The Housing Experiences and Future Aspirations of Polish Migrants in the UK

Alexandra Buckland-Stubbs

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Abstract

Buckland-Stubbs, A., Crook, D. and Southern, R.
School of Life and Medical Sciences, University of Hertfordshire, UK

Polish migrants were the most visible and abundant newcomers of the post-2004 Eastern European migrations to the UK, but little research has been done on the housing experiences, settlement practices or long-term aspirations of these individuals. This research seeks to provide greater insight into the housing experiences, settlement practices and future aspirations of Polish migrants in the UK. It also seeks to provide a holistic view of perceptions and experiences in both the migration destination and the country of origin, by situating the lived experiences of the Polish participants in this research within the context of wider economic, social, and political structural influences in the UK and in Poland. This study provides an increased understanding of the views and experiences of Polish migrants before and after the decision for Brexit and examines their propensity for movement following the EU referendum result. A total of 59 semi-structured interviews were carried out with 35 Polish migrants and 14 housing experts in the UK case study localities of Luton and Peterborough, and interviews were also carried out with 10 Polish nationals across four localities in Poland. The interview narratives were then examined using a combination of content analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to reveal the lived experiences and future aspirations of a selection of Polish individuals in the UK and in Poland. The results suggest that migratory movements from Poland to the UK were mostly influenced by desires for self-improvement, travel or an improved quality of life and that short-term migration plans frequently evolve into long-term or permanent settlement. The results also indicate that social ties strongly influence Polish settlement location choices within the UK and that social capital provides important support to newly arrived migrants, including assistance finding housing. Although most participants found their accommodation easily, and aspirations for homeownership were high, the results suggest that changing housing market conditions are negatively affecting migrant access to housing; and although Polish migrant housing experiences in Luton and Peterborough do appear to improve over time, issues of insecurity, dissatisfaction and substandard housing conditions frequently arise within Polish migrant housing pathways - particularly in Luton. Additionally, there was a low propensity for the Polish participants in Poland to migrate to the UK, as most indicated that they were content with their lives in Poland and had little desire for change. Similarly, most of the Polish participants in the UK intended to remain in the UK despite the unsettling prospect of Brexit, as most were embedded in UK society with strong social networks and stronger aspirations to remain in the UK rather than to return to Poland or migrate elsewhere. However, multiple Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough were concerned about the potential impacts of Brexit on their rights to remain within the UK and on their rights to housing and homeownership within the UK.

Key Words: Polish; Migration; Housing; Phenomenology; Lived Experience; Luton; Peterborough; Brexit

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful grandmother Kathleen Fitch, who always believed in me, loved me unconditionally and dreamed of attending my doctoral graduation ceremony, but sadly passed away during the completion of this research in July 2019 aged 92. She will forever be loved and dearly missed.

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Thank you all very much.

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List of Abbreviations

A8- The eight Central and Eastern European countries that joined the European Union on the 1st of May 2004 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) Cyprus and Malta also joined the EU in 2004 but are not a part of the A8.

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

Covid-19 - SARS-CoV-2 virus

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

E.G. – Exempli gratia (A Latin phrase meaning 'for example')

ESRC - Economic and Social Research Council

Et al. – et alia (and others)

EU- The European Union

EU2 – The two countries that joined the EU on the 1st January 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria).

EUSS – The EU Settlement Scheme

FoM – Freedom of Movement

GEC – Global Economic Crisis

HMO – House of Multiple Occupation

I.E. – Id est (A Latin phrase meaning 'that is')

IPA – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

LGBTQ+ - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual identities

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NOAH – New Opportunities and Horizons

NRPF – No Recourse to Public Funds

ONS – Office for National Statistics

PBIC – Polish-British Integration Centre

PiS – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (The Law and Justice Party in Poland)

PO - Platforma Obywatelska, (The Civic Platform Party in Poland)

SOC – Standard Occupation Classification

WRS - Worker Registration Scheme

UK- The United Kingdom

USSR – The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.0 Chapter Introduction

This opening chapter highlights the background and significance of the research, explains the rationale for focusing on Polish migrants, presents the aim, objectives and research questions that underpin the study and outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background and Rationale of the Research

This research adds to micro-level studies of migration, by bringing the lived experiences, views and migration and settlement aspirations of Polish migrant individuals to the forefront of the study, and examining them within the context of wider economic, social and political structural influences in the UK and in Poland. This thesis also contributes to existing literature on the housing experiences and long-term intentions of Polish migrants in the UK, which is a little explored area in migration research.

The European Union (EU) expanded on the 1st of May 2004, allowing people from the eight accession (A8) states of Poland, Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Estonia to migrate freely to live and work in the UK and other European nations (Pemberton, 2009). The UK migrant population stock more than doubled between 1993 and 2013 and the most significant growth in the foreign-born population during this period occurred between 2005 and 2006, representing the huge number of Eastern European migrants that entered the UK after the EU was enlarged in 2004 (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2014). This wave of migrants has had a large short-term impact upon UK private and public services including housing, and the long-term impacts are continuing to be realised (Glasgow Housing Association, 2008).

The large amount of Polish migration to the UK since 2004 has created structural impacts greater than any other migration flow to the UK since the end of the Second World War and the New Commonwealth flows of the 1950s and 1960s (Favell, 2008; Oğuz, 2020). The positive and negative effects of these large structural transformations on migrant places of origin and migration destination locations have been well researched (e.g. Messina, 2001; Webster, 2011; Thomspson, 2014; Craig-Norton, Hoffmann & Kushner, 2018;

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Kaczmarczyk, Aldaz-Carroll & Hołda, 2020), but there is less research on how these changes have impacted migrant individuals themselves. It is well known that migrants have long experienced challenges such as discrimination, xenophobia, and housing issues within UK society (Pooley & Turnbull, 2005; Lukes, de Noronha & Finney, 2019); but how and why do these issues continue to persist in the 21st Century for new migrant groups? What are the experiences of these migrant individuals? and how are their housing experiences and movement and settlement aspirations affected by unsettling political, economic and social circumstances within their countries of origin and destination? There has been extensive research on the determinants of migration from Poland to the UK but there has been limited research on the settling practices or long-term intentions of Polish migrants in the UK (Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee, 2017; Ryan, 2018). This research contributes to reducing this knowledge gap and furthering the understanding of the intentions and settlement practices of Polish migrants in the UK within the unsettling context of the EU referendum and Brexit, by exploring the housing experiences and future movement and settlement aspirations of a selection of Polish individuals in two comparative localities in the UK.

The original research presented in this thesis seeks to illuminate the lived migration and housing experiences and the future movement and settlement aspirations of 35 Polish migrant individuals in Luton and Peterborough in the UK. This research also explores the views of 14 housing expert participants to gain greater insight into the housing market challenges that contextually frame the housing experiences shared by the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough. Additionally, this research explores the views and movement aspirations of ten Polish nationals across four cities in Poland following the decision for Brexit. The impact of Brexit on EU migrants is a very contentious issue and the data collected in this study provides increased understanding of the views and experiences of Polish nationals in the UK and in Poland before and after the decision for Brexit, and examines their propensity for movement following the EU referendum result.

Polish migrants were chosen to be the focus of this research because Polish residents were the fastest growing migrant community in Britain when this research began in November 2015 (Trevena, 2009; Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2014). Furthermore, Polish migrants have been the most visible and abundant new inhabitants from the Eastern European wave of migration from A8 countries to the UK following EU enlargement in 2004 (Burrell, 2012). In 2013, Polish residents represented the most common non-British nationality present in the UK, with an estimated 726,000 Polish national residents (14.8% of the UK population at the

time) (ONS, 2014). In contrast, in 2004 there were 69,000 Polish nationals recorded to be residing in the UK, which represented 2.3% of the total population at the time (ONS, 2014). These statistics show that there had been a significant increase in the number of Polish nationals present in the UK between 2004 and 2013. And in the 2021 UK Census, 743,083 individuals in England and Wales recorded Poland as their country of birth (ONS, 2022e). According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2022a) India represents the most common non-UK country of birth within the UK population, but Polish has remained the most common non-British nationality in the UK since 2007 (ONS, 2022a).

Much of the previous research relating to migrant housing experiences focuses on the initial stage of settlement rather than long-term experiences (Amas, 2008; Smith, 2015; Montagna & Grazioli, 2019). Coulter and Van Ham (2013) believe that situating residential moves within the context of the life course enriches investigations into the residential mobility of households. They advocate moving beyond a year-on-year analyses of residential mobility in favour of focusing on broader individual mobility experiences (Coulter & Van Ham, 2013; Smith & Finney, 2015). This study collects the migration, settlement, and housing experiences of Polish migrants in the UK since 2004 and pre-Brexit and explores these and their movement and settlement aspirations within the context of their life events and wider structural influences. This has helped to uncover links between specific life events and experiences, desires to move and actual moves, and wider influences that can affect the migration decision process and lived experiences in both Poland and in the UK (Smith & Finney, 2015).

Although there have been some important UK based studies regarding the relationship between internal migration and the housing market, research in this area has slowed in the UK since the mid-1990s (Smith & Finney, 2015). Additionally, Amas (2008) suggests that the impact of the influx of new migrants into a locality has been under researched and describes a need for further in-depth studies regarding the housing experiences of new labour migrants. This research advances understanding of the current literature centred on the experiences and intentions of A8 migrants, by studying the under-researched lived housing experiences and long-term movement and settlement aspirations of Polish migrants within the comparative case study localities of Luton and Peterborough in the UK, which have high concentrations of Polish inhabitants. As well as being influenced by employment opportunities and social networks, according to Robinson, Reeve, and Casey (2007) housing experiences and the housing market consequences of migrants are dependent upon the local

context. Therefore, this study of the housing experiences of Polish migrants within the localities of Luton and Peterborough adds to current knowledge regarding the relationship between migrant housing experiences and the housing market within two localities in the UK. The presence of London Luton Airport in Luton and the town's connectivity with London, as well as the proximity of Peterborough to London Stansted Airport and seasonal agricultural work in the Wash have resulted in these localities being key gateways to the UK and UK based employment opportunities, with high concentrations of Polish migrants within their respective populations. Luton as an entry point location, referred to as an *entrepôt* (WordSense, 2023), is compared with Peterborough, which is not an entry point, to establish whether a port of entry within a settlement destination makes a difference to the migration and housing experiences and the future aspirations of Polish migrant individuals in the UK.

This research has evolved during a time of great uncertainty in the UK, as the research began eight months prior to the EU referendum on the 23rd of June 2016, in which a small majority of the UK population (51.9%) voted for the UK to leave the EU (Arnorsson & Zoega, 2016). Although the original aim and objectives of this study were formulated prior to the decision for the UK to leave the EU and were not related to Brexit, the research has developed during the context of a rapidly changing Brexit situation with a shifting government, a newly formed immigration system and major societal, economic and political upheaval. The data collected in this research are temporally situated in the midst of multiple unsettling events, after the immediate impact of EU Enlargement in 2004 and the recessionary years in the UK following the Global Economic Crisis (GEC), and around the time of the EU referendum in the UK in 2016, prior to the enactment of Brexit and prior to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). These unsettling events have created economic, political, and social uncertainty and have had the potential to disrupt the mobility plans and experiences of EU migrants within the UK (Kiley & Ryan, 2021). And migrants' responses to Brexit must be understood against the backdrop of their life experiences.

This thesis contributes original insights into international and internal migration motivations, Polish migrant housing strategies and settlement choices, the future migration and settlement aspirations of Polish nationals in the UK and in Poland, and the impact of unsettling events and changing conditions in both places of origin and destination. This research utilises an innovative methodological design by carrying out multi-perspectival and multi-sited, transnational research on a large sample of Polish participants and housing expert participants in Luton and in Peterborough in the UK, and in Poland. This enables the

triangulation of data collected from multiple different perspectives and situates the lived experiences of the Polish participants in this research within the context of wider economic, social and political structural influences in the UK and in Poland. This original approach adds to the conceptual value of the thesis and contributes to migration research by acting as a useful example of a transnational, holistic study that combines micro-level, meso-level and macro-level elements as well as multiple different perspectives on the same phenomenon, to reveal shared and unique themes among the participants, and to demonstrate real-life, original examples of the interplay and dynamics between human agency and structural factors within the lives of the participants and within the wider contexts in which they are situated. This thesis argues that human agency and socio-cultural factors are of great significance within migrant migration motivations, housing negotiations, settlement choices and future movement and settlement aspirations and should be considered alongside wider structural factors within places of origin and destination in migration research.

Additionally, this research takes a methodologically bold approach to the analysis process by utilising a combination of content analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) on the narratives of a large sample of participants, partitioned into smaller comparative samples for analysis. This approach enables greater insight into how the Polish participants interpret their lived experiences of migrating to the UK and interacting with the UK housing market, and contributes new understandings of the housing challenges faced by Polish migrant individuals in the UK and their movement and settlement aspirations before and after the EU referendum result.

This research seeks to illuminate the lived experiences that Polish migrants have of engaging with the housing market in two case study localities in the UK prior to Brexit, linking this to socio-economic, cultural and political conditions in Poland to provide a transnational perspective and to uncover a range of push and pull factors that affect Polish housing and migration experiences. As well as expanding current knowledge on the housing experiences and migration pathways of Polish migrants in the UK, this research provides an increased understanding of the future migration and settlement aspirations of a selection of Polish nationals in the UK and in Poland following the EU referendum result.

The following section presents the research aim, the research objectives and the research questions that this research seeks to address.

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

1.2.1 Research Aim

A critical evaluation of the housing experiences and future aspirations of post-accession Polish migrants in the UK, using a phenomenological approach that allows an exploration of the lived experiences and views that Polish nationals both in the UK and in Poland have towards migration and settlement following the decision for Brexit.

1.2.2 Research Objectives

- To critically analyse the migration and settlement pathways of Polish migrants in the UK within the case study localities of Luton and Peterborough.

- To critically assess the lived housing experiences of Polish nationals living in Luton and Peterborough in order to evaluate the challenges that Polish migrant individuals experience in the UK housing market.

- To gain an in-depth understanding of the future migration and settlement aspirations of Polish individuals in the UK and in Poland, including the factors that influence return migration decisions.

1.2.3 Research Questions

- What factors influence Polish migratory decisions and settlement trajectories in the UK?
- What challenges do Polish migrant individuals experience in the housing market in Luton and in Peterborough?
- What are the future migration and settlement aspirations of a selection of Polish nationals in the UK and in Poland?

1.3 Thesis Structure

Chapter 1: Introduction (pages 9-17) and Chapter 2: Context and Case Study Areas (pages 17-50)

An Introduction to the Thesis and the Rationale and Context of the Research

Chapter 3: Literature Review (pages 51-71)

A Review of Previous Literature and Approaches to Migration Research

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods (pages 72-106)

The Research Design

Chapter 5: Housing Expert Interview Results (pages 107-111),

Chapter 6: Polish Migration Motivations: Results and Discussion (pages 112-173),

Chapter 7: Polish Settlement Pathways, Residential Choices and Housing Experiences: Results and Discussion (pages 174-249), and

Chapter 8: Future Migration and Settlement Aspirations: Results and Discussion (pages 250-335)

The Results and Discussion

Chapter 9: Conclusion (pages 336-360)

The Conclusion of the Thesis Including the Main Findings and Contributions

Figure 1. A visual overview of the thesis structure

As shown in Figure 1, this thesis is divided into seven chapters. The introduction to the research including the rationale for the study, the research aim, research objectives and research questions is presented in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 then provides contextual information about Poland, the UK, and the case study areas of Luton and Peterborough within the UK. Following this, Chapter 3 presents a literature review of theoretical approaches to migration research and previous relevant research. Subsequently, Chapter 4 discusses the theoretical framework, methodology and methods that were chosen to form the research design. This is then followed by an analytical discussion of the results of the thesis in Chapter 5, Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8. Chapter 5 presents background information on the Housing Expert participants and summarises the findings that were obtained from the interviews with the housing experts related to housing market issues in Luton and Peterborough. Chapter 6 then discusses the results related to the migration motivations of the Polish participants in the UK, Chapter 7 discusses the settlement pathways, residential choices and lived housing experiences of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough and Chapter 8 discusses the future movement and settlement aspirations of the Polish participants in the UK and in Poland. Subsequently, Chapter 9 concludes the research with a discussion of the main findings, research limitations and original research contributions.

1.4 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 1 has introduced the research topic, discussed the rationale for the study, and presented the research aim, research objectives and research questions. This chapter has also presented a visual overview of the thesis structure in Figure 1. Chapter 2 now discusses contextual information regarding Poland, the UK, Luton and Peterborough to introduce the case study areas and to frame the research.

CHAPTER 2: Context and Case Study Areas

2.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter sets the scene for the thesis by providing contextual information about Poland, the United Kingdom (UK) and the case study areas of this research. First, section 2.1 presents contextual information regarding Poland; the UK and migration between Poland and the UK to frame the research by presenting various socio-cultural, political and economic factors within the country of origin and destination which are likely to have influenced the housing experiences, migration pathways and future aspirations of the Polish participants in this research. Subsequently section 2.2 introduces local level contextual information about the primary and secondary case study areas of Luton and Peterborough in the UK, which provide comparative local contexts for this study of the lived housing experiences and future aspirations of Polish migrants in the UK.

2.1 Poland and the United Kingdom

Figure 2. A map of Poland, displaying the nation's geographical position in Central Europe (Google Maps, 2022a).

As shown in Figure 2, Poland is located in Central Europe, east of Germany and also shares borders with Belarus, Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine (CIA, 2015).

In 1999 a three-tier administrative system was introduced in Poland, administratively dividing the country into voivodeships, counties and municipalities (Szczepańska, Zagroba & Pietrzyk, 2022). Poland has 16 voivodeships, which have 18 main cities acting as administrative centres. These 18 cities are the largest cities in Poland, and the names and locations of the cities within the voivodeships, the names of the voivodeships and the voivodeship boundaries are shown on Figure 3 below (Szczepańska, Zagroba & Pietrzyk, 2022).

Figure 3 The 16 voivodeships and 18 main administrative cities in Poland (Szczepańska, Zagroba & Pietrzyk, 2022).

Figure 3 provides useful context to the migration pathways of the Polish participants that were interviewed in the UK and provides useful geographical context for the interview data that was collected in Poland as a part of this research, as data collection occurred in four of

these 18 cities, in Szczecin, Wrocław, Warsaw and Kraków. Figure 3 also sets the scene for the following discussion of political, economic and social changes in Poland.

2.1.1 Political, Economic and Social Change in Poland 1939-1989

Poland has been a historically contested nation affected by multiple wars and conflicting political interests; and Poland's often fluid boundaries and shifting demographics have been shaped by the outcomes of these struggles.

The German army invaded Poland on the 1st of September 1939. Poland was one of the worst affected nations in the Second World War as approximately six million Polish citizens died as a result of the German occupation of Poland, including over 3 million Polish Jews killed during the holocaust (Wawrzyniak, 2015). When the Second World War ended and Germany was defeated, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) took control of Poland, Poland became a satellite state of the Soviet Union and was known as the People's Republic of Poland (Kasztalska, 2014; Shepley, 2015).

Between 1944 and 1989, the Polish political system was ruled by the communist party, which rejected capitalism and western values such as democracy (White, 2017). During this time, Poland experienced modernisation as a result of industrialisation, urbanisation, technological advancement and improvements to the education system (Kozlowska, 2010). However, economic development in communist Poland was slow and Polish citizens experienced economic difficulties, limited freedoms, limited civil rights, and societal nepotism as Polish society was divided between privileged and repressed individuals (Kozlowska, 2010). Under communist rule, Polish land, resources, industries and infrastructure were seized by the communist government and utilised by the Soviet Union. Following 1945, the Soviet Union altered the borders of the Polish republic by reclaiming Eastern Poland and returning the previously German ruled territories of Silesia, Pomerania and Prussia to Poland (Grzechnik, 2017). This resulted in large population redistribution as over four million ethnic Germans and approximately 481,183 ethnic Ukrainians were forcibly removed from their homes and replaced by Polish settlers (Iglicka, 2000; Grzechnik, 2017). Political and economic instability in Poland led to an increase in emigration following the Second World War. For example, between 1950 and 1990, over one million Polish people migrated out of Poland, including many Jewish Polish people who emigrated between 1946-1948 and then again in 1968 (Iglicka, 2000). Polish society experienced a wave of anti-semitism and anti-

revisionism in 1968 which led many Jewish Polish people to migrate to Israel (Kowalik, 2002). There were many societal resistance efforts against communist rule in Poland including uprisings in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980, and these resistance efforts contributed to the fall of communism in 1989 (Kenney, 1991). The independent trade union Solidarnos´c´ won the first free elections in 1989 and Lech Wałesa, the union candidate who is commonly referred to as a national hero, became the first democratically elected president of Poland in 1990 (Kasztalska, 2014).

This summary of some of Poland's historical events between 1939 and 1989 demonstrates how the nation's demographics, economics and political boundaries have been shaped over time, and highlights that migratory movements are intertwined with Poland's history. Particularly as Polish nationals have often emigrated to avoid volatile political and social situations in Poland (Iglicka, 2000; Aziz, 2018).

2.1.2 Political, Economic and Social Change in Poland Post-1989

The communist regime in Poland collapsed in 1989 and the Polish economy transitioned from a socialist to a market economy (Likic-Brboric, 2007). After 1989, state-imposed restrictions on international mobility ceased and Polish citizens gained increased mobility choices (Iglicka, 2000). However, the transition to a post-socialist, capitalist economy resulted in economic hardship in Poland and social struggles to adapt to the new reality (Iglicka, 2000). Polish history was used as a policy tool and was reframed to be compatible with the anti-communist agenda (Behr, 2022). The Polish government also attempted to reform the nation's post-socialist economy through economic liberalisation policies and the introduction of 'shock therapy' which led to a substantial recession, factory closures, reduced wages and mass unemployment across Poland (White, 2017; Bouzarovski & Tirado Herrero, 2017). State provided social assistance schemes and subsidy programs that were common under the socialist economy were abolished and replaced with new subsidy programs that were targeted towards low-income groups (Bouzarovski & Tirado Herrero, 2017). Unemployment in Poland peaked at 20.6% in early 2004 and widespread experiences of joblessness throughout the population fostered pessimistic views of the Polish labour market (White, 2017). Many Polish citizens also felt disillusioned at the slow rate of economic progress in Poland following 1989, as it was hoped that transitioning to a market economy would bring western levels of economic prosperity to Poland, but progress towards this goal was a lot slower than many people had hoped for and expected (Kozlowska, 2010).

These negative experiences and lack of faith in the Polish economy coincided with Poland gaining access to the EU and its labour market in 2004, which encouraged many Polish nationals to migrate as an alternative livelihood strategy to support themselves and their families (White, 2017). In addition, the provision of state subsidies decreased over time, which was partly owing to EU accession and economic growth in Poland (Bouzarovski & Tirado Herrero, 2017). By October 2008, unemployment levels in Poland had improved and the Polish economy had recovered from its post-communist financial shocks. Within a year, in 2009, the GEC worsened unemployment in Poland once more, further increasing the number of Polish citizens who had experienced unemployment during their lifetimes (White, 2017).

As well as the historical conflicts discussed above, these economic changes have also impacted Poland's demographics and migratory movements over time. These examples demonstrate that Poland's economy and labour market were turbulent following the collapse of the communist regime and suffered further drawbacks with the onset of the GEC, such as an increase in precarious employment (Pytlas, 2021). However, it is evident that Poland's economy has improved over time as between 2007 and 2014 Poland's economy grew by 20%, which was a record in Europe at that time (European Council, 2022). Poland is also the largest economy in central Europe, and according to Bukowski and Paczos (2021) and The World Bank (2022) Poland's economy has become one of the most resilient economies within the EU in recent years, experiencing relatively less economic damage owing to the Covid-19 pandemic than other European countries and recovering strongly in 2021. In addition, while unemployment rates have soared across Europe since 2020, the unemployment rate in Poland was among the lowest in the EU in 2021 (Bukowski & Paczos, 2021).

Although Poland's economy has notably improved over time, Figure 4 shows that there have been regional development differences across the nation's sixteen provinces. Głebocki & Rogacki (2002) studied the presence of regional economic disparities in Poland and concluded that eastern voivodeships have generally suffered from below national average levels of industrial restructuring, agricultural production and export activity compared to more prosperous western regions of Poland. This implies that the Polish population in eastern regions of Poland is more likely to have experienced economic hardship or

unemployment, which is likely to have encouraged higher levels of migration from these areas than from other regions of Poland.

Figure 1 Regions of development and regression in Poland: 1 – regions of intensive development, 2 – regions of moderate development, 3 – regions of poor development, 4 – regions of regression
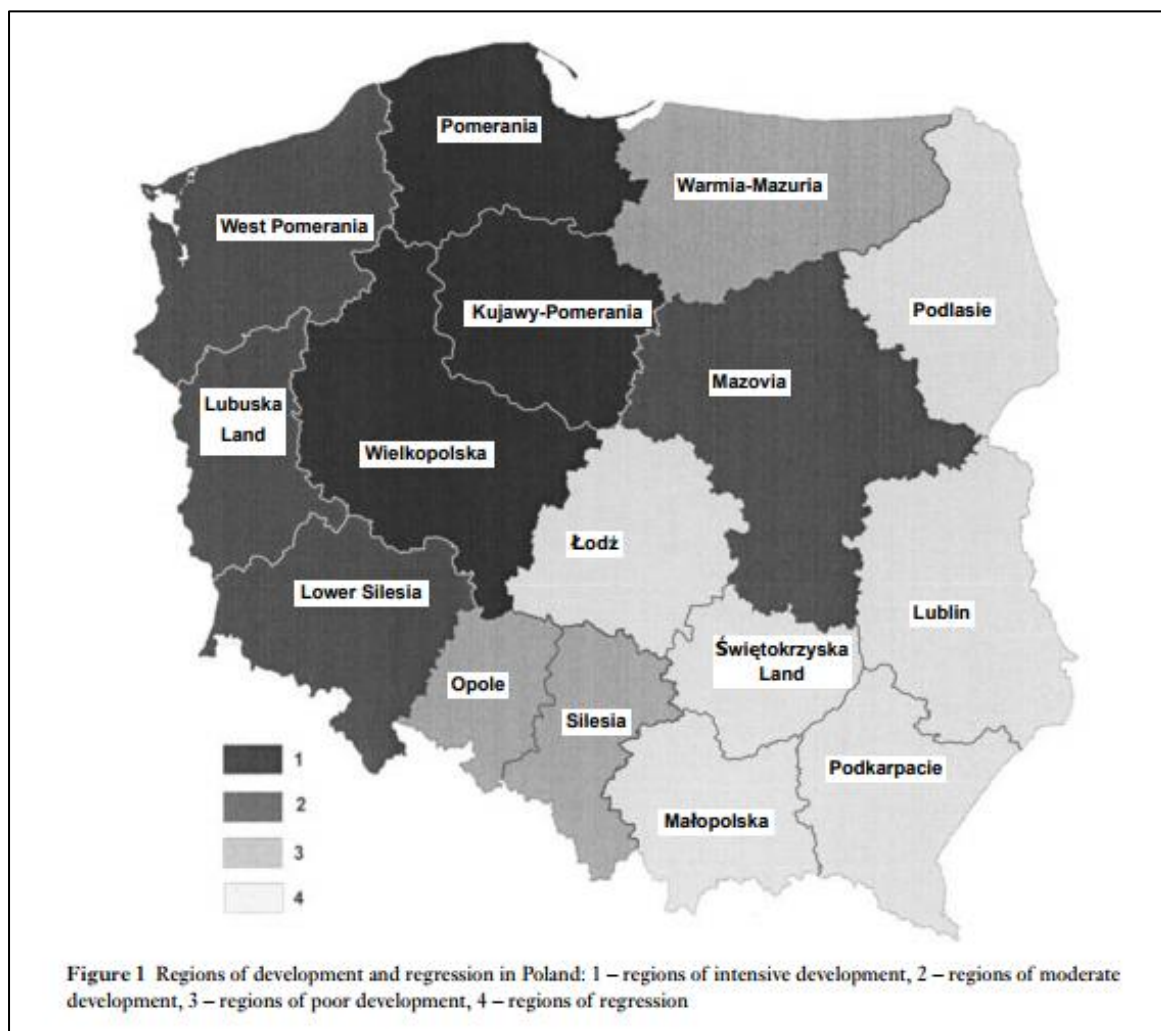
Figure 4. A map showing the 16 voivodeships of Poland and regional development differences (Głębocki & Rogacki, 2002, p.58).

Politically, Poland's leadership structure has altered during this research. In November 2015, when this study began, Poland was led by the President of Poland Andrej Duda, and the nation's government was run by Prime Minister Beata Szydlo (CIA, 2015). Both Andrej Duda and Beata Szydlo are members of Poland's conservative Law and Justice party (PiS) which was first founded in 2001, came into governmental power in 2015 and remains the nation's leading political party in March 2023. Prior to the election of the PiS party in 2015, Poland was led by the previous Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who represented a centrist party called the Civic Platform party (PO) (European Council, 2022). PO was in governmental power in Poland from 2007-2014 and Donald Tusk had been the longest-serving democratic Prime Minister in Poland before stepping down and being elected as the President of the European Council in 2014 (European Council, 2022). This led to a

parliamentary election in Poland, and the PiS party received 37.6% of the vote which enabled the PiS party to come into power in 2015 (Jaskiernia, 2017; Farrar, 2022). The PiS electorate largely consisted of elderly voters, farmers, blue collar workers and those with lower forms of education, who supported populist attitudes with anti-liberal economic and cultural positions (Pytlas, 2021).

The PiS party has consistently portrayed itself as a defender of traditional, Christian values and of Polish national identity in opposition to the supposedly threatening liberal agendas of those in support of immigration, feminism, and the rights of the LGBTQ+ community (Zgut, 2020). This has included the use of political rhetoric that frames the EU's acceptance of homosexuality as a threat to Polish national identity, the economy and Poland's Christian values (O'Dwyer, 2018). Additionally, the PiS party has openly used homophobic language and supported policies that are repressive of LGBTQ+ rights (O'Dwyer, 2018). Spreading populist and nationalistic views polarises the Polish population and increases conservative support for the PiS party in Poland (Zgut, 2020). The anti-liberal and homophobic agenda of PiS continued during the 2015 election campaign in Poland, in which PiS opposed the recognition of same-sex couples (O'Dwyer, 2018). Additionally, during the lead up to the 2015 election, at the height of the Mediterranean migration crisis in Europe, the PiS party took a strong stance against the EU migrant relocation scheme claiming that accepting the immigration of Muslims into Poland would threaten Poland's Christian values and national security (Szczerbiak, 2019). The PiS party gained political power of Poland in the October 2015 election and there were many public protests both for and against the PiS party's admission to governmental leadership, which created a volatile political environment in Poland. Shortly after taking political leadership in 2015, the Polish government limited feminist policies by reducing state funding for in-vitro fertilisation treatments, restricting women's access to emergency contraception and reducing the accessibility of funding to combat domestic abuse (Gwiazda, 2021).

Poland's political situation further became the subject of controversial debate in July 2017 as PiS proposed a plan to remove Poland's supreme court judges and appoint fifteen constitutional tribunal members of their own choosing instead, to allow PiS to have increased power and control over the Polish judiciary system (Broniatowski, 2017; Davies, 2017). EU authorities were notably concerned by those plans and warned that Poland would face sanctions if the plans were not reversed (Davies, 2017; Szczerbiak, 2022). For example, The Venice Commission stated that the plans posed a threat to the rule of law, democracy, and

human rights. The proposal resulted in the European Commission launching its' first investigation into the democratic standards of an EU member state (Davies, 2017). Furthermore, three US senators voiced their opinions on the alterations to Poland's constitutional court and media regulation, stating that the proposed changes would negatively affect democratic values, freedom of speech and the judiciary system (Davies, 2017). In response to these concerns and the possibility of receiving penalties from the EU, President Andrzej Duda officially dismissed the PiS party's plan to remove the nation's supreme court judges on the 25th of September 2017 (Broniatowski, 2017). Although this temporarily diffused tensions between Poland and the EU, political tensions continued as the leader of PiS continued to push the party's agenda, tensions surfaced within the PiS party and the nation's population continued to be politically divided (Broniatowski, 2017). Additionally, Mateusz Morawiecki became the Prime Minister of Poland, succeeding Beata Szydło in December 2017. Although Andrzej Duda dismissed the proposal to immediately remove the Supreme Court Judges, he created a revised proposal that meant that supreme court judges had to resign at the age of 65 unless granted approval to remain by being elected by a three-fifths majority in parliament instead of nominated by judges' organizations (Broniatowski, 2017). The EU commission started legal infringement procedures on Poland, which required the Polish government to reverse parts of its reforms, and clashes between the EU and the Polish government on rule of law have continued in recent years (Szczerbiak, 2022).

Although the PiS party has been domestically and internationally criticised for: undermining democracy and rule of law; being at odds with the EU; and spreading anti-liberal, nationalistic views towards the rights of the LGBTQ+ population, women's rights and immigration issues, the party has remained popular in Poland owing to its stance on socio-economic issues (Szczerbiak, 2019). For example, the PiS government has delivered on its socioeconomic pledges by cutting taxes and increasing social spending, which has lowered the unemployment rate and has provided a financial boost for low-income households (Szcerbiak, 2019). One example of this is the government's 500+ Family (Rodzina 500+) subsidy programme which was launched in April 2016 and involves the government paying families 500 złoty for each child within their household (Ministry of Family and Social Policy, 2019). The benefits associated with the PiS party's social spending programmes were partly the reason for the party's popularity in the lead up to the parliamentary election in October 2019, in which the PiS party was re-elected into power with 43.6% of the votes (Szczerbiak, 2019; Pytlas, 2021). A year later in October 2020, the Polish Constitutional

Court imposed restrictions on women's access to abortion, leading to mass public anti-government protests in support of women's rights and freedom of choice (Zgut, 2020). In July 2021, the EU Court of Justice called for the Polish government to suspend its new supreme court disciplinary chamber as it threatened judicial independence and did not comply with EU law (Szczerbiak, 2022). PiS claimed that it planned to remove the chamber, but the EU Commission was not satisfied with the Polish government's ambiguous commitments and delayed Poland's access to the EU Covid-19 national recovery fund and ordered the Polish government to pay one million Euros in fines per day until it complied with the ruling of the EU Court of Justice (Szczerbiak, 2022). Since then, Poland has become central to the EU and NATO's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, assisting military and humanitarian aid into Ukraine and accepting Ukrainian refugees (Szczerbiak, 2022). Poland has welcomed a large number of Ukrainian refugees (approximately 3.5 million between 24th February 2022 and mid-May 2022) who have migrated across the Polish-Ukrainian border to escape from the Russian war on Ukraine (Duszczyk & Kaczmarczyk, 2022). Poland has long accepted labour migration from Ukraine, which has helped to reduce labour market shortages in Poland caused by a large proportion of the Polish workforce migrating to EU member states after EU accession in 2004 (Kopeć, 2022). Poland is now also accepting many Ukrainian refugees from the Ukraine crisis (Duszczyk & Kaczmarczyk, 2022; The World Bank, 2022). This is a stark contrast to the Polish government's hostile response towards refugees from the Mediterranean migration crisis in 2015. Assisting Ukrainian refugees helps the Polish government to safeguard the economic and social ties between Poland and Ukraine, particularly as Ukrainian migrant workers are now a key part of the Polish economy (Kranz, 2022). Additionally, welcoming Ukrainian refugees is an important act for Poland geopolitically, because as well as offering humanitarian refuge to the nation's Ukrainian neighbours in need, it also highlights Poland's political position in opposition to Russia. Poland and Russia have a long history of conflict and the PiS party in Poland commonly portrays itself as a power defending Europe from Russian and Belarusian influences (Kranz, 2022; Gromada & Zeniuk, 2022).

The next national election in Poland is scheduled for October 2023, and previous Prime Minister Donald Tusk has announced that he intends to return to the PO and oppose the PiS party in the next election (Szczerbiak, 2019; Farrar, 2022). This upcoming election will determine whether the PiS party's political leadership will continue for another term or if another party will take over Poland's government at the end of 2023.

Following this overview of political, economic and social changes in Poland over time, the subsequent subsection provides an overview of the history of migration between Poland and the UK.

2.1.3 An Overview of Migration Between Poland and the UK

Migration from Poland to the UK has been occurring since as early as the sixteenth century on a small-scale, and the characteristics of migration flows between Poland and the UK have differed at different points in history (Trevena, 2009). The UK has had a long relationship with Polish settlers with the post-World War Two Polish diaspora as well as large waves of Polish migrations to London between the 1990s and early 2000s (Whitehead, Edge, Gordon, Scanlon & Travers, 2011). Over time, migrating to the UK has become an increasingly common social practice in the lives of Polish nationals, which Favell (2008) describes as a culture of migration.

Prior to the 1990s, most migratory movements from Poland to the UK were permanent and often forced, motivated by political factors such as war, antisemitism and martial law (Aziz, 2018). Before 1989, when Polish people migrated abroad it was often viewed as a one-way movement with little to no possibility of returning to Poland again (Ignatowicz, 2011). Whereas post 1989, migratory movements between Poland and the UK have become temporary and circular as well as permanent and have become increasingly motivated by economic and social factors as well as changing immigration policies (Ignatowicz, 2011; Aziz, 2018). The two largest phases of migration from Poland to the UK have occurred in the period during and after the Second World War, and in the period post-EU enlargement in 2004 (Trevena, 2009).

During the Second World War, after the German invasion of Poland in 1939, the UK became home to the Polish government-in-exile, and by 1945 there were 249,000 Polish members of the Polish Armed Forces under the British Command (Trevena, 2009). Following the Second World War, the British government recruited foreign workers to help rebuild the country and many Polish citizens remained in the UK to avoid Soviet persecution in Poland (Burrell, 2012). In 1947 the British government introduced the Polish Resettlement Act that allowed Polish servicemen and women who had fought in Western Europe to remain in the UK if they did not wish to return to communist Poland, which resulted in 120,000 Polish army members settling in the UK (Burrell, 2012; Aziz, 2018). Work schemes were also introduced to support displaced persons. Spigelman (2013) notes that there was initially a

sense of societal pride and allegiance between these post-war Polish settlers and British people in the UK, but that public opinion related to the Polish settlers gradually soured owing to negative perceptions of Catholicism, anti-Soviet sentiment and perceived economic threats to British livelihoods. British workers became fearful that the newcomers would lower wages and living standards and exacerbate food and housing shortages (Spigelman (2013). Subsequently, when martial law was introduced in Poland from 1981 to 1983, there were small streams of Polish citizens migrating to the UK to seek asylum (Aziz, 2018).

During communist rule in Poland from 1945-1989, the English language became a symbol of resistance against the soviet administration owing to its association with freedoms and prosperity in the west (Kasztalska, 2014). In 1948, the Russian language was the only compulsory foreign language taught within the Polish education system, and the teaching of other foreign languages including English practically ceased. Russian remained the only compulsory foreign language in the Polish school curriculum until the 1960s, when Poland then added a compulsory western language to the curriculum (Kasztalska, 2014). Since the fall of communism in 1989, the teaching of the Russian language became virtually obsolete and it became increasingly popular to learn English as the English language provided a connection to western popular culture and Polish people had increased access to English and American media such as music, television, and films (Kasztalska, 2014). Learning English is commonly viewed by members of the Polish population as a symbol of educational achievement and improved employability prospects and most young people (~89% in 2012) now learn English as a part of their education in Poland (Kasztalska, 2014).

Sztompka (2004) observed that from the 18th century onwards, Polish people exhibited what he referred to as East European syndrome in which Polish people commonly idealised political freedoms and economic prosperity in the west; viewed central and Eastern Europe as inferior to the west and viewed Poland as superior to societies further east. Following the Second World War, Stztompka (2004) suggested that East European syndrome evolved into Homo Sovieticus, in which Eastern Europeans often viewed themselves as mentally and culturally separate from the rest of Europe, and inferior to other Europeans, which was exacerbated by western condescending attitudes and suspicion towards Eastern Europeans in political contacts, economic exchanges and travel procedures (Sztompka, 2004). For instance, prior to 1989 Eastern Europeans were commonly treated as second class individuals during travel procedures and were subjected to extended visa procedures and humiliating security and customs checks, with longer queues and questioning at western

border points (Sztompka, 2004; Burrell, 2008). International travel outside of the eastern bloc was restricted by the communist state in Poland prior to 1989, but some travel to western nations was possible via professional employment opportunities and for women who had family members to visit abroad (Burrell, 2008).

Mobility patterns from Poland to the UK have changed since 1989 owing to the liberalisation of international travel and political and socio-economic changes that occurred within Eastern and Central Europe during the 1990s (Ignatowicz, 2011). The large flows of Polish migrations to the UK during the 1990s and early 2000s were mainly short-term economic movements in search of labour opportunities (Burrell, 2012). During this time there was a significant amount of irregular migration from Poland to the UK, and there were opportunities for regular labour migration to the UK via legalised temporary migration programmes and seasonal work schemes (Düvell, 2004; Aziz, 2018). Many Polish people travelled to the UK on student visas or on the basis of joining a particular temporary or seasonal scheme (such as the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Scheme), and some worked beyond the scope of their permissions and remained in the UK after their visa expiry dates (Anderson, Ruhs, Rogaly & Spencer, 2006; Kubal, 2009). Additionally, between 2001 and 2004, tens of thousands of irregular Polish migrants in the UK obtained a self-employed visa to legalise their presence in the UK and gained the ability to participate in regularised forms of employment, to pay taxes, to obtain a mortgage and to engage in other aspects of UK society provided by legal status (Garapich, 2008).

Subsequently, on the 1st of May 2004, Poland was one of the A8 countries to join the EU, which altered the nature of mobility patterns between Poland and the UK (Ignatowicz, 2011). Globalisation has altered international migration flows and transnational networks between countries, increasing the amount of global mobility, the diversity of sending and receiving countries, cultural diversity and temporary and circular movements (Czaika & De Haas, 2014; Aziz, 2018). Globalisation has led to greater international connectivity and globalising trends such as financial deregulation, trade liberalisation, regional market integration, and the internationalisation of economic activities (Likic-Brboric, 2007). The EU is an example of regional market integration and functions with a fundamental principle that labour can move freely between EU member states, entitling workers to seek employment and live in other EU countries (European Commission, 2015). EU accession in 2004 granted Polish citizens access to freedom of movement (FoM) rights within EU member states and the UK was one of only three EU countries (as well as Sweden and Ireland) to place little restriction

on the labour market access of A8 migrants (Drinkwater, Eade & Garapich, 2006; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). The UK and Ireland granted A8 migrants open access to their labour markets with few requirements such as the need for A8 migrants to register on the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) to work in the UK (which was in place from 2004-2011), and restricted access to welfare benefits (Drinkwater *et al*., 2006). The limited restrictions placed on A8 migrant's access to UK labour markets in 2004 resulted in the UK becoming the main destination for Polish migrants after 2004 (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). Since EU enlargement the huge influx of Polish citizens that have migrated to the UK has been the largest wave of immigration in contemporary British history, and Polish migratory movements continue to alter UK society and the economy (Favell, 2008; Trevena, 2009). As well as increasing international migration from Poland to the UK, the enlargement of the EU regularised what was previously mostly irregular migratory movements between Poland and the UK and provided amnesty for undocumented central and Eastern Europeans who had been working in the UK prior to 2004 (Aziz, 2018; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). These previously undocumented workers were able to regularise their status and live and work within the EU legitimately after EU accession (Aziz, 2018; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021).

Globalisation has also increased the ability and propensity for people to migrate as increased connectivity and technological advancements have led to cheaper and more accessible forms of travel and communication, easier access to information, and transnational social networks (Aziz, 2018; De Haas, 2021). For example, prior to 2004, many Polish people who chose to migrate abroad had to rely on coach travel as a means of transportation (Burrell, 2008; Ignatowicz, 2011). Whereas following EU enlargement in 2004 there was an increase in airlines offering low-cost flights between destinations in Poland and the UK (Burrell, 2012). This was a reflection of the rising demand for mobility between the two countries and resulted in an increase in Polish people using air travel to migrate and a decrease in coach transportation as a means of migration abroad, although many people continued to travel between Poland and the UK via vehicle transportation as well (Burrell, 2012; Ignatowicz, 2011). Joining the EU enabled Polish migrants to enjoy greater travel freedoms and enabled more flexible, circular and regular mobility between Poland and the UK (Ignatowicz, 2011; Dobruszkes, 2009).

The UK is home to the busiest airport system in Europe and the airports in the southeast of England provide important global connections for other regions of the UK (Suau-Sanchez, Voltes-Dorta & Rodriguez-Deniz, 2016). The main airports in the south and east of England

are Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City. These five airports combined provide flight connections to 106 countries worldwide and served approximately 62% of all air traffic in the UK system in 2013 (Suau-Sanchez *et al.*, 2016). These five airports are also the bases of low-cost airlines that provide flights between Poland and the UK and Table 1 shows the different destinations in Poland offered by each airline at London Luton Airport and London Stanstead Airport as these airports are in the closest proximity to Luton and Peterborough (the case study areas of this research).

Airline	Airport	
	London Luton Airport	London Stansted Airport
EasyJet	Kraków (2hrs 30mins)	Kraków (3hrs 40mins)
WizzAir	Wrocław (2hrs 15mins)	Wrocław (2hrs 25mins)
	Gdansk (2hrs)	
	Katowice (2hrs 10mins)	
	Rzeszow (2hrs 30mins)	Rzeszow (2hrs 45 mins)
	Olsztyn-Mazury (2hrs 15mins)	Olsztyn-Mazury (2hrs 15mins)
	Poznan (2hrs 15mins)	Poznan (2hrs 20mins)
	Warsaw (2hrs 20mins)	
	Lublin (2hrs 30mins)	
		Kraków (3hrs 40mins)
RyanAir	Bydgoszcz (2hrs 10mins)	
	Lublin (2hrs 30mins)	
	Rzeszow (2hrs 30 mins)	Rzeszow (2hrs 45 mins)
		Wrocław (2hrs 25mins)
		Szczecin (1hr 50mins)
		Poznan (2hrs 20mins)
		Olsztyn-Mazury (2hrs 15mins)
		Kraków (3hrs 40mins)
Other Airlines		Lodz (unknown airline(s) -2hrs 10mins)
		Warsaw (AirMoldova - 2hrs 20mins)

Table 1. The Polish destinations and flight times offered by each airline at London Luton Airport and London Stansted Airport (data sourced in November 2022).

Table 1 indicates that multiple destinations across Poland are accessible via flights from London Luton Airport and London Stansted Airport through various airlines, mainly offered by WizzAir and RyanAir. This information is important for context, as Burrell (2011) states that:

> *'Not only has there been a proliferation of low-cost air travel carriers operating routes between Poland and the UK (Ryanair, Easyjet, Wizzair, Jet 2, Sky Europe (closed 2009), Central Wings (2005–2008), BMI Baby), but the Poland to the UK market has become the largest east–west low-cost air carrier market in Europe'(Burrell, 2011, p.1024).*

These low-cost flight connections between airports in Poland and the UK facilitate initial migration journeys, transnational visits and return migration movements (Burrell, 2011). As a result of the increased demand for travel between destinations in Poland and the UK after 2004, Luton Airport and Stansted Airport have become increasingly important transport hubs for low-cost routes between Poland and the UK since 2005 (Burrell, 2012). And the diversity of Polish destinations available at Luton Airport and Stansted airport and the ease of access between these airports and Luton and Peterborough is likely to have impacted the high level of Polish settlement within these localities. For instance, Burrell (2012) suggests that the settlement patterns of post-2004 Polish migrants in the UK can be closely mapped onto the geography of air travel. Polish residents are geographically spread across the UK but there are concentrations in the south and east of England in areas such as Luton, Peterborough, Lincolnshire, Cambridge, parts of London, Southampton, Sussex and Norfolk (Hardy & Clark, 2005; ONS2022b).

