosic 2006) viz: British-style 'immigrant multiculturalism' (Faas 2010), 'immigrant integration' (Favell 2001). According to Faas (2010) countries like Ireland or Germany favour the term interculturalism, while Great Britain or the Netherlands focus on multicultural approach. Concisely, these approaches seek to create some sense of belonging across ethnic boundaries (see Faist 2000) however, one of the reasons why European acculturation research has not yet realised its full potential is the distinctive understanding of socio-cultural adaptation in the 'terminological quagmire' (see Connor 1994; Phalet and Kosic 2006). Whilst many European states have adopted a number of different official policies to deal with migration-related diversity such as assimilation, integration, interculturalism, or multiculturalism (Gray 2009), the debate about cultural diversity, including what the appropriate educational response should be, is still very much in its infancy in Ireland.

The Irish integration support model is characterised by well-developed intercultural education policies. Liaison between school, parents, and local community is systematic, while intercultural learning is well integrated into the curricula and promoted in school daily life (see NAMS report 2012).

In general, the Irish secondary schools aim to offer equal educational and socio-cultural opportunities to all students including immigrant students. Thus, some secondary schools organise International Days, when schools open their doors for students and their parents. These events promote cultural diversity and enhance relations within different multicultural groups at school by facilitating dialogue between the youth of different origins and backgrounds. For instance, Polish immigrant students supported by their parents show the best of their culture by promoting Polish cuisine. They bake Polish *Sernik* [cheesecake] and serve *Barszcz* [beetroot soup] and *Polish Bigos* [cabbage dish]. They often bring and display books that illustrate the most interesting or famous places in their country of origin. Such events influence socio-cultural practices and sometimes encourage the Irish to buy something Polish in the Polish shops because they had the opportunity to taste it. Faas (2010) calls it 'integrative multiculturalism'. Whilst some contemporary scholars (Bryan 2012; Devine 2012) heavily criticise this approach arguing that International Days or other similar events only highlight otherness, I heavily disagree with this view. Evidence gathered by the LASPIT research project, suggests that such events are highly regarded, and needed, because they help all of us to learn, respect and accept cultural diversity, notwithstanding the fact that such events are sometimes the only occasions during which immigrant students gain a full recognition of who they are. Consequently, International Days become a symbolic point of reference of cultural exchange:

We have the International Day. This is a special day organised to widen our knowledge of other countries. That's when different kinds of food and other traditions are introduced to us. This is where I can ask my colleague to give me a recipe and later I can try to cook something oriental at home... My Polish friends wear regional gowns and I cook something Polish. I could cook at school but usually I prepare everything at home...Last year during the International Day we brought Polish 'Salty sticks' [laugh]*...and when the Irish girls tried tem they could not stop eating them. They eat everything. Later, I learned that they went to the Polish shop and bought a few packs. They've started buying them regularly. Nevertheless, not only my colleagues are so mad about Polish stuff. During the International Day, almost every Irish teacher has asked about different recipes for the Polish dishes served* [voice full of joy and happiness].

(Klara aged 15, 2nd wave, 25 September 2010).

Byrne *et al.* (2010) argue that the nationality of immigrant students in a school may have a profound effect on how immigrant students settle in, integrate, and develop, both socially and academically. The ESRI data indicates that the Department of Education and Skills records students of 160 nationalities in the secondary schools, where 85% of secondary schools have students from the EU10 Accession States. Within this multinational environment, Eastern European nationals forms in terms of numbers, the largest group in one third of secondary schools (*ibid.*:281). Sadly, data from the NAMS report (2012) highlights that despite various supports, newly arrived migrant students are an increasingly disadvantaged group in European schools.

5.5.4 Linguistic support in the Irish secondary schools

Undeniably, in the broad research area regardless of its discipline, English is *franca di lingua*. For Polish immigrant students its significance translates into ability to acquire the Irish secondary curriculum accomplished by the Leaving Certificate. In light of the recent migration influx, the Irish state introduced special provision in the education system made for new entrants – the English Language Support Programme (ELSP).

The ELSP has set out to build on the work of Integrate Ireland Language and Training (2001-2008) to ensure that newcomer students can access mainstream education (Lyons and Little 2009). However, the Irish education system has been challenged by multicultural classroom composition, curriculum requirements, and the fact that a large percentage of newly-arrived students are from non-English speaking countries (Kosmalska 2012). Thus, the provision of the ELSP was of the utmost importance. Nonetheless as noted by Lyons and Little (2009) – the challenges at post-primary level have been particularly acute for three reasons:

1) The older that newcomer learners are when they first enter the education system, the more they must learn in order to catch up with their English-speaking peers;
2) Subject specialists whose formation has not prepared them to take account of non-English speaking students in the class deliver the post-primary curriculum;
3) Much English language support at post-primary level is delivered, not by specialists, but by mainstream subject teachers who need to fill their timetable.

Even those Polish immigrants who arrived in Ireland with some command of English were lacking this important linguistic proficiency. Additionally, in many Irish secondary schools the ELSP was poorly coordinated (Byrne *et al.* 2010; Lyons and Little 2009).

The policy response of the Department of Education and Skills to the provision of the ELSP was also criticised by scholars. For example, Kitching (2010) heavily criticises this provision disputing that 'a universal conceptualisation of (standard) English in schooling neglects the heterogeneity of English language practices available to, created and taken up by students of various ethnic heritages, hybridities and class locations' (*ibid.*:221). There is also indicative evidence from the LASPIT research project that highlights logistical issues, and shortages of English language support teachers, which heavily impacted on the quality of the ELSP provision because in most cases, those with the lowest English proficiency in the class were prioritised. Polish interviewees admitted that it was teachers, who solely decided on their placement in and removal from the ELSP. Some Polish teenagers reported that they felt an early withdrawal from the ELSP disadvantaged them.

Arguably, proficiency in the language of instruction is a major tool and precondition for further learning. However, language-learning support in a host country is only one important aspect of responding to linguistic diversity in Irish schools.

Valuing the mother tongue of immigrant students is an essential part of developing a positive and appreciative approach to diversity and identity. It means seeing students' language capacities as part of their personal, social, and cultural identity and welcoming it as a tool for learning and understanding (NAMS report 2012:98). Ireland's supportive provision is manifested through allowing students to sit the Leaving Certificate in 15 EU languages[24]. Immigrant children often avail of this opportunity because in many instances it helps them to gain the points needed to access their first choice courses at the Irish universities (Table 5.1 below).

[24] Bulgarian, Czech, Dutch, Danish, Estonian, Finnish, Greek/Modern, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovakian, and Swedish.

Table 5.1 Non-Curricular Languages (Sits) 2007-2012

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Polish	53	171	328	452	574	707
Lithuanian	61	131	176	207	254	262
Romanian	25	67	92	121	115	109
Others	40	65	87	97	122	122
Latvian	32	50	48	96	111	87
Portuguese	27	29	55	49	57	63
Dutch	16	28	31	29	29	20
Total	254	541	817	1,050	1,262	1,370

Source: State Examinations Commission 2012

Last Census reflects the magnitude of diversity of languages spoken in Ireland. Polish is currently the second most spoken language in Ireland, with more than 115,000 daily users. Due to the high demand particularly for Polish language support, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Dublin, in cooperation with Polish and Irish schools, is currently organising intensive preparatory courses for those planning to sit the 2013 Leaving Certificate Polish exam[25].

In addition, all students in secondary school learn another foreign language as a part of the Irish curriculum. It means that at the same time, immigrant students have to acquire a minimum of two foreign languages (excluding Irish). The LASPIT dataset suggests that Polish immigrant teenagers are exposed to English language mostly at schools. Outside of school, all Polish participants speak almost exclusively in their native language living in what Bobek (2011) calls parallel bilingual words. It is important to stress that young Polish teenagers recognise that proficiency in English is essential for them to interact in their new social arena. However, they still prefer to express themselves in Polish, especially during the transition period, 'switching' to Polish as soon as they have opportunity to do so because 'a learnt language is just a mask, a form of borrowed identity' (Marani 2011:52). English language competency has a direct impact on Polish teenagers' early transition period imposing primary socialisation within the co-ethnics. Positive social engagement in the schooling context means positive engagement within Irish society. Sadly, newcomers are often exposed to various forms of bullying and exclusions. Vera, the ELSP teacher reported:

In terms of bullying, I'm aware that certain things happen in so diverse an environment, but from my experience, students will be reluctant to come to the teacher and discuss the issue. That is why we dedicate our time to discuss bullying. We also endorse multicultural approach, hosting various events

[25] Press release - Workshops - Polish Embassy in Dublin issued 14.03.2013. The detailed information about the preparation programme offered in Dublin, Cavan, Kilkenny, Letterkenny and Portlaoise was disseminated through the official and social websites: www.dublin.msz.gov.pl and Facebook: Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Dublin. The initiative had also great coverage through press release and posters (Appendix 10 and Appendix 11).

throughout the year like for instance International Day. We try and provide as much as we can, so as you may be aware this school is often a second home to them and it is because we look after every aspect of their life – not only academically but also socially with an emphasis on the universal values.

(Vera, Second-Level Teacher,

South County Dublin, 27 September 2011).

Social boundaries, hermetic Irish groups, and linguistic boundaries affect integration processes and influence the *acculturation process* of many immigrants. Moreover, both quantitative and qualitative research lend support to the notion that immigrant students are more likely to experience marginalisation and bullying than their Irish peers (Bryan 2010; Devine *et al.* 2008; Murray 2011; Smyth *et al.* 2009). The LASPIT research project has shown that Polish teenagers' ability to socialise was restricted by many boundaries.

5.5.5 Irish curriculum through the lenses of Poles

Generally, Polish immigrant children who arrive in Ireland are highly literate and have well-developed study skills that prepared them for competitive exams. The only obstacle is their proficiency in speaking English despite significant differences in Polish and Irish syllabus.

The Irish curriculum differs significantly from the Polish one. In both countries, students' performance at school is based on the assessments carried out few times a year. In Ireland however, progression is allowed regardless of educational attainment. The Polish curriculum had no similar provision for students[26]. According to the Polish curriculum, second-level students are not allowed to progress to a higher class unless they demonstrate knowledge and skills of the standards set in the syllabus. Those who perform below expectations and do not achieve a pass mark in the final exams are not allowed to progress with the rest of their class and often they have to repeat the entire academic year; this can carry negative connotations in Poland. The LASPIT findings indicate that Polish curriculum is found to be restrictive, inflexible (subject wise) and generally not student-friendly. This is why it is often called 'a rat race' as even particularly gifted students struggle with their workload regardless of their personal skills and interests.

[26] Current reform of Polish Educational System provides an option of progression regardless of educational attainment - allowing students from Primary and Gymnasium to progress regardless of the final examination outcomes.

By contrast, Irish secondary schools do not assume fixed differences in potential. Young students tend to be treated equally and efforts are made to allow them achieve their full academic potential. Polish immigrant students encounter a relative decline in educational outcomes during the transition period, which primarily stems from language difficulties. Some newcomers need shorter periods of time in order to match their Irish counterparts, some require more time and support. However, the LASPIT interviews indicate that many Polish entrants, during the post-transition period, out-perform natives, especially in maths because of the striking difference in maths syllabus. For instance, in Poland, it is forbidden to use calculators during exams, while in Ireland students use calculators for arithmetic and some trigonometry functions:

I learn in the fifth class here what I was taught in Poland in the third one...

(Marek aged 12, 1st wave, 25 February 2010).

In general, Polish newcomers credit the Irish school for its attitude towards students, particularly the Irish teachers' directness, and openness, emphasising that attending the Irish school has been a nice change after the strict code of conduct employed by schools in Poland.

5.5.6 Bilingual education in the Irish secondary schools

A description of the Irish educational system would not be complete without reference to the Irish curriculum of bilingual education because it is one of the political aims to make fifty percent of the Irish population fluent in Gaeilge by the end of 2020. This policy carries certain implications for newcomer students. The LASPIT research project reported instances where Polish newcomers were not exempt from studying Irish despite the fact that they had to acquire English. Generally, interviewees were exempted from Irish except where newcomers were of primary school going age: "*I've to learn Irish and I'm cross about this!*" complained twelve-year old Marek during our first interview in February 2010. It requires a lot of effort to acquire mainstream curriculum through a second language, and at the same time learn another foreign language. This is why many teachers found that in practice they were not always able to follow the Irish syllabus and impose Irish on the immigrant children simply because they still needed to master English in order not to fall behind with their mandatory subjects. Daniel, a thirteen-year-old boy, was forced to learn Irish for two years before being exempted from it:

Daniel: *I was angry...*

Beata: *Why were you angry?*

Daniel: *Because I wanted to learn English...Learning both Irish and English at the same time caused a mix-up in my head...my teacher saw it, and some papers had been prepared and it was all sorted out. The problem is that if you are below ten [years of age] you have to learn Irish, but I was ten when I arrived. They checked this, and decided that I do not have to learn Irish. Now when I have Irish – I go to the library, and I write an essay or something in English...*

(Daniel aged 13, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

Another Polish interviewee - thirteen-year-old Grzegorz - asserted that in his secondary school he has been forced to learn Irish even if previously he was exempted. Inexplicably, fourteen-year-old Arkadiusz, who explained that up to the fifth class, he was exempted from Irish, also has encountered a situation similar to Grzegorz's. He was informed that because he had been living in Ireland for more than three years he was required to learn Irish until his Leaving Certificate. The LASPIT has shown that many Polish parents micromanage this part of schooling of their children. Some émigré parents (those with some English) were in touch with the DES and with teachers' support obtained written permission exempting their offspring from learning the Irish language. There is evidence however that Polish parents with very low proficiency in English were not actively engaged in dialogue between school policy and the Department of Education and Skills (DES):

Mirek: *He had just exams in maths, Irish, and English and I tried to exempt him from Irish, but I was informed that failing an exam in Irish means that there's no chance for him to attend secondary school...it was problematic.*

Jadwiga: *He had real difficulties in learning Irish he really was struggling with it*

Mirek: *This language is not easy...we couldn't even help him with English, how could we help with Irish?*

Jadwiga: *He often came to me complaining: "Mommy is it not enough that I struggle with English! Why do I have to learn Irish, too?"*

(Jadwiga aged 40 and Mirek aged 41, Dublin 11).

This excerpt illustrates that because of a lack of English language proficiency, Polish parents often could only listen to their offspring's complaints and sympathise with them. Lack of familiarity with the Irish educational system, little contact with the

class tutor, and inability to express thoughts and opinions in English forced many Polish émigré parents to wait passively for further developments.

Within the sample of Polish teenagers who currently do not learn the Irish language another intriguing pattern was found: some Polish teenagers had to attend Irish classes due to the lack of other provisions. They did not have to learn Irish but they had to be physically present in the class because their schools were not in a position to offer them anything instead. With time, the ELSP replaced participation in the Irish classes but as highlighted, in a large percentage of cases, this provision was not available from the beginning of a newcomer's education in Ireland. These examples outline a diversity of discourses reflecting on existing managerial practices, particularly in the context of social interaction between schools, newcomers and their parents.

Equally, for many Polish parents working shifts or handling two jobs, it was not always possible to attend school meetings, engage in extra-curricular activities, or join the Parent Teacher Association. Furthermore, many parents feel socially uncomfortable because of their low competency in English. Polish émigré parents happily learn essential phrases from letters or text messages sent from schools provided that Polish immigrant children have enough patience to read and translate the correspondence thoroughly, confirming that a language 'is the fundamental prerequisite for achieving integrational goals. It is not just a tool for performing everyday transactions but also opens access to the receiving culture and society' (White 2011:233).

Concomitantly, as noted before, the Irish syllabus comprises a minimum of one foreign language, which is obligatory in the secondary schools. For Polish students this means that apart from acquiring English, another foreign language must be acquired simultaneously (e.g., French, Spanish or German but not Polish). Speaking many languages can be advantageous (August and Hakuta 1997; Nestor 2013). It is a set of skills that can be easily transferred to the job market all over the world. More importantly, in our era of global economic advancement the demand for highly skilled, well-educated, often multi-lingual professionals is still increasing. Hence, language competencies, and the completion of third level education is critical for the current cohort of immigrant teenagers. The LASPIT data clearly suggests that most Polish teenagers envision themselves settling in Ireland for the duration of third-level education.

5.5.7 Polish teenagers in Irish schools - parental perspective

The LASPIT data shows that Polish émigré parents appreciate general aspects of Irish schooling where an emphasis is placed on integration and general schooling culture, rather than marks only. Describing the Irish educational system, Polish parents were under the impression that their offspring follow the Irish syllabus only; they acquire less knowledge in terms of scope and breath but they learn many useful practicalities. Polish mothers seem to be relieved that their children were out of the 'rat race' so common in the Polish educational context. Usually parents focused on positive attributes of the Irish schooling system, which in general was considered friendlier than Polish, with caring and approachable school staff. Overall, I was informed that students in the Irish schools feel valued, their work and their achievements always appreciated, and a practical application of acquired knowledge furnishes them for their adult life. The fact that many things do not have to be memorised - instead students are taught how to access various sources of information - was emphasised as a key strength of the Irish education system:

What my son learns here is relevant in a real life and this is what matters to me. He knows how to use the ATM, how to draft a good business plan and he has good computer skills. And the most important: he's happy here! He has a stimulating environment that allows him master his skills and pays less attention to areas that aren't his strengths and are unimportant to him...

(Malwina aged 42, Dun Laoghaire).

School supportiveness plays a crucial role in the context of all students, and this is especially so for immigrants. Maciej's narratives exemplify one aspect of Irish school supportiveness:

From an academic prospective I learned more practical stuff here. You know in Poland I had Biology and Chemistry but all chemical stuff was always not available – locked in the cupboards – because the stuff was too dangerous. Here in Ireland we conduct different experiments on weekly basis... I don't know how it's in Poland now, but I reckon that nothing has changed. Probably all stuff is still locked in the cupboards and when you study IT – there's only one PC in the class, which of course belongs to a teacher...

(Maciej aged 20, 1st wave, 15 November 2009).

From the parental perspective, Polish immigrant students display generally positive attitudes towards Irish schools. Since arrival, Polish teenagers have actively tried to adapt to a new cultural and linguistic environment. Whilst the language support (ELSP) offered by Irish schools is very important, there are also other aspects of

academic and pedagogical support: assistance in the integration process, teacher-student relationship, peer-to-peer support and positive classroom engagement.

5.5.8 Polish teenagers and the classroom engagement

Irish classrooms are dominated by the ethos of equal opportunities and interculturalism. For Polish immigrant children this new social arena is a little bit disorientating. Teachers address students by their first name while in Poland students are mainly addressed by their surname or by the number assigned to them at the beginning of each academic year. Polish interviewees reported that in their classrooms teachers constructively try to engage all pupils in classroom activities, paying particular attention to immigrant students who need more time and often some help to understand the task because:

> '...while the student may be able to work at fairly advanced levels in his/her native language, a child's inability to speak English will make it difficult to cover the same material in the new language'
>
> (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001:146).

The Irish teachers, who came up with various ideas that helped newcomers during the transition period, very quickly noticed this aspect:

The first time I went to school, I could say only one sentence - "I cannot speak English"...Everyone asked me questions but I didn't understand them. Later school principal made a special book for me. For example, there was a picture of a glass and the word "glass" was written below. Also the principal always made sure that I had somebody by my side - a colleague to help me with learning; sometimes they showed me things and named them and this is how I learned...also all the time I heard English around me, and this is why I speak English now...

(Daniel aged 13, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

Other teachers asked linguistically advanced Polish students to introduce newcomers to the school. If this option was not available, teachers themselves sought to explain daily homework or the rules of classroom participation. This was a source of frustration for both teachers and students. Nancy, principal of an Irish school based in North County Dublin, offered some insight into the experiences of newcomer immigrant students:

We have many newcomer students in our school, but I noticed that Polish students are somehow special. I mean they work very hard to achieve and despite lingual problems, they do perform very well. On top of this, they show a deep respect towards schooling in general and it is a real pleasure to have Polish students in the class. I am still amazed by the fact that they arrive from a linguistically and culturally different country and so quickly they adapt here. I personally admire them, because of all the hard work and effort put into this process. I know that often it was not them but their parents' decision but these immigrants trying their best not to let their parents down. I can only imagine how difficult it can be, but in the class, they are always nice and polite, always eager to do something, engaging in classroom activities and eager to learn...

(Nancy - Principal of an Irish secondary school,
North County Dublin, 5 March 2011).

I recall vividly a situation with my twins at the beginning of their first year in their secondary school in Ireland. Students were asked to volunteer for a parent-teacher meeting singing performance. Both my girls raised their hands and volunteered because they wanted to be part of the class but due to the language barrier, they had no idea what it was for and what was expected from them. Finally, the big day arrived and both my girls returned home from school and wished us a happy evening. The moment I entered the school premises, I noticed a worried look on the principal's face who asked me where the twins were. I explained that they stayed at home. To my surprise, the principal asked me if my twins were sick. I answered that they were fine and after few more probing questions, it became clear that my twins were supposed to take part in the stage performance and each of them had a simple singing role. They had no idea about this because of their limited English. They were convinced that singing rehearsals were a classroom engagement. Positive attitude and willingness to participate was not enough. I still remember while sitting in the audience, I saw other students, singing beautifully and when the time came for my daughters' part, a Music teacher stepped in twice and filled for them. Disappointment was mutual and it was not only this instance. Interviews with the key informants often touched on educational and pedagogical issues. Kazimierz, a director of Polish Saturday School who actively engages in promoting Polish culture and Polish values among Polish newcomer students explained:

Polish children are somehow lost here. Different culture, different environment, and most importantly, the language barrier contribute to the feeling of alienation, and otherness. We try our best to help them to overcome these obstacles by offering some kind of continuity in terms of their Polish education but it is not easy. Many of the Polish children are so tired after attending the Irish schools that it is very difficult to keep them focused on the Polish curriculum.

(Kaziemierz – Principal of a Polish Saturday School, 21 October 2009).

Vera from the Irish secondary school in South County Dublin was another key informant, offering interesting insights into the provision of the ELSP and the standard syllabus:

I come from two backgrounds. I teach history, religion, and extra English. In term of obstacles, it is not so bad because in the Extra English classes, the whole class constitutes of newcomer students. We have the formal test of assessing their level of proficiency in English. In the extra English classes I have a chance to sit down with them, we can do written, oral, listened English and I can tailor the teaching to their needs. I find it much harder [the mainstream subject] *because you have a course to finish, you have time constraints and with the subject like history or religion - they are full of language. It is very dense, the amount of reading...I found it really difficult to help newcomer students to understand it, and to help them keep up with the rest of the class. You can differentiate the homework for them but for the Junior and Leaving Certificate they will get the same paper as Irish students and all teachers are challenged by bringing them* [immigrant students] *to the same level as their peers. On the other hand, we are very lucky that we still have this one hour of extra English every day... I also found that whatever level of English particular newcomer has, the parents would have significantly less... that I perfectly understand why immigrants parents are so shy and they are often not involved in the school life.*

(Vera, Second-Level Teacher,

South County Dublin, 27 September 2011).

As highlighted by Vera, low proficiency in language among parents can hinder school outreach to immigrant parents. The LASPIT research project indicates that there is also some evidence of linguistic disadvantage experienced by some Polish migrants in the Irish schooling system. The unfolding narratives of Polish teenagers, instantiate that in many Irish schools Poles are expected to use English and not their native tongue particularly during the breaks. "*I was not allowed to speak Polish at my school*" asserted 15 year old Małgorzata during our interview in December 2009. Polish newcomer students were particularly sensitive to this issue, because school breaks sometimes were the only occasions to ask and check something with their native counterparts.

5.6 Conclusions

Unquestionably, post-accession migration particularly to 'Celtic Tiger' Ireland offered Polish immigrant parents a brief but attractive interlude from the greyish existence in the Polish reality. The literature review indicates that the Polish influx was viewed extremely positively through the prism of successful integration. However, in light of the gathered evidence pertaining to Polish immigrant families with teenage

children, I argue that this integration is superficial, segmented and far from desirable (see section 5.2). Polish immigrant parents in particular have proven to be 'birds of passage haunted by the dreams of return' (Portes 2004). Understandably, they cannot avail of an option to return because they do not want to uproot their children again. This is why 'comfort zones' are of utmost importance to Polish immigrant parents who display clear alacrity towards Polish heritage and expect continuity of appreciation, if not cultivation of Polish cultural heritage, from their offspring. For instance Polish teenagers' participation in the Polish Saturday Schools is perceived as a way of retaining cultural capital. The LASPIT research also found that some Polish parents sometimes seem to encourage both sides of their offspring's identity formation; this often results in 'cultural bricolage' (Kempny 2010). Naturally, the extent to which the new cultural elements should be allowed to overrun Polish traditions is debatable and it is perceived differently by each Polish household. However, all qualitative interviews unmistakably indicated that the dual heritage was not seen as a threat but clearly as a great asset. Some of the parents interviewed even argued that a dual heritage would be less restrictive, giving the offspring choice and equipping them for the future. Undeniably, Polish parents clearly favour interculturalism by being able to be comfortable and work successfully in not one but two or more cultures.

Narratives from Polish immigrant teenagers offered interesting divergences (see also Chapter 6). For them involvement in both cultures, particularly in the mainstream culture meant that they were able to function and move smoothly in the Irish and the Polish environment. Despite being first-generation immigrants, Polish immigrant teenagers embraced the new, acquired the language, and familiarised themselves with the mainstream culture which fostered 'an integrated style of acculturation' (Farver *et al.* 2002) contrary to their parents who prefer to stay in their 'comfort zones'.

More importantly, the LASPIT found the emergence of what Alam (2012) calls an 'acculturation gap' among this first-generation of Polish immigrants. In order to bridge this gap and enable Polish émigré parents to function the same way as in Poland, Polish immigrant teenagers have to take the onus of basic duties such as reading, translating, and writing letters and/or text messages and emails etc. for their parents who despite slow English language progression are often illiterate in English. *"I've to translate almost everything for my parents and it is not funny!"* complained 14 year old Grazyna. It appears that Polish parents now learn from their children when it comes to the Irish culture and language.

In addition, the migratory journey and the transition period were identified as the most stressful experiences because Polish newcomers during their transition period were 'not committed' to Irishness and they strongly identified themselves with Polish ethnic identity. As a result, Polish émigré parents, often feel conscience-stricken because, in general, they uprooted their children but failed to provide adequate support due to a lack of English language proficiency. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) state that highly educated immigrant parents are better equipped to help and provide resources to their offspring. But as explained earlier, parents of Polish immigrant teenagers are quite an atypical cohort of immigrants, who despite being well educated, were not in a position to pedagogically support their offspring. Consequently, immigrant children became like a symbolic viaduct that bridges the gap between the Polish and the Irish culture, enabling Polish parents to function quite easily within the Irish social structure despite the fact that by and large they were 'not fit for migration' with teenage children.

Concomitantly, immigrant teenagers, as social actors, are exposed to societal change not only as individuals but also as individuals 'within and between multiple cultures and subcultures' (Saldana 2003). Immigrant children seldom have opportunities to elaborate on their cultural heritage – the Irish curriculum does not cater adequately for this aspect yet (see Faas and Ross 2012). Subsequently, immigrant children have only a limited number of extra-curricular activities that form an essential part of developing a positive and appreciative approach to diversity and identity with all students regardless of their nationality, race, and country of origin. That is why, the International Days and other events organised by the Irish schools were praised because they create opportunities for integration among children, particularly in terms of cultural awareness and their 'heteroglossic repertoires' (Busch 2012).

Whilst this chapter provided the context of the post-accession migration of Poles, setting Polish immigrant teenagers' socio-cultural adaptation in the relevant acculturation context, the next chapter will exclusively focus on answering the main research question of what it is like to be a Polish immigrant teenager in Ireland.

Chapter 6

What is it like to be a Polish immigrant teenager in Ireland?

6.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter 1, the LASPIT research project focused on Polish immigrant teenagers and their reunited families for the following set of reasons: Firstly, between 2006 and 2011, the number of non-Irish nationals increased rapidly; however the increase was particularly dramatic as illustrated in Figure 1.1 (in Chapter 1) amongst Polish nationals. Secondly, between 2005 and 2008, the highest allocation of PPS Numbers in Ireland was to Polish citizens (CSO 2011) *inter alia* Polish families and their children[27]. Thirdly, as explained before my insider/outsider standpoint had a significant impact on my decision about why and how I was going to conduct this exploratory longitudinal research. The voice of Polish immigrant teenagers became a powerful tool to elicit acculturation nuances. Through the portraits embedded in the 'ethnographic case study' (Merriam 1988) presented throughout the LASPIT, efforts were made to present experiences of Polish immigrants, and to outline the *acculturation process* that unfolded over the course of this longitudinal research. For this reason, the qualitative method of inquiry was specifically chosen (Woods 1999). Because of this choice, 'the interpretation of findings is more likely to be offered by the researcher and it is therefore open to alternative interpretations' (Hardwick and Worsley 2011:5). While I do not claim that my sample is representative of all Polish immigrants in Ireland, it gives a flavour of what it means to be an acculturating Polish teenager in Ireland. Thus, drawing on the LASPIT evidence, this chapter provides interesting insights into the ways of how acculturating individuals experience socio-cultural change in terms of identity, behaviour, and values.

6.2 'Forced migration' and 'dependant migration' in the context of the LASPIT research project

Successful social inclusion encompasses social habitus, successful acculturation, and economic well-being, grounded in freedom understood as the capability of individuals to realise their own ends (Fanning 2011). Arguably, in the

[27] http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/labourmarket/2011/ppsn_2011.pdf

acculturation context 'freedom depends on the options the person has in deciding what kind of life to lead as well as the presence or absence of coercion [...] they (immigrants) make choices about where to live and work [...] but often not under circumstances of their choosing' (*ibid.*:7). Here, Fanning (2011) touches on a very important point that came to light during the LASPIT research project, namely the presence of Polish immigrant children in Ireland, who are only here because their parents decided to bring them here.

While the contemporary literature pertaining to migratory decisions of Poles after the EU enlargement implies that Poles were somehow 'forced' to migrate (White 2011), for Polish immigrant teenagers from the LASPIT research project this terminology has a completely different connotation. In general, the word 'forced' has various references and can be perceived and interpreted differently by individuals depending on their geographical position, their cultural and political heritage. 'Forced migration' is often used to describe displacement.[28] Equally, this term not only means uprooted, but also strongly points towards displacement that perfectly describes accounts of many Polish teenagers interviewed from 2009 to 2011. Therefore, the term 'forced migration' has been incorporated into the LASPIT research project. Some sociologists may dispute the usage of the 'forced migration' terminology in relation to the uprooting encounters of immigrants' offspring, however, drawing on the narratives gathered during the LASPIT fieldwork, it has become obvious that 'forced migration' is the best term to encompass the array of emotional 'epiphanies' (Saldana 2003) encountered by the Polish immigrant teenagers. For instance, Michalina a seventeen-year-old girl recalls her migratory journey to Ireland:

I didn't want to go, I hated that idea, but I was told that I had to. Despite my age, I was crying like a baby, and I was 'forced' to board a plane to Dublin...

(Michalina aged 17, 11 April 2010 1st wave/focus group/Kilkenny).

Michalina's personal account is a powerful one. It indicates that her standpoint was completely different to that of her parents, who gave her no choice. As a young adult, nevertheless still a 'child' in her parents' eyes, she had no choice but to obey. The helplessness, despair and the realisation that regardless of what she feels or wants she

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[28] Forced migration is also called deracination - originally a French word meaning uprooting refers to the coerced movement of a person or persons away from their home or home region. It often connotes violent coercion, and is used interchangeably with the terms forced displacement. A specific form of forced migration is population transfer, which is a coherent policy to move unwanted persons, perhaps as an attempt at ethnic cleansing. Someone who has experienced forced migration is a 'forced migrant' or 'displaced person'. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forced_migration

has no other alternative, struck her with all its force. The only way to cope was to cry. Michalina said that she cried as a baby – indeed, a seventeen year old was suddenly incapacitated, and her body following her mixed emotions, reacted too. She revealed that she was crying during the entire flight to Dublin, and it took her a long time to come to terms with it. This account is an extreme example, because not every Polish teenager was literally forced to board a plane, however many of the Polish underage interviewees felt that they had no choice and were 'forced' to follow their parents, who on the other hand, were 'forced' by their individual circumstances. This deliberation on the migratory terminology brought me to 'dependant migration' (Zontini 2010) - another term commonly used in this doctoral dissertation.

By virtue, the notion of 'dependant migration' seems to be more socially acceptable. Although the examples of dependant migration given by Zontini (2010) refer to Moroccan and Phillippino women, and their offspring who migrated to Spain and to Italy. Issues examined by Zontini (*ibid.*) in the context of dependant migration are more widely relevant. Admittedly, children in the process of migration are exposed to major social changes. The parental role in mediating the migratory experience and adjustment is of crucial importance (Arononowitz 1984). Hence, the reference to 'dependant migration' has a notion of universal validity in the case of a migratory journey and the process of Polish families' reunification in Ireland, particularly through the lenses of Polish émigré parents.

Subsequently, it has emerged that the majority of young interviewees identified their migratory journey as 'forced migration', contrary to their parents who opted for 'dependant migration' terminology.

6.3 Interviewing Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland

This sub-section exists because of the Polish immigrant teenagers' input. It portrays the migratory journey, the settlement in Ireland, and coping strategies of Polish immigrant teenagers. Since almost every interview touched on the beginning of the migratory journey, it is intended to follow this format and present a snapshot of immigrants' migratory stories chronologically.

6.3.1 Becoming an immigrant – arrival in Ireland

Largely, Polish families who have teenage children often arrange for their offspring to stay with their relatives in the home country while they migrate. They do this in order to avoid the uncertainties of life during their migratory journey followed

up by the transition period. The study identified that the teencare arrangements were always in place when the migratory decision was taken by the Polish émigré parent(s):

My dad was in Ireland for some time and then my Mum came and I was left in Poland with my grandmother for the next few months.

(Marta aged 18, 1st wave, 11 April 2010).

Well...it was not easy without Mother... first I was living with my aunt and with my cousins and later I went to live with my Mum's friend. First I said cool - without my Mother there's nobody to tell me what to do but as time went by it was not what I've expected...without Mum it was not the same. I was convinced that she was going to stay in Ireland only for a short time...but it was a long time...sorry... [sad voice, emotions still visible in the body language and on the face of the interviewee].

(Pawel aged 13, 1st wave, 10 March 2010).

First, my Daddy arrived. A few months later, my Mum and I joined him only for the vacation period. Then we returned to Poland and in September, my Mum returned to Ireland, leaving me [sad voice] *to live with my aunt for the next nine long months. When they had a place to live and settled down in Ireland, my Mum came back to Poland and took me with her.*

(Julia aged 15, 1st wave, 19 January 2010).