Contemporary migration from Poland to the UK has long occurred against a backdrop of anti-immigrant sentiment towards Polish migrants in British public discourse - most notably prior to EU enlargement in 2004; during the recession in the UK following the GEC; and during the lead up to the EU referendum in 2016. There has been considerable negative press related to migration and its impact on the UK economy, health, education and housing services over time, which has been politically fuelled by the agendas of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the British National Party (BNP) in recent years, as well as the influence of the British press (Robinson, 2010; Spigelman, 2013; Hogan & Haltinner, 2015). British press sources such as The Daily Mail newspaper have repeatedly framed immigration negatively to stir populist sentiment (Spigelman, 2013; Reed, 2018). Prior to

the EU enlargement in 2004 the tabloid press began spreading anti-A8 and anti-Polish migrant sentiment, warning that the UK would experience a flood of immigration from Central and Eastern Europe after 2004 (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). During this time, press coverage of immigration from Poland to the UK was commonly negatively portrayed as an oncoming invasion of cheap labourers that would undercut British tradespeople, steal British jobs and threaten livelihoods (Spigelman, 2013). Spigelman (2013) highlighted that some positive press portrayals of Polish migrants did exist at the time, (such as articles covering Polish people as hardworking professionals who could provide cheap and high-quality services), but emphasised that negative portrayals of Polish people in the press were far more frequent. This led to increased anti-immigration sentiment, and in the years following EU enlargement the tabloid press and Conservatives criticised the Labour government for losing control of immigration (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021).

Additionally, when the GEC began in 2007, which led to an economic recession in the UK between 2008 and 2009, anti-immigrant sentiment increased within British public discourse as the UK experienced rising levels of unemployment. During this time, Polish migrants were often the primary targets of negative public discourse related to EU migration and were portrayed as abusers of welfare benefits (Portas, 2018; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). Public perceptions spread that EU migration to the UK was primarily motivated by access to British welfare benefits, worsening negative public perceptions of uncontrolled European immigration (Portas, 2018). At the time of the 2008-2009 UK recession, the value of the Polish złoty grew relative to the falling value of the British pound, economic and living standards deteriorated in the UK and many expected Polish migrants living in the UK to return to Poland or to move to other EU member states (Trevena, 2009). However, as Trevena (2009), White (2011) and Kilkey & Ryan (2021) point out, the scale of Polish return migration during the recession was exaggerated, and although some return migration did occur, the scale of return was less than predicted and the UK Polish population continued to grow. Many Polish migrants remained in the UK despite the recession, some returned to Poland indefinitely as a result of the recession, and others who returned to Poland eventually returned to the UK again in a process that White (2014) refers to as double return migration. Some Polish individuals engaged in double return migration to migrate to the UK a second time because they missed the UK, they struggled to re-adapt to living in Poland and experienced difficulties re-entering the labour market in Poland (White, 2014).

In the lead up to the EU referendum in the UK in 2016, at a time of austerity and government public spending-cuts, the Leave campaign took advantage of anti-immigration discourse claiming that voting to leave the EU would enable Britain to 'take back control of its borders' and blaming uncontrolled EU immigration for issues such as housing shortages and National Health Service pressures (Portas, 2018).

Numerous scholars concede that the majority leave vote in the UK's EU referendum was largely influenced by negative public views of immigration in the UK (Tilford, 2015; Arnorsson & Zoega, 2016). For instance, Tilford (2015) stated that EU membership had become heavily associated with uncontrolled immigration in the minds of many UK voters in the lead up to the referendum. Tilford (2015) also described a variety of reasons for negative public opinions regarding EU immigration in the UK such as decreasing wages, a shortage of housing and service pressures, but he added that these views were unfounded by evidence. For instance, many people associated migration with the decrease in British workers' wages between 2008 and 2014, but in reality, Tilford (2015) states that this largely resulted from the economic recession rather than immigrational influence. Additionally, migrants are often used as scapegoats regarding the housing crisis, an example of which is demonstrated in Plate 1 which depicts the front page of the Daily Mail newspaper in May 2016 (one month prior to the EU referendum) with the headline 'Migrants Spark Housing Crisis' (Academy of Urbanism, 2016).

Plate 1. The front page of the Daily Mail newspaper in May 2016.

The UK housing system has undergone major shifts over the last twenty years as the government has reduced investment in housing infrastructure and social housing and has reduced housing welfare for individuals. The government has also decreased investment in regeneration projects for deprived areas (Smith & Finney, 2015). These changes have resulted in an alteration of the UK's housing tenure composition as there has been a reduction in the proportion of households in owner-occupied and social rented housing and there has been significant growth in private renting (Smith & Finney, 2015).

The substantial changes in the UK housing market over the last two decades have resulted in a 'housing crisis' with a lack of affordable and stable housing for both owner-occupation and renting (Whitehead & Williams, 2011; Smith & Finney, 2015). Migrants are frequently blamed for housing shortages and the housing crisis, but the UK government has significantly contributed to the housing shortage as public policy has fallen short of property construction requirements over the last three decades (Tilford, 2015). This is poignant in terms of this research as this study explores housing expert views regarding housing market issues in two UK localities and explores Polish migrant housing experiences and their engagement with the housing markets in these localities. Tilford (2015) believes that chronic government policy failures have created the issues above, but that the media and the government have used immigration as a scapegoat for these failures, shaping public discourse towards an anti-immigration sentiment in the UK, which ultimately contributed to the Brexit vote.

Rzepnikowska (2019) emphasises that although anti-immigrant sentiments shared by media sources and British politicians may be economically motivated, they produce racialised effects and affect relations between British and Polish people in the UK. As well as contributing to the decision for the UK to leave the EU, negative sentiment towards immigration has resulted in increased xenophobia, discrimination and hate crime incidents aimed at migrants in the UK (Devine, 2018; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). This has included heightened racism and hate crime incidents targeted at Polish migrants in the UK (Rzepnikowska, 2019; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). For instance, following the EU referendum a Polish man was murdered in Harlow in August 2016, in what was described as an unprovoked hate crime incident (Krupa, 2016). Additionally, cards were posted through the doors of Polish families in Huntingdon which referred to Polish people as vermin and told them to leave the EU; many social media posts contained verbal abuse aimed at Europeans and other nationalities living in the UK; and a Polish family in Plymouth were the victims

of an arson attack as their shed was deliberately set on fire a few days after the referendum result and they received a letter in the post saying 'go back to your country, next be your family' (Hopkins, 2016). In the month following the EU referendum the number of hate crime incidents in the UK increased by 41%, and more attacks were aimed at Polish people than all other nationalities combined (Weaver, 2016). Hate crime incidents are often underreported, and it is likely that the actual level of hate crimes following the referendum was higher than the estimated amount and that many incidences occurred without repercussions (Lumsden, Goode & Black, 2019).

Kilkey and Ryan (2021) describe Brexit as the third major unsettling event that has occurred in the lives of Polish migrants in the UK since the early 2000s as well as EU enlargement in 2004 and the 2008-2009 recessionary years in the UK following the GEC in 2007 (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). The long-term impact that Brexit will have on UK immigration remains to be seen. However, in the short-term, it is evident that both EU and non-EU migration to the UK decreased during the six months following the referendum (ONS, 2020).
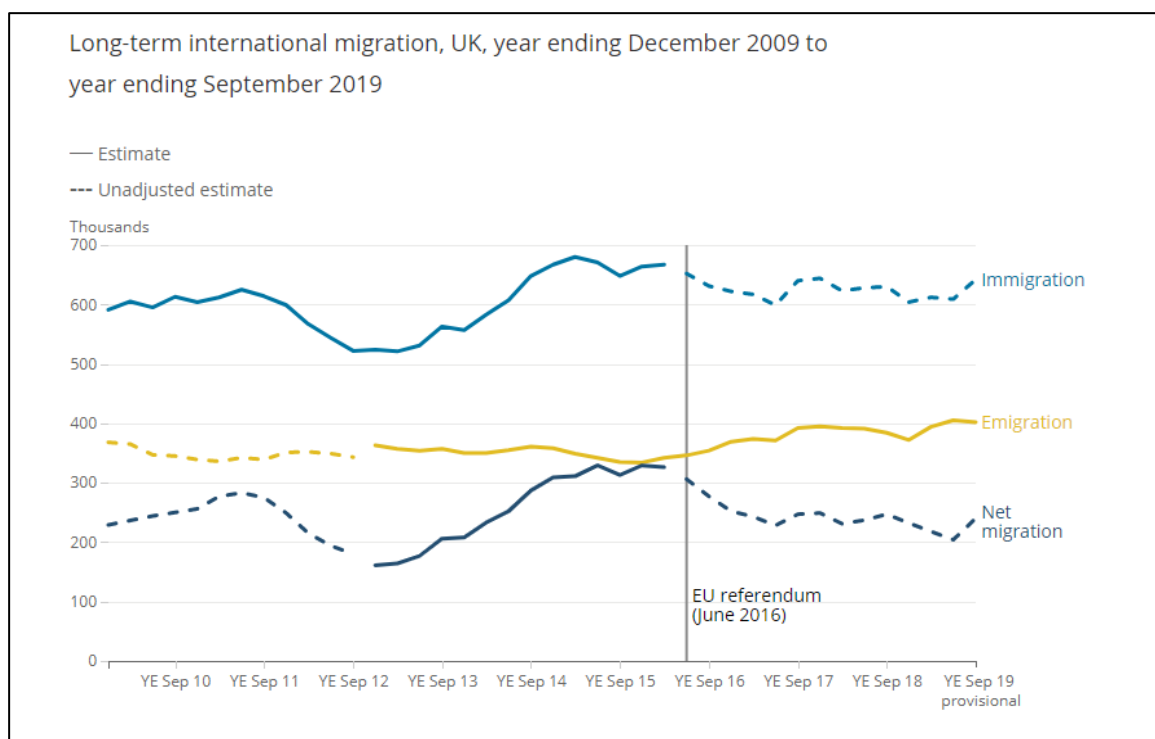
Figure 5. Long-term international migration trends in the UK between 2009 and 2019 (ONS, 2020).

Figure 5. shows that net migration in the UK has fluctuated over time between 2009 and 2019 and indicates a decrease in net migration following the EU referendum in June 2016.

Sumption and Walsh (2022a) indicated that EU net migration decreased by 51,000 between June 2016 and November 2016 and stated that this decline was largely owing to a fall in net migration from Eastern European nations. Following the EU referendum there was a great deal of uncertainty about the future rights of EU citizens living in the UK after the removal of FoM rights, which created socio-legal status insecurities among EU migrants in the UK (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). Additionally, the volatility of the UK economy and the fluctuating value of the British pound since the EU referendum result have exacerbated feelings of uncertainty (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021).

It appears that the widespread uncertainty that arose from the EU referendum result and the large amount of hate crime that subsequently ensued may have discouraged EU immigration to the UK and could have also encouraged EU migrants living in the UK to return to their countries of origin. If this is correct, then the impact of Brexit could act as a release valve to the high level of inward European migration that the UK has experienced in recent years, primarily since EU enlargement in 2004. On the other hand, although Brexit related fears may have encouraged some return migration or movement elsewhere during the year following the referendum, it is possible that the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) that enabled all EU citizens who had lived in the UK for at least five years to apply for 'settled status' and hold the same rights as British citizens may have reduced feelings of uncertainty and decreased aspirations to move elsewhere in favour of choosing to remain in the UK.

Additionally, existing Polish migration research has suggested that many Polish migrants have become embedded in UK society over time and have developed desires to settle permanently in the UK, which would reduce their propensity for further migratory movements (White, 2017; Ryan, 2018).

EU immigration decreased significantly after the Brexit referendum in 2016, but net migration of EU citizens in the UK continued to be positive until early 2020 when it appears that the Covid-19 pandemic led to negative net EU migration with more EU citizens leaving the UK than staying (Sumption & Walsh, 2022b). By the end of September 2021, an estimated 5.2 million EU citizens had applied to the EUSS and an estimated 2.1 million people held pre-settled status and would need to reapply to the EUSS to remain in the UK permanently (Sumption & Walsh, 2022b). In the 2021 Census, 743,083 individuals in England and Wales recorded Poland as their country of birth (ONS, 2022e). This figure has increased from 579,000 in the 2011 Census, indicating that the Polish born population in the

UK has continued to grow over the last decade, despite the impact of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic (ONS, 2022e). Additionally, the 2021 Census data confirmed that Polish passports remain the most common non-UK passport held in England and Wales, with 760,000 recorded Polish passport holders (ONS, 2022e).

This section has provided the contextual background for this research at the national level, and the subsequent section provides contextual information at the local level and introduces Luton and Peterborough as the primary and secondary comparative case study areas of this research.

2.2 Luton and Peterborough

This section introduces Luton and Peterborough as the study areas of this research and provides contextual information, including the geographical location of the localities within the UK, the demographic characteristics of the local populations, and economic aspects. The information provided within this section justifies the choice of Luton and Peterborough as comparative case study areas in this research. This section also provides local contextual information for the interviews that were carried out with Polish participants and housing expert participants in Luton and Peterborough. Figure 6 shows the locations of Luton and Peterborough in the east of England.
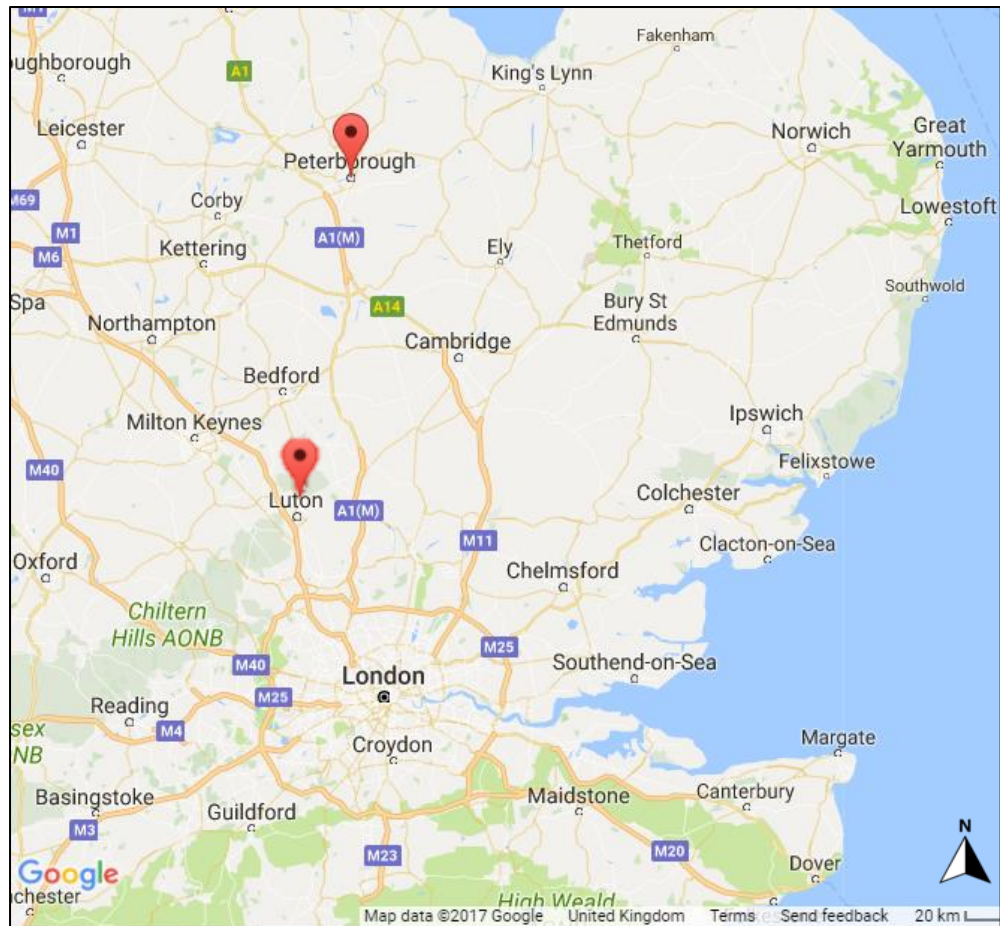
Figure 6. The location of Luton and Peterborough in the East of England (adapted from Google Maps, 2017).

Luton is the primary case study location in this research, and a decision was made to also study the experiences of Polish migrants in Peterborough to enable a comparative analysis of the lived experiences of Polish migrant individuals in two localities within the East of England. Social phenomena are not fixed and often vary for different people and different geographical areas (Bloemraad, 2013). Most place-based comparative migration research studies similarities and differences at the nation-state level between different countries (Bloemraad, 2013). However, Bloemraad (2013) states that contemporary, dynamic comparative research can occur at the sub-national level to highlight contrasts and comparisons between localities, regions, and neighbourhoods within a country rather than assuming that all places within a country are homogenous (Bloemraad, 2013). And this form of comparative research is useful when studying migrant experiences within a country, as the lives of migrant individuals can be very different within different locations within a nation (Bloemraad, 2013). Therefore, studying the lived experiences of Polish migrants in Luton and Peterborough enables an opportunity to compare and spatially contrast the lived experiences of a selection of Polish migrant individuals within the context of these localities.

Both Luton and Peterborough are located in the East of England (as shown on Figure 6), and the East of England was the region that experienced the largest population growth in England between 2011 and 2021 (an increase of 8.3%, representing an increase of 488,000 residents) (ONS, 2022c). Within that period, Luton's population grew by 10.9% (from 203,200 to 225,300), and Peterborough's population grew by 17.5% (from 183,600 to 215,700) which are higher rates of population growth than the overall increase in the East of England (8.3%) and England (6.6%) respectively (ONS, 2022c; ONS, 2022d). Additionally, Luton is the most densely populated of the 45 East of England local authority areas with 5,196 people per square metre of land, whereas Peterborough is the 18th most densely populated local authority areas in the East of England with a population density of 628 people square metre of land (ONS, 2022c; ONS, 2022d). These statistics indicate that both localities are densely populated and have experienced high population growth between 2011 and 2021.

In the 2021 Census, 81,049 individuals in the East of England recorded Poland as their country of birth and 8779 of these Polish individuals were recorded in Luton and 8338 were recorded in Peterborough (ONS, 2022e). These statistics indicate that in both localities 3.9% of the local population was born in Poland. Figure 7 provides a visual representation of the population of local authority districts in England and Wales by country of birth: Poland in the 2021 Census.
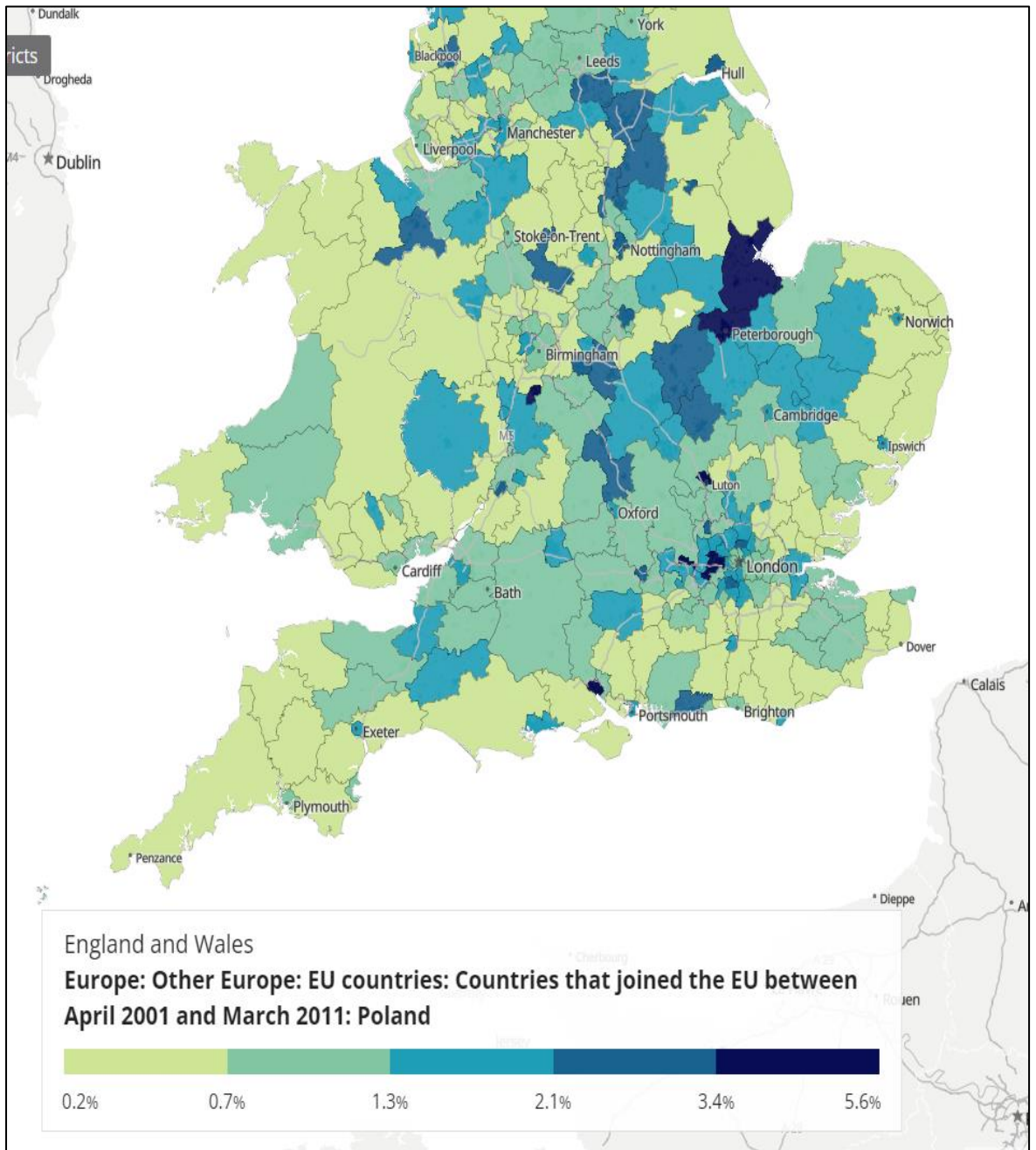
Figure 7. The population of local authority districts in England and Wales by country of birth: Poland in the 2021 Census data (ONS, 2022b).

Additionally, Table 2 lists the ten local authority districts in England and Wales with the highest percentages of people born in Poland within their local populations in the 2021 Census. These local authority districts are represented in the darkest blue shades on Figure 7.

Local Authority District	Percentage of the local population born in Poland (%)
Slough	5.6%
Boston	5.4%
Ealing	5.1%
Southampton	4.7%
South Holland	4.0%
Hounslow	3.9%
Luton	3.9%
Peterborough	3.9%
Redditch	3.7%
Kingston Upon Hull	3.4%

Table 2. The ten local authority districts in England and Wales with the highest percentages of people born in Poland within their local populations. Adapted from ONS (2022f).

Table 2 and Figure 7 indicate that Luton and Peterborough have some of the highest concentrations of Poland born residents in England and Wales, other than the local authority districts within London and Greater London (Ealing, Slough and Hounslow); within the agricultural Wash (Boston and South Holland); and Southampton. This also indicates that Luton and Peterborough were the urban local authority districts with the highest concentrations of Poland born residents within the East of England (ONS, 2022b).

The information presented within section 2.2. and subsections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 indicates that both localities are densely populated, with high levels of population growth and similar sized large Polish populations, making them interesting sites of comparison in this research.

2.2.1 Luton

Luton is a town located within the county of Bedfordshire, and is approximately 30 miles north of central London. According to 2021 Census data, Luton has a population of 225,300 (Luton Borough Council, 2022). Luton is one of the largest towns in the East of England and is home to a variety of nationalities and cultures, for instance, there are over 150 different languages and dialects spoken in the town, highlighting the diversity present within the population (Holmes, 2022a). Luton has been referred to as a super-diverse town, as greater than half of the town's population is non-White British (Holmes, 2022a; Vinter, 2022). Luton is one of four local authority districts in the UK outside of London that has most of the local population being from ethnic minority groups, including Slough, Leicester, and Birmingham (Holmes, 2022b). According to 2021 Census data, 45.2% of Luton's population

was of a White ethnic background and 54.8% of the population was of a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background (Holmes, 2022b; Vinter, 2022). This included 37% Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh; 10.1% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African; 4.3% mixed or multiple ethnic groups; 45.2% White and 3.5% any other ethnic group (ONS, 2022b). And within the White category, 10.9% were listed as other White, which is a Census category that encompasses people from Eastern European backgrounds, including Polish residents. In the 2021 Census, the number of people recorded within the other White category in Luton had increased from 14,225 people in 2011 to 24,560 people in 2021. In the 2021 Census, 8779 people in Luton recorded Poland as their country of their birth (3.9% of the local population), 4.2% of the local population had a Polish passport and 3.63% spoke Polish as their main language (ONS, 2022b). Some of the more established Polish residents from the post-World War Two diaspora reside in Luton, as well as more recently arrived Polish migrants and local Polish social networks are maintained through organisations such as Polish churches and the Polonia Polish Community Group (Sharp & Randhawa, 2014).
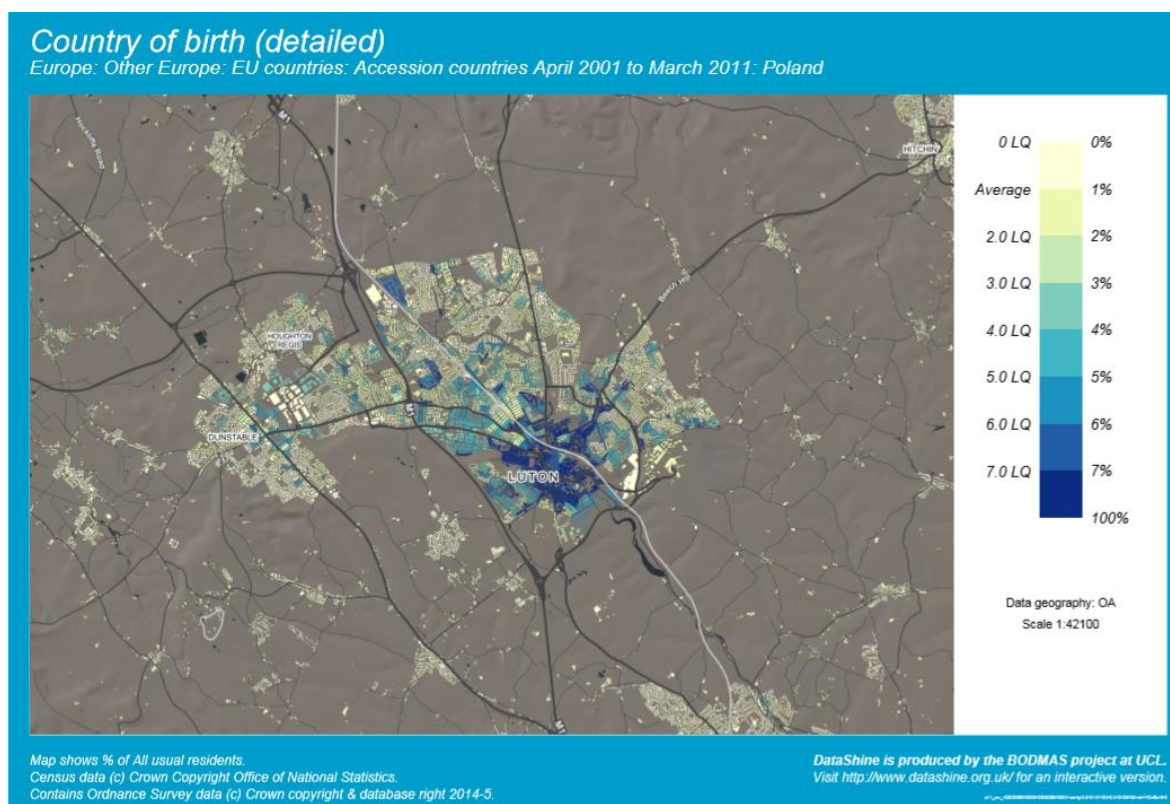
Figure 8. The spatial distribution of people in Luton who recorded Poland as their country of birth in the 2011 Census (DataShine, 2020).

Figure 8 indicates that most Poland born nationals were spatially concentrated in the south of Luton, in the town centre and adjoining areas at the time of the 2011 Census. It is assumed that this is likely to still be the case in the 2021 Census data, but unfortunately the 2021

version of these data could not be accessed at the time of writing this thesis and it is believed that it will be released during the spring of 2023.

As well as having a large Polish population, Luton was also chosen as the primary case study area for this research because it is one of the main entry points for Polish migrants arriving in the UK. Figure 9 illustrates the position of Luton in relation to other nearby areas and shows the town's major transport links including London Luton Airport, which is thought to be the main pathway for the high number of migrants coming to the area from A8 accession states. The town's other transport links include three train stations with links to London and a bus service with routes to London Victoria (Luton Borough Council, 2011).

Figure 9. The main transport links in Luton (Luton Borough Council, 2012b).

Luton is a form of *entrepôt* as the town is one of the main physical entry points for migrants arriving in the UK (Eade & Valkanova, 2009). An *entrepôt* is defined as the entry point and initial host location for immigrants, which may provide them with sources of social or economic support to help them to adjust to their new surroundings (Constant & Zimmerman, 2013). Migrants may choose to settle in their initial host location, or they may choose to leave the *entrepôt* to live elsewhere (Åslund, 2005). Although newcomers can remain in *entrepôts* permanently, it is thought that most migrants enter a country via a location and

then move on to settle in another area. Luton differs from other *entrepôts* because as well as being a main entry point for newcomers, the town is also home to a large, established Polish community. Many Polish newcomers choose to settle in the town, but it is also used as a transitory destination for migrants who later move on to settle in other destinations such as localities in Northamptonshire (Central Bedfordshire Council, 2010).

Traditionally Luton's main industries have been related to manufacturing and the motor trade but according to Luton Borough Council, there has been a contemporary shift towards the service sector; finance and insurance; information technology and aerospace and engineering related industries (Luton Borough Council, 2012c). As of 2022, Luton's main employment sectors are administrative and support services (17.4%), wholesale and retail (13%), health (13%), transportation and storage (9.8%), education (8.7%) and manufacturing (7.6%) (Holmes, 2022a). Luton airport is a major employer in the town employing over 11,000 people, and 7,000 employees work within the town's manufacturing sector (Holmes, 2022a). Although Luton's economy was growing prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the town has experienced increased low-paid, unstable work and unemployment in recent years, severely impacting the most deprived areas (Holmes, 2022a).

Luton has a significant number of housing issues such as overcrowding, homelessness, a shortage of land for new builds, variable private renting conditions and a high demand for housing that far outweighs the housing supply stock (Luton Borough Council, 2012a; Duncan, 2021). For instance, in 2018 there were 13,150 households on the waiting list for social housing (a 36% increase since 2016), and 25% of those households were living in unhygienic or overcrowded housing (Hutchinson, 2019). A large mismatch between housing supply and demand can be a significant issue as it can prevent residents from having access to affordable housing, which can force them to live in overcrowded and substandard living conditions. Living in inappropriate or low-quality housing can adversely affect educational attainment, health and the ability to move in search of employment (Wilson, 2010). Luton also has a severe homelessness issue, with the highest rate of homelessness in England outside of London in 2021 (in London one in 53 people were homeless and in Luton one in 66 people were homeless) (BBC, 2021). The existence of these housing market issues in Luton further makes the town an interesting case study area for this research. Boyle (1993) states that there are plentiful employment opportunities in southern England for incoming migrants but says that migrants in the south face high rental costs and limited access to social housing compared to areas in the North of England. London has a large rental market but the

cost of housing in the nation's capital has soared in recent years, out-pricing many potential property-buyers (Boyle, 1993; Canocchi, 2014). Luton has become an attractive location for cash investors from London seeking affordable housing that provides more value for money (Canocchi, 2014). Luton is also a popular residential destination because it is within easy commuting distance of London with good transport links (Canocchi, 2014). However, in December 2022, the average house price in Luton was £306,227, which could outprice lower-income households from being able to afford homeownership in the area (Rightmove, 2022a). In addition, like some London Boroughs, Luton is densely populated and has a large rental market and a huge demand for rented housing (Holmes, 2022a). Outside of London, Luton had the highest demand for room rentals in the UK in 2011, with an average of 8.9 people applying for each available room (Boyce, 2011). Luton has a higher proportion of privately rented accommodation (through landlords and letting agencies) than the national average which is likely to influence incoming migration to the town (Holmes, 2022b).

Although Luton has a long-established Polish community, the settlement pathways, living conditions and future intentions of Polish migrants in the town remain under-researched (Central Bedfordshire Council, 2010). Central Bedfordshire Council (2010) suggested that very little was known about the household characteristics and long-term intentions of recent economic migrants in Bedfordshire and the Luton sub-region. This was partly owing to a lack of research, but also because many Polish residents were thought to live in informal housing obtained through Polish social networks and word of mouth exchanges (Central Bedfordshire Council, 2010). There is a lack of knowledge regarding the household characteristics and long-term intentions of recent economic migrants in Bedfordshire and the Luton sub-region, which this research aims to rectify by studying the lived housing experiences and future migration and settlement aspirations of individuals within the Polish migrant community in Luton for the first time. The experiences gathered from the participants in Luton will also be analysed and compared with the experiences gathered from the participants in Peterborough.

2.2.2 Peterborough

Peterborough is a city located within the County of Cambridgeshire in the East of England region, and according to 2021 Census data, Peterborough has a population of 215,700 (ONS, 2022b). Peterborough is more urban and population dense than Cambridge and is the most ethnically diverse area in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region (Fitzjohn, Gowers, Lea, Mailer, O'Neill and Wakefield, 2019). This is partly owing to the high level of immigration in Peterborough, as highlighted by Burnett (2012):

> *'To the Sun, it is a "city in crisis", to the Express, it's an example of "Britain's migrant squatter shambles", and to the Mail, "the town the Poles took over". If ever there was a locality depicted as epitomising the impacts of immigration, this would be it' (Burnett, 2012, p.1).*

Peterborough became an asylum dispersal area in 2001, housing refugees and asylum seekers, but since 2004 the profile of migrants arriving in Peterborough has changed and now mostly consists of economic migrants from A8 countries (House of Commons, 2008). These migrants have been drawn to Peterborough by the lower cost of living than in London and the availability of low-skilled employment in sectors such as local agriculture and food packing industries, which do not require a high level of English language proficiency (House of Commons, 2008). The largest proportions of new national insurance registrations in Peterborough between September 2017 and September 2018 were made by migrants from A8 countries including Poland (35.6%) and EU2 countries (Romania and Bulgaria - 34.8%), suggesting that most recent migrants in Peterborough originated from those countries.

Additionally, according to the 2021 Census ethnicity data for local authority districts, Peterborough's population was 14.3% Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh; 4.1% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African; 3.5% mixed or multiple ethnic groups; 75.4% White and 2.7% any other ethnic group (ONS, 2022b). And within the White category, 14.6% were recorded as other White, suggesting that like Luton, Peterborough has a high percentage of Eastern European residents, including Polish residents within the local population. In the 2021 Census 8,338 people in Peterborough recorded Poland as their country of birth (3.9% of the local population), 4.1% of the local population had a Polish passport and 3.62% of the Polish population in Peterborough spoke Polish as a main language (ONS, 2022b). Comparable to Luton, Peterborough has a long-established Polish

population, with Polish residents who migrated to the UK post-World War Two, as well as more recently arrived Polish migrants (Scullion & Morris, 2009). Peterborough is a popular migration and settlement destination for Polish migrants in the UK and is even commonly referred to as Polishborough among members of the Polish population (Iqbal, 2018).
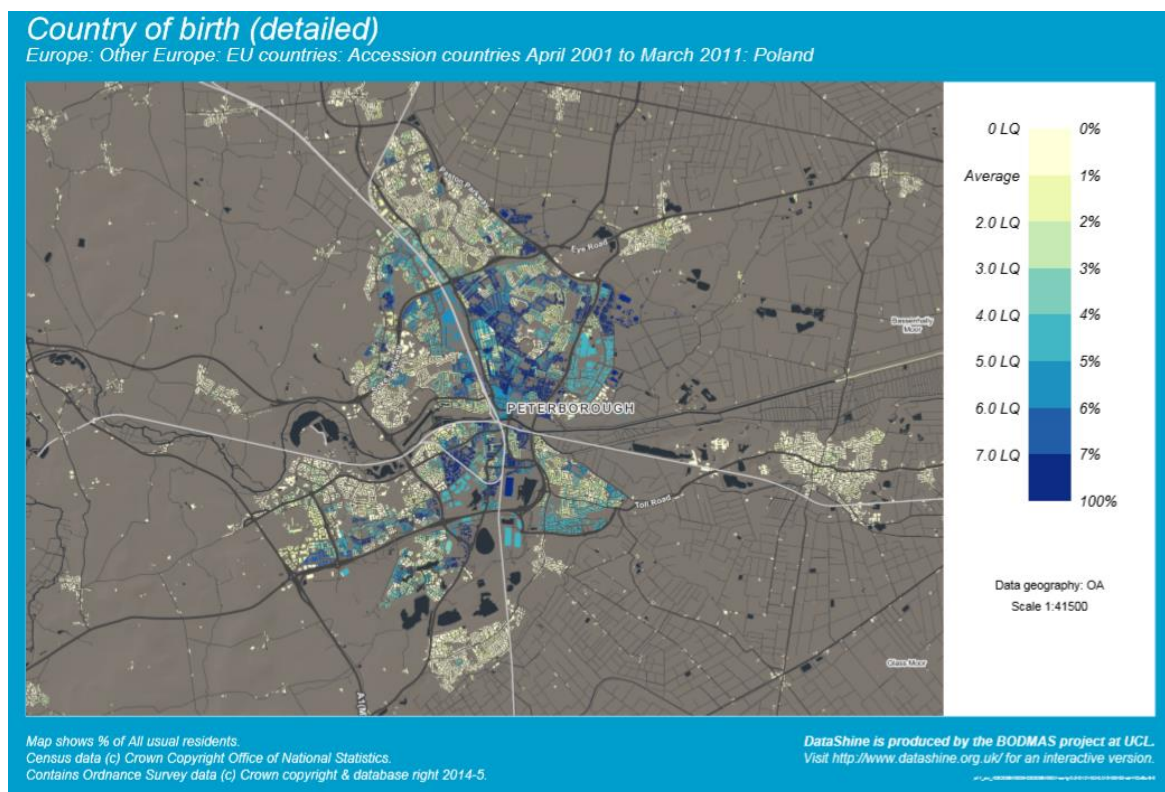
Figure 10. The spatial distribution of people in Peterborough who selected that they were born in Poland in the 2011 Census (DataShine, 2020).

Figure 10 indicates that the Polish born population of Peterborough in 2011 was spatially concentrated around the city centre and in the Central, East, Park and Dogsthorpe electoral wards of the city. This includes areas such as Eastgate, Millfield, Dogsthorpe, Eastfield and Newark. As mentioned previously, some of these wards contain some of the most deprived areas of the city.

Peterborough has a productive economy with a history of being a centre for advanced, high-end engineering, hosting engineering firms such as Caterpillar Perkins, Dresser-Rand and Redring Xpelair (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, 2019). Despite this economic productivity, Peterborough has higher levels of deprivation than the national average, and the spatial distribution of deprivation in Peterborough varies as rural, outer city areas are less deprived and the most deprived areas are located around the urban centre, in electoral wards such as Central, North, Dogsthorpe and Ravensthorpe (Fitzjohn *et al*., 2019).

Peterborough has the highest level of overall deprivation in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, containing 11 of the 29 most deprived wards (38%) (Fitzjohn *et al*., 2019).

According to 2021 Census data the most common occupation type in Peterborough is elementary occupations (16.6%), which includes warehouse employment, cleaning and other menial level jobs. Peterborough also has a large proportion of residents working in process, plant and machine operative occupations (11%). This shows that a large proportion of Peterborough's residents are employed within the lower two categories of the standard occupation classification (SOC) groups, which tend to require less educational qualifications and experience (Peterborough City Council, 2020). In addition, 15.7% of Peterborough's population are employed within professional occupations; 11.2% are employed in associate professional or technical occupations; 9.9% are managers, directors or senior officials; 9% are in administrative or secretarial occupations; 8% work in skilled trades occupations; 9% are employed in caring, leisure or other service occupations; and 8.6% work in sales or customer service occupations. Additionally, many Polish migrants who live in Peterborough are thought to be employed as agricultural workers in the rural areas that surround Peterborough, commonly referred to as the Wash (House of Commons, 2008). According to the Migration Advisory Committee (2009), A8 migrants are disproportionately represented near areas of agricultural activity such as the Wash. Therefore, it is thought that Peterborough's connectivity to these agricultural labour opportunities has increased the attractiveness of the city as a settlement destination for A8 migrant workers (House of Commons, 2008; Migration Advisory Committee, 2009).

The Peterborough area has an extensive local transport network including road, rail, air, bus and cycle connections. Peterborough is connected to other parts of Cambridgeshire, London, Norwich and the Midlands by rail services, and people travelling from Peterborough to London by train can utilise frequent high-speed rail services to reach the capital city in less than one hour (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, 2019). Rail services also conveniently connect Peterborough to Stansted Airport and the national rail network, with frequent services to other major cities such as Manchester and Edinburgh (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, 2019). The city also has a frequent urban bus network that provides increased connectivity to local areas and neighbouring villages (including areas in the Wash), and a network of central and rural cycle routes such as the 45-mile Green Wheel route (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority,

2019). Additionally, Peterborough benefits from road links such as the A14, the A1(M) and the M11 which connect the city to Cambridge, Stansted Airport, the Midlands, London, the North of England and to coastal ports on the east coast for freight travel. Stansted Airport is the closest airport to Peterborough and is a key regional international gateway, connecting the region to over 170 destinations in 39 countries (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, 2019).

Local community members have expressed concerns about the rapid increase in Eastern European migration into Peterborough (House of Commons, 2008). These public immigration concerns were related to an increased amount of houses of multiple occupation (HMOs), limited English language skills, the speed of population change and pressures on local services (House of Commons, 2008).

Peterborough suffers from a range of housing issues including, overcrowding, a shortage of social housing and homelessness. According to Fitzjohn *et al.* (2019), the level of household overcrowding in Peterborough and Cambridge was significantly higher than the national average in 2019. There is also a mismatch between the availability and demand for social housing in Peterborough, for example between 2019 and 2020, there were 4,560 households on the waiting list for social housing in Peterborough and during that same period there were only 795 advertised social housing places (Lamy, 2020). Peterborough also has a high rate of homelessness as out of all local authorities in England and Wales, Peterborough had the sixth highest estimated number of people sleeping rough on a single night in Autumn 2021 compared to the previous year (9 people in 2020 and 36 people in 2021, representing a 300% increase) (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2022). Additionally, between 2021 and 2022, 327 households with children in Peterborough were at risk of homelessness, which was an increase of 199 households since 2020-2021 (Barker, 2022). Furthermore, in 2020 the average property price in Peterborough was £222,420 which was 8.8 times the average local salary, and by December 2022, the average property price in Peterborough had increased even higher to £241,818 (Lamy, 2020; Rightmove, 2022b). This has resulted in less attainable homeownership for lower-income households in Peterborough (Lamy, 2020). The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority released a series of objectives in 2019, that included supporting new housing and development and addressing housing affordability issues (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, 2019). Between 2019 and 2020, 281 new affordable homes were built in Peterborough and a further 301 were expected to be built between 2020 and 2021 (Lamy, 2020).

Peterborough was selected as a case study area for this research owing to the large concentration of Polish migrants in the city, which is comparable to the size of the Polish population in Luton. Also, rapid growth in Peterborough's population in recent years has caused concerns over infrastructure such as housing provision, and Peterborough suffers from a range of housing issues such as supply and demand issues, overcrowding and homelessness that make the city an interesting site of comparison to compare and contrast with data collected in Luton. Additionally, whereas Luton is an *entrepôt* location in the UK containing London Luton Airport, Peterborough does not have a direct entry point and is more likely to be a secondary destination for Polish migrants in the UK, who may move to the area in search of cheaper housing outside of London and agricultural work in the nearby Wash. Therefore, Peterborough was chosen as the secondary case study area for this research to enable a comparison between the experiences of Polish migrants in an *entrepôt* location and a non-*entrepôt* location within the East of England region of the UK.

2.3 Chapter Conclusion

The national and local level contextual factors discussed within this chapter frame the housing pathways and lived experiences of Polish migrants that are under investigation in this study. Therefore, this chapter provides a useful contextual background for this research. The following chapter will present a literature review of theoretical approaches to migration research and existing relevant research related to migration and housing.

CHAPTER 3: Literature Review

3.0 Chapter Introduction

The Literature Review chapter is split into two sections. Section 3.1 presents a critical review of various migration theories and approaches to migration studies that have influenced the development of this research. The subsequent section (3.2) presents a literature review of existing relevant research related to migration and housing, focusing on previous findings and suggestions for future research that have influenced the construction of this thesis.

3.1 Review of Theoretical Approaches to Migration Research

Theory helps to summarise existing knowledge on a topic and can be used to clarify and give meaning to empirical research findings (Jnawali, 2014). Theory can therefore provide an analytical framework through which to study social phenomena (O'Reilly, 2015). Migration is an under-theorised social phenomenon that is linked to various processes, patterns and outcomes and conducting research into these components enhances understanding of human life (O'Reilly, 2015; De Haas, 2021). This section will review various theoretical approaches to migration research that were considered when planning this study and will introduce the conceptual framework of this research.

The most common questions raised in migration research concern the causes and nature of human movement and the effects of migration in places of origin and destination. There are various theoretical perspectives surrounding the causes of migration. Ravenstein (1885) identified various patterns of human movement that were used to create eleven laws of migration. Although Ravenstein's laws are now over 135 years old, they have laid the foundations for further migration theories and many of his ideas are still relevant today (Benassi,, Bonifazi, Heins, Licari & Tucci, 2019). For instance, Ravenstein (1885) identified that most human movements are short distance, that most people move from rural to urban areas and that counter currents exist. Ravenstein also identified the importance of migration in urban growth and highlighted the role of push and pull factors in human movement, which still apply to present day migration flows (Grigg, 1977).

Zelinsky's (1971) mobility transition model is a spatial model that was developed to explain migration in relation to demographic change (De Haas, 2010; Skeldon, 2019). The mobility

transition model suggests that all societies experience migration in different forms depending on their position on a five-phase scale of demographic change, which links to the demographic transition model (Zelinsky, 1971). The mobility transition model suggests that migration is a universalistic process, based upon the experience of western Europe, and has been criticised as not all societies follow the same route to development or develop at the same speed (De Haas, 2010; Balogun, 2022). Zelinsky's (1971) model tried to illustrate that the process of modernisation and the demographic and economic changes that result from it have profoundly altered universal migration patterns. The model indicates a shift in migration over time from rural based traditional agriculture towards modern urban industrial living (De Haas, 2010; Zhu, Zhang, Wang, Yuan, Yang & Skitmore, 2020).

Structural approaches to migration studies draw upon historico-structural theories such as Marxism and World Systems Theory and interpret migration as a product of network constraints and capitalist failures (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino & Taylor, 1993). World Systems Theory developed by Wallerstein (1974) views migration as the constant movement of cheap labour from peripheral nations to the wealthier global core (O'Reilly, 2015). This perspective focuses on the role of wider systems in human movement and does not view humans as individual agents.

Conversely advocates of Neo-classical migration theory such as Lewis (1954) and Todaro (1969) believe that migration is a product of human agency, as individuals use rational thought and reason to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of potential movement. Individuals then only decide to migrate if the analysis suggests that the movement will bring a positive net return (Massey *et al*., 1993). Therefore, when taking a Neo-classical approach to migration studies, cumulative migration flows can be viewed as an accumulation of individual moves owing to different individual cost-benefit analyses (De Haas, 2010). These opposing perspectives focus either on structural influences or on human agency as migratory causes but fail to incorporate aspects of both (De Haas, 2021). The New Economics of Labour Migration theory was developed by Stark and Bloom (1985) as an alternative view, suggesting that migration is a risk-sharing behaviour carried out by households or families rather than by individuals, to stabilise income and overcome market constraints (Massey *et al*., 1993; Duda-Mikulin, 2015). Both Neo-classical views and the New Economics of Labour migration theory are traditional, human capital approaches to migration studies that focus on the human agency of individuals and family-decision making as initiators of the migration process (Hagen-Zanker, 2008).

As well as structural and human capital approaches, there are various behavioural approaches to migration research that focus on push and pull factors and emphasise the importance of security in migration decision-making (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). Wolpert (1965) developed a behavioural model known as the stress-threshold model. The stress-threshold model assumes that migration occurs owing to individual place-utility evaluations. In this model, all individuals hope to achieve a threshold amount of utility and when making a migration decision, individuals compare the utility levels of all possible destinations to decide whether to migrate or not and where to migrate if they decide to do so (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). However, this seems unrealistic as it is highly improbable that individuals would be able to explicitly measure the utility levels of all potential migration destinations to make migration decisions. Another behavioural model, developed by Crawford (1973), is the value-expectancy model. Crawford believed that migration decisions are subjective and that the values and expectations of human movement are dependent on several factors such as the strength of intentions to move, personal and household characteristics, societal factors and the modifying effects of limiters and facilitators (Hagen-Zanker, 2008). Molho (1986) developed another popular behavioural model known as the migration decision making framework, which focuses on the search process that individuals use to select a new destination (Molho, 1986). This links to Lee's (1996) analytical model of intervening obstacles. Lee's spatial framework (1996) is a behavioural push-pull model suggesting that migratory decisions are dependent upon push factors at the place of origin that can generate a desire to move elsewhere, pull factors at the destination location that attract people to go there and intervening obstacles such as immigration laws and physical barriers, which can prevent or aid movement from occurring (De Haas, 2010). Lee (1996) proposed that migration streams occur owing to opportunities being concentrated in certain areas and information passing between migrants and people that they remain in contact within their place of origin, which may motivate future migrations to the same area (De Haas, 2010). Criticisms of Lee's (1996) arguments include his assumption that everyone has full and equal access to information and his failure to acknowledge aspirations as an important factor in migratory decisions (De Haas, 2010). This research accepts Lee's claim that migratory movements can be influenced by push and pull factors that affect people's decisions to leave a place and attract them to move to another place, but also recognises aspirations as an important influential factor on migration decision-making.

The cultural turn in geography coincided with the scepticism of modernist thought in favour of postmodern theory (Best & Kellner, 1991; Nash, 2001). Postmodernist thinkers are

dubious of the use of only one approach, theory or methodology and instead encourage diversity and context in migration studies (Boyle, Halfacree & Robinson, 2014). Dear and Flusty (1998) discuss postmodern urbanism and describe the postmodern city as a heteropolis, full of ethnic and cultural pluralism where the majority of the population consists of minorities. Many migration studies have utilised aspects of postmodern thought, such as Didero, Farooq, Nebel and Pfaffenbach (2019); Kovačević and Malenica (2021), and Laroussi (2022). Geographers such as Dear (1988) and Soja (1987) introduced postmodern concepts into the discipline such as a focus on qualitative research, ethnographic studies and self-reflexive work in a growing corpus of micro-level studies (Robinson, 1998).

In contrast, macro-level migration studies typically examine structural aspects of migration such as migration flows between countries, national immigration policies and the causes and effects of migration in sending and receiving countries (De Haas, 2021). These studies are more likely to include quantitative elements than micro-level migration studies (Hong, Wu, Frias-Martinez, Villarreal & Frias-Martinez, 2019). On the other hand, micro-level migration studies tend to be qualitative in nature and focus on studying the lives, identities and experiences of migrant individuals (Hong *et al*., 2019; De Haas, 2021). These studies seek to illuminate the migrant voice and interpret the lived experiences and views of migrant individuals to highlight shared and unique experiences and gain an insight into how individuals make sense of their perceptions and life events. Whereas macro-level studies suit structural migration theories, micro-level studies are more strongly aligned with theories which advocate human-agency (De Haas, 2021). Together this evidence points to the need for more holistic migration studies that embrace all levels of analysis. This research contributes to micro-level studies of migration by focusing on the migration, settlement and housing experiences of Polish individuals in the UK and the future aspirations of Polish individuals in the UK and in Poland. This research also situates these micro-experiences within the meso-level contexts of Luton and Peterborough where the experiences took place and considers wider macro-level structural influences that may have influenced the experiences and aspirations of the participants in this research, such as economic, social and political influences in Poland and in the UK.

Other theoretical concepts such as integration, assimilation, acculturation and transnationalism attempt to address the outcomes of migration after movement has taken place. Bartram, Poros & Montforte (2014) define integration as the increasing social involvement of immigrants in a destination society over time, whereby immigrants play an

equal role to indigenous inhabitants in the labour market, participate in politics and obtain jobs that match their abilities and qualifications. Bartram *et al*. (2014) also explains that to achieve integration, the existing population must accept migrants as a part of their society and the migrants must feel like they belong to that society in a meaningful way (Bartram *et al*., 2014). However, integration is not a guaranteed outcome. Immigrants can be partially integrated or experience a conflicting situation which is commonly referred to as segregation. A segregated space is an area where a minority group is not distributed evenly across space relative to the rest of the population (Massey & Denton, 1988; Reardon & Sullivan, 2004). Migrants can be segregated socially, economically, politically and residentially (Krysan & Crowder, 2017). Massey & Denton (1988) believe that segregation is a multidimensional and spatial phenomenon with five distributional characteristics – evenness, exposure, concentration, centralisation and clustering. Various literature points towards migrants and minority groups being segregated from the charter group in the population (the majority group that existed in the location before the minority group arrived) (Knox & Pinch, 2006; Benassi *et al*., 2020). For instance, Pacione (2009) declares that migrants have cultural differences that can often create communication issues with existing residents and lead to residential segregation. Bourdieu (1984) claims that inclusion and exclusion are based on an unspoken perception of 'them' and 'us' and that this distinction is based upon people's perceived interests of allowing some people in and keeping others out. Pacione (2009) matches this view and states that groups that are perceived to be different from the charter group are likely to experience separation in both social and physical space.

The term integration is often used interchangeably with the terms assimilation and acculturation to describe the process of immigrants becoming progressively like host populations over time. However, there are some notable distinctions between these terms. Assimilation is defined as the process of immigrants becoming a part of a host society and integrating into key institutions, which can be hindered if migrants experience discrimination or emotional difficulties when adapting to their new destinations (Faist, Fauser & Reisenauer, 2013). Many scholars who study assimilation such as Park (1928), Gordon (1964) and Alba and Nee (2009), frame assimilation as an inevitable eventual outcome of migration, as immigrants become increasingly similar to host populations over time and as further generations are born, which aids integration into host societies. Acculturation on the other hand is defined by Bartram *et al.* (2014, p.8) as a:

'Process by which the cultural patterns of distinct groups change when those groups come into contact with each other – sometimes resulting in the groups becoming less distinct culturally' (Bartram et al., 2014, p.8).

Acculturation is a term used to describe the process of migrants gradually adopting the cultural practices and customs of a host society, or altering practices and customs as contact between migrants and the host population increases, which can include changes to cultural aspects such as language, clothing, religious practices, emotional expressions, musical tastes and personal values (Bartram *et al.*, 2014; Bhugra, Watson & Ventriglio, 2021; Boileau, Bless & Gebauer, 2022). Criticisms of acculturation and assimilation theory stem from the multiculturalist ideological perspective that suggests that societies contain a multitude of different orientations and therefore, migration should not be viewed solely as a binary, one-way relationship between a migrant and a host society, whereby migrants gradually change to become more like a host population (Bartram *et al.*, 2014; Berry, Lepshokova, MIRIPS Collaboration and Grigoryev, 2022). The binary models of assimilation and acculturation theory appear to be less relevant to multicultural societies with heterogenous populations, such as Luton and Peterborough, than other conceptual migration theories such as transnationalism that account for a wider range of outcomes, relationships, and identities in the migration process (Bartram *et al.*, 2014).

Transnationalism is a term used to describe the ties that migrants sustain across borders that connect both origin and destination societies (Faist & Bilecen, 2019; Nowicka, 2020; Harima, 2022). Transnationalism encompasses migrant efforts to maintain ties with places of origin, whilst simultaneously also integrating and being a member of society in places of destination. It is the process of forming relationships, actions and identities in multiple national contexts rather than in the context of a single country (Bartram *et al.*, 2014; Faist & Bilecen, 2019). The concept of transnationality was first introduced by Glick-Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton (1992), in recognition of emerging changes in migration, from commonly acknowledged historical patterns whereby most migrations involved permanent re-settlement and most migrants appeared to sever ties with their origin locations, to contemporary patterns of migrants building and maintaining ties with their home countries as well as settling in new destinations (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). Scholars originally viewed transnationality as an exciting new development in migration research (e.g. Glick-Schiller *et al.*, 1992). However, transnational practices are not solely contemporary

phenomena and have been evident in migration flows throughout history, for instance, migrants have long engaged in sending remittances and international correspondence (Vertovec, 2001). Although transnational practices are not exclusive to contemporary migration, transnationality has undoubtedly proliferated with globalisation and with what Castells (1996) referred to as the 'information age' (Vertovec, 1999; Tedeschi, Vorobeva & Jauhiainen, 2020). Transnational practices are facilitated by cross-border networks, which in turn are facilitated by communication and transportation technologies (Vertovec, 2009; Tedeschi *et al*., 2020; De Haas, 2021). These technologies have developed rapidly throughout the twenty-first century owing to globalisation and advancements in innovation, reducing the amount of time and expense associated with communication and travel (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2009; De Haas, 2021). This has eased the ability of migrant networks to transcend borders and overcome geographical constraints so that social, economic and political ties within countries of origin can be maintained relatively easily in destination locations (Faist *et al*., 2013; Bartram *et al*., 2014). For example, social media networks allow instantaneous international communication and satellite technologies enable migrants to view television channels from their countries of origin (Chouliaraki & Georgiou, 2022). Although transnational ties are often discussed in positive terms, there are also negative outcomes of transnational networks such as transnational gangs, trafficking practices, money laundering activities, international terrorist networks and dysfunctional international family relationships (Kacowicz, Lacovsky, Sasson, & Wajner, 2021).

There are economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions of transnationalism (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999; Faist *et al*., 2013; Tedeschi *et al*., 2020). Economic transnationalism commonly refers to international flows of remittances, but also includes the practices of transnational corporations and cross-border entrepreneurship (Faist *et al*., 2013; Bivand-Erdal & Carling, 2021). The political dimension of transnationalism encompasses multiple citizenships and the voting activities of migrants in their sending and receiving countries (if permitted or if they have dual citizen status) (Vertovec, 2001; Faist *et al*., 2013; Tedeschi *et al*., 2020). It also includes the practices of international non-governmental organisations, such as United Nations agencies, which distribute resources and support political campaigns internationally (Vertovec, 1999). Members of ethnic diasporas can also engage in political transnational activities by influencing relations between migrants, home-country politics and politicians, and by taking action against injustices or shared causes in their country of origin (Vertovec, 1999). Finally, cultural transnationalism includes religious linkages and exchanges, marriage agreements, the maintenance and use of language abilities

and engagement with cultural fashion, art, music, and media from origin countries (Vertovec, 2009; Bartram *et al*., 2014). Cultural transnationalism also comprises migrant efforts to maintain their home country cultural values and traditions in their destination locations (Vertovec, 2009). Identity development can also be discussed as a social element of transnationalism (Tedeschi *et al*., 2020). When an individual migrates to another country, they carry their national identity with them, which has been conditioned by a variety of factors such as history, concepts of belonging, morals, values, cultural influences, hierarchies, resources, regulations, personality characteristics and experiences. When a migrant joins a host destination population, their national identity may begin to widen and adopt aspects from people and experiences within the new destination location, forming a hybrid, cosmopolitan identity (Tedeshi *et al*., 2020). Vertovec (1999) discussed the term 'diaspora consciousness' to explain the binary feelings of attachment that migrants often experience towards their country of origin and their destination location (such as concurrently feeling a sense of both belonging and unbelonging, being here and there and being a national of one country and a resident or citizen in another, which can influence a migrant's construction of their perceived identity (Vertovec, 1999). Additionally, transnationalism is facilitating processes of cultural reproduction as aspects of different identities, cultures, customs and traditions are shared between individuals and shared across borders, creating cultural hybrids and new ethnicities (Vertovec, 1999). Individual engagement in transnational activity is not a constant occurrence, it is intermittent, and ties can sometimes diminish with time (Bartram *et al*., 2014). Although some scholars such as Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2009) argued that assimilation and transnationalism are intertwined social processes rather than opposing theoretical concepts, classical assimilation theory has been critiqued and somewhat replaced by the concept of transnationality (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2009; Faist *et al*, 2013). Advocates of traditional assimilation theory view transnational activities as evidence of failure to successfully integrate into destination societies, whereas other academics have conceded that assimilation is not the sole path to integration and that migrants who engage in transnational practices frequently also engage more successfully with societal practices in destination locations (Bartram *et al*., 2014). Whereas assimilation is commonly described as an inevitable one way process following migration, in which migrants sever ties with their countries of origin and become increasingly similar to their new host populations, the theory of transnationalism offers an advanced understanding of the process of integration, whereby it is acknowledged that most migrants sustain ties across borders and maintain engagement with the societies in their new destinations as well as in their countries of origin (Bartram *et al*., 2014; Faist *et al*., 2013).

Therefore, transnationalism was deemed to be the most relevant theoretical concept for describing contemporary outcomes of human movement and was selected as the most appropriate theory to conceptually frame this research. Additionally, reflections and connections with Poland were evident within multiple interviews that were carried out with the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough, which resulted in the concept of transnationalism evolving into an increasingly important theme as the research progressed. This further led to the selection of transnationalism as the conceptual framework of this research, which is discussed further in section 4.4 of Chapter 4.

3.2 Review of Previous Research

Migration is a geographical phenomenon that continues to be a fundamental factor in the process of societal change and affects societies all over the world (Smith & Finney, 2015). It is defined as the permanent or temporary movement of individuals from one location to another (Bartram *et al.*, 2014). This definition becomes more ambiguous when focusing on the distance moved and the length of time needed to be taken before a movement can be considered as migration. It is this definitional ambiguity that makes migration the most complex component of population change to research, particularly when there is limited migration data available. Migration has become the widespread focus of many academic journals, books, and conferences across a range of different disciplines such as history, economics, law, politics, sociology, anthropology and geography (Brettell & Hollifield, 2000). Each of these disciplines has developed their own perspectives on the topic of migration, but geographers are particularly interested in studying patterns of human movement and the spatial outcomes (White and Woods, 1980).

Halfacree (2004) explains that in most of the existing literature concerning migration, cultural aspects are overshadowed by a focus on economics. This is supported by Silvey and Lawson (1999) who imply that classical migration studies too often assume that migration is an inherently economic phenomenon and fail to explore non-economic aspects such as the impact of language to the same degree. Studies that have attempted to discuss both frequently portray non-economic factors as secondary to economic factors (Halfacree, 2004). The cultural turn within human geography created a shift within theoretical migration research towards the inclusion of cultural aspects in the migration process, but most of this work has focused on international migration, so more work is needed that focuses on the cultural aspects of internal migration (Halfacree, 2004). Halfacree (2004) also implies that incidences

of counter-urbanisation may be explained by the aspirations of individuals to switch their busy urban capitalist lifestyles for a more idyllic rural way of life - drawing upon David Harvey's concept of spatial utopia (Harvey, 2000). This implies that individuals are motivated to move from one location to another because they aspire to change their everyday existence and improve their quality of life (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

An individual may choose to move from one household or neighbourhood to another within the same locality, region, or country as their place of origin, which is referred to as internal migration. Alternatively, an individual may choose to migrate from one country to another, which is known as international migration (Peters & Larkin, 2008). Individuals who only move short distances might not experience a large degree of lifestyle change as they are more likely to be able to maintain existing social ties and employment if they are still living nearby (Martiniello & Rath, 2010). On the other hand, individuals who migrate long distances, especially those who cross international borders, can often have to negotiate more significant lifestyle changes such as language barriers, different social customs, living alongside other cultures and different legal and educational systems (Arafat & Allen, 1995). However, technological advancement has eased long-distance communication, facilitated flows of international goods and shortened travel times, allowing many long-distance movers to maintain ties to their places of origin whilst living in new destinations (Vertovec, 2009). The host society that receives migrants can also experience change as the population adjusts to new members and integration and cultural mixing occurs over time (Saggar, Somerville, Ford & Sobolewska, 2012). In addition, some migratory movements are temporary for a short period of time before returning to the place of origin or moving elsewhere; some migratory movements are permanent and result in long-term settlement in the migration destination; and other migratory movements are temporal or circular in nature. For instance, circular migration involves short-term and repetitive cyclical movements between sending and receiving countries (Vankova, 2020). Some researchers have also discussed the concepts of 'liquid migration' and 'intentional unpredictability' to describe the flexibility, spontaneity, and fluid nature of the migratory movements of EU migrants, which is facilitated by FoM between EU member states (Engerbsen & Snel, 2011; Jancewicz, Kloc-Nowak & Pszczółkowska, 2020). Within the first few years after EU enlargement in 2004, migration researchers such as Eade, Garapich & Drinkwater (2006) regarded EU migrants as temporary, circular migrants (Ryan, 2018; Strockmeijer, de Beer & Dagevos, 2019). However, more recent research has suggested that initial temporary or spontaneous liquid migration plans may transform into decisions to settle permanently or engage in long-term

stays, as migrants desire 'anchored' lives and can become 'embedded' in their migration destination locations over time (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022). EU migration research tends to focus on temporary, circular or return migration patterns between EU member states, but less attention has been given to how EU migrants negotiate attachments, belonging and long-term settlement within receiving countries (Ryan, 2018). The concept of 'embedding' is a dynamic process in which migrants are active agents and negotiate and re-negotiate attachments and a sense of belonging within specific societal contexts and within the influence of socio-economic and political structures (Ryan & Mulholland, 2015; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022). Migrants can be embedded within the context of their local environment and can also have attachments that embed them in other geographical contexts, such as an attachment to social ties within the place of origin that maintain a sense of transnational connection to the sending country (Ryan, 2018). The concept of 'differentiated embedding' highlights that a migrants' level of embeddedness may be multi-layered and may differ in reference to different sectors of society. For example, an individual may feel a strong sense of attachment to their friends and family members within a location creating deep embedding within local social networks, but simultaneously an individual may have an unstable job and dislike aspects of the area, resulting in shallow embedding in the labour market with little sense of attachment to the local area (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022). A process of dis-embedding can occur if attachments are severed or reversed, such as a breakdown in social relationships or a loss of employment, and obstacles such as immigration policies can act as barriers to embedding (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022). In contrast, the concept of 'social anchoring' refers to the process of migrants establishing anchors or footholds that enable them to obtain a sense of security and stability within a migration destination (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022). Inequalities and structural influences may limit an individual's ability to establish anchors and maintain a sense of stability; anchors can exist in sending and receiving countries simultaneously and anchors can exist in different forms such as cognitive, social, material and institutional anchors (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022).

There has been extensive existing research on Polish migration to the UK that has focused on a variety of different aspects. For instance, some research has focused on the determinants of Polish migration to the UK and how patterns of migration between Poland and the UK have altered over time (Drinkwater & Garapich, 2015; Burrell, 2018). Other studies have explored interactions and differences between the post-Second World War and the more recently arrived post-2004 Polish migrants in the UK (Garapich, 2005; Galasińska, 2010;

Brown, 2011). Some researchers have focused on Polish migrant social networks within the UK (Ryan, Sales, Tilki & Siara, 2008; Ryan & d'Angelo, 2018) and some studies have focused on the integration of Polish migrants into UK society including Polish migrant perceptions of identity, belonging and conceptions of home (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016; Kubal, 2016; Datta & Brickell, 2016; Botterill & Hancock, 2019). Other studies have focused on the experiences of Polish migrants in the UK, particularly in relation to experiences within the labour market (Currie, 2007; Janta, Ladkin, Brown & Lugosi, 2011; Knight, 2014), or gender focused studies that look at the experiences of male Polish migrants in the UK (Kilkey, 2013; Bell & Pustułka, 2017; Fiałkowska, 2019), or the experiences of female Polish migrants (Aziz, 2015; Ryan, 2019; Duda-Mikulin, 2019; Marshall, Cox & Birdi, 2020). In addition, some studies have focused on family strategies and family migratory movements (Ryan, 2011; White, 2016) and some have focused on experiences of return migration (Duda-Mikulin, 2019; Filimonau & Mika, 2019). More recently research has turned attention to the impact of Brexit on Polish migrants in the UK. For instance, some studies have focused on the impact of Brexit on the wellbeing and feelings of Polish migrants in the UK (Guma & Dafydd Jones, 2019; Martynowska, Korulczyk & Mamcarj, 2020). Some research has focused on the discrimination and xenophobia experienced by Polish migrants before and after the Brexit vote (Rzepnikowska, 2019). Other researchers have focused on how Brexit may affect the migration and settlement plans of Polish migrants in the UK (McGhee, Moreh & Vlachantoni, 2017; Trąbka & Pustulka, 2020; Jancewicz et al., 2020; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022). McGhee et al. (2017) found that most of their Polish participants aimed to apply for British citizenship within five years of the study to tie their legal status to the UK, and many had uncertain future plans owing to Brexit anxiety and insecurities about the potential to lose their rights in the UK following Brexit. Trąbka and Pustulka (2020) developed a typology of four different orientations that migrants adopt when facing uncertain situations such as Brexit (bumblebees, honeybees, cocoons and butterflies). In the context of the UK, bumblebees are migrants who are deeply embedded in UK society with established forms of social and economic capital that create strong attachments to their current residential location (Trąbka & Pustulka, 2020). Honeybees also aspire to remain in the UK but tend to me more recently arrived and younger migrants than bumblebees and have less established anchors in their places of residence. Honeybees may eventually become bumblebees as their length of time in the UK increases (Trąbka & Pustulka, 2020). On the other hand, cocooned migrants experience stress and anxiety related to Brexit, feel uncertain about their futures in the UK, and remain in limbo while they attempt to make sense of their plans. Cocooned migrants

may become bees if they can eventually alleviate their Brexit related concerns, but if they are unable to do so then they may un-anchor and dis-embed and migrate somewhere else (Trąbka & Pustulka, 2020). Finally, Trąbka and Pustulka (2020) describe the fourth migrant orientation type as butterflies, who have transnational capital and do not have strong anchors or attachments to the UK, so they do not feel strongly affected by Brexit and feel as though they can easily lift their anchors and move elsewhere if needed. In addition, Jancewicz *et al*. (2020) suggested that Brexit was unlikely to have a strong impact on Polish migrant incentives to remain in the UK unless the economic situation and labour market declines in the UK. Processes of EU migrant anchoring and embedding in the UK have been challenged by the impact of the decision for Brexit, as Brexit is a macro-level geopolitical change that can be viewed as an 'unsettling event' with the potential to disrupt migration and settlement plans at the micro-level (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022). Brexit has altered the privilege of liquid movement by removing FoM rights and enforcing parameters on mobility between the EU and the UK (Lulle, Moroşanu, & King, 2018). In some circumstances migrants may un-anchor and dis-embed and re-embed and re-anchor elsewhere by returning to their country of origin or moving elsewhere, and it is possible that the 'unsettling' effects of Brexit may have reversed or altered embedding and anchoring processes for Polish migrants in the UK. Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee (2017) and Ryan (2018) highlighted that there has been a lot of research on the determinants of Polish migration to the UK and migratory movements between the two countries, but that relatively few studies examine the settling practices or long-term intentions of Polish migrants in the UK, which is an under-researched area that this research aims to contribute knowledge to by studying the housing experiences and future aspirations of Polish migrants in Luton and in Peterborough in the UK. In addition, relatively little is known about the spatial mobility of Polish migrants after arriving in the UK (Trevena, McGhee & Heath, 2013), and this research provides greater insight into the settlement pathways, residential choices and experiences, and internal and international mobility aspirations of post-accession Polish migrants in Luton and Peterborough around the time of the EU referendum and prior to the enactment of Brexit.

The consumption of housing fuelled by migration has increasingly become important both socially and culturally. Most long-distance migrations are thought to be made for employment and educational reasons, whereas cheaper short distance migrations are more likely to be related to housing or neighbourhood alterations (Coulter & Van Ham, 2013). Additionally, housing related migration drivers cross-cut other drivers such as life-course stages and employment (Smith & Finney, 2015).

Previous research has indicated that migrants typically initially share their accommodation with other people of the same nationality or similar nationalities (for example those with shared languages), and then later move into larger forms of affordable rented housing near to social ties within the community, and some will subsequently purchase housing within the area (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Soaita, Munro & McKee, 2020). Most migrants enter the private rented sector when they first arrive in the UK and then in the longer-term may move into owner-occupied housing (Myles & Hou, 2004; Nygaard, 2011). Whitehead, *et al.* (2011) focused on the access of labour migrants to the UK housing market rather than refugees and found that competition for housing was strongest among labour migrants themselves rather than between migrant groups and the local population. Additionally, over time the proportion of migrants forming households and their household structure was reported to begin resembling the UK average (Whitehead, *et al.,* 2011; Perry, 2012). Nygaard (2011) found that most migrants in the UK initially live in rented accommodation, but after 12-15 years begin to resemble the average UK tenure composition. These findings suggest that tenure, particularly a large rental market, may play an important role in attracting migrants to an area. In accordance with the spatial assimilation model, Myles and Hou (2004) found that it is common for migrants to initially settle in disadvantaged migrant enclaves, and then over time migrants may become more successful and purchase homes in more affluent, and often majority White neighbourhoods (Myles & Hou, 2004). Most international migrants are thought to share a tendency to settle in the location where they first arrive in the UK and new immigrants typically fill voids in the housing stock that are left by others (Robinson *et al*., 2007). These residential patterns are often viewed in terms of the success of long-term migrants, but the suggestion that migrants tend to live in disadvantaged enclaves when they first arrive at their destination could imply that there are issues satisfying the need to provide appropriate housing for migrant arrivals (Myles & Hou, 2004; Murdie & Teixera, 2011). In addition, numerous sources have raised concerns regarding the living conditions of migrants in the UK who are thought to be living in poor, unsafe and overcrowded living conditions (Spencer, Ruhs, Anderson & Rogaly, 2007; Glasgow Housing Association, 2008; Perry, 2008).

The effects of the UK housing crisis are not spread evenly among all social groups; some groups are experiencing a higher-than-average reliance on private renting (Finney & Harries, 2015). Most migrants find accommodation in the private sector during their first five years in the UK (Perry, 2012; Robinson *et al*., 2007; Glasgow Housing Association, 2008). When

migrants initially arrive in the UK, they may not necessarily view their stay as permanent, therefore there may be less of a need to strive for owner-occupied housing and privately rented housing may appear to be sufficient for their perceived short-term needs (Nygaard, 2011). Private renting provides increased flexibility, but tenure insecurity, the volatility of rental prices, the maintenance of rented accommodation and the lack of regulation on private landlords can adversely affect housing experiences within privately rented accommodation (Finney & Harries, 2015).

Furthermore, those living in the private rented sector have a higher propensity to later migrate to other areas than those living in owner-occupied or social housing (Boyle, 1993). This means that migrants living in privately rented accommodation are more residentially mobile than council housing tenants or homeowners. Social housing tenants are more likely to change their addresses than owner-occupied individuals, but owner-occupied residents are more likely to move between local authority areas than council housing tenants (Boyle, 1993; Hughes & McCormick, 1981, 1985, 1987). Boyle (1993) suggests that social housing tenants are less likely to move between regions because of administrative or institutional constraints on council housing and because working classes, who are often social housing tenants, tend to have strong ties to home that may create a reluctance to move longer distances.

Soaita *et al*. (2020) highlight that migrants appear to be more likely to accept substandard housing conditions than non-migrants, particularly shortly after their arrival in a new destination. This is because migrants often choose to reduce their living costs and maximise their saving potential by choosing to live in cheaper forms of housing; some migrants are used to living in poorer conditions within their country of origin and are content with what might be considered to be poor housing by others within destination locations; and undocumented migrants may be willing to accept substandard housing conditions owing to fear of deportation and a lack of housing options (Soaita *et al*, 2020). But as migrants become increasingly embedded in their migration destinations, settle for longer periods of time and obtain more stable forms of employment, they are more likely to be willing to spend more money to improve their housing conditions (Soaita *et al*., 2020).

Kearns & Parkes (2003) analysed how residential mobility in England is affected by house and neighbourhood factors. Their study found that dissatisfaction with the home or neighbourhood and the means to address this dissatisfaction by moving to a new home varies between different socio-economic groups. They found that lower income residents are more

likely to be dissatisfied with their homes or neighbourhoods than higher income residents and that lower income residents are more likely to be trapped within their neighbourhoods - especially in contexts where there is a high demand for housing (Kearns & Parkes, 2003). Being trapped in a specific house or neighbourhood because of economic reasons and being unable to improve satisfaction and quality of life by moving can affect an individual's psychological well-being (Smith & Finney, 2015). Research has indicated that Polish arrivals in the UK have primarily been employed in low-salary, low-skilled jobs such as roles in the catering, construction, retail and domestic sectors, despite the fact that many Polish migrants are highly educated (Drinkwater, Eade & Garapich, 2006; Trevena, 2014). Low-income movers are often excluded from more expensive housing and costly neighbourhoods, for example in gentrified or suburban areas (Smith & Finney, 2015).

Massey and Denton (1987) conducted a cross-sectional analysis and discovered that in metropolitan areas where minority groups are more likely to be able to speak English and earn higher incomes, these groups were less likely to experience high levels of segregation (Logan, Stults & Farley, 2004). Logan, Stults and Farley (2004) discuss the effects of income upon segregation and state that the often relatively low income of migrants relative to the existing population in a destination location can reinforce migrant segregation. However, Knox & Pinch (2006) suggest that high levels of segregation can only partially be explained by the low economic status of minority groups within a population and similar to Pacione (2009) discuss four functions for the clustering of minority groups: clustering for defence, clustering for mutual support, clustering for cultural preservation and clustering as form of resistance against societal struggles. First, a migrant group may congregate for defence if the charter group is hostile or discriminative towards the migrant community, encouraging minority groups to withdraw from wider society and seek security in their own territories. Secondly, migrants may cluster in a particular area for mutual support or to avoid wider society within a minority cluster containing familiar languages, cultures, and traditions. Thirdly, Knox & Pinch (2006) and Pacione (2009) describe clustering for preservation in which minority groups may choose to residentially congregate to protect their cultural heritage and increase the likelihood that their children will continue the tradition of marrying within their culture. Finally, minorities may cluster to build resistance to struggles by representing their needs within the wider community e.g. by electing a political representative. Pacione (2009) states that the degree of minority assimilation will affect the ability of an ethnic enclave to remain as a distinctive spatial entity. Clustering can improve the employment prospects of new migrants and increase the income of second or higher

generation migrants (Schaffner & Treude, 2014). Enclaves also help newly arrived migrants to settle into their new surroundings faster as the enclave represents a social network to aid integration and counter discrimination and migrants are surrounded by familiarity and do not instantly have to deal with the newness of their destination and the charter population. On the other hand, remaining within the security of an ethnic enclave could lower incentives to try to integrate with the wider host society, because if all needs are fulfilled within the enclave then there is less of a need to interact with individuals or services outside of the ethnic community (Schaffner & Treude, 2014).

Ethnic diversity within an area can often increase social tension between different groups, but Christ, Schmid, Lolliot, Swart, Stolle, Tausch, Al Ramiah, Wagner, Vertovec and Hewstone (2014) argue that culturally diverse environments that promote intergroup interactions can reduce prejudiced attitudes and increase tolerance within localities. Gross and Schmitt, (2003) describe clustering as an attempt made by migrants to lower the costs of migration to new and possibly unfamiliar destinations. They argue that the presence of an existing community group of the same origin creates segmentation of labour, which creates more labour market opportunities and attracts the arrival of more immigrants, which then form country specific clusters within the new destination location (Gross & Schmitt, 2003). Zuccotti, Lorenz, Paolilli, Sanchez and Serca (2022) suggest that individuals often practice homophily, in which individuals choose to interact and share spaces with other individuals who have shared or similar characteristics to them, such as ethnicity or socioeconomic background. Furthermore, Zuccotti *et al*. (2022) suggest that when individuals have access to greater socioeconomic resources, they have greater freedom of choice, and greater ability to afford to live in wealthier (and often Whiter) neighbourhoods.

Existing research related to migrant housing covers a range of topics such as: the architecture of migrant housing (Lozanovska, 2019; Lozanovska, 2022); the relationship between migration and the housing market (Murphy, Muellbauer & Cameron, 2006; McDonald, 2013; Haas & Osland, 2014; d'Albis & Boubtane, 2019); informal forms of migrant housing such as squats (Dadusc, Grazioli & Martinez, 2019); home-making practices and house purchasing practices within places of origin (Levin, 2015; Boccagni & Bivand-Erdal, 2021; Boccagni & Yapo, 2022); refugee housing (Casey, Coward, Fordham, Hickman, Reeve and Whittle, 2004; Phillips, 2006; Fosas, Albada & Natarajan, 2018; Bernt, Hamann & El-Kayed, 2022); and migrant health and mental health in relation in housing (Leilier, Bjärtå, Ekdahl & Wasteson, 2019; Koh, 2020; Kawr, Saad, Magwood & Alkhateeb, 2021). In

addition, some research on migrant housing is focused on migrant housing conditions in various countries. For example, Smith (2015) researched the housing conditions of migrants in Ontario, Canada; Greenburg & Polzer (2008) studied migrant housing conditions in South Africa; multiple studies have focused on migrant housing conditions in China (Xie & Chen, 2018; Zeng, Yu & Zhang, 2019; Xiao, Yang, Xu & Ma, 2020); and some studies have focused on the housing conditions of agricultural workers in North Carolina (Holden, 2021; Vallejos, Quandt & Grzywacz, 2011; Arcury, Lu & Chen, 2014).

Other academics have focused on the housing experiences of migrants. Migrant housing experiences can depend on a range of factors such as the specific national and local context, race, ethnicity, legal status and length of settlement since arrival (Soita *et al*., 2020). Liu, Wang & Tao (2013) conducted an empirical study on social capital and migrant housing experiences in urban China and found that most migrants in urban locations experience tremendous discrimination in the housing system because of an inability to afford housing and the lower position of migrants in the Chinese social hierarchy. Migrants in urban China usually live in substandard informal housing settlements with minimal space and inadequate amenities (Liu, Wang & Tao, 2013). The findings of their research uncovered that it is more 'whom' a migrant knows than 'how many people' they know that influences an individual's housing opportunities; therefore, social capital is an important factor in overcoming housing discrimination and having access to better quality housing (Liu, Wang & Tao, 2013). In addition, Özüekren & Ergoz-Karahan (2010) studied the housing experiences of Turkish migrants in Berlin and Istanbul and suggested that migrants frequently reside in less desirable neighbourhoods and are frequently subject to discrimination in the housing market in western Europe. Their findings evidence the importance of acknowledging differences within migrant groups to improve understanding, suggesting that differences among migrants such as ethnicity, rural or urban background and religious preferences are significant in explaining housing preferences and segregation patterns (Özüekren & Ergoz-Karahan, 2010).

Other studies have focused on Polish migrant housing experiences in various contexts. For example, Murdie (2003) found that Polish migrant renters in Toronto, Canada commonly experience upward residential mobility by gradually affording higher rents and moving into better quality housing over time (Murdie, 2003; Soaita, *et al*., 2020). In addition, Mostowska (2014) studied homeless Polish migrants in Oslo and Brussels and found that labour migrants were particularly vulnerable within the housing market because of socio-cultural differences,

weakening social connections with people in places of origin, financial vulnerability, and limited language abilities. Furthermore, Stachowski and Fiałkowska (2020) studied the marginalisation of Polish migrants in rural Germany and Norway and found that Polish migrants working in seasonal employment in rural Germany were more likely to live in substandard housing in designated migrant accommodation areas and be isolated from local communities than Polish migrants in Norway, who resided in housing within the local housing market and were more likely to interact with local people. Additionally, Ulceluse, Bock and Haartsen (2022) researched the impact of Polish and Romanian migration in three villages in the Netherlands and found that migrants living in hotels or boarding houses rather than houses felt as though they were in a state of limbo and had less privacy and reduced housing quality. Additionally, local people did not want to live close to immigrant housing facilities and viewed the migrants as temporary visitors rather than as welcomed new residents. The social hierarchies that formed reinforced stereotypes of Polish migrants as heavy drinkers and created social and spatial distance between the migrants and local people (Ulceluse, Bock and Haartsen, 2022). Furthermore, Smith (2013) and Smith (2015) studied the housing experiences of recently arrived Polish migrants in Dublin and their conceptions of home. The studies highlighted that suitable and affordable housing with tenure security is key for migrant integration into a new society and that housing is closely related to the well-being of individuals and the development of healthy, thriving communities. Grabiec (2019) also studied Polish migrant housing experiences and their perceptions of home in Ireland and found that feelings of housing insecurity were exacerbated by the housing crisis. In addition, Polish migrant housing experiences in rented accommodation depended on the people who shared the housing and the quality of the housing conditions (Grabiec, 2019). The findings also suggested that Polish migrants were more affected by the housing crisis than the non-migrant Irish population and that there was insufficient provision of information and assistance to the migrant population.

In the context of the UK, Robinson *et al.* (2007) found that Somali, Polish, Pakistani and Liberian migrants in Sheffield tended to be drawn to inner city neighbourhoods with large private rented sectors. Grysel-Fieldsned and Reeve (2007) also studied the experiences of new Polish, Liberian, Pakistani and Somali migrants in Sheffield and found that early forms of housing for Polish labourers were characterised by insecurity, as Polish migrants had restricted access to welfare benefits and their housing security was dependent upon keeping their employment. Additionally, the findings suggested that most Polish migrants in Sheffield initially stayed with social ties temporarily after arriving and then commonly

utilised their social networks to assist them to move into the private rented sector (Gryszel-Fieldsned & Reeve, 2007). Similarly, Parutis (2011) found that Polish migrants often choose to reside with other Polish individuals or individuals from other migrant groups, particularly initially after arriving in their migration destination country to help them to adjust to living in a new location. Polish migrants have been found to frequently utilise their social networks to organise their housing arrangements and to obtain housing, employment and linguistic support (Murdie, 2003; Glasgow Housing Association, 2008; Trevena *et al*., 2013; Soaita *et al*., 2020). Polish migrants tend to find their first form of accommodation in their migration destination through their Polish social support networks and then as their English language abilities improve and their knowledge of the UK improves, they are more likely to live and socialise with other groups within the local community (Parutis, 2011). Kozlowska (2010) suggests that Polish migrant choices to seek assistance within social networks rather than from organisations and support services may be a social legacy of communism, when Polish citizens were distrustful of communist state-led institutions and preferred to be resourceful by seeking assistance within their own communities (Kozlowska, 2010). Parutis (2011) also found that Polish migrants sometimes engage in subletting within migration destinations to reduce housing costs. According to Gryszel-Fieldsned and Reeve (2007), post-accession Polish migrants in Sheffield commonly had initial goals to work and earn money in the UK temporarily before returning to Poland and sought cheap accommodation in Sheffield to reduce their housing costs and maximise their income potential during their time in the UK (Gryszel-Fieldsned & Reeve, 2007).

In addition, McGhee, Heath and Trevena (2013) studied the experiences of post-accession Polish migrants in social housing within low demand areas in Glasgow and found that their participants were willing to compromise on aspects of safety by residing in low demand areas to live within social housing, as being a social housing tenant created a perceived sense of security with a belief that they would be able to access welfare protection in the event of loss of employment or changing circumstances. Trevena *et al*. (2013) also studied the internal mobility patterns of post-accession Polish migrants in England and Wales. Their findings suggest that the propensity for Polish migrants in the UK to undertake internal movements is greatest initially after migrating to the UK and then decreases over time, as once individuals have secured stable forms of employment and housing and formed well-established social networks and stronger connections to a location they are less likely to relocate again (Trevena *et al*., 2013). Their findings also suggested that most of their Polish participants had migrated to the UK in search of employment opportunities and that their

internal movements were influenced by employment opportunities, migration channels and whether the participants had children. Polish migrants with children were less likely to relocate than those without children and Polish migrants that had utilised recruitment agencies to migrate to the UK were more likely to engage in internal mobility than those who had migrated by utilising their social networks (Trevena *et al*., 2013).

Migrants can experience housing systems differently from previously settled households (Smith, 2013). Most migrants face similar problems to non-migrant, low-income households within a population, but with added disadvantages associated with language barriers and a lack of knowledge of legal rights and how to navigate housing systems (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Soaita *et al*., 2020). Language barriers and a lack of information about housing choices can make migrants vulnerable and unclear about their rights (Glasgow Housing Association, 2008). Mogilnicka (2022) highlighted that post-accession Polish migrants in the UK have been overrepresented in low skilled employment roles, exploited in the labour market and subjected to substandard housing conditions (Mogilnicka, 2022). Gaining an understanding of migrant housing experiences and obtaining insight into the challenges that migrants face within local housing markets is important as it can aide local communities, policymakers, and practitioners to develop more equitable environments (Murdie, 2002; Smith, 2013). There has been extensive migration research, but relatively little research on the housing experiences of migrants (Soaita *et al*., 2020), and this research aims to contribute to this under researched area by examining the housing experiences of Polish migrants in Luton and Peterborough in the UK.

3.3 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 3 has reviewed various theoretical approaches to migration research and has discussed existing research on Polish migration, migrant housing and migrant residential patterns. This chapter situates this thesis within the context of existing literature, and presents various existing findings, approaches and recommendations for further work that have influenced the development of this research. The next chapter provides a discussion of the methodology and methods that were utilised to form the research design of this thesis.

CHAPTER 4: Methodology and Methods

4.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological choices that were made to develop a research design suited to address the aim, objectives, and research questions of this thesis. Chapter 4 begins by outlining the purposes of the Methodology and Methods Chapter and includes a roadmap diagram (Figure 11) to visually present the chapter contents and the overall research design. The chapter then discusses the research philosophy, the research type and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that form the methodological foundation of this research. Additionally, this chapter presents the research methods that were used to complete the data collection phase of this research, including a discussion of the use of interviews as a data collection method, sampling techniques, reflections on the interviewing process, reflections on the positionality of the researcher and the ethical considerations that were necessary to complete this research. The chapter then discusses the use of content analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis as data analysis methods before culminating with a chapter conclusion.

Chapter 4 Methodology and Methods

4.0 Chapter Introduction

4.1 Research Philosophy:
- Social Constructivism / Interpretivism

4.2 Research Type:
- Qualitative
-Naturalistic

4.3 Theoretical Framework:
- Humanistic
- Phenomenological Inquiry

4.4 Conceptual Framework:
- Transnational Perspective

4.5 Research Methods:
4.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews
4.5.2 Sampling Methods
4.5.3 Reflections on the Interviewing Process
4.5.4 Positionality of Researcher
4.5.5 Ethical Considerations

4.6 Data Analysis Methods:
- 4.6.1 Transcription
- 4.6.2 Content Analysis
- 4.6.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

4.7 Chapter Conclusion

The Research Design

Figure 11. A roadmap diagram of the contents of Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods, illustrating the research design.

4.1 Research Philosophy

This thesis is underpinned by a social constructivist ontological perspective to form a humanistic methodological approach (Flowerdew & Martin, 1997). A social constructivist and interpretivist research philosophy was chosen as the ontological perspective for this research as it strongly aligns with the aim, objectives and research questions of this thesis outlined in Chapter 1 (section 1.2). Constructivism and interpretivism are research paradigms that assume that knowledge is subjective, co-constructed by the researcher and the subjects being researched, and is based on aspects such as signs and symbols that are shared by people of a particular culture. Although individuals who are members of a particular cultural group live different realities and have their own individual experiences (Grbich, 2013). Social constructivism advocates that multiple and diverse versions of experiences and behaviours exist in different socio-cultural settings, which result from different methods of utilising and constructing cultural and discursive resources (Anyan, 2013). Research that follows a constructivist and interpretivist paradigm highlights individual experiences, explores how individuals make sense of their lived experiences, and studies how their social environments have influenced their constructed understandings of their experiences (Grbich, 2013; Bleiker, Morgan-Trimmer, Knapp & Hopkins, 2019). This research philosophy strongly aligns with the aim of this research to critically evaluate the housing experiences and future aspirations of Post-accession Polish migrants in the UK, using a phenomenological, lived-experience approach that allows an exploration of the views that Polish nationals both in the UK and in Poland have towards migration, settlement and housing following the decision for Brexit. Additionally, social constructivist approaches to migration research conceive communication, migration and transnationality as socially constructed phenomena that are affected by temporal and spatial settings, which is a view that is accepted in this thesis (Amelina, 2018; Christmann, Knoblauch and Löw, 2022). The following section introduces the research type that aligns with the social constructivist and interpretivist research philosophy discussed within this section.

4.2 Research Type

This research is qualitative and naturalistic. Qualitative research is relevant to the study of social relations and is better suited to studies of behaviours, experiences and other social phenomena than quantitative research (Grbich, 2013; Flick, 2023). Whereas quantitative research tends to endeavour to be objective, measure numerical attributes such as frequency and distribution, and study causal relationships, in contrast qualitative research values subjectivity and aims to increase insights and understanding of the meaning and experience of human lives and social phenomena (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson, 2002; Flick, 2023). Acknowledging, respecting, and interpreting the views of participants and the researcher, and illuminating the subjective meanings, activities and social situations that are shared and understood by the participants is central to effective qualitative research (Fossey et, al. 2002; Grbich, 2013). In addition, Armstrong (2010) states that bringing the setting and it's residents to life and moving beyond description to offer new understandings of social phenomena is central to qualitative and naturalistic research. In qualitative research, the participants are viewed as the topic experts, and research validity and quality is in part realised by revealing the truth of the subject matter and authentically representing the views and experiences of the individuals that are being studied (Fossey et, al. 2002; Grbich, 2013).

Naturalistic inquiry is a qualitative form of research that creates greater understanding by observing, describing and interpreting the views, actions and experiences of specific groups or individuals within a societal context (Armstrong, 2010). Naturalistic researchers utilise qualitative methods to obtain subjective, descriptive data from participants, and draw on this data in addition to their own knowledge and experience to develop rich interpretations of social phenomena being studied (Armstrong, 2010). Therefore, a qualitative and naturalistic research type aligns with the aims and objectives of this thesis. Naturalistic research can generate new insights into social phenomena that can broaden the understanding of participant experiences within social contexts (Armstrong, 2010). In naturalistic research, the researcher is the research instrument and becomes immersed in the topic area by becoming familiar with the study area(s) and the wider context of the research, as well as by interacting directly with the participants to gain a greater understanding of their personal views and lived experiences (Armstrong, 2010). Data collected from naturalistic research is best comprehended within the environment in which the participants live and work, and naturalistic researchers must become familiar with the research participants (Athens, 2010). This is often a satisfying experience as the researcher gains new and interesting insights into

the lives of the participants within the context of their everyday surroundings (Armstrong, 2010; Athens, 2010). In addition, this research is naturalistic in form as it does not seek to be generalisable (Walker, 2017). For instance, Armstrong (2010) states:

> *'The aim is not to find a representative case from which to generalise findings to other similar individuals or groups. It is to develop interpretations and local theories that afford deep insights into human experience' (Armstrong, 2010, p.881).*

Generalisation and replication are unlikely in qualitative research studies as each study is bounded by time and context (Grbich, 2013). In naturalistic research, the social phenomena being studied should not be interpreted or understood outside of the temporal and spatial contexts in which they were studied (Armstrong, 2010). This thesis has adopted this style of research, as this research seeks to illuminate the lived migration and housing experiences and future aspirations of a selection of Polish individuals at the time that the research took place, within the set context of the study areas, rather than attempting to seek a representative sample or to generalise the findings.

This thesis aligns with the principles of qualitative, naturalistic research discussed above, and has aimed to follow naturalistic research guidelines by maintaining an open-mind and adapting to changing knowledge as the research has progressed; gaining access to the study areas; engaging directly with the participants by carrying out interviews; analysing the interview data to form interpretations; writing up findings and forming conclusions (Armstrong, 2010; Athens, 2010). This section has introduced the research type chosen to complete this thesis, and the following section outlines the theoretical framework that was utilised as a research strategy to actualise the qualitative, naturalistic form of research discussed above.

4.3 Theoretical Framework

This section introduces the theoretical framework that underpins the methods used in this research (Bleiker *et al*., 2019). This research draws on humanistic and phenomenological theoretical frameworks. This thesis adopts a humanistic methodological approach as the study focuses primarily on the views and experiences of individual agents (Flowerdew & Martin, 1997). A humanistic theoretical framework has been chosen as opposed to a structural-positivist approach, as humanistic thought explores the meanings and values behind human issues, whereas structural-positivist thought has been criticised for de-humanising these issues and overlooking their meanings and values (Daniels, 1985; Larsen, 2020). Positivist approaches are predominantly empirical and quantitative in nature and focus on reasoning, whereas humanistic approaches seek to explore and report human matters to deepen current knowledge on the subject (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). This study will primarily utilise qualitative techniques. Therefore, the empirical fundamentals of structural-positivism and its emphasis on quantitative research would not be ideally suited to this research. In contrast to the objective principles of positivism, humanistic research focuses on the thoughts and behaviour of individuals and is therefore more subjective and more usefully suited to qualitative methods (Daniels, 1985, Larsen, 2020). Humanistic geography examines human experiences and meanings of space, place, mobility, and related geographic phenomena (Seamon & Lundberg, 2017). Therefore, a humanistic theoretical framework aligns with this study of the lived migration and housing experiences and future aspirations of the Polish participants within this research.