6.3.2 Family separation

The literature suggests that positive and solid family relations pay a particularly crucial role in promoting socially competent behaviour fostering academic engagement and achievement, particularly in the migratory context (Baker *et al.* 2009; Heckmann 2008; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). Given the fact that the family is our nearest environment, yet when cultures clash, as often happens in the case of migratory decisions, the family's understanding of absence and presence and their definition of family become more challenging (Boss 1999). Admittedly, many of those young Polish respondents who were left in Poland experienced real difficulties linked to family separation, especially in the cases of an absent father – separation has had a profound impact on their lives. It is impossible to record the migration journey without acknowledging the past. Every migrant entrant to Irish society has had his/her own past. All interviewees, regardless of their sex and age had their own lives in Poland and a clear sense of belonging prior to migration. Not surprisingly then, parental migratory decisions and the notion of nostalgia was present in their children's encounters. Moreover, during this qualitative inquiry some teenagers avoided talking

in detail about the subject, some felt better having opportunity to talk about it, others, used humour 'as a coping mechanism' (see Boss 1999; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). It was even noticed that in terms of gender, boys tend to perceive the separation period in a more painful way than the girls do. A sixteen-year-old male-interviewee upon our meeting surprised me by being so open about his feelings:

It was 28 February 2008. I was barely fourteen... before my arrival, I was living with aunt. My Mum left – it was very bad... I even took pills to calm me down, but they didn't work...I was crying after my Mum, and I was taken by my aunt to town but it was so bad that I still cannot forget it, even if I would love to...I only heard her voice...I slept on her pillow... my Mum was using perfume and I felt her scent... I almost stopped eating... I ate a little bit at school because my Mum paid for dinners at school. Besides these school meals, I barely ate...Later my Mum had to come back from Ireland.... I started skipping school and I was with my friends and suddenly I started to steal sweets from the shop and I was caught and they took me to the Police station and they were waiting for my Mum to take me home... Later my aunt took me but my Mum had to come back anyway...I was in court and I had a curfew and when my Mum flew back I had to stay with my uncle, and we went for walks... and to the church every week. My Mum returned to Ireland... and around two months later, I joined her.

(Adam aged 16, 1st wave, March 2010).

For Boss (1991) such recollection is a classic example of what she named ambiguous loss where children are left with all emotional ballast to deal with and the main problem they encounter is the psychological presence of a loved one psychically absent. Ambiguous loss makes us feel incompetent. It erodes our sense of mastery and destroys our belief in the world as a fair, orderly, and manageable place (*ibid.*). Adam's narrative is not exceptional. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the vast majority of the interviewed respondents (26 out of 34) were not new entrants. However, Polish interviewees' narratives illustrate that regardless of their habitual residence status all of them were deeply affected by ambiguous loss. Sixteen-year-old Michał recalls:

I arrived in July 2009... [Silence]*...I missed my Mum when she went to Ireland and it was hard, but I managed...It wasn't painful not at the beginning…*

(Michał aged 16, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

These two examples outline that family boundaries are exclusive, and for every child, particularly immigrant children, what constitutes a family will be different. Taking account of these experiences took only minutes to be recorded but it should not be forgotten that the separation period in the LASPIT cohort stretched from a few weeks

up to four years, and affected every member of such transnational families. Teenagers' attention to details, such as month and year indicates that these memories of separation and migratory arrangements are still thorny, and too complex to be dealt with easily. Separation encounters seems to be highly gendered. It is noticeable that Polish teenage girls refer differently to their separation experiences. They keep painful memories to themselves, revealing only the bare facts:

First, my Dad arrived around three years ago. We were supposed to join him after a year but it kept changing. Eventually first I finished the primary school in Poland, and then we arrived here.

(Teresa aged 14, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

Well... my Mum arrived first and she has been living in Ireland for over three years, when she decided to let us come to Ireland, too. So, I started to go to school. That's all.

(Patrycja aged 15, 1st wave, 24 November 2009).

Klara: *I arrived last year, exactly two weeks before the school year. The first two weeks were very hard.*

Beata: *You mentioned ...that your father left Poland first...*

Klara: *Yes, he had left first, and after a year, my Mum left. It was decided that I stay in Poland with my auntie. So, I was living for a year with my auntie and then I arrived here... It was hard to be separated...*

(Klara aged 14, 1st wave, 23 January 2010).

Klara's narrative, similarly to other interviewed girls, does not go into the separation details. Generally, girls were less expressive emotionally than boys, which was quite unusual.

One particular account was atypical. The young male interviewee indicated that his whole family came to live in Ireland after his father's migration because he could not live without his 'Daddy', which was confirmed by his parents in a separate interview. While the pain and loneliness associated with the separation was fully understandable; the influence it had on the migratory decision of the whole family has taken me by surprise. From my own experience as an immigrant mother and from other interviewees' accounts, I knew that despite child's tears – migratory decisions were usually taken by adults - children were rarely consulted – they were informed about parental decisions, and expected to abide:

First, my Dad arrived... It was in October when he arrived here, and then after three months he visited us for Christmas Eve and then he returned to Ireland, and bought the tickets for us – for my Mum, my brother and my sister for the 8th of February...the tickets allowed us to stay in Ireland for only three weeks. When those three weeks had passed I told my Mum that I wasn't going back to Poland, and that I wished to stay here in Ireland. I didn't speak English...I wanted to stay here because my Daddy was here. So, my Mum returned to Poland... she cleared our flat and gave it back [to the local city council].

(Andrzej aged 15, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

There is another angle visible in Andrzej's account – he outlined that prior to his permanent arrival his father was visiting his family in Poland and vice versa. Such situations were not unique. Other teenage interviewees in the LASPIT cohort had similar experiences:

Well... in June we arrived here with my Mum - it was June 2006. We came here for two months as a part of our vacation. Daddy didn't live in this town at that time. We're renting a house there. So, we arrived here for two months...then we returned to Poland. Then we arrived again and stayed.

(Arkadiusz aged 14, 1st wave, 8 March 2010).

There is clear evidence that sometimes attendees of these holiday trips to Ireland became permanent settlers. Economic opportunities and a better standard of living had an impact on migratory decisions:

Daddy came first and we flew a few months later with my Mum. We were supposed to stay here only for a while [holiday], *but Mum found a job and I went to school here. It was in 2006.*

(Daniel aged 13, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

First, my Dad arrived here in Ireland, than my Mum arrived here just for few days [city break holiday]... *Anyway, my Mum returned and took me to Ireland and we've stayed here since.*

(Marek aged 12, 1st wave, 25 February 2010).

Well, first my Mum arrived. Then my sister and I visited her just for the holiday period and then two years ago after the summer holiday it was decided that I could come and stay permanently here with my Mum.

(Anna aged 14, 1st wave, 29 January 2010).

Some of the interviewees referred to 'the most memorable thing' at the time of their arrival. For many of them it was a thrill of their first journey by plane. Many young respondents when asked about their arrival in Ireland, elaborated on that topic:

I arrived in 2006...I flew in by plane! I didn't go to school, because of English. We moved over three times!

Dominik aged 13, 1st wave, 11 February 2010).

I arrived with my Mum. I flew in by plane! My Father was here for about six months. I came on 29th August, and after being here only a week, I had to go to school and I didn't understand a thing...

(Teresa aged 14, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

All verbal accounts were somehow unique. Among 34 participants, only one interviewee did not experience dependant/forced migration. Sylwia arrived in Ireland shortly after passing her Leaving Certificate in Poland. Before, she visited her mother and her younger sister in Ireland. That particular young woman made an informed choice about her future. She could stay in Poland with her elder sister but after analysing pros and cons of studying in Poland or abroad, she took an independent migratory decision:

I arrived to Ireland last August 2009 in order to stay permanently. I've visited Ireland before - during Christmas or school breaks. I arrived here because I wanted to learn English. The fact that my Mum and my younger sister were already in Ireland made things easier.

(Sylwia aged 20, 1st wave, 29 January 2010).

The LASPIT research also found that according to some teenage interviewees Ireland was not initially considered a destination country in terms of migratory destinations. In the following two excerpts, Polish informants provided the background around their unplanned or more precisely not expected arrival in Ireland:

At the beginning, we were to go to Germany, not to Ireland, that's why my English was so poor, I wanted to master German because we have family in Germany...so I just have never paid much attention to English. Later when I learned that we are moving to Ireland, I cried a lot, but it was decided that I should try to accept it. I was twelve; I just finished my primary school. So we arrived here, but it wasn't easy...

(Tosia aged 16, 1st wave, 9 April 2010).

I was in a state of shock when I was told that we were going to Ireland. I was seventeen and I did not like that idea of arriving here; anyway, we landed here at the beginning of July, and I entered a completely different world.

(Dorota aged 20, 1st wave, 11 April 2010).

So...I arrived in Ireland with my Mum in summer 2007...and at the beginning when I learned that I was due to come and live here...I didn't like it...you know the friendships etc.. Mum says that we'll return one day but...anyway I wasn't happy that I had to leave my friends...

(Julia aged 15, 1st wave, 19 February 2010).

Aforementioned citations not only elucidate 'the multiple ways in which children enter into family migration processes' (Orellana *et al.* 2001:577) but they also provide insights into tangible aspects of migratory arrangements prior to and after the migration journey.

6.3.3 The sense of togetherness: long distance communication and issue of belonging

Noticeably, in term of distance, Polish teenagers had completely different attitudes. Some of them felt peripheral and some centralised. It appears that for some Polish interviewees, Ireland is perceived as a place from where you only need to *'hop on'* a plane to reach every desired destination in the EU, in the UK or in America. While, other Polish teenagers emphasised that *'to go anywhere'* you actually have no choice but to take a plane. Therefore, one of the practical ways of staying 'in touch' was operationalised through the Polish social networking site called *Nasza Klasa or GaduGadu often called 'gg'*[29].

This sub-section examines the ways in which Polish teenagers use the internet as part of their migratory experience, which helped them to maintain their transnational relationships between the borders of Poland and Ireland. Certainly, the internet plays an important role in our contemporary life. Not surprisingly, it forms Polish immigrant teenagers, everyday life experience:

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[29] *Nasza Klasa* https://nk.pl/login is a social networking platform that not only links together alumni but serves as a networking portal commonly used by young Polish people in Poland and abroad. GaduGadu is a chatting portal very popular among youngsters http://www.gg.pl/

I use Nasza Klasa and "gg" [Gadugadu]. *Now I still keep in touch but not so madly as at the beginning, when I felt so lonely.*

(Basia aged 14, 1st wave, 3 December 2009).

Mainly Gadugadu sometimes "Nasza Klasa"

(Michał aged 16, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

Gadugadu and the Skype. Skype is the best! [laugh]

(Teresa aged 14, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

Polish immigrant teenagers use a range of social websites in various ways, mainly to maintain relationships with extended family and with peers in Poland. However, they also use email, blogs, Skype and other portals that facilitate chat. Apart from social usage, the internet is also used instrumentally to find important information, to assist them with homework (e.g., *Google translate*), to find streets and locate places through *Google maps* etc. Nevertheless, despite access to these modern technologies, Polish teenagers gradually became aware that long distance communication does not equal face-to-face contact, particularly with loved ones:

Beata: *Can I ask if you compare the last four years that you spent here, do you feel that you gained or lost?*

Maciej: *I definitely lost my friendships from Poland. I mean it's not the same any more. Everyone thinks that friendships can be maintained via the internet – well it's not the same. You are in touch but if you see one another every six months, you can notice a change. The friendship is blurring... they* [Polish peers] *envy me – they're convinced that they had to stay in Poland and learned lots of rubbish, while I've lived a comfortable life here in the Western country.*

(Maciej aged 20, 1st wave, 15 November 2009).

Modern technologies, cheap flights, free or low cost calls to the chosen country alongside relatively easy access to the internet, bridge the geographical, physical and emotional gaps; however as emphasised by my interviewees, distance and virtual contact hardly replaces daily interactions with extended family and friends:

Surely, the standard of living is better here...It'd be fantastic to live here, and have all your friends and family relatives from Poland in here...I often call them [Polish friends and family relatives] *or we used to have a chat using the Skype or "gg"...* [Silence]*...but it is not exactly the same...*

(Natalia aged 14, 1st wave, 23 January 2010).

Natalia's account is one of many. Despite relatively cheap access to flights, the informants seldom travel back and forth more than twice a year. Emotional attachments and ambiguous loss is deeply rooted in immigrant's narratives. Polish acculturating teenagers therefore try hard to maintain links with their extended family and friends in the home country through available sources, particularly with peers who constitute an important source of reference, of emotional buffering and intimate relationships:

I contact them [my friends in Poland] *via 'Gadugadu' or 'Nasza Klasa'. When I arrived here* [in 2006] *"Nasza Klasa" didn't exist, and I had no access to a computer. I wrote letters to them!* [Laugh] *It was like this for about six months. Now, I usually spend two hours a day on GaduGadu or on the phone, if I have any top up. I also use Nasza Klasa or Skype...*

(Julia aged 15, 1st wave, 19 January 2010).

During those initial interviews, it has become evident that, there are many things and activities that young people enjoyed doing together with their extended family but that activities could not be continued because of the geographical distance. Many of the interviewees struggle to come to terms with the fact that their friendships are difficult to maintain even via modern technologies:

Beata: *Do you keep in touch more via the internet or via phone?*

Dorota [20]: *More via phone because not everyone can afford to have a PC...*

Iza [18]: *I'm missing my family my cousins I do miss them...I still visit Poland as often as I can but it's always not enough!*

Michalina [17]: *But it's not the same as during the first year*

Iza [18]: *You're right during the first year we counted time from one visit to another. We were waiting for these visits. It was an important part of our life, of 'our survival'...*

Michalina [17]: *Yes, you got it right. It's more OK now if you cannot go. It's OK when you go back, and It's OK when you are in Poland.*

Iza [18]: *During the first year, I was crying when I had to return to Ireland, and I had a real depression for almost a week…*

(11 April 2010 1st wave/focus group/Kilkenny).

Presented narratives point out that due to migration and acculturation 'the group boundaries have changed over space, time and context' (King-O'Riain 2006:230); however, as exemplified by the aforementioned accounts from the focus group in

County Kilkenny, with time, Polish teenagers grew reconciled to the reality of their new conditions.

6.3.4 The transition period in intercultural Ireland

The transition period however, has its own timing for each acculturating individual. The LASPIT research project found that it takes from six months to a year to get used to a new socio-cultural context:

Well... I'm quite shy and it took me a good few months to make some friends. First, I established a rapport with those who were taking the same road to school as me, and then I met few at school and in the internet cafe. All of them were Irish. I was the only foreigner; They [Irish counterparts] *didn't do any efforts to make me feel welcomed. Some of them even bothered me by using vulgar Polish words learned God knows where...Sometimes they asked me to tell them another vulgar stuff but it's a digression. Overall, they were OK.*

(Maciej aged 20, 1st wave, 15 November 2009).

I went to school for the first time... I didn't speak English... [Sad and a stammered voice]*...I was so terrified... Then we were sitting in the class, introducing one to another and when my turn came, everybody was laughing at me because I could hardly say anything... I was very, very sad. You can't judge people because they struggle with the language. I was here only two weeks, they shouldn't have treated me this way...*

(Basia aged 14, 1st wave, 3 December 2009).

At school...the teacher was reading the class list, and kept asking us if we recognise from which country a person comes from. At the end of the last lesson, I approached Agnes and asked "do you speak English" and she said "yes" but she quickly added that she was Polish. She translated everything for me... [Laugh].

(Paweł aged 13, 1st wave, 10 March 2010).

I was terrified of going to a new school, I didn't like the uniform, and I was afraid of speaking English. The first day was the worst. I went to my class that happened to be the first year of secondary school, and the teachers kept asking me many questions, especially when they learned that I was from Poland. I was probably the first Polish girl in Kilkenny [laugh]*; definitely, I was the first in my school. The first day was so stressful that I came home and started to cry.*

(Iza aged 18, 1st wave, 11 April 2010).

Narratives from the transition period provide rich insights into obstacles and various challenging situations encountered by new arrivals. Comparison of 'then' and 'now' visibly outlines change through time. Anna, aged fourteen recalls:

The first day at school was one of the best ones. My Irish peers were so kind and helpful. They were trying to show me where our next lessons were, what books we were using etc... It was so kind of them! ...Today they don't bother so much. Only those who are my colleagues are still interested if I need any help, and I really appreciate it!

(Anna aged 14, 1st wave, 29 January 2010).

Polish teenagers in the age bracket (15-17) and (18-20) often touched the 'moving backwards' issue, while I asked them about the transition period:

Michał: *I was a little bit afraid about attending school here...I should have gone into third year of my secondary school, but I wasn't allowed...* [Silence]

Beata: *Tell me about your first day, please.*

Michał: *I was stressed so much!!! I didn't understand anyone...I could communicate in English, but the Irish accent made me so stressed. I entered a class, full of different children, somebody asked me something – and I didn't understand... so I felt that my face turned purple, I started to sweat oh...I asked him to repeat the question... he repeated it, and finally I understood. Then our teacher came in, and started telling us about our weekly plans and asked us to write it down, and I made my first faux pas. I haven't brought any pens so I asked the teacher if she could be so kind and lend me a pen. She said that she was not here* [in the class] *to supply pens... What else ...children from the class were very nice at the beginning but it's changed – they were less kind later...I mean that whenever I talk about something during class all of them wait for another faux pas from me. Of course, I'm aware that I still make grammatical errors, but I feel bad about it when they stare at me and wait...I'm a foreigner, I feel I'm different...*

Beata: *Do any other Poles attend your class?*

Michał: *No, there's only a girl from Latvia and you can notice that she's been here for quite a long time, and that she made herself fit in.*

(Michał aged 16, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

Michał's account is one of many. It exemplifies the clash between age-based identity and the social identity through which newcomers are perceived. This is why in my Polish teenagers' narratives Irish peers are often called children. Many mature Polish teenagers due to their low English language proficiency were moved to the lower classes. Some of them were moved even three years behind their age peers. Frustration, disappointment, and helplessness caused by the fact that they have to occupy categorical spaces of 'adolescence' instead of 'young adulthood' were still very fresh despite the passage of time:

Dorota [20]: *The principal wanted everyone to attend the transition year so I was moved not only a year but two years! In Poland, I'd have been in my Leaving Cert year...*

Beata: *How old were you upon arrival in Ireland?*

Dorota [20]: *I was eighteen. It was the most shocking and sad to me. Well ...I think that I could fight more for it...*

Iza [18]: *We were told the same...Dorota lost two years.*

Jolanta [19]: *I feel too old in this school now...*

Dorota [20]: *Tell me about it! Do you think that I feel young?*

Beata: *So I understand that from today's perspective you are still not happy with that 'moving backwards' arrangements because you're still trapped in the secondary school while in the Polish context you would enjoy a student life instead.*

Dorota [20]: *Yes exactly so! I could understand one year, I knew that with my English, I would not be allowed to sit the Leaving Cert exams... but moving me two years behind was far too much!*

Iza [18]: *I was moved one year behind. But because I started my school in Poland one year earlier, it was OK for me, so neither I lost not gained*

Agnieszka [13]: *I was continuing my primary school education so I guess I'm OK.*

(11 April 2010 1st wave/focus group/Kilkenny).

The bitterness caused by being trapped in secondary school was clear. While the other Polish peers at the age of twenty have already embraced the student life, my respondents had to face staying behind, in secondary school. In many narratives, secondary school uniforms became a symbol of being 'trapped' in the wrong age-based category. Patrycja aged fifteen from County Dublin was moved three years behind. She also found this decision very unjust:

I started attending my new class with the 12-year old girls... you know I am the eldest in my class ... I should have been attending third year...

(Patrycja aged 15, 1st wave, 24 November 2009).

These accounts implicitly focus on age-based social identity. Age as argued by Hockey and James (2003) has been stamped upon the body symbolically marking 'then' and 'now' across the changed life course and social identity. These young people are symbolically 'trapped' in the secondary school context, while their peers in Poland enjoy university student life status.

Interviews with the key informants (some Irish teachers and school principals) explicated this issue, and justified these decisions by the fear that low English competency might affect the Leaving Certificate results and the future of immigrant newcomer students. To cope with various challenges and obstacles, new

arrivals employed various coping or what I call in this research, the *acculturation strategies.*

6.3.5 Polish newcomers' acculturation strategies

The importance of coping strategies during the *acculturation process* is often mentioned in the literature. Coping strategies of acculturating Polish interviewees were identified mainly during the first wave. According to Sam and Berry (2006) 'individuals engage in strategies that attempt to deal with the experiences that are appraised as problematic [...] and are linked to the notion of coping (*ibid.*:47). *Acculturation strategies* are very important in the context of the LASPIT research project because they define how the mainstream culture accommodates the needs of acculturating immigrants, and how acculturating immigrants cope with various challenges posed by the *acculturation process.* Gathered excerpts are particularly interesting because they provide rich information on techniques employed by Polish immigrant teenagers, mainly in their school context. As established, the major issue upon arrival in Ireland was related to language competency. Interviewed Polish teenagers found various ways of overcoming the lingual problem. Some of them quickly befriended other Poles who acted as 'live translators':

She [a Polish girl] *introduced me to all and... they* [natives] *were very kind to me...I spoke through her. I talked to her and she translated my words.*

(Fabian aged 12, 1st wave, 27 February 2010).

So, technically, I had some English, but I quickly discovered that it was completely different...adding Irish accent to it... there are two other Poles in my class-so it is not so bad but I'm the one who speaks English the best among us [laugh]. *They've used me as a dictionary... With other Irish peers, I had difficulties chatting... It was very, very stressful for me.*

(Teresa aged 14, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

She translated everything for me... [Laugh] *we were using 'post its'. For example, how do you say "Can I go to the toilet" and she wrote back in English and then below she wrote how to pronounce it.*

(Paweł aged 13, 1st wave, 10 March 2010).

For Paweł, Teresa and many other interviewed teenagers, Polish peers became an important source of insider knowledge and practical linguistic assistance. Their

acculturation strategies had further consequences, because Pawel and Teresa, similar to many other Polish teenagers remained very close to other Poles, delaying the English language acquisition. Notwithstanding that, they often missed opportunities to befriend the natives. This is what Ryan *et al.* (2009) call 'high level of bonding and low levels of bridging' (*ibid.*:153). Others, like for example thirteen-year-old Daniel, tried to embrace the new social arena and to acquire English via 'sticking' to the Irish peers. Daniel explained that he realised very quickly that by being around the Irish he would learn the language and 'find himself' in Ireland:

Daniel: *The school was ok, just the language...I learned English in Poland, but I'd never mastered it. Only here* [in Ireland] *did I manage to be good at English - to my surprise!* [Laugh]. *I felt strange- Ireland was a completely different place, and I was missing Poland...When I arrived, first, there was only one Polish boy in my school. Later two Poles arrived and they were my best friends for a while... I always said "Hi" to Poles. There were no Poles in my class. I was lucky not to have Poles in my class...I made friends with the Polish chap, and later with all Irish in my class.*

Beata: *If I told you that, a new boy from Poland, who doesn't speak English, is going to arrive in Ireland next week - what would you advise?*

Daniel: *I could help him...show him around the place, show him the area of Lucan just in case, I could help him with English, and I'd advise him who to stick with and who to avoid...*

Beata: *How do you know who is good and who you need to avoid?*

Daniel: *Well... at school, you know, you have a mixed crowd, and some of my Irish friends tell me whom I need to avoid...I'd also advise: go ahead...even if they call you names don't pay attention as they may hate you later. Try to work hard to catch up with English...be brave and open, don't be afraid of school and the language...*

Beata: *Daniel, have you ever been asked by one of your teachers to help or translate something?*

Daniel: *Yes, when I came to secondary school, the head boy asked me for help because there was another Polish boy, and I was needed...*

(Daniel aged 13, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

Noticeably, despite being surrounded by natives, Daniel's Polish lingual skills and his familiarity with the new social arena became a useful source of information for new arrivals from Poland. With time, the acculturative changes start to be expressed in the language used among immigrants. The usage of particular slang in English forms boundaries between acculturating individuals, confirming that newcomers who have a higher level of English language proficiency display what Phinney *et al.* (2001) calls a stronger level of cultural identity over time. Among the LASPIT interviewees, those who arrived with a certain level of English competency navigated more smoothly in their new social arena but displayed strong alacrity towards Polishness, simultaneously being quite perceptive toward Irish cultural heritage. Those immigrant teenagers, particularly in the age group (12-14) without English, or with very limited proficiency,

acquired English along with a certain percentage of Irishness because they were literally immersed in the Irish culture. In other words, it appears that they were more open to the mainstream cultural values than older Polish immigrant teenagers, who were more culturally resistant towards the mainstream culture.

However, acculturating youth do not only communicate via language. For example, fashion plays an important role in the way young people communicate. The ways clothes are being worn can inform social structures of one's ethnicity and belongingness. Subsequently, it can be argued that language and fashion are part of an individual's habitus, of daily interactions, and ethnic identity style, which can form specific 'social boundaries' (see Lamont and Molnar 2002) suggesting that young people employ various tools during their *acculturation process.*

Apart from linguistic issues, gathered excerpts also shed more light on Polish immigrant teenagers' networking strategies, exemplifying the dynamic of relationships between arrivals and the natives:

The Irish made no efforts to make me feel welcomed. There was a canteen in our school, and during the lunch time a cup of tea was offered free of charge, and I have been told that I cannot drink this tea because it's provided only for Irish and I was not Irish. I ignored this and enjoyed my cuppa. I never heard this comment again.

(Maciej aged 20, 1st wave, 15 November 2009).

At the beginning, they [Irish] *were observing us...judging us...so we started to do the same. Later you know...our Polish boys are very good at football...Irish boys lacked some skills in this game...so it started to bother them. So it was like Irish contra Polish. Especially the Irish boys were often saying "you Poles go back to Poland." Boys wanted to sort it out after school, so when the principal of school learned about it, we had some talk and later everything changed. Irish left Poles in peace and Poles left Irish alone, so we started kindly greeting each other...*

(Ewa aged 14, 1st wave, 21 February 2010).

After the initial few days, Polish teenagers had to employ specific *acculturation strategies* that helped them to cope with the challenges in their new socio-cultural arena:

When I went to the Irish school, I went to the new class. I was hardly speaking English...so we used body language, we drew pictures to explain anything and we just used hands to help us to speak...my friends had the same problem.

(Tosia aged 16, 1st wave, 9 April 2010).

When I went to this school in Dublin, lots of children thought that I couldn't speak English, but I studied hard and I quickly surprised them!

(Dominik aged 12, 1st wave, 11 February 2010).

Many Polish interviewees quite openly spoke about the effective *acculturation strategies*:

Smile at everyone, always be kind and polite, don't close yourself in your world, and especially don't stay close towards the Irish only...

(Michał aged 16, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

Firstly – do not be afraid...approach the Irish and say "Hi" even if you don't speak English... this is the beginning. Secondly treat this arrival in Ireland more as a journey than the end of the world... you have Skype, the internet, you can keep in touch...

(Ewa aged 14, 1st wave, 21 February 2010).

First, don't worry. Everyone is kind and nice in my school. There is a girl who arrived recently so they asked me to help her. Somebody helps you. You can help another person.

(Dominik aged 13, 1st wave, 11 February 2010).

The first is to penetrate the Irish groups and try to make first contacts with them...You know, an Irish girl who belongs to such groups is singled out, and suddenly she is outside this group, but it only for a while, so you can try to strike up a friendship with her – it is always easier than befriend whole group...

(Teresa aged 14, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

The LASPIT research project also established that some Polish teenagers are socialised into groups via music and via sport. The choice of music determines your position and informs the group about your cultural taste, which, depending on the choice of music can be highly valued or not. Empirical evidence suggests that different groups exist or co-exist almost in each school and each class. Some of them are almost hermetic and hardly penetrable for immigrants, especially at the beginning.

It appears that gender determines the hermetic/softness of the boundary groups. For instance, the Irish female groups are very enclosed for other newcomer girls, particularly in the same sex schools; whilst native boys appear to be more open for intercultural contacts. On the other hand, in culturally plural societies, a socio-cultural context, especially school context may affect the *acculturation strategies*. For instance, Polish newcomers are not familiar with the Irish 'slagging' culture, which

sometimes may lead to temporary separation (Sokolowska 2010a) despite natives' positive and welcoming attitude.

6.3.6 Acculturative stress and negative social mirroring

Issues pertaining to the *acculturation process* and the experiences of acculturative stress are discussed broadly among Polish immigrants living in Ireland. This sub-section endeavours to demonstrate how the socio-cultural context, negative social mirroring, and acculturative stress can affect the *acculturation attitudes* of immigrants. The LASPIT evidence suggests that new arrivals quickly became 'familiar' with acculturative stresses due to cultural and lingual clash. Concomitantly, the LASPIT data have shown that being 'the other', the 'outsider' influences the dynamics of inclusions and exclusions among the peer groups. Newcomers are not always welcomed in the receiving context and many of them are exposed to unconstructive and hostile encounters. Whereas the notion of belonging is very important, in some instances because of the negative social mirroring some of the acculturating Polish teenagers withdrew and chose separation instead:

We were sitting in the class, introducing one another, and when it came to my turn, everybody was laughing at me because I could hardly say anything...I was very, very sad. The teacher told the students not to laugh but without success. There're many nasty girls in my class. There're only a few who don't laugh at me. The rest of them laugh at me all the time. They tease me. It hurts. All the girls in my class are native Irish. I'm still teased by some of them. I'd love to know them better but on the other hand, I hesitate to make friends with them...hearing them chatting and talking, not to me of course, but among one another, I consider them being "shallow". I know that I should not say that...

(Basia aged 14, 1st wave, 3 December 2009).

As evidenced, 'psychological disparagement' (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard 2001) and negative social mirroring influence the *acculturation attitudes* affecting newcomers who desperately try to find themselves in their new social arena:

I was very nice to them and I really wanted to befriend them but despite my efforts, the Irish girls were laughing at me. For example, they kept asking me "where did you buy your hair?" When they asked me about Oranmore, I told them a few things about this lovely place in Galway, but they kept saying that they know better...It was to show me that they were smarter than I was. I was also being laughed at because of the way I spoke [with a foreign accent]*...I tried to fit in, to be like one of them and that it why I decided to change myself.*

(Lidia aged 14 1st wave, 15 November 2009).

The notion of being an immigrant, an outsider who yet has to learn all the ropes, distinctively manifested itself during the transition period. The LASPIT narratives indicate that it takes at least six months to move on and embrace the new social context regardless of the language proficiency. This pattern repeatedly emerged in every qualitative interview conducted with Polish immigrant teenagers. It also appears that newcomers with some level of English coped better in terms of acculturative stress and were also less exposed to bullying. The restorative narratives illustrate that language proficiency in acculturation context serves as a tool against bullying and discrimination. Unfortunately, those for whom English was an issue, were largely exposed to negative social mirroring and different forms of bullying. In some cases labelling or the negative social mirroring took place in the local neighbourhood – outside the school environment:

Fabian*: Sometimes after school, I was called different bad names*
Beata: *How did you cope with this?*
Fabian*: So...when they called me names... I didn't listen to them. I had my real friends here. My Mum advised that if somebody calls me names, I shouldn't listen to it, and I should play with those who like me...*

(Fabian aged 12, 1st wave, 27 February 2010).

The LASPIT established that none of the Polish respondents was familiar with the Irish culture of 'slagging'. Gathered accounts disclose two dimensions in terms of newcomers' attitudes towards this phenomenon. Some respondents very quickly realised that it is a cultural thing and they accepted the 'slagging' as a part of the new culture that they were about to embrace; while others, reported that they do not like this 'slagging culture', they have their own reservations towards this. One of the plausible explanations why the 'slagging culture' was not welcomed from the beginning is the fact that the 'slagging' does not exist in Polish culture.

Embracing new culture means embracing new language in this context too. The large percentage of Poles arrived with almost none or very limited English and even those who had some English competency were struggling in adjusting to the Irish accent and slang vocabulary. Lack of familiarity with the Irish culture of 'slagging' appears to form part of acculturative stress.

'Slagging' was often taken at face value, affecting the newcomers' *acculturation process*. It proves rightly so, what Saldana (2003) underlines that *acculturating* 'individuals do not just make sense of the social and physical worlds; during the interplay they

construct deeper meaning from their synthesis of those worlds' (*ibid.*:161). With time, new arrivals learned that the Irish culture of 'slagging' is a part of the Irish cultural repertoire:

Beata: *Are you familiar with 'slagging'?*

Daniel: *It is normal among Irish. I ignored this, and I stayed with Poles at that time. Now my best friend is Irish.*

(Daniel aged 13, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

Thirteen-year-old Daniel did not elaborate on the 'slagging'. It is obvious from his account that the Irish 'slagging' culture became part of his second culture acquisition. His immersion in the Irish culture during his primary school helped him to understand the difference between the bullying and the 'slagging'. Subsequently in his secondary school, Daniel was not only fluent in English but he was also familiar with the Irish cultural repertoire. Saldana (2003) asserts that one person's quality is another person's quantity. Thus, qualitatively orientated Polish social actors in their new social arena might interpret the Irish 'slagging culture' as provocative, which often may be expressed via verbal responses or silence, while other quantitatively orientated Poles might do not display any reactions.

6.3.7 Socialisation and the interplay with peers

Having experienced various instances of culture clash in Ireland, I was very interested in how Polish teenagers gradually succeeded in making friends and moved from the phase of being 'out there' to the phase of being 'in between', and eventually to the 'settling down' stage.

The LASPIT identified that over thirty teenagers for a long period felt alienated, without any sense of belonging to their new cultural setting. In particular young teenage girls who for almost two years after arrival were overshadowed by the feelings of otherness. Some needed additional time to 'shake off' negative experiences and find a will to try again. Up to date findings on the interplay shows explicitly different patterns of socialisation: Poles can be socialised into Irish groups while other Poles are 'available' in the same school environment. They make friends only or mainly with other Poles and ignore Irish counterparts. Another scenario points to selective socialisation, when neither Irish nor Poles are chosen, the interplay and friendships are formed among migrants from other countries:

Grażyna: *It took me almost a year to make some friends in my own class. They tried. I didn't speak English but they approached me and asked if I was OK. They asked me if I needed any help, or if I understood what the homework was.*

Beata: *Were these girls Irish or other immigrants?*

Grażyna: *They were other immigrants. The Irish were not interested in how I was progressing.*

(Grażyna aged 14, 1st wave, 8 February 2010).

Beata: *May I ask about your peers now? You mentioned that you have two Poles in your class but you also have other friends?*

Teresa: *Actually yes... there's a Brazilian girl and she was helping me willingly from the beginning. She helped me with English because I had to speak English to communicate with her. There were also Slovakian girls but we communicated via Polish.*

Beata: *What about making friends with the Irish peers?*

Teresa: *I am still trying...*

(Teresa aged 14, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

Teresa's narrative, similar to many others in the LASPIT research project, outline the importance of socialisation and having the natives as friends. Socialisation is important throughout life, not only in adulthood. The experience of socialisation is also a part of adolescence and of course childhood. Socialisation experiences will differ depending on the cultural context, social class criteria, and the *nested context.* Socialisation becomes more complex when the culture change occurs, and the newcomers have to learn their new socio-behavioural repertoire in order to mix with the insiders (Saldana 2003; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001).