A humanistic perspective is an over-arching standpoint that can be narrowed down into a series of individual approaches such as behaviouralism, phenomenology, existentialism, idealism and pragmatism (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). This research uses behaviouralism as an approach as behaviouralists utilise and measure the memories and experiences of people to attempt to explain decision making and spatial choices. This thesis aims to collect the memories and narratives of individuals to uncover more information related to the lived experiences and choices made by Polish individuals in the UK and in Poland. Therefore, the aims of a behaviouralist approach are compatible with this research (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). Behaviouralists also acknowledge that human action is facilitated by cognitive processing and this study assumes that individuals are capable of human agency, and both affect and are affected by the context in which they are located (Findlay & Li, 1997). Behaviouralism can also be narrowed down into two sub-groups: analytical behaviouralism and

phenomenological inquiry. Analytical behaviouralists are mainly concerned with placing behavioural variables into spatial models, whereas work centred in phenomenological inquiry is largely concerned with people's morals, values and their sense of place (Bliss, 2016; Frechette, Blitzas, Aubry, Kilpatrick and Lavoie-Tremblay, 2020). Similarly, to positivist thought, analytical behaviouralism has been criticised for dehumanising human behaviours and for overlooking the social and cultural context in which individual's make decisions (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). Phenomenological inquiry is better suited for this research as this thesis seeks to understand individual behaviours, views, and experiences within a set context, rather than attempting to fit variables into spatial models (Frechette *et al.*, 2020). Phenomenological philosophers have continued to develop humanistic themes since the 1990s and conceive places as spaces that encompass both human experience and the physical context in which human experience occurs (Seaman & Lundberg, 2017). Additionally, Morrisey (2022) highlights that adopting a phenomenological approach within migration research can enable researchers to access and gain deeper understandings of migrant experiences within diverse contexts. This research aligns with these views and has adopted a humanistic and phenomenological theoretical framework, as it is acknowledged that the lived migration and housing experiences of the Polish participants in this study have occurred within specific spatial and temporal contexts, as well as within wider social, political, cultural and economic influences in Poland and in the UK (as discussed during Chapter 1 and 2).

4.4 Conceptual Framework

This thesis utilises an overarching transnational conceptual framework to capture the holistic experience of migration from start to finish, within both the country of origin and the migration destination. Transnationalism developed into an important theme as the research progressed, as within some of the early interviews that were carried out, it became evident that multiple Polish participants frequently related their experiences in the UK to their previous experiences of living in Poland and to ongoing connections with their places of origin in Poland. Therefore, it became apparent that in order to fully understand the migration motivations and lived experiences of Polish migrant individuals in the UK, it was also important to try to understand the context of where the participants had migrated from and their experiences and views of Poland. Burrell (2003) emphasised that migrant experiences are inextricably linked to transnationalism, as contemporary forms of international migration are occurring within a globalised world, in which migrants have greater ease of access and

connection to their places of origin. Many other scholars have also adopted this view within their migration research such as Skrbiš (2008), Ding (2015), Soong (2015) and Ní Laoire (2020). In addition, Boccagni (2016) and Nowicka (2020) suggest that migration research that explores migrants' daily life experiences through a transnational lens enables a better understanding and illuminates hidden aspects of migrant's lives. As discussed within Chapter 3 (section 3.2) the theory of transnationalism offers an advanced understanding of the process of integration, whereby it is acknowledged that most migrants sustain ties across borders and maintain engagement with the societies in their new destinations as well as their countries of origin (Bartram *et al*., 2014; Faist *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, transnationalism was considered to be the most relevant migration theory for describing contemporary outcomes of human movement and was selected as the most appropriate theory to conceptually frame this research and to illuminate the experiences of the Polish participants.

To further current understanding of mobility, migrant integration, and transnationalism, Bivand-Erdal & Lewicki (2016) recommended a need for further research across both places of origin and settlement locations. This research has collected data in the UK and in Poland and studies how factors within both locations are connected to form a holistic representation of the lived experiences of Polish migrants within both the country of origin and destination. A multi-sited approach to transnational migration research has also been advocated by scholars such as Marcus (1995), Falzon (2009), Amelina (2010), Faist (2012). Nowicka (2014) discussed the need to study narratives in a transnational context. Similarly, Marcus (1995) advocated approaches to research that trace the paths taken by migrants or seek to follow the life histories and narratives of migrant experiences, which this research aims to achieve by studying the narratives of Polish people to reveal their lived experiences within both the UK and in Poland (Nowicka, 2014). In addition, Apitzsch and Siouti (2007) suggest that combining a transnational perspective with methods such as interviewing can be useful for investigating links between individuals, societal contexts, and constructions of identity within migration processes. This study has incorporated the recommendations of Marcus (1995), Apitzsch and Siouti (2007), Nowicka (2014) and Nowicka (2020) by using a transnational framework as the conceptual theoretical framework of the research and by analysing the interview narratives of the migration pathways, housing experiences and future aspirations of Polish individuals within the UK and in Poland to gather insight into their lived experiences. The following section discusses the research methods that were used to complete this research.

4.5 Research Methods

This section discusses the research methods that were used to complete the data collection phase of this research. This section is split into five subsections to discuss the use of interviews as a data collection method (subsection 4.5.1), the sampling techniques that were used to select participants (subsection 4.5.2), reflections on the interviewing process (subsection 4.5.3), reflections on the positionality of the researcher (subsection 4.5.4) and ethical considerations (subsection 4.5.5). This section is then followed by a discussion of the data analysis methods used to complete this research.

4.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the data collection method to fulfil the aim of this research, and a total of 59 interviews were carried out. In-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with 35 Polish migrants in the UK (27 in Luton and eight in Peterborough) to critically investigate the housing experiences, views and future aspirations of a selection of Polish migrants living in Luton and Peterborough. This aligns with the humanistic approach taken in this study and has helped to reveal the lived migration and housing experiences of Polish individuals living in Luton and Peterborough. Additionally, 14 semi-structured interviews took place with housing expert participants who had knowledge of the housing market and/or the housing practices of the Polish community in Luton and Peterborough (ten in Luton and four in Peterborough). These interviews were carried out to provide knowledgeable perspectives on the local housing markets, and to gain further information about migrant housing practices in the case study localities. Expert interviews are frequently included in qualitative research and can supplement the information gained through other means, such as interviews with migrant participants (Caro, Xhaho and Dushi, 2017; Aziz, 2018; Sandoz, 2020). Furthermore, ten semi-structured interviews were also carried out with Polish nationals in Poland to explore their views, experiences and aspirations in relation to the UK. The interviews with Polish nationals in Poland provide valuable insight into the views that Polish individuals in Poland had towards migration to the UK and their movement and return migration experiences. These interviews were carried out in the cities of Szczecin (three interviews), Wrocław (one interview), Warsaw (two interviews) and Kraków (four interviews). The details concerning the recruitment of each participant and when and where the interviews occurred is discussed within subsection 4.5.2 and presented in Appendix IX.

Interviewing is a method that is conducive to the research design of this thesis, as interviewing aligns well with the research philosophy and research type as well as the chosen theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Most importantly, interviewing was selected as a data collection method to complete this research because interviews enable researchers to collect in-depth, narrative data from participants, which is an effective method of gathering the information needed to address the research questions and to meet the aim and objectives of this research (Mason, 2017). For instance, interviewing can provide an in-depth understanding of a topic by allowing participants to share detailed examples and rich narratives, and to explain in their own words how they understand and make sense of their experiences (Hoggart, Lees & Davis, 2002; Knott, Rao, Summers and Teeger, 2022). Interviewing is also a practical way of gathering an insight into the varying opinions and experiences within a group and identifying whether there is a consensus in their views on certain subjects (Hay, 2010). Studying migrant narratives enables researchers to uncover patterns and similarities but can also highlight distinctiveness within the lives of different individuals (Merrill & West, 2009). Interviews also help to reveal complex motivations and behaviours such as those that influence the migration process (Hay, 2010). Furthermore, interviews allow the participants being studied to reflect upon their own personal experiences and better engage with research, which is a particularly useful technique when studying a minority group within a population, such as migrants, as they are often less heard within a society and can occasionally counter general assumptions regarding public opinion (Hay, 2010). Additionally, many migration researchers have employed interviewing as a method to investigate Polish migrant experiences, such as McGhee, Heath and Trevena (2012), Grabowska (2018), Ryan (2018), Burrell and Schweyher (2019), Fiałkowska (2019) and Rawiński (2021), demonstrating that interviews are an effective method of obtaining qualitative data on the views and experiences of Polish migrants within specific contexts.

Interviews can vary in form and can be structured, unstructured or semi-structured (Knott *et al.,* 2022). Structured interviews use a set list of questions that must be asked to each participant in a specific order; unstructured interviews have no set list of questions and no aide-memoir, requiring questions to develop spontaneously as the interview progresses; and semi-structured interviews utilise an aide-memoir to guide the line of questioning and form the basis of discussion between the researcher and the participants, but in semi-structured interviews researchers have the freedom to deviate from topics and questions in the interview guide and to cover topics in a varied order if appropriate and desired (Knott *et al*., 2022). A semi-structured approach to interviewing was selected in favour of an unstructured or a

structured approach in this research, as semi-structured interviewing enabled the researcher to utilise aide-memoirs to discuss the same topics with multiple interviewees, whilst also allowing the researcher flexibility to ask additional questions to probe participants for further information when appropriate and enabling the participants to raise additional topics if desired.

Limitations of Interviews as Research Methods

Finding and contacting potential participants and organising each interview can be time-consuming. Writing up the transcripts of each recorded interview and analysing the data can also take a considerable amount of time (Robson, 2002; Aziz, 2018). For that reason, time planning and good organisation was essential in this research. Furthermore, it is important for the researcher to maintain a rapport with the participant throughout the interview to keep them engaged, while attempting to maintain a neutral position on the topics being discussed (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). This can be difficult as interviews are social interactions that are not neutral in nature, but it is essential to ensure impartial data analysis (Hoggart, Lees & Davis, 2002; Kitchin & Tate, 2000). As with questionnaires, there is no method of checking the honesty of interview answers, which could cause some reliability issues when analysing the data (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). The interviewing process requires participants to recall past events in detail, which can sometimes be difficult, and interviewees may provide socially acceptable answers rather than their own honest responses to create a positive impression of themselves (Tonkin, 1995). This can be a particular issue if the interviewer asks questions that are sensitive in nature during the interview process (Donley & Grauerholz, 2012). To try to overcome this limitation, an attempt was made to try and maintain a rapport with the participants and to encourage honesty by ensuring that the interviewees understood the purpose of the study and were aware that their answers would remain completely anonymous and confidential as stated on the interview consent form and in line with ethical approval requirements (discussed further in subsection 4.6.5).

Another limitation of interviews is that the discussion between the researcher and the participant can sometimes deviate from the topics that the researcher is trying to collect data on (Donley & Grauerholz, 2012). To try to avoid this situation from arising, an attempt was made to maintain control and guide the conversation sufficiently to collect enough data, whilst ensuring that the participants did not at any time feel dismissed. Another drawback of the interview method is bias, particularly when multiple researchers are conducting the

interviews as each researcher will have their own interviewing style which could affect the results. To minimise bias, there was a sole interviewer in this research, and this ensured that each interview was conducted in a similar way (Donley & Grauerholz, 2012). This study also aimed to carry out the interviews in a consistent setting where possible, which was generally in a public place such as a café or a restaurant. The researcher also attempted to cover the same questions in a similar order in each interview to ensure that the data collection was consistent, and that each interviewee had a similar interview experience (Donley & Grauerholz, 2012).

This subsection has discussed the rationale for choosing semi-structured interviews as a suitable data collection method for this research, and covered the amount of interviews that took place with Polish participants and housing expert participants at each study location. The following subsections present the sampling methods that were used to select the participants, reflections on the interviewing process, the positionality of the researcher, and the ethical considerations that were associated with the research.

4.5.2 Sampling Methods

This subsection discusses the sampling methods that were utilised to recruit Polish participants and housing expert participants for this research in Luton, in Peterborough and in Poland, and provides details about when and how the interviews took place.

The exact number of Polish residents in each study location was unknown. However, the size of the Polish populations within Luton and Peterborough was known to be large, as discussed in Chapter 2 and shown in Table 3, which would have made them extremely time-consuming, costly, and improbable to study in their entirety. This limitation restricted the type of sampling approach that could be taken. It was impossible to carry out random, systematic, and stratified sampling to collect data because the total number of Polish migrants living within Luton and Peterborough was unknown and data relating to migrant places of residence within the study areas was not available (Donley & Grauerholz, 2012). Rather, in accordance with the humanistic and phenomenological approach that was adopted in this research, a purposive and voluntary sampling technique enabled primary data to be collected effectively. Purposive sampling involves actively seeking a sample of individuals who meet the needs of the research (McNeill and Chapman, 2005), which in this case was primarily Polish migrants living in Luton and Peterborough. In particular, the participants

were selected by utilising a purposive sampling strategy known as maximum variation sampling, in an attempt to collect data from a wide range of diverse perspectives on the same research phenomenon (Suri, 2011; Patton, 2014). Maximum variation sampling was utilised as a purposive sampling strategy as it enables the collection of diverse data from a variety of different perspectives, which can both highlight the uniqueness of particular cases as well as shared patterns, similarities and differences across cases (Suri, 2011; Patton, 2014). This can help to form a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied and aligns with the characteristics of interpretative phenomenological analysis based research as discussed in section 4.6.3. Varied perspectives were sought by gathering data from housing expert participants as well as from Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough in the UK and in Poland. Varied perspectives were also sought within these different participant groups by attempting to collect data from a diversified sample of participants of different genders and ages (over 18).

Locality	Total population size (2021)	The amount of people within the local population who recorded Poland as their country of birth (2021)
Luton	225,300	8779 (3.9%)
Peterborough	215,700	8338 (3.9%)

Table 3. The total population size in Luton and in Peterborough and the amount of people within the local populations who recorded Poland as their country of birth in the 2021 Census.

The sampling criteria for Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough was Polish individuals who were over the age of 18, were born in Poland, had migrated to the UK after 1995 (but preferably after 2004), and represented a range of genders and ages (over 18). Similarly, the sampling criteria for the Polish participants in Poland was participants that represented multiple genders and ages (over 18), and that represented a range of backgrounds i.e., some who had never previously migrated or visited the UK, some who had visited the UK but had not migrated to the UK, and some who had previously migrated to the UK but had since returned to Poland. Additionally, the sampling criteria for the housing expert participants were individuals who were over the age of 18 and had knowledge of the local

housing market or housing needs of the Polish communities in Luton or Peterborough. This was determined by the researcher by studying information about the individuals online, snowball sampling and speaking to the individuals about their knowledge of the housing market and the Polish communities in Luton and Peterborough.

To select Polish participants for the interviews in Luton and Peterborough, the researcher carried out purposive sampling by visiting areas where there were likely to be many Polish people present, such as Polish churches and Polish shops. A degree of snowballing also took place as some participants introduced the researcher to further participants throughout the data collection process, which proved to be very helpful. Interview advertisements (written in both English and Polish and shown in Appendix V) were also distributed in Polish shops and posted online to try and attract participants to take part in the research. The researcher felt that it was important to distribute a Polish version of the recruitment poster, as well as an English version, as the researcher did not want to exclude the recruitment of any participants who wanted to take part in the research based on language. Therefore, the researcher created an English version of the poster and then attempted to translate the poster into Polish using Google Translate. English and Polish versions of the poster were then distributed in Polish shops on Dallow Road and High Town road in Luton and on Lincoln Road in Peterborough, as well as online via Facebook, Twitter and a Polish Forum (PolishForums.com). The researcher was later made aware by a Polish participant in Luton (Marcia), who had experience of working as an interpreter, that there were a few errors on the Polish version of the poster. Marcia offered to amend the text to improve the quality of the Polish version of the poster, and as she had previous translation experience and was kind enough to offer assistance, the researcher agreed. The amended Polish version of the participant recruitment poster was then re-distributed. Although translation can be a limitation in cross-language qualitative research, the researcher did not want to exclude Polish speakers who could not speak English from participating in the research if desired. Therefore, the researcher felt that it was important to distribute the recruitment poster in Polish as well as in English, and if any Polish speakers had responded to the recruitment poster by email in Polish and had requested to take part in an interview, then the researcher would have arranged for a qualified interpreter to facilitate the interview between the researcher and the participant. However, this did not occur.

Although the Polish participants were largely selected based on who was present and willing to take part in interviews in these areas, a degree of judgement sampling also took place to

try and ensure that a range of participants of different genders and ages were selected. Some interview participants were also voluntarily chosen through responses to advertisements. Furthermore, local housing associations, local councils, homelessness charities and estate agencies were approached via email and in-person to recruit participants for the housing expert interviews. It was hoped that a minimum of two housing expert individuals from each type of organisation would take part in the interviews within each case study location to provide a range of housing expert views from different organisational perspectives. This proved to be more successful in Luton than in Peterborough, as in Luton interviews were carried out with three estate agents, two local council staff members, two staff from housing associations, two members of staff from a homelessness charity in Luton (The New Opportunities and Horizons (NOAH) Enterprise Welfare Centre) and one Polish community gatekeeper from the Polish church in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. It proved more difficult to find willing housing expert participants in Peterborough, and unfortunately although Peterborough City Council were contacted multiple times, none of the staff agreed to take part in the research. However, housing expert interviews in Peterborough were carried out with a staff member from a local housing association, two estate agents and a staff member from a charity in Peterborough that provides food for people in need (Peterborough Soup Kitchen).

The areas where the purposive sampling took place in Luton and in Peterborough are shown as red circles on the maps in Figure 12 and Figure 13, and the main roads where the purposive sampling took place are presented as red lines. The red circles shown on Figure 12 indicate that the main areas where the purposive sampling took place in Luton were in the town centre, the High Town area of Luton, the Dallow area of Luton and a small area in west Dunstable. The main roads where the purposive sampling took place in Luton, presented as red lines on Figure 12 were High Town Road and Dallow Road in Luton which contained many Polish shops, and Victoria Street in Dunstable which was where the Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish church (used by Polish residents in the Luton and Dunstable area) was located. The red circle shown on Figure 13 indicates that the main area where the purposive sampling took place in Peterborough encompassed Peterborough city centre and the area located to the north of the centre near Central Park. The main roads within this area where the purposive sampling took place in Peterborough (depicted as red lines on Figure 13) were Lincoln Road, which contained a lot of Polish businesses, and Westgate which is located next to the Queensgate shopping centre in the city centre.
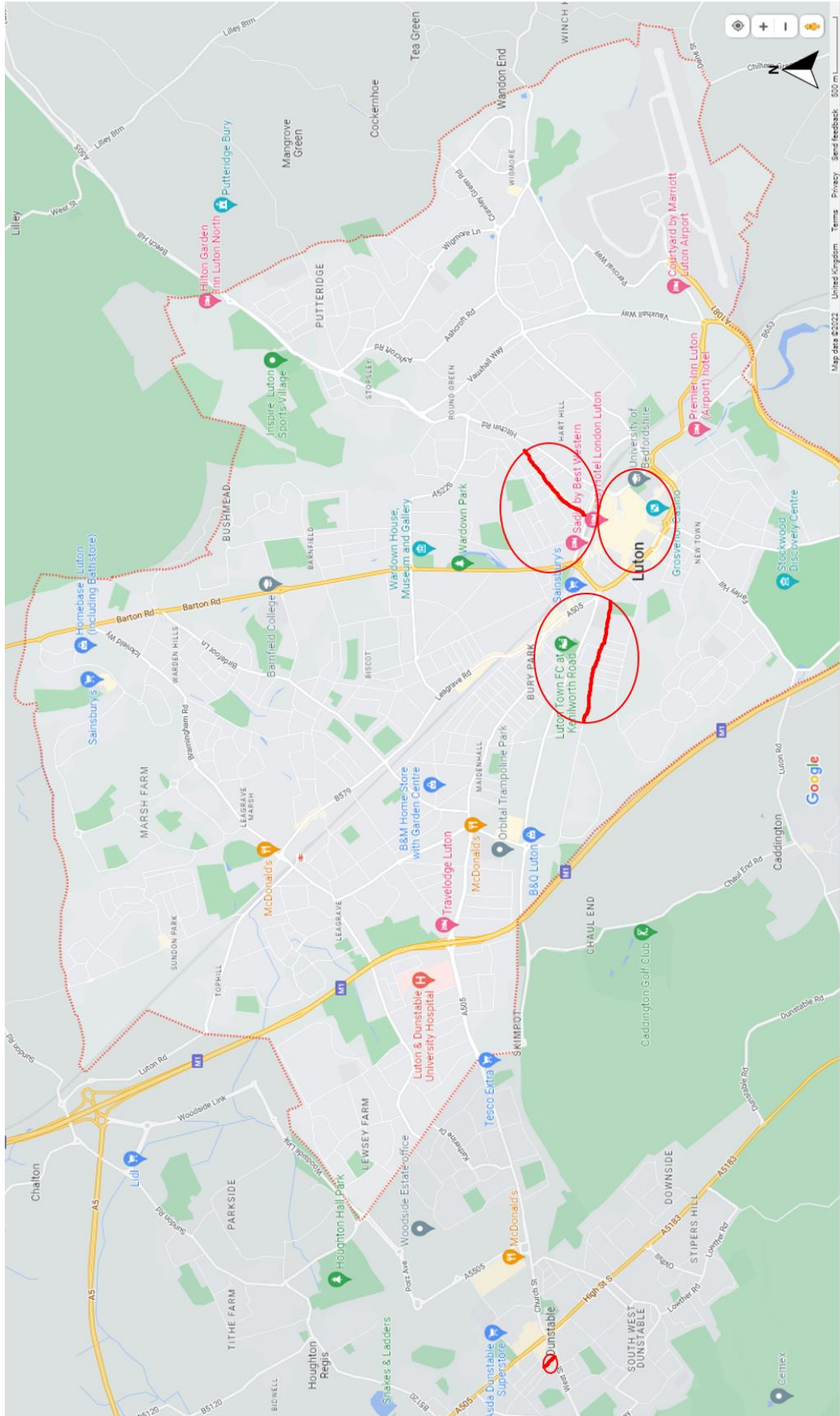
Figure 12. The purposive sampling locations in Luton
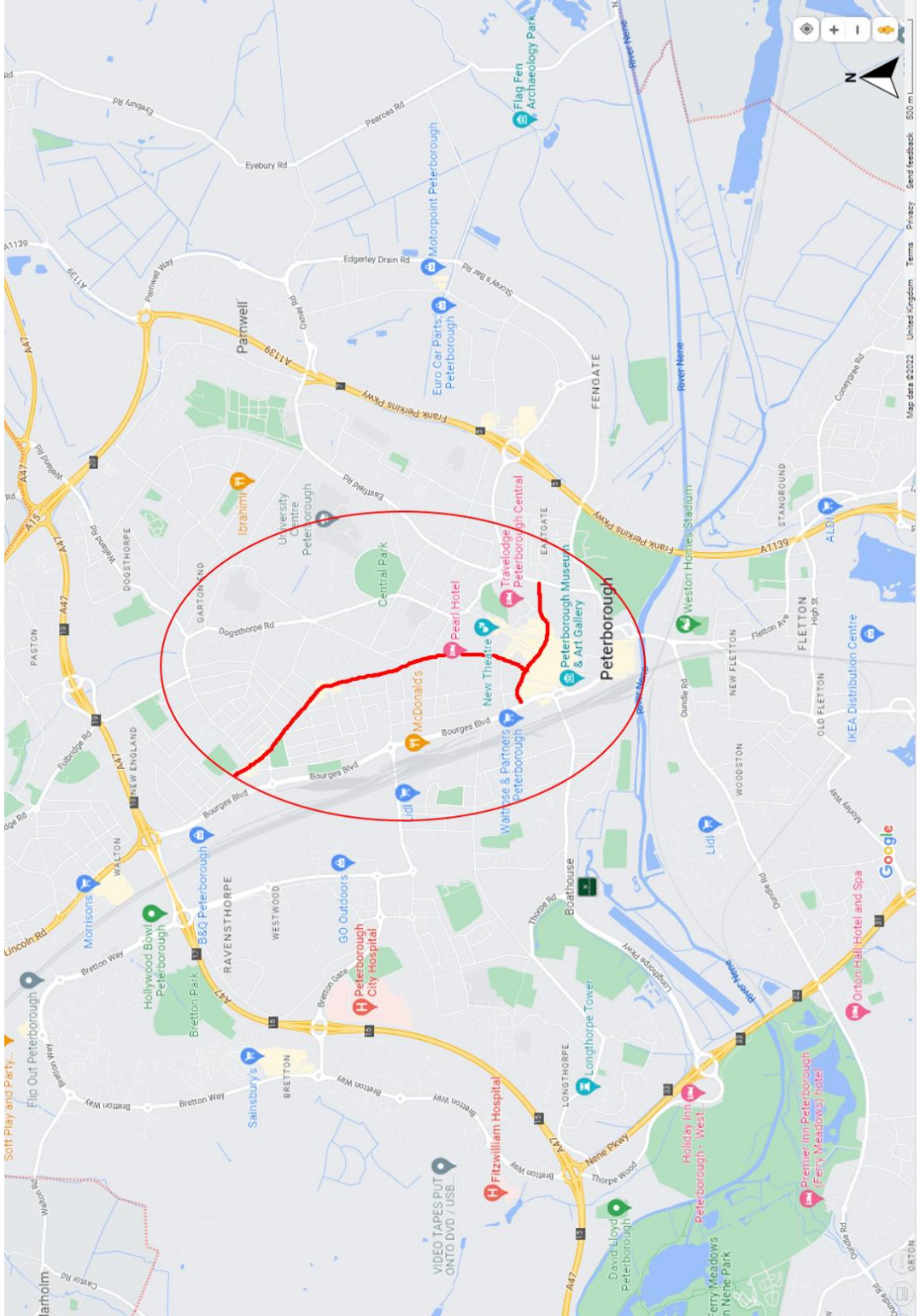
Figure 13. The purposive sampling locations in Peterborough.

The data collection period in Luton occurred between March 2016 and March 2019. During this time, a total of 37 participants were interviewed in Luton which consisted of 27 Polish participants and ten housing experts. Most of the interviews in Luton (25 interviews with Polish participants and eight interviews with housing experts) took place between March 2016 and July 2016. The data collection period in Luton was then expected to be finished and the researcher began developing transcripts of the Luton interviews while attempting to organise interviews in Peterborough. However, during the data collection period in Peterborough, the researcher was given the opportunity to interview four further participants in Luton. Three of these additional interviews took place in July 2018 and consisted of interviews with two housing experts who worked at the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre in Luton, and one Polish migrant user of the support services provided by the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre. The opportunity to carry out these interviews became possible owing to the researchers' time volunteering as a teaching assistant at the NOAH Academy in Luton between January 2018-September 2018, as a colleague of the researcher at the NOAH Academy introduced the researcher to a contact who worked at the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre. The researcher emailed the contact to discuss the purposes of the research and the contact agreed to be interviewed as a housing expert (LHE9) to share his perspective and experience of assisting homeless Polish migrants in Luton. Housing expert LHE9 also introduced the researcher to another staff member who worked at the NOAH Enterprise Welfare, who was Polish and was also willing to take part in an interview to share her perspective as housing expert LHE10. Housing experts LHE9 and LHE10 then introduced the researcher to a Polish migrant user of the NOAH Enterprise support services who was interested in taking part in the research. This was Tymon, a Polish participant in Luton who shared his experiences of migration and settlement in the UK, as well as his experience of losing his identification documentation and becoming homeless. Additionally, in March 2019, the researcher was contacted by a Polish participant who had previously been interviewed in Luton in 2016 (Marcia). Marcia informed the researcher that she had a contact (Marek) who was interested in sharing his experiences and contributing to the research, and the researcher agreed to carry out an interview with Marek in Luton in March 2019. Although these interviews occurred years after the initial data collection period in Luton in 2016, the researcher felt that it was worthwhile revisiting Luton to carry out these additional interviews because the opportunities to obtain perspectives on Polish migrant homelessness in Luton and the experiences of a homosexual Polish migrant in Luton (Marek) were too valuable to be missed and offered new insights to the data that had already been collected during the initial data collection phase. As a result, the full data collection period in Luton occurred

between March 2016 and March 2019. Concurrently, the data collection period in Peterborough occurred between May 2017 and October 2018. During this time, a total of twelve interviews were carried out with participants in Peterborough, which consisted of eight Polish participants and four housing experts. In addition, the data collection period in Poland occurred between the 7th of March and the 19th of March 2019. During this time, ten interviews were carried out with Polish nationals across four cities in Poland (three in Szczecin, one in Wrocław, two in Warsaw and four in Kraków). Eight of the ten participants in Poland were recruited via online advertisements through Facebook and two participants (Krystyna and Beata) were introduced to the researcher through mutual contacts who worked at the University of Hertfordshire. The locations where the interviews with Polish nationals took place in Poland are shown in red in Figure 14.
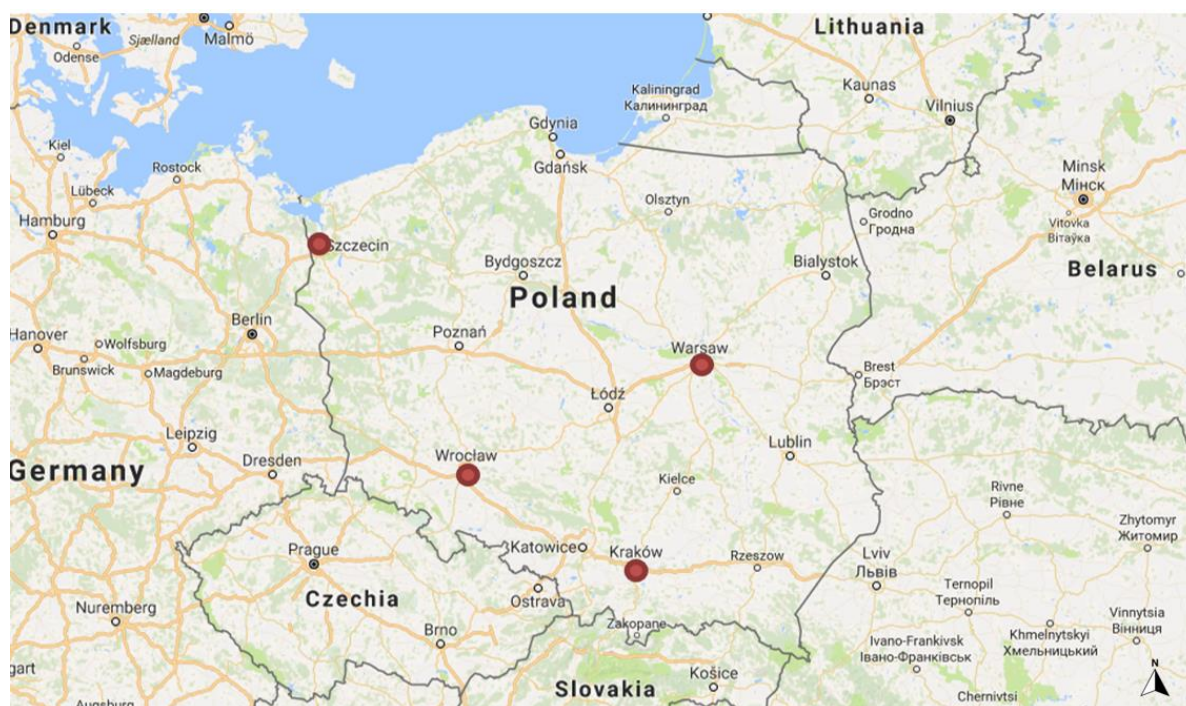
Figure 14. The four data collection sites in Poland: Szczecin, Wrocław, Warsaw and Kraków (adapted from Google Maps, 2022a).

The interviews were mostly conducted in public spaces, and the interview locations were selected based on the participant's preferences and availability, as well as the researcher's need to carry out the interviews in safe locations with a suitable amount of privacy, that were sufficiently quiet to ensure audio-recording quality. Information regarding when and where each interview with each participant took place is displayed in Appendix IX.

The appropriate sample size for qualitative and doctoral research is often contested, but Mason (2017) states that sample sizes should reflect the purpose of the research and become irrelevant if the quality of the data produced is sufficient to achieve the aims of the study. Baker and Edwards (2017) recommend graduate students to aim for a medium sample size of approximately thirty participants to circumvent the challenges associated with research time constraints and to enable researchers to delve deeper into the data provided by a smaller number of participants rather than obtaining a shallower insight into the views of a larger sample. However, Baker and Edwards (2017) also state that larger samples of research participants may be advisable when interviewing additional participants offers differing experiences, perceptions and outlooks to the study or when research takes the form of a comparative or multi-sited project, as participants must be gathered at multiple study sites. This research has a large total sample size of 59 participants, as it is a multi-perspectival and multi-sited, comparative project studying both housing expert views and the narratives of Polish migrants in Luton and in Peterborough, as well as the narratives of a selection of Polish nationals in Poland. It was initially thought that the researcher would have difficulty accessing and recruiting Polish individuals within the Polish communities in Luton and in Peterborough as an outsider. However, as the researcher became more familiar with the study areas and the Polish communities within these localities, the researcher was successful in recruiting 27 Polish participants and ten housing experts in Luton and eight Polish participants and four housing experts in Peterborough, as well as ten Polish nationals in Poland, and these were believed to be sufficient sample sizes to achieve the aim of the research within the time constraints and practicalities of the research (Mason, 2017). Therefore, the researcher decided to cease collecting data in March 2019 and focus on the data analysis process (Mason, 2017). The demographic characteristics of the Polish participants such as their gender, age, occupation, place of origin in Poland, year of arrival in the UK and settlement pathway in the UK are presented and discussed in Appendix XI and Appendix XII.

Limitations of the Sampling Methods

Finding participants who were willing to take part in the research and organising interviews with participants was time-consuming (Flowerdew & Martin, 1997). To try to overcome this limitation, advertisements written in both English and Polish were handed out in each case study location and distributed online to try and attract Polish participants. These advertisements are displayed in Appendix V. Another limitation of the sampling methods

was that the choice of which people to approach within the study sites was not controlled, which made the participant selection process prone to bias (Flowerdew & Martin, 1997). Ideally a bias-free sample is used, but purposive sampling makes this difficult (Robinson, 1998). Therefore, the generalisations implied from this study are minimal and all conclusions are specific and tentative (Robinson, 1998). In line with the research design, this research makes no claim of representativeness and seeks to illuminate the lived experiences of a selection of individuals within the context of Luton, Peterborough, four localities in Poland, and wider influences in the UK and in Poland. Some participants were recruited via direct contact (face to face or via email), but other participants were recruited via indirect contact (through snowball sampling or volunteering to take part by responding to advertisements). The proportion of Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough that were recruited via direct and indirect contact is displayed in Table 4. As the participants who volunteered to take part in the research by responding to advertisements or being recruited via snowball sampling were not directly approached by the researcher to encourage them take part in the study, there was a lower level of bias in the selection process of these participants. Although purposive and voluntary sampling techniques were the most suited form of sampling methods for this study, it was important to acknowledge these methodological limitations whilst conducting the research.

Direct or Indirect Recruitment	Participant Recruitment Method	Percentage of Polish Participants in Luton	Percentage of Polish Participants in Peterborough
Direct contact	Recruited following contact by email	7% (2 Participants)	0% (0 Participants)
	Recruited face-to-face	22% (6 Participants)	12% (1 Participant)
Indirect Contact	Recruited by responding to advertisements	15% (4 Participants)	50% (4 Participants
	Recruited via snowball sampling	56% (15 Participants)	38% (3 Participants)

Table 4. The amount of Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough that were recruited via direct and indirect contact methods.

4.5.3 Reflections on the Interviewing Process

The interviews carried out in this study were recorded using a Dictaphone and a mobile phone to ensure that it was possible to listen back to the conversation and transcribe the interview data (Donley & Grauerholz, 2012). Recording the interviews also allowed a focus on listening to what the respondent was saying during the interview instead of being preoccupied with making extensive notes. Word-for-word notes of what each participant was saying were not taken during the interviewing process, but contextual information about the setting and the date and time of the interviews was recorded (Flowerdew & Martin, 1997; Robson, 2002).

The interviews were all carried out in English, apart from one interview with a Polish participant in Luton (Małgorzata) which was conducted in English and Polish with the assistance of an interpreter. The interview took place at a Polish-British Integration Centre (PBIC) drop-in session at the Luton Irish Forum on Hitchin Road in Luton, and the conversation between the researcher and the participant was facilitated by a qualified interpreter who worked for the PBIC. The researcher allowed an interpreter to facilitate the conversation between the researcher and the participant during the interview, as Małgorzata wanted to contribute to the research and the researcher did not want to exclude any participants based on a language barrier. The use of an interpreter was an effective method of bridging the language barrier between the researcher and the participant and was necessary to enable the interview to take place. However, there are methodological limitations associated with cross-language research and it is important to acknowledge that the use of an interpreter may have affected the accuracy of the content or the participant's use of language in the information that was gathered during the interview (Squires, 2009).

The interviewing process was guided by three sets of pre-determined questions. These questions were prepared by the researcher, with assistance from the researcher's doctoral supervisors and formed the aide-memoirs used during the interviewing process. Questions were selected that were believed to be conducive to gathering the data needed to achieve the aim and objectives of the research. An effort was made to ask questions to collect background data on the participants, to gather contextual information and to provide the Polish participants with opportunities to share details regarding their lived migration and housing experiences and their future aspirations. The aide-memoirs that were used to guide the interviewing process can be viewed in Appendix VI, Appendix VII and Appendix VIII.

The semi-structured interview approach enabled a more natural form of interaction to take place and created an environment in which the researcher aimed to make the interviewees feel heard and valued.

The researcher felt that the interview questions were largely successful in producing the quality of data needed to complete this research, although there were some limitations that could be improved in future work. For instance, although an effort was made to ask similar questions to each participant to increase the ease of comparing responses related to similar topics, there were some instances when questions were asked to some participants and not others, which led to varied inclusion of information within the participant's narratives. This did not strongly affect the research but created a degree of variation within the data produced. To attempt to rectify the impact of this limitation, the researcher contacted the participants post-interview when possible to attempt to clarify any gaps within their narratives. However, this was only possible when the participants had provided the researcher with their contact information. In addition, some of the questions initially led to ambiguity and needed to be followed up with probing questions to illicit deeper insight into the experiences of the participants (Nardon, Hari & Aarma, 2021). For example, 'do you have a desire to move to the UK in the future? could be answered with a vague yes or no answer and was therefore followed up with the probing questions 'if yes, why?' and 'and when would you like to move there?'. Including probing questions proved useful in encouraging participants to explore ambiguous aspects of what was shared during the interview process further and to provide increased detail within their narratives (Nardon *et al.*, 2021). However, some participants appeared more willing to share detailed information with the researcher than others (Knott *et al*., 2022). On reflection, it may have been useful to include greater use of clean, open-ended questions such as 'is there anything else that you would you like to tell me about that?' to elicit more elaborate responses and deeper insights and reflections (Nardon *et al*., 2021; Knott *et al*., 2022). It is hoped that reflecting on the interviewing process and the associated limitations will create methodological transparency and facilitate greater trustworthiness in the research (Cairns-Lee, Lawley & Tosey, 2022). In addition, the following subsection presents reflections on the positionality of the researcher.

4.5.4 Positionality of the Researcher

The researcher is the primary data gathering instrument in qualitative research and researchers have their own subjectivity based on their personal background, viewpoints, and experiences (Tracy, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge and reflect on the positionality of the researchers in qualitative studies. It is important for researchers to consider how their own viewpoints, background and experiences may influence their choice of research approach and impact their actions and interpretations throughout the research process (Armstrong, 2010).

The researcher's position as an academic researcher may have created a perceived dichotomy of power within the relationship between the researcher and the participants, which could have intimidated some participants and led them to alter their narratives (Burrell, 2003; Kozlowska, 2010). Although, Burrell (2003) and Kozlowska (2010) suggest that the impact of a perceived social hierarchy is likely to be lessened if the researcher is a young doctoral student, as in the case of this research, who may be more likely to be viewed as a student in need of assistance by the participants rather than as an institutional academic. Although the researcher did not believe that her age or gender greatly affected the research process, it is possible that the participants may have felt more inclined to take part in the research because of a perception of the researcher as a relatively young female student in need of assistance. It is also possible that female participants may have felt more comfortable sharing their experiences with a female researcher, and that male participants may have felt less comfortable sharing their experiences owing to the researcher being female (Batool & Ali, 2021). Although this was not noticeable to the researcher during the data collection process, this may have been a factor that could have influenced the skew towards a greater number of female Polish participants in Poland. In addition, it is possible that the researcher's white British ethnicity and Christian religious background may have enabled the researcher to gain easier access to some of the Polish participants in this research, such as those who had negative perceptions of multiculturalism.

Additionally, insider or outsider status is another valuable feature of positionality to reflect on (Mason-Bish, 2019). If the research was conducted by a Polish migrant researcher, then they would have personal knowledge and experience of the phenomenon being studied and could be described as an insider. However, the researcher is a British born, non-Polish speaker, with no personal experience of being a migrant. Therefore, the research was

conducted as an outsider and the researcher's interpretation of the topic was from an external perspective (Mason-Bish, 2019). Having an outsider status can create disadvantages such as difficulties accessing other community groups or building a rapport with the participants. Additionally, participants may be more willing to share information with researchers with an insider status than they might be willing to share with someone with an outsider status. For example, Kozlowska (2010) suggests that Polish participants may be less likely to be critical of aspects of British society with a British interviewer than they might be while conversing with a Polish interviewer. Conversely, outsiders have the potential to make different and objective observations from insiders and could be able to highlight aspects that may be overlooked by insiders (Mason-Bish, 2019). As a British-born outsider, the researcher initially found it difficult to form social connections with the Polish communities in Luton and Peterborough, and to recruit Polish participants, as the researcher could not speak Polish and did not have existing Polish contacts within the study areas prior to carrying out the research. However, as the researcher became more accustomed to the study areas by frequenting areas, events and facilities used by Polish people within the study areas, the researcher was able to become immersed in Polish interactions and activities within the study areas and was able to build a rapport and trust with Polish individuals, some of which became participants. Building a rapport with participants can lessen perceived power hierarchies and build a sense of mutual trust that can encourage participants to take part in research and share greater detail with researchers (Anyan, 2013).

In accordance with the design of this thesis, the interview data produced in this research are viewed as a co-constructed product of both the participants and the researcher, as the participants have shared their lived experiences within their narratives, and the researcher has played a role in shaping the line of questioning and has attempted to interpret the way in which the participants have perceived and made sense of their experiences. Additionally, the narratives shared by the participants occurred within specific temporal and spatial contexts and have been influenced by wider structures. Therefore, it is important to note that the interview data presented and interpreted in this research are one of many possible representations of the topic and that this research makes no claim to representativeness. This subsection acknowledges that the researcher is not a neutral entity during the process of carrying out interviews (Burrell, 2003), and identifies aspects of the researcher's background, role and experiences that may have influenced the research. The following subsection details the ethical considerations that were associated with this research.

4.5.5 Ethical Considerations

This subsection discusses the ethical considerations that were acknowledged and implemented to complete this research. All research that concerns human beings carries risks and any fieldwork that involves personal data, participant observation or interviewing is sensitive (Düvell, Triandafyllidou & Vollmer, 2009). By providing researchers with information, human participants can be at risk of losing their personal privacy, reliving traumatic experiences, decreasing their social status and possibly revealing illegal behaviour which may place them in an uncomfortable situation (Düvell, Triandafyllidou & Vollmer, 2009; ESRC, 2005). Researchers can also be at risk during interview situations if the conversation is carried out in a dangerous location, or if the topics discussed are seen to be too sensitive or provoke emotions of anger among the participants ((Düvell, Triandafyllidou & Vollmer, 2009). When working with different cultures or vulnerable populations, the ethical responsibilities of the researcher can be complex (Birman, 2005). The main principles of ethical standards in social science research are to be respectful, honest and considerate of the needs of the participants to minimise the potential risk of sensitive topics (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2009). This can be achieved by gaining the consent of the participants; ensuring that they are well informed about the study and not misled; and by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2009). Another method of minimising the potential risks to the researcher and research participants is for the interviewer to familiarise themselves with the lifestyles, values, culture and customs of the subjects prior to carrying out the research so that there is increased understanding between the interviewer and interviewees (Düvell, Triandafyllidou & Vollmer, 2009; Birman, 2005; Seibert, 2022). Additionally, it is not always possible to foresee issues that may arise when collecting data from humans, so it is important for researchers to remain flexible and adapt to unanticipated developments (Düvell, Triandafyllidou & Vollmer, 2009). In this study, the participants were given a full brief of the research that explained the purpose of the research and what they would be required to do if they chose to participate. This brief was provided in the form of a Participant Information Sheet, shown in Appendix III. The participants were also reassured that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any stage and that any shared information would remain anonymous and confidential. The names of the participants have been replaced by pseudonyms within this thesis to maintain the anonymity of the individuals that contributed to the research. Individuals that read the Participant Information Sheet and decided to take part in the research, were asked to sign a Participant Consent Form (shown in Appendix IV) before participating in an interview. This research has also adhered

to the ethical guidelines set by the University of Hertfordshire Ethics Committee, as a risk assessment was carried out and ethics approval was obtained prior to starting the data collection process. The risk assessment is shown in Appendix I, the ethics approval notification documentation is shown in Appendix II and the ethics approval protocol number for this research is: aLMS/PGR/UH/02260(2)

Section 4.5 has discussed the research methods that were utilised to the complete the data collection phase of this research. This is now followed by a discussion of the data analysis methods that were used to analyse the data that was collected using these research methods.

4.6 Data Analysis Methods

This section discusses the data analysis methods that were utilised to analyse the interview data that was collected to complete this research. Qualitative data analysis requires the researcher to classify, combine and compare the data that has been collected, to reveal patterns, extract meaning and create a coherent narrative (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). There is no ubiquitous set of rules for carrying out qualitative data analysis, but the process does require a logical and organised structure to ensure that the procedure is consistent, clear, and straightforward (Robson, 2002). In this study, the interview data was transcribed and analysed using content analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

4.6.1 Interview Transcription

Following the interviewing process, the audio recordings of the interviews were re-listened to and a transcript of each interview was created. Transcription is the process of attempting to represent the original language that was shared during an interview into a written format (Bird, 2005). From a phenomenological perspective, during the process of transcription, the transcriber is an interpreter and the act of transcribing is an interpretative act, as researchers must pay close attention to the data and make judgements about the level of detail to include in each transcript (Bird, 2005; Bailey, 2008). Transcription is inherently subjective and selective as transcripts can never truly be verbatim or capture every detail that is shared within an audio recording (Bird, 2005; Seibert, 2022). The researcher acknowledges that a true verbatim transcript is not possible, but an attempt was made to develop a semantic record of all of the verbal communication that was spoken by the researcher and the participant during the duration of each interview audio recording (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Seibert (2022) highlights some of the challenges associated with the transcription of data shared in a second language by multilingual participants such as differing conceptual understandings, non-idiomatic speech, and grammatical variations. Most of the Polish participants in this study spoke Polish as a first language and English as a second language and most of the interviews (apart from one) were carried out in English. Therefore, the Polish participants generally shared their narratives with the researcher in their second language and some of the features of multilingual research discussed by Seibert (2022) were evident during the interviewing and transcription process. For example, some participants used unconventional English wording and grammar within their narratives. Researchers may choose to filter out unconventional uses of the English language and verbal fillers such as 'umm', 'uh' and repeated words, but this can lead to the loss of information that could be important to the interpretation process (Kowal and O'Connell, 2014). Therefore, other than removing identifying information to ensure the anonymity of the participants, the researcher has transcribed the content of the interviews without altering the participant's original use of language wherever possible (Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik, 2021). This decision was made in an effort to maintain a clear and close representation of what each participant said during the interview. This was deemed important to prepare the data for data analysis, as the researcher needed to closely interpret the information that was shared by the participants. Following the transcription process, the interview transcripts were analysed using content analysis and IPA.