In the case of Polish teenagers in Ireland, it became obvious that the set of experiences gained through their childhood was not always applicable in the Irish realm. In other words, transferability of gained social skills had its own limitation in terms of its applicability in the new socio-cultural context. Therefore, some scholars divide socialisation into enculturation and other socialisation encounters.

Enculturation *per se*, refers to the experiences that encourage children to become respected members of a specific culture (Brislin 2000), sets a context of boundaries and correctness that dictates what is, and what is not permissible with that society's framework (see also Kolikant 2008; Rudmin 2009); and by many, enculturation is seen as a part of the *acculturation process* (Rudmin 2009). In general socialisation:

'takes place in a cultural context [...] where children are active participants in their own socialisation [...] Adolescence brings unique challenges [...] Culture – common features of adolescence include the importance of the peer group [...] and adult expectations that adolescents make various contributions'

(Brislin 2000:113-114).

Polish immigrant teenagers' narratives manifest dynamism of individual socialising:

Beata:	*I would like to ask you about relationships with your peers*
Michalina [17]:	*Well, I've only Irish friends and as it is with friendships sometimes you have a row...you know.*
Iza [18]:	*I'm not close to any Irish* [laugh] *I mainly keep in touch with other immigrants...*
Beata:	*May, I ask why?*
Iza [18]:	*Well it was that way from the beginning. They* [natives] *knew each other from primary school had their own groups and they kept away others! ...I'm not surprised by it...they had their own groups and it is difficult to include a new person especially that as there were more than one of us so it might be a valid reason...*
Dorota [20]:	*Because there were five of us! Five newcomers! Automatically we created a group and also it was easier to communicate specially with a girl from Czech Republic because she understood our Polish, and I have to admit that for many months we were speaking Polish only.*
Jolanta [19]:	*That's why it drives me crazy...every break they speak Polish and poor Phillippino girls - they can't make any sense of it!*
Iza [18]:	*Oh, You hypocrite! Until November last year, you were speaking mainly Polish!*
Klaudia [15]:	*I'm an alien, but I've to admit I mixed with folks in my class, people can talk about different things not only about earrings etc.* [laugh] *but I don't go out with anyone, I prefer to stay at home.*
Jolanta [19]:	*She always needs a long time to assimilate so I still count on her in this matter!*
Klaudia [15]:	*There was a Polish girl in my class so I could talk to her more openly due to the lack of the language barrier but we weren't interested in the same things...*
Michalina [17]:	*At the beginning I didn't go out with my peers but after a year It's pretty much standard practice that we go out every week...*
Dorota [20]:	*When we met I was over nineteen, and I could go everywhere and she couldn't so sometimes partying was complicated especially with other girls who were younger and naturally they were not allowed to go to pubs and clubs...*
Agnieszka [13]:	*There're Polish twins in my class, and I've a good relationship with them. We have friends from other countries, too*

Iza [18]: *I've even one Irish colleague, and I go out with her but she is different...*

Dorota [20]: *It's difficult because of all these huge cultural differences*

Michalina [17]: *But if you know them better you can talk more deeply with them, the conversations are not so shallow...*

Dorota [20]: *In our case, our age played a role because we were in the secondary school already in Poland we learned a code of conduct among people who were just before the Leaving Cert so we were more matured. They* [native peers from the transition year] *didn't have such opportunities and that's why the differences between us were so striking!*

(Focus group 1st wave, 11 April 2010).

This excerpt highlights two aspects of acculturation: firstly, it shows that acculturating individuals can function between two different cultures independently of one another depending on the context barometer (e.g., welcoming/hostile context). Secondly, it outlines that age (see Dorota's accounts) and language competency play a significant part in the *acculturation process*. Here for example Dorota's intercultural encounters were informed largely by her maturity and age. She could not socialise with her peers because they were not allowed to pubs because they were underage. Sometimes, the chosen *acculturation strategies* do not work and need to be redressed:

I hung around with Poles at that time but it didn't bring me closer to the Irish. Now I've my best friend who is Irish and he is good to me... We play on the computer or on the Xbox. He visits me and I go to his birthday tomorrow, and then we'll go to play paintball. We often go out together...

(Daniel aged 13, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

Daniel's narrative illustrates the fluidity and dynamism of social networking. While initially he really depended on other Poles, with time his level of dependency appeared to diminish while he moved on, acquired some English and found a best friend among the natives. Moreover, he quite quickly realised that 'hanging around Poles' did not bring him closer to his goal and changed his *acculturation strategy* in order to achieve his goal of striking friendships with the Irish. However, it is not always the case. Sometimes hostile environment precludes positive interplay. Some newcomers because of exposure to bullying and social exclusion instead of moving on distanced themselves from the Irish, which profoundly affected their *acculturation process*.

6.3.8 Bullying and discrimination

During the first wave, my interviewees were asked about their experience of discrimination and bullying. Discussing marginalisation or bullying is an embarrassing issue. Moreover, various forms of bullying and discrimination have a profound effect on individuals, newcomers in particular (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). Because of my own insider knowledge on bullying, marginalisation, and discrimination it was easier for me to discuss it with my respondents. Furthermore, my teenage interviewees were given an option to elaborate on their acquaintances' experiences if they felt reluctant to talk openly about their own bullying experiences. From the LASPIT dataset, it is clear that adults or teachers may under report the bullying problem due to unawareness. For example: thirteen-year old Kasia disclosed that she did not report any of the incidents that happened at her school because she did not want to worry her parents and escalate the problem by notifying her teachers. It should be noted, that often immigrant children also don't want to 'make trouble' or appear as a 'trouble-makers'.

Kasia, arrived in Ireland nine years ago when she was only five years old. Kasia changed her schools very often. She hated those changes. On top of this, she has an artificial leg and this means that Kasia is sometimes exposed to a lack of understanding and acceptance because of her otherness:

Kasia:	*I also experienced bullying...* [head and eyes down, sad face]
Beata:	*May I ask if you feel ok to talk about it and to share this unpleasant experience?*
Kasia:	*It was because... because I have an artificial leg... I had to wear a school uniform and even when I was wearing...long socks - my artificial leg was visible…*
Beata:	*Did you obtain any help or any support from your teachers?*
Kasia:	*Of course not! I haven't spoken to anyone about it...*
Beata:	*I see. Can you share this with your parents? Can you confide in them?*
Kasia:	*No...*
Kasia:	*It was in a primary school where I was so happy. It didn't bring any special attention to me, they* [girls] *treated me normally. Now I'm in the secondary school and boys... some of them are my friends but some of them are very unkind, especially an Irish boy named Ted, he makes my life...*[Kasia gets very emotional] *miserable... He learned recently about my leg, I've no idea who told him about it, but he tells everyone that it is a wooden leg...*
Beata:	*I understand that it must be very hard for you*
Kasia:	*Bullying happens...*
Beata:	*How do you cope with it?*
Kasia:	*When I was very young, I didn't know about it... now I understand it better. I know that it's not my fault*

Beata: *I see, it requires a certain level of maturity... how about teachers?*

Kasia: *They don't react because they do not see it* [bullying]

Beata: *You mean they do not want to see it*

Kasia: *No, I mean that they are not aware of it, because it happens during breaks...*

(Kasia aged 13, 1st wave, 15 February 2010).

This lengthy conversation gives details of bullying encounters. In Kasia's case, it has nothing to do with her being an immigrant girl. She made a clear statement that the language and her origin was never an issue. Her challenge was based on her performance as a girl, a girl whose body was scrutinised and commented on. Interestingly her encounters and possible rejections were never discussed at home. It was clear from her intonation and her body language that she felt slightly better off after having opportunities to discuss this during our interview. Kasia mentioned that her parents were so busy with providing for her and the rest of the family that she did not want to add to their worries. In light of the gathered data, her decision was not unique.

Lidia who is a 15 year-old girl also knows what it means to be bullied. Lidia's acculturation journey started five years ago. Her Mum arrived in Ireland first. Three months later, she and her stepbrother arrived to Co Clare. It was summer 2005. However, Lidia did not attend school there. Her Mum bought her a school uniform, but because of nightshifts in her job, she opted for a change and they all moved to Cavan, where eventually Lidia started her school. She has nice memories from this period:

Lidia: *The first day at school was just wonderful. Irish girls introduced themselves and when the classes were over and I left school I was running to my Mum because I was happy!*

Life in Cavan offered Lidia good friends and many happy moments in spite of some bullying encounters:

Lidia: *After about a year – Irish girls started 'slagging' me...I was also being laughed at because of the way I spoke. When my English improved, they were envious that I knew two languages, and they started to speak to me in Irish so I couldn't understand a word.*

Lidia was exempted from the Irish language because she had to acquire English. Her experience shows how young girl(s) can struggle to negotiate their space in their new social setting. To my surprise, Lidia knew that the bullying repertoire was not fair, but

she did nothing to change it. Unexpectedly her school intervened and things changed again:

Lidia: *In about two years, the Irish girls changed again. Five others Irish girls, and I had regular meetings with our teacher. One day one of the Irish girls said that she remembered how badly I was treated about a year ago...*

Besides being a new entrant, Lidia quite quickly adjusted to her new setting, and very soon made a few friends among the Irish and the other migrants:

Lidia: *I remember one Irish girl who was the worst... She pushed me...she bullied me. We were chatting about it with our teacher because that meeting was about bullying. Later I made around ten friends with Poles, and with some Irish, too.*

Lidia's encounters illustrate 'important spaces of challenge to the culture of (hetero) sexualized competition' (Ringrose 2008) among teenage girls. The Irish girls were expressing their aggression and bullying was one form of it. As argued by Ringrose (2008) bullying discourses can have profound psychological effect on its victims. In Lidia's case negative social mirroring and bullying pushed her towards anorexia. In other instances, the LASPIT found that it led to self-harming, low self-esteem, and the feeling of otherness. Lidia's narratives illustrate how difficult it is for a young female entrant to navigate in the new social context, and sheds more light on the network complexity and its dynamism:

Lidia: *I remember one day I was invited to the birthday of an Irish girl. She also invited other girls including a "black girl" and it was super... so when I heard that my Mum needed to move again I was devastated.*

Indeed a few months later, Lidia, her Mother and her stepbrother moved to Dublin. Here for the first time Lidia encountered an entirely hostile environment:

Lidia: *So I started a new school. In my new class all the girls were Irish. During first year, I was alone. I was sitting on my own, in the first row or in the last row, always alone...Nobody spoke to me, and I didn't speak to anyone. I only talked to some Polish girls from other classes who were attending the same school.*

Despite her positive attitude since the first day, everything went wrong. Lidia experienced bullying; her positive attitude and her self-esteem gradually evaporated. She dreaded facing school and started to skip classes. At the same time, her Mother

met an Irish widower and they all moved in to his place. The school was not a safe place anymore; the place Lidia lived in was alien and strange especially that she had to obey the new house rules; for example, not eating together with her Mum as she used to. There were only two chairs in the kitchen. Lidia and her new stepbrother [widower's son] were supposed to eat in their own rooms – alone. Lidia felt lost and alienated. She missed her Daddy, she missed her older stepbrother who started college in Sligo, and she was often crying because she was not accepted at school. The strategies employed by her proved to be ineffective. To gain control over her life Lidia decided to change her image. She gradually lost weight and withdrew from school life. She learned how to hide food and to wear clothes in such way as even her Mom, who is a health professional, did not recognise the symptoms until it was too late. Lidia developed anorexia. Fighting for life – she was brought to the hospital, and after three months she was allowed to re-enter her school.

Lidia's mother informed me about her daughter's illness during our initial meeting. Therefore, I just let the conversation flow and did not mention this subject at all. However when Lidia told me her story during our initial interview she also mentioned her bullying encounters. At this stage, everything she told me fell into place because I knew about her anorexia. At some point during our conversation, Lidia realised that her account was lacking an important piece of information. She decided to confide in me:

Lidia: *That's why I was sick – from the stress and despair. I can tell you - but I don't have do it – Do I?*

Beata: *You're absolutely right. You do not have to tell me about this.*

Lidia: OK [hesitation] *I will tell you. I had anorexia. You know I was so depressed because of it all that I started rejecting myself. This year I am also struggling...*

Unfortunately, when Lidia returned to her school and to her class - nothing had changed. Furthermore, for the next few months the bullying encounters dominated her school life. Psychological counselling was provided to a few Polish girls by the school, and some Irish girls were even suspended. In the meantime, Lidia's Mum left the Irish widower and his son, and spent a lot of time with her sick daughter. Now Lidia lives with her Mum, her Polish stepbrother, and Mum's Polish partner, who happily dedicates his time and patience to show Lidia that she is a lovely individual who is accepted and loved. Lidia is making progress slowly in terms of knowledge acquisition and in terms of gaining weight. Lidia's acculturation journey is not yet over but she recently confessed that Ireland is her home now and Poland is a place she visits from time to time.

Lidia's story illustrates conflicts involved in navigating competitive culture among young female teenagers offering insights into the intersecting identities between gender, interplay, control, and power. The LASPIT research identified that bullying encounters can be experienced regardless of gender. Nevertheless, Polish immigrant boys coped differently to the immigrant girls. Among those who perceived bullying more often from the mainstream society, Polish boys in this sample used to confide in their mothers more often. Polish immigrant girls seldom discussed this issue at home. For example, Kasia's empirical narrative cited before, clearly indicates that she encountered bullying but has never discussed this issue with her parents because she did not want to worry them. Other interviewed girls also said that they seldom talk about negative encounters:

Parents... are not aware that children are lonely, and they usually need a few years to make friends and to say that they like their school. They think that if a child goes to school everything is ok because a child doesn't inform parents of what was going on...

(Małgorzata aged 16, 1st wave, 16 December 2009).

Kasia's encounters also record behavioural change related to the transition from childhood to adolescence: during the primary school, young girls displayed more acceptance toward Kasia while i.e., secondary school changed Kasia's projection. The boys took almost every opportunity to make her feel different. The same applies to Lidia and many other young girls who did not feel comfortable discussing bullying at home. The reason for this is that parents reminded their children almost daily, how much they sacrificed for them, and they had some expectations (regular Irish and Polish school attendance, hard work, good behaviour, and no trouble).

If one cannot turn to parents – who else can she/he talk to? The LASPIT research project identified that peers can serve as buffers against bullying and other dangers that they might encounter. Thirteen year-old Daniel explains: *"only my peers can guide me which crowd is safe to mix with"*. Peers are actively engaged in the control of violence among young social actors, providing support and guidance (Darmody and Smyth 2013; Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard 2004). Overall, during the LASPIT research project I came upon twenty cases of bullying and discrimination. Gathered data plausibly indicates that Polish teenagers whose language proficiency at the time of arrival was very low [approximately 80 words or less] are far more likely to experience bullying, discrimination, or marginalisation. The accent also plays an important role. Over half of females in the LASPIT research project complained that their foreign accent makes their life *'tougher'* because it emphasises their otherness.

6.3.9 Irish teachers through the lenses of the Polish immmigrant youth

In general, Irish teachers are perceived as very helpful and understanding. New arrivals and also the Polish teenagers who have been living in Ireland for the last couple of years still have fond memories of their transition period and their teachers' creativity that helped them to go through the initial period when they did not speak English:

For the first few months, they [Teachers] *were very helpful. When, for example, I did not understand something they tried to help me or if the homework was too difficult for me, I was given an easier task. English teachers helped me a lot. In addition, my school offered extra English classes. They employed somebody who taught me English...There was another girl and we both attended extra English classes after school.*

(Klara aged 14, 1st wave, 23 January 2010).

The LASPIT found that native teachers have first-hand knowledge about how the secondary schools can facilitate migrants particularly from non-English speaking countries:

Michał: *Teachers treat me very well. They are so kind to me. I was stunned when I went for my first business classes, and I was approached by the business teacher who shook his hand with me. It was...*[silence – he thinks of the right word to express it]. *It was incredible...*

Beata: *What happens if you have a problem with something or you are not sure that you understood correctly?*

Michał: *I ask the teachers, I'm not afraid to ask and they always help.*

Beata: *Do you think that the Irish teachers demand less from you?*

Michał: *Well, they don't want me to notice this, but the answer is: "Yes".*

(Michał aged 16, 1st wave, 28 February 2010).

Bilingual teachers especially were found working as 'cultural brokers' between Polish migrants and the natives, facilitating acculturation, enabling newcomers the second culture acquisition. There are only two respondents in the LASPIT cohort who reported having bilingual teachers. Ewa aged 15 recounts how she met her bilingual teacher and how supportive it was for her:

I met an Irish teacher who spoke Polish...she tried to speak to me in English but I didn't understand, and when she noticed this, she switched to Polish. It was super!

(Ewa aged 15, 1st wave, 21 February 2010).

Arguably, schools, which happen to have bilingual teachers, provide better support for immigrant students (NAMS report 2012). It was identified that it also increases the comfort and the feeling of safety among immigrants. Fifteen-year-old Andrzej said: *"I went to her and she helped me."* It is necessary to acknowledge that not every immigrant child has a comfort of having parent(s) with a good level of proficiency in English. Most Polish parents admitted that it is very stressful not to be able to provide help and support when the offspring has a problem while doing homework. Thus, some Polish parents decided to pay for grinds. A bilingual person, usually of Polish origin, who was able to read and translate the meaning of the sentences from English to Polish, offered the grinds.

Despite initial appreciation to the friendly approach and special considerations given to newcomer students, some Polish teenagers, particularly those attending Polish Saturday Schools reported that in contrast to Polish secondary teachers, teachers in the Irish schools are very helpful but less qualified:

Dorota [20]: *Actually, at the beginning we were only reading but then I told my teacher that I had a problem with English grammar and she found a good book that helped me lot and we do lots of grammatical exercises*

Michalina [17]: *I had joined Irish classes but I was given some English grammatical exercises to do. Also during the first year, I had extra English classes during my lunch breaks.*

Beata: *Do the teachers adjust their teaching to the different levels in the class?*

Agnieszka [13]: *Well, for example, some girls are given exercises from the main curriculum because they struggle with it; I'd need exercises that are more grammatical 'cos I don't have problems with understanding English text - so it varies...*

Beata: *What about teachers in general?*

Iza [18]: *All of them like me!*

Michalina [17]: *From the beginning, they were very kind for me. Even today, if I've any problem, I can go and ask them for help or advice*

Iza [18]: *From my experience, the kindest teacher is my business teacher...*

Jolanta [19]: *Our English teacher is very good. She really cares especially in view of the fact that accidentally, we chose honours English in the exams. She takes us once a week for about two hours of maths...*

Dorota [20]: *Looking even at our latest exams...we pass only because she helped us a lot...*

Michalina [17]: *I'm here over three years and before taking that decision, I spoke to my English teacher about my chances to pick up honours level and succeeding in it. After our conversation, I was confident that I would be fine.*

Agnieszka [13]: *I like some teachers and they like me. I also know those, who I don't like and vice versa. Sometimes I feel that I could throw my book at the teacher's desk…*

Jolanta [19]: *It's not only you, we know about it...My two English teachers are very kind, they understand that I am struggling...they said that if I want to stay after the lessons are over they will stay with me and they will help me*

Iza [18]: *My science teacher - he doesn't bother if you are native or not, if you are in the class or not...he just teaches*

Michalina [17]: *He thought me maths so I know what you are talking about...*

Iza [18]: *For example, we weren't allowed to use calculators at school in Poland. We have to count everything ourselves, and that's why we are good in logical thinking, and even our maths teacher was asking me about it...*

Michalina [17]: *I was never good at maths but I do all subjects at higher level, here.*

Iza [18]: *They have a wider knowledge but at the basic level...we even have some classes where teachers are struggling...with some tasks. Our teacher has all the exercises in his folder. If there was an exercise that is not in his folder he wouldn't be able to do it*

Dorota [20]: *Our teacher is OK, he knows that girls understand this; he explains things but it is always based on the examples from the book. In Poland maths teacher gives you tasks that are not in your book so you can check that you really understand it. Overall, I'm not surprised having considered the fact that he also teaches Irish dancing and something else...*

Michalina [17]: *In Poland - maths teacher can teach only maths, maybe Physics, and they at least, must have a Master's Degree to teach it*

Dorota [20]: *Exactly but not in the secondary school! In Polish secondary schools, a maths teacher can teach only maths! So overall, I'm not surprised that here the maths teacher sometimes doesn't know something...It's funny that you hear from your teacher "Girls if you find out how to resolve this problem in this exercise please let me know" and we are all staring at him...He doesn't even bother saying that it's such difficult exercise that he can't do it so it is unlikely that a similar one will be at the Leaving Certificate, so there's nothing to worry about* [Laugh]

Iza [18]: *That's so true, as opposed to the Polish Leaving Certificate we know exactly what we have to learn here*

(Focus group 1st wave, 11 April 2010).

These narratives outline a dynamic construct of challenges in the Irish education system posed by a more diverse student intake. The LASPIT data also indicates that from the educational perspective, a complex approach is required in terms of the preservation of culture along with the provision of curriculum in a multicultural context.

The research also identified that for Polish teenagers living in Ireland, secondary schools are gendered institutions. It is not common that youth is divided by gender in the Polish education system, where co-educative education system is the norm. Therefore, many Polish migrants find the Irish system of having single-sex gendered and co-educational schools very confusing. The majority of respondents in the LASPIT cohort were attending single-sex schools and only a handful of Polish immigrant teenagers continued their education in co-educational schools. Overall, the LASPIT data suggests that Polish newcomer students found it difficult to adapt to a single-sex environment.

Additionally, it was found that having another Polish peer at school often reduced the magnitude of loneliness but did not stimulate Polish immigrants to put more effort into acquiring English:

Beata:	*Tell me please, what happened, when you didn't understand something during lessons?*
Tomasz:	*I usually asked my colleague who speaks Polish*
Tomasz's Mother:	*There were many such situations that he was complaining about the fact that he didn't know or didn't understand something. He often came from his school complaining about his Polish colleague who didn't tell him what something meant and he was very angry about it. He relied on his Polish peers. It slowed the English acquisition a bit but it was more convenient at that time.*

(Tomasz's Mother and Tomasz aged 12, 1st wave, 25 February 2010).

It was identified that Polish newcomer students need assistance to understand textual tasks. This is what their parents usually pay grinds for tutoring offered by bilingual Poles. Fifteen-year-old Małgorzata said: *"I knew for example how to do maths but I was struggling because I didn't understand text."* The majority of Polish parents are unable to translate academic language into Polish, hence, they often fail to assist their children with homework (Appendix 6). This pattern was documented predominantly among Polish families who were brought up at the time of communism when the Russian language was enforced at all levels in all Polish schools (see Table 6.1). This pattern declines among younger parental generation namely parents born in the 1970s and above because they had a chance to learn the English language.

Table 6.1 Polish Émigré Parents: English proficiency upon arrival by gender

Gender	**English language proficiency among Polish émigré parents upon arrival in Ireland**				
	Advanced	Intermediate	None	Very basic	**Total**
F	2	2	13	8	**25**
M	0	0	8	2	**10**
Total	**2**	**2**	**21**	**10**	**35**

Source: LASPIT

School culture and school leadership has a significant role to play. Meaningful relationships provide tangible school-based support, significantly reduce acculturative stress, and lessen the probability of encountering negative social mirroring. All students including the newcomer students learn about the society in which they live through their experience in the socio-cultural context of school (Gorard *et al.* 2006; Devine *et al.* 2013). Moreover, apart from acculturative stress, a stressful school climate, in which students' experiences academic pressure, and the absence of supportive relationships, can seriously undermine students' well-being (see Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008).

Interviews with Polish teenagers revealed that Polish Saturday Schools are characterised by a far more stressful climate than the Irish secondary schools. For instance, interviewees complained that teachers are still 'yelling' at pupils. The amount of homework given does not take into account that Polish pupils also attend the Irish schools five days per week and have the other homework too. This aspect of strict school performance was also found in the ethos of Polish Saturday School based in Ireland. These schools run every Saturday and Sunday and they deliver Polish curriculum for primary and secondary cycle.

6.3.10 Polish Saturday schools

The majority of Polish teenagers, who were strongly encouraged to continue their Polish education in parallel to the Irish curriculum, asserted that the difference between the Irish and the Polish school is so striking that in fact, they are like two different worlds for Polish newcomer students. The parents of Polish teenagers also confirmed the same findings:

Elwira: *He also attends Polish school during weekends and he is still on this high level in the Irish school. Actually, he recently has changed this Polish school. First, he attended the one at the Polish Chaplaincy in Dublin 8, now he moved to this Polish school in Blackrock, and he is not happy about it too.*

Beata: *How long has he attended this new Polish school in Blackrock?*

Elwira: *He only started last week, and I must confess that it was very unpleasant experience, because the Polish teachers were shouting at them* [the Polish pupils]. *It was his first such unpleasant experience here in Ireland. As you know, the attitude and the whole atmosphere is so different at the Irish and the Polish schools.*

(Elwira aged 38, North Dublin).

Quite a good percentage of Polish teenagers attend Polish Saturday Schools during weekends. Parents' views indicates that the time and efforts spent on continuing Polish education through their mother tongue is treated as an investment in further social and professional life. For many Polish parents it is only possible to obtain this level of contextual knowledge by grasping Polish and Irish education at the same time. However, this view is not always perceived in a positive way by the young Polish interviewees. Since the English language acquisition is of utmost importance in light of forthcoming Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations, Polish teenagers dedicate a substantial amount of their time into acquiring the Irish syllabus through their second language. It was noted that at the same time, continuation of Polish education is forced upon teenage immigrants, often regardless of their own choice.

While Polish teenagers face a daunting set of tasks probably unimaginable to their Irish counterparts, the majority of Polish teenagers in the sample attend Polish weekend-based schools with the exception of national holidays, while their Irish peers avail of school-free weekends. In the course of the LASPIT research project, it became clear that with time, some teenagers could not bear it any longer and withdrew from these extra commitments enforced upon them by their parent(s):

Teresa: *I don't attend Polish school any more*

Beata: *Why?*

Teresa: *It was too much! I also have a right to my life! It was too much to bear! Attending school for five days is enough! At Polish school, they don't take it into consideration. They know that we attend the Irish school Monday to Friday but they are still very demanding. I understand one day a month, but on a regular basis, it is just too much...*

Beata: *Do you know if other Poles left the Polish school, too?*

Teresa: *I know about another girl.*

Beata: *How did your parents react when you told them about it?*

Teresa: *Actually, it's very non-recent - it's been only a week, since I took that decision, and I told*

them...and they...they were fine. They absorbed it somehow. They even told me that if I feel that I would like to return to the Polish school one day they will not object...

(Teresa aged 14, 2nd wave, 20 October 2010).

In Teresa's case, Polish Saturday School became a burden. She needed a break, a school-free weekend like any other ordinary native teenager. She wanted to enjoy her life. Her decision was not unique. Other narratives from Polish respondents, who stopped attending Polish Saturday School, also indicate that the acquisition of academic English reciprocally intertwined with Junior and Leaving Certificate exams, and a right to their own free time during weekends was more important than the acquisition of Polish history or geography.

Another interesting pattern based on the new *nested context,* emerged from the comparison of the Irish and Polish school environments. Direct comparison of the Irish and the Polish curriculum, positions Irish faculties at a lower level in terms of depth and breadth of knowledge; however in terms of the pleasantness of schooling environment, the Irish schools are considered an exemplar of a student-friendly environment. Because the Polish schooling curriculum significantly differs from Irish one, this differentiation often creates a space for conflict between Polish parents and Polish teenagers. Typically, Polish teachers' approach is based on indisputable respect. Undone homework or lack of specific knowledge required by Polish curriculum is usually viewed as disrespect and may result in obtaining not only a bad mark but in addition, a formal notification to the guardian that explicitly would state that the particular student is not performing as expected. This is why young Polish interviewees often emphasised why they 'love' the Irish schools with its pro-student, friendly approach.

This finding is not only important but it bears specific connotation because Polish teenagers as new entrants to Irish society are preoccupied with grasping 'the new cultural rules of engagement' (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard 2001), with acquiring English and establishing relationships with their peers, therefore a friendly and welcoming environment is of utmost importance.

6.3.11 Migration through the lenses of Polish children

The longitudinal aspect of the LASPIT research project allowed observation of how the perception of the migration is evaluated retrospectively in teenager's eyes. The majority of Polish teenagers with time, usually after the transition period,

recognise the sacrifices made for them. It was explicitly seen among those Polish students who arrived in Ireland a few years ago during the 'Celtic Tiger' era. Fourteen-year-old Basia who shares a shabby apartment with her mother and three other immigrant Poles explained:

My Mum works a lot but we have more money, and I can even enjoy riding horses. In Poland, our house is still unfinished and I remember one winter when we had nothing to heat the house and it was so terribly cold. Here is so cosy. I'm saving money to buy a horse in future, and I enjoy shopping...

(Basia aged 14, 1st wave, 3 December 2009).

Many Polish conversational partners expressed the complexity of their feelings, consisting of affection and appreciation, retrospectively exhibiting a keen understanding of the parental migratory decisions. Such appreciation was not born overnight. Retrospective accounts gathered from the Polish teenagers who arrived during the Irish economic growth period revealed such appreciation. Therefore, with time, the new-old entrants started to express their gratitude for the opportunity to grow up in Ireland. While non-recent immigrants, who arrived during recessionary times, mentioned the gratefulness usually around the second wave, when the initial acculturative stress associated with the transition period was over, and Polish newcomers became more familiar with their new *nested context*. The verb 'to scarify' has its own dichotomy in the eyes of the majority of my young respondents. The majority of the Polish teenagers perceive their arrival as a sacrifice in its own terms. Sixteen-year-old Małorzata asserted:

Foreign children are often isolated, they are sad, and sometimes they became even sick! Children don't speak about it, because parents so often reminded them of the sacrifices made by them [parents], *saying that children should be thankful and happy that they have a better life that as a consequence children usually hide the real emotion, they separate their true feelings from what they say and they become more introvert. Parents also think that children will get along easily...that no matter how difficult it might be, they will be fine...they are so mistaken... Children are aware of these expectations, and don't want to upset their loved ones. On the other hand, they have to carry this double burden and it's so unfair! This is really what happens!*

(Małgorzata aged 16, 1st wave, 16 December 2009).

Małgorzata's assertion touches a delicate area outlining complexity and often contradicting personal views towards parental migratory decisions. It appears that immigrant children tend to hide their true feelings, because they respect and love their

parents and they do not want to make trouble for them. They know that their parents have had a hard life in Poland, and that life in Ireland has not been easy either (e.g., parental downward mobility, lack of language proficiency, low paid jobs, redundancies particularly in the construction sector, etc.).

Interviewing parents brought an array of consistent reasons providing explanatory background for migratory decisions. Polish teenagers most often did not offer simple answers but instead touched on the complex issues that tap into psycho-emotional aspects of acculturation. While interviewed parents explained their motivation and reasons for emigrating from Poland, their offspring did not approve the merits of decisions taken on their behalf. More importantly, the longitudinal approach shows that the majority of the interviewees still miss their relatives such as grandparents, aunts etc. For example, fourteen-year-old Klara said that despite the fact that she has the internet:

There are moments in your life that you need a real presence of somebody you trust. Somebody who can hold you, and who can tell you that nothing matters but you, and that everything will be OK...

(Klara aged 15, 2nd wave, 25 September 2010).

It is natural that grandparents or other close relatives often fill such roles. Long distance separation and life unpredictability added to the overall feeling of *ambiguous loss*. Klara's comment above is a very powerful one. A young teenager in a very clear way described that in spite of modern technologies, there is nothing like the presence of someone you can trust, that you can talk to in the time of stress. It is argued that in each individual case, the cultural frame for the separation will influence how the child internalises and responds' to separation experience, more importantly, even cautiously planned separation unequivocally leaves a permanent mark on child psyche (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001).

The LASPIT data indicates that the absence of parent(s) caused by migratory decisions proves to be more difficult than initially envisaged. Despite new technologies and low-cost air-transport the physical distance has impacted, particularly, on inter-relationship between migrants and his/her loved ones left behind. It is true that Skype enables visual aspects of free conversations for those equipped with webcams. However, the majority of Polish interviewed immigrants could not afford to buy a laptop in the crucial separation time, not to mention purchasing two PC's – one to be used in Ireland and one to be used by the rest of the family in Poland. Despite technological advancement, 'transnationalism has its

limitations' (White 2011), hence certain types of love and care cannot be operationalised from a distance. The LASPIT research project has established that essentially a parental migratory decision gave Polish teenagers a lot in terms of better life and higher standard of living, but at the same time it deprived them of what they were used to and took for granted while being raised in Poland.

The limited practical applicability of Berry's fourfold theory in light of the LASPIT findings forced me - the researcher - to seek a more flexible acculturation paradigm. Mary Douglas (1996) identifies distinctive social patterns epitomised by the 'grid and group' theory, which offers a multi-dimensional approach to acculturation study, accounting for social variables, interconnection and eventually social change with all its dynamics both at the individual level and at the societal level. The 'group' interestingly translates to a wider meaning and splits the world into outsiders and insiders, while the 'grid' outlines the degree to which various cultural behaviours are classified and differentiated. This model perfectly exemplifies Julia's, and Małgorzata's assertions, cited below:

I have been here for five years. For example, at the beginning, I compared the Poles to the Irish and I was thinking that Irish girls are so fantastic because of the way they welcomed me. I even befriended a few Irish girls. With time I've changed my mind and now I consider Polish girls to be my real colleagues [...] Hence, I will maintain my Polish identity and I'll never change my accent in order to make me sound more native. Some foreigners change their accents, and the way they speak in order to sound more Irish. They also try to do their hair and make-up in styles that are popular among Irish girls. They do a lot to make themselves similar to the Irish and to belong to Irish groups [...] I have friends from Romania and Latvia ... I only make friends with other girls from abroad and I am proud of being Polish...

(Julia aged 15, 1st wave, 19 Jan 2010).

Hence, for instance Julia's whole description of her new social landscape, her initial reaction to her new social setting, and the reaction of the peers in her class visibly contrast with her 'awakening' (Douglas 1996). Her narratives illustrate that suddenly she became aware that the values of her heritage culture are no longer applicable in her new realm. At this point, she becomes what Douglas coined 'an awakened one', who is aware that the cultural dissonance or more precisely the culture clash creates distinctive conflict for her socio-cultural context. In this perspective, deconstruction of her own social settings enriched by her reflective approach triggers a change over time in her attitude and her behavioural repertoire. By contrast, Małgorzata and Patrycja are fully aware that they are anchored in their socio-cultural context on a temporary basis. It is unquestionable that they would love to free themselves from

social ties and be free to live their lives the way they see fit but the social pressure and its demand for conformity is too strong:

I wasn't allowed to speak Polish at my school. I could hardly speak English…Polish was the only way of communicating and expressing myself [...] I don't like the Irish culture, I was brought up in Poland and I feel OK in Poland, but I'm stuck here, uprooted and thrown in the deep end [...] But I'll manage. I do what is expected of me, I socialise with Irish people and speak their language, but I'm really Polish inside. Very soon, I'll finish in this school and I'll be free to live my life the way I want to...

(Małgorzata aged 16, 1st wave, Dec 2009).

I have no friends because we immigrants distanced ourselves. We are stuck... stranded here... We have been uprooted from where we've been living for a long time [...] I'm convinced that I won't stay here forever [...] Some of them [school peers] *express an interest, but it's more a question of being polite than being really interested in what I'm doing during the break. It's so false to me – this kind of pretending to be interested in [...] I've even noticed that they treat each other in the same way. Even among the Irish, they will show off how caring they are, and when one of them turns around another one easily gossips or says nasty things about someone out of earshot. It's something that prevents me from being involved in [...] There is even one Irish girl, who truly likes me. Nevertheless, even that Irish girl who is very kind to me, who sits with me at the same desk and talks to me during breaks – she doesn't go beyond this […] so this relationship has its boundaries – school boundaries. I'd love to spend my time differently[…]like I used to in Poland, but it's not the case [...] Of course, I 'befriended' some colleagues here but the fact is that my Polish friends in Poland keep me going. I tried to get used to my new school, to the new language and the new environment – slowly I progressed [...] but at the end of the day you're really lonely here. You don't feel that you belong here. I still feel an outsider [...] watching life that is lived by others but I'm not a part of it. I'm standing aside because I don't fit in…*

(Patrycja aged 17, 3rd wave, 14 May 2011).

As exemplified above, Małgorzata and Patrycja took their own distinctive social stance; both girls noted the value of real friendship. Both girls abjured the importance of social status in comparison to true friendship, as expressed by Wilkinson (2011) that social status - dominance, hierarchies, pecking order - are orderings based on power, coercion, and privileged access to resources regardless of the needs of others. Friendship, by contrast, is based on reciprocity, mutuality, social obligations, sharing and recognition of each other's needs. Because of this disjunction 'we hear the more insistent demand of the inner self to be given full expression' (Douglas 1996). In addition, the abovementioned narratives show how the Polish immigrants operate at the intersection of acculturation "*I do what is expected of me, I socialise with Irish people and speak their language*" (Małgorzata aged 16), and interculturalism "*I'm not a part of it. I'm*

standing aside because I don't fit in" (Patrycja aged 17), *"I don't like the Irish culture", "I will maintain my Polish identity and I'll never change my accent in order to make me sound more native"* (Julia aged 15).

6.4 Conclusions

Throughout the LASPIT research project, particularly during the first wave of interviews information concerning acculturation *per se* was gathered, enhanced by the exploration of the perception of acculturation from parents and key informants' perspectives. During the second wave, the LASPIT captured respondents' shifting process from the transition period to the 'settling in' period. It was predominantly manifested in the narratives, which indicated English language competency improvement and re-born educational aspirations initially suppressed by English illiteracy. Additionally, diversity of the *acculturation strategies* (namely the use of body language, clothes, make-up, hair-styles, the use of ethnic peers as 'life dictionaries', Irish peers as cultural guides, humour, etc.) employed by the Polish immigrant teenagers has unequivocally highlighted acculturation multidimensionality, contextuality, and temporality of the *acculturation outcomes.*

The third wave brought to light an array of findings. Despite variations in the acculturation encounters, and in the types of *acculturation strategies* employed by Polish immigrant teenagers, remarkable similarities in the *acculturation outcomes* in terms of a greater alertness to Polishness were found along with a mismatch, which refers to the inability to identify with the dominant values of society or rather with what is perceived to be the dominant values of society (see Durkheim 1933; Hilbert 1986). Another interesting finding concerns prospective dimension of the migratory experience. It appears that Polish immigrant teenagers are not interested in returning to Poland mainly because of the re-acculturation encounters. Some will stay in Ireland, while others endeavour to go to Germany, the UK or other Western European countries.

The ethnographic case study enabled the LASPIT research to provide more than a holistic description of socio-cultural analysis of acculturation phenomena, signifying in particular, tension derived from the growing acculturation gap between parents and children of the first-generation immigrants, which as argued by Alam (2012), can only be resolved through a trade-off, exemplified by selective acculturation, which does not necessitate rejection of native culture. The LASPIT data suggests that with time, Polish teenagers learned how to navigate between two

cultures, which resulted in linguistic bricolage with the emergence of 'heteroglossic repertoires' (see Busch 2012). Being bicultural does not necessitate equal distribution of appreciation of both cultures. Arguably, as evidenced in this chapter and in Chapter 7, a visible pattern of increased appreciation of Polishness was found for Polish immigrant teenagers who took part in the LASPIT research project.

Chapter 7

'Before' and 'after': cross-case study and longitudinal analysis of change over time in the context of acculturation

7.1 Introduction

By analysing 'before' and 'after' longitudinally this chapter offers summative assessment of the *acculturation process*, *acculturation attitudes* and *acculturation outcomes* in the context of Polish immigrant children and their cultural fit over time. This chapter also points to practical limitations of Berry's (1992; 1997) fourfold acculturation paradigm, moving from acculturation to interculturalism, and offering instead a greater diversity of findings. Moreover, the later analyses will demonstrate that apart from the context, and the individual *acculturation strategies*, the factors such as age, gender, and length of stay in Ireland are highly relevant and have an impact on the *acculturation outcomes* too.

The LASPIT main data collection consisted of three waves of one-to-one interviews conducted between 2009 and 2011 supplemented by the VIA questionnaire (Appendix 7) and enriched by vibrant focus groups. Conversely, while the focus group used group dynamics (Saldana 2003) to cover acculturation topics, the individual interviews with those who participated in the longitudinal part of this project, resulted in gathering richer data that 'allows [us] to unravel the complexity of other people's worlds' (Rubin *et al.* 2005). The rest of the empirical data were drawn directly from my reunited family's acculturation experience.

7.2 Analysing acculturation of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland

One of the aims concerning the LASPIT empirical investigation was to capture the *acculturative change* in daily life of Polish immigrant teenagers posed by exposure to different socio-cultural contexts. To satisfy this objective scientifically, it was necessary to access multiple sources of evidence. Empirical evidence in the main was obtained from the in-depth interviews analysed through the NVivo, and from the on-line VIA questionnaires.

In order to measure the *acculturation attitudes* of Polish respondents, the VIA questionnaire was first carefully adapted in order to reflect the heritage origin of Polish newcomers and to cater for the Irish context. It was found that this modified

version of the Vancouver Index of Acculturation is a powerful tool to measure the *acculturative attitudes*. This qualitative part of the research, based on the usage of quantitative questionnaire was introduced on-line as a word document consisting of a tentative list of ten categories (see Appendix 7) coded appropriately to reflect theory-driven and data-driven groupings that allowed the measurement of the *acculturative attitudes*. The measurements were always administered post-interviewing, when the email address and relevant permission was obtained for follow-up of the quantitative part of the research.

Subsequently, the LASPIT research project via the employment of the appropriate acculturation measurements produced interesting findings based on triangulation trajectories of holistic approach to acculturation over a time scale of two years. SPSS Statistics were used in the data analyses of both the aggregate and the subsets. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the demographic data collected from all participants: Polish immigrant teenagers and their parents. Nominal and ordinal data is presented using numerical frequency and percentage values, outlining variables variance and direct comparison of the *acculturation outcomes* regarding Polish heritage culture versus the mainstream culture. Frequency distributions outline the ratio and interval data such as the age of participants, outlining the measurement of the mode, median and variability of the data.

The LASPIT qualitative data have been examined categorically, thematically and chronologically because the longitudinal qualitative data analysis acknowledges both the linearity and non-linearity of developmental pathways and human life trajectories (Saldana 2003). The data was analysed through NVivo software, which enable a data storage, and labelling for qualitative analysis (*ibid.*). These qualitative analyses support the overall LASPIT research findings. For instance, the Nvivo 'word frequency report' indicates that a word *Poland* in the context of home, *Ojczyzna* (Fatherland) and Polishness was mentioned 290 times. Whilst the importance of having true friend(s) appeared 169 times in the Polish immigrant teenagers' narratives in the eighty-seven interviews recorded for this project research.

To capture change over time, the LASPIT longitudinal quantitative data were divided by time pools (T1 and T2). Subsequently, Polish teenagers' socio-cultural changes over time became more evident in each pool, particularly when the LASPIT output was compared over time. Furthermore, acculturation phases, stages, and contextual conditions of the Polish individuals who took part in the LASPIT research project have been examined topically. In qualitative research, the dimensions and variability of the data are its dynamics. Saldana (2003) argues that employment of the Nvivo to chart the dynamics of change through time provides a richer and more

participant-centred basis for analysis. Examination of independents contribution for each tested category measured attitudes towards specific aspects of Polish and Irish cultures. Its statistical output illustrates that at the individual level, there are independent cultural orientations towards the mainstream and the heritage culture with interesting relationships between both cultures.

7.2.1 Vancouver Index of Acculturation - implementation details

As elaborated in detail in Chapter 3, there is no widely agreed taxonomy for measuring acculturation. The attempts to measure the *acculturation attitudes* were challenged by many scholars e.g., Berry 1997; Rudmin 2003; Ryder *et al.* 2000. For the purpose of this research project, the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA), which encompasses the main and the heritage aspects of culture was employed. Moreover, the VIA allows measuring a change over time, which was particularly important in light of the longitudinal design of the LASPIT research project.

The Vancouver Index of Acculturation was implemented via the survey engine called Survey Monkey. The following procedure for administering the VIA questionnaire was used: All 34 Polish teenagers were invited to complete the VIA initial survey in 2010 via the email invitation. Twenty-three responded to the first – initial invitation and completed the VIA questionnaire. When the second invitation to the second round of the Vancouver Index of Acculturation questionnaire was issued in spring 2011, eighteen respondents completed the VIA questionnaire. Three of them participated in the survey for their first time, and fifteen were repeat respondents. Thus, the grand total of respondents who took part in the VIA questionnaire for a minimum of one time was twenty-six. Each time the link to the VIA questionnaire was active for a month enabling the potential respondents to access the questionnaire. Figure 7.1 (below) depicts implementation of the VIA questionnaire:

Figure 7.1 VIA Gantt Chart

VIA 1st round (T1)	**Mar-10**	
Invitation issued to all 34 Polish teenagers		Only 23 responded
VIA 2nd round (T2)	**Mar-11**	
Invitation issued to all 34 Polish teenagers		3 responded for the first time and 15 for the second time

- ✓ **Total number of respondents who participated in the VIA questionnaire a <u>minimum of</u> one time =26**
- ✓ **Total number of respondents who participated in the VIA questionnaire in both rounds (T1 and T2) = 15**

The initial VIA questionnaire data were downloaded into Excel format on 29th of December 2010. The same procedure applies to the second and the final VIA questionnaire, which was downloaded on 5th of April 2011. Later the data were cleaned, coded, and synthesised. As indicated in Figure 7.1 the total number of participants in the VIA questionnaire was twenty-six. The youngest person in the sample was twelve, whilst the oldest was twenty. However, for the purpose of the various analyses of the VIA dataset, the age of Polish teenagers in the sample was coded into three age ranges.

In terms of detailed distribution by age as illustrated in Figure 7.2 the VIA sample during the first round comprised twelve respondents in the first age category (12-14), ten respondents in the second age category (15-17), and four respondents in the third age category (18-20). It is important to outline a breakdown of the age group characteristic because the later analyses will demonstrate that age, gender, and length of time in Ireland are highly relevant and impact on the *acculturation outcomes*.

Figure 7.2 VIA sample distribution by age categories

Age brackets	**12-14**	**15-17**	**18-20**	**Total**
Distribution in percentage by age categories	46%	39%	15%	100%

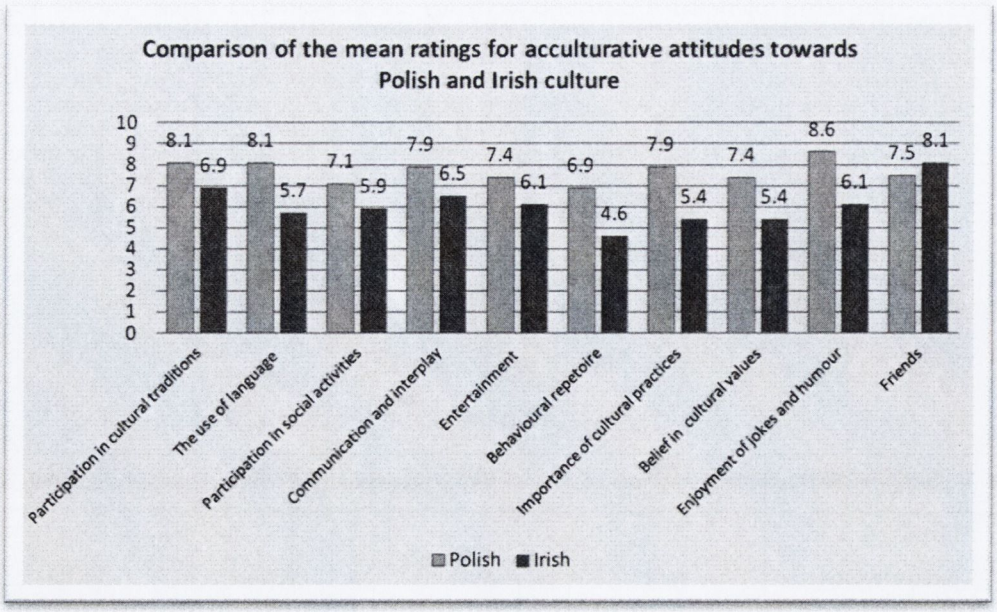
n=26

7.2.2 Vancouver Index of Acculturation – data analysis

The first part of this section attempts to describe the procedures for data analysis obtained from the Vancouver Index of Acculturation questionnaires. Before presenting the exploratory analyses of the VIA dataset, it is important to note that one of the main objectives of the LASPIT research project was to describe the acculturation experience of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland. Following the LASPIT objectives, various analyses of the dataset from the 26 respondents was followed by longitudinal analysis of the cohort of respondents who completed the VIA questionnaire twice.

The first part of the LASPIT findings in Figure 7.3 pertains to all respondents who took part in the VIA questionnaire offering a synopsis of the *acculturation attitudes* across the LASPIT cohort, giving a flavour for the complexities of the adjustment process. One of the striking features of this first set of the VIA analyses (at an aggregate level) is that it compares favourably with the Polish teenager's narratives outlining a greater appreciation towards the Polish culture in comparison to the Irish culture. There is also visible fluctuation between various life domains, synthesised to ten distinctive categories. Figure 7.3 (below) outlines acculturative attitudes of Polish immigrant teenagers in the Irish context for all 26 VIA respondents, who took part in the VIA at least once showing an interesting pattern.

Figure 7.3 Comparison of the mean ratings for acculturative attitudes towards Polish and Irish cultures



n=26

In light of the results in Figure 7.3 outlining increased embracement of Polishness versus Irishness, it was quite surprising to find that the majority of the participants of the VIA questionnaire highlighted the importance of having Irish friends. It was the only time when the outcome of the VIA questionnaire showed reverse output. Fourteen out of twenty-six Polish teenagers marked '10' on the 1-10 visual analogue scale to indicate the importance of having Irish friends. What is more surprising, is that the majority of the respondents positioned their choice ranking the importance of having the Irish friends on the right side of the 10-item VAS scale, indicating that having Irish friends was very important. Many Polish informants clearly stated that the Irish peers apart from the initial 'welcoming' were not interested in befriending Poles, particularly if there were also other Poles in the same school.

These findings have some parallels in the UK context. White (2009) identified that Polish secondary school children sometimes found it harder to integrate, especially if they were in classes with other Polish children. Non-Polish students assumed that they were self-sufficient within their Polish friendship groups, and did not try to befriend them. For my interviewees however, meaningful friendship with natives was of utmost importance because they were the real 'hosts' in Ireland. As natives, presently schoolmates, prospectively work- colleagues, they constitute important ramification for fostering positive interculturalism that would allow Polish immigrants feel that they are welcomed, accepted, and valued.

7.3 Cross-case study and longitudinal analysis

The complexity of the *acculturation process* is even more visible when we move to another layer of the data analyses. Having isolated the main topics – it was decided to examine the gathered qualitative and quantitative data longitudinally. As mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3, this research builds on the work of Berry (1997) in general and in particular on Berry's acculturation paradigm. Thus, formative reflection that arises out of Polish teenagers' narratives is a starting point for deeper analyses of the isolated topics. The LASPIT has confirmed the limitations of Berry's fourfold acculturation theorem in terms of its practical applicability, 'moving the research field towards the diversity of the paradigms and findings' (Rudmin 2010).

The case studies provide unique insights into the phenomena of immigrant youth socio-cultural adaptation contributing to ongoing theoretical debates in this field (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). It was decided to use this diversity and richness of findings to demonstrate diverse acculturation patterns within isolated topical typologies in the cross-case study analysis of the LASPIT data.

In terms of the general characteristics of this group of Polish immigrant teenagers, seven respondents were aged 12-14, six respondents were aged 15-17, and two respondents were in the age bracket 18-20.

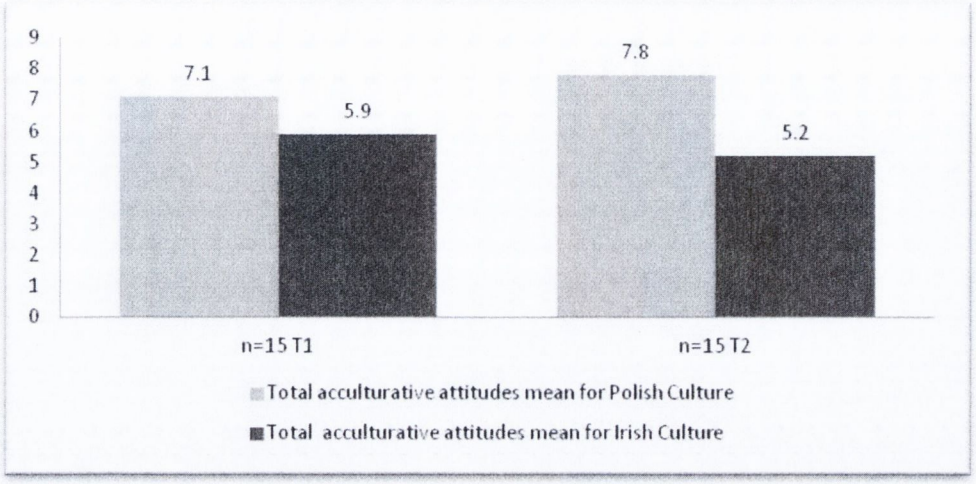
In order to document findings arising from the qualitative and quantitative phases and to provide a cross-case study analysis it is necessary to delineate comprehensive T1 and T2 group characteristic. These were examined longitudinally, and from different angles aiming to find linkages between the LASPIT research objectives and the LASPIT outcomes with reference to the original research questions.

The T1 and T2 comprised fifteen Polish teenagers – eight Polish newcomers and seven non-recent immigrants. The grand total aggregates the VIA analyses for T1 and T2 and outlines Polish teenagers' attitudes towards the heritage and mainstream culture captured over time offering a parallel comparison of *acculturative attitudes* among non-recent Polish immigrant teenagers.

A breakdown of the VIA items for each of T1 and T2, and the remaining eleven respondents who took part in the VIA questionnaire only once is available in Appendix 8.

Appendix 8 outlines mean, median, mode and standard deviation for the VIA items comprising of questions pertaining to heritage and mainstream culture. T1 denotes the first wave of the VIA questionnaire administered in 2010, and T2 stands for the second, administered in 2011. In terms of scoring - the heritage subscore is the mean of the odd-numbered items, whereas the mainstream subscore is the mean of the even-numbered items (Ryder *et al.* 2000). Therefore, direct comparison of the mean ratings for all considered aspects of acculturation for Polish and Irish cultures in T1 and T2 confirms an overall increase in embracement of Polishness generally, and a decrease of embracement of Irishness for the total sample. These results echo the qualitative narratives gathered over the course of the LASPIT cohort (see Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.4 Mean of the VIA acculturation attitudes measures taken in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2)



n=15

Overall, Figure 7.4 demonstrates a rise in appreciation of Polish culture over time. These findings are in line with empirical narratives particularly among older teenagers; Michał is one of many examples:

I'm very proud of being Polish. I'm proud that I speak the Polish language and when I'm in my class, I'm filled with the feeling of pride in being Polish. I've never thought about it. I've only realised here how much my Polishness matters to me. Of course being here influences us. We are happier, we smile more often we don't snap [...] I would be happier if the Irish started to appreciate the richness of Polish culture and what it can offer.

(Michał aged 17, 3rd wave, 2 June 2011).

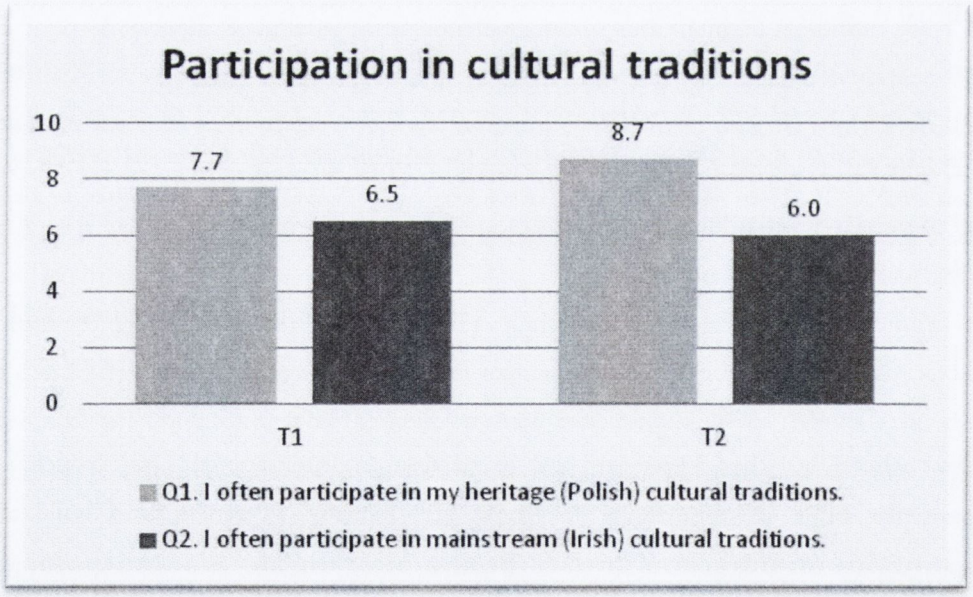
The strive for cultural recognition and the awareness of the Polish culture was also echoed in other interviews and in relation to International Days, which in particular offer an opportunity to 'show off', increase awareness, and build an appreciation towards cultural diversity. Because 'score reliability is a characteristic of data, it is essential that researchers not only understand the average score reliability typically produced by a scale, but also understand the influence of study characteristics and participants on score reliability' (Huynh 2009:258). Therefore, age, gender and context were taken into account because as shown all are strongly associated with variations in score reliability of the VIA outcomes. Closer examination of the acculturative attitudes for various categories illustrates however some fluctuation such as an increase or decrease in category over time.

In this section, it is endeavoured to critically examine the VIA variables of age, gender, and the nested context of Polish teenagers in order to explain the distinctive patterns and diversity of findings. Paired t-test was also used to test statistical significance between arithmetical means for each VIA variable examined. The paired t-test results were not statistically significant which was expected considering the small sample size. However the answers given to the VIA questionnaire have remained consistent over time.

7.3.1 Attitudes towards participation in cultural traditions

Section 7.3.1 to 7.3.10 presents results obtained for the *acculturation attitudes* of ten variables for the cohort of Polish immigrant teenagers, who responded to the VIA T1 ['before'] and T2 ['after'] (see below Figure 7.5 to 7.14).

Figure 7.5 Participation in different cultural traditions (Polish and Irish) recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire



n=15

Figure 7.5 provides information on attitudes of acculturating Polish respondents towards their heritage and mainstream traditions. The majority of those surveyed celebrate typical Polish feasts, indicating that participation in Polish cultural tradition plays a very important role in their life. The mean for all participants increased from

7.7 to 8.7 for participation in Polish cultural traditions, and decreased from 6.5 to 6.0 for participation in mainstream tradition.

The results in Figure 7.5 are echoed in the gathered narratives. For example, Basia aged fifteen indicates that culinary traditions are an important part of Polish culture, particularly for emigrants. It appears that there is an increased awareness of heritage culture, and traditions, manifested in greater engagement in preparations that often include catering for other immigrant Poles, which would not be so typical in Poland:

My Mum cooks only Polish traditional food and as you know, we have a Polish cook here; so we eat only traditional Polish food. We celebrate a typical Polish Christmas. We also make traditional Polish festive food for other Polish families. Last Christmas I was helping my Mom with preparations – we were working for two full days and nights in order to make everything ordered by other Polish families – you know barszcz, pierogi, kutia...

(Basia aged 15, 2nd wave, 23 September 2010).

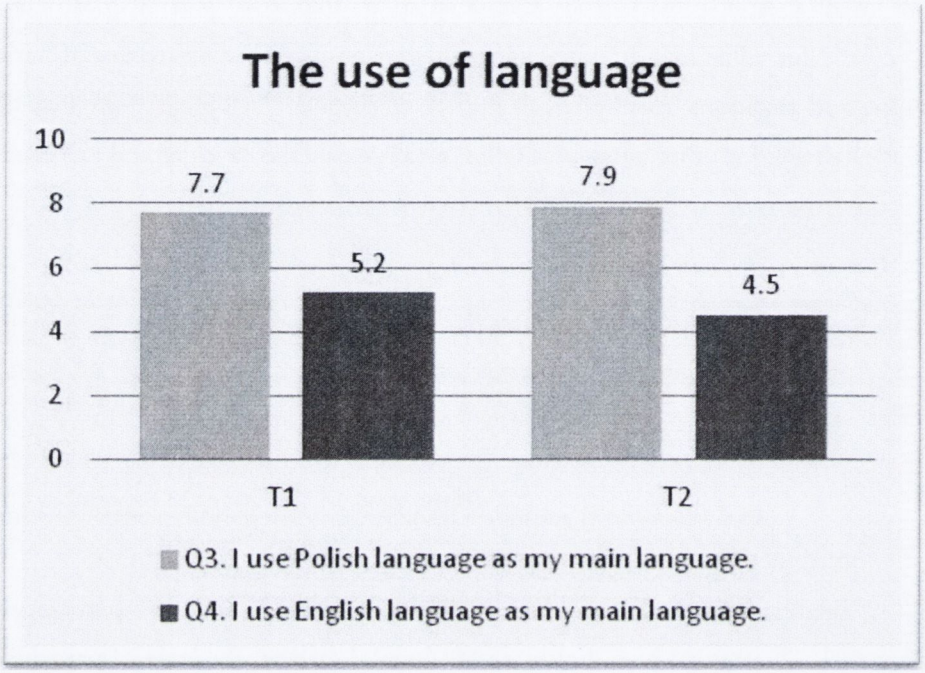
Interestingly, there is no discernible pattern among the Polish participants in this regard. All sampled households are bicultural; however, the level of participation in other cultures differs from one household to another.

It appears that traditional Polish dishes appear during important Polish feasts such as Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday but there is also a plethora of empirical evidence that Polish immigrant teenagers' friendships with other immigrants (e.g., Indian, Spanish) influence cuisine and cultural practices of acculturating immigrants, explaining why the Irish cuisine is not so popular.

7.3.2 The use of Polish and English language over time

The qualitative interviews along with quantitative output suggest that the majority of acculturating Polish teenagers still use the Polish language as their main language (Figure 7.6).

Figure 7.6 The use of Polish and English language recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire



n=15

An interesting question arises from these responses. Why is there a decrease in usage of English over time? Again the answer was explored in the LASPIT qualitative data, which indicated that whenever Polish new arrivals are outside the school environment, they tend to switch to Polish:

Well – it is difficult at school, at the beginning this 'slagging' and teasing – it is hard... Overall, it's cool but I still find that it's easier to express myself in Polish in spite of the fact that I love the English language... At the beginning it is a big noise – chaos – you know... you don't understand anything! For example me- I could hardly speak English, even now I don't speak a lot. If other Irish girls ask me something I answer very shortly...this is why I switch to Polish

(Basia aged 14, 1st wave, 3 December 2009).

The evidence in Figure 7.6 is unexpected, and one might assume, equate to more use of the English language. Admittedly, the use of the mainstream language has increased over time particularly in terms of the academic language proficiency; however, in teenagers' statements the use of the English language has decreased in comparison to the Polish language because teenagers compared daily use of English and Polish. The following quote from Małgorzata's interview provides further insights:

When I arrived in Ireland, I hardly spoke English. So at the beginning the focus was on English. We had extra English classes at school. Then at home, we had to try and speak English non-stop. In the evenings we were sitting often until midnight doing homework through English. I was sick of it! Even at school, I was forbidden to speak Polish to my schoolmates... with a time, we were allowed to speak Polish again at home, and we also watch a lot of telly and movies through Polish because my father doesn't speak English. Now, I use English mainly at school, however often during breaks if there are other Poles around I switch to Polish. So globally during the day, I think that I use more Polish and less English...

(Małgorzata aged 17, 3rd wave, 2 September 2011).

Interestingly, even those Polish teens who are not new immigrants naturally switch from English to Polish while they are back at home:

At school, I only speak English and only Polish at home. I have been living in Ireland since I was five years old but Polish was always present in my life. My entire family, my siblings –everyone speaks perfect Polish...It is our language!

(Kasia aged 13, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

Even those with long habitual residence admit that Polish is widely used for a large proportion of the day, particularly outside the school environment and this general shift was visible across the LASPIT cohort. Figure 7.6 challenges the popular perception that the longer acculturating individuals are exposed to another linguistically different culture, the more orientated they become towards the lingual and cultural habitus of this culture. They say they use the English language less because they are more proficient in it and do not need to practice as much.

Admittedly, longer habitual residence positively correlates with increased fluency in English (particularly academic English), but has nothing to do with the daily preference of the use of languages. Another factor that could possibly contribute to explaining these interesting results is the regular Polish Saturday School attendance. Most Polish parents interviewed, encouraged their children to continue their Polish education through Polish Saturday Schools. On top of this, Polish language is spoken

in every Polish home, and because of increased influx of Poles to Ireland, it is currently the second language after English used in Ireland (see Census 2011). Polish literature, history, and geography seem to be important aspects of being Polish. However, this knowledge can be gained only through specific channels. One of those channels is Polish Saturday School that offers a compact knowledge in this area. Anastazja a principal of one of the Polish Saturday Schools outlines:

We have over 800 pupils here. We have to be organised and we have to be demanding. Polish children know very well what is expected of them... We offer them the option of continuing their Polish education including the Polish Leaving Certificate, which gives them access to Polish tertiary education if their parents decide to return to Poland. We run classes on Saturday and Sunday but we also offer various extra-curricular activities. Pupils are expected to perform well, to familiarise themselves with the mandatory reading materials and to have their homework done. They have to work hard and consistently in order to follow the syllabus delivered here.

They have less time to do it because they attend Irish schools during the week. I have to say that I owe a lot to their parents who despite various work arrangement make this extra effort and drive pupils to our school regularly despite the weather or distance. Polish parents sacrifice a lot, they understand the importance of Polish education. Sadly, Polish children do not always recognise it. The bottom line is that we try very hard to deliver the Polish syllabus so they would not be disadvantaged to their Polish peers who attend Polish schools in Poland. Parents also help a lot but at the end of the day, it's really up to each individual student to acknowledge potential benefits of what is delivered and offered here.

(Anastazja, the principal of a Polish Saturday School,
14 February 2010).

Furthermore, Polish Saturday Schools also prepare its students for the Polish Leaving Certificate enabling immigrant children to acquire a dual qualification. Polish immigrant teenagers are supposed to use only Polish during Polish classes and they have to follow the Polish curriculum that prepares them for the Polish Leaving Certificate exams. It should be acknowledged that upon arrival, the majority of Polish newcomers had no, or very little, English language proficiency; therefore initially, the main time and focus was on acquiring English. For that reason, the enrolment in the Polish Saturday School usually took place at a later stage, which correlates to the increase in use of Polish language. Some of the respondents asserted that they use less English than Polish, while some individuals are fifty-fifty - use Polish and English equally in their everyday life. However, it varies according to each acculturating individual:

When I arrived, I didn't speak English. I knew only a few basic words. This is why it was so difficult for me. Irish girls could not speak to me because I was from a foreign country. There were few Poles; two of them, from my class helped me quite a lot. But I don't maintain contact with them, because they know English and have Irish friends, they do not want to speak to me in Polish. My English has improved but [deep breath] *I still don't speak the way I'd love to...I still express myself better in Polish...This is why I started reading tons of books in Polish.*

(Patrycja aged 15, 1st wave, November 2009).

When English is no longer an obstacle towards effective communication, Polish teenagers tend to switch from one language to another when it suits them. For instance, many text messages between Polish peers are sent in English because it is less time consuming to write. Secondly, most mobile phones have an extra option of the English dictionary built in which enables its users to write faster. Receiving text messages in English or a mixture of Polish and English for the last couple of years, made the author aware that as a mother of two teenage acculturating daughters, you need to be constantly prepared for surprises.

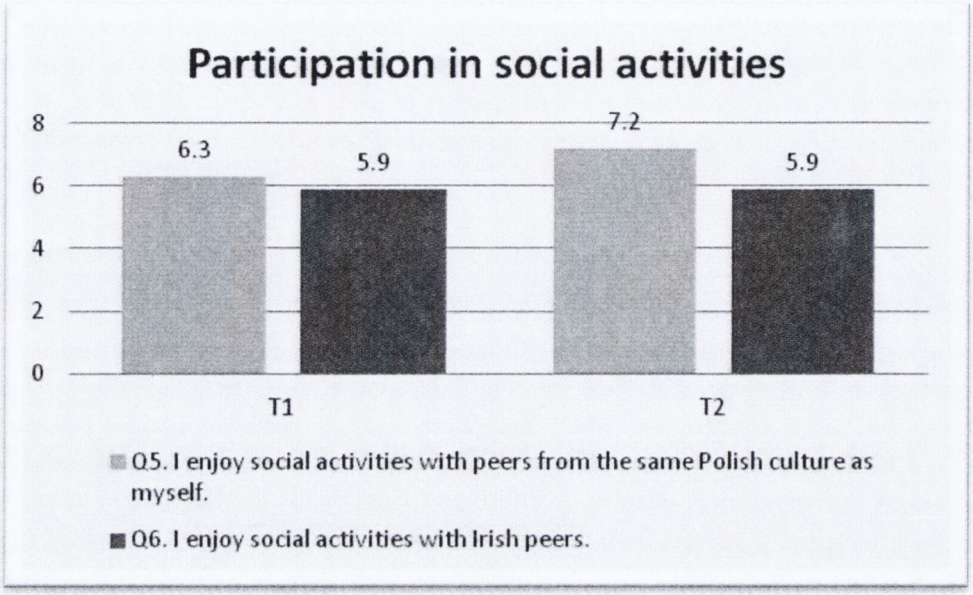
Polish immigrant teenagers often combine their mother tongue with the English language, resulting in linguistic bricolage. Whilst it can be surprising to Polish parents, on the contrary, Polish teenagers do not perceive it as something different or unusual because lingual dualism is innate to their teenage immigrant upbringing. At the same time, an individual immigrant teenager is also exposed to Polishness through Polish TV programmes and books as for example, Patrycja, who purchases about ten to fifteen books every time she re-visits Poland.