The transcription and analysis processes were extremely time-consuming taking approximately three years. This was because each of the 59 interviews were individually transcribed, and then each transcript was first manually analysed using content analysis, before undergoing a second phase of more in-depth analysis using IPA. The process of transcribing the interviews to an appropriate level for IPA research took approximately seven hours per hour of recorded sound, as suggested by Smith *et al*. (2009). In this research, following the completion of the transcription procedure, the process of undertaking content analysis and IPA on the interview data took approximately one year, and the process of making sense of the analysis and writing up the results, discussion and conclusions of the thesis has also taken approximately one year. The transcription and analysis process has been very time-consuming, emphasising the importance of time planning highlighted by Smith *et al*. (2009). As Bird (2005) suggests, it can be difficult to understand the magnitude and significance of the task of undertaking interview transcription and analysis until it is

personally undertaken and experienced. The following subsections discuss the use of content analysis and IPA to analyse the interview data.

4.6.2 Content Analysis

The interview data were first analysed using content analysis, and then further analysed using IPA. This subsection discusses the use of content analysis to analyse the interview data and reflects on the advantages and disadvantages of utilising content analysis as an analysis method. Descriptive qualitative data is concerned with the who, what and where of events or experiences, and can be effectively obtained through content analysis (Doyle, McCabe, Keogh, Brady & McCann, 2020). Content analysis also aligns well with a constructivist and interpretivist philosophical perspective and naturalistic methods (Doyle *et al*., 2020). Content analysis provides a lower level of interpretation than IPA analysis but is an effective method of analysing and presenting descriptive, contextual information within textual data such as interview transcripts (Doyle *et al*., 2020).

The process that the researcher used to carry out content analysis is shown in Figure 15. To conduct content analysis the researcher read through the transcripts line by line and identified similar units of meaning (such as recurring phrases or themes) that were raised by multiple individuals (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). This allowed the extraction of any recurring patterns, key concepts, contradictions and interesting information provided by the participants in a logical and organised way (Flowerdew and Martin, 1997). The researcher then formulated descriptive labels for the units of meaning (codes) and quantified which codes applied to each participant. The units of meaning were then grouped to into sets that belonged together to form categories (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). Once the researcher had developed a set of categories and quantified the number of participants that discussed each unit of meaning within their interviews, the researcher was then able to utilise the results to create visual representations of the descriptive data.

Read the transcripts and become familar with the data

Identify similar units of meaning within the content of the transcripts (common phrases, patterns and themes)

Formulate descriptive labels for the units of meaning (codes) and quantify which codes apply to each participant

Sort and group codes that belong together to form categories. This creates a set of descriptive categorised results that provide answers to who, what, when and where questions

Create visual representations of the descriptive results provided by the content analysis process e.g. graphs, tables and maps

Figure 15. The content analysis process utilised in this research. Adapted from Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) and Doyle *et al*. (2020).

These visual representations are presented in the form of graphs, tables and maps within the results chapters of this thesis. These visual representations of the descriptive results provided by the content analysis have assisted the researcher to present answers to who, what, when and where questions and provide clear contextual information to support the results of the IPA analysis discussed throughout the results chapters. For example, the results produced through the process of content analysis have been utilised to discuss and present

demographic information related to the participants, the means that were used by the Polish participants to find their housing in the UK and the level of satisfaction that the Polish participants felt regarding their housing.

When using qualitative content analysis, the open-ended answers and narratives that are given by the participants during data collection are subject to researcher interpretation. The subjective nature of qualitative content analysis can create issues in research as one researcher may analyse and interpret data differently from another researcher. To try to counter this issue, the researcher asked for the secondary input of other researchers at the University of Hertfordshire to assist in analysing aspects of the participant narratives, which has provided further opinions regarding the themes and meanings embedded within the results. Another issue that can be associated with qualitative thematic content analysis is a misinterpretation of what the participant was trying to say. It is possible for the researcher to misinterpret the meaning behind speech during discussions and to miss some content out – particularly if the researcher is completely reliant upon recordings when writing transcripts as recording devices can pick up background noise which can sometimes stifle what the participant has said. To ensure that an accurate understanding of what the participants were trying to convey was presented, the researcher contacted the participants post-interview when it was considered necessary to clarify ambiguities within their narratives. However, this was only possible when the participants had provided the researcher with their contact information. Following the process of carrying out content analysis, the interview data was re-analysed in-depth using IPA.

4.6.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Following the completion of the content analysis process, the interview data was manually re-analysed using IPA. IPA is underpinned by three philosophies: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Owing to the phenomenological origins of IPA, implementing IPA as a data analysis method supports the humanistic and phenomenological theoretical framework of the research design, including the epistemological focus on phenomenological inquiry. IPA is a qualitative analytical approach that focuses on the lived experiences of individuals and examines how those individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences within the context of their social worlds (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021; Smith & Nizza, 2022). IPA does not simply summarise what participants have said but attempts to interpret and make sense of human experiences from the participant's point of view (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Within the context of this research, the

lived human experiences being examined were the migration and housing experiences of Polish migrant individuals in the UK and the future aspirations of a selection of Polish nationals in the UK and in Poland. The IPA process has enabled interview extracts to be closely interpreted to illuminate the lived migration and housing experiences of the Polish participants (Fade, 2004). IPA is not usually utilised by migration researchers and is more widely used in psychological research (Eatough & Smith, 2017), but utilising IPA as a framework for analysis in migration research such as this is beneficial to researching the individual lived experiences of migrants and interpreting the meaning and significance within migrant narratives. Utilising IPA adds originality to this research and emphasises the focus on the lived migration and housing experiences of the Polish participants.

Although Smith *et al*. (2009) state that there is no set correct sample size that should be utilised in IPA research, most IPA studies use small samples or study one particular case in depth. Smith *et al*. (2009) suggest that up to six participants is a reasonable sample size for a student project and reduces the likelihood that the researcher will become overwhelmed by the amount of data generated during the data collection and analysis process. However, Smith *et al*. (2009) also state that PhD research offers more scope for flexibility and that doctoral IPA research may utilise larger sample sizes providing that there is sufficient time and reflection to provide quality analysis. The researcher acknowledges that it can be more challenging for studies with large samples to meet the commitments of IPA research than studies with small samples. However, this research has attempted to implement a relatively bold analytical approach, by utilising a combination of content analysis and IPA to analyse a large data set of 59 interviews and attempts to explore the research topic from multiple perspectives (Smith *et al*., 2009). Although this methodologically bold approach is more complex and time-consuming than conventional uses of IPA, this approach offers an innovative process of carrying out multi-perspectival IPA research on a large sample of migrant experiences and adds to the originality of this research. This research studies interview narratives provided by different sets of participants with different perspectives (Polish migrants in Luton, Polish migrants in Peterborough, Polish nationals in Poland, housing experts in Luton and housing experts in Peterborough). These five sets of participants constitute smaller samples of individuals within the total large sample of participants in this research. Each of these smaller samples offers different perspectives on the migration and housing experiences and future aspirations of Polish individuals as well as the challenges that Polish migrants experience within the housing market in Luton and Peterborough. Analysing each smaller sample of participants using IPA individually before

moving on to wider IPA analysis across the sample sets helped to make the data analysis process more manageable. Offering different perspectives on a phenomenon by interpreting the narratives of different sets of participants can provide a multi-faceted, detailed insight into the phenomenon being studied and can be viewed as form of triangulation (Smith *et al*., 2009). In IPA studies with larger samples, the level of detailed analysis may be reduced, and studying recurrent themes across cases becomes of increased importance, but the analysis maintains the characteristics of IPA research if group level themes are still illustrated using examples from particular individuals (Smith *et al*., 2009). Research using larger samples requires skill to maintain an idiographic focus on the experiences of individual participants, while also discussing connections across the wider group of participants (Smith *et al*., 2009). The results chapters of this thesis present the superordinate and subordinate themes that emerged from the IPA process and an effort has been made to illuminate the personal views and lived experiences of individual participants as well as the wider sample of participants by including extracts of the participants' interviews throughout the results chapters, and providing close analytic readings of these extracts to demonstrate how the experiences shared by each participant have been interpreted (Nizza, Farr and Smith, 2021).

The IPA Process

Although there is no standardised method of conducting IPA analysis, Smith *et al.* (2009) provide guidelines to assist researchers to carry out IPA analysis successfully, which were implemented in this research. The steps that were utilised to complete the IPA analysis of the interview data in this research are presented in Figure 16. Smith *et al.* (2009) recommend that IPA analysis should generally begin by reading and re-reading interview transcripts line-by-line and making exploratory comments, which can be descriptive, linguistic and conceptual. These comments facilitate the interpretation of meaning within the participant's narratives. The comments are formed by the researcher using both what they interpret from the transcript and their own pre-conceptions. IPA acknowledges that researcher's have their own biases and beliefs and views these as necessary for understanding and interpreting the experiences of others (Fade, 2004). Once the transcript has been read and commented on multiple times, every important aspect of the phenomenon being studied should have been commented on to highlight the essence of the phenomenon. The exploratory comments can then be re-evaluated to identify emergent themes (Smith *et al*., 2009).