The separation from relatives and Polish friends heightened the use of phone, Skype, and social media websites. In fact, most conversations conducted though these devices are conducted in Polish and with Polish people. In addition, gathered narratives indicate temporary emergence of English language dystrophy after a holiday in Poland and linguistic bricolage after arrival from Ireland. This explains why Polish respondents reported the increased usage of their heritage language compared to English.

7.3.3 Social life of Polish teenagers outside school

Figure 7.7 (below) offers a snapshot of social life, meetings, and gatherings in the context of acculturation. The relevant part of the VIA questionnaire attempted to establish how, and with whom, acculturating Polish individuals spend their free time.

Figure 7.7 Participation in social activities recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire



n=15

Most of the cohort of Polish teenagers indicated that they like going to the cinema or just going out when they are accompanied by other Poles. Moreover, the LASPIT found that participation in social activities with other Poles increased over time. It can be explained by the fact that many Polish teenagers were initially quite isolated from other Polish peers because they were often the only Poles in the class. However, with time, the influx of Polish teenage newcomers has increased resulting in more opportunity to befriend other Poles. Similar evidence was obtained from the qualitative interviews, particularly among Polish teenage girls:

Klara: *I would even say that the Irish girls are far better at keeping secrets than Polish girls. Presently I do not hang around with the Irish as often as before because I found fantastic Polish friends and my life now revolves around them.*

Beata: *The last time we spoke the Irish girls constituted your world here. Why did it change so rapidly?*

Klara: *Two new Polish girls arrived in our school and we immediately became real friends. I still keep in touch with my Irish colleagues and even regularly go out together but I definitely spend more time with the Poles now. We spend every weekend together, we go to play billiards, we go together to the cinema, or we just go to the park. We spend a lot of time together now.*

(Klara aged 16, 3rd wave, 30 May 2011).

However, it should not be omitted that the surveyed group of Polish respondents asserted that they enjoy social activities with their Irish counterparts. Over time, the mean for quality time with Irish peers remains unchanged as evidenced in Figure 7.7. This can be related to difficulties in penetrating often very hermetic Irish groups, particularly among Irish girls. Patrycja's assertion exemplifies this issue very well:

Well, I don't meet Irish much, maybe I meet a few sometimes, but generally, I stick with Poles. When I meet them [the Irish], we just go for a walk to school or we just sit on the school bench and chat. We don't go shopping together as I used to do with my Polish friends.

(Patrycja aged 16, 2nd wave, 13 July 2010).

Well, I have no 'real' friends because we immigrants distanced ourselves…Apparently, there is even the one Irish girl who truly likes me. Nevertheless, even that Irish girl who is very kind to me, who sits with me at the same desk and talks to me during breaks – she doesn't go beyond this. I don't call for her and we never go anywhere during the weekends, so this relationship has its boundaries – school boundaries. I'd love to spend my time differently, I'd love to go out, to go to the cinema with somebody like I used to in Poland, but it is not the case [...] Of course, I 'befriended' some class mates here but my main contacts are with my Polish friends... and this keeps me going. I tried to get used to my new school, to the new language, and the new environment – slowly I progressed [...] At the end of the day you are really lonely here. You don't feel that you belong here. I still feel an outsider...watching life that is lived by others but I'm not a part of it. I'm standing aside because I don't 'fit' in. But the bottom line is that - as I mentioned before - I don't always want to 'fit'...'

(Patrycja aged 17, 3rd wave, 14 May 2011).

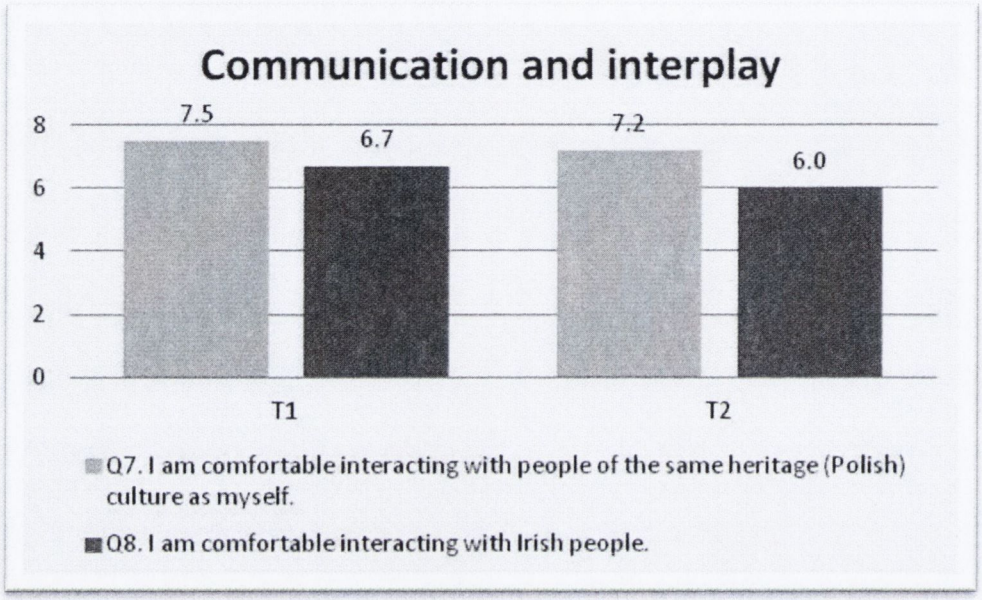
Patrycja's narratives outline another important issue evoked regularly by other Polish teenagers – a desire to have true Irish friends (see Figure 7.14).

7.3.4 The level of comfort prodded by social interaction with peers

Figure 7.8 touches on a very delicate subject pertaining to the level of comfort while interacting with peers. The respondents have been asked the same question; however, the first one asked about the level of comfort while interacting with Poles, while the second covered interplay with the Irish people. Again, most respondents indicated that they strongly agree that they feel very comfortable when they interact

with other Poles, in contrast to the lower levels of comfort indicated with references to Irish peers.

Figure 7.8 Social interactions, communication, and interplay recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire



n=15

Figure 7.8 shows changeability of *acculturation attitudes* towards peers captured over time in T1 and T2. When this cohort was asked to reflect on their interaction with Irish in terms of the feeling of 'comfortable with' only eight Polish teenagers agreed that they feel comfortable. Critical examination of this category shows however, a decrease in feeling comfortable over time for both the mainstream and the heritage culture. Why is that?

Again narratives obtained from the Polish immigrant teenagers over time helped to interpret these puzzling results; for instance, Basia aged fourteen, indicated during the first wave of interviews that:

All the girls in my class are native Irish – only recently another Polish girl joined my class…I'm still being teased by some of them, others I know better. I'd love to know them better but on the other hand, I hesitate to make friends with them. I don't know if I should tell you but the truth is that according to me the Irish youth is somewhat strange... they talk only about boys, discos and babies. I do not like it...

(Basia aged 14, 1st wave 3 December 2009).

During the second wave, the interplay with the Irish escalated turning Basia off completely for the time being:

The Irish girls threw my book in the toilet bowl! They called me names. They punched me and pushed me... For a while, I thought that I lost this particular book. Then I saw my book in the loo. Before I noticed that, they were snooping in my backpack. It was not only me. They also were very nasty to my Polish colleagues; they called them names and pushed them, too.

(Basia aged 15, 2nd wave, 23 September 2010).

While, by contrast, during the third wave conducted in May 2011 Basia took informed decision of isolating herself from the Polish peers:

Beata: *You mentioned that you seriously considered changing your school because of the bullying encounters and the overall atmosphere.*

Basia: *That's right, but I was thinking about it, and I eventually decided that I'll stay in this school. I will stay because there are fantastic teachers here... This year I will be the only Pole during the transition year so maybe things will change. I signed in for the 5th class with the rest of my Polish colleagues but I changed my mind and decided to take part in the transition year. As I mentioned in the beginning, I believe that being a sole Polish student during the transition year will give me an opportunity to gain some new Irish friends. It's a pity that this school is not co-educative. I think that when the school is mixed it is healthier. I often see girls who don't know how to behave because they aren't used to being around boys.*

Beata: *So you are still personally interested in having Irish friends...*

Basia: *Yes, I am. I know that I talk about how difficult it is, about the cultural differences but I would love to give it a try, particularly now, when I don't struggle with English so much.*

(Basia aged 16, 3rd wave, 27 May 2011).

The excerpt from Basia's story almost mirrors the diagram in Figure 7.8. In 2010 because of her experience of being bullied, Basia's interaction with Irish peers understandably decreased. While in 2011, she was singled out from the group of Polish school friends who together decided to skip the transition year and move to the fifth year. Basia decided to participate in the transition year with the Irish crowd, excluding herself from her current Polish peer-group. Naturally, it affected her relations with Polish peers in 2011, which thus decreased.

We would need another round of the VIA questionnaire to see Basia's further interplay trajectories. Michal by contrast, explained that over time he found the interplay with other foreigners the most comfortable:

Michał: *I don't like the way the young Irish behave. They are strange to me. They are very impulsive... rebellious...*

Beata: *Being impulsive and or rebellious isn't that typical for teenagers?*

Michał: *I am aware of this but...it's strange for me – the way they dress... They are sloppy, they wear non-ironed, dirty, stained stuff and they don't care...also the way they behave, the vulgarity. Many take drugs officially, and I don't like when they only close the door from school they start smoking. In Poland, it wouldn't be so noticeable. Teens would be afraid of smoking so openly at the front of the school. I also disapprove that if you are over sixteen you can buy cigarettes. Generally, I cannot stand the way they behave towards adults…*

Beata: *What about your Polish friends?*

Michał: *All of them are in Poland. I have one school girl friend from Latvia now...*

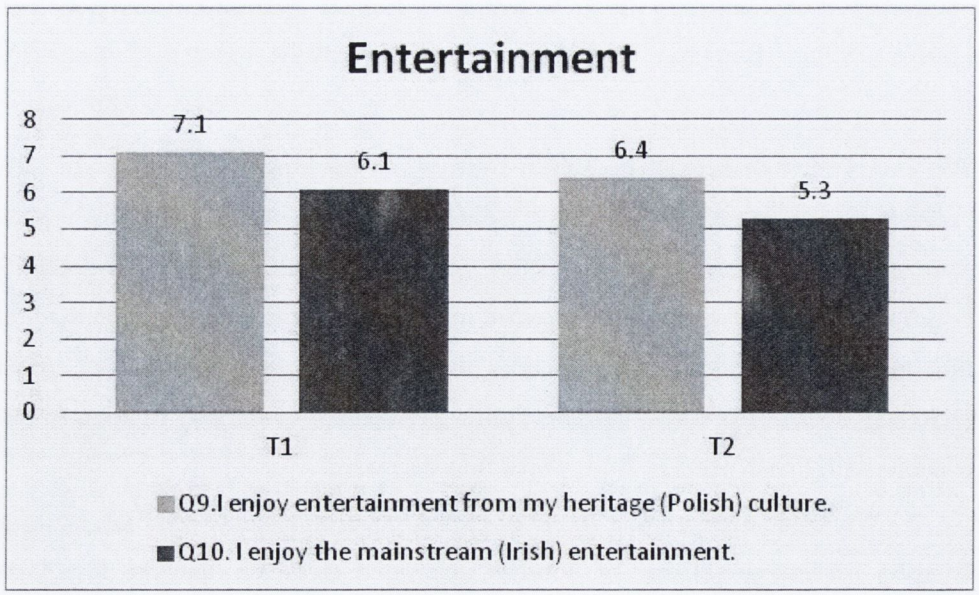
(Michał aged 16, 2nd wave, 29 September 2010).

A comparison of this finding with the VIA results for this category for the total sample of twenty-six respondents appear to provide similar results. However, as noted before, the LASPIT sample size affects its generalizability.

7.3.5 General attitudes towards entertainment associated with mainstream and heritage cultures

In general, the longitudinal mean for this category outlines that Polish teenagers have a preference for Polish over Irish entertainment as seen in Figure 7.9 below.

Figure 7.9 Attitudes towards entertainment recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire



n=15

Figure 7.9 also shows a decline in enjoyment ratings over time for both associated entertainment categories. Polish teenagers' narratives afforded insights providing first class explanatory background: the crosscheck of these outcomes with the VIA questionnaire data indicated that Patrycja, Kasia, Małgorzata, Kasia, Marta and Paweł, were among those who particularly expressed a decrease in their enjoyment of entertainment.

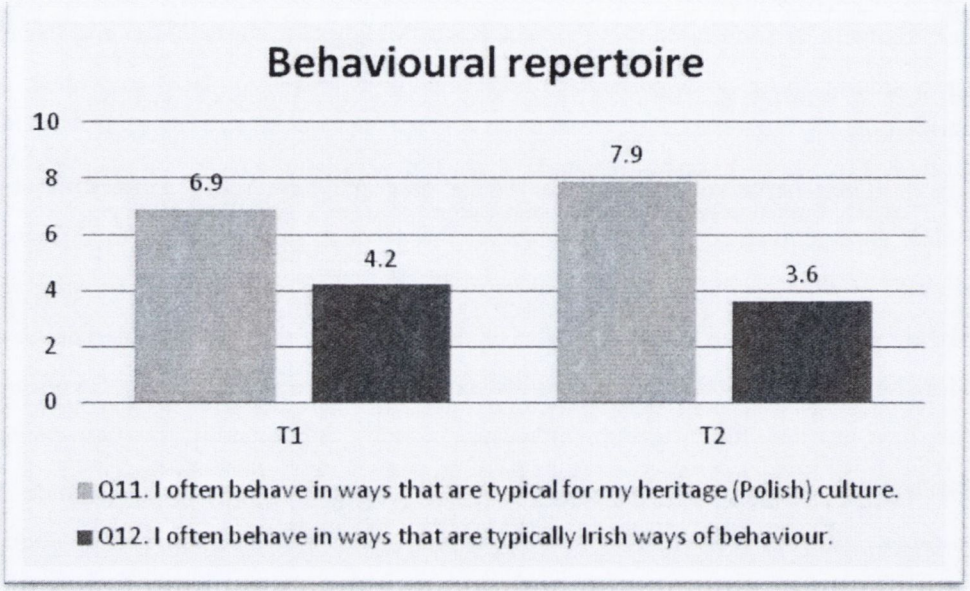
Their narratives showed that whilst they still have more appreciation for Polish entertainment, it also indicated that these young people spend an increased amount of time on the computer. Interestingly, they do not perceive time spent on playing games or using *Facebook* as part of the heritage or mainstream entertainment. More importantly, as they approached the Junior Certificate or the Leaving Certificate, they have less time for entertainment because of study. Subsequently, the mean ratings for this category, for both cultures have declined.

7.3.6 Cultural repertoire

In this part of the VIA questionnaire, Polish teenagers were asked about their behavioural repertoire. Overall results of the whole group of twenty-six, sixteen positioned their behaviour on the right side of the ten-VAS-item scale, indicating that in general they behave in ways reflecting their Polish upbringing.

The longitudinal batch of the fifteen respondents also indicated that they often behave in a way typical for Poles. Moreover, Kornelia, Patrycja, Basia, Małgorzata, Michał, Marta, Teresa, Ewa and Tomasz marked '10' and/or '9' on the VAS-item scale to underline their Polishness for this category. Some of this group comprise teenagers who recently arrived in Ireland ranging to those who have been living in Ireland for more than three and a half years (see Figure 7.10 below).

Figure 7.10 Behavioural repertoire recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire



n=15

Remarkably, as illustrated in Figure 7.10 the majority of those surveyed positioned themselves on the higher rating for Polish behavioural repertoire on the VAS scale. Concomitantly, the majority also rated a strong disagreement with the statement suggesting displaying typically Irish behaviour:

I often behave in a way that I used to in Poland because I'm really Polish. I sometimes alter my behaviour slightly, but I like Polish cultural behaviour, I identify myself with it!

(Kornelia aged 16, 1st wave, Dec 2009).

Irish girls are more like Barbie dolls, but Polish girls you know...they can climb the tree and if needed - can sit with other girls and talk about everything...they (Irish girls) could not understand it...they don't like that we have good relations with boys, we climb the trees and chat.. Therefore, they started to look at us with a kind of amusement... but this is a way we behave in Poland – it's normal.

(Ewa aged 14, 1st wave, 21 Feb 2010).

Similar attitudes prevailed in relation to the importance of maintenance of the heritage culture compared with mainstream culture and associated values (see Figures 7.11-7.12). It can be explained by the fact that the majority of the Polish immigrant teenagers in the LASPIT sample were brought up in Poland, and they enculturated as they grew up. Now in Ireland, in their new socio-cultural context, during the *acculturation process*, they had to learn the Irish cultural repertoire. The second culture acquisition however never replaced their first culture – acquired back in Poland.

7.3.7. Importance of cultural practices among Polish teenagers

The importance of cultural practices was regularly highlighted by Polish parents but not so much by their immigrant children (as evidenced in Figure 7.11 below). Naturally, older teenagers had their own stance in terms of Polishness, but for many younger interviewees, these questions resonated with Polish Saturday School attendance, which as shown in this dissertation decreased over time at Polish teenagers' request, contrary to their parents' expectations:

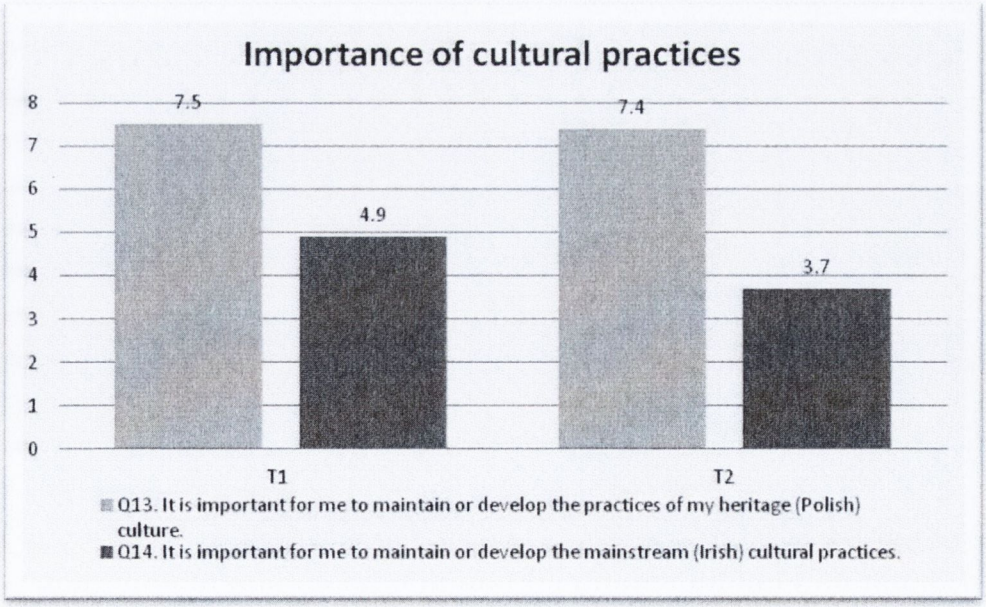
I don't attend Polish school anymore! I hated it! It was too much!

(Teresa aged 14, 2nd wave, 20 October 2010).

I hated to go to Polish school, it was like awful - I went but it was as a candidate for the execution!

(Ewa aged 14, 1st wave, 21 Feb 2010).

Figure 7.11 Importance of cultural practices recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire



n=15

7.3.8 Belief in cultural values

The aggregate analyses of data gathered throughout the LASPIT research project, helped to establish Polish teenagers' belief in cultural values. Polish teenagers are engaged in absorbing heritage knowledge *vis-a-vis* Polish history, geography, and literature, and many of them continue their Polish education by attending Polish Saturday Schools. Others not attending Polish School maintain their cultural, historical, and geographical education through intervening from relatives:

Fabian: *School is easy here... I don't like doing homework and my Mum told me that in Poland teachers give you so much that you spend all weekend doing homework.*
Beata: *Do you attend Polish school here in Ireland?*
Fabian: *No, but I regularly visit my aunt and she teaches me the Polish history and geography...Mum says that it is important!*

(Fabian aged 12, 1st wave, 27 February 2010).

Polish parents revealed that they understand that the onus of transferring and maintaining the Polish cultural heritage rests with them. Even those teenagers who do not regularly attend Polish Saturday School are regularly exposed to certain aspects of Polish culture as promoted by their parents.

Polish émigré parents are interested in continuity of Polish culture because it would provide linkages between the old generation and the future generation enabling Polish parents to communicate with their grandchildren in Polish. Such an upbringing understandably impacts on acculturation of Polish teenagers (see Figure 7.12 below).

Figure 7.12 Beliefs in cultural values recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire

n=15

7.3.9 Jokes and humour from a dual perspective

Figure 7.13 illustrates the attitudes of Polish teenagers towards Polish and Irish humour and 'slagging'. A comparison of attitudes towards Polish and Irish jokes and respective humour outlines that Polish immigrant teenagers enjoy more Polish jokes and humour compared to the Irish sense of humour:

I don't sense this culture, its jokes and 'slagging' humour...I will never feel it...the cultural distance...

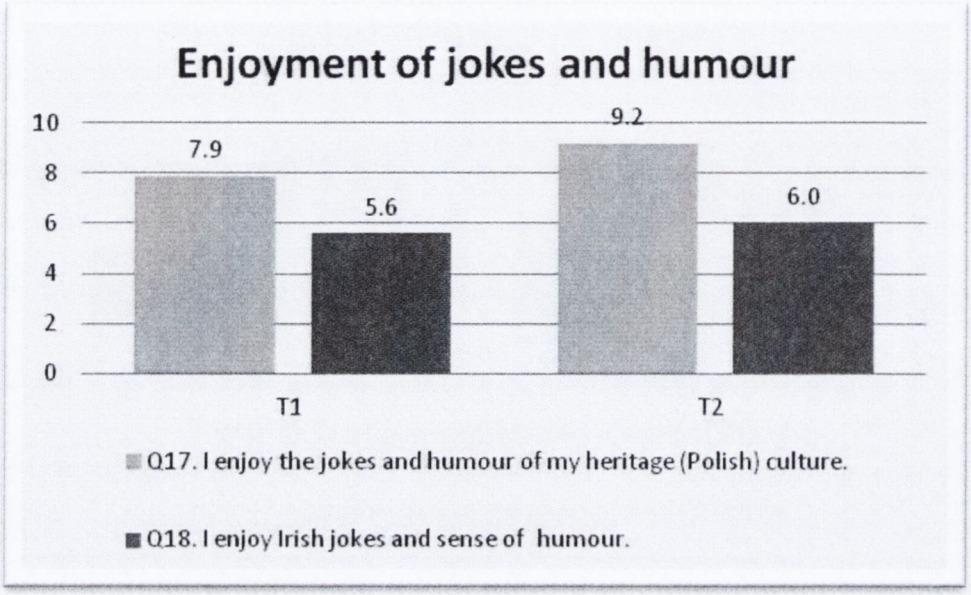
(Michał aged 17, 3rd wave, 2 June 2011).

Similar to Michał's quote, almost every respondent in the LASPIT outlined that the Irish 'slagging culture' was neither funny nor enjoyable (see Figure 7.13 below).

What I've a problem with is that Irish people speak too quickly and often use slang or jokes that I don't understand. I consider this as a very uncomfortable situation for me... If I don't understand at all , I sometimes ask them to repeat speak slower – but it doesn't always work. You know I often hear "O Jesus, you don't get it!" They [native speakers] are too lazy to repeat or explain things. On the contrary, foreigners who came here some time ago and I know how hard it to learn another language, they always speak slower and explain things.

(Sylwia aged 20, 1st wave, 29 January 2010).

Figure 7.13 Enjoyment of jokes and humour recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire



n=15

Unsurprisingly, in some cases the measurement for the enjoyment of jokes and humour went up over time for Irish jokes, which became more interpretable - coinciding with improved English language competence:

At the beginning, I didn't understand the Irish sense of humour. Now I can enjoy it but I still prefer the Polish jokes and Polish humour.

(Kornelia aged 17, 2nd wave, 1 October 2010).

7.3.10 Friends and friendships

'Friends and friendship' was the last category of the VIA questionnaire. This category pertaining to friends and friendships is very special for all those surveyed. As visible in Figure 7.14 (below) the fluctuation regarding friendships with Polish, Irish or other immigrants became the most visible.

The importance of having friends and the changeability of friendships was also captured by the VIA questionnaire. In contrast to other factors, this was the first time when the bilinear scale showed a reverse output over time delineating a yearning towards having Irish friends. The second round (T2) is different because some Polish

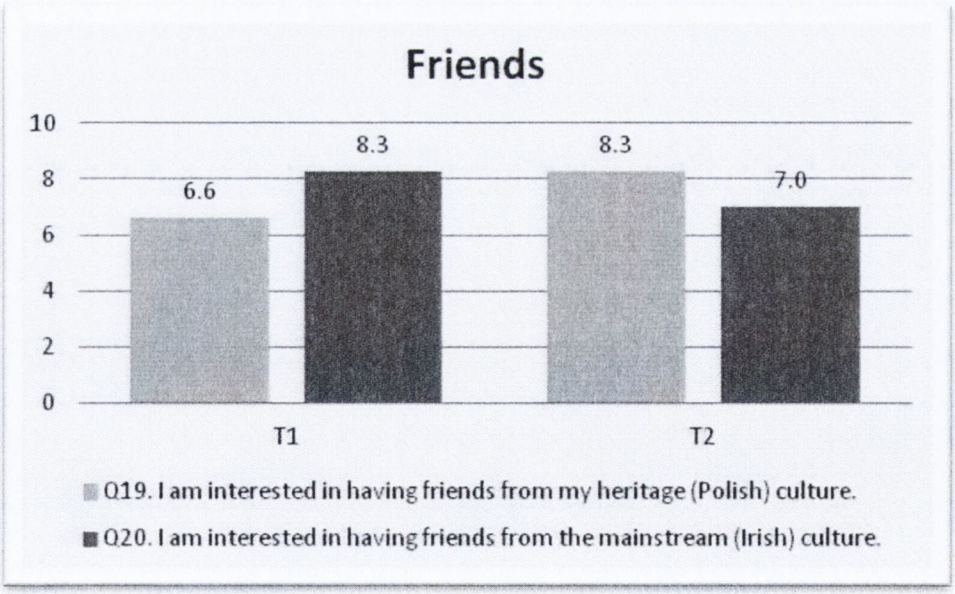
teenagers completely changed their attitude towards Irish colleagues and decided to stick closely to Polish peers (or other foreigners):

I ...befriended a few Irish girls. With time, I have changed my mind and now I consider Polish girls to be my real colleagues...At present I don't make any friends with the Irish at all!

(Julia aged 15, 1st wave, 19 January 2010).

In this category, detailed analyses showed the following results for T1 and T2: In 2010, four of fifteen teenagers indicated that in 2010 they made friends with Irish, Polish and other migrants. Of these, three asserted that they had best relations with Poles only. A further three indicated that the best contact they had with both Poles and other migrants. Two respondents indicated Irish as their best mates. In 2011, the situation changed [T2]: six out of fifteen had the best contact with other migrants; five indicated that their best relationships were with Polish peers, while two informed that their best friends were Irish colleagues (see Figure 7.14).

Figure 7.14 Importance of having friends from heritage and mainstream culture recorded in 2010 (T1) and 2011 (T2) captured by VIA questionnaire



n=15

Aftermath analysis of the group age variables and overall time spent in Ireland at the time when the VIA was administered brings another dimension of findings: Those from T1 cohort who in 2010 indicated that the best relationships they had were

with Irish peers with an average duration of living in Ireland for four years. Those who indicated that they mainly made friends with other Poles had been living in Ireland for less than three years and two of them were new arrivals. However, in 2011, among T2 participants, those respondents in Ireland over three years on average indicated that other migrants were their best friends. While those who strongly indicated that they had the best contact with Polish peers consisted mainly of newcomer students.

A comparative analysis based on Polish teenagers' interviews outline that in general their contacts with school peers were satisfactory in 2010 and in 2011. Because of special emphasis on having friends, particularly having Irish friends, emerged from the initial topical analyses, this factor was identified for follow up during the VIA cross-case analyses.

It is argued that the case studies are particularly important for examining the process of youth development and change over time, and for elucidating the diversity of social interactions and experiences that shape the immigrant student's social and cultural adaptation (Saldana 2003; Suárez-Orozco 2008). Therefore, at a practical level, the data were scrutinised within two groups for similarities and for differences. Then dissimilar pairs were analysed for similarities and similar pairs were analysed for differences. At the same time, the interpretive line of inquiry allowed facts to be collected answering the main questions of this research project. As a result, the following *acculturation strategies* around friendships have emerged:

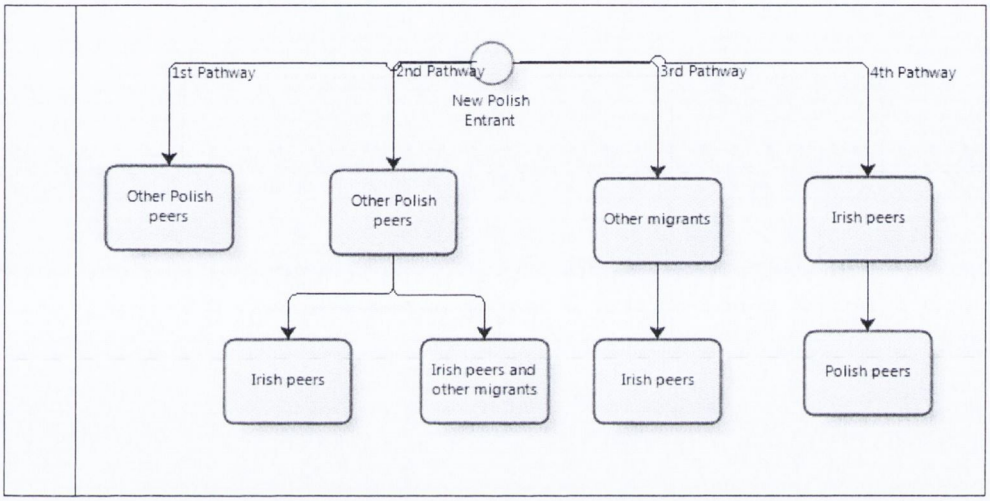
In terms of the patterns of social interactions, particularly in terms of forming friendships in the new socio-cultural context, the LASPIT data indicates that Polish newcomer students gain new colleagues between two to six months residency in Ireland via four distinctive pathways (see Diagram 7.1 below).

- The first pathway is the situation when there is another Polish person in the same class or in the same school;
- The second pathway is more sophisticated and relates to when initially the Polish newcomer befriends another Polish peer, and only at a later stage befriends others. In this case, there is a sub-division. Some of the interviewed cohort befriended only Irish via this pathway, and others reported befriending Irish and other migrants in this manner;
- The third pathway is completely different and relates to the circumstances when the Polish newcomer primarily befriends other migrants in order to

gain access to Irish peers (when applicable because as shown some Polish teenagers replaced Irish friends for a meaningful friendship with Poles) at a later stage;

- The last pathway shows that in some cases the Irish became first colleagues of the newly arrived Poles only to be replaced by other Poles who later joined the same school/class.

Diagram 7.1 Acculturation strategies of Polish immigrant teenagers: patterns of social interactions with peers



Source: LASPIT

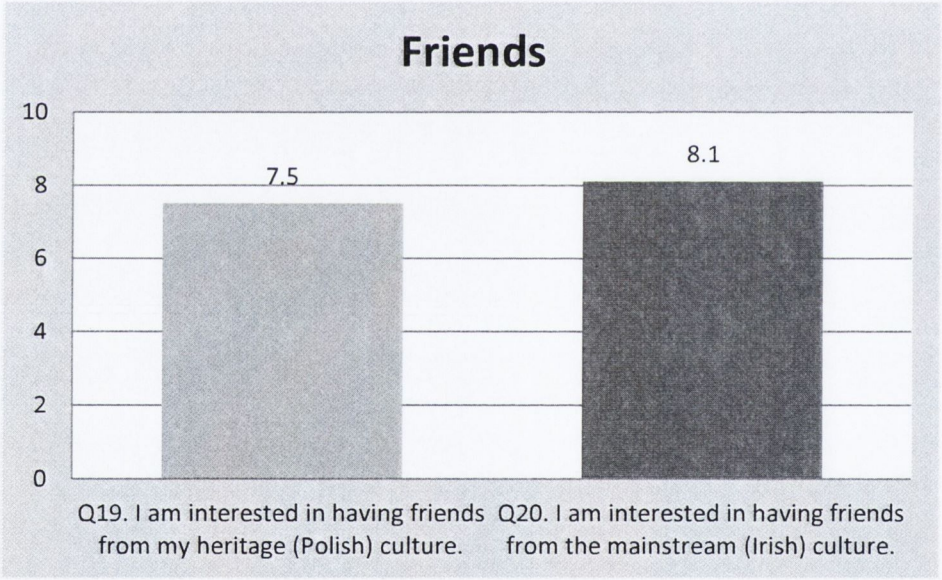
powered by BizAgi Process Modeler

In terms of the interplay with peers, the LASPIT data shows that the 'degree of welcoming' in the new country influences the *acculturation strategies*. The majority of Polish immigrant teenagers reported that they felt that they were welcomed in to their new school environment. Four complained that despite their best efforts they did not feel that they were welcomed in their class. By contrast, accounts of the six remaining teenagers leave no doubts that they entered a very 'cold' if not hostile peer-to-peer environment. Therefore, depending on the nested context, Polish teenagers individually employed different *acculturation strategies*.

The analysis of utilised strategies bears many similarities. Within the total group of 34, those who had other Poles within their reach (in the same class or in the school) befriended them in order to bridge the linguistic gap and compensate for feeling alienated. Interestingly enough, such decisions bore dual consequences. Firstly, the entrants distanced themselves from the Irish in their school environment; and secondly, they extended the time for English language acquisition. Other newcomers, who were 'deprived' of the presence of other Poles, befriended other foreigners. An

interesting pattern came out within that group. Other immigrants from different countries appear to be more patient with new entrants because they share a mutual understanding of the transition period and often they have already developed a good social network with Irish peers, albeit through other foreigners. Some Poles befriended Irish and some did not. Natives were befriended only if the context was welcoming. More importantly, the *acculturation strategies* exemplified in Diagram 7.1 outline that regardless of the chosen pathway the majority of *acculturation strategies* employed by Polish newcomers were aimed towards having Irish friends. The desire and importance of having natives as friends was underlined in the narratives as well as in the VIA output, where the mean outlining an importance of having Irish friends totalled 8.1 in comparison to 7.5 for the importance of having Polish friends for all 26 surveyed respondents (see Figure 7.15).

Figure 7.15 Importance of having friends for all 26 VIA participants



n=26

For instance, due to a 'negative social mirroring' sixteen-year-old Basia stood by other Poles in her school. However, during our last interview she reported that she has taken a deliberate decision. All her Polish friends are 'skipping' the transition year and they are moving to fifth year, while Basia is joining all the Irish girls she has always wanted to befriend:

Basia: *Acclimatisation is difficult and long. In Poland, you had all the familiarity, you knew where you belong... you knew your place. I'm here for over two years, and I still have the problem with belonging...I still don't feel I belong here...*

Beata: *Do you mean that you still feel Polish?*

Basia: *Yes, I do, but I also like Ireland... the only problem here is that I still cannot make friends with the Irish...It's the culture and prejudice. I have prejudice towards the Irish and I know that they have towards us, too... I still feel a bit lost, a bit alien. I still cannot find a decent Irish friend... I noticed that there are some of the Poles who have fantastic relations with the Irish, but usually we are talking about those who arrived a long time ago, usually during primary school...This year I will be the only Polish girl enrolled in the transition year so maybe things will change. Originally, I had signed up for fifth year with the rest of my Polish colleagues, but I changed my mind, and decided to take part in the transition year. I strongly believe that we will make it through together. I have faith.*

(Basia aged 16, 3rd wave, 27 May 2011).

Further examination of the Polish teenagers' *modus operandi* in their new socio-cultural context indicates that age on arrival, gender, and time of habitual residence in Ireland each play a crucial role in shaping particular *acculturation attitudes* (see Table 7.1 and Graph 7.1 and Graph 7.2 below[30]). Table 7.1 delineates habitual residence in Ireland by gender for the total LASPIT cohort.

Table 7.1 Habitual residence in Ireland in years by gender

Gender	**Habitual Residence in Years by Gender**									
	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	7	8	9	**Total**
Females	2	3	1	4	1	8	0	0	1	**20**
Males	2	0	0	7	0	3	1	1	0	**14**
Total	**4**	**3**	**1**	**11**	**1**	**11**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**34**

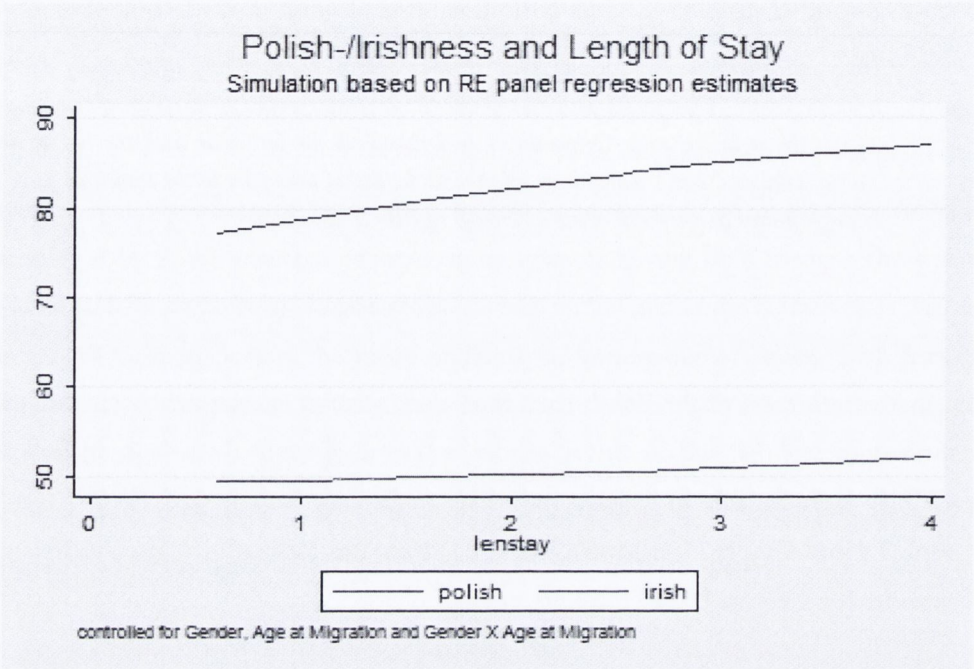
Source: LASPIT

In order to verify how age, habitual residence and length of stay in Ireland affect the *acculturation outcomes*, panel regression estimates were generated via SPSS (see Graphs 7.1 and 7.2 below).

Graph 7.1 (below) shows simulation based on the panel regression estimates for all twenty-six respondents who took part in the VIA questionnaire. It is controlled for habitual residence/length of stay in Ireland, age on arrival in Ireland and gender.

[30] I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Peter Mühlau for his assistance in generating Graph 7.1 VIA questionnaire output - panel regression estimates and Graph 7.2 Attitudes towards Irishness and Polishness in age/gender interactions.

Graph 7.1 VIA questionnaire output - panel regression estimates

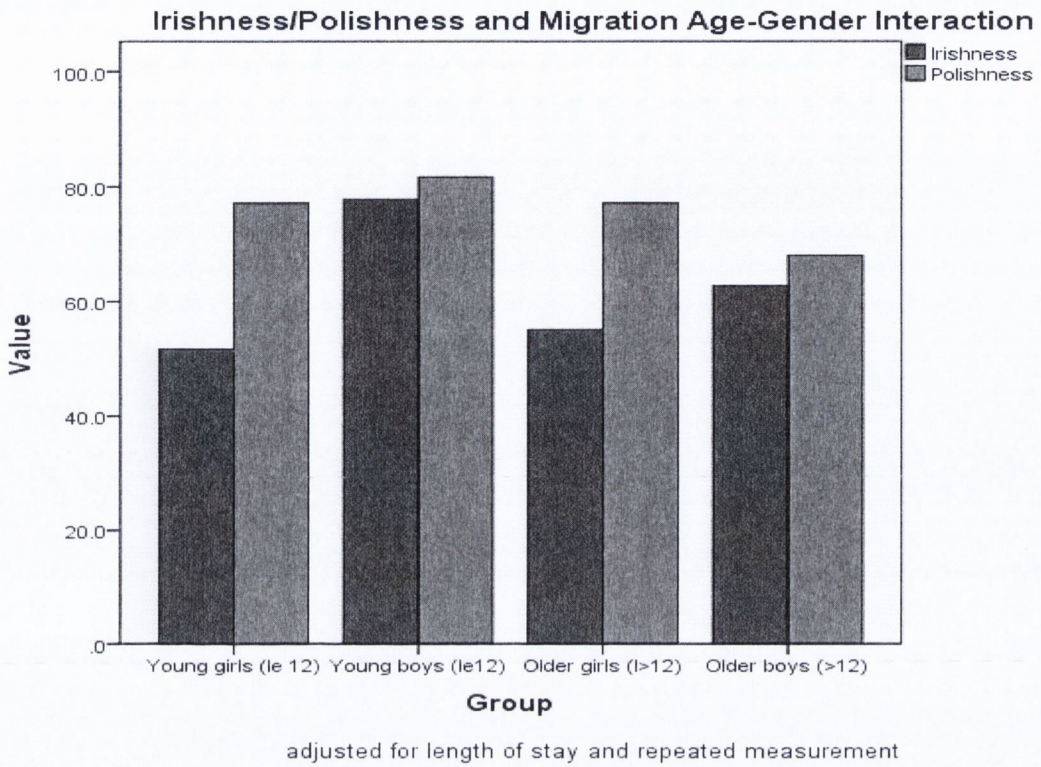


n=26 (15*+11**)

n= 15* (represents a number of respondents who participated in the VIA questionnaire in both rounds in T1 and T2)

n=11** (represents a total number of respondents who participated in the VIA questionnaire only one time)

Graph 7.2 Attitudes towards Irishness and Polishness in age/gender interactions



n=26 (15* +11**)

n= 15* (represents a number of respondents who participated in the VIA questionnaire in both rounds in T1 and T2)

n=11** (represents a total number of respondents who participated in the VIA questionnaire only one time)

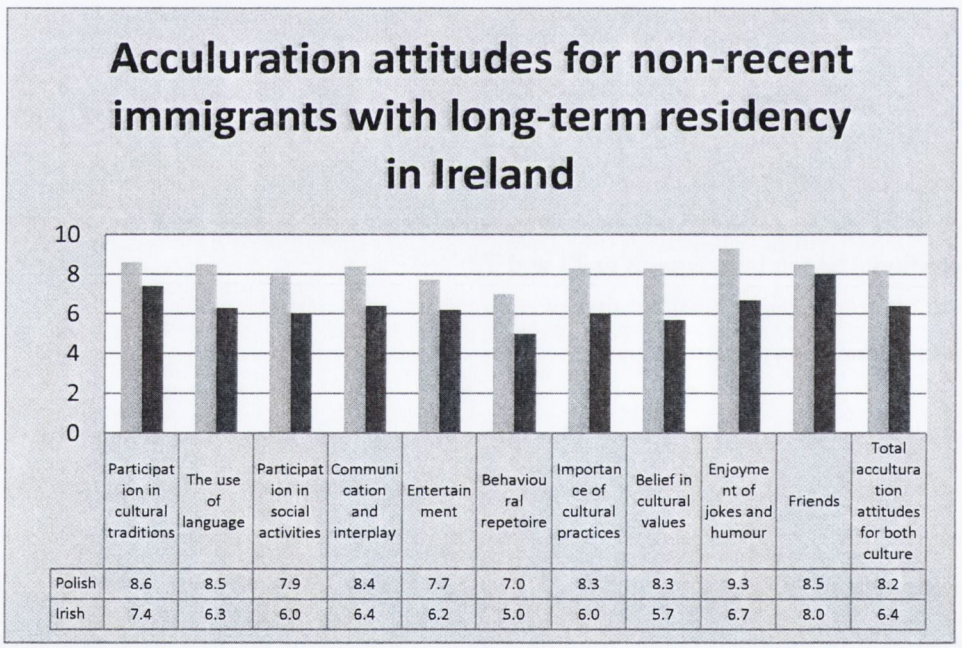
Graph 7.2 (see above) illustrates that age on arrival and gender matter, outlining that the *acculturation attitudes* differ significantly for boys and girls. More importantly, it appears that acculturation is far easier embraced by males, predominantly young boys.

As mentioned before the total number of respondents who took part in the VIA questionnaire totalled twenty-six. The detailed examination of the cohort of fifteen respondents in the longitudinal batch has been presented. Therefore, the analysis now focuses on the findings of the group of those eleven respondents, who took part in the VIA questionnaire only once.

7.3.11 Non-recent immigrants and their greater appreciation of Irishness

This particular group of Polish immigrant teenagers comprising non-recent immigrants offers another layer of interesting findings in terms of similarities and differences compared to the longitudinal batch of fifteen respondents, and complements previously presented findings. This group of eleven respondents deserves a special attention as gender balance was almost 50:50 here [five males and six females]. In addition it represents higher ranking of appreciation of Irish culture compared with the longitudinal batch (see Figure 7.16 below) Therefore, analyses have concentrated on providing possible explanations for the relatively greater appreciation of Irishness, which could relate to a long habitual residence and/or other factors.

Figure 7.16 Acculturation attitudes for non-recent Polish immigrant teenagers



	Participation in cultural traditions	The use of language	Participation in social activities	Communication and interplay	Entertainment	Behavioural repetoire	Importance of cultural practices	Belief in cultural values	Enjoyment of jokes and humour	Friends	Total acculturation attitudes for both culture
Polish	8.6	8.5	7.9	8.4	7.7	7.0	8.3	8.3	9.3	8.5	8.2
Irish	7.4	6.3	6.0	6.4	6.2	5.0	6.0	5.7	6.7	8.0	6.4

n=11

On closer examination of this cohort, these respondents at the time of their arrival in Ireland, were often naturally exposed to contact with natives because of the scarcity of other Poles in their new socio-cultural arena:

I was the only Polish girl in my class. There was great excitement around me but I didn't understand anything... there was nobody to help me because at the time, there was nobody else from Poland...

(Grażyna aged 14, 1st wave, 8 February 2010).

Sometimes other Poles happened to be in the same class and naturally, they facilitated newcomers because they were already familiar with the school environment and language, viz:

She [a Polish girl] *introduced me to all and... they* [Irish] *were very kind to me...I spoke through her. I was talking to her and she was translating my words...*

(Marek age 12, 1st wave, 25 February 2010).

Gathered narratives for this particular cohort outline that the friendliness and supportiveness of the schooling environment is one of the variables that positively increases successful acculturation. Similar observations were reverberated by other scholars (Devine 2011; Darmody and McCoy 2011). Young Polish informants repeatedly elaborated on how helpful it was to have somebody who understood their limitations and the issue of culture clash in the *acculturation process*. Their narratives outline the importance of peer-to peer and teacher-student relationships in creating a supportive and caring school environment, particularly during the initial transition period:

I was almost six, a teacher asked me what country I came from, and I said that I was from Poland...I didn't speak English but the teacher said that there was a Polish girl and if I wanted we could meet and she could help to translate.

(Fabian aged 12, 1st wave, 27 February 2010).

As shown, the relatively young age of interviewees at the time of arrival, and a long habitual residence seem to foster positive attitudes towards the mainstream culture. However, there are also other factors, which contribute towards a greater appreciation of Irishness.

Most Polish teenagers in the LASPIT cohort were exempt from learning Irish with some exceptions for those immigrants enrolled in Irish primary education. For them the *acculturation process*, apart from acquiring English, went in parallel with the main mainstream cohort. Additionally, the fact that they also had to learn Irish like the rest of the class, hid their 'otherness', and bridged the socio-cultural gap. Subsequently, they socialised into Irish groups smoothly, they befriended natives, and made true friendships.

The association of gender characteristics with interplay with peers, particularly natives, demonstrates a distinctive pattern in the LASPIT cohort, indicating that boys are quicker to be recruited into Irish groups. Even those young males who initially had some trouble with gaining new friends managed to overcome this problem via sport. For example Arkadiusz - 14 - year-old boy described his initial experience of being a new entrant to Ireland, indicating that the peer-to-peer relation between boys at this age can be very complicated, but sport is seen as a platform for mutual understanding:

Beata: *Did you want to make friends with natives? Did they want it?*

Arkadiusz: *I reckon that both sides were interested...*

Beata: *You said that in the beginning they kept their distance. What did you do that they* [Irish] *accepted you?*

Arkadiusz: *I started to play football with them ... I just played with them...*

Beata: *When you were playing -was it important to be good at it?*

Arkadiusz: *Yes, because then they wanted you* [in their team]... *If you are good at sport they* [natives] *will want you in their team...*

(Arkadiusz aged 14, 1st wave, 8 March 2010).

In this dialogue Arkadiusz discursively constitutes his position as *'somebody who is wanted'* because he is good at sport. Yet at the same time, his narratives provide more insights on the embodied bullying issue that takes place also in this environment. However, his identification with being a *'wanted one'* exempted him from the negative experiences encountered by those who failed to prove themselves as worthy ones. Andrzej, aged fifteen [four-year residency in Ireland], indicated that there are many other opportunities to meet and befriend natives:

I went to an Irish school – where we were welcomed and they offered some help with English. I had extra English classes for about three years...so they helped us a lot, they taught us English. The boy – another Irish classmate from my street also helped me. Teachers paid more attention to me as a person. They helped me with vocabulary and with different words if I didn't understand they explained things to me...Frankly, now I prefer to be here [in Ireland] *than in Poland, I have no idea why... I just prefer living in Ireland...I have only Irish friends, so we meet during school breaks, later I do my homework, then I have my training so I meet them and sometimes we play football or basketball.*

You have plenty of opportunities to befriend the Irish - you can use breaks at school and start to talk to them or during classes. For example, I'm with different people during Business classes and with a different crowd during Art classes. So you have many opportunities...

(Andrzej aged 15, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

Andrzej's account bears many similarities with other male's narratives not only in this group of eleven respondents but also across the total LASPIT cohort, demonstrating better relationships with the natives achieved through participation in sport activities.

These findings outline gender-specific relations and acculturation networking patterns, which seem to be less constrained and much simpler to navigate between teenage boys than for teenage girls because boys find various activities with other boys who have similar interests, they can 'do' together, and then become friends. The reported findings relate also to an individual's age upon arrival. Unquestionably, native males evaluate immigrant boys on the basis of their fitness and skills in sport.

In addition, an increased alertness to mainstream culture through participation in the same classes and activities fosters relationships between Polish newcomers and natives resulting in the positive *acculturation outcomes*. On the other hand, Polish females belonging to this particular group of eleven respondents as indicated by Grażyna, aged fourteen, were also exposed to the Irish culture because at the time of their arrival, they were usually the only Poles in the class.

The evidence gathered from Polish immigrant females however, provides a strikingly different picture:

Beata: *Do you recollect your first day at school?*

Tosia: *Yes, very well, I'll never forget it...because it was the first class, and everyone was asking questions but I couldn't answer those questions, so they started laughing at me, and I burst into tears, and went home. It was my first day...later it became worse...I mean I was alone in my class, there were no other foreigners in my class, it was very stressful for them and for me...*

Beata: *How did you cope with it?*

Tosia: *I tried to be similar to them. I tried not to distinguish myself. I started to wear make up to school – similar to the Irish girls but because of this they* [Irish girls] *didn't like me. You know if you look pretty – you know... you know that you look pretty and others know, too* [She refers to Irish boys in her school]. *They – I mean the Irish girls despised me for this...so when they learned that somebody was interested in me it was a drama! Irish boys are OK, but the Irish girls are horrific...those Irish girls who wear makeup have never accepted me but the other Irish girls tried to help me, despite the fact that communication between us was so complicated...*

Beata: *So what kind of people are your friends at school?*

Tosia: *Irish girls from my class - those who don't wear makeup - they understand me and they accepted that I'm not fluent in English.*

(Tosia aged 16, 1st wave, 9 April 2010).

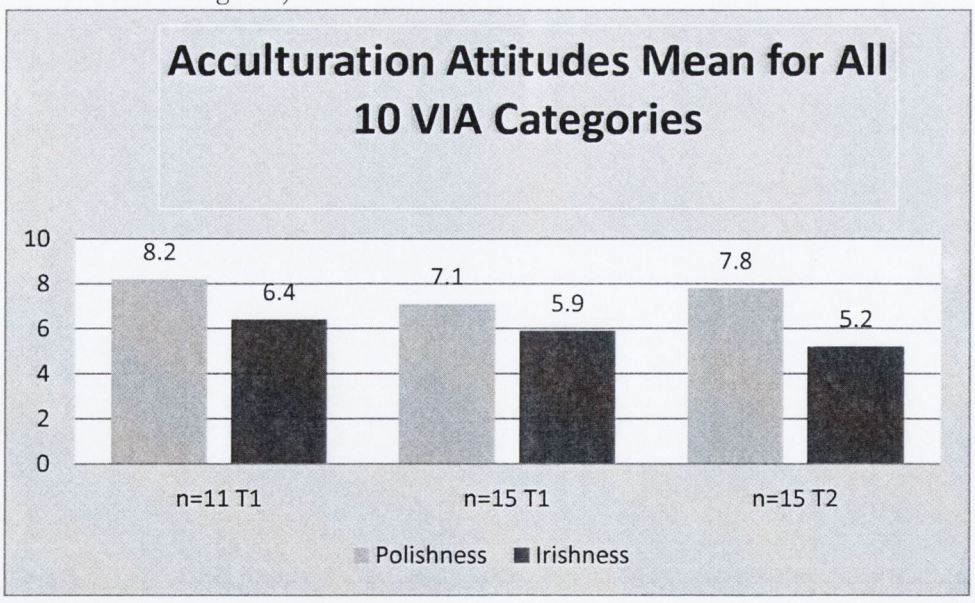
Tosia's narrative is one of many examples of what Ringrose (2008) calls 'competitive (hetero) sexualized aggression' so characteristic within a girlhood environment. From a gender perspective, the LASPIT data reveals a clear disparity between Polish immigrant boys and Polish immigrant girls. Particularly, Polish immigrant boys in the youngest age bracket reported being socialised into Irish peer groups mainly via sport, and reported being 'highly satisfied' in terms of relationships with the natives. This can partially be explained by the masculine hierarchy in schooling context (see Garratt 2010a, Garratt 2010b), while the variance in a girl's environment can be either very positive or very hostile. Ewa aged fourteen explains:

It depends on a person...some Irish are super, normal girls...some Irish envious that we are Polish girls and that we can chat to Polish boys because they consider Polish boys very handsome...

(Ewa aged 14, 1st wave, 21 February 2010).

Despite this evidence of competitiveness among teenage girls, all of them eventually befriended some Irish peers. This may serve as an explanation to the cross-case findings where acculturative mean for Irishness was the highest in this cohort of 11 respondents (see Figure 7.17 below).

Figure 7.17 Acculturation attitudes towards Polish and Irish culture (mean for all ten VIA categories)



n=11 (represents a total number of respondents who participated in the VIA questionnaire only once)
n= 15 (represents a number of respondents who participated in the VIA questionnaire in both rounds in T1 and T2)

Noticeably, in this cohort of 11 respondents (see Figure 7.17), Polishness scored the highest level in comparison to the longitudinal batch of Polish immigrant teenagers, reinforcing Rudmin's (2010) assertion that acquiring a second culture denotes diversity of findings, particularly at the individual level. The evidence presented in this chapter illustrates that the *acculturation outcomes* can be influenced by various factors such as age, gender, and context.

The cross-case analyses of *acculturation attitudes* of Polish immigrant teenagers, clearly outlines a greater embracement of Polishness, over time, despite variations in appreciation of the mainstream culture, pointing to the dynamics of acculturation domain specificity. Given the LASPIT dataset represented linearly, it could be argued that it is very unlikely that lines representing acculturation patterns would juxtapose for every single *acculturation attitude* variable captured by the Vancouver Index of Acculturation.

The case studies presented throughout this chapter depict the cultural dimension of acculturation with an emphasis on social and cultural identity visibly illustrating what it is like to be a Polish teenager in Ireland, and how the acculturation context shapes a child's agency and influences the *acculturation outcomes*. The cross-case analyses not only concentrated on Polish teenagers' *modus operandi* in their schooling context, albeit this was central to the study, but they also focused and captured the background information, including the nested context (e.g., family context, school context, and change in the individual's attitudes posed by migratory experience). By looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases, the LASPIT research has strengthened the validity and the relevance of the findings (Miles and Huberman 1994) outlining the diversity of the *acculturation outcomes* at the individual level (Rudmin 2010).

The LASPIT aimed to capture the transition moment and the *acculturation strategies*, which were achieved through the employment of the qualitative panel. The employment of qualitative methodology with an emphasis on narrative style helped to distinguish empirically *acculturation strategies*, and shed more light on acculturation as a learning process that facilitates socio-cultural adaptation.

The study found that Polish parents aware of their pedagogical support limitations in the Irish context, appreciated peer-to-peer supportiveness, particularly by other Polish students. For instance, a mother of twelve-year-old Tomasz outlined the importance of the Polish network in the new social arena:

The truth is that he also made friends only with Polish children, because he knew Polish better. There was a Polish boy who helped him along the way. Also a Polish girl helped him. He was lucky to have two Poles in his class. Later he started to spend more time with the Irish children. There is one Irish

boy called Peter and another called Steven who is his real friend. Steven is often in our house. He visits my child almost every day

(Elwira aged 38 South Dublin).

The friendliness of school management and provision of bilingual services was welcomed by Polish newcomers who in some instances were *'privileged'* to access such services. For example, fifteen-year old Andrzej explained that all Irish teachers were very kind and very helpful, but when they realised that he hardly understood anything, they asked a Polish teacher who was bilingual to help translate things for as long as it was needed:

They [teachers] *also paid more attention to me as a person. They helped me with vocabulary, with different words. If I didn't understand they explained things to me [...] There was also a Polish teacher so they asked her to help and to explain things to me.*

(Andrew aged 15, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

Polish newcomer students who were offered similar opportunities reported much easier transitions to the new context. Understandably, such bilingual provision was rare.

7.3.12 Dispersion of Polish immigrant teenagers' attitudes over time

In order to summarise the distribution of individual scale variables, a frequency test was run, which produced summary information such as minimum and maximum values of the range for Polish [pol] and Irish [ire] cultures. Summary information describes the central tendency of the frequency distribution and associated patterns among the cohort.

The arithmetic mean for the longitudinally analysed sample calculated using SPSS is 7.5 for the Polish culture and 5.5 for the Irish culture (see Table 7.2 below), while dispersion of Polish immigrant teenagers' attitudes over time is presented in Graph 7.3-Graph 7.5).

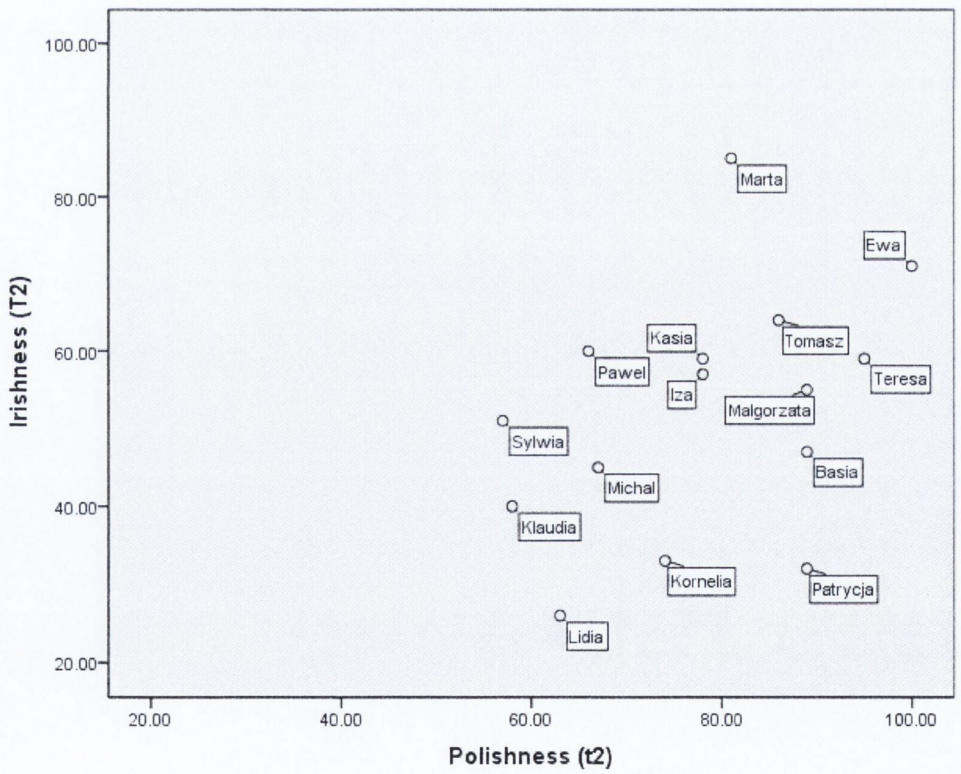
Table 7.2 Arithmetic mean for Polishness and Irishness for T1 and T2

	Polishness [pol1]= Polish heritage culture in T1 (summer 2010)	Polishness [pol2]= Polish heritage culture in T2 (spring 2011)	Irishness [ire1]= Irish culture in T1 (summer 2010)	Irishness [ire2] = Irish culture in T2 (spring 2011)
Mean	7.2	7.8	5.9	5.2
Std. Deviation	2.1	1.4	1.7	1.7

n = 15 Polish acculturating teenagers

Graph 7.3 below charts the attitudes of Polish teenagers towards the mainstream and the Polish cultures for the same cohort of 15 respondents:

Graph 7.3 Acculturative attitudes towards Irishness T2 plotted against Polishness in T2



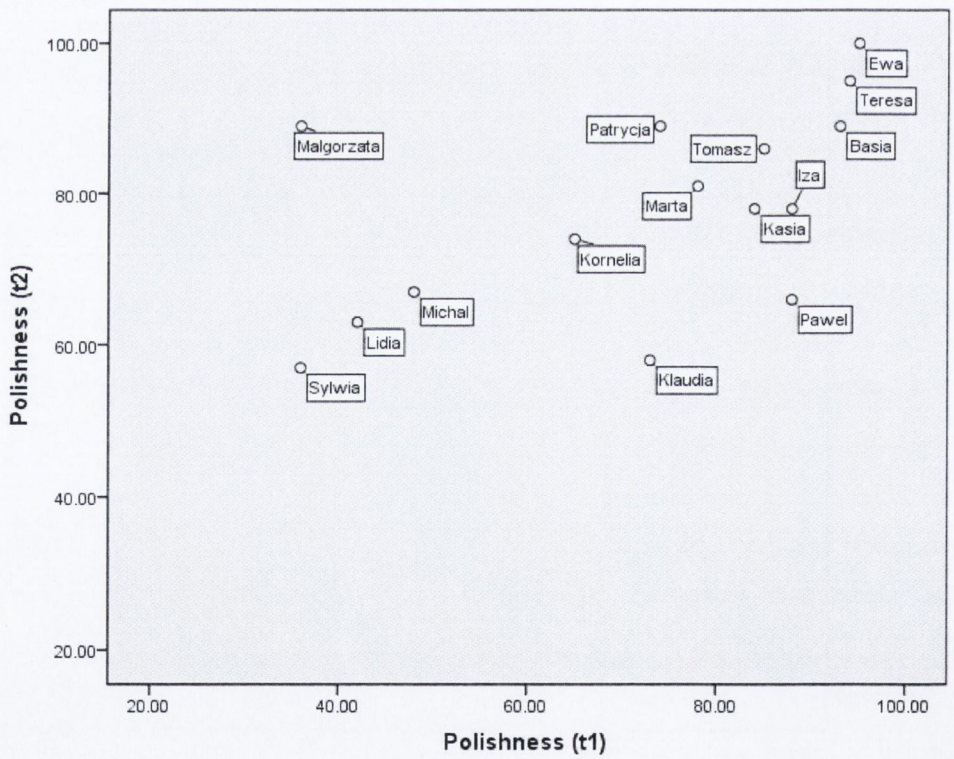
A closer examination of the acculturative attitudes in this sample (Graph 7.3) indicates that Marta, aged twenty appears to be more predisposed towards the Irish culture than the rest of the group. It might be explained by her persistent positive attitudes despite her initial difficult encounters during her transition time:

I was seventeen and I didn't like the idea of arriving here; but we landed here, and it was a completely different world for me. When I went to school – it was very hard...I didn't speak English, some girls were laughing at me saying "you arrived here and you do not know how to speak English". I sometimes heard them [the Irish girls] laughing behind me...it was awful...We had extra English, and the English teacher was very kind. She helped me a lot and overall she treated us Poles very well. If I had a problem with understanding or with translation, I could always count on her. I could always approach her and she always explained things to me...she was very kind...With time things have changed...It's important not to give up and learn English as soon as you can, and don't be afraid of people, because overall the Irish are very nice!

(Marta aged 20, 1st wave 9 April 2010).

The second Graph (7.4 below) charts, the attitudes of 15 Polish teenagers towards the Polish culture compared over time:

Graph 7.4 Acculturative attitudes towards Polishness in T1 versus Polishness in T2



Patrycja, Michał, Lidia, Sylwia and Kornelia, evidently started to appreciate their Polish heritage culture more whilst in Ireland. But the most significant increase in embracing Polishness is evident for Małgorzata. Her responses as exemplified below

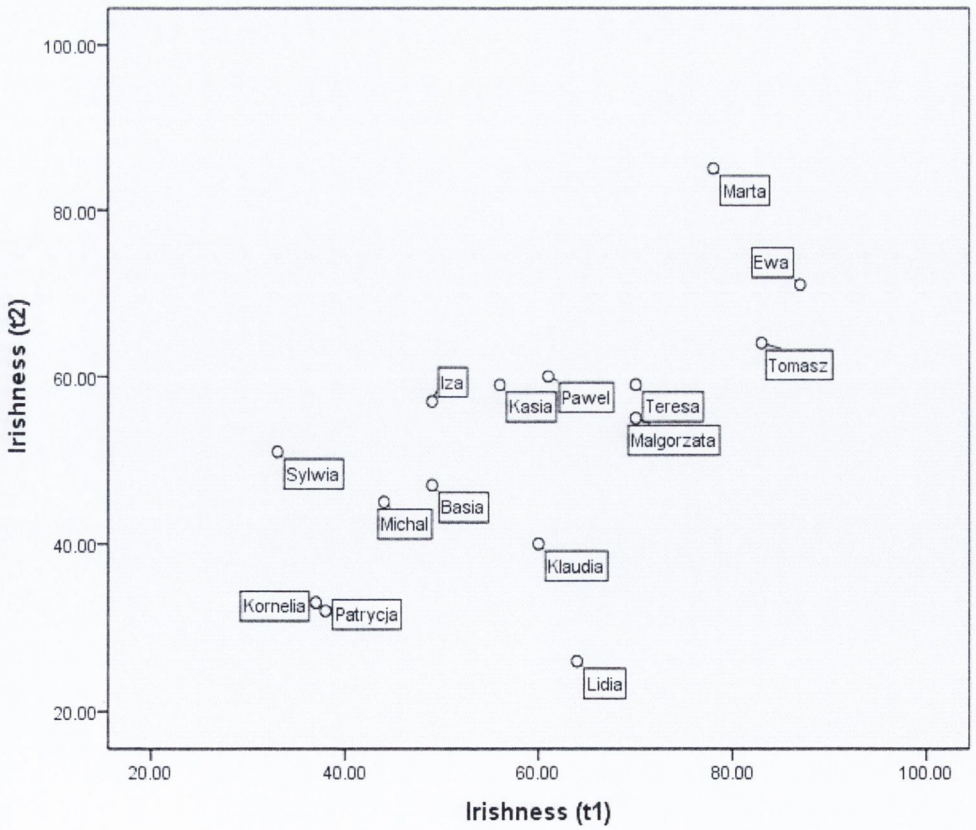
increased the variance for the total sample; at the same time this short excerpt tackles the complexities of the *acculturation process* faced by immigrant teenagers:

I was up-rooted but not rooted again. I'm like a rotting plant in the water which refuses to create fresh roots...However being an immigrant has some advantages: you learn to rely on yourself, you become more independent, sometimes it proves that you don't need anyone to "survive", you are self-sufficient. Being an immigrant distinguishes "sharks from sprats": sharks are those who adjusted easily and can survive regardless of the circumstances even if they pay for it by being lonely. By contrast, weak sprats are all those psycho-emotional well-beings who can be easily damaged, prone to self-cutting, depression, suicidal thoughts, anorexia, and all this other crap. However, also among sharks you can find weaker and stronger ones. Some of them will manage to befriend others...some will remain lonely.

(Małgorzata aged 17, 2nd wave, 8 May 2011).