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│    Read an interview    │
│        transcript       │
└─────────────────────────┘
            ↓
┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Re-read the interview │
│        transcript       │
└─────────────────────────┘
            ↓
┌─────────────────────────┐
│    Make Exploratory     │
│  Comments (Descriptive, │
│ Linguistic and Conceptual)│
└─────────────────────────┘
            ↓
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Evaluate the Exploratory│
│     Comments to form    │
│      emergent themes    │
└─────────────────────────┘
            ↓
┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Begin reading the next│
│ transcript and repeat the│
│          process        │
└─────────────────────────┘
```
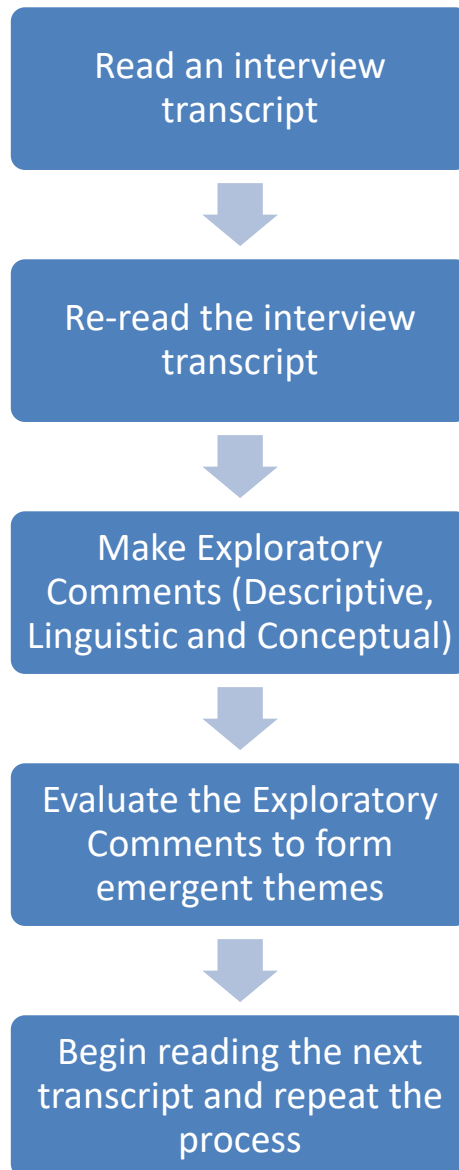
Figure 16. The IPA process utilised in this research. Adapted from Smith et al. (2009).

Smith *et al*. (2009) emphasise that the process of carrying out IPA is iterative, and that researchers may shift their relationship with the data by moving back and forth between the steps outlined to consider different ways of thinking about the data, rather than solely following the process in a one-way linear fashion. This iterative approach to the IPA process was utilised in this research. Once the process of IPA has been completed for each transcript as an independent case, the researcher can move from studying single cases to looking for patterns of convergence and divergence across cases (Smith *et al*., 2009). To achieve this the researcher searches for connections across cases, studies potential links between themes, and examines which themes are most prominent across the cases, which may result in the reorganisation and renaming of some themes (Smith *et al*., 2009). The superordinate and

subordinate themes that emerge from studying single cases and patterns across cases then form the structure and basis of discussions regarding the results of the research, highlighting shared qualities of the participants' experiences as well as unique idiosyncrasies shared by individuals (Smith *et al.* 2009). In this thesis, the researcher has attempted to construct a coherent, analytic dialogue throughout the results chapters by presenting the superordinate themes and the corresponding subordinate themes in tables, indicating which participants highlighted each theme within their narratives; and by interweaving the researchers' interpretations with interpreted extracts from the individual participants' narratives (Nizza *et al*., 2022). This is good practice in IPA research as it highlights the voices of the participants within the research and enables the reader to check the interpretations that are made (Smith *et al*., 2009).

4.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided a discussion of the methodology and methods that have formed the research design. The chapter began by outlining the purposes of the Methodology and Methods chapter and presented a visual overview of the chapter contents and the overall research design. The chapter then discussed key aspects of the research design, including the research philosophy, the research type and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that have formed the methodological structure of this thesis, as well as the data collection and data analysis methods used to complete the research. Methodological limitations have been acknowledged and discussed throughout this chapter and this section concludes the discussion of the research methodology and methods presented in chapter 4. The next chapter provides an overview of the key findings related to housing market issues in Luton and Peterborough that were revealed through the semi-structured interviews with local housing experts. Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8 will then provide an analytical discussion of the findings that emerged from the semi-structured interviews with the Polish participants in this research.

CHAPTER 5: Housing Expert Interview Results

5.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the main findings from the housing expert interviews in Luton and in Peterborough. Chapter 5 begins by providing an overview of the characteristics of the housing expert participants, such as the pseudonyms that have been used to conceal their identities, their places of work and demographic characteristics. This information is presented in section 5.1. Subsequently, section 5.2 provides a summary of the key findings related to housing market issues in Luton and Peterborough that were revealed through the semi-structured interviews with the local housing experts. Unfortunately owing to word limit constraints it was not possible to present all of the housing expert interview results within the main body of the thesis, but the full analytical discussion of these results alongside interpreted extracts from the housing expert interviews can be viewed in Appendix X if desired.

5.1 Housing Expert Characteristics

An overview of the housing expert characteristics is displayed in Table 5. which shows the alternative names that have been allocated to the housing expert participants to ensure their anonymity, as well as which case study area the housing experts were interviewed in, their places of work, their ages, their genders, and their ethnicities. The housing experts that were interviewed in Luton consisted of three local estate agents, two members of Luton Borough Council, two housing association employees, two staff members from the NOAH enterprise charity in Luton (one of which was Polish) and one Polish voluntary community worker who also acts as a cultural affairs officer and member of the Polish parish committee in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. 71.4% of the housing experts interviewed in Luton were male, 28.6% were female, two participants were Polish and the rest of the housing experts were White British. The housing experts in Luton ranged in age from thirty-one to fifty-seven, but two did not disclose their age. In contrast, the housing experts in Peterborough consisted of two local estate agents, one housing association employee and one voluntary staff member from a local charity called the Peterborough Soup Kitchen. 75% of the housing experts interviewed in Peterborough were male, 25% were female, two of the housing experts were aged 49 and two did not disclose their age. Three of the Peterborough housing experts were White British,

and one was mixed White and Asian. Multiple attempts were also made to request an interview with staff members at Peterborough City Council, but unfortunately no staff members agreed to take part in the research. The selection of the housing expert participants is discussed in subsection 4.5.2.

Case Study Area	Housing Expert Name	Place of Work	Age	Gender	Ethnicity
Luton	LHE1	Estate Agency	57	M	White British
	LHE2	Estate Agency	45	M	White British
	LHE3	Estate Agency	31	M	White British
	LHE4	Luton Borough Council	-	M	White British
	LHE5	Luton Borough Council	47	M	White British
	LHE6	Housing Association	44	F	White British
	LHE7	Housing Association	-	F	White British
	LHE8	Polish Church and NOAH Enterprise Charity	-	F	Other White (Polish)
	LHE9	NOAH Enterprise Charity	37	M	White British
	LHE10	NOAH Enterprise Charity	35	F	Other White (Polish)
Peterborough	PHE1	Housing Association	49	F	Mixed White and Asian
	PHE2	Peterborough Soup Kitchen Charity	49	M	White British
	PHE3	Estate Agency	-	M	White British
	PHE4	Estate Agency	-	M	White British

Table 5. An overview of the housing expert demographic information.

5.2 A Summary of the Main Findings from the Housing Expert Interviews

The analysis of the Housing Expert interviews suggested that both and Luton and Peterborough suffer from a lack of suitable housing, particularly a shortage of social housing, including temporary and emergency accommodation. Both localities have a severe shortage of social housing, with full or closed waiting lists for social housing spaces and a limited social housing stock. In Luton, the housing expert narratives implied that there was a shortage of houses that were large enough to accommodate families, a shortage of social housing and a shortage of affordable housing for both renters and buyers. This differed in Peterborough, as the shortage of housing in Peterborough's housing market appeared to be less broad owing to ongoing construction and development in the area (which was limited in Luton), so the shortage of suitable housing in Peterborough discussed by the housing experts was mainly in reference to a lack of social housing rather than to a shortage of suitable housing in general. Whereas it appears that Luton has a shortage of multiple forms of housing, especially affordable housing, social housing and housing that is suitable for families.

The housing experts explained that the housing issues in Luton are exacerbated owing to the 'London effect', wastage within the housing market and development constraints. It appears that Luton's close proximity to London has made Luton an attractive location for individuals and developers to rent and buy property that is comparatively cheaper in Luton than in the capital city, which has increased local property costs and has lowered the availability of affordable housing in the town. Additionally, internal migration from London is increasing demand and competition for housing spaces and is reducing the housing stock available for the population in Luton. Developers are buying up properties in Luton to take advantage of the high buy to let potential, and Luton is being used an area to absorb surplus people from London in a bid to reduce benefit expenditures and reduce housing pressures in the capital. This has resulted in increased accommodation prices, a lack of affordable housing and high competition for housing in the town, which has exacerbated supply and demand issues in Luton.

Additionally, from the housing expert interviews it appeared that the quality of housing in Luton is not always reflected in the price, and that there are substandard conditions within some rental properties that need to be improved to ensure that they are suitable for the

community. Substandard housing conditions were not discussed by the housing experts in Peterborough, suggesting that it is a more prevalent issue in Luton than in Peterborough. The Luton housing experts also discussed increasing property demands escalating the cost of living in the town, exacerbating housing and care costs faced by elderly people, and increasing homelessness caused by a lack of affordable housing in the town. In contrast, when discussing topics related to the subordinate theme of costs and affordability issues, the Peterborough housing experts discussed difficulties faced by individuals who are trying to purchase housing and get onto the property ladder, as well as a lack of funding available to build a sense of community and improve social aspects in the city.

The housing experts also highlighted that Luton's housing stock is in need of further construction and repurposing of vacant and unused land and properties to better accommodate for the large demand for housing in the area, both presently and in the event of future migration streams or an increased birth rate, which the housing experts in Luton suggested will require a relaxation of planning regulations and decreased construction limitations. Whereas in Peterborough, the housing stock appeared to be large enough to sustain the current population, and most of the housing experts suggested that the housing stock would be large enough to sustain future population growth providing that construction continued at a sustained rate to provide enough housing to meet population demands in Peterborough. There has been long-term development in Peterborough and construction has been ongoing in the city for decades, creating more housing developments over time. Whereas, in Luton, the housing experts implied that there are restrictions on construction and development which prevent the town from building a sufficient amount of housing to sustain the rate of population growth and increasing population demands for housing in the area.

In addition, the housing experts in both localities highlighted that it can be difficult for individuals in need to access temporary and emergency accommodation in Luton and Peterborough, as there are limited spaces available, individuals have to qualify for temporary or emergency housing places and can only access those places for a limited period of time. Additionally, migrants without the ability to speak English fluently may find the process of obtaining emergency accommodation more difficult than English speakers and may be in a disadvantaged position when attempting to access emergency accommodation. migrants with limited English language skills can also experience difficulties understanding their rights and documentation, which can lead to some individuals being ripped off financially

and put at a disadvantage in the housing market owing to language barriers. It was highlighted that it has become increasingly difficult to be a Polish migrant in the UK over time, both for those who continue to live and work in the UK and have experienced rising living costs over time, and for those who have unfortunately found themselves losing their employment roles, losing their accommodation or struggling to overcome personal difficulties and addictions, who will now find it increasingly more difficult to prove their eligibility to access sources of assistance and public funds.

5.3 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has presented the main findings from the analysis of the housing expert interview extracts regarding housing market issues in Luton and in Peterborough. This sets the scene for the analytical discussion of the results of the semi-structured interviews with Polish migrants within Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8. The following chapter discusses the migration motivations of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough. Chapter 7 then discusses the settlement pathways, residential choices and lived housing experiences of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough which have occurred within the context of the housing markets discussed within this chapter. Subsequently Chapter 8 discusses the future migration and settlement aspirations of the Polish participants in Luton, in Peterborough and in Poland.

CHAPTER 6: Polish Migration Motivations: Results and Discussion

6.0 Chapter Introduction

Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8 present an interpretative, analytical discussion of the results that emerged from the content analysis and IPA of the semi-structured interviews with the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough.

Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the results related to the migration motivations of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough. This includes a discussion of their motivations for migrating from Poland to the UK, as well as their motivations for migrating and settling in Luton or Peterborough.

Within Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8, the superordinate themes and the corresponding subordinate themes that emerged from the IPA process are presented in tables, and are followed by an analytical discussion of the extracts from the interview transcripts to highlight shared and distinct experiences among the participants and to demonstrate how phenomenological interpretations have developed during the analysis process. Themes are often related and should be considered as a part of the hermeneutic circle, so although themes are often discussed separately within this chapter, they will also often be discussed in relation to one another and existing research. Within the discussion of each subordinate theme, multiple participant extracts and examples of the interpretations have been included to highlight a suitable proportion of participant perceptions and lived individual experiences within each theme.

6.1 Motivations for Migrating to the UK

The superordinate themes that emerged from the Polish migrant participant narratives when discussing the factors influencing their decisions to migrate to the UK were economic push and pull factors, the influence of social relationships and desires for self-improvement, travel, and improved quality of life. The percentage of participants in Luton, in Peterborough and in Luton and Peterborough combined that discussed reasons for migrating to the UK that related to each superordinate theme is shown in Figure 17.
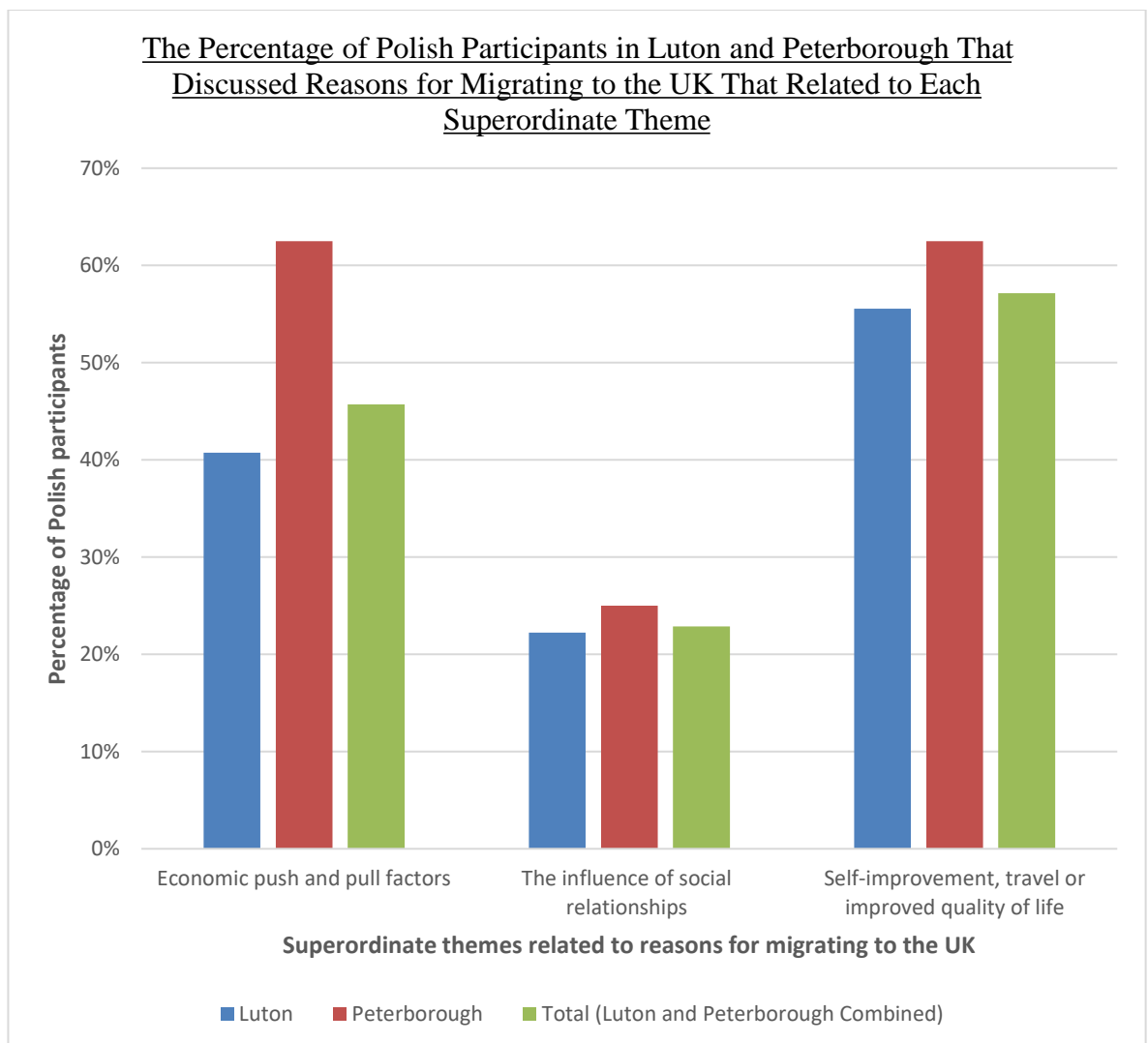
Figure 17. The Percentage of Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough that discussed reasons for migrating to the UK that related to each superordinate theme.

Figure 17 indicates that the superordinate theme of self-improvement, travel or improved quality of life was the most prevalent when studying the data from the Polish participants in Luton (56%), Peterborough (63%) and in Luton and Peterborough combined (57%),

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suggesting that overall, the subordinate themes relating to self-improvement, travel or improved quality of life were the most important factors in the migration decision making of the Polish participants across the two localities. However, when studying the data in Peterborough in isolation, an equally large proportion of the Polish participants in Peterborough (63%) discussed economic push and pull factors as their reasons for migrating to the UK, suggesting that economic factors were equally as important among the participants in Peterborough. This differed in Luton, as only 41% of the Polish participants in Luton discussed the superordinate theme of economic push and pull factors within their reasons for migrating to the UK, suggesting that economic factors may have been less important among the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough in their migration decision making processes. Similarly, a greater proportion of the Polish participants in Peterborough (25%) discussed reasons for migrating to the UK that related to the superordinate theme of the influence of social relationships than the Polish participants in Luton (22%), although this difference was much smaller. When studying the data for Luton and Peterborough combined, it is evident that themes related to self-improvement, travel or improved quality of life were the most prevalent reasons provided by the Polish participants (57%), followed by economic push and pull factors (46%) and the influence of social relationships (23%). Each superordinate theme consisted of subordinate themes, shown in Table 6.

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes
Economic push and pull factors	• Financial hardships in Poland • Migrating for work or to earn or save money
The influence of social relationships	• To join friends • To join romantic or family ties
Self-improvement, travel, or improved quality of life	• Escaping personal difficulties in Poland • Seeking a change, improved opportunities, or an improved quality of life • Migrating to study or learn • Migrating to travel and visit the UK

Table 6. The superordinate and subordinate themes related to motivations for migrating to the UK.

Although Table 6 presents the superordinate themes and the corresponding subordinate themes as separate entities, it is important to recognise that migratory decisions are often complex and difficult to categorise, and in many cases numerous factors influenced the migration decision making of the participants and there were often crossovers between the themes. Each superordinate theme and the corresponding subordinate themes are discussed

below, using tables to demonstrate which participants related to each theme, and including interview transcript extracts from a selection of participants to illuminate each theme and highlight the lived experiences of the Polish participants.

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6.1.1 Economic Push and Pull Factors

Figure 17 shows that 46% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough mentioned reasons for migrating from Poland to the UK that were related to the superordinate theme of economic push and pull factors. In Luton, 41% of the Polish respondents gave reasons for migrating that were related to economic push and pull factors, whereas in Peterborough, a greater proportion of the Polish respondents (63%) discussed economic factors as reasons for migrating to the UK. This may be reflective of the fact that more Polish migrants were interviewed in Luton than in Peterborough, providing a greater opportunity to gather a wider range of experiences in Luton. A8 migrants are frequently described as economic migrants, but the fact that less than half of the Polish participants in Luton (41%) provided reasons for migrating to the UK that were related to economic factors suggests that this term may be an oversimplification of post-2004 Polish migrants that masks the true complexity and diversity of their migration motivations.

Within the Polish participant narratives, economic push and pull factors were significant in many accounts of why they had decided to migrate to the UK. These discussions indicated that many people had chosen to migrate to the UK for the opportunity to search for employment and to earn and save better money in the UK, but they also often reflected financial difficulties in Poland such as unemployment or difficulties supporting themselves or their families; and multiple participants discussed a comparatively worse quality of life in Poland than what was available for them in the UK. For some, migrating to the UK was planned on a temporary, short-term basis to earn some money before returning to Poland to fund their studies, to buy a car or to start a business, but most of these individuals have since found that their initial short-term stays have evolved into long-term or permanent stays in the UK. For others, migrating to the UK in search of employment and better financial prospects was viewed as a more substantial and potential long-term life change to escape financial hardship in Poland and to improve their quality of life. The participants that discussed each subordinate theme that related to the superordinate theme of economic push and pull factors is shown in Table 7.

Study Area	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes	
		Financial hardship in Poland	Migrating for work or to earn or save money
Luton	Mikolaj	✔	✔
	Zuzanna	✔	✔
	Janusz		
	Marcia		
	Andrzej		
	Szymon	✔	✔
	Dawid		✔
	Eryk		
	Patrycja		
	Krzysztof		
	Henryk	✔	
	Ryszard		
	Basile		✔
	Tomasz		
	Jedrek		
	Angelica		
	Stanisław		✔
	Berta		✔
	Małgorzata		
	Milosz	✔	✔
	Lukasz		
	Kasia		
	Celestyna		
	Daria		✔
	Oskar		✔
	Tymon		
	Marek		
Peterborough	Michal		
	Ewa		
	Izabela		✔
	Grzegorz		✔
	Agnieszka		✔
	Oliwia		
	Artek		✔
	Borys	✔	

Table 7. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of economic push and pull factors.

Financial Hardship in Poland

A total of 17% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (11% of the Polish participants in Luton and 12.5% of the participants in Peterborough) discussed comparatively poorer economic conditions in Poland relative to the UK within their reasons for migrating to the UK. For instance, Henryk was a 21-year-old warehouse operative living in the High Town area of Luton. He had migrated to the UK with his brother (Ryszard) from the city of Bydgoszcz in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship in northern Poland in 2015, and his narrative suggested that he had migrated to the UK because of a low income, a difficult economic situation in Poland and the opportunity to live a better quality of life in the UK. Henryk responded:

> *'Because of the economic situation there in Poland, economy income yeah… I can live better life here than in there and here country can take care of me better than the country that, I mean the politicians and all of this'.*

This suggests that his decision to migrate to the UK was largely based on the economic and political situation in Poland, which fitted into the theme of financial hardships in Poland, but interestingly, his extract also indicates that he desired to feel taken care of by the country that he lived in, and he felt that the UK would offer him the chance to be better supported and offer him a better quality of life than what was available in Poland. When prompted he also mentioned that he wanted to move to the UK because he thought that people were nicer in the UK and because many of his friends were already living in the UK and very few of his friends remained in Poland, suggesting that social factors also played a role in his migration decision-making process; demonstrating an overlap between superordinate themes within his narrative.

Mikolaj had migrated to Luton from a town called Hnubieszow in the Lublin Voivodeship in southeast Poland. Lublin was one of six voivodeships in Poland that were categorised as regions of economic regression by Głębocki and Rogacji (2002). This sets the context of Mikolaj's migration experience as his migration decision making process was driven by unemployment and financial hardship in Poland. He commented:

> *'Place where I'm living is no, not was job ten years ago… so I move for a job I think… especially this place where I'm living because this is, eastern, eastern Poland there's service is not… oh very difficult find a job ten years ago… maybe now is ok but…'.*

This suggests that Mikolaj felt as though he was unable to find employment opportunities, not only in the town where he was living, but in the eastern part of Poland in general, demonstrating the scale of financial hardship within Poland at the time. Because of this, he decided to migrate to the UK in search of a job and better economic conditions than he had been experiencing in Poland.

Similarly, in the following extract, Borys illustrates that financial hardship and difficult economic conditions in Poland influenced him to migrate to the UK, particularly the fact that he felt unable to support his family and felt that he had no choice but to leave Poland in search of better conditions for his wife and children. He said:

> *'I wanted to protect my family because the politics situation and life in Poland was very hard… for example, you go into work yeah? I pay you for example two pounds per hour. You say it's not enough. I say, I'm your boss, this is… purely… an example, yeah? Boss say to you look outside I have for your place, two hundred people; you stay, or you're going out… you know, this two pounds is nothing for the survival. If you want to work, I'll give you two pound. If you don't want to work, going out, going to another place. So if you give, on the month working I give you two hundred quid, this is your wages… so you're taking away from this buy a little bit to eat, pay bills or doing more. And I have a wife and kids… so if you're normal, I say no I must be changing'.*

This extract illustrates that Borys was working for a very low hourly wage where he was living in Gniew in the Pomeranian voivodeship in northern Poland, equating to approximately two pounds per hour, and although he felt that this amount was too low, his employer would not change his wage and told him that if he was unhappy with the amount then he could leave and try to find a job elsewhere because there were hundreds of other

people searching for work who would take his position if he left. He was unhappy with his wage, but what appeared to trouble him the most was that after he had paid his bills and bought food to eat, there was little money left to support his family, and he implied that the amount that he earned was not enough to sustain their lives comfortably in Poland. Because of this, he decided that he had to make a change and migrated to the UK in search of better financial opportunities to support his family. Borys explained that he initially migrated to the UK alone and sent money back to his wife and children who remained in Poland while he established himself in the UK and began to build a life for them there. He filed documentation with the Home Office and when he felt as though he had established a suitable situation in the UK for his family, his wife and children joined him in England and he later had further children in the UK. His extract is interesting because although his decision to migrate to the UK could simply be labelled as economic, because he had chosen to leave behind financial difficulties in Poland in search of a new job in the UK, the essence of his account illustrates that he was most concerned about his family and their quality of their life. He explained that he left Poland so that he would be able to support his family, and after migrating, he was sending money back to Poland to support his family and did not ask them to join him in the UK until he felt that he had established a suitable situation for them in the UK. This demonstrates that although he ultimately migrated to the UK because of economic push and pull factors, his family circumstances, and his desire for a better quality of life for himself and his family were also significant motivating factors in his decision to migrate.

Migrating for work or to earn or save money

A total of 40% of the Polish respondents across the two localities (37% of the Polish participants in Luton and 50% of the Polish participants in Peterborough) said that they had migrated to the UK to find a job or to earn or save money in the UK. Although many of the participants indicated that they had migrated for employment or for an improved income in the UK, there were often crossovers between this theme and the other themes related to economic push and pull factors, for instance 33% of the participants who discussed reasons for migrating related to finding work or earning better money in the UK also discussed financial hardship in Poland as reasons for migrating. Within the participant narratives, there were also crossovers between the superordinate themes. For example, Basile discussed reasons for migrating to the UK that related to both economic push and pull factors as well as the superordinate theme of self-improvement, travel or improved quality of life. Basile

was a 26-year-old warehouse operative in Luton, and the following extract demonstrates that his primary reason for migrating to the UK from Warsaw in 2013 was to search for an improved income:

> *'The reason why I came here was for better money from job'.*

This was his main reason for migrating to the UK, but Basile also said that he wanted to change something in his life, implying that he was not satisfied with his life in Poland prior to migrating and wanted to migrate in search of a change and a new start abroad. He said:

> *'Of course I wanted to change something in my life but…first was something like I want to come here and just live here for the rest of my life, but after few months was something changed so…I want to move my girlfriend back to Poland'.*

This demonstrates that as well as having economic motivations for migrating, Basile migrated to the UK in search of a life change, which relates to the superordinate theme of self-improvement, travel or improved quality of life. The extract highlights that he had initially intended his migration to the UK to be a permanent life change, as he had planned to stay in the UK for the rest of his life. However, after a few months, Basile's viewpoint changed and at the time of the interview on the 3[rd] of July 2016, ten days after the EU referendum had taken place, he explained that he wanted to return to Poland with his girlfriend. His comment that after a few months of being in the UK something had changed implies that he was not as satisfied living in the UK as he had expected to be prior to migration and indicates that he had been having doubts about remaining in the UK for three years, within a few months of arriving in the UK. It appears that these long-term doubts about remaining in the UK were exacerbated by the EU referendum and evolved into an aspiration for return migration to Poland following the decision for Brexit. For instance, Basile later added:

> *'Now we just want to back to Poland… next Friday we will go to Poland for three weeks and we have our wedding… and after wedding we want to back to Poland…so… it's like your Brexit… I think that was problem for us because we, we had decision about back to Poland after wedding'.*

This suggests that he and his partner felt as though the UK's vote for Brexit created a dilemma for them, which ultimately pushed them to make a decision to return to Poland permanently following their wedding in Poland.

Conversely, Agnieszka had also migrated to the UK in search of an opportunity to earn money, but she had originally migrated on a short-term basis which later evolved into a long-term stay in the UK. Agnieszka lived in Peterborough and worked as a train station supervisor. She had originally migrated to the UK on a temporary basis from Tomaszow Lubelski in the Lublin voivodeship in southeast Poland in 2012 to earn money before starting her university studies in Poland, but this had progressed into a long-term stay and she had been living in Peterborough since she first arrived in 2012. Agnieszka said:

> *'To be honest, it's because umm… the first plan was just to come here for three months, just to earn some money before my university because I applied for three universities in Poland. So yeah, so…so the first plan was that one… when they accepted all of my applications, I was ready to go back and then I was like, just like, no… I'm going to stay here!'.*

This shows that her initial decision to migrate to the UK was only supposed to be temporary to earn money for three months before returning to Poland to start a university course, but that when the time came for her to return to Poland, she made the decision to remain living and working in the UK. The following extract explains her reasons for choosing to remain in the UK:

> *'To be honest I...I was feeling like more… how to say that? free in this country. Because in Poland, I'm not sure if (name of another participant) told you but people are, you know, looking at your every step, like watching you all the time… everyone (laughs)… the family, they are really judging sometimes so… yeah and here I was just feeling like no one's watching me… I have no family here, no one to judge me so…I could make my own decisions, you know? I was feeling grown-up finally, so… maybe, maybe that's why'.*

This extract suggests that although Agnieszka was initially attracted to migrate to the UK on a temporary basis owing to economic motivations, she found that her experience of migration brought her a newfound sense of independence and freedom to do whatever she wanted without the influence or judgement of family members that she had experienced whilst living in Poland. She felt as though migration had enabled her to grow up and had empowered her to gain control of her life and gain the ability to make her own decisions. She later explained that she intended to remain living in the UK and had no aspirations to return to live in Poland, suggesting that her sense of freedom and independence in the UK had transformed her initial temporary migration plans into permanent plans to remain in the UK.

Similarly, Oskar originally planned to migrate to the UK on a temporary basis to earn and save money before returning to Poland, but his short-term plans evolved into a long-term stay in the UK. When asked why he migrated to the UK, Oskar said:

> *'I think I am coming maybe three-six months to you know to job and collecting money and I want come back to Poland and open business in the Poland… How long I am in the UK?... now is seven years or eight'.*

Oskar was a 36-year-old who was unemployed in Luton at the time of the interview owing to poor health and had migrated to the UK from the city of Kielce in the Świętokrzyskie voivodeship in south-central Poland between 2007 and 2008. His extract indicates that his

primary reason for migrating to the UK was to earn and save money, providing a typical example of the superordinate theme of economic push and pull factors as motivations for migrating to the UK. Within his narrative he further explained that his motivation for earning and saving money was to fund his entrepreneurial aspirations of opening a business in Poland. He explained that his migration was initially only supposed to be temporary, for three to six months, but that he had been living in the UK for approximately eight years at the time of the interview, indicating that his short-term migration plans had evolved into a long-term stay and that he was yet to realise his goal of starting a business in Poland.

Similarly, Dawid had migrated to the UK temporarily to save up money but had remained in the UK long-term, years after he had originally intended to return to Poland. When asked why had migrated to the UK, Dawid commented:

> *'...because I want to save money for car... I come here just for the maybe half year, six months-seven months maximum but I am staying at this moment eight years (laughs)... after three months I buy car here... we saved in Poland first of all... we saved for everything we saved, with my wife now, we saved for money because we wanted to open a restaurant in Poland... but is we open here'.*

Dawid was a 31-year-old Polish restaurant owner in Luton, who had initially migrated to the UK from the town of Ruciane-Nida in northeast Poland in 2008 on a temporary basis for six to seven months to save money to buy a car in Poland when he returned. His extract suggests that his main motivation for migrating to the UK was economic owing to the pull factor of being able to make and save money in the UK so that he could afford to buy a car that he wanted. However, the extract also reveals that Dawid and his wife had a long-term aspiration to open a restaurant together and had been saving in Poland to achieve their goal prior to migrating to the UK. He explained that although he had initially only intended to migrate for six to seven months, his time in the UK had evolved into an eight-year long-term stay and he and his wife had decided to open their restaurant and fulfil their goal of becoming restaurant owners in Luton instead of returning to Poland. Similar to the experiences of Agnieszka and Oskar, Dawid's narrative indicates transient movement plans that have evolved from short-term intentions into a long-term stay. He said 'I come here just for the

maybe half year, six months – seven months maximum, but I am staying at this moment eight years' and then laughed, indicating that he found it quite humorous that his stay in the UK had been much longer than he had originally anticipated.

The narratives provided by Basile and Agnieszka indicate that although many of the Polish respondents shared experiences of initially migrating to the UK owing to economic motivations such as to find a job or to earn or save money in the UK, it is evident that their decision to migrate is often related to other factors as well, such as Basile's desire to make a life change and Agnieszka's previous aspirations to attend a university in Poland. The range of themes presented within these migrant experiences sit across different superordinate themes and indicate multiple reasons that have influenced their migratory decisions, demonstrating the complexity of migration decision making processes and supporting the suggestion that it may be too simplistic to refer to post-2004 accession migrants as purely economic migrants. Furthermore, the extracts provided by Basile, Agnieszka, Oskar and Dawid demonstrate that initial migration plans are often transient and evolve depending on how an individuals' satisfaction levels, needs and experiences change within particular locations over time.

6.1.2 The Influence of Social Relationships

Figure 17 shows that 23% of the Polish respondents in Luton and Peterborough mentioned reasons for migrating from Poland to the UK that were related to the influence of social relationships (22% of the Polish participants in Luton and 25% of the Polish participants in Peterborough). The superordinate theme of the influence of social relationships was not as significant as the other superordinate themes within this section (economic push and pull factors and self-improvement, travel, or improved quality of life), as the other themes were discussed by more participants across the two localities as factors that affected their decisions to migrate to the UK. Although the other superordinate themes were discussed more frequently as reasons for migrating to the UK, the influence of social relationships on migratory decisions was a shared theme in multiple participant narratives, and at an idiographic level, for some individuals the influence of social relationships was their sole and therefore most important reason for migrating to the UK. The participants that discussed each subordinate theme that related to the superordinate theme of the influence of social relationships is shown in Table 8.

Study Area	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes	
		Migrating to join friends	Migrating to join romantic or family ties
Luton	Mikolaj		
	Zuzanna		
	Janusz		
	Marcia		
	Andrzej		
	Szymon		
	Dawid		
	Eryk		
	Patrycja		✔
	Krzysztof		
	Henryk	✔	
	Ryszard	✔	
	Basile		
	Tomasz		
	Jedrek		
	Angelica		✔
	Stanisław		
	Berta		
	Małgorzata		✔
	Milosz		
	Lukasz		
	Kasia		
	Celestyna		
	Daria		
	Oskar		
	Tymon		
	Marek	✔	
Peterborough	Michal		
	Ewa		✔
	Izabela		
	Grzegorz		
	Agnieszka		
	Oliwia		✔
	Artek		
	Borys		

Table 8. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of the influence of social relationships.

The narratives revealed that social ties influenced the decision for multiple Polish participants to migrate to the UK. Some of these participants had decided to migrate to the UK to join their friends who had previously migrated and were already living there. Others had family members or partners living in the UK and had decided to migrate to join them.

Also interestingly, one participant decided to migrate to the UK in search of love or romance, as she had decided to migrate to meet a Polish man that she had been talking to and had fallen in love with online. The extracts provided indicate that social relationships have affected the migration decisions of some Polish participants in this study, however it is evident that other superordinate themes were discussed more frequently than the influence of social relationships, and section 6.2 indicates that opportunities for reunification with social ties appears to have had a greater influence on decisions to move to and settle in Luton and Peterborough specifically, rather than on decisions to migrate to the UK in general.

Migrating to Join Friends

None of the participants in Peterborough discussed reasons for migrating to the UK related to this subordinate theme, but 11% of the Polish participants in Luton (representing 8.6% of Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough) said that they had migrated to the UK because they had friends who were already living in the UK. Of those participants, Ryszard, a 27-year-old warehouse operative in Luton who migrated to the UK in 2015 from Bydgoszcz in northern Poland said that he had migrated to the UK because he already had friends living in Luton. Similarly, his brother Henryk also discussed his friends as a factor in his decision to migrate to the UK, along with financial hardship in Poland and the opportunity to have a better life in the UK than in Poland. For instance, Henryk said:

> *'...people are more nice here, nicer... and I got more friends here, most of my friends moved here... and there is no one left'.*

Henryk's narrative reveals that one of his reasons for migrating to the UK was because most of his friends had already migrated to the UK and he had no friends left in his city in Poland. This implies that Henryk felt as though he had lost his social connections in Poland and chose to follow his friends to the UK to maintain his friendships and social connections. This is suggestive of chain migration and highlights a desire to maintain social relationships as a reason for migrating to the UK.

Marek was a 33-year-old general shop assistant who also worked as a Polish language teacher online and at a Polish Saturday school in Luton. He migrated to the UK in 2006 from the city of Świdnica near Wrocław in the Lower Silesian voivodeship of southwest Poland. The following extract reveals that after a period of personal distress related to difficulties passing his university studies in Poland and losing out on a promotion at work, Marek sought a break from his life in Poland and sought solace with his friends who had previously migrated to the UK and invited him to come to the UK and stay with them.

'Because of them (his friends). Because of them to be honest and I was working hard in Poland and… I was studying and working at the same time and I was not promoted at work. And I had some troubles at…troubles at my uni, so I decided that I needed a break, suddenly I needed a break. And they invited me here, so I just took that opportunity and came…. I was studying and I was working in… a company something like W H Smith… but it was in Poland and I wanted to be a manager. But the main manager nominated somebody else and I was already dedicated to that job. And I didn't study enough to pass my exams… So I didn't pass my exams, and I was not promoted, and I was frustrated… And that opportunity appeared out of the blue and I just…took it'.

This indicates that Marek's friends were his primary reason for deciding to migrate to the UK, but that he had also been influenced by personal hardships that he was facing in Poland such as failing his university examinations and being overlooked for a promotion at work. It appears that Marek was frustrated with his life in Poland and felt as though he needed a break, so when his friends offered him an opportunity to join them in the UK, he decided to take it and move to the UK. This demonstrates the influence of social relationships on migration, and also highlights the potential spontaneity in migration decisions as Marek described the opportunity to migrate to the UK with his friends as an opportunity that *'came out of the blue'* and said that he *'just took it'*, suggesting that the opportunity to migrate was unexpected and came at a time when he was not particularly happy with his life in Poland, and so he took the opportunity to move to the UK with his friends. Marek also said:

> *'They also could support me in a lingual way because I didn't speak English quite good… so I felt more comfortable that I had somebody…somebody with me'.*

This extract explains that his friends helped him to learn English and provided him with a sense of comfort in the UK as he had migrated to a place where he already knew some people and had people to support him linguistically when he needed it. He knew some English because he had learnt English at school in Poland, but he could not speak English fluently when he first migrated to the UK and said that he found himself translating '*word by word or sentence or sentence'* and found it difficult to express what he wanted to, so he valued the linguistic support of his friends when he first arrived in the UK. This highlights that social relationships not only act as pull factors which can influence migration decision making processes but can also act as important support mechanisms after arrival.

Migrating to Join Romantic or Family Ties

A further 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (14.3% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) discussed reasons for migrating to the UK related to the subordinate theme of joining romantic or family ties. The participants who indicated that they had migrated to join romantic or family ties were female, and their reasoning varied from wanting to continue the spark of an online romance in person in England, wanting to join their husbands in the UK, migrating with a partner who had a desire to move to the UK, or migrating to join family members who had already migrated to the UK. Some of these responses support the literature suggestion that female migrants often migrate to join their spouses who have previously migrated. However, this was not a dominant trend among the female participants as 37% of the Polish participants across both localities were female and only two of those participants had migrated to the UK to join their husbands. As well as expressing reasons for migrating related to joining romantic or family social ties, a theme of transnational social relationships emanated throughout the transcript extracts as it became evident that international separation from social ties was a shared experience by multiple Polish participants across the localities during their migration experiences. For example, Angelica said:

Angelica was a 36-year-old Polish warehouse operative in Luton who had migrated to the UK from the city of Szczecin in northwest Poland. Her extract shows that her husband had migrated to the UK before her and had been living in Birmingham. She later decided to follow him with their daughter and they all lived in Birmingham together when she first migrated to the UK before they all eventually moved to Westbury Park in London and later moved to Luton. Her extract indicates that her primary reason for migrating to the UK was to join her husband, and it also highlights the fact that her and her daughter were geographically separated from her husband and that she and her husband were taking part in a long-distance transnational relationship prior to her decision to migrate to join her husband in the UK.

From a differing perspective, Patrycja had decided to migrate to the UK to meet a man that she had met online and had formed an online romance with. She was working as an office cleaner and as a cashier in a Polish money transfer company in Luton and had migrated to the UK from Stalowa Wola in the Subcarpathian voivodeship of southeast Poland in 2008. Patrycja had formed a romantic relationship with a man online and had decided to take it further by moving to the UK temporarily for three months to meet him in person. This is similar to Angelica's experience in that Patrycja intended to join a social tie in the UK to end the geographical separation between them, however, Angelica and her partner were married and Patrycja's transnational relationship with her online partner was still in the early stages when she decided to migrate to the UK. The following extracts from Patrycja's narrative indicate that she found it quite humorous that she had only intended to stay in England for three months but had been living in England for eight years at the time of the interview:

> *'Ahh that was quite funny situation, first of all I was quite curious how it looks like… in England and another thing I fall in love with someone… A Polish guy which already been here…that's why I came here just for three months, and uh I was supposed to go back after three months but I've stayed for eight years now so (laughs)'.*

When asked further about whether she had moved to the UK to be with the man that she had fallen in love with online Patrycja said:

> *'Err well not really, I just came here, we didn't met err because been in different part, so that was quite complicated… I didn't think about just coming here just to earn money or something like that, no. In the beginning. Later on I changed my mind… I stayed here.. that was quite hard three months, the first few months but I start to really enjoy living in England… and because I finished my studies in Poland… well actually I broken it, I didn't finish completely so I decide to come Luton… Because one of, one friend of mine at that time lived here… and helped me to find a job… and I am still'.*

Patrycja appeared to reflect on her decision to migrate to the UK to meet a Polish man who she had fallen in love with online in a humorous way, labelling it as *'quite a funny situation'*, perhaps because she did not ever meet the man in person after arriving in the UK. However, from studying her narrative, it is believed that Patrycja was suggesting that her reason for migrating to the UK was *'quite a funny situation'* as it was unusual and different compared to the reasons for migrating to the UK that would be more commonly provided by others. This interpretation was reinforced by her statement: *'I didn't think about just coming here just to earn money or something like that, no. In the beginning. Later on I changed my mind'*. This suggests that she believes that most Polish people migrated to the UK for economic reasons, but that for her, money was not a motivating factor in her initial decision to migrate and did not become important to her until later in her migration experience, as she found the first three months of living in England in Harlow and Newcastle financially difficult and moved to Luton because a friend lived there and helped her to find a job in the town. Instead, Patrycja decided to migrate to the UK because of the influence of the romantic relationship

that she had formed online and because of her curiosity about what England would look like. Her initial plan for a temporary stay had evolved into long-term residency in the UK over time and at the time of interview she intended to remain in England indefinitely.

In contrast to the other examples above, Ewa had chosen to migrate to the UK with her partner when he decided to leave Poland to move to the UK. Ewa's narrative revealed her partners shifting satisfaction levels and his history of migration and return migration between the UK and Poland. The following extract demonstrates transnational elements as not only did her partner move from Poland to the UK, then from the UK back to Poland and then returned from Poland back to the UK again, demonstrating multiple transnational movements and double return migration (White, 2014), but it also shows how their relationship developed across transnational settings. For example, Ewa and her partner were both born in Poland, and although they first met in London, they spent the first couple of years of their relationship in Poland while Ewa completed her studies, before deciding to migrate to the UK together.

> *'Umm… it's quite complicated because my boyfriend used to be…in the UK and he just umm…he just decided he doesn't like it and he went back to Poland to find a wife and he met me in London, and he been in Poland for two years and he was waiting for me to finish studies and he decided to move back to the UK and he took me with him so I just.. I just finished studies and yes'.*

Ewa was a 24-year-old insurance claim consultant in Peterborough who had migrated to the UK from Katowice in the Silesian voivodeship of southern Poland. In another part of her interview, Ewa revealed that she had always wanted to migrate to the UK, suggesting that migration to the UK was viewed as a long-term or even life-long aspiration. However, the extract from her narrative above indicates that she migrated to the UK with her partner because he decided to migrate and she said: 'he took me with him'. This suggests that Ewa viewed her role in the migration decision making process as passive, as if it was somewhat out of her control and was predominately decided by her partner. The extract demonstrates the superordinate theme of the influence of social relationships on decisions to migrate in multiple ways. For example, Ewa indicated that her boyfriend had previously decided to return to Poland because he was unsatisfied in England and because he wanted to find a wife in Poland, suggesting that he was influenced to return to Poland by the possibility of forming

a romantic relationship and his desire for marriage. Additionally, Ewa indicated that when they were both living in Poland her boyfriend delayed his plans to migrate to the UK until she had finished her studies, demonstrating that he took her studies and his relationship with her into consideration when making his migration decisions and chose to put his migration plans on hold until she was able to join him to migrate to the UK together. Finally, it is evident that because her partner wanted to return to the UK, Ewa chose to migrate with him and they continued their relationship in the UK. This highlights that individuals consider their partners' desires and lives when making migration decisions, conveying the influence of social relationships on migratory decision-making processes.

Oliwia also conveyed the influence of social relationships within her reasoning for migrating to the UK, as the following extract demonstrates that she had chosen to migrate to join family members who had already migrated to the UK.

> *'Umm because of my family! ... my brother was here first. So he left in 2006, he came here in 2006. Then my mum moved here. She came back to Poland for a few months, and then she decided she can't live in Poland anymore… so she went back to England and after a few months I just leave everything there and I came after them'.*

Oliwia was a 31-year-old financial advisor in Peterborough who had also migrated to the UK from Katowice in Poland. She had chosen to migrate to the UK in 2008 to join her brother and her mother who had previously migrated to the UK and were living in Peterborough. This again highlights transnational separation of social ties across borders and indicates that she had decided to migrate to the UK to remove this separation and join her family members who were already living in Peterborough. Oliwia's narrative suggests that her brother migrated to the UK in 2006 and was later followed by her mother who joined him in the UK. Oliwia suggested that her mother experienced some doubts about living in the UK after migrating, so her mother decided to return to Poland and lived there for a few months before realising that she did not want to live in Poland anymore, so she returned to England again. This suggests that similar to Ewa's partner above, Oliwia's mother experienced shifting satisfaction levels and had also engaged in double return migration (White, 2014). Furthermore, Oliwia's narrative highlights the influence of social ties in her

own migration decision making process and indicates that multiple members of her family had migrated to the UK over time in a pattern of chain migration.

6.1.3 Self-improvement, Travel, or an Improved Quality of Life

Figure 17 shows that 57% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (representing 56% of the Polish participants in Luton and 63% of the Polish participants in Peterborough) discussed reasons for migrating to the UK related to the superordinate theme of self-improvement, travel, or an improved quality of life. This superordinate theme was discussed by a greater number of Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough combined than the other superordinate themes within this chapter, and therefore appeared to be the most significant superordinate theme in the migration decision making process of the Polish participants in this study. Within this superordinate theme, four subordinate themes were present including: escaping personal difficulties in Poland; seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life; migrating to study or learn; and migrating to travel or visit England. The participants that discussed each subordinate theme that related to the superordinate theme of self-improvement, travel, or an improved quality of life is shown in Table 9.

Study Area	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes			
		Escaping personal difficulties in Poland	Seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life	Migrating to study or learn	Migrating to travel and visit the UK
Luton	Mikolaj				
	Zuzanna				
	Janusz		✔	✔	
	Marcia		✔	✔	
	Andrzej	✔		✔	
	Szymon				
	Dawid				
	Eryk			✔	
	Patrycja				✔
	Krzysztof			✔	
	Henryk		✔		
	Ryszard				
	Basile		✔		
	Tomasz		✔		
	Jedrek		✔		✔
	Angelica				
	Stanisław				
	Berta				
	Małgorzata				
	Milosz	✔		✔	
	Lukasz		✔	✔	
	Kasia				✔
	Celestyna				
	Daria				
	Oskar				
	Tymon	✔			
	Marek	✔	✔		
Peterborough	Michal	✔	✔		
	Ewa				✔
	Izabela	✔			
	Grzegorz		✔		✔
	Agnieszka				
	Oliwia				
	Artek		✔		✔
	Borys		✔		

Table 9. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of self-improvement, travel, or improved quality of life.

Escaping Personal Difficulties in Poland

17% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (15% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) discussed reasons for migrating to the UK related to the subordinate theme of escaping personal difficulties. These personal difficulties varied in nature as some participants migrated to the UK owing to social difficulties including marital and familial issues, whereas others migrated owing to difficulties with their education or financial situations. Additionally, one participant, Andrzej, migrated to the UK to complete his university studies and to avoid being drafted into the army in Poland and another participant, Tymon, faced a five-year prison sentence for fraud in Poland and had migrated to the UK to avoid his sentence.

Marek's extract, which is also shown and discussed on pages 127-128, highlighted that he had migrated to the UK to join his friends, but also revealed that he had experienced personal difficulties in Poland such as failed university examinations and being overlooked for a promotion at work. His narrative suggested that these factors had contributed to him feeling unsatisfied with his life in Poland and having a desire to take a break, and so he made a life change by migrating to join his friends in the UK. Therefore, Marek's narrative related to multiple subordinate themes within this chapter – migrating to join friends, escaping personal difficulties in Poland, and seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life.

Additionally, Milosz discussed personal problems in Poland within his reasoning for migrating to the UK. Milosz was a warehouse operative in Luton who had migrated to the UK from the city of Częstochowa in the Silesian voivodeship in southern Poland. He explained that he had migrated to the UK because of family and financial problems in Poland:

> *'Mmm family problems… money problems… Job exactly… and um English learn… yes that's important for me'.*

Milosz's extract reveals that multiple factors influenced his migration decision making process such as personal difficulties related to his family and financial situation, which included his need to find employment. Additionally, his extract reveals that he placed an

importance upon learning English, suggesting that he also chose to migrate to the UK to improve his English language skills, which aligns with the subordinate theme of migrating to study or learn, indicating an example of a crossover between multiple subordinate themes.

Similarly, Izabela had also faced personal difficulties in Poland which resulted in her decision to migrate to the UK. She was a 35-year-old shop owner in Peterborough who had migrated to the UK from Darłowo in the West-Pomeranian voivodeship in northwest Poland in 2003. When asked why she decided to migrate to the UK, Izabela said:

> *'I tried to finish my school in Poland so I need some extra money. Because my dad had the business and got bankrupt, so I decided to come and make some money to finish my…studies'.*

By focusing on the phrase '*I decided to come and make some money'* within this extract Izabela's reasoning for migrating to the UK could simply be categorised as being economic, but by studying her narrative in greater depth using IPA the extract suggests that Izabela's decision to migrate was mostly influenced by her desire to continue her studies and to overcome the personal challenge of funding her education in Poland. Izabela was facing a difficult situation whereby she wanted to complete her studies in Poland but could not afford to continue studying after her father's business went bankrupt and he was unable to support her education costs. Therefore, she made the decision to migrate to the UK to try to overcome this problem by earning enough money in the UK to cover the costs of her education in Poland. She explained that after she had earned enough money in the UK to fund her education she engaged in a transnational lifestyle travelling between Poland and the UK to complete her studies in Poland whilst living and working in Peterborough, and had since remained living in the UK since 2003.

In addition, Andrzej's motivation for migrating to the UK was unique among the Polish participants in this study, but was idiographically interesting and related to the theme of escaping personal difficulties in Poland. Andrzej was a 30-year-old forklift driver in Luton who had migrated to the UK from Kolno in the Podlasie voivodeship in northeast Poland between 2005 and 2006. His extract revealed that he had decided to migrate to the UK because if he had remained in Poland then he faced being conscripted into Poland's army to complete a period of national service.

Andrzej said:

> *'I wanted to study here and…I hadn't finished University in Poland and because I hadn't finished University in Poland…the national service wanted me to join them so I didn't want to join the army and I wanted to finish my degree, so I came over and started studying in the UK'.*

This extract reveals that whilst Andrzej was completing a university in degree in Poland, he had not been required to carry out his national service requirement to join the army in Poland. However, as he had not been successful in completing his university degree in Poland and as he was only 19 or 20 in 2005/2006 before he migrated, and at that time all males aged 18-28 were required to serve nine months national service in Poland, the army had conscripted him to complete national service (Lewis, 2007). Andrzej was then faced with a difficult personal decision to either remain in Poland to complete national service, or to migrate abroad. He explained that he did not want to join the army and wanted to migrate to complete a degree in the UK, so he decided to migrate to the UK to avoid being forced to carry out national service in Poland and to begin studying in the UK. This extract demonstrates that it is not only the economic situation in Poland that can affect migration decisions, but that political conditions in Poland have also created personal difficulties and affected the migratory decisions of some Polish individuals such as Andrzej. According to Lewis (2007), thousands of young Polish men migrated to the UK between 2004 and 2007 to avoid being conscripted into Poland's army, and if they failed to alert the army before leaving the country for longer than two months, then they were classed as being absent without leave and were eligible to face legal consequences such as being stripped of their Polish citizenship or facing three years in prison if they returned to Poland. Although only Andrzej highlighted conscription as his reason for migrating within this research, it is likely that migrating to the UK to avoid being drafted into the army was a shared experience among many young male Polish migrants during the period between 2004 and 2009 as it was a national requirement for all males aged 18-28 who were not studying to serve nine months national service in Poland until 2009 when conscription ended in Poland (Osipovič, 2010).

Seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life

A total of 34% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (30% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough) discussed reasons for migrating to the UK related to the subordinate theme of seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life. The narratives indicated that many of the participants felt unsatisfied or unfulfilled in Poland and wanted to migrate to the UK to make a change or take a break from their lives in Poland in search of a better quality of life and improved opportunities in the UK.

For example, Jedrek said that he had migrated to the UK to find a better life after he had completed his high school education in Poland. Jedrek was a 28-year-old ramp agent at Luton Airport who had migrated to the UK from the village of Wielgie in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship in north-central Poland in 2007. He explained that he had migrated to the UK to find a better life and believed that his reasoning for migrating to the UK would be shared by most other Polish migrants as well. He said:

> *'It's going to be same answer for like everyone… to try (to) find a better life… that's what I think… I just finished the high school… and I decide (to) come for… (a) holiday for (a) few months and have a look around but now its just like 9 years… already'.*

This extract conveys Jedrek's desire to search for a better life for himself in the UK after finishing his high school education in Poland. The choice of the words *'to find a better life'* within his narrative suggests that Jedrek was unsatisfied with his life in Poland prior to migrating, and that he desired more and migrated in search of an improved life after completing his studies in Poland.

Similarly, Tomasz said that he had migrated to the UK to seek improved opportunities for personal growth and career progression opportunities. Tomasz was a 38-year-old pushback driver at Luton Airport who also ran a limited company and was involved in the Polonia Polish Community Group in Luton. He had migrated to the UK from Lublin in southeast Poland in 2008 and he and his fiancé had migrated to the UK in search of career progression opportunities which they did not feel were available to them in Poland. Tomasz said:

> *'Well um for the opportunities really…we moved together; with my fiancé and we decided to come here and we had quite good jobs in Poland…but we decided to move because we… felt that we won't grow up too much because there's like, we can call in, in Polish err like, like a ceiling, something so you cannot jump out of whatever you actually you do… so we decided rather than go to Kraków, Warsaw or bigger cities in Poland… we decided to move to London… yeah that was our idea… to get better opportunities in life… it wasn't actually about money it was more about the chance to…grow'.*

Tomasz's extract and his choice of the words: *'we felt that we won't grow'*, *'ceiling'* and *'cannot jump out'* highlight that he felt trapped within his employment position in Poland and that he did not feel as though there were any opportunities for career progression or self-growth within his employment in Poland. The extract also reveals that he and his fiancé had considered migrating to larger cities in Poland, but had decided to migrate to London instead because they believed that moving to London would enable them to access better opportunities in life. This clearly relates to the subordinate theme of seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life, and although Tomasz's reasoning could be interpreted as being economic, his phrasing that his decision to migrate *'wasn't actually about the money, it was more about the chance to… grow'* emphasises that his decision to migrate to the UK was mostly influenced by the potential to access improved opportunities for self-growth and career progression in the UK rather than by financial incentives.

Michal's reasons for migrating to the UK also provided a useful example of this subordinate theme as he migrated to make a change in his life after his relationship with his wife ended in Poland. Michal migrated to the UK from Kraków in the Lesser Poland voivodeship in southern Poland in 2005 and at the time of the interview he was 51 years old, living in Peterborough and working as a coordinator in a Tesco distribution centre. When asked why he had migrated to the UK, Michal said:

> *'Err personal reasons. So my, my marriage was collapsed yeah? And I had to change something in my life… and I found and asked Tesco. They, they needed people to work in England, on the Polish website yeah? I sent an email and they called me back after two minutes.. and I had appointment next week. And after two weeks I was here'.*

The extract from Michal's narrative above suggests that his marriage breakdown had led him to feel that he needed to make a change in his life, and so he searched for employment opportunities online through a Polish website and discovered an opportunity to migrate to the UK to work for Tesco. He took the chance to make a change in his life and applied for the role, and it seems as though he was rapidly contacted by Tesco and interviewed before being offered the job and migrating to the UK. Within only two weeks of seeing the role advertised online, Michal had migrated to the UK to begin working for Tesco in a distribution centre, demonstrating the speed at which migration decisions can sometimes be made. In Michal's case it seems as though he wanted to change his life quickly after the breakdown of his marriage, so in this case, perhaps he saw the opportunity to migrate to the UK and to start a new job role as an opportunity to escape from his personal problems in Poland and to make a fresh start in the UK. When the researcher highlighted the speed of his migration process, Michal said:

> *Yes… maybe it's good because more time to thinking... maybe I couldn't decide to move. So now is you know the time so I just decided to move… and I am here'.*

This statement is interesting as Michal reflected on his rapid migration process and suggested that the spontaneity of his decision to apply for the job and the speed at which he was offered an interview and the role in the UK was beneficial for him, because if he had had more time to think about the decision, then he may have chosen not to move. This implies that his decision to migrate to the UK was quite impulsive and suggests that at that time he felt eager to make a change in his life, did not want to think too much about whether it was a good decision and accepted the rapid speed of the opportunity to migrate to the UK to have a fresh start and leave his personal marital problems behind in Poland. Furthermore, the fact that he viewed the lack of time to think his migration decision through as positive, as it avoided the

possibility of talking himself out of moving, suggests that he now felt as though migrating to the UK was the correct decision for him and that he reflected on his decision to migrate as a positive change in his life.

Each of these examples demonstrate the subordinate theme of seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life in the UK and indicate that some participants migrated to the UK to take a break from their lives in Poland or make a fresh start abroad to find a better quality of life.

To Study or Learn

In Luton, 26% of the Polish participants discussed reasons for migrating to the UK related to a desire to study or learn, whereas none of the participants in Peterborough discussed this theme within their accounts of their motivations for migrating to the UK. This is likely to be owing to the fact that Luton is home to the University of Bedfordshire, where multiple Polish participants in Luton had chosen to study, whereas Peterborough contains the University Centre Peterborough (UCP) which was established in 2007, is partnered with Anglia Ruskin University and approved by the Open University and is a relatively new, smaller and less well known university than other higher education institutions in the UK such as the University of Bedfordshire (University Centre Peterborough, 2021).

As discussed on pages 135-136, Milosz mentioned his desire to learn English as one of his reasons for migrating to the UK. This is an example of the subordinate theme of migrating to study or learn, but differed from the experiences of the other six Polish participants who discussed this theme as the others all said that they had migrated to the UK to study at UK universities.

Of those six Polish participants, five had migrated to the UK to study at the University of Bedfordshire in Luton and the remaining Polish participant, Lukasz, had migrated to the UK to study at a University in Edinburgh. Lukasz was a 31-year-old case coordinator at the Red Cross in Luton. He had migrated to the UK in 2006 from Pila in the Greater Poland voivodeship in northwest Poland, and although he was living in Luton at the time of the interview, he had originally migrated to Edinburgh to study at a university there.

When asked about his migration motivations, Lukasz said:

> *'The deciding factor was that I probably was more likely to support myself while studying in University. In Poland I didn't have that opportunity… I didn't have much of a choice when to go, where to go to University. I thought I had bigger changes in the UK to actually study'.*

Drawing similarities to some of the descriptions given within the economic reasons for migrating to the UK, this extract suggests that Lukasz's migratory decision was influenced by a lack of opportunities and difficult circumstances in Poland compared to the opportunities that he felt were available to him in the UK following Poland's accession to the EU. Lukasz's narrative implies that he felt as though his university options were limited in Poland and that he would have found it harder to support himself financially during his studies if he had remained in Poland to study at a Polish university. In contrast, Lukasz felt that the UK offered him a greater choice of universities to attend and a better chance of being able to support himself financially while completing his studies. This suggests that although Lukasz's primary motivation for migrating to the UK was to study at a UK university, other subordinate themes also influenced his migration decision process, such as economic push and pull factors and seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life.

Similarly, Janusz said:

> *'The main reason was to come and get a degree. Education…lifestyle choice as well I guess, maybe better opportunities after uni'.*

Janusz was a 29-year-old cabin crew member at Luton Airport and had migrated to the UK from Wrocław in the Lower Silesian voivodeship in southwest Poland in 2007. Although his response above was quite brief compared to the answer provided by Lukasz, Janusz's extract also highlights the subordinate themes of migrating to the UK to study or learn and seeking change, improved opportunities or a better life. His extract demonstrates that his primary motivation for migrating to the UK was to obtain a degree at a UK university, and after migrating he completed a degree at the University of Bedfordshire. The extract also reveals

that Janusz's migratory decision was influenced by secondary factors including greater choices and improved opportunities after graduation in the UK than what he felt would have been available to him in Poland.

Krzysztof also provided a useful example of the subordinate theme of migrating to the UK to study or learn. Krzysztof was a 30-year-old business development manager in Luton who had migrated to the UK from Zamość in the Lublin voivodeship in southeast Poland in 2005. When asked why he had decided to migrate to the UK, Krzysztof said:

> *'I came here to study, basically I finished high school and I just had a well big think what I want to do, I actually been in the UK in 2001 I think as like a school trip…and to be fair I have heard that you can come here and study as well so I thought it's a good idea'.*

This indicates that his decision to migrate was partly owing to aspirations to study but was also influenced by a sense of familiarity with the UK following a school trip to the UK in the past. His extract also suggests that Krzysztof initially felt unsure about what to do next after finishing his high school education in Poland and that he viewed migrating to the UK to study further as a beneficial next step in life. Within his extract, Krzysztof mentioned that he had heard that it was possible to come to the UK to study, suggesting that the idea of migrating to the UK to enter higher education was being communicated to or among young people in Poland, which influenced his decision to migrate to the UK to study at a UK university.

This was further supported by Marcia who indicated that she had been influenced to migrate to the UK to study because the University of Bedfordshire did a tour at her university in Poland to offer Polish students the opportunity to study in Luton. When asked why she had decided to migrate to the UK, Marcia said:

> *'I was, I suppose getting bored of life in Poland, because I wasn't raised in Poland I only lived there for five years so Polish isn't my first language, um and the University of Bedfordshire did a tour at my university where I was studying English and they offered us studies here so I passed all of the exams and I came here'.*

This indicates that the University of Bedfordshire has played a role in encouraging young Polish people to migrate to Luton by advertising their higher education courses in Poland, which suggests that there is likely to be an established Polish international student and alumni community within Luton's population, including some of the participants of this research. Like Janusz, Marcia had also migrated to the UK from Wrocław in 2007 and was working as a Research Administrator at the University of Bedfordshire. Her extract indicates that she had felt unsatisfied and bored living in Poland and had a desire to move elsewhere and find more excitement in life. She was then presented with an opportunity to migrate to the UK to study in Luton and she completed the necessary exams to migrate and enrol at the University of Bedfordshire. Marcia's extract is an effective example of the subordinate theme of migrating to the UK to study or learn as well as the subordinate theme of seeking a change, improved opportunities or a better life.

Three out of the seven Polish participants who discussed migration motivations that related to the theme of migrating to study or learn also discussed motivations that related to the theme of seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life. Additionally, two out of the seven participants who discussed migration motivations that related to the theme of migrating to study or learn also discussed motivations that related to the subordinate theme of escaping personal difficulties in Poland, indicating a crossover between themes and multiple migration motivations within the Polish participant narratives.

Migrating to Travel and Visit the UK

In total 17% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough (11% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough) discussed reasons for migrating to the UK related to the subordinate theme of migrating to travel and visit the UK.

As mentioned on pages 129-131, one of the reasons provided by Patrycja for her decision to migrate to the UK was her curiosity to see and experience what England looked like as she said: '*first of all I was quite curious how it looks like… in England',* demonstrating that she had a desire to visit the UK which conveys the subordinate theme of migrating to travel and visit and the UK. Additionally, Jedrek provides another example of this subordinate theme as he initially migrated to the UK for a holiday for a few months, which had evolved into a long-term nine year stay in Luton. Jedrek's extract is shown on page 138 and includes the phrase:

> *'I decide (to) come for… (a) holiday for (a) few months and have a look around but now it's just like nine years… already'.*

This phrase indicates that Jedrek initially only intended his migration to the UK to be temporary but that it had evolved into a long-term stay. When asked why he had decided to stay in the UK for longer than a few months, Jedrek said:

> *'I (was) living with (my) parents when I was in Poland… and when I come here, I never work in Poland so I start first job was here.. so it was like a shock… so then, I grow up so quickly you know to become to be man…and I think that's quite interesting for me, it's alright for me I think'.*

This suggests that migrating to the UK provided Jedrek with a newfound sense of independence as he had to work and provide for himself in another country away from his parents. Jedrek described this as *'a shock'* suggesting that the initial experience of migrating, starting work, living in a new country, and supporting himself was surprising and new to him. He also described his experience of migrating as though it was a catalyst, speeding up his process of growing up and becoming a man. He said that he 'grew up so quickly' and described the process as interesting for him, suggesting that although it may have initially been a shock for him to have to work and support and himself, and although he initially only intended his stay in the UK to be temporary, he eventually became accustomed to his new sense of independence, found employment in the UK and enjoyed feeling as though he had become a self-sufficient adult, so he decided to remain in the UK longer.

Similarly, Kasia had originally only planned to visit the UK for short-term, one-year period, which later evolved into a long-term stay. Kasia was a 35-year-old Polish warehouse operative in Houghton Regis, near Luton in Bedfordshire. She had migrated to the UK from Pionki in the Masovian voivodeship in Central Poland in 2006 and when asked why she had decided to migrate to the UK, Kasia said:

'Why? (laughs) er this was a trip with my friend from er university… and er move like came here only for one year and back to Poland and to er finish there at the university and… I stayed here (laughs) and I'm here ten years now'.

Kasia's decision to migrate to the UK to take a trip with a friend from her university in Poland is an effective example of the subordinate theme of migrating to travel and visit the UK. Kasia's extract indicates that she was studying at a university in Poland and had decided to take a gap year to come to the UK with a friend because her friends brother was already living in the UK, in Luton. Her stay in the UK was only supposed to be for a one-year gap year in between her studies in Poland, but she later explained that after the year had finished she had decided to remain living in the UK and to fly between the UK and Poland every weekend to complete the final year of her university studies in Poland. She completed her degree in Poland and remained living in the UK, and at the time of the interview Kasia had been living in the UK for ten years. Her experience is a useful example of this subordinate theme and is also an interesting example of a transnational lifestyle as she frequently flew back and forth between the UK and Poland to complete her studies. Kasia's experience is also an effective example of how initial short-term plans can evolve into long-term migratory movements.

Another example of this subordinate theme was provided by Artek, who was a 42-year-old insurance advisor in Peterborough and was also involved in organising charity events in Cambridgeshire and the East of England to raise money to help children in need in Poland. He migrated to the UK from Szczecin in northwest Poland in 2004. Artek explained that he previously had good employment in Poland working as a professional sports player and as a car parts trader, but that he had decided to migrate to the UK with four or five friends via a flight to Stansted Airport to make a change in his life, to change his job and to visit a new country. When asked about his migration decision, Artek said:

> *'Why? I needed to change my life, you know?*
> *Because I had a good job in Poland but when it's*
> *the… before open…Poland will be united with*
> *Europe, I think I needed to change my life and I*
> *need to go, it's coming here, change to job,*
> *change life and I need to… see the new country.*
> *Because too many people talking to me about the*
> *UK and I would like to see, so ok let's go'.*

Artek's extract exudes the subordinate theme of migrating for work or to earn or save money as well as the subordinate theme of seeking a change, improved opportunities, or a better life. This is particularly evident in his choice of the words: *'I think I needed to change my life and I need to go, it's coming here, change to job, change life'*, which highlight Artek's desire to migrate to make a change in his life and to find a new employment opportunity in the UK. Additionally, his choice of the words *'needed to change my life'* and *'I need to go'* suggests that at that time he viewed migration and making a life change as a need rather than solely a desire, suggesting that despite having what he referred to as a *'good job in Poland'*, he felt unsatisfied with his life at that time and felt that he needed to make a change. As well as relating to those subordinate themes, Artek's extract conveys the subordinate theme of migrating to travel and visit the UK as he stated that when he was in Poland he felt as though he *'would like to see'* the UK, because he had heard a lot about the UK from others. He later explained that others would tell him about the good points of living in the UK, such as the attractive value of the British pound at that time, and he said that their recommendations had encouraged him to migrate to the UK to experience the benefits for himself. This demonstrates that he had a desire to migrate to the UK to visit the country that he had heard so much about, and to experience the benefits that he had heard about first-hand. This also provides an example of how word of mouth exchanges between Polish nationals in Poland and those with experience of migrating to the UK can encourage some individuals to consider migrating to the UK themselves. Artek's extract above also implies that he viewed Poland's accession into the EU in 2004 as somewhat of a turning point that enabled him to make a change in his life and migrate to work in the UK, as he suggests that he decided that he needed to change his job and his life when Poland joined the EU. In a later part of the interview Artek said:

> *'Not permanently, but I think to staying here just only five or six years and come back to Poland but at the moment no chance… my plan is that I need to go back to Poland after Olympic 2012… because I am playing the sport, I am interested about sport and I would like to watch in my life the Olympics, and I think after Olympics I go back. But now is the fifteen years later, and I'm with you! (laughs)'.*

This suggests that Artek initially only intended to migrate to the UK for five or six years before returning to Poland. However, by interpreting his extract it seems as though he pushed the timescale of his initial plan to return after five or six years (which would have been between 2009 and 2010) back until after the 2012 Olympic games in London, because he was interested in sport, and wanted to see the Olympics in person within his lifetime. Because of this, he had decided to remain living in the UK longer and at the time of the interview in 2019, long after the Olympic games had ended in 2012, Artek had been living in the UK for fifteen years. This is therefore another useful example of a temporary migration plan evolving into a long-term migration experience.

The range of participant accounts within section 6.1 highlight that the Polish participants have been motivated to migrate from Poland to the UK primarily because of desires for self-improvement, opportunities, and an improved quality of life, but also owing to economic pull and push factors and the influence of social ties. The accounts also strongly highlight the complexity of migration decisions and the diversity in the range of factors that influence people's choices to move abroad; indicating that the use of the term economic migrant may not be completely appropriate to encompass the variety of reasons why Polish migrants have migrated to the UK following EU accession in 2004. This illustrates that although some migratory decision trends have emerged from the data and the literature, there are also accounts that are unique to particular individuals and that are dependent on their own personal needs, desires and experiences.

The next section focuses on the factors that motivated the Polish participants to migrate and settle in Luton or Peterborough specifically, rather than elsewhere in the UK.

6.2 Motivations for Migrating and Settling in Luton or in Peterborough

The superordinate themes that emerged from the Polish migrant participant narratives when discussing the factors influencing the decision to migrate and settle in Luton or Peterborough were social migration and settlement motivations and attractive features of the location. The percentage of participants in Luton, in Peterborough, and in both localities that discussed each superordinate theme is shown below in Figure 18.
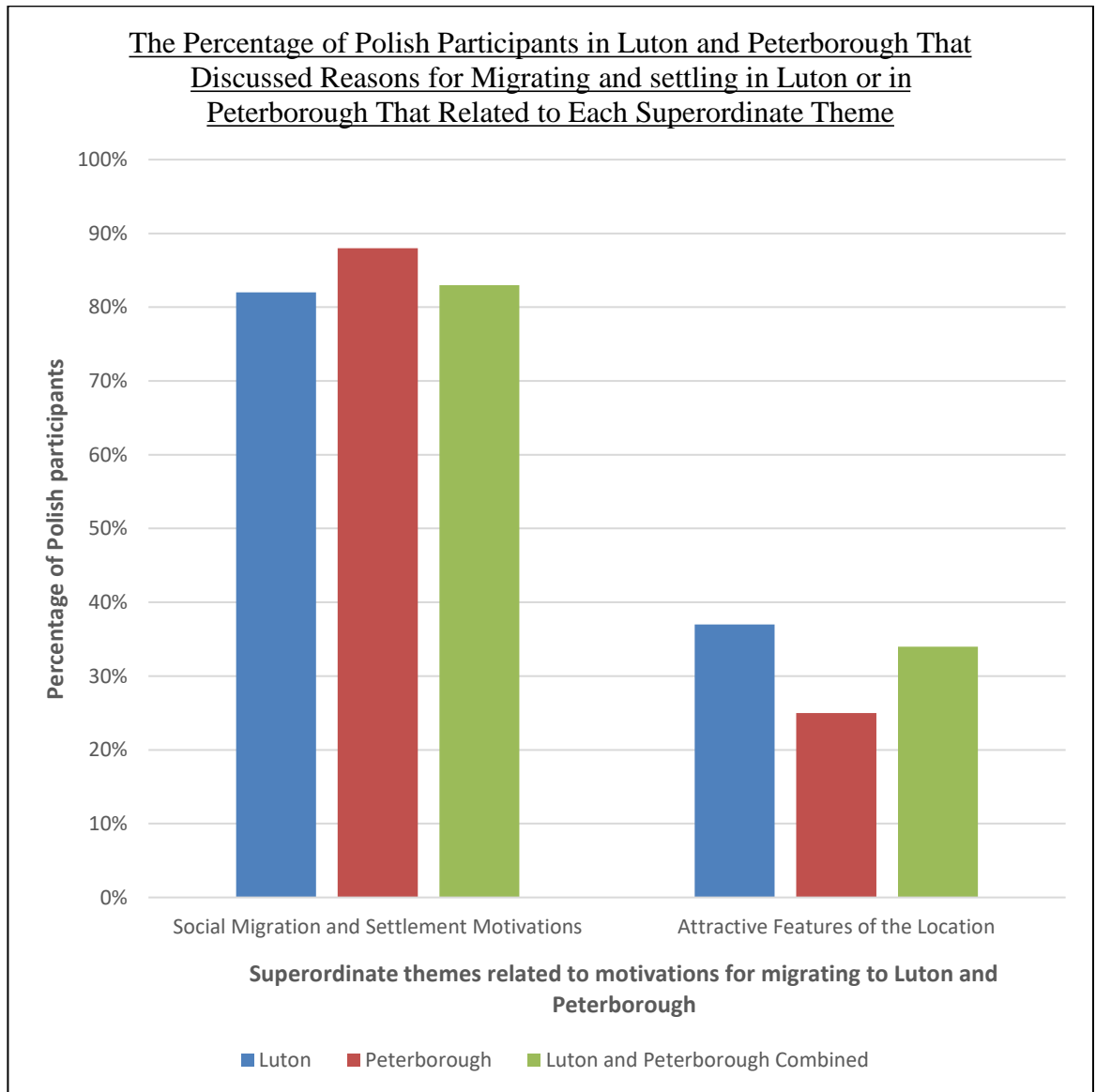
Figure 18. The Percentage of Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough that discussed reasons for migrating and settling in Luton or in Peterborough that related to each superordinate theme.

Figure 18 shows that 83% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (82% in Luton and 88% in Peterborough) discussed the superordinate theme of social migration and settlement motivations in their reasoning for migrating and settling in the localities. This was the most prevalent superordinate theme discussed by the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough, suggesting that social migration and settlement motivations were the strongest factors that influenced the Polish participants to migrate and settle in Luton or Peterborough. Additionally, 34% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough combined (37% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) discussed the superordinate theme of attractive features of the location within their reasons for migrating and settling in Luton and Peterborough. This suggested that in Luton, aspects of the town itself such as the presence of the University of Bedfordshire and Luton Airport, travel connections, Luton's geographical position within the UK and Luton based employment opportunities influenced the migration and settlement decisions of ten Polish participants in Luton. However, this superordinate theme was only discussed by two Polish participants in Peterborough, suggesting that attractive features of the location were not as significant within the migration decision processes of the Polish participants in Peterborough as they were among the Polish participants in Luton. The two participants in Peterborough that did discuss this theme within their reasoning for migrating to Peterborough referred to employment opportunities as pull factors that motivated them to migrate to the city. Each superordinate theme is shown in Table 10 along with the corresponding subordinate themes.

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes
Social migration and settlement motivations	- The presence of family ties or partners in the location - The presence of friends in the location - Encouragement or invitations from social ties
Attractive features of the location	- The presence of a university and university marketing - Position in the UK, the presence of an airport and other travel connections - Employment opportunities in the location

Table 10. The superordinate and subordinate themes related to motivations for migrating and settling in Luton or in Peterborough.

As with the section covering the motivations that the Polish participants had for migrating to the UK, the discussion of their motivations for migrating and settling in Luton and Peterborough also shows some crossovers between themes within some of the Polish participant narratives, highlighting that numerous factors can influence an individual's

decision to move to a particular area. Each superordinate theme and the corresponding subordinate themes are discussed below, including tables to illustrate which participants discussed motivations related to each theme, and including extracts from the participant interviews to illuminate their lived experiences and the interpretation of each theme.

6.2.1 Social Migration and Settlement Motivations

Figure 18 shows that 82% of the Polish participants in Luton and 88% of the Polish participants in Peterborough provided reasons for migrating to Luton or Peterborough related to social factors including the presence of friends, partners or family members in the localities and encouragement or invitations from social ties. The high frequency of motivations related to reunification with social ties and the influence of social ties suggests that social networks had a significant influence over settlement location choices in the UK. Interestingly, only 23% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough stated that they had migrated to the UK owing to the influence of social ties, compared to 83% of the Polish respondents in Luton and Peterborough mentioning social ties as a motivation for moving to Luton or Peterborough specifically. This suggests that social ties may have a low level of influence over international migration decisions but appear to hold a greater level of significance when deciding where to settle within the UK. The narratives revealed that many of the Polish participants had chosen to migrate to Luton or to Peterborough specifically because they already had friends, family ties or romantic partners within those locations, or because they had been invited or encouraged to move there by their social ties, indicating that reunification was a prevalent motivating factor among the participants when making settlement location decisions. Additionally, the narratives revealed that for some, the existing presence of friends, family ties or partners within a locality was viewed as important when deciding where to migrate and settle within the UK, as social ties were often viewed as sources of assistance that could help to make migration experiences easier. The participants that discussed each subordinate theme that related to the superordinate theme of social migration and settlement motivations is shown in Table 11.

Study Area	Polish Participants	The presence of family ties or partners in the location	The presence of friends in the location	Encouragement or invitations from social ties
Luton	Mikolaj		✔	
	Zuzanna	✔		
	Janusz			
	Marcia			
	Andrzej			
	Szymon			✔
	Dawid	✔		
	Eryk			✔
	Patrycja		✔	
	Krzysztof	✔		
	Henryk		✔	
	Ryszard		✔	
	Basile	✔		
	Tomasz	✔		
	Jedrek			
	Angelica			✔
	Stanisław			
	Berta			✔
	Małgorzata	✔		
	Milosz		✔	
	Lukasz	✔		
	Kasia	✔		
	Celestyna		✔	
	Daria	✔		
	Oskar	✔		
	Tymon			✔
	Marek		✔	
Peterborough	Michal			
	Ewa	✔		
	Izabela	✔		
	Grzegorz	✔		
	Agnieszka	✔		
	Oliwia	✔		
	Artek		✔	✔
	Borys		✔	

Table 11. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of social migration and settlement motivations.

<u>The presence of family ties or partners in the location</u>

A total of 43% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (37% in Luton and 63% in Peterborough) discussed the subordinate theme of the presence of family ties or partners within their discussions of their motivations for migrating and settling in Luton or Peterborough. This was the most frequently discussed theme in relation to motivations for migrating and settling within the localities, suggesting that the presence of family ties or partners within those locations was the most prevalent motivating factor among the Polish participants in this research when deciding on a settlement location within the UK. Within the narratives, 23% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (22% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) discussed motivations for migrating and settling within the localities related to the presence of family ties in the location. For instance, the extracts provided by Oskar, Dawid and Daria below show that their decisions to move to Luton were heavily influenced by the existing presence of their family members within the town. When asked why he had chosen to migrate to Luton, Oskar replied:

> *'Why I move to the Luton?...because before I come here my brother in the Luton'.*

Suggesting that the presence of his brother in the town, who had migrated to Luton prior to his own decision to migrate was his sole reason for choosing Luton as a settlement location in the UK. Similarly, Dawid said:

> *'Because my sister and my brother lived here'.*

Also suggesting that the pre-existence of his siblings in Luton was his most important and sole motivating factor for choosing to migrate to Luton. Furthermore, Daria said:

> *'Luton live my family… my brother and my sister in law. Is me work for my family yeah'.*

Daria's extract reveals that the presence of her brother and sister-in-law who were already living in Luton influenced her decision to move to the town, and additionally, her family ties in Luton provided her with a work opportunity as she was working for her family in a Polish shop in the High Town area of Luton. This is an example of social ties providing migrant individuals with opportunities for assistance, which in this case was an employment opportunity provided through a Polish family business in Luton. Another example of this was provided by Basile who said:

> *'Because er my girlfriend uncle live here… so was easier to, to make first steps here'.*

Basile's extract demonstrates that he and his girlfriend decided to migrate to Luton because of the existing presence of his girlfriend's uncle in the town and the belief that his presence would provide them with assistance to make it easier to adjust to living in the UK. In his extract, Basile reflects on their decision to migrate to Luton to join his girlfriend's uncle and describes it as being *'easier to make first steps here'* because of the support that was available to them from that family member. This again highlights that the presence of family members within a location can be attractive to prospective migrants when they are making settlement decisions, for reunification purposes, but also because social ties often act as sources of support that migrants can turn to for assistance if needed, particularly while initially adjusting to living in a new country.

As well as being influenced by family ties when making migration and settlement decisions, 20% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough discussed the presence of their partners within the location or the influence of new romantic relationships within their reasons for migrating to Luton or Peterborough (15% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough). For instance, Małgorzata said:

> *'My husband was already living here so I decided to live with him'.*

This extract indicates that Małgorzata's sole reason for choosing to migrate to Luton was because of the existing presence of her partner in the town and her desire for reunification with him in Luton.

Similarly, Ewa explained that she had migrated to Peterborough because her boyfriend was living in Peterborough and she said:

> *'Err I'm here because my boyfriend is here, and my boyfriend is here because his brother is here… So I don't really know why we are here!… it wasn't my decision, but yeah'.*

Ewa's extract suggests that her main reason for migrating to Peterborough was because her boyfriend was already living in the city, and she explained that her boyfriend had decided to migrate to Peterborough prior to her to join his brother who was already living there, demonstrating that they had both decided to migrate to Peterborough for reunification purposes. Additionally, Ewa's extract suggests that she had felt as though she had no choice in where she would be living in the UK because the decision had already been made for her owing to her partners' presence in Peterborough and his previous decision to migrate to join his brother in the city.

Likewise, Lukasz migrated to Luton to join his partner who had found employment as a teacher in Luton, and he also described the process of migrating to Luton as though it was out of his control and was not his own personal decision. When asked why he had migrated to Luton he said:

> *'Oh by accident (laughs)… well yeah… it wasn't my first choice already or my choice to move to Luton, um my current partner she got a job up here as a teacher and I just joined her from Aberdeen'.*

Lukasz's extract shows that he and his partner had been living in Aberdeen, but his girlfriend had found a new employment opportunity as a teacher in Luton and had decided to migrate to Luton to take the role. As a result, Lukasz appeared to feel as though he had no choice but

to migrate to join her in Luton, presumably because he wanted to maintain his relationship with his partner and live with her within the same town rather than taking part in a long-distance relationship.

Additionally, four Polish participants (Zuzanna and Krzysztof in Luton and Izabela and Grzegorz in Peterborough) said that they had been influenced to migrate and settle in Luton or Peterborough because of the influence of newly formed romantic relationships. For example, Zuzanna was influenced to migrate to Luton because of a romance that she had formed online with a man who lived in Luton. Zuzanna said:

> *'Because on a website I met a very nice guy and I came here… and now he is my husband'.*

Zuzanna's extract shows that she developed a relationship with a man in Luton that she met via a website, so she came to Luton to meet him and their relationship progressed so she decided to move to Luton to join him, and at the time of the interview they had since married.

Similarly, Grzegorz migrated to Peterborough because of a newly formed relationship. Grzegorz said:

> *'That's really long story! (laughs)… Err I went back on holiday back to Poland and then I met my missus, and because of her I decided to stay in Poland… But unfortunately she decided to go to England… And she's got some family in Peterborough, so she moved here and then I decided it's pointless to be in the same country and not in same place so I moved here. So that's a very rough idea'.*

Grzegorz was a 27-year-old transport clerk living in Peterborough who had originally migrated from the city of Tomaszów Lubelski in the Lublin voivodeship in southeast Poland to Taunton in Somerset in 2011. He migrated to the UK to travel and to earn money to buy motorcycles, and he enjoyed living in Taunton because he liked the countryside, but his choice of settlement location in England changed following a holiday to Poland. Grzegorz had returned to Poland for a holiday and while he was there, he met a Polish lady in his

hometown who later became his partner. As a result of his newly formed relationship, Grzegorz decided to leave the UK and return to Poland to be with her. However, his partner had different plans and decided that she wanted to migrate to UK and settle in Peterborough to join her family ties who were already living in the town. Therefore, Grzegorz decided to return to the UK again, and as his partner was moving to Peterborough to join her family ties, he decided to join her there instead of returning to Taunton as he wanted to be in the same location as his girlfriend. This illustrates the impact of his romantic relationship on his migration and settlement decisions and also highlights that personal plans and desires can change to suit the needs and preferences of loved ones and to maintain social relationships.

Similarly, Krzysztof said that he had originally intended to migrate to Glasgow to study there, but that his decision changed completely when he began a relationship with a girl that was going to attend the University of Bedfordshire, so he chose to move to Luton to be with her instead. He said:

> *'Umm well err really it was girl… because I was supposed to go and study in Scotland… But I just literally met, I think three, four months before I came to UK I met a girl and she was coming to Luton and I changed my plans completely… to be fair I wanted to go to Glasgow as umm I have like a step family living in Scotland so I thought it's going to be just easier… to go there'.*

This extract demonstrates that his newly formed romantic relationship influenced his decision of where to migrate and settle in the UK, and shows that he altered his own initial desires to migrate to Glasgow to join his family ties and study in Scotland to match his partners migration plans, because he wanted to join her in Luton instead. This again is evidence of individuals altering their personal plans and desires to suit the preferences of loved ones and to maintain social relationships.

Analysing these experiences using IPA has highlighted the importance of social ties on settlement location decisions and suggests that existing social networks can provide support for newly arrived migrants in the UK while they adjust to their new surroundings. It has also highlighted the influence of romantic relationships as people take their partners' desires and needs into consideration when making settlement decisions and the break-down of social relationships as well as the formation of new social relationships can influence individuals

to change their housing and settlement locations. The extracts within this section highlight the importance of social networks in shaping migration patterns to particular areas in the UK and demonstrate why the subordinate theme of the presence of family ties or partners in the location was the most prevalent factor discussed by the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough within their reasons for migrating to the localities.

The presence of friends in the location

A total of 26% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough discussed the presence of friends in the location as an influencing factor in their decisions to migrate or settle in Luton or Peterborough (26% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough). For example, when Mikolaj was asked why he chose to move to Luton, he said:

> *'Why? because my friends was here, so I am coming to my friends and I stay'.*

And similarly, Milosz said:

> *'Er I have here friend…it's been easier… coming to somebody'.*

These extracts are typical of the references to the subordinate theme of the presence of friends in the location. The extracts show that Mikolaj and Milosz were motivated to migrate to Luton owing to the existing presence of their friends within the town, and the quote provided by Milosz conveys the idea proposed by Pacione (2009) and Knox and Pinch (2006) that migrants often group for mutual support and to assist newly arrived migrants to settle in a new destination, as Milosz expressed that his ability to migrate to Luton and join a friend had made his experience of migrating to the UK easier for him.

Similarly, Borys discussed the existing presence of his friends in Peterborough as a source of assistance and support when he first migrated and began living in the town.

Borys said:

> *'Basically my friends living in here… Yeah, they a little bit helped me, finding another job you know? like on the start, living in a group, it's easy, you know?... If you're going for example jungle, going by yourself is dangerous. If you go in a group, with somebody you know how they're surviving in the jungle, it's better… if you're going to for example a different country, and you're going alone, you are not understanding nothing, especially the language if you don't understand it. This English is a jungle you know?'.*

Interestingly, Borys uses the metaphor of a *'jungle'* to describe migration destination locations, likening the experience of adjusting to a new locality in a new country to an experience in the wilderness which can be dangerous, requires knowledge and can be easier to adapt to with the support of others rather than attempting to survive alone. The term jungle conjures up images of dense tropical forests that are difficult to navigate. The Oxford Dictionary (2021) defines a jungle as 'an area of tropical rainforest where trees and plants grow very thickly', as well as 'a dangerous or unfriendly place or situation, especially one where it is very difficult to be successful or to trust anyone'. This second definition is interesting in the context of Borys's extract as it is suggestive that he viewed his migration destination as an unknown and potentially dangerous place, and that he chose to migrate to a location where his friends were already living so that he would not need to navigate and adjust to a new location alone and would have access to social support from his friends with collective knowledge and understanding of how to overcome potential dangers and difficulties to survive and live in that area successfully. Additionally, Borys also likened the English language to a jungle, suggesting that a new language is another unknown situation that can be difficult to learn how to navigate and overcome without the support of friends. Perhaps Borys's perspective was shared by others as Henryk said:

> *'I got most of my friends here… they all start here… they start this way because there is a lot of people from Poland here'.*

This extract indicates that Henryk had decided to migrate to Luton because most of his friends from Poland had already migrated to the town and he wanted to join them in Luton. The extract also indicates that his friends had decided to migrate to Luton because of the existence of a large Polish population in the town, which is again suggestive that some Polish individuals who intend to migrate abroad seek locations where they already know social ties living within the area or seek locations that have large Polish populations so that they will have greater access to support and will be able to ask other Polish people for assistance if they cannot initially speak English themselves. And as Borys indicated above, this may be viewed as a strategy to overcome potential dangers, adjust to a new language and a new location, and to improve the likelihood of having a successful migration experience.

Encouragement or invitations from social ties

A total of 17% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough discussed encouragement or invitations from social ties as influencing factors in their decisions to migrate and settle in Luton or Peterborough (19% in Luton and 13% (one participant) in Peterborough). For example, when asked why he decided to move to Luton, Tymon said:

> *'My friend tell me come here and here is plenty job… and I buy a ticket and come here'.*

Tymon did not provide his age, but he appeared to be in his 30s and had migrated to the UK from Kraków in 2013 to delay having to complete a five-year prison sentence in Poland for fraud. He could not speak any English when he first migrated to the UK and had originally migrated to Sheffield where he worked 96 hours per week. He worked long nine-hour shifts for very little pay in a car wash from 7am until 5pm, earning just £30 per day; and then worked in the kitchen of a takeaway restaurant from 7pm-1am to earn an additional £20 per day. He lived in Sheffield for seven to nine months and then, as his extract shows, one of his friends who was living in Luton encouraged him to move to the town by telling him that there were plenty of employment opportunities in Luton. Owing to his friend's recommendation, Tymon decided to buy a ticket and move to Luton, demonstrating the subordinate theme of being motivated to migrate to a location because of encouragement or invitations from social ties. At the time of the interview, Tymon had been living in Luton for four years, and had worked as a builder and in various forms of warehouse employment, but

he had lost his job two years prior to the interview and had been engaging in drug dealing and fraud to make money. The interview with Tymon took place at the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre in Luton. During the interview Tymon explained that he had lost his identification and his accommodation and had been sofa surfing and sleeping rough for two months. Tymon said that he had tried to turn himself into the police in the UK and the police had explained to him that he was not wanted in the UK and was only wanted in Poland, so Tymon visited the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre for assistance to obtain a new passport so that he could return to Poland to complete his five-year prison sentence. He explained that he had to wait three weeks for his new passport to arrive and that he would then be returning to Poland to carry out his sentence. Tymon's migration story was unique among the Polish participants in this research and showed evidence of criminal activity, difficult working conditions, drug dependency and homelessness. And although his experience was turbulent, consisted of difficult situations and was not shared by others in this research, it demonstrates the utility of highlighting individual experiences as well as shared experiences to uncover a range of different lived experiences.

Artek and Szymon also provided useful examples of the theme of encouragement or invitations from social ties as a motivating factor for migrating to Luton or Peterborough. When asked why he had decided to move to Peterborough, Artek said:

> *'Because my friends they're here, and they recommend it... and they're looking for a room for me and everything... yeah first three months I stayed with my friends'.*

This extract demonstrates that Artek had decided to migrate to Peterborough because of the existing presence of his friends in the town, and because they had recommended and encouraged him to join them in Peterborough. His quote suggests that his friends also encouraged him to move to Peterborough by offering him an opportunity to stay with them for a three-month period after migrating and by offering to search for a room for him to rent independently as well. This shows that Artek was motivated to migrate to Peterborough because of encouragement from his social ties and because of the support that his friends offered him in the UK, which is reflective of the discussions of social ties being viewed as assistance and support mechanisms while adjusting to a new location above in the section related to the subordinate theme of the presence of friends in the location.

Additionally, when asked why he migrated to Luton, Szymon said:

> *'Why Luton?...Because I have airport and I have work. I no looking later… I am lazy (laughs)…(Nods)…yeah because you see I have barrier with language yeah…when I go I must looking new place, new house, new people and in Luton speak a slang that I know yeah…Outside new and London is new slang, I think that is just my barrier in language yeah…I have here friends and I am speaking'.*

And in a later part of the interview when discussing whether he liked Luton as a place to live, Szymon said:

> *'My friend called me "want you come to England on Friday?… Yes I want…and on Monday I was here'.*

These extracts reveal that Szymon was influenced to migrate to Luton because a friend of his invited him to come to England, and within a few days he had accepted and arrived in Luton. This shows the spontaneity in his decision and action to migrate to the UK and is a useful example of the subordinate theme of encouragement or invitations from social ties influencing the decision to migrate to Luton. The first extract provided by Szymon above also reveals reasons as to why he had decided to remain in Luton long-term. For instance, Szymon said *'I have airport and I have work. I no looking later',* suggesting that he felt content living in a location where he had a job and access to an airport, and that he had no desire to consider moving elsewhere because his immediate needs for employment and a means of international travel had been met in Luton. Furthermore, in his extract Szymon implied that he had not considered moving elsewhere because despite attending English language lessons at a local college, he felt limited in his ability to speak English and felt as though he had become familiar with the local slang and the local accent. Because of this, he felt able talk to people in Luton, but felt as though he would struggle to adjust to slang and accents in other areas and would struggle to find new accommodation, to adjust to a new place and to meet new people if he moved elsewhere, so he would prefer to remain in Luton permanently. This suggests that although Szymon was content living in Luton, he also felt

trapped in Luton to some extent, as he did not feel as though he would be capable of adjusting to living in a new location owing to his English language abilities.

Eryk also provided an example of the subordinate theme of encouragement or invitations from social ties as a motivating factor in his settlement location decision as he had been influenced to migrate to Luton to attend the University of Bedfordshire, which had been recommended to him by a friend. Eryk said:

> *'Actually it was a coincidence because I was applying through UCAS because my friend informed me about it, this uni was one of my choices yeah… And fortunately they like you know were ok with me studying here… But my second choice was Staffordshire if I remember'.*

Eryk's experience was unique among the participants, as most of the participants that related to this subordinate theme had been encouraged by social ties to join them in Luton or Peterborough or had been recommended to move to the localities for economic opportunities, whereas Eryk had been recommended to attend the University of Bedfordshire. Eryk was a 22-year-old waiter in a Polish restaurant in Luton and he had migrated to the UK in 2013 from Sopot in the Pomeranian voivodeship in northern Poland. His sole reason for migrating to the UK was to complete his university studies at the University of Bedfordshire, and as indicated in his extract above, he discovered that it was possible to migrate to Luton and attend the University of Bedfordshire because a friend of his had recommended the university to him. Owing to his friend's recommendation, Eryk chose the University of Bedfordshire as one of his university choices on his UCAS application and was accepted, so he migrated to Luton to complete his degree.

In a later part of the interview with Eryk, he shared his initial experience after first arriving in Luton and said:

> *'I remember the first thing that taxi driver said to me, he basically asked me 'oh where are you form and why are you coming here?' I said I am coming here to study…and purely to study and you know improve my skills and stuff…and he was asking 'oh but where are you from?' I was like I am from Poland 'Oh yeah, you're from Poland? we've got a lot of Polish people here, too much'…and it's like, and it was first thing that I heard out here in England so it's, it was like my gosh…but really it didn't give you any good attitude to want to spend some more time out here…I remember the, it's not the fact that I am bragging or anything but I remember once I get to my student accommodation over there I was like so shocked I started crying because I didn't really want to be here…but after a couple of days it got better'.*

This extract further supports the fact that Eryk decided to migrate to the UK and to Luton to attend the University of Bedfordshire, because he wanted to study and improve his skills and because the university had been recommended to him by a friend. Additionally, this extract highlights that migrating to another country can be an emotional and difficult experience for individuals, particularly if their initial experiences in their new destination country and new place of residence are negative, which was unfortunately the case for Eryk who felt that he had received an unwelcome reception from a taxi driver when he first arrived in the UK.

6.2.2 Attractive Features of the Location

Figure 18 shows that 34% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (37% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) discussed reasons for migrating to Luton and Peterborough that were related to attractive features of the location. These attractive features of the location included the subordinate themes of the presence of a university and university marketing; position in the UK, the presence of an airport and other travel connections; and employment opportunities in the location, shown in Table 12.

Study Area	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes		
		The presence of a university and university marketing	Position in the UK, the presence of an airport and other travel connections	Employment opportunities in the location
Luton	Mikolaj		✔	
	Zuzanna			
	Janusz	✔	✔	
	Marcia	✔		
	Andrzej			✔
	Szymon		✔	✔
	Dawid			
	Eryk	✔		
	Patrycja			
	Krzysztof			
	Henryk			
	Ryszard			
	Basile			
	Tomasz			✔
	Jedrek		✔	
	Angelica			
	Stanisław		✔	
	Berta			
	Małgorzata			
	Milosz			
	Lukasz			
	Kasia			
	Celestyna		✔	
	Daria			
	Oskar			
	Tymon			
	Marek			
Peterborough	Michal			✔
	Ewa			
	Izabela			✔
	Grzegorz			
	Agnieszka			
	Oliwia			
	Artek			
	Borys			

Table 12. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of attractive features of the location.

Most of the references to the superordinate theme of attractive features of the location were made by the Polish participants in Luton and most of the responses were centred on the University of Bedfordshire and travel connections highlighting the role that the higher education institution plays in influencing Polish migrants to settle in Luton and highlighting the attractiveness of Luton Airport and other travel connections in the migratory decisions of some participants. Additionally, Luton's geographical position within England was mentioned as an attractive feature of the location and three participants in Luton and two participants in Peterborough were attracted to migrate to the localities owing to employment opportunities within the locations. More detail about each of the subordinate themes is provided below, using extracts from the Polish participant narratives to demonstrate the interpretation of each theme and to illuminate the lived experiences of the Polish participants.

The presence of a university and university marketing

This subordinate theme was exclusively discussed by three of the Polish participants in Luton (11%) and was not mentioned by any Polish participants in Peterborough. Within these three Polish migrant narratives in Luton provided by Janusz, Marcia and Eryk it was evident that the presence of the University of Bedfordshire in Luton and the marketing of the university in Poland to attract Polish students had played a part in motivating those individuals to choose to migrate to Luton. For example, Marcia said that she had wanted to move to an English-speaking nation and had chosen to migrate to Luton specifically because the University of Bedfordshire was advertised where she lived in Poland. Marcia said:

> *'If any other University advertised themselves I probably would have kind of gone there'.*

This shows that her decision to attend a UK university influenced her decision to migrate to the UK, and that her decision to settle in Luton specifically was largely a result of the successful marketing of the University of Bedfordshire in Poland. Similarly, word-of-mouth marketing appears to have influenced Eryk's decision to move to Luton, as a friend of his told him about the possibility of attending the University of Bedfordshire. Eryk said:

> *'Actually, it was a coincidence because I was applying through UCAS because my friend informed me about it, this uni was one of my choices yeah'.*

This extract and Eryk's lived experience is also discussed on pages 163-164 with reference to the subordinate theme of encouragement or invitations from social ties influencing decisions to migrate to Luton or Peterborough, as his narrative indicates that a friend recommended the University of Bedfordshire to him which encouraged him to choose Luton as migration destination. Additionally, his extract is a clear example of being motivated to migrate to Luton because of the presence of a university and university marketing. Similarly, Janusz said:

> *'Because there was a local, I was told the university of Bedfordshire in the heart of England… so that's what I believed and I thought that would be the best location'.*

This extract indicates that he was told via word-of-mouth that the University of Bedfordshire was in a good location in the UK, 'in the heart of England', and so he assumed that Luton would be the best location for him to migrate to in the UK to study for his degree. This again indicates that the presence of the university in Luton had a significant influence over Janusz's decision to migrate to the town, as well as Luton's geographical position within England. This extract is therefore also a useful example of the subordinate theme of position in the UK, the presence of an airport and other travel connections discussed below, as well as being an example of the subordinate theme of the presence of a university and university marketing as influences on settlement location decisions.

Position in the UK, the presence of an airport and other travel connections

A total of 17% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (22% in Luton and 0% in Peterborough) discussed the subordinate theme of position in the UK, the presence of an airport and other travel connections within their reasons for migrating to Luton. Six of the Polish participants in Luton and none of the Polish participants in Peterborough discussed reasons for migrating to the localities related to this theme, showing that this theme was less

significant within migratory decisions of the Polish participants in Peterborough than in Luton. Within these six Polish participant narratives in Luton, four mentioned the airport or flight connections within their reasons for migrating to the town. For example, Mikolaj and Celestyna both mentioned Luton's proximity to an airport within their reasons for migrating to Luton. When asked why he migrated to Luton, Mikolaj said:

> *'Why? because my friends was here… So I am coming to my friends and I stay… and airport was close… this was reason'.*

And similarly, when Celestyna was asked why she had decided to migrate to Luton, she said:

> *'Um close to the airport… few people who I used to know from Poland they, they lived in here as well so that's the thing as well'.*

These extracts indicate that Mikolaj and Celestyna were both motivated to migrate specifically to Luton because of the presence of their social ties within the town, as well as the presence and proximity of Luton Airport. Additionally, Stanisław provided an interesting example of the subordinate theme of position in the UK, the presence of an airport and travel connections within his reasoning for migrating to Luton. He said:

> *'Because this was my flight, from Katowice it was straight to Luton… so fly straight to Luton that's why'.*

This extract indicates that the sole reason why Stanisław decided to move to Luton was because when he booked a flight from Katowice in Poland to migrate to the UK, the flight landed in Luton and he remained in the town. This demonstrates that he had only migrated to Luton because of the presence of the airport in the town, and because of travel connections which enabled travel between his place of origin in Poland and Luton.

Similarly, another respondent Jedrek also mentioned the airport and the convenience of Luton's location and transport connections, by saying:

> *'We've got airports, we've got loads of trains, loads of buses…so anywhere where you would want to go like northside or seaside…or anywhere, yeah this is the best connection yeah'.*

This suggests that he was particularly interested in settling in Luton because of its convenient location and connections to other areas, both within the UK via train and bus routes, and abroad via Luton Airport. The examples provided above provide evidence of the subordinate theme of position in the UK, the presence of an airport and other travel connections; and highlight Luton's importance as an *entrepôt* destination and a well-connected town in shaping Polish migrant decisions to migrate and settle in the area.

Employment opportunities in the location

A total of 14% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (11% in Luton and 35% in Peterborough) discussed the subordinate theme of employment opportunities in the location within their reasons for migrating to the localities. Most of the participants that discussed this theme (shown in Table 12) were attracted to Luton or Peterborough because of pre-arranged employment roles within the localities, whereas one participant was attracted to Peterborough because of perceived opportunities for young people to find work and to improve their education in Peterborough.

For instance, Andrzej said:

> *'When I first came to the UK I had a job in Luton, Luton airport, that was I found it through a Polish-English agency back in Poland so I came over here prepared. After, on the day of arrival I had a job and accommodation provided'.*

Andrzej's extract shows that he chose to migrate to Luton because he had pre-arranged an employment role at Luton Airport while he was still in Poland through a Polish-British

recruitment agency. His ability to pre-arrange employment in Luton influenced his decision to migrate to the town, and it also appeared to be important for him to organise employment before migrating to be prepared with a source of income when he arrived in the UK. Additionally, Andrzej's extract indicates that employment agencies based in Poland can facilitate Polish settlement within particular locations in the UK by assisting Polish migrants to find employment and accommodation within those locations. Michal had also pre-arranged an employment role in Peterborough prior to migrating which influenced his decision to migrate to Peterborough. Michal said:

> *'Yes. It was through the company… they were offering, they were offering me different localisations… but I just picked…Peterborough (laughs)'.*

Michal's migration experience is also discussed on pages 139-141 and shows that he had used a Polish website to search for employment opportunities and found an advertised job role to work for Tesco in the UK. Michal's extract above indicates that his decision to migrate to Peterborough was influenced by his employment role with Tesco, because the company had offered him various locations to work in the UK and he had chosen Peterborough out of the list of options. This again shows a level of spontaneity and speed in his decision to migrate to Peterborough as it does not appear that he carried out any research or a cost-benefit analysis on the location and it appears that he only chose to migrate to that town specifically because a job was available there and he was drawn to the name Peterborough out of the list of options that was provided to him by Tesco.