Similar analysis was also conducted to compare attitudes to the mainstream culture. Graph 7.5 indicates Polish teenagers' attitudes towards the Irish culture over time:

Graph 7.5 Acculturative attitudes towards Irishness in T1 versus Irishness in T2



In Graph 7.5 Sylwia, Iza, and naturally Marta represent the newcomers who obviously put an emphasis on adjustment and integration. Unfortunately, the volume of this

dissertation does not allow citing every single excerpt gathered during the course of the LASPIT research project. However, two excerpts from the second and the exit interview with Sylwia are presented below because they outline the complexity of the *acculturation process* - expression and perception of the sense of belongingness at the intersection of both the mainstream and the heritage cultures:

The Irish seem to stick with the Irish. Immigrants are one group and the Irish constitute another group. Those who were willing to meet me, already invited me into their groups – and all of them were immigrants. They [the Irish] made no attempts to meet me or to make me feel welcomed. At the time of my arrival, I hardly spoke English but the other immigrants were very helpful. They arrived a few years ago, and they encountered this, too. It is different here. In Poland, you have one very good, close friend. Here you are in the group, among friends but these people come and go. The Irish here are also allowed to do what they want. They think so because they are here, it is their Motherland...they are entitled to be first, to get the best before the others...I'm convinced that the Irish are better equipped here that they have a better starting point here. Regardless of how much I may try, they will always be ahead of me. They already know all the ropes in comparison to us – the newcomers. They have language, they have their families here, and all their friends are here. They were brought up here and it gives them a better start...We the foreigners have to work twice as hard ...it is hard...I look at myself and my former life from a different perspective. Being here has broadened my knowledge. I can see that people in Poland have no idea about life abroad. They have no idea at what cost and how much work is required to adjust to a new cultural environment, to acquire language and try to fit into this 'western' life style. They see the surface – you earn your wages in Euro, you have nice clothes, you fly to Poland and back...I'm sure that many of them have no idea of how hard it really is....

(Sylwia aged 20, 2nd wave 25 September 2010).

I feel at home now, Ireland is my home now. I even decided to do a Master Degree later and maybe a PhD. Now, we've a lot of projects and I am still learning a lot…but I am one of them now.

(Sylwia aged 21, 3rd wave 24 December 2011).

It is clearly visible that adjustment to a new environment and linguistically different settings requires a lot of effort and brings certain changes in the lives of acculturating immigrants. Admittedly, change in our life is inevitable; however the constellation of changes and challenges embedded in the *acculturation process* are of no comparison to typical changes (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard 2001). Conversely, different people react differently to changes in their life. Transnational migration by virtue means a change in physical space, a change in socio-cultural environment, a change in a spoken language and most importantly – an impact on the reunited family changing their daily routine, daily habits, and the interplay:

Beata: *So how it is to be a Polish teenager in Ireland?*

Michał: *Tough...academic vocabulary, the way of expressing your thoughts, different culture. It all translates to my contact with others. I even found that I feel more comfortable being around other immigrants*

Beata: *Why is that?*

Michał: *Because they are also in the same boat as I am, they understand...but overall I can't just make friends like this with Irish...*

Beata: *Would you like? Do you care?*

Michał: *No I don't care. If Irish girls are around I may say something but I don't approach Irish boys. I don't feel comfortable...*

(Michał aged 17, 3rdwave, 2 June 2011).

Examination of independent contributions for each tested category illustrates that at the individual level, there are independent cultural orientations towards the mainstream and the heritage cultures. Acculturation involves change (Saldana 2003). 'In general emigration, as should be expected, by isolating the individual from the family and from the community, provokes individualization...but the degrees and varieties of individualization are numerous' (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918:51). In this context, different dynamics and different narratives as reported earlier have emerged. Older teenagers in age brackets (15-17) and (18-20) reported not being interested in cultural fit (except Sylwia - the outlier), while teenagers in the youngest age bracket (12-14) were more accommodating, willing to learn as quickly as possible in order to fit in.

It is debatable whether one can generalise from this qualitative study; nevertheless, one can definitely draw a migratory experience pattern on the foot on similarities and reoccurrence of certain aspects of migration and the *acculturation process.* Polish youth experienced a constellation of profound changes as a result of migration. Interestingly, the dichotomy of this process reveals that social exclusion occurs not only in the country of settlement. While Polish newcomers are sometimes excluded from the Irish youth groups because they are *immigrants*, they often experience exclusion in their country of origin because they are *emigrants.*

They [Polish peers] *think that I am a "smart ass" who left the Fatherland, migrated with Mom, and now has plenty of money. In addition, they are convinced that all Poles here are earning their money by washing dirty dishes in the pubs - but as you know, it is not a case.*

(Maciej aged 20, 1st wave, November 2009).

Such polarisation is not easy for any young person notwithstanding migrants. It is often viewed by Poles themselves as very unjust. Admittedly, the awareness of Polish ethnicity and language limitations came as a shocking discovery upon arrival in Ireland therefore, while re-visiting Poland; Polish teenagers were even more amazed by the hostility and envy of those who for many years were considered their real friends:

I don't like to fly to Poland any more. I'm often in touch via the internet only. When I visit Poland, I visit my two friends only. Others...well I wear different clothes, we [as a family] *have more money...so I'm considered different...*

(Lidia aged 14, 2nd wave, 28 June 2010).

Finally, the longitudinal aspect allowed observing that within social contexts not only newcomers acculturate and modify their behaviour – other social actors given time also slowly change and redraw their boundaries. The excerpts from three waves of one-to-one interviews with Teresa perfectly exemplify this:

Teresa: *Well – these* [other foreigners] *girls have changed and I've changed during this year, this big barrier collapsed, and I started to talk to them*

Beata: *Do you spend some time with some Irish peers?*

Teresa: *No, it doesn't work with the Irish yet...*

(Teresa aged 14, 1st wave, 14 February 2010).

Eight months later, Teresa is still struggling with friendships with natives:

Teresa: *As you know, at the beginning, I didn't want to stay here. If somebody offered me an option of returning to Poland, I wouldn't be sure of my answer. Before it was clear – I'd have said "yes" – now I'm not sure if this is the case.*

Beata: *What makes you feel like that?*

Teresa: *Life is easier here! It is easier for my parents who lead a less stressful life. They're happier here.*

Beata: *What about you?*

Teresa: *I still have difficulties in having a good relationship with the Irish girls. They tend to form groups in the class. These groups are very hermetic. You can hardly break or enter such a group. More importantly, there is no interest in members of one group in people from another group. They hardly even talk to one another.*

(Teresa aged 14, 2nd wave, 20 October 2010).

During the third wave, the patterns of socio-cultural engagement, particularly in the schooling context, have changed:

Beata: *What about peers from school - any updates?*

Teresa: *Actually, the Irish twin girls arrived to our class, and it changed everything. They started to talk to me. It's been now two months and we are doing very well. One twin can be quite moody but you know – no one is perfect.*

Beata: *Are you happy with this new relationship?*

Teresa: *'Course I am! We walk the dogs together, because I also have a dog. We go out together, too.*

Beata: *How has this relationship affected your relations with the other Irish girls?*

Teresa: *It made me feel stronger, more bold...more outspoken – and not in the bad way but in a friendly way.*

Beata: *Would you like to have more Irish friends?*

Teresa: *Yes, I would... Actually, I need to tell you that the entire class has changed – all those little groups are breaking down and we are slowly becoming one whole class.*

(Teresa aged 15, 3rd wave, 20 May 2011).

This excerpt from the exit interview with Teresa, vividly illustrates that the *acculturation process* is contextual. It also points towards Saldana's (2003) claim that 'gender' and 'school' are more than constructs - they are cultures, and acculturating teenagers as the social actors are exposed to societal change not only as individuals; but also relational and hierarchical realms, within and between, multiple cultures and subcultures. This surfaced in American research and it is also visible in the Irish intercultural context.

7.4 Conclusions

The cross-case analyses helped to examine variation in the *acculturation outcomes* through identification of aspects that influence acculturation change over time, indicating that the *acculturation outcomes are* not fixed, but rather volatile. In the LASPIT cohort, the change became evident post the initial interview. Moreover, three waves of qualitative interviews over a period of two years brought an array of interesting findings concerning acculturating teenagers' socio-cultural repertoire. By and large, in the sampled group of acculturating teenagers, there is a visible pattern of increased awareness and appreciation of Polish cultural heritage and Polish identity consciousness, accompanied by a stronger embracement of the Polish heritage values in comparison to the Irishness mirroring positively the orthogonal acculturation

model (Sayegh and Lasry 1993). The VIA output characterised by the maintenance of strong ethnic identity, may at first glance, be mistaken for the 'straight-line assimilation' model. However, qualitative data 'put the story' behind the numbers indicating micro segmented, selected acculturation (see Rumbaut 2008) with the emergence of bicultural identities in some instances. Still as shown in Graph 7.1 and Graph 7.2, the *acculturation process* is not only highly contextual but also age, gender and length of stay dependent. These findings endorse Raumbaut's and Rudmin's understanding that while acculturation is examined at the individual level, interactions between various social actors in a wider collective context mean that, the findings apply to group levels because peer groups operate within a relational and hierarchical realm and legitimise certain models of behaviour (see King-O'Riain 2006). It is evident that Polish immigrant teenagers growing up in Ireland, similar to other immigrant youth exposed to transnational migration, have to adapt to competing cultural models and social practices that encompass complicated relationships among identity, race, ethnicity, and inequality (King-O'Riain 2008; Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008).

Chapter 8

Key findings, discussion and limitations of the LASPIT research project

8.1 Introduction

The research findings presented in this doctoral dissertation offer a 'glimpse' of the *acculturation process;* addressing the complex dynamics that underlie and flow from the contemporary transnational migratory decisions both in the home and the host country. By contextualising acculturation on the examples of the 34 Polish teenager's experiences, the LASPIT answered the main question of what it is like to be a Polish teenager in the 'Celtic Tiger' and post-'Celtic Tiger' Ireland. It also describes acculturation experiences of Polish immigrant teenagers in Ireland (based on the accessed sample) longitudinally, from both time and context perspective.

Building on Berry's work the research focused on the *acculturation process* with the aim to test Berry's paradigm in the intercultural Irish context. Hence, the adapted VIA questionnaire, which design reflected low and high acculturation scenario that recreated Berry's fourfold acculturation paradigm (based on bilinear measurements with ten distinctive acculturation categories) was purposively employed in the LASPIT research. Examination of the *acculturation process* of Polish immigrant teenagers took into account: the intercultural contexts, child's agency, and schooling context. It allowed the exploration of the linkages between theory and practice, subsequently testing Berry's theorem in culturally diverse Ireland.

Berry's model did not work as intended, unequivocally disproving Berry's conceptualisation of acculturation orientations perceived simultaneously as attitudes, strategies, and outcomes. The LASPIT research project has shown that Berry's theorem does not stand up in the contemporary globalised area, because transnational migrants navigate between multi-diverse, multi-layered contexts at the intersection of acculturation and interculturalism resulting in 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007), and hybridity. The emergence of orthogonal acculturation (retaining/letting go of the culture of origin while independently learning about/rejecting the new culture (Portes 2004; Portes and Raumbat 2001) indicates that neither culture is conceptualised as fixed and static variable nor the *acculturation attitudes, acculturation strategies, acculturation outcomes.* Transnational immigrants can, but do not have to, identify with the host

culture (Sayegh and Lasry 1993). In this context, this chapter endeavours to discuss the LASPIT findings, in order to acknowledge the limitations of the research alongside implications for further research, policy, and practice.

The content of this chapter takes the following format: an overview of the LASPIT key findings is provided first. This is followed by a discussion and the potential theoretical and empirical contribution of the LASPIT research project. The final section outlines the limitations of the study and points towards implications arising from this research project.

8.2 LASPIT: Summary of key findings and conclusions

The LASPIT data suggest that migration stories and 'life trajectories cannot be understood without taking into account the inner economies of families whose collective need often dominate those of the individual' (Bertaux and Kholi 1984:220) bringing our attention to the composition of 'family' and 'home'. This dissertation answered the puzzling question of why so many Polish families, who were often in paid employment, had respectable jobs and had their own accommodation in Poland, uprooted their teenage children, and moved to Ireland to 'start from scratch' their new life in linguistically and culturally different settings. As evidenced in Chapter 4, they were lured by the 'Goldrush labour market' (Wickham *et al.* 2009). The findings show that the integrity of marriage and family as a unit was tested to the limits by the migratory experience, and that the majority of Polish children were separated from their parents and siblings for extensive periods, and as a result suffered emotionally and experienced the ambiguous loss. Boss (1999) argues that ambiguous loss blurs family boundaries, causing people to question their most intimate relationships. Drawing on the set of narratives accumulated by the LASPIT research project, it is noticeable that separated children however, were somehow more affected by ambiguous loss than their parent(s). It was particularly visible during qualitative interviews when each interviewee provided a precise date and timeframe of the separation period. This pattern appeared consistently among separated children irrespective of the age and gender. Through these accounts, the LASPIT exemplifies the implications of parental migratory decisions on teenage children, highlighting the need for a thorough consideration of both leaving children behind and uprooting them. The LASPIT data also shed more light on the importance of remittances and Irish Child Benefit (Chapter 4 section 4.6); but as evidenced, emotional detachment,

and long-term separation outweighed economic reasons and in many instances triggered unplanned family reunification.

The experience of separation from and reunification with their parents in conjunction with the status lowering of their parents in the host country requires very dynamic and demanding family relations particularly in the recessional , post-'Celtic Tiger' Ireland. Despite visiting Poland regularly (usually twice a year), despite modern technologies (internet and social media), immigrants are deeply affected by the geographical distance, progressing adolescence and exposure to new cultures. In this context, the LASPIT data show atypical gendered behaviour concerning emotional expressions. Polish immigrant girls were found to be less expressive emotionally than boys. It was particularly visible in the retrospective narratives pertaining to the separation period. Polish boys talked openly and with great detail about their feelings when they were left behind, whilst Polish girls did not engage in this aspect of migratory experiences, usually closing 'this entire chapter of their life' with a casual statement outlining the timeframe of the separation and focusing on arrival in Ireland. Qualitative interviews uncovered another uncommon behaviour of Polish newcomers. Polish boys appeared to confide in their mothers in relation to bullying encounters or other matters. Polish girls completely avoided this subject (e.g., bullied Lidia or Kasia) explaining that their émigré parents '*had enough on their plate*'.

In terms of language acculturation, association between English level proficiency and the *acculturation process* was found. Empirical analyses of the LASPIT dataset have shown that low English language proficiency hindered the development of Polish teenagers' social network of relationships, who were somewhat more exposed to social exclusion, bullying, and the negative social mirroring particularly in the school context. This was visible in the new arrivals' *acculturation strategies*, in various instances when the newcomer students were unable to 'break through' in terms of their social interaction, particularly with their Irish peers, while those who had some level of competency in English appeared to experience the 'less rocky' pathways. This was particularly prominent in cases comprising newcomers moved to the lower years due to limited English, which added to the notion of otherness, and in many instances caused an aged-based identity clash.

The LASPIT found a few cases where Polish newcomers were bullied on the grounds of their nationality, their accent, and their origin; with girls experiencing bullying more often at school, while boys being exposed to various confrontations outside the school environment (see Chapter 6 section 6.3.4 and 6.3.8).

This research also found a pattern of bilingual dystrophy encountered among Polish immigrant teenagers. English language dystrophy seems to increase after

holidaying in Poland, while Polish lingual dystrophy is more complex because it relates mainly to the academic language, and in this regard a consistent pattern was found across the LASPIT cohort. Polish teenagers reported that with time, the Irish education furnished them with academic English, which resulted in significant dystrophy in Polish academic language. This is also one of the reasons why my interviewees are keen to access university programmes here in Ireland. Low competency in Polish academic language would affect their entry exams to higher education in Poland. The large percentage of Polish émigré parents is educated to third level with high proficiency in Polish academic language but low competency in English. Quite contrary, their children on average have quite good fluency in colloquial English and English academic language but very low proficiency in Polish academic language although they are well able to speak and write in colloquial Polish. This is mainly because since they were born they were taught Polish back in Poland, and they still speak Polish in their homes in Ireland (see Chapter 7, section 7.3.2). Kempny (2010) argues that the most powerful resource for maintaining the solid boundaries of one's culture is the use of native language in everyday life. There is indicative evidence of this in the LASPIT data.

The narratives gathered over the course of the LASPIT research project indicate that Polish immigrant teenagers hold high academic aspiration for the future, considering tertiary education as 'a must' in terms of their educational attainment (see Chapter 5 section 5.5.6). However, due to limited English language competency and the streaming process to the 'Ordinary Level' subjects, some of them may not avail of all the options available to the 'Higher Level' Leaving Certificate graduates (see Chapter 5 section 5.5). This may have further implications as Polish immigrants may not be able to access higher education first-choice programmes.

Low English proficiency has also an adverse effect on the relations with peers in the context of ethnicity and the age-based identity. The LASPIT identified a strong presence of belongingness issues, otherness, and the negative social mirroring notwithstanding the acculturative stress. In this context, the experience of outerism and otherness emerged in correlation with gender. Analyses of the LASPIT dataset indicate that in terms of the *acculturation process*, boys appear to have less problematic encounters with their school peers, and they are often socialised into groups via sport or music. It seems that the younger the male entrant is, the smoother the *acculturation process* is. Various hindrances related to intercultural awareness were overcome more naturally. This pattern was particularly visible among 12-14 year-old males (see Graph 7.2), nevertheless it was identical for all boys. 'Testing the ground approach' was observed among older male teenagers aged 15-20 because they had already formed

their own social standing in relation to fitting in culturally. Yet the LASPIT data indicates that with time male teenagers in this age range progressed socially mainly through sports activities and a shared interest in computers and social media (see Chapter 6, paragraph 6.3.7).

The *acculturation process* of the Polish immigrant females is in salient contrast to the male counterparts. As evidenced in Chapters 6 and 7, analysis of female narratives indicate that girls struggle to navigate through 'the culture of (hetero) sexualized competition and competitive (hetero) sexualized aggression' (Ringrose 2008). While Polish boys 'connected' with and built successful networking through the usage of the internet; girls reported that social media were at times used for cyber bullying and a mechanism for various social exclusions.

The LASPIT dataset suggests that Polish teenage girls in general are more likely to report problematic encounters with their school peers and often express their dissatisfaction with the relational engagement with peers[31]. Polish immigrant girls reported that their identity as foreigners was easily identifiable by their accent, which added in some contexts, to the overall feeling of exclusion and otherness. This pattern emerged particularly among recent newcomer students with very low English proficiency were exclusionary effect explicitly manifested through various practices predominantly in the school context (e.g., allocation of newcomers of the same age-group and nationality from senior level to junior level, segregation of students in terms of the Irish attendance; ELSP attendance and the profound omission of contemporary multicultural society visible in the content of the Irish textbooks etc.). The experience of otherness can be very complex and problematic, characterised by the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion among peers, signifying the notion of belonging or not belonging to a particular peer-group. This notion is naturally negotiable but it appears to be grounded by the experiences and it is context specific. Some variations in the *acculturation attitudes* among Polish immigrant teenagers attributable to gender and language competency, but mainly to contextual factors, length of stay, gender and child's agency were found. Additionally, the fact that Polish teenagers sometimes had to suppress their culture in order to fit in, for instance, where they were not allowed to use their mother tongue, raises questions about the approach taken within the Irish educational system, and poses questions regarding social inclusion.

Arguably, narratives presented in this dissertation show tension between ascribed collective social identities derived from acculturation experience (e.g., being assigned to lower age classes) and the individual teenager's identity. The clash between

[31] Similar observations were reverberated by Suárez-Orozco (2001; 2008), who found that although immigrant female youth adjust better particularly in terms of education they often express a higher level of dissatisfaction and sadness in comparison to the male counterparts.

the individual and collective identity reproduces the symbolic meanings of clash between the age-based identity and the social identity through which newcomers are perceived. Polish teenagers' accounts encourage the emergence of a better understanding of the complexities involved in the *acculturation process* at the time. They highlight problems with the definition and empirical identification of first-generation Polish immigrant teenagers, who contrary to their parents (also first-generation immigrants), have no notion of returning to Poland. The majority envisage staying in Ireland for the near future. Similar findings were reported by Portes and Rumbaut (2004:1162) who showed how members of a generation can react differently to the common historical stimulus, forming different "generational units" within the same actual generation.

Whilst Polish émigré parents are genealogically defined and counted, Polish immigrant teenagers struggle to find themselves. They are still Polish but they know that they are somehow different from their parents, from other Poles born in Ireland and from their Polish peers, often former friends who stayed in Poland and never migrated because their parents were never attracted by the Irish 'Goldrush labour market' (Wickham *et al.* 2009). The majority of Polish immigrant teenagers were raised in Poland. Many years of enculturation, of learning their Polish culture naturally resulted in a strong connection to the cultural background. It is apparent that the Polish immigrants maintain a strong ethnic identity but they are also receptive to the new learning environment in the host culture (see Chapter 7, particularly Graph 7.3 to Graph 7.5). Thus, in these widely varying contexts the way young immigrants come to define themselves is significant, revealing much about their social attachments and detachments as well as how, and where they perceive themselves to fit in the society in which they are its newest members defined by sociologists as the '1.5 generation' (Portes and Rumbaut 2004).

It is argued that 'the imagery is suggestive: international migration is a powerful and transformative force, producing profound social changes not only in the sending and receiving societies, but, above all, among the immigrants themselves and their descendants' (*ibid.*:1162). That is why acculturating individuals sometimes take an informed decision of not fitting in or experience a lack of fit in particular contexts (see Chapter 6 section 6.3.11). In this regard, the LASPIT research shows how newcomers define and relate to a mismatch, which refers to the inability to identify with the dominant values of society or rather, with what is perceived to be the dominant values of society. Polish teenagers pointed out on many occasions that they are not interested in full assimilation. At the same time, they acquired a certain cultural competence that enabled them to function in the Irish intercultural encompassment. In parallel, as

evidenced (in Diagram 7.1), they strived for meaningful friendships with the natives. Polish immigrant teenagers were welcomed by other Poles, and by other immigrants, but as shown in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 - they were not always 'welcomed' or were 'kindly ignored' by the Irish. This shows how acculturation in some cases reinforces, and in others weakens social bonds and social cohesion, creating various types of relations (see Douglas 1996; Rumbaut 2008).

The LASPIT dataset has shown tensions between visibility and invisibility of the heritage culture, particularly in the context of Polish immigrants' 'heteroglossic repertoires' (Busch 2012). This applies iteratively across the entire data implying that acculturation is 'partially a matter of personal choice' (Phalet and Kosic 2006) but at the same time it is profoundly determined by various contexts and globalism of culture. As argued by King-O'Riain (2006), certain cultural markers signify people. Here Polishness is manifested in the way of thinking (invisible aspect) and by the culture performance (visible aspect), while the acquired aspects of the mainstream culture are validated by the everyday experience particularly in the school context. In this instance, the standpoint of the majority of Polish respondents is deeply embedded in their Polish cultural heritage because of the Polish parents who are the main culture carriers deeply interested in maintenance and cultivation of Polishness. Successively Polish teenagers socio-cultural predilection is primarily derived from their Polish upbringing and from Polish values transmitted through the generations with the exception of a need to have Irish friends (see Figure 7.15).

Overall, the LASPIT data uncovered some interesting findings challenging the popular view of frequent journeys of Poles between the host country and the home country. The study found that the majority of Polish families reunited because of emotional, not economic reasons. Finally while Polish children had to, or more precisely were 'forced to' follow their parents to Ireland; presently, Polish émigré parents seem to be 'entrapped' and have to stay in recessional Ireland, because of their children who do not wish to be uprooted again. As discussed earlier, migratory decisions affected not only Polish parents but also their offspring. Arguably, power disparities within the reunited family bring to light serious implications, positioning over time, the well-being of uprooted teenagers as a top priority and outweighing economic benefits. Conclusively, the LASPIT finding indicates that bringing teenagers to the country of settlement significantly reduces émigré parents' mobility (see section 4.7). A deepening recession and a natural conclusion that Polish reunited families similar to many other EU immigrants as 'free movers' (Ignatowicz 2010) will not stay in recessional Ireland seemed obvious. The LASPIT data however shows the opposite. Having opportunities to move freely within the EU, Polish immigrant

parents are reluctant to explore new options including returning to Poland because they are already familiar with the emotional cost of uprooting associated with migration (see Chapter 4 section 4.5). Subsequently, it provides us with a 'glimpse of the dilemma' between material possessions, economic well-being and emotional cost of achieving it. Thus, this finding generally sketches how a one-off decision is unlikely to be re-made even under changed socio-economic circumstances. It also shows that motives and goals can change over time.

8.3 Discussion and contribution

While the broad literature on transnational studies mainly focuses on the economic nature of the new migration, this study moved beyond previous conceptualisation by paying renewed attention to social factors influencing migration and giving centrality to households and families as analytical units. The LASPIT research project focused on Polish family reunification in Ireland and examined acculturation as an 'individual process' (Rudmin 2010) by capturing Polish immigrants' acculturative experiences and describing how Polish immigrants are constructed at Irish schools at the divergence and convergence of culture and habitus, challenged by bilingualism and multiculturalism, which highlighted an issue of identity and cultural fit. This issue also emerged in American context posing significant problem with the 'definition, depiction and measurement of the immigrant "first generation," a large segment of which is composed of persons who migrated as children and who are often regarded as members of the "second generation' (Portes and Rumbaut 2004:1161). Discussion of the *acculturation process*, although applied to a relatively small group of Polish immigrant youth (n=34) allows for a critical review of Berry's acculturation paradigm introduced in Chapter 2.

Berry's model endorses *integration,* as the most desirable and healthy outcome for immigrants, in effect patronising others (Sakamoto 2007). Subsequently, Berry's acculturation theorem at root is apolitical in nature and largely ignores structural factors affecting individuals in their dealing with unfamiliar culture (Ager and Strang 2004; Rogler 1994; Sakamoto 2007; Rudmin 2010). Berry's assumption that integration is the goal appears to be no longer relevant in our multicultural, global societies. For many transnational immigrants, the global is 'a blend of home' and the site of orientation. Berry's four generic types of acculturation have been disputed on the grounds that they do not cover all options, and that they are not logically exhaustive because acculturating respondents endorsed more than two types of acculturation, which are defined at the construct level to be mutually exclusive

(Rudmin and Ahmadzadeh 2001; Rudmin 2003). In addition, The LASPIT data has shown that the *acculturation attitudes, acculturation strategies,* and *acculturation outcomes* are completely separate albeit intrinsically connected elements (see Chapters 6 and 7). It is crucial to make this distinction because academics tend to use the *acculturation strategies, attitudes, and outcomes* interchangeably thus failing to examine them individually, and failing to show how they account for variations in the *acculturation outcomes.*

Polish immigrant teenagers during their *acculturation process* as evidenced (in Chapter 6 in section 6.3.5) employ various *acculturation strategies.* Over time and with response to cultural diversity they change their *acculturation attitudes* connecting and re-connecting with diverse aspects of cultures (see Chapter 7 section 7.3.1-7.3.10) during their *acculturation process.* The *acculturation strategies* exemplified in Chapter 6 are particularly visible during the transition period pointing to the conclusion that newcomers are very resourceful e.g., they use their co-ethnic peers to form ties and to 'survive in the jungle of English vocabulary'. If this option is not available, sport/social media/or computer games is seen as a common language and bonding platform.

Through the various *acculturation strategies* (e.g., by invoking cultural norms/speaking English, using equivalents of Polish names in English/ imitating the Irish hair-style and make-up/natives body language, outfits and behavioural display/or acting in typically Polish ways), Polish immigrant teenagers actively exercised their social identity through the belonging, or the desire to belong and to be part of the particular peer-group. It was particularly evident, when in looking for patterns within a particular context, similar themes from the LASPIT data were verified by contrasts for the opposite cultural context (see Chapter 7; Polishness versus Irishness) as advocated by Yin (1984). High adherence to Polish heritage and openness towards cultural diversity constructs the 'bricolage effect' (Kempny 2010) that demarcates the crossroads of acculturation - the 'delicate dance over continuity and change' (Alam 2012).

The LASPIT findings show that the *acculturation outcome* coined by Berry (1997) *marginalisation* was not present in the LASPIT cohort, while *assimilation, integration, and separation* often overlapped one another. Del Pilar and Udasco (2004) and Knight *et al.* (2009) reported similar findings, debunking the validity of marginalization perceived by Berry as rejections of both the mainstream and the heritage culture. More importantly, it became clear that the *acculturation strategies* and *acculturation outcomes* cannot be identified as fixed in time because they depend on the *acculturation attitudes* and contextual factors that are not fixed in time either. All of them are 'processually produced' (Hockey and James 2003) – not only have they temporal

dimension – they are also subject to fragmentation (e.g., segmented/orthogonal acculturation/any direction/any level) and change over time.

Although, historically acculturation was understood as a linear process of shedding one's culture of origin while acquiring the traits of host culture (unidimensional/bidimensional assimilation); presently acculturation is conceptualised as an orthogonal process of retaining/letting go of the culture of origin while independently learning about/rejecting the new culture (Portes 2004, Portes and Raumbat 2001; Rumbaut 1997; Ryder *et al.* 2000; 2003; Sakamoto 2007; Zea *et al.* 2003) conceptualising acculturation as multidimensional phenomena and multivariate phenomena (Sayegh and Lasry 1993; Noels *et al.* 2004). In this model, immigrants identify with both the heritage and the host cultures without any detriment to their full participation in the host society (Sayegh and Lasry 1993).

As evidenced, whilst the immigrant teenagers learn how to navigate in their new socio-cultural context, they also undergo re-definition of Polishness through the re-construction of their identity via exposure to different cultural and social norms. This highlights the fluidity and the temporality nature of ascribed identities influenced by acculturation experience. Young people shop around, visit, and re-visit different stages of identity formation. They explore and take what suits them best constantly checking how this new ascribed identity resonates with their habitus and fits into their particular contexts. This fluidity in identity formation and behavioural acculturation patterns strengthen the conclusion that identity is definitely not fixed and it has multiple dimensions at any given moment in relation to the different realms of social context (see also Burrell 2009; Jenkins 2004; Kempny 2010; Saldana 2003). It also links contextual conditions, and the *acculturation process* with a mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1979), which influence the *acculturation attitudes*, and impacts on the *acculturation outcomes*.

In this case, the LASPIT dataset shed more light on the relationship between context, interculturalism and the *acculturation outcomes*, indicating that even those immigrants who are willing to integrate might find themselves limited or even rejected by the mainstream society (depending on the context and the specificity of the accessed sample). This supports the contention that the nested context and individual characteristics may affect positively or negatively the *acculturation outcomes* (see case studies in Chapters 6 and 7). Concomitantly, the notion of individual and collective emotional discourses attached to particular positive and negative acculturative encounters create a platform, in which identity, belongingness, and individuals' stances are constantly negotiated and re-constructed (see also Rumbaut 2008).

At the intersection of habitus and intercultural context, Polish immigrant teenagers undergo the *acculturation process*, and develop their own *acculturation strategies*, which are flexible, changeable, and most importantly informed by immigrants' *acculturation attitudes*. This new perspective encroaches on the process of achieving and maintaining congruence between individual characteristics and awareness that social structure expects newcomers to perform up to certain standards causing interruption and consequently acculturation stress (Burke 1991). In tandem, the social context provided by immigrant parents plays a decisive role in the adaptation outcomes of their children (Portes and Rumbaut 2005:991).

The LASPIT data show the powerful influence of the heritage culture, and the choices made by first-generation of immigrants who contrary to their parents, in many instances resemble the '1.5 generation' (Portes and Rumbaut 2004) or second-generation of immigrants. Given the rapid socio-cultural change accompanying immigrants, it is inevitable that familiarity and skills associated with the heritage culture are not easily transferable into the new culture in which immigrants are expected to socialise and participate (Brislin 2000; Dhruvarajan 1993). At a social level, young teenagers' cultural repertoire is constantly shaped by the multicultural context in which they live. Polish teenagers' cultural repertoire is not static because immigrant youth try to define themselves in terms of sociability and friends. They act and behave more like the Polish at home (hence visible Polish cultural retention), and change their behavioural repertoire within their school context or outside school context if the need arises.

Observed longitudinally deterioration or improvement of the *acculturation attitudes* towards ethnicity, identity and other aspects of culture, shows how the socio-cultural environment such as school, influence the making and re-making of identity, which has temporal dimension. The individual's characteristics along with the context profoundly shape each individual and the way his/her identity is ascribed and later re-negotiated, but as argued by Hall (1996) it is never completed. The majority of the interviewed respondents asserted that they have never before thought about their Polishness. Conversely, their new social dimension raises questions of identity and belonging forcing acculturating individuals to question the values of the host society. In doing so, Polish teenagers reflect on and evaluate their social position. They take a stand framing narrative evidence, which challenges the common assumption pertaining to cultural fit. In the acculturation context, it means that identity of acculturating social actors is under permanent influence of the contextual factors, cultural diversity and serves as a point of reference, because of individual's capacity to exclude, to reject (see Hall 1996:18) or hybrid. Thus, their social identity appears to

reproduce a recursive spiralling, constantly negotiated, but still an incomplete narrative of identity formation (see Hockey and James 2003).

Arguably, in all those complexities of negotiating the social standing during the process of the second culture acquisition, Polish teenagers are very selective, negotiating their social standing between socio-cultural dynamics, culture clashes and the heritage and mainstream social habitus (see also Alam 2012). Their ethnicity, their 'cultural capital' (King-O'Riain 2006) is constantly influenced by various social forces and contexts (e.g., ethnic food and the availability of Polish products in the Polish shops reinforces Polish immigrants identities, while multicultural relationships trigger gradual development of more cosmopolitan tastes for cuisine different from typically Polish and/or Irish) with a visible expansion towards the new, towards these aspects of the Irish culture that do not exist in Polish cultural repertoire (for example; celebration of St Patrick's Day parade or Halloween). This appears consistently among those Polish teenagers who befriended other immigrant peers, validating the importance and influence of socio-cultural context. At the same time, immigrant teenagers reproduce Polishness in a symbolic way through active participation in International Days. In doing so, they provide dynamic linkages between their heritage and the intercultural contexts. Naturally, Polish immigrant teenagers have their own socio-cultural standpoints in terms of their exposure to the cultural diversity, which indicates that Polish values and the Polish cultural upbringing matters a lot in shaping and re-shaping their cultural repertoire with the emergence of a 'blur of cultural boundaries' (Alba 2005) in some life domains (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Whilst it is accepted that certain degree of acculturation occurs over time among first-generation immigrants (see Greenman and Xie 2008), the findings signify that in some acculturation domains there is a strong resistance to shed some aspects of the heritage culture. For instance, language acculturation is an example of the 'generational slippage' (Portes and Rumbaut 2004) supporting the argument of the '1.5 generation' not only within first-generation of immigrants in general, but within the same family of first-generation immigrants in particular.

Analyses of life portraits among the Polish immigrant teenagers coincided with the collapse of the 'Celtic Tiger'. This left the research with the open questions regarding the social inclusion and further well-being of immigrants. The rapid shift in the European economic situation and the recessional climate slowly reflects the change of societal barometer that affects social and emotional well-being of immigrants in general. It appears that Polish immigrant children do not position themselves as equal to their Irish counterparts in terms of their socio-economic opportunities. As evidenced (in Chapter 5) Polish newcomers were often placed in

disadvantaged schools, regularly streamlined to Ordinary level, and very often they were too early taken from the ELSP classes due to lack of funding, aside from being moved to lower classes. All these have had an adverse effect on immigrants' *acculturation process* notwithstanding their future progression opportunities particularly in terms of accessing third-level education (see section 5.5). Moreover, acculturating immigrants seem to be more and more exposed to comments that times are hard and now the Irish people need all the jobs available, including those previously disregarded, which imply that Poles should go back to Poland (see Chapter 4 section 4.7). Luckily, such comments so far are scarce, representing transformation of stress into symbolic hierarchy of immigrants (see also Byrne 2012; Michael 2012) but unquestionably increasing the feeling of exclusion and fostering the negative social mirroring that links interpersonal aspects and wider societal stress to the economic downturn. Besides this exemplifies how structural factors particularly at macro-level influence micro-level (see also Wimmer 2008).

Overall, the longitudinal nature of the LASPIT data allowed ascertaining 'causal relationships among different aspects of the process' (Portes and Rumbaut 2005) with a measure of the *acculturation attitudes* over time. Moreover, it allowed capturing the *acculturation strategies* and subsequently, the changes of the *acculturation strategies* if those employed before proved to be not successful. Through the careful examination of how *acculturation attitudes* have changed over time and which factors triggered the changes, the LASPIT found interesting patterns around Polish immigrants' *acculturation strategies* and *acculturation outcomes.*

This research along with other studies on acculturation and ethnic identity shows that the designation of minority and dominant groups in the context of acculturation and culture is far more complicated than early bicultural models suggested (Kohli and Mather 2003; Phalet and Kosic 2006; Potocky-Tripodi 2002; Sakamoto 2007). In practice, there are more borderline cases, overlapping at the intersection between the *acculturation outcomes* and the blurring boundaries at the intersection of mainstream and the heritage culture. This indicates the complexity of the *acculturation process* particularly at the individual level proving that individuals as social actors move in and out of boundedness (Battersby 1993) within what Harris (1987) calls a dynamic matrix of cultural context in the social system. Acculturating immigrants learn their new cultural repertoire within relational and hierarchical social realm. This learning process involves immigrants and the natives in a relational process that is not necessarily linear or rational (Bragg and Manchester 2011) offering a dialogue between different cultures. Such conceptualisation of interculturalism provides a more adequate framework for researching cultures because, contrary to the

static Berry's model, attitudes towards specific life domain are continually being constructed and re-constructed as they are shaped by social interactions and dynamic intercultural contexts.

The LASPIT data also shows that the arrival in Ireland resulted in the loss of long-term friendship despite increased ability to use modern technologies. Furthermore what has emerged from the LASPIT is that a young person who has been undergoing the *acculturation process* within a socio-linguistically different context alters his/her behaviour and often for a long period lives 'in between' heritage and the mainstream cultural domains. Thus, the rhetoric of acculturation invariably means re-affirmation of culture in its widest context through the concept of belonging. The discursive and topical analyses suggest that Polish 'reactive ethnicity' (Rumbaut 2008) seems to be crucial within their wider acculturative experiences in the multicultural context. Yet in the context of re-acculturation, their second culture acquisition poses substantial challenges creating questions pertaining to belongingness, identity, and otherness, raising issues of social inclusion and exclusion along with the networks of various relationships.

8.4 The limitations of the LASPIT research project

The limitations about the nature of the accessed sample and the methodology that limited the interpretation of the final findings should be acknowledged. As noted in previous chapters a prerequisite for the employment of mixed methods was the target of Polish population based on the linkages between immigrant parents and their children in the Greater Dublin area. I was aware that in other scenarios, the straightforward way was to approach individuals directly, and ask them about their acculturative experiences. However, given the fact that ethical principles did not allow for a direct approach on the one hand, whereas on the other, it was important to avoid parental persuasion in terms of participatory agreement, the employment of snowball sampling guided by Saldana's assertion that 'not everything that is legal is ethical' seemed the most appropriate. Whilst the choice of the above-mentioned research methods including longitudinal design have been grounded and justified, it is imperative to acknowledge that this particular design of the LASPIT research project has its weaknesses inherent in its methodology. Due to the high costs of qualitative longitudinal research, the sample is usually small, which affect research generalizabity and may cause problems with sample attrition.

Despite the fact, the LASPIT uniqueness was derived from its longitudinal design (rarely present in other acculturation studies), a two-year field study is a

relatively short period for acculturation research and in my view it limits the LASPIT findings. In addition, budgetary constraints impacted on the research accessibility to Polish teenagers in other parts of Ireland restraining representativeness of the sample.

Furthermore, in light of the aforementioned discourses presented in the dissertation, I would argue that even if the credibility and accuracy have been established and demonstrated by the LASPIT research project, there is still a question of interpretation or more precisely misrepresentation in respect to the evoked reality. Cavallaro (2001) explains this methodological challenge:

> 'Misrepresentation is an inevitable component of perception [...] Given that both our faculties and our environment are subject to contingent variations [...] it would be preposterous to assume that we could represent the world uniformly and objectively [...] *Hence* [...] we do not perceive the world as it is but rather as mediated by various filter and channels: forms of language and form of interpretation that do not mirror the world but actually construct it...'
>
> (Cavallaro 2001:48-9).

8.5 Reflecting on the LASPIT research in the context of implications for further research and policy-makers

The LASPIT research project generated rich but limited data. Its findings pertaining to acculturation are inclusive of transnational family reunification but are exclusively confined to the Polish respondents interviewed during the course of this study. 'The family mediates children's transnational ties and activities, but children also connect to their cross-border family [...] through return visits to the place of origin...' (Haikkola 2011: 1201). As suggested by the broad literature, empirical cases of transnational social fields are grounded in real social relations and they vary in history, organization, and patterns of use (Orellana *et al.* 2001). The LASPIT dataset highlighted the importance of context ('hostile' *versus* 'welcoming') during the *acculturation process* because 'we are contextual human beings: how we behave is dictated in part by the shape of our environment' (Pariser 2011:174).

The research showed that the *acculturation process* is a much more dynamic, often shaped by larger social structures, not just individual orientations, and global culture. Thus, it appears that successful acculturation encompasses participation in social life, rights, recognition and a sense of belonging, lack of language barrier and identity awareness. Moreover, acculturation is a long and complex process that affects both the mainstream society and the newcomers. For this reason, it would be valuable

to expand future research over other social actors namely the Irish immigrant peers and the school staff. Sociological inquiry examining how and to what extent the arrival of immigrant teenagers alters native's agency would seem to be worth conducting particularly in light of the recent economic changes. The synopsis from the LASPIT research field suggests that some Irish parents are concerned about the growing socio-cultural diversity within Irish schools. The follow-up on the national scale could help to ascertain what particular factors underlie these concerns. It is certainly a challenge faced in our contemporary, multicultural Ireland.

To conclude, migration is described as a multi-layered phenomena involving many factors and variables that may be viewed through a variety of lenses (see Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2008). This research has provided unique insights into the *acculturation process* through the lenses of Polish immigrant teenagers, their parents, and the key informants. By adopting this perspective, the LASPIT research project has sought to contribute to a growing body of acculturation literature by making important inroads into our understanding of the *acculturation process* predominantly with regard to our perception of the *acculturation strategies, acculturation attitudes,* and *acculturation outcomes* in the context of interculturalism. Dynamics of super-diversity has profound implications for how the policy-makers and practitioners might understand and deal with its modes of difference (Vertovec 2007:1050). Despite adoption of a very wide range of instruments and intercultural policy approach, significant cuts in the education sector have reduced support measures available in the Irish schools. However, it continues to be important to provide inclusive education policies and to continue to cater for newcomers who often require more than two statutory years of ELSP, to hire bilingual teachers particularly during the transition period, and to endorse 'reflexive intercultural education' (Jackson 2004) that would go far beyond annual International Days' celebrations.

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Eds.	Edition
e.g.,	For Example
LASPIT	Longitudinal Acculturation Study with the Polish Immigrant Teenagers
SBS	Snowball Sampling
QLR	Qualitative Longitudinal Research
VAS	Visual Analogue Scale
VIA	Vancouver Index of Acculturation

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Appendix 1

Interview and Questionnaire Introductory Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am a postgraduate student currently undertaking a PhD course in Trinity College Dublin. The main area of my research is acculturation of Polish teenagers in Ireland. As part of the research, I want to use interviews and questionnaires to bring to light information surrounding this topic.

I would be grateful if you could allow your child to be interviewed by me and to fill in the following questions in order to get a better understanding of the process of acculturation of Polish teens in the Irish context along with family reunification and development of the social relations and networks with Irish and others peers.

All information given will be used anonymously and in confidence. One of the aims of this research is to make recommendations for the future benefit of immigrant children therefore I would be grateful to everyone willing to participate and you and your child's contribution to this research would be hugely appreciated. Please note that you or your underage child can withdraw from this research at any time.

Wywiad i Kwestionariusz [Polish Version]

Szanowny Rodzicu/Opiekunie

Jestem studentka studiow doktoranckich na Uniwersytecie Trinity w Dublinie. Glownym tematem moich badan jest asymilacja polskich dzieci w Irlandii. Jedna ze skladowych mojej pracy jest uzyskanie informacji o faktycznej sytuacji polskich dzieci za pomoca bezposrednich wywiadow i badan ankietowych przeprowadzonych z polskimi dziecmi, ich rodzicami oraz nauczycielami tu w Irlandii. Bylabym niezmiernie zobowiazana gdybyscie Panstwo zechcieli wziasc udzial w tym przedsiewzieciu oraz wyrazili zgode na udzial w nich Panskich podopiecznych.

Proponowane badania ankietowe rozlozone w czasie przez okres najblizych 3 lat pozwole lepiej zozumiec i poznac niezykle dynamiczny, a zarazem bardzo indywidualny process asymilacji polsich dzieci w kontekscie tutejszej edukacji oraz relacji zarowno z najblizszymi jak i tutejszymi rowiesnikami. Udzial w opisanym powyzej projekcie badawczym jest dobrowolny, a wszystkie uzyskane informacje beda anonimowe i beda traktowane jako scisle tajne/poufne. Istnieje mozliwosc wycofania sie, odmowienia udzialu w wywiadzie lub w ankiecie na kazdym etapie tego projektu badawczego. Jednym z glownych celow mojego projektu badawczego jest przygotowanie rekomendacji - zalecen ktore pozwola zarowno podmiotom edukacyjnym jak i rodzicom lepiej zrozumiec process akulturyzacji.

Ponowne pragne z gory zlozyc wyazy szacunku i podziekowania dla wszystkich, ktorzy zdecyduja sie wsiasc udzial w tym projekcie badawczym i bezposrednio przyczynia sie do powstania tej pracy naukowej, rzetelnie okreslajacej faktyczna sytuacje polskich dzieci w Irlandii.

Appendix 2

The Informed Consent Form

Purpose of the study: This assessment is part of the study of the acculturation of Polish teenagers in Ireland.

What your child will be asked to do: Participation in this study includes the following activities:

- Your child will be asked to describe their own experiences of adjustment in his/her own words
- Your child will be asked to fill in the short questionnaire capturing information about school and interplay with his/her peers.

Risk of Participation: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study.

Benefits of Participation: The benefits which may be reasonably expected to result from this study are the opportunity to reflect on individual experiences and increase the level of your child's self-esteem by better understanding of his/her own identity and uniqueness.

Confidentiality of information: The author of this research project will use the information collected for research purposes only. Project researcher will protect the confidentiality of this information and will not disclose the identity of you and of your child or information that identifies you or your child to anyone outside of this research project. Obtained data will be secured during storage on project researcher's server. The author of this research will maintain your individual privacy in all published and written data resulting from this study.

Basis of participation: You or your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. You or your child may refuse to participate, or you or your child may stop participating at any time and for any reason without penalty. You or your child has a right to refuse to answer particular questions.

Whom to contact: If you have any questions about this study, please contact Beata Sokolowska at sokolowb@tcd.ie

Consent to Participate: I was introduced to the author of this research and knowing the aim of this study I allow my underage child .....to participate in this research and I am aware that any comment my child may contribute will be used anonymously for the purpose of this research only.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Formularz infomacyjny i zgoda na udzial w projekcie badawczym [Polish version]

Cel projektu badawczego:Wywiad i ankieta stanowia integralna czesc projektu badawczego dotyczacego oceny sytuacji i akulturyzacji polskich dzieci w Irlandii.

Na czym polega udzial mojego dzieckoa/dzieci: Udzial Panstwa dziecka/dzieci w tym projekcie badawczym bedzie polegal na:

- Opisaniu wlasnymi slowami swoich przezyc i doswiadczen asymilacyjnych tu w Irlandii.
- Wypelnieniu krotkiego kwestionariusza zawierajacego ogolne pytania dotyczace bariery jezykowej, szkoly oraz kontaktow z rowiesnikami

Jakie jest ryzoko wziecia udzialu w tym projekcie: Nie istnieje zadno ryzyko zwiazane z udzialem w tym projekcie badawczym

Korzysci wziecia udzialu w tym projekcie: Jedna z wielu korzysci owocujacych wzieciem udzialu w tum projekcie badawczym jest mozliwosc refleksyjnego, retrospektynego spojrzenia na nabyte doswiadczenia, ktore besposrednio lub posrednio maja wplyw na poczucie/zwiekszenie wlasnej wartosci i lepsze rozumienie wlasnej osobowosci i jej unikatowosci.

Poufnosc informacji: Autorka tego projektu badawczego zobowiazuje sie wykorzystac wszystkie dobrowolnie uzyskane informacje tylko na potrzeby tego projektu. Zobowiazuje sie rowniez chronic wszystie dane , ktore w jakikolwiek sposob pozwolilyby zidentyfikowac tozsamosc Panstwa lub panswa dziecka/dzieci. Wszelkie uzyskane informacje beda przechowywane na serwerze chronionym haslem. Prywatnosc/anonimowosc Panstwa i Panskich dzieci bedzie bedzie scisle chroniona we wszelkich materialaach obublikowanych w przyszlosci.

Udzial w projekcie badawczym: Udzial zarowno Panstwa, jak i Panstwa dziecka/dzieci w tym projekcie jest oparty na wolontariacie. Zarowno Panswo, jak i Panstwa podopieczni moga w kazdej chwili zrezygnowac z udzalu w tym projekcie badawczym bez zadnych konsekwencji. Ponadto zarowno Panstwo jaki Panstwa dziecko/dzieci maja prawo odmowic odpowiedzi na niektore pytania
Kontakt z osoba odpoweidzalna za ten projek bdawczy : W razie jakichkolwiek pytan prosze o kontakt z Beata Sokolowska at sokolowb@tcd.ie lub 086 233 91 41

Zgoda na udzial w wyzej opisanym projekcie badawczym: Ja nizej podspisany/na zapoznalam sie z autorka jej projektem badawczym. Wyrazam zgode na udzial mojego dziecka.....
w tym projekcie badawczym bedac swiadomym/ma, ze wszystkie uzyskane informacje oraz dane moje i mojego dziecka beda traktowane anonimowo i wykorzystane tylko na potrzeby tego projektu.

Sign: _____
Date: _____

Appendix 3

Volunteer Form

I was introduced to the author of this research and knowing the aim of this study I volunteer to participate in this research and I am aware that any comment I contribute will be used anonymously for the purpose of this research.

Signed: _____
Date: _____

Formularz wolontaryjny [Polish version]

Ja nizej podspisany/na zapoznalam sie z autorka i jej projektem badawczym. Wyrazam zgode na wolontarayjny/dobrowolny udzial w tym projekcie badawczym bedac swiadomym/ma, ze wszystkie uzyskane odemnie informacje beda traktowane anonimowo i wykorzystane tylko na potrzeby tego projektu.

Signed: _____
Date: _____

Appendix 4

The Informed Consent Form [for Key Informants]

Purpose of the study: This assessment is part of study of the acculturation of Polish teenagers in Ireland.

What you will be asked to do: Participation in this study includes the following activities:

- Qualitative interview with the author of this study

Risk of Participation: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study.

Benefits of Participation: The benefits which may be reasonably expected to result from this study are the opportunity to reflect on individual acculturation experiences in the wider school context.

Confidentiality of information: The author of this research project will use the information collected for the research purposes only. Project researcher will protect the confidentiality of this information and will not disclose the identity of you or information that identifies you anyone outside of this research project. Obtained data will be secured during storage on project researcher's server. The author of this research will maintain your individual privacy in all published and written data resulting from this study.

Basis of participation: You participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or you may stop participating at any time and for any reason without penalty. You have a right to refuse to answer particular questions.

Whom to contact: If you have any questions about this study, please contact Beata Sokolowska at sokolowb@tcd.ie

Consent to Participate: I was introduced to the author of this research and knowing the aim of this study I allow my underage child .....to participate in this research and I am aware that any comment my child contributes will be used anonymously for the purpose of this research only.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5

	Multiple types of interviews		
Dilemma	*Structured*	*Semi-structured*	*Unstructured/Open in-depth interview*
General characteristics	Does not allow for deep contact	Allows for good contact	Allows for good and deep contact
Main advantages for a child	Protects against secret revealing	Provides the feeling of safety, acceptance, dignity, and empathy. Helps to build trust. Increases the openness and trust. Increases the self-esteem. Increases the sympathy for the interviewer.	Provides the feeling of safety, acceptance, dignity, and empathy. Introduces the feeling of being accepted. Helps to build trust. Increases the openness and trust. Increases the self-esteem. Increases the sympathy for the interviewer. The interviewee decides what to reveal and what to say.
Main advantages for an interviewer	The interviewer may lack psychological and practical experience Flow of the interview can be easily anticipated.	Allows to build trust and get more in-depth understanding of the issues discussed and the individuality of the underage respondent. Allows to prepare and implement successful plan for longitudinal cooperation with child. This option is the most optimal one for the interviewer and the child.	Allows to build trust and get more in-depth understanding of the issues discussed and the individuality of the underage respondent. Allows to prepare and implement successful plan for longitudinal cooperation with the child. Spontaneous answers let the interviewer look inside the child's world. Allows for formulation of many hypotheses.
Main disadvantages for a child	No freedom of answer. Only asked questions are answered. Weak contact with the interviewer. It might frustrate the child.	This option is the most optimal one for the interviewer and the child.	When there is a week contact with the interviewer the questions might be threatening to comfort of the child during the interview.
Main disadvantages for an interviewer	No options of asking extra questions if needed. It does not allow for deep contact with the child. It does not allow the interviewer to know the child and his/her world any better.		It requires lots of engagement in active listening to the child and proper reactions. The interviewer should have a lot of experience before engaging in this type of interview.

Source: adapted from Brzezińska and Toeplitz (2007:88)

Appendix 6

Statistical data on parents' age, marital status, language proficiency, household head

Name	Gender	Age	Education	Marital status upon migration	Number of children	Household Head	English language proficiency upon arrival	Polish domiciliary origin	County of habitual residence in Ireland
Hubert	M	72	tertiary	divorced	2	no	very basic	city	North Dublin
Jolanta	F	52	tertiary	divorced	3	yes	very basic	town	North Dublin
Kajetan	M	52	secondary	married	2	yes	none	town	South Dublin
Tekla	F	50	secondary	married	2	no	none	town	South Dublin
Monika	F	36	tertiary	separated	2	yes	very basic	city	Co Wicklow
Gienia	F	40	secondary	single	1	yes	very basic	town	Co Kilkenny
Żaneta	F	38	tertiary	married	2	yes	none	town	Co Kildare
Elwira	F	38	tertiary	married	1	no	intermediate	city	South Dublin
Tymoteusz	M	49	tertiary	married	1	yes	none	town	Co Wicklow
Gertruda	F	52	secondary	single	1	yes	none	rural area	North Dublin
Karina	F	38	tertiary	married	2	yes	very basic	town	North Dublin
Beata	F	35	tertiary	married	2	yes	advanced	rural area	Co Dublin
Herbert	M	54	tertiary	married	2	no	none	town	Co Dublin
Anna	F	42	tertiary	separated	3	yas	none	town	North Dublin
Bogdan	M	40	secondary	married	2	yes	none	town	Co Kilkenny
Rozalia	F	39	tertiary	married	1	no	very basic	town	South Dublin
Antonia	F	45	tertiary	married	2	no	very basic	town	Co Kilkenny
Franciszka	F	42	secondary	married	1	yes	none	town	South Dublin
Maciej	M	47	secondary	married	1	yes	none	town	South Dublin
Ksenia	F	44	tertiary	married	2	yes	very basic	rural area	Co Kilkenny
Lucja	F	39	tertiary	married	1	no	none	town	North Dublin
Lucjusz	M	46	tertiary	married	2	yes	very basic	town	Co Kilkenny
Alicja	F	35	tertiary	married	2	no	very basic	town	Co Wicklow
Daniel	M	42	secondary	married	1	yes	none	rural area	North Dublin
Malwina	F	42	tertiary	married	2	yes	none	town	Co Dublin
Tadeusz	F	45	secondary	married	2	yes	none	town	Co Dublin
Milena	F	42	secondary	married	2	no	none	town	Co Kildare
Mieczysława	F	45	tertiary	married	2	no	none	city	Co Kilkenny
Mirek	M	41	secondary	married	1	yes	none	town	Co Wicklow
Jadwiga	F	40	secondary	married	1	no	none	town	North Dublin
Bartosz	M	38	secondary	married	1	yes	none	town	Co Wicklow
Elżbieta	F	50	tertiary	married	2	yes	intermediate	city	South Dublin
Bożena	F	40	secondary	married	4	no	none	rural area	North Dublin
Salomea	F	40	tertiary	married	2	no	none	town	North Dublin
Zofia	F	39	tertiary	single	1	yes	advanced	city	North Dublin

Appendix 7

Polish Teenagers in Ireland _ Survey 1

Exit this survey

1. Default Section

1. Gender

2. School name and address

3. Please finish the sentence. My school is...

4. Please finish the sentence:My class is...

5. How many English words did you know at the time of your arrival to Ireland?

- ☐ 0-20
- ☐ 20-80
- ☐ 80-150
- ☐ 150-250
- ☐ 250-500
- ☐ over 500

6. My English proficiency in writing is now:

- ○ Very poor
- ○ poor
- ○ good
- ○ very good
- ○ excellent

7. My English proficiency in reading is now:

- ○ Very poor
- ○ poor
- ○ good
- ○ very good

- ○ excellent

8. My English proficiency in communicating is now:

- ○ very poor
- ○ poor
- ○ good
- ○ very good
- ○ excellent

9. In relation to your peers the best contacts you have with:

- ☐ Irish
- ☐ Polish
- ☐ Other migrants

10. My relations with my peers are:

- ○ extremely dissatisfied
- ○ dissatisfied
- ○ satisfied
- ○ highly satisfied

11.

How many people in your class do you consider firends?

12. I have experienced bullying in Ireland:

- ○ strongly agree
- ○ agree
- ○ neither agree nor disagree
- ○ disagree
- ○ strongly disagree

13. I can count on at least one adult at school:

- ○ strongly agree
- ○ agree

- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

14. Who makes you feel loved?

15. I am happy here and I have no problems with cultural integration:

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

16. Currently I am slowly adjusting to Irish culture:

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

17. I have a feeling that they do not like me here and I am not happy here:

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

18. My family have better economic opportunities here in Ireland:

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree

strongly disagree

19.
Please detail any additional information that we should be aware of:

*20. **Please answer each question as carefully as possible. Please tick one of the numbers to the right of each question to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement.When 1 indicates that you strongly disagree and 10 that you strongly agree.**
Many of these questions will refer to your heritage (Polish) culture, meaning the culture that has influenced you most.
For each of the following statements,please indicate the strength of your agreement:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. I often participate in my heritage (Polish) cultural traditions (e.g.Christmas Eve celebrated on 24 December,Easter,Andrzejki,etc)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. I often participate in mainstream Irish cultural traditions. (St Patrick's Day celebrated on 17 March,Haloween,etc)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. I use Polish language as my main language. (in my everyday life (e.g. at home) and during conversations)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. I use English language as my main language. (in my everyday life (e.g. at home) and during conversations)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. I enjoy social activities (parties, meetings, a cinema) with peers from the same Polish culture as myself.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. I enjoy social activities (parties, meetings, a cinema) with Irish peers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. I am comfortable interacting communicate, play, chat) with people of the same heritage (Polish) culture as myself.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. I am comfortable interacting										

(communicate, play, chat) with typical Irish people.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from my heritage (Polish) culture.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. I enjoy Irish entertainment (e.g. movies, music).	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. I often behave in ways that are typical of my heritage (Polish) culture.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. I often behave in ways that are 'typically Irish.'	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. It is important for me to maintain or develop the practices of my heritage culture. (e.g. to celebrate Polish Christmas, Holy Souls day - Swieto Zmarlych,etc)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. It is important for me to maintain or develop Irish cultural practices.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. I believe in the values of my heritage (Polish) culture.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. I believe in mainstream Irish values.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
17. I enjoy the jokes and humour of my heritage (Polish) culture.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
18. I enjoy Irish jokes and humour.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
19. I am interested in having friends from my heritage (Polish) culture.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
20. I am interested in having Irish friends.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Done

Appendix 8

It illustrates Mean, Median, and Mode from VIA questionnaire outlining acculturation attitudes for Polish immigrant teenagers

Variables (examined acculturation categories)	VIA 11 (these 11 participated in one wave of the VIA only)		VIA T1				VIA T2			
	Polish	Irish	Valid 15	Polish	Valid 15	Irish	Valid 15	Polish	Valid 15	Irish
1. Participation in cultural traditions	8.6	7.4	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.7 9.0 10 3.3 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	6.5 6.0 5 2.5 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	8.7 10.0 10 2.2 7	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	6.0 6.0 6 2.7 9
2. The use of Language	8.5	6.3	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.7 8.0 10 2.5 8	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	5.2 5.0 3a 2.4 7	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.9 8.0 5a 1.9 5	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	4.5 5.0 5 1.7 6
3. Participation in social activities	7.9	6.0	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	6.3 7.0 10 3.4 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	5.9 6.0 10 3.4 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.2 7.0 5a 2.5 8	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	5.9 5.0 5 2.8 8
4. Communication and interplay	8.4	6.4	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.5 9.0 10 2.8 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	6.7 7.0 10 2.8 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.2 7.0 5 2.3 7	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	6.0 6.0 5 1.8 7
5. Entertainment	7.7	6.2	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.1 9.0 10 3.3 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	6.1 5.0 10 3.5 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	6.4 6.0 5a 2.7 8	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	5.3 5.0 5a 2.7 9
6. Behavioural repertoire	7.0	5.0	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	6.9 7.0 5a 2.4 7	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	4.2 4.0 3 2.1 6	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.9 9.0 10 2.1 6	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	3.6 3.0 1 2.8 9
7. Importance of cultural practices	8.3	6.0	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.5 9.0 10 3.3 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	4.9 5.0 3a 2.56 8	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	7.4 8.0 10 2.9 9	Mean Median Mode Std. Dev Range	3.7 4.0 1a 2.2 7

8. Belief in cultural values	8.3	5.7	Mean	6.6	Mean	5.2	Mean	7.8	Mean	4.1
			Median	7.0	Median	4.0	Median	9.0	Median	4.0
			Mode	10	Mode	3a	Mode	10	Mode	2a
			Std. Dev	3.0	Std. Dev	2.9	Std. Dev	2.7	Std. Dev	2.2
			Range	9	Range	9	Range	9	Range	7
9. Enjoyment of jokes and humour	9.3	6.7	Mean	7.9	Mean	5.6	Mean	9.2	Mean	6.0
			Median	9.0	Median	5.0	Median	10.0	Median	6.0
			Mode	10	Mode	3a	Mode	10	Mode	3a
			Std. Dev	2.9	Std. Dev	3.2	Std. Dev	1.1	Std. Dev	2.9
			Range	9	Range	8	Range	4	Range	9
10. Friends	8.5	8.0	Mean	6.6	Mean	8.3	Mean	8.3	Mean	7.0
			Median	6.0	Median	10.0	Median	9.0	Median	7.0
			Mode	10	Mode	10	Mode	10	Mode	10
			Std. Dev	3.2	Std. Dev	2.4	Std. Dev	2.3	Std. Dev	2.4
			Range	9	Range	7	Range	7	Range	8

T1= VIA administered in 2010 for n=15

T2= VIA administered in 2011 for n=15

Appendix 9

Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in Dublin

Preparing students for taking a Polish exam at Leaving Certificate level - the second most spoken language in Ireland.

14.03.2013, Dublin

At their most recent meeting in Brussels, European Education Ministers concluded that any modernisation of the education systems in the member states should include the first and foremost foreign language learning.

More than ever, the European labour market is looking for specialists speaking at least one foreign language. It is important to provide for language learning at school, especially at secondary level. Ireland already has such provisions in place by allowing students to sit the Leaving Certificate in 15 EU languages.

Census 2011 reflects the magnitude of diversity of languages spoken in Ireland: almost 10% of the population said they spoke a language at home other than English or Irish. **Polish is currently the second most spoken language in Ireland, with more than 115,000 speakers/daily users**. There has never been a greater economic imperative in Ireland to maintain and increase this multilingualism.

In 2011, almost 600 out of 1,260 students that took an EU language exam signed up for Polish and in 2012 it was already 740 students.

The Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Dublin in cooperation with Polish and Irish schools is organising intensive courses for those planning to sit the 2013 Leaving Certificate Polish exam. As a non-curricular EU language, Polish does not appear as part of the normal school educational programme/module. Thus, it is of great importance to support students in the process of preparing for the exam.

Courses will take place during the Easter break between **25-28 March in Dublin, Cavan, Kilkenny, Letterkenny and Portlaoise** and are organised in cooperation with Polish schools in each location. These courses could not take place without the support of St Benildus College, Dublin and Errigal College, Letterkenny. In Dublin participants will have opportunity to meet with lecturers from the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies at **Trinity College Dublin**.

More information about the program can be found at: www.dublin.msz.gov.pl and Facebook: Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Dublin

.....Ends.....

Notes to editors:

- 514,068 (almost 10%) of the population stated in Census 2011 that they spoke a language other than English or Irish at home.
- The Polish community is the largest minority group in Ireland, with a population of 122,585 (Census 2011), almost a 100% increase on figures returned in Census 2006.
- There are 26 Polish weekend schools, five of which operate under the remit of the Polish Department of Education. The schools have approx. 4,100 Polish children that live in Ireland.
- Only on rare occasions do Irish mainstream schools provide classes in the first language for their pupils. This is mainly a school-based initiative. The school is not obliged to provide first language classes for pupils whose first language is not English.
- At present, approximately 10% of primary school pupils and 12% of post-primary school students were born outside of Ireland. In schools, there are pupils from over 160 countries and over 200 languages are spoken. For approximately 70-75%, English is not their first language.
- There exists a substantial body of international research evidence in support of maintaining and developing first language proficiency among minority language children. These data particularly point to the positive benefits of first language proficiency on the development of the second language.

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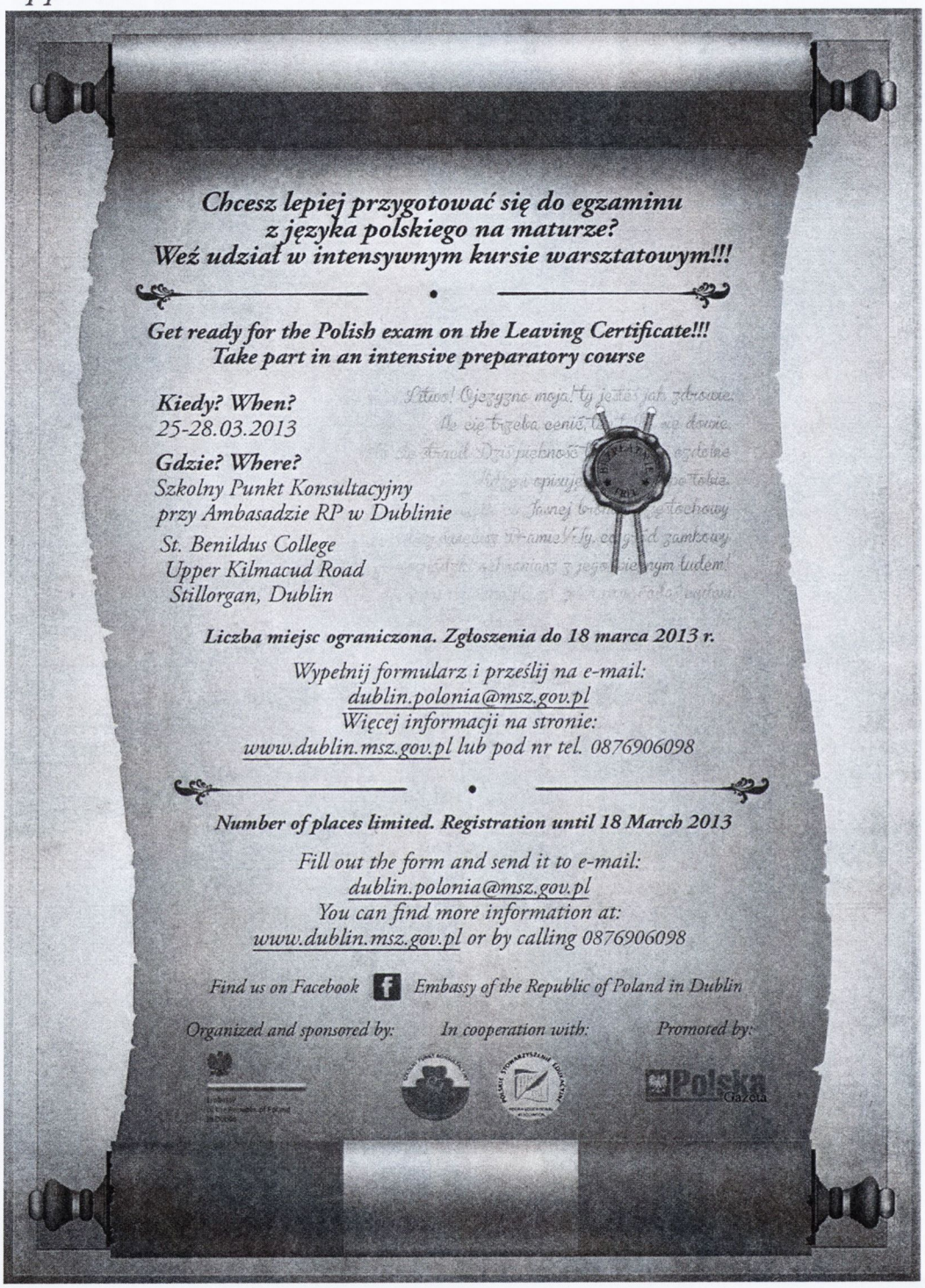
Appendix 10


Chcesz lepiej przygotować się do egzaminu
z języka polskiego na maturze?
Weź udział w intensywnym kursie warsztatowym!!!
Get ready for the Polish exam on the Leaving Certificate!!!
Take part in an intensive preparatory course
Kiedy? When?
25-28.03.2013
Gdzie? Where?
Szkolny Punkt Konsultacyjny
przy Ambasadzie RP w Dublinie
St. Benildus College
Upper Kilmacud Road
Stillorgan, Dublin
Liczba miejsc ograniczona. Zgłoszenia do 18 marca 2013 r.
Wypełnij formularz i prześlij na e-mail:
dublin.polonia@msz.gov.pl
Więcej informacji na stronie:
www.dublin.msz.gov.pl lub pod nr tel. 0876906098
Number of places limited. Registration until 18 March 2013
Fill out the form and send it to e-mail:
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