Another respondent Tomasz said that he had first migrated to the UK with his fiancé in 2008 in search of career progression opportunities and had initially stayed with his sister who was already living in Luton for two weeks. Then after two weeks he moved to London to begin his life in the UK there. He lived in London for one month, but he and his fiancé struggled with the cost of living in London and found it difficult to find employment in the capital city, so he looked for work elsewhere and decided to migrate and settle in Luton because his sister lived there and because he had been offered a job at Luton Airport. Tomasz said:

> *'We lived in London for a month because of the cost of living and lack of jobs, my English was a bit well I came here without really good English… that was the biggest problem and err yes so we lived here for one month and then after that they offered me job at the airport and I work there since then'.*

Additionally, when asked why he had decided to migrate specifically to Luton, Tomasz said:

> *'Actually my sister lives here so when we came err to, to the UK we've been here for two weeks… but we said to her oh we'll go this to you, go to London… we'll be here just for two weeks… we could have stayed even longer but I said no I don't want to you know… stay longer than two weeks and yeah after that, after this two weeks we moved to London for a month and then came back here when they offered me job at the airport'.*

These extracts illustrate the role that employment opportunities had in motivating Tomasz to decide to migrate and settle in Luton. He was first influenced to search for employment roles in Luton owing to the high cost of living and a lack of available job opportunities in London, and his ability to obtain a job opportunity at Luton Airport influenced his final decision to migrate to Luton to live and work there. This clearly demonstrates the subordinate theme of employment opportunities within the location as a motivation for migrating and settling in Luton, but Tomasz's extracts also indicate that he was influenced to move to Luton because of the existing presence of his sister in the town, which also aligns with the subordinate theme of the presence of family ties or partners in the location.

In contrast to the other examples provided within this section, rather than choosing to migrate to Peterborough because of pre-arranged employment, Izabela decided to migrate to the city because of the potential that she thought that Peterborough could offer in terms of employment opportunities for young people and opportunities for young people to educate themselves. When asked why she migrated to Peterborough Izabela said:

> *'At that time I liked the area, because it's for young people there's more opportunity to find the work and to educate more yourself… and very soon I meet my husband and we start a family. So that push you to, you know, to stay'.*

Izabela's experience of migrating to the UK is also discussed on page 136 and indicates that she had decided to migrate to the UK to earn money to be able to afford to complete her studies in Poland. Her extract above indicates that she chose to migrate to Peterborough because of the employment and education opportunities that she perceived to be available within the town, suggesting that she was motivated to migrate to Peterborough owing to perceived opportunities, rather than pre-arranged employment roles like the other participants who discussed this theme. Izabela's narrative also reveals that although she was initially drawn to migrate to Peterborough by perceived opportunities for employment and education, she was influenced to settle in the town long-term because she met her partner in Peterborough very soon after arriving, and they got married and started a family, which influenced her to remain in Peterborough.

The extracts provided within this section are useful examples of the subordinate theme of employment opportunities within the location as a motivating factor for migrating to Luton or Peterborough and align with the superordinate theme of attractive features of the location.

6.3 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 6 has provided a discussion of the results related to the migration motivations of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough. This has included a discussion of the motivations that the participants had for migrating from Poland to the UK, as well as their motivations for migrating and settling in Luton or Peterborough. This chapter has revealed that the most prevalent motivations that the Polish participants had for migrating from Poland to the UK were related to desires for self-improvement, travel or an improved quality life, highlighting the importance of human agency and socio-cultural aspects within migration decisions. Economic factors were more important within the migration decisions of the Polish participants in Peterborough than in Luton, but more interviews took place in Luton and a wider range of experiences were captured in Luton than in Peterborough. The influence of social ties on motivations to migrate to the UK was less than the influence of self-improvement, travel or an improved quality of life, or economic factors. Although social ties appear to have had a relatively low level of influence on international migration decisions, in contrast social motivations appear to have had a greater level of significance on settlement location choices within the UK. Social factors were the most prevalent motivations that the Polish participants had for choosing to migrate to Luton or Peterborough specifically (83%). These social motivations included the presence of family ties or partners

in the location; the presence of friends within the location; or encouragement to move, such as invitations or recommendations from social ties. Attractive features of the locations were also prevalent motivating factors for selecting Luton and Peterborough as places to live among the Polish participants (34%). These attractive features of the locations included the presence of the University of Bedfordshire in Luton, travel connections including London Luton Airport and employment opportunities within the localities. Employment opportunities were more common motivations among the Polish participants in Peterborough than in Luton and included both pre-arranged employment opportunities within the localities prior to migrating, and the perceived economic opportunities that were available within the localities. Conversely the presence of a university and travel connections were more prevalent motivations among the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough. The findings discussed within this chapter have provided greater insight into the international migration motivations and settlement choices of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough and have highlighted the importance of socio-cultural factors and human agency, as well wider structural factors in Poland and in the UK that motivate individuals to migrate and to settle in particular areas. The findings have also highlighted transnational influences within the participant narratives, such as London Luton Airport providing travel connections between the UK and Poland; circular migratory practices; the marketing of the University of Bedfordshire within Poland; employment roles in the UK that are advertised and acquired prior to migrating from Poland; and the importance that many of the Polish participants placed on maintaining ties with their social connections and members of the Polish community within the localities for support and assistance – particularly while they initially adjusted to living in the UK after migrating from Poland. The findings have also indicated that some individuals who initially only intended to migrate to the UK on a temporary basis, or that previously engaged in circular migration practices have since settled and remained in the UK and could now be described as permanent or long-term migrants. This chapter has contributed original insights into the international and internal migration motivations and the lived migration experiences of a selection of Polish migrants in Luton and in Peterborough. Chapter 7 subsequently discusses the results related to the settlement pathways, housing negotiations, residential locations, housing characteristics and housing experiences of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough.

CHAPTER 7: Polish Settlement Pathways, Residential Choices, and Housing Experiences in the UK: Results and Discussion

7.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter discusses the results related to the settlement pathways of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough since their arrival in the UK, as well as a discussion of the results related to their housing negotiations, their residential locations within Luton and Peterborough, their housing characteristics, and their housing experiences.

7.1 Settlement Pathways

This section discusses the settlement pathways of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough since they first migrated to the UK from Poland.
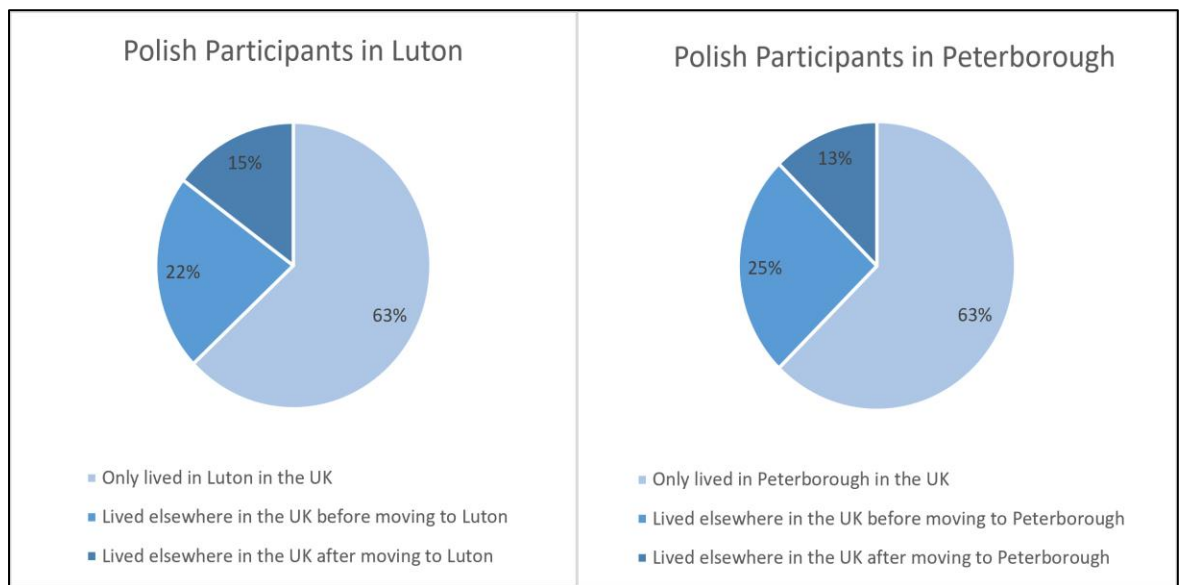
Figure 19. The internal settlement pathways of the Polish migrant participants in the UK.

Figure 19 demonstrates that 63% of the Polish participants in Luton had only ever lived in Luton since arriving in the UK, and 63% of the Polish participants in Peterborough had only ever lived in Peterborough since migrating to the UK, meaning that the localities were their initial point of settlement in the UK and were also the destinations where those Polish participants had chosen to remain and settle on a long-term basis. This emphasises Luton's importance as an *entrepôt* destination and highlights the fact that initial entry points often

become permanent areas of settlement, supporting the findings of Robinson *et al*. (2007) that international migrants are thought to share a tendency to settle in the location where they first arrive in the UK.

Figure 19 also shows that 22% of the Polish participants in Luton had previously lived elsewhere in the UK before migrating to Luton. These locations included Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Leicester, Newcastle, Birmingham, Harlow, Salisbury, London, Watford and Sheffield as shown in Table 13. Most of these areas are located north of Luton and this could be suggestive of traditional internal north-south UK migration flows, as northern members of the population often move towards the south for the perceived benefits of living close to the capital city.

Additionally, Figure 19 indicates that 25% of the Polish participants in Peterborough had lived elsewhere in the UK before migrating to Peterborough. These locations included London, and Taunton in Somerset.

Table 13 shows the settlement pathways of each Polish participant that was interviewed in Luton and Peterborough since they migrated from Poland and first arrived in the UK.

Study Area	Polish participants	Settlement Pathway Since Arriving in the UK
Luton	Mikolaj	Only Luton
	Zuzanna	Leicester Luton
	Janusz	Luton → St Albans → Luton
	Marcia	Only Luton
	Andrzej	Luton → Salisbury → Watford → Luton
	Szymon	Only Luton
	Dawid	Only Luton
	Eryk	Only Luton
	Patrycja	Harlow → Newcastle → Luton
	Krzysztof	Only Luton
	Henryk	Only Luton
	Ryszard	Only Luton
	Basile	Only Luton
	Tomasz	London → Luton
	Jedrek	Only Luton
	Angelica	Birmingham → London → Luton
	Stanisław	Only Luton
	Berta	Only Luton
	Małgorzata	Only Luton
	Milosz	Only Luton
	Lukasz	Edinburgh → Glasgow → Aberdeen → Luton
	Kasia	Luton → Houghton Regis
	Celestyna	Only Luton
	Daria	Luton → Streatley
	Oskar	Only Luton
	Tymon	Sheffield → Luton
	Marek	Only Luton
Peterborough	Michal	Only Peterborough
	Ewa	Only Peterborough
	Izabela	Only Peterborough
	Grzegorz	Taunton, Somerset → Poland → Peterborough
	Agnieszka	Only Peterborough
	Oliwia	Only Peterborough
	Artek	Peterborough→ St. Ives, Cambridgeshire
	Borys	London → Poland → Peterborough

Table 13. The settlement pathways of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough since arriving in the UK.

Figure 20 provides a visual representation of the settlement pathways taken by the Polish migrants in Luton who had lived elsewhere in the UK in areas that are greater than 10 miles away from Luton.
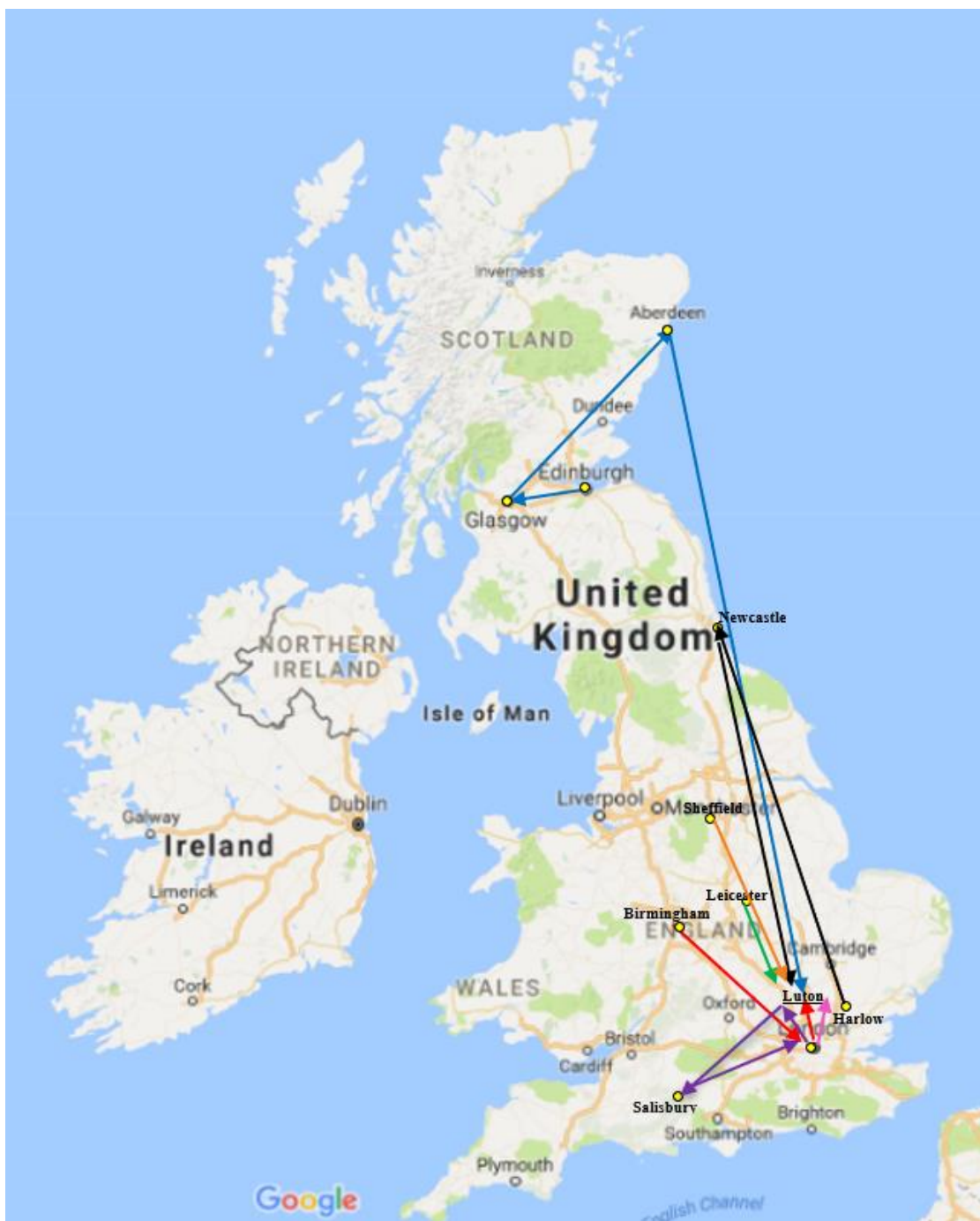
Figure 20. The settlement pathways of the Polish participants in Luton who had lived elsewhere in the UK greater than 10 miles away from Luton.

Figure 20 shows that Lukasz, depicted by the light blue arrows, moved from Edinburgh to Glasgow, and then to Aberdeen before eventually moving to Luton. Lukasz explained that he had originally migrated from Poland to Edinburgh to attend Edinburgh University. When

he finished his studies, he moved to the other Scottish cities and seemed to particularly enjoy his experience of living in Glasgow, but later decided to move to Luton because his girlfriend at the time was going to attend the University of Bedfordshire and he wanted to go with her.

Another Polish participant Patrycja depicted by the black arrows on Figure 20 originally migrated from Poland to Harlow for an expected period of three months, out of curiosity, to see the UK and in hope of developing an online romance that she had formed with a Polish man that was living in Liverpool. However, her online romance did not come to fruition and although she found her first few months in the UK quite difficult, she said that she started to enjoy living in England and saw the economic benefits of remaining. She found a job through a Polish advertisement working in the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow, but the Polish agency later suffered from legal issues which resulted in Patrycja losing her job. A colleague that she knew at the hospital had a daughter in Newcastle, so Patrycja and her colleague decided to leave Harlow and move there to join the colleague's daughter. Patrycja said that it was very difficult for her to find employment or a place to live in Newcastle, so a friend who was living in Luton helped her to come to Luton instead and allowed her to share a room with them.

Tomasz and his fiancé, depicted by the pink arrow on Figure 20 , moved from Lublin in Poland to the UK in 2007, and after spending two weeks staying with his sister in Luton temporarily, they moved to London. But Tomasz and his fiancé were soon unable to cope with the high cost of living and difficulties finding employment in the capital. As a result, Tomasz started to search for employment elsewhere and was successful in obtaining a job at Luton Airport, so they moved to Luton and the town became a long-term settlement destination.

Andrzej's internal mobility depicted by the purple arrows on Figure 20 had also been influenced by economic pull and push factors. He originally migrated from Kolno in Poland to Luton in 2005 or 2006 and secured a job at Luton Airport through a Polish agency before arrival. He remained in Luton for approximately eight years and obtained a degree from the University of Bedfordshire, but then found employment in Salisbury and decided to move there. He said that this decision was mainly a result of finding a job in Salisbury, but also because he was curious whether he would be able to move and start new life elsewhere after having been settled in Luton for so long. This indicates that although his primary reason for engaging in internal migration was economic, he also decided to move to a new area to

indulge his own personal motivations. Andrzej remained in Salisbury for six months, but then lost his job and decided to move to Watford. However, he found it difficult to find employment in Watford and eventually decided to move back to Luton where he felt that he had friends and connections that could help him to find employment easily. He said that his friends and connections told him about numerous jobs to help him to obtain employment, re-emphasising the importance of social networks for providing support.

Similarly, Tymon, depicted by the orange arrow on Figure 20 had initially migrated from Kraków in Poland to Sheffield, where he spoke no English and worked long shifts for nine hours at a car wash and an additional five hours at a takeaway restaurant for approximately £50 per day. He lived in Sheffield for approximately eight months and then a friend recommended him to move to Luton because there were plenty of jobs there, so he decided to move to Luton and had lived there for four years prior to the interview. This again highlights the significance of social ties in influencing internal migration and settlement patterns in the UK and highlights the pull factor of employment opportunities in Luton.

Zuzanna depicted by the green arrow on Figure 20 explained that she had migrated from Poznan to Leicester in search of employment in the UK because the financial situation in Poland had worsened. She settled in Leicester for six months, but later formed a romantic relationship with a gentleman that she met online and moved to Luton to join him; the pair have since got married and had children in Luton.

Similarly, Angelica depicted by the red arrows on Figure 20 originally migrated from Szczecin to Birmingham so that she and her daughter could join her husband who had previously migrated and was already living in the UK. It seems that Angelica's settlement patterns were heavily influenced by her husband's employment patterns as she moved to the UK to join him in Birmingham where he was working as a bus driver. Their family later moved to London, before deciding to move to Luton which was recommended to them by a friend who had told her husband that there were work opportunities for him in Luton.

Although the key themes of moving owing to higher education, economic factors and social relationships are commonly found throughout these accounts of UK settlement patterns among the participants in Luton, there is no key evident recurring trend of movement from particular areas, except perhaps a common theme of Polish migrants choosing to move to Luton because they found life in London to be too expensive and difficult.
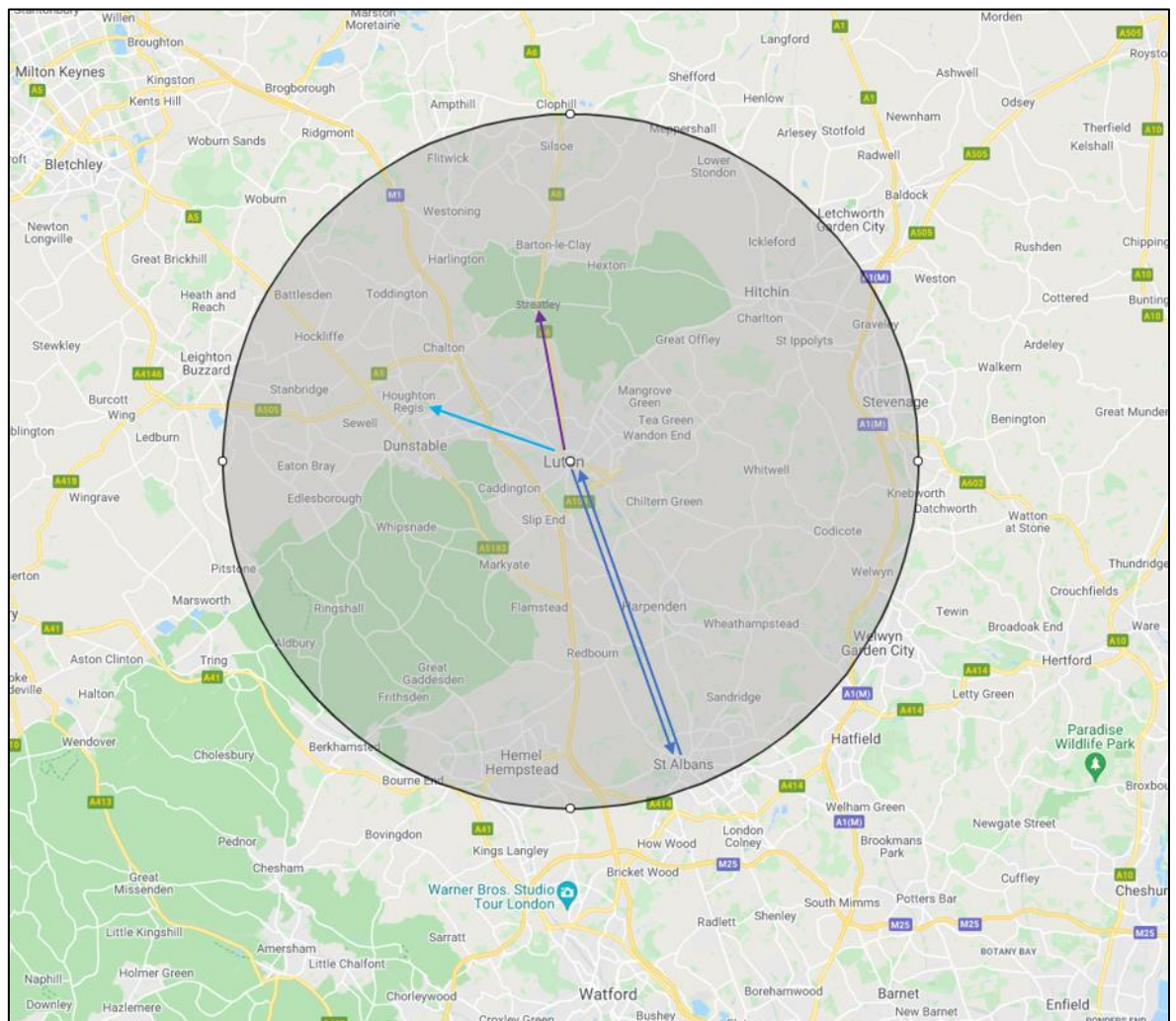
Figure 21. The settlement pathways of Polish migrants who had lived elsewhere in the UK, within 10 miles of Luton.

Figure 21 demonstrates that some Polish participants in Luton had settled in areas within 10 miles of Luton as well as residing within the town at some stage. These participants originally arrived in Luton when they migrated to the UK, but later chose to move out of Luton and settle in surrounding areas.

Janusz, depicted by the dark blue arrows on Figure 21 originally migrated from Wrocław in Poland to Luton to attend the University of Bedfordshire. When he had finished his studies, he found employment in St. Albans and eventually grew tired of the commute, so he decided to move to St. Albans and rent a room there instead. He remained in St. Albans for three years before deciding to return to Luton again after finding a new employment role as a cabin crew member for EasyJet in Luton Airport.

Additionally, Daria, depicted by the purple arrow on Figure 21 had migrated from Warsaw to Luton to work with her brother and her sister-in-law in their family business. She had

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lived in two areas in Luton before deciding to move out of the town and into the neighbouring village of Streatley. She decided to move to Streatley because she thought that it was a nicer location than Luton and she found satisfactory accommodation there with a friend.

In addition, Kasia, depicted by the light blue arrow on Figure 21 arrived in Luton from Pionki in Poland in 2006 to spend a gap year in the UK during a break from her university studies in Poland. She originally only intended to stay in the UK for one year but settled in Luton for a year and a half before deciding to move to the smaller neighbouring town of Houghton Regis where she had remained for over seven years. She explained that she had decided to move to Houghton Regis because she disliked living in Luton and had wanted to move elsewhere but remain in a nearby area. She preferred living in Houghton Regis because she perceived it as a nicer, quieter place to live with many friendly English people.

These examples demonstrate that some migrants move out of Luton into surrounding areas because they are attracted by employment opportunities, satisfying housing conditions and personal preferences. The examples also indicate push factors that have motivated some individuals to move out of Luton such as long commute times and dissatisfaction with life in the town.

Only three out of the eight Polish participants in Peterborough (38%) had lived elsewhere in the UK other than in Peterborough. The settlement pathways of these participants are illustrated in Figure 22.
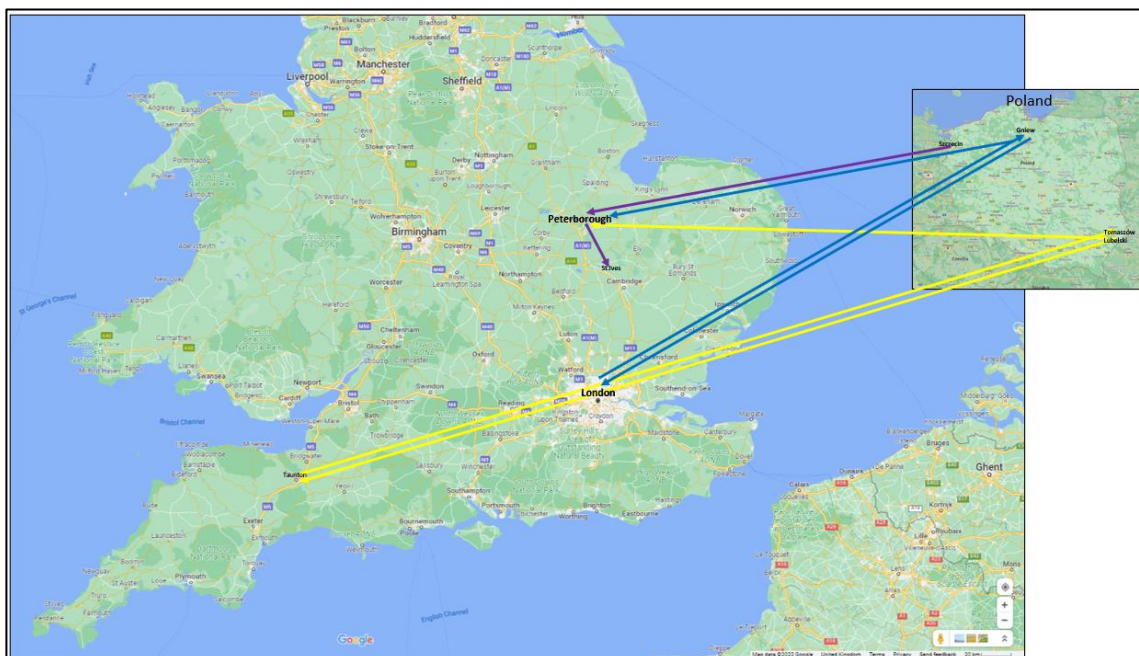
Figure 22. The settlement pathways of the Polish migrant participants in Peterborough who had lived elsewhere in the UK, other than in Peterborough.

Grzegorz, depicted by the yellow arrows on Figure 22 migrated from Tomaszów Lubelski in southeast Poland to the UK in 2011 in search of a travel experience and employment in the UK. Grzegorz originally migrated to Taunton in Somerset in the UK, but later returned to Tomaszów Lubelski in Poland for a holiday and met his girlfriend Agnieszka there. Agnieszka had some family members in Peterborough and decided to migrate to Peterborough to join her family there, and Grzegorz wanted to be with Agnieszka and did not see the point of them both living in the UK but being in different parts of the country, so he decided to move to Peterborough instead so that he could live in the same city as Agnieszka.

Borys depicted by the blue arrows on Figure 22 migrated from Gniew in northern Poland to the UK in 2001. He had originally migrated to London to help his cousins to renovate a house that they had purchased in London. He stayed with them for approximately five months to finish the renovation work and then returned to Poland. But Borys explained that the political and economic situation in Poland was very hard for him at that time, as there was high competition for work, little available employment and low pay which was insufficient for him to support himself, his wife, and his children. Because of this, Borys began to think about starting a new life in the UK and researched what documents he would need to migrate. He sorted out his visa to migrate to the UK and then migrated to Peterborough by himself to join some friends who were already living in Peterborough and

had offered to help him to adjust to living in the UK by helping him to find employment. He then waited six months until he had established himself and had secured a stable job and rented accommodation in Peterborough, and permission from the home office, before he invited his wife and children to migrate to join him in the UK. Borys and his family had remained living in Peterborough since 2001.

Artek depicted by the purple arrows on Figure 22 migrated to Peterborough from Szczecin in northwest Poland in 2004. He had lived in the Bretton area of Peterborough for six months before he migrated out of Peterborough and moved to St. Ives in Cambridgeshire. Artek described St. Ives as a small town with friendly people and he said that although he liked Peterborough, he thought that St. Ives was a better place to live and preferred living there.

Åslund (2005) identified that it is common for new migrants to enter a particular location and then relocate to another area and found that the propensity for relocation is influenced by various individual characteristics such as gender, marital status, age, earnings and employment. However, internal relocation within the UK does not appear to be a dominant trend that has been followed by the Polish migrant participants in Luton and Peterborough. On the contrary, most of the Polish participants first arrived in Luton or Peterborough when they migrated to the UK and most had chosen to remain and settle in the localities since. Perhaps Luton and Peterborough differ from other *entrepôts* and secondary destinations in their ability to attract Polish migrants to settle permanently in the town because of the presence of well-established Polish communities within the localities, consisting of post-war Polish migrants, Post-2004 EU expansion Polish migrants and other influxes of Polish migrants. Åslund (2005) and Zuccotti *et al.* (2022) identify that migrants often prefer to settle in areas with a high proportion of co-ethnics and other minority groups within the population. Therefore, Luton's ethnically diverse population, and the large immigrant populations in Luton and Peterborough could be a factor attracting Polish migrants to settle within the localities long-term. Furthermore, Luton and Peterborough's established Polish communities may have perpetuated further Polish migration to the localities and encouraged permanent settlement, as it appears from the findings presented in Chapter 6 (regarding the migration and settlement motivations of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough) that the Polish participants in this research often initially relied on their social networks after arriving in the UK and have often preferred to settle where their social ties are present within the UK.

7.2 Housing Negotiations

This section explores how the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough interacted with the housing market to find their housing when they first arrived in the UK, and how easy the Polish participants felt that it was for them to obtain accommodation. This information was analysed using content analysis and IPA, and as most of the responses to the questions that were related to this topic were relatively brief, it was decided to principally present the content analysis results, with some participant extracts and IPA interpretations to supplement the analysis, rather than presenting the information in a typical IPA style format, as is the case in most of the other sections within the results chapters.
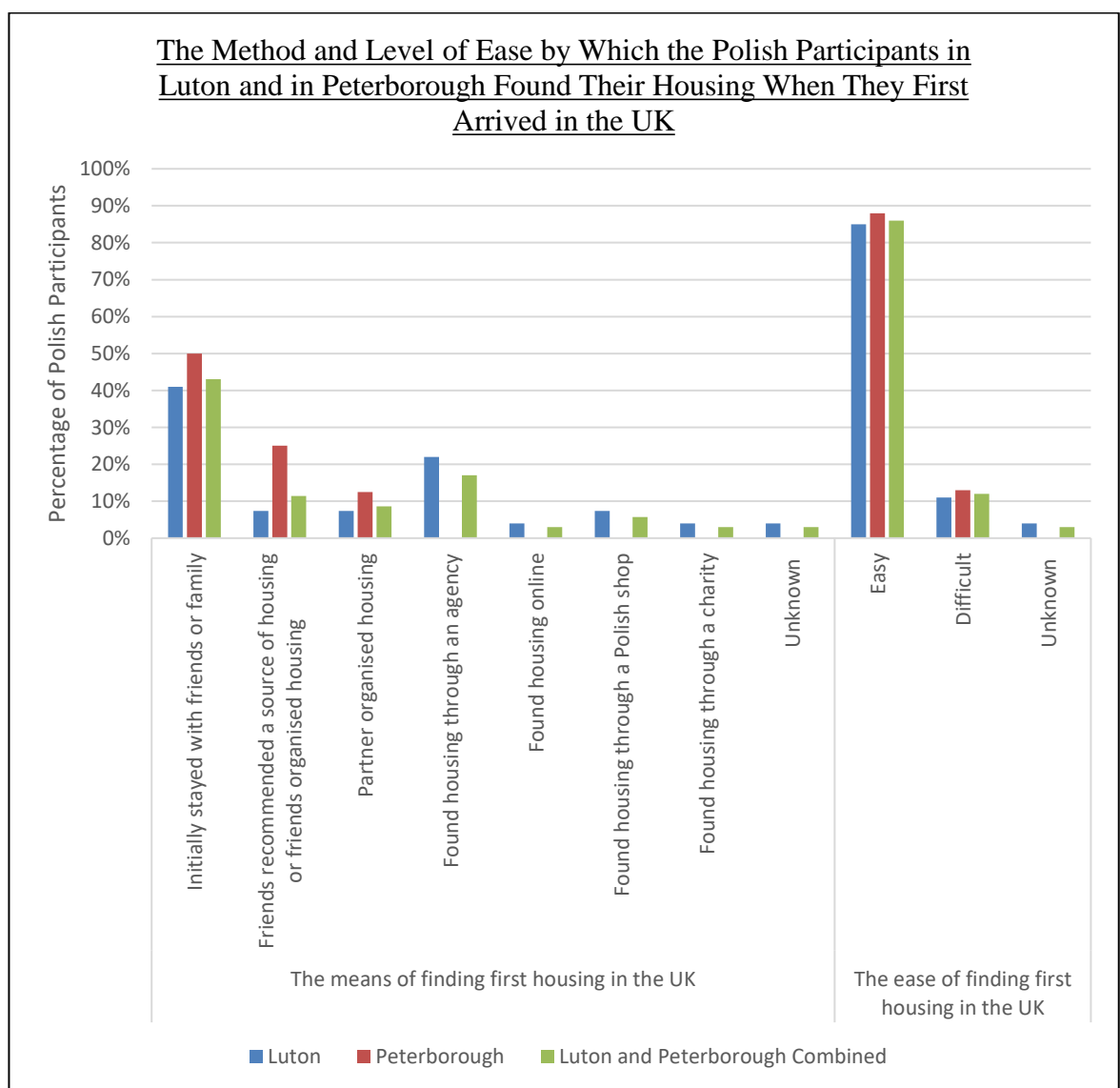
Figure 23. A graph to show how the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough found their housing when they first arrived in the UK, and how easy they found their experience of finding housing.

Figure 23 shows that 86% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (85% in Luton and 88% in Peterborough), said that they found it easy to find housing after migrating and first arriving in the UK. For example, Andrzej expressed the ease of finding housing in Luton compared to his later experience of finding housing in Salisbury:

'Compared Salisbury to Luton, Luton finding a place in Luton is extremely easy…whereas finding accommodation in Salisbury took me about, at first two months to find pretty much something decent'.

When asked why he had found it easier to find housing in Luton Andrzej said:

'There is quite a few properties that are for rent, people don't live here as such, they, it's a market of people just buying loads of homes and then just renting them out on the market so you can go to any agency and within a week you are going find accommodation'.

This highlights the perceived benefits that Andrzej felt that Luton's large rental market offered compared to other areas such as Salisbury that have smaller rented sectors. It appears that the high proportion of rental properties in Luton may facilitate a relatively easy and faster process for migrants to find accommodation in the town compared to other areas, as was the case in Andrzej's experience. In addition, multiple participants described their experiences of finding accommodation as easy owing to the support that they had received from social ties in terms of helping them to find accommodation or providing them with an initial source of short-term accommodation after arrival.

Figure 23 indicates that the most common means through which the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough found their accommodation after migrating to the UK was through their social networks, either by initially staying with friends or family members; receiving recommended sources of housing from friends or family; or having social ties who organised accommodation on their behalf.

A total of 49% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (44% in Luton and 63% in Peterborough) said that they had initially stayed with friends or family when they first arrived in the UK. For example, Oskar said that he had no accommodation that he could readily move into when he arrived in the UK, so he stayed with his brother for a few nights before he found his own accommodation through a local property agency.

In addition, Tomasz said:

> *'Actually my sister lives here so when we came err to, to the UK we've been here for two weeks… but we said to her oh we'll go this to you, go to London… we'll be here just for two weeks…and she said ok you can stay for two weeks (laughs)…no we could have stayed even longer but I said no I don't want to you know… stay longer than two weeks and yeah after that, after this two weeks we moved to London for a month and then came back here when they offered me job at the airport'.*

This extract indicates that Tomasz initially relied on his sister for temporary accommodation in the UK for two weeks before moving out into a place of his own. He stated that he did not want to stay with his sister for longer than two weeks, suggesting that although the initial support of social ties was important to him while he initially adjusted to life in the UK, he had a desire to be self-sufficient and independent as soon as possible. Therefore, Tomasz moved into his own rented housing after two weeks, which he obtained via an agency. Tomasz mentioned that he had found his current and previous form of accommodation via an estate agency on High Town Road in Luton and said that he had been using the agency for a long time, he was happy with their services, and intended to continue using the same agency to meet his future property needs in Luton.

Additionally, Jedrek provided another example of initially staying with family members in Luton. Jedrek said:

> *'I come to visit my family, part of family…so first few months I don't work, so after that I even don't speak English…so I started learning here and then after like 6 months so I start to get some job…and I get paid for it and then step by step I start learning'.*

Jedrek also added:

> *'I living with family…and then after that I move to the room…and rent the room. After that… I meet my Ex mrs…so we rent a house, like a flat yes…and then we try to make a family, proper family but… it's not work so we just we split up and all of my life was destroyed…for a few months, quite long months… and after that I start you know, start thinking about myself no one else… And then everything has gone back to normal'.*

Jedrek explained that after he had initially lived with his family in a three-bedroom house with a garden in the Marsh Farm area of Luton for a few months, he had moved in with some friends to rent a double room in a two-bedroom house on Oak Road in the Bury Park area of Luton. He later moved into a one-bedroom flat with his wife in the High Town area of Luton, who eventually became his ex-wife, and when they separated Jedrek rented a room by himself in a six-bedroom house in the Stockwood area of Luton and later rented a one-bedroom flat alone in Hightown, which was his current property at the time of the interview. These extracts highlight that Jedrek's housing pathway and his housing negotiations in Luton have been strongly influenced by his social ties, as his family connections provided him with an initial place to stay in the UK while he adjusted and enhanced his English language skills after migrating to enable him to obtain a job. Additionally, the formation and the breakdown of his relationship with his partner had led him to change his housing multiple times during the duration of his time living in Luton.

In addition, Oliwia provided another example of initially staying with a family member after migrating to Peterborough. Oliwia said:

> *'I moved with my mum to my brother for... two weeks I think we lived with them before we found our place'.*

This extract suggests that like the experience shared by Tomasz, Oliwia had also chosen to live with a family member for a period of two weeks before finding private rented accommodation in Peterborough. This suggests that Oliwia relied on her mother for support while she initially adjusted to living in Peterborough and the UK.

Similarly, Artek provided another example of initially staying with social ties in Peterborough. He initially resided with friends for three months and said:

> *'Yeah first three months I stayed with my friends…so we rented one house and we… we were renting one house and I stayed with my friends… you know national insurance number… all documents that we needed to organise… and when I was coming here, I didn't speak English….nothing, zero, absolutely zero… I'm learning to every day'.*

This extract suggests that Artek initially relied on his social ties for accommodation, language support and assistance with organising documentation such as a national insurance number when he first arrived in Peterborough. This highlights a strong early reliance on social ties and the utilisation of social networks to make his initial experience of migrating, settling, and adjusting to the UK easier.

Additionally, 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (7% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) said that their friends had organised their accommodation for them on their behalf or had recommended a source of housing to them. For example, Angelica said:

> *'When we came to Luton our friend here recommended some agencies to rent the house'.*

This extract indicates that Angelica received details of recommended housing agencies from a friend who was already living in Luton, indicating that Angelica trusted and relied on the suggestions that were provided by her social ties to find accommodation in Luton.

Additionally, Marek provided a useful example of his social ties organising his accommodation in the UK on his behalf. Marek said:

> *'Yes, yes, yes. Actually, they were also moving so they umm rented two rooms in one house, so we could live together in a shared house, but we had separate rooms… They were also moving so they were looking for… a house that offered two separate rooms at the same time. And they hired both and I was paying for one and they were paying for the other one… we lived there only three months because we didn't like the people we lived with'.*

Within this extract Marek explained that his friends had organised his accommodation in Luton on his behalf by finding a house that had two separate bedrooms to rent which would accommodate Marek and his friends. Marek said that his friends had found the accommodation that they had first lived in together on Biscot Road in Luton through a window advertisement on a house that they happened to pass by.

Furthermore, 9% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (7% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough) said that they had found their first accommodation in the UK via their partners, as their partners had organised their housing on their behalf.

For example, Małgorzata said that her accommodation had already been arranged by her husband who had migrated to the UK before her. She explained that when her husband migrated to the UK, her husband had moved into a house where his uncle was living, and that when she migrated to the UK to join him, she joined them within their existing accommodation.

In addition, Lukasz provided another example of his partner organising housing on his behalf and said:

> *'I already had a place to stay… it was an agency flat which was arranged by my partner, she was already living here'.*

Additionally, Ewa provided another example and said:

> *'My boyfriend came here first, one month earlier…so yeah he had some more time to sort everything out…and I just came here too and had everything already… it was (easy) because yeah my boyfriend speaks English as well, so it's not a problem for him'.*

These extracts suggest that Lukasz and Ewa found the process of finding accommodation in the UK to be easy as they both had partners who had previously migrated to Luton and Peterborough and had already organised housing in the UK, so Lukasz and Ewa were able to join their partners in those forms of accommodation immediately after arriving in the UK and did not need to take any actions to find housing themselves. This again highlights one of the ways that social networks in the UK can make the process of finding accommodation easier for newly arrived migrants in the UK.

The large number of participants who relied on their family or friends for guidance or for an initial place to stay in Luton and Peterborough highlights the importance of social capital in housing negotiations and suggests an early reliance on social capital for accommodation. The fact that 83% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (82% in Luton and 88% in Peterborough) had social motivations for choosing Luton or Peterborough as settlement locations could imply that many of the Polish participants expected their friends and relatives to allow them to stay with them and to offer them support upon their arrival in the UK. The heavy reliance on social ties suggests that social capital was of great importance to the Polish participants in this research and provided them with support and refuge when they first arrived in the UK and while they adjusted to their new migration and settlement destinations. The IPA of the interview extracts provided by the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough suggests that an early reliance on social capital was common among many of the participants and suggests that chain-migration and the utilisation of social networks in the UK was viewed as a means of making migration and settlement in the UK easier.

In addition, 9% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (11% in Luton and 0% in Peterborough) said that they had found their first form of accommodation in the UK through an agency. Examples of both UK and Poland based agencies were provided by the Polish participants. For example, Andrzej utilised a Polish based agency to find his housing and said:

> *'There was an agency in Kraków and they provided pretty much everything for my first six months'.*

This extract highlights that transnational influences also operate within housing negotiations as businesses abroad can facilitate migrants to find sources of accommodation and employment within the UK. In contrast, Dawid provided an example of utilising a UK-based agency to find his first accommodation in Luton. Dawid said:

> *'I go into agency and that's it… yeah before, now I rent from the private landlord… but first few houses I went to agency and we want to rent house and that's it…now I live, in last five years in landlord, my last house…from private landlord'.*

Similarly, Stanisław also shared that he had found his first accommodation in Luton through a UK based agency. He said that he had spent approximately one month looking for a satisfactory property in Luton and had found housing easily through an agency. Stanisław commented:

> *'I don't see problem with housing because… I rent straight away…if you have money and you work and you got like proof that you work…then the agency rent you house straight away…I come here and found a job…I don't have problem, if you have good language and you want to work then I don't see problem…I work with like a couple agencies and…found the best option for me'.*

This extract suggests that Stanisław felt as though it was easy for him to sort out his housing using an agency because he was able to rent housing straight away as he was financially prepared, had proof of employment in the UK and had good English language abilities. These factors were beneficial to Stanisław and assisted him to find accommodation quickly and easily, but this extract also highlights the fact that migrants with limited English language abilities, who may not have a job when they first arrive in the UK and may not have enough funds to immediately pay a deposit to secure housing may find the experience of finding accommodation to be more difficult than Stanisław. His example suggests that finding accommodation in Luton is generally easy if individuals are able to meet certain conditions in relation to their employment and wealth, but not all individuals are able to meet those conditions, which can make the experience of finding accommodation more difficult.

A total of 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (11% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough) said that they had experienced difficulties finding their first form of housing when they arrived in the UK. For instance, Tomasz said that he had found it difficult to find housing when he first arrived in the UK. Tomasz said:

> *'It was difficult. It was like typical of bureaucracy, I couldn't um, I couldn't umm lend (rent) house because I hadn't got a bank account…I couldn't open bank account because I didn't have a job, I didn't have a hob because I didn't have bank account and I, it was to start somewhere it was quite difficult for me, er but luckily we just had McDonalds job when they offered a bank account straight away…and er home office, when I started everyone should be registered with home office'.*

Tomasz's example is in direct contrast to Stanisław's experience and illustrates that migrants often have to negotiate and hold a position in the UK labour market and provide proof of employment and proof of funds before they are able to access rented accommodation, which could slow down the process of finding housing and make it more difficult for newcomers to find accommodation. These difficulties also relate to the suggestion made by NOAH Enterprise (2014) and the housing expert participants in Luton who worked at the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre (LHE9 and LHE10) that a lack of secure employment in the UK can often lead to homelessness. In addition, one Polish participant in Luton Berta suggested that she had experienced difficulties obtaining housing in Luton and mentioned that she had found her housing through the NOAH

Enterprise Charity, which is based in Luton and aims to support excluded and homeless individuals. As Berta sought assistance from NOAH Enterprise, it was assumed that she had been struggling with homelessness or exclusion herself when she first searched for accommodation in Luton.

A total of 14% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (15% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough) commented that they felt that it had become harder to find housing over time, suggesting that the housing market may be changing and negatively affecting migrant accessibility to property. This could reflect the dramatic increase in Luton's property prices in recent years owing to rising competition and demand for housing, Luton's attractive proximity to the capital, and London investors buying up property in the area (Canocchi, 2014; Boyce, 2011). Rising property costs and the high demand for housing are likely to have exacerbated the process of finding housing and this could out-price migrants from desired positions in the housing market. For example, Patrycja said:

> *'Um well I shared a room with my friend so it was quite easy for me I didn't need to search for any accommodation. Later on for example now I was looking for a flat… and that wasn't very easy because there are so many people and the condition of the houses are not compared to the price which they want… so it was quite hard to find a place to live, as in a flat not to share a house with someone'.*

This extract implies that Patrycja initially found her experience of finding accommodation in the UK to be easy because she did not need to search for housing herself and was able to stay with a friend, further highlighting that social ties are an important source of support that can aid the experience of finding accommodation in the UK. Additionally, the extract shared by Patrycja reveals that she found it harder to find subsequent forms of housing after moving out of the room that she shared with her friend, which Patrycja suggested was owing to the high demand for housing and a mismatch between the cost and condition of available places to rent.

Similarly, Grzegorz also provided an example of initially having an easy experience of finding his first housing in the UK and later feeling as though it was difficult to find

subsequent housing. Grzegorz initially had his housing organised for him by some of his social ties when he first arrived in the UK in Taunton in Somerset. Grzegorz said:

> *'Somebody found it for me so it was really easy! (laughed and confirmed that his housing was found by a friend)'.*

This demonstrates that Grzegorz found his experience of finding accommodation when he first arrived in the UK to be easy because of the assistance that was given to him by social ties to obtain accommodation on his behalf. Grzegorz was also asked about his experience of finding housing in Peterborough after he moved there from Somerset, and said:

> *'I stayed with my missus' uncle so that was even easier… yeah, but after we moved out, it was a bit hard to find something on our own. Umm… loads of places are illegally rented and that's, that's a big issue… sub-letting, yeah'.*

This extract suggests that when Grzegorz moved to Peterborough, he also relied on social ties to obtain accommodation, by staying with his partner's uncle before he was able to move out and sublet housing with his partner in Peterborough. These extracts highlight that Grzegorz had initially found his experiences of obtaining housing to be easy, because he had received assistance from his social ties, but that he had subsequently found it harder to find accommodation when he was searching for housing without any involvement from social ties. This suggests that being able to rely on social ties to provide a source of housing or to provide assistance to find housing can make the process of obtaining accommodation easier. The extract provided by Grzegorz also implied that subletting is a large issue in Peterborough, which he suggested had also made his experience of finding suitable subsequent housing in Peterborough more difficult.

Furthermore, Figure 23 demonstrates that 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (15% in Luton and 0% in Peterborough) said that they had found their housing online when they first arrived in the UK. For example, Marcia said:

> *'Very easy because I paid upfront for university accommodation'.*

Within this extract, Marcia highlighted the ease of her experience of finding her first form accommodation in Luton as she was able to secure her university accommodation before migrating to the UK. Marcia subsequently confirmed that she had found and paid for her university accommodation in Luton online via a website and attended the university of Bedfordshire.

Similarly, Eryk also attended the university of Bedfordshire and found his first form of accommodation in Luton online. Eryk said:

> *'Yeah I went straight into student accommodation, I was applying to it in Poland already, when I was still in Poland, yeah… a student website basically… I don't remember how I found out about it, but yeah, I guess the university sent me the email but it's you know… (does action to imply a long time ago… but it was pretty expensive for me you know, when we translated the currency to the English one like oh my gosh. My father was complaining the whole year'.*

This extract demonstrates that similarly to Marcia, Eryk was able to secure his student housing for the university of Bedfordshire in Luton online prior to migrating, whilst still living in Poland.

Similarly, Daria and Tymon also found their first forms of accommodation in the UK online. Daria shared that she had found her first form of housing in the UK via a website, which advertised private rental opportunities. Likewise, Tymon explained that he had also found his housing in Sheffield and in Luton online through websites including Gumtree and Facebook.

Moreover, 6% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough combined (7% in Luton and 0% in Peterborough) said that they had found their first housing after arriving the UK through Polish shops. For instance, Janusz said that he had found his first form of accommodation in the UK through a Polish shop owner. Janusz said:

> *'I moved in with a friend that picked me up from Toddington services and it took approximately… I found a place within 24 hours…Initially we tried to, we went through newspapers adverts….and we had a couple of viewings but it didn't really work out. And then we just went to the Polish shop and the owner of it actually offered us a place…so we could even, we moved in the very same day, which was just up the road very close to the town centre'.*

This extract indicates that Janusz had assistance from a friend to find accommodation in the UK and reveals that he had initially attempted to find housing through newspaper adverts, which proved to be unfruitful. The extract suggests that although his initial attempts to find accommodation were unsuccessful, he was able to find housing in Luton relatively quickly as he was offered a place to rent within 24 hours of arriving in the UK and had viewed multiple properties during that period. Ultimately, Janusz found his housing through a Polish shop in Luton, as he visited the shop with his friend, was offered a place to rent by the Polish shop owner and moved into the accommodation that day.

In addition, Milosz also said that he had found his first accommodation in Luton through a Polish shop, by looking at the advertisements that were on a Polish shop window close to the Sainsbury's supermarket in the Bury Park area of Luton. Milosz described it as:

> *'Full of offers yeah, small papers, piece of papers with offers yeah'.*

And when asked if that was the typical way in which he searched for and obtained housing in Luton, Milosz said:

> *'Yeah, there is the best way is here'.*

Milosz was then asked if he had utilised any other methods to find housing in Luton, to which he replied that he had found his most recent form of accommodation via a property agency and that he had found one of his previous properties by searching in a newspaper. His extracts suggest that he initially searched for accommodation in Luton by seeking out connections to the existing Polish community in the area, such as Polish shops, which again highlights the importance of social and cultural capital and transnational factors in migrant residential choices and experiences.

Similarly, Eryk indicated that after moving out of his student accommodation, which he had pre-arranged online prior to migrating to the UK, he had found his subsequent housing by looking at advertisements on the window of a Polish shop. Eryk said:

'Just like uh a note on the, the er…shop mirror all those looking at and I'm like alright…the phone number is on there, I just give it a call and it was like oh yeah yeah we've got the room'…and I went to the place that I am living right now and they were like you can move next day' and I was like alright…so yeah but there is only one shop like this in Luton which is like hanging the information about the available place, or like announcement I got a dog to…to sell or something like that…like a puppy or yeah…Um I don't, are you familiar with er Luton?... you know where the Lil, Lidl shop was?...This was like on Dunstable Road, the beginning of Dunstable Road…close to this Lidl, like on the opposite side from the entrance of Lidl…There is a shop, I don't know if it's still open but it, its called Polish something…so anyway but… you've got also the Sainsbury and between the Sainsbury and Lidl over here is like in this, this er like er district or whatever you call it…yeah you can have a look over there…the store owner is pretty nice so…you can, you can talk with them'.

This indicates that Eryk had knowledge of a couple of shops that posted advertisements for housing and other items on their shop windows in Luton. Interestingly, the researcher was also made aware that the branch of Lidl that Eryk referred to within his extract was also commonly used as a pick-up and drop-off site for post and parcels that were being delivered to and from Luton and Poland. In addition, Eryk's example also suggests that he was able to find housing easily using the shop window advertisements, as he called the phone number that was listed on one of the advertisements, was invited to view a property and then began renting the property the next day.

Additionally, Krzysztof said that he had initially sublet a room within a property that his girlfriend's family were renting, then moved out after six months and sought his subsequent

accommodation via leaflets and advertisements in Polish shops. Krzysztof said that when he was searching for accommodation in 2005, nobody had the internet on their mobile phones and it was not easy to utilise the internet, so people were more reliant on shop advertisements to find accommodation then than they are now. He said that many people probably still use shops to find housing, but that it's now easier to use the internet to find accommodation. This suggests that technological advancements over time may have altered the methods that some Polish migrants use to negotiate the housing market and find accommodation within localities in the UK. Most of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough arrived in the UK during the first five years following EU accession in 2004, so the majority could have also experienced limited internet access and could therefore have been more reliant on Polish advertisements, friends and family members and agencies rather than on the internet to find their housing at that time. However, over time, internet access has progressed and may provide more recently arrived migrants with an additional and relatively easy method of negotiating the housing market.

There are at least four Polish shops in Luton that have advertisements for accommodation, work opportunities and other miscellaneous items posted in their shop windows. During the data collection process, the researcher observed the Polish shop with window advertisements that was described by Milosz and Eryk in the extracts above, which was located close to the Sainsbury's supermarket in the Bury Park area of Luton and is shown in Plate 2.

Plate 2. A Polish shop on Crawley Road, Luton. (Buckland-Stubbs, 2016).

Plate 2 is an image of the 'Polish Market Polski Smak' shop that was located on Crawley Road in Luton and was photographed by the researcher on the 4th of June 2016, showing 81 advertisements posted on the shop windows. The shop remained on Crawley Road as of June 2022 and was called 'Polski Smack international' with images of both the outline of Poland and Romania on the shop banner with the colours of the Polish and Romanian flags, suggesting that the shop had since diversified to sell Romanian products as well as Polish products. Most of the Polish shop window advertisements that were observed on Polish shops during the completion of this research were handwritten, and most were written in Polish. The primary use of the Polish language on the advertisements may be particularly appealing to newly arrived migrants from Poland who may not have learnt English at all or may have limited English language abilities when they first arrive in the UK. Perhaps this is why Milosz chose to seek his first housing through Polish shop window advertisements. Other possible reasons for utilising Polish shops to find housing include the potential frequency of visits and a possible perceived sense of security. Many Polish people attend Polish shops frequently and would therefore be likely to see the advertisements during their visits, which could influence their housing negotiations. Furthermore, Polish migrants may feel that the accommodation that is advertised via Polish shops and Polish advertisements is more trustworthy, as it is being advertised from within the Polish community; and perhaps a

sense of social and cultural security plays a role in housing decision-making. The use of Polish advertisements in Polish shops to search for housing in Luton also supports the suggestion made by Central Bedfordshire Council (2010) that many Polish residents in Luton are thought to live in informal housing obtained through Polish social networks and word of mouth exchanges.

Furthermore, one participant in Peterborough, Michal said that he had found his first accommodation in the UK through his employer before he had migrated to the UK. He said:

> *'When I signed the contract…it was including accommodation as well…the first year that err Tesco Poland just arrange everything for us so…they arranged err the house to share with their friends yeah?... of course they arrange the bank accounts, everything yeah?... we were there one or two meetings before we fly…and we meet each other…so just four of us, just landed in the one house. And we didn't know who would be living with who…so just lucky dip yeah'.*

The extract shared by Michal above indicates that as a part of his employment contract, Tesco had agreed to arrange accommodation for Michal and a few other successful job applicants to live together in Peterborough, and had arranged a few opportunities for them to meet each other before they all migrated to the UK to live and work together in Peterborough. This example demonstrates that in some circumstances, employers facilitate accommodation arrangements on behalf of individuals who migrate to the UK.

The findings discussed within this section suggest that social networks provide important support to newly arrived migrants to help them to find housing and negotiate the housing market in the UK.

7.3 Residential Location Within Luton or Peterborough

The Residential Locations of the Polish Participants in Luton
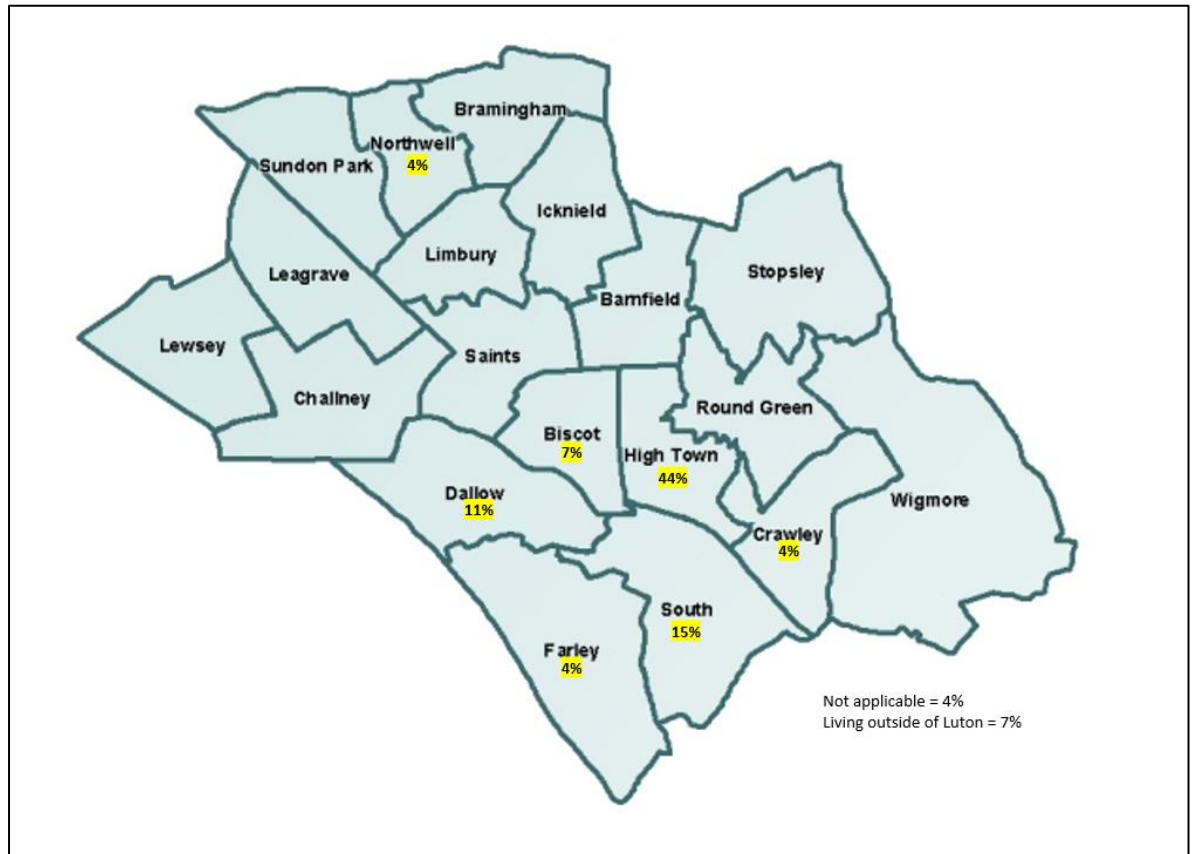
Figure 24. The electoral wards in Luton where the Polish participants were living at the time of the interviews.

Out of the 27 Polish participants in Luton, 24 provided information about where they were living within Luton at the time of the interviews. This data has been analysed using content analysis and is displayed in Figure 24, demonstrating which electoral wards the participants lived in within Luton. Two participants were living outside of Luton in nearby areas, as Kasia was living in Houghton Regis and Daria was living in Streatley, therefore their residential locations are not recorded on Figure 24. Additionally, one participant in Luton, Tymon, was homeless at the time of the interview and it was not applicable to record his residential location in Luton. It is evident from Figure 24 that most of the Polish participants in Luton (85%) were living in wards in the south of Luton in High Town (44%), South (15%), Dallow (11%), Biscot (7%), Crawley (4%) and Farley (4%). In contrast, one participant was living in the Northwell ward in the north of Luton (4%). This could suggest

residential clustering of Polish residents in the south of Luton, particularly in the High Town area.

<u>The Residential locations of the Polish Participants in Peterborough</u>
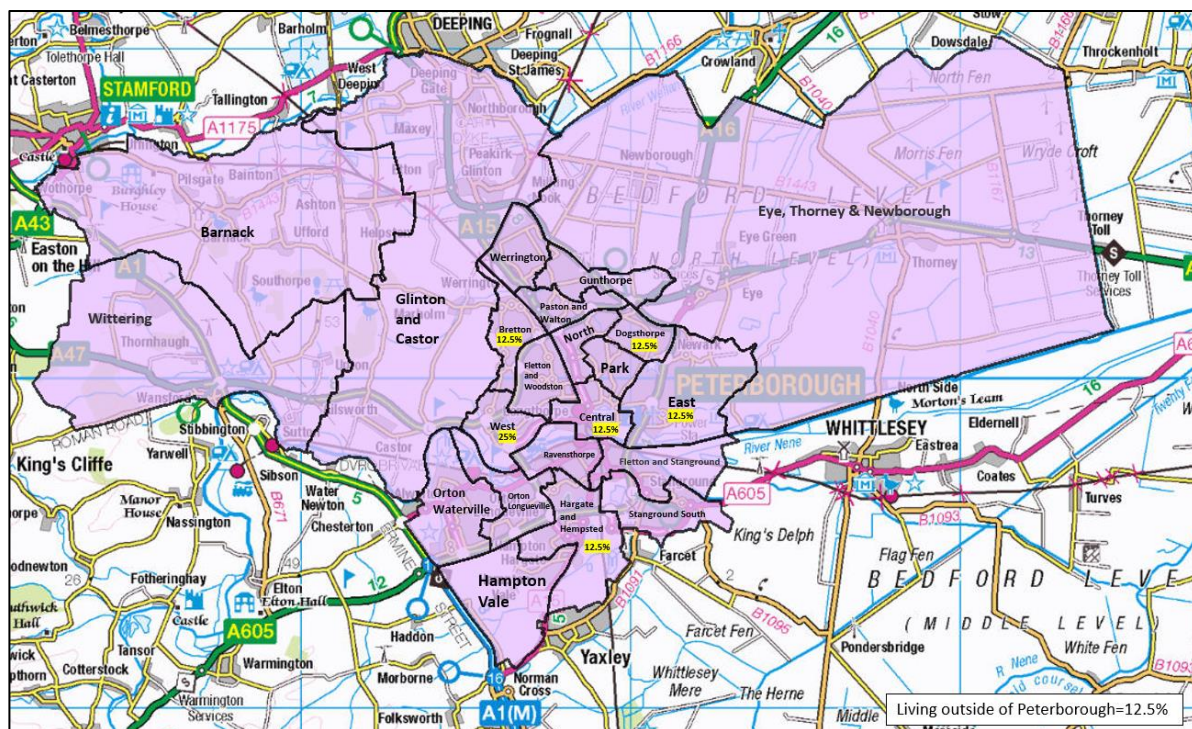
Figure 25. The electoral wards where the Polish participants in Peterborough were living at the time of the interview process (adapted from Peterborough City Council, 2022).

Figure 25 displays the data collected from the Polish participants in Peterborough regarding where they were living in Peterborough at the time of the interviews. Figure 25 indicates that the eight Polish participants that were interviewed in Peterborough were residentially distributed in some of the smaller electoral wards surrounding Peterborough city centre, with one participant living in the Central ward (12.5%), two living in the West ward (25%), and one participant each living in the East ward, in Hargate and Hampsted, in Dogsthorpe, and in Bretton. Figure 25 also indicates that the Polish participants in Peterborough did not appear to be residentially clustered in any particular ward, which differed from the residential distribution of the Polish participants in Luton as 44% lived in the High Town ward in Luton. The lack of evidence of residential clustering among the Polish participants in Peterborough may be owing to the smaller sample of Polish participants that were interviewed in Peterborough than in Luton, which may have been an inadequately small sample to capture residential trends among the Polish population in Peterborough. On the other hand, it may

be owing to a dispersed Polish population throughout Peterborough with little or no residential clustering.

7.4 Housing Characteristics
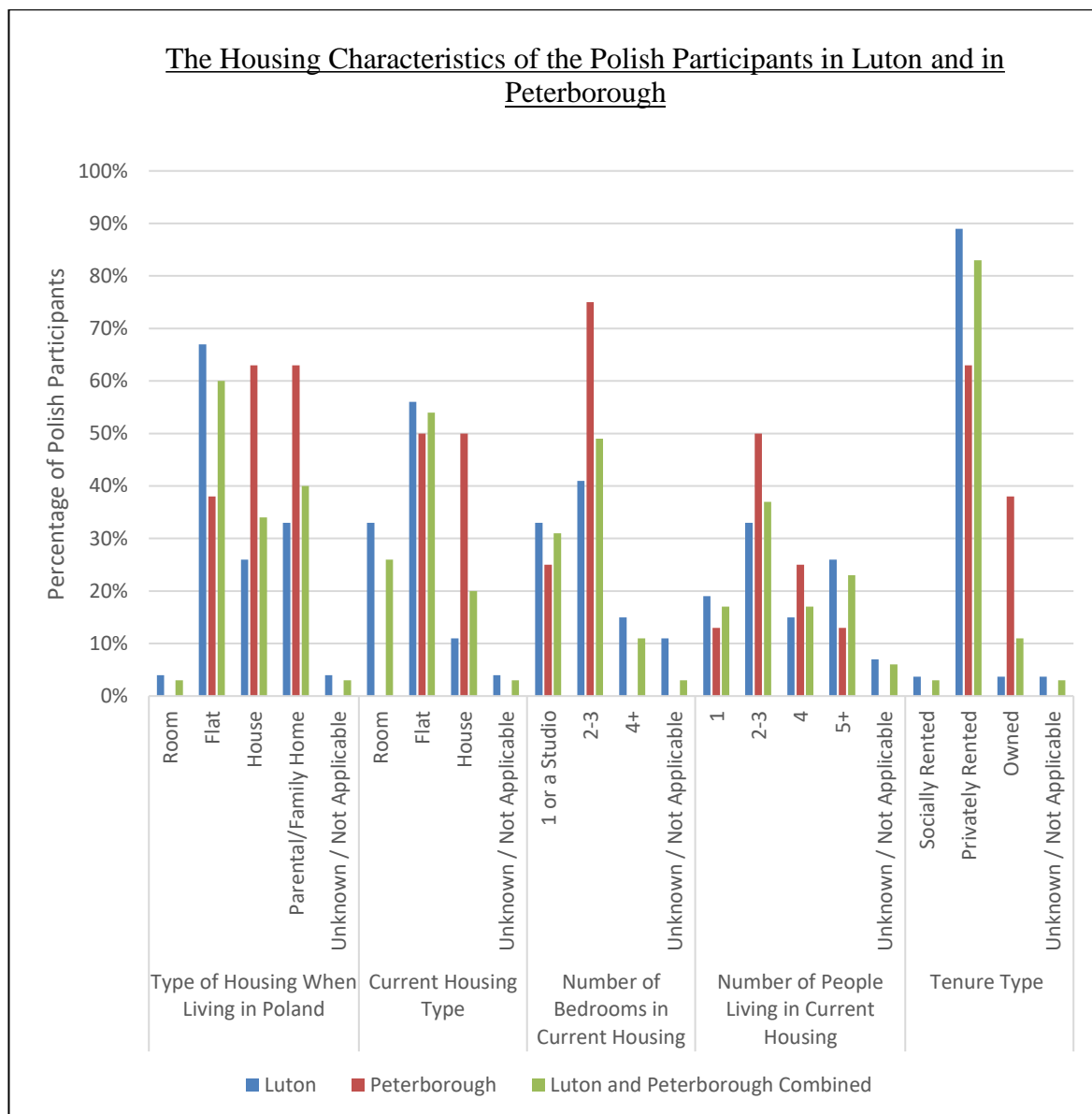
Figure 26. The housing characteristics of the Polish interview participants in Luton and in Peterborough.

Additionally, Figure 26 shows that 54% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (56% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough) were living in a flat at the time of the interviews, which interestingly could be a result of Polish national housing preferences as 60% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (67% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough) were also residing in flats when they were living in Poland before migrating to the UK. One

of the housing experts, LHE5 who worked at Luton Borough Council made a suggestion that people's aspirations in terms of their property or tenure type may be cultural. This idea, paired with the results shown in Figure 26 could suggest that the Polish participants who were living in flats in Luton and Peterborough may have potentially chosen to do so because they were used to living in that form of housing in Poland. On the other hand, the prevalence of respondents who were living in rooms within houses and in rented flats may simply be a direct result of the large rental market in Luton, which largely consists of HMOs (providing individual rooms to renters) or flats rather than whole houses.

A further 20% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (11% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough) were living in houses and again, most of these interviewees were renting their accommodation at the time of interviewing. Only 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (4% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough) owned their own homes at the time of the interviews. In Luton, the 4% consisted of one Polish participant, Angelica who owned a three-bedroom, semi-detached home in the Farley Hill area of Luton. In contrast, in Peterborough, 38% of the Polish participants (three participants) were homeowners. This indicates that a greater proportion of the Polish participants in Peterborough were homeowners than in Luton, but in both localities, homeownership among the Polish participants was less common than private renting. The fact that 66% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (93% in Luton and 63% in Peterborough) were living in rented accommodation suggests that many of the Polish participants may have been in a position in which they were economically unable to achieve homeownership in Luton at the time of the interviews. Particularly as 46% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (56% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough) said that they aspired to become homeowners in the future. This along with the dramatic increases in house prices in recent years could suggest that some Polish migrant individuals may be outpriced from being able to get onto the property ladder – an experience that is also shared by many young and non-migrant adults in the UK (Whittaker, 2017). In addition, one participant in Luton was homeless at the time of the interview and another participant in Luton was socially renting their housing within the town.

Figure 26 also indicates that 17% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough lived alone (19% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough), 37% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough (33% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough) lived in a property consisting of two or three people, 17% (15% in Luton and 25 in Peterborough) were living in accommodation comprising four people, and 24% (26% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough)

were living in a property containing five or more people. There does not appear to be a significant difference between these percentages, suggesting that the Polish participants were residing in a variety of different conditions in terms of their housing capacity and the number of people that they were sharing their housing with. Figure 26 illustrates that most of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (60%) were living in accommodation containing two or three bedrooms (56% in Luton and 60% in Peterborough), and that most were living with two or three other people within their housing (40% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough, representing 33% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough). This contrasts with the suggestion within the literature that migrants often tend to live in overcrowded housing (Spencer *et al*., 2007). It may be that some of the Polish participants in this research may have initially lived in crowded forms of housing and then progressed into less crowded housing over time, but it did not appear that the Polish participants were living in overcrowded housing conditions at the time of the interviews.

7.5 Housing Experiences

This section presents the content analysis results related to how satisfied the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough were with their housing at the time of the interviews. This is supported by a discussion of relevant extracts from the participants' narratives and is followed by an IPA discussion of the housing issues that were experienced by the Polish participants in both localities, to illuminate the lived housing experiences of the Polish participants within Luton and Peterborough.

7.5.1 Housing Satisfaction

The Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough were asked how satisfied they were with their current housing at the time of the interviews. The content analysis results are presented in Figure 27 and demonstrate that 83% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (81% in Luton and 88% in Peterborough) expressed that they were satisfied with their housing. Whereas only 14% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (15% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough) indicated that they were unsatisfied with their housing at the time of the interviews. These findings indicate that most of the Polish participants in both localities felt satisfied with their living conditions and their accommodation.
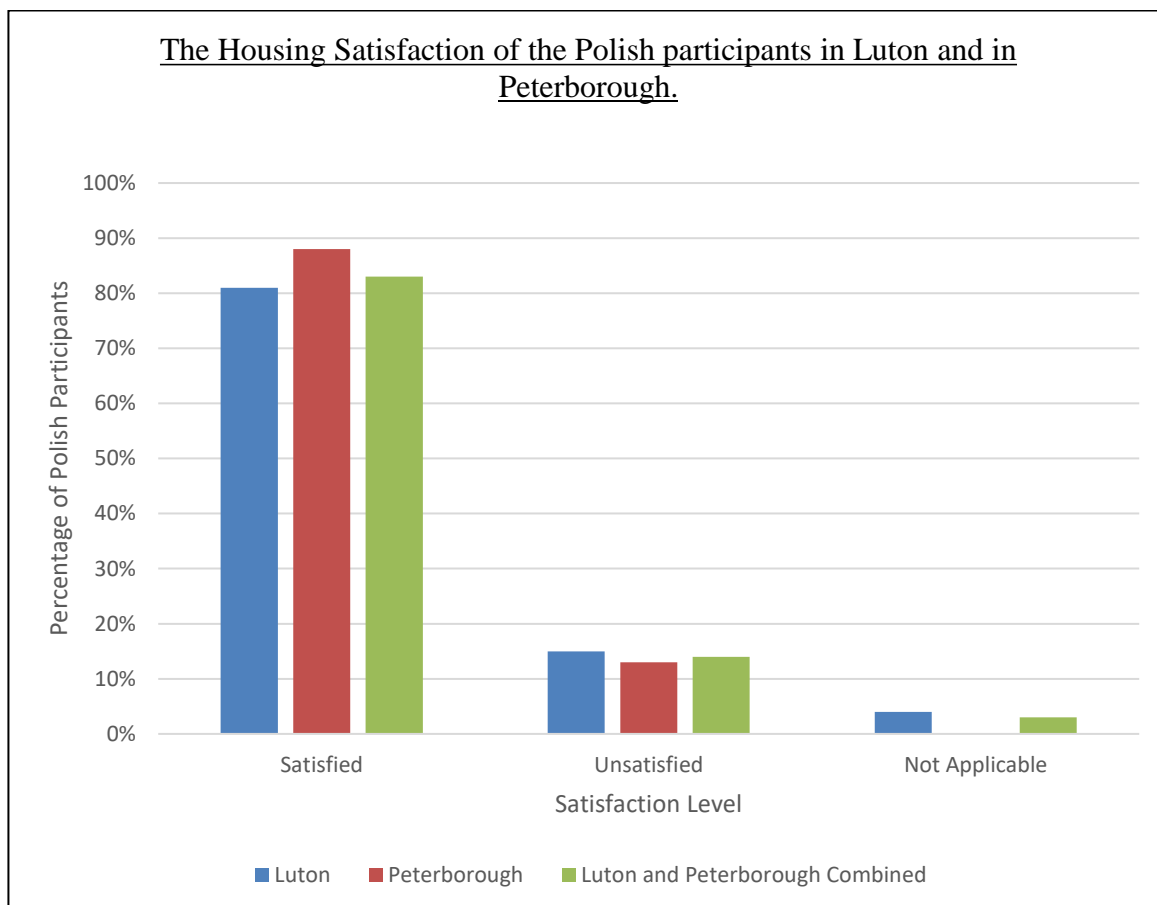
Figure 27. A graph to show how satisfied the Polish respondents in Luton and in Peterborough were with their housing at the time of the interview process.

Daria was particularly expressive in praising her housing satisfaction in the village of Streatley, near Luton, and said:

> *'Yes I love (laughs), I love my landlord, I love my house, flat! This is flat I love everything!'.*

Krzysztof also described his housing in Luton as:

> *'Really great'.*

Krzysztof also said:

> *'I've actually found really good people to live right now and I'm happy… it's um my friends house, he is the basically the owner of the house and erm it's er four-bedroom house with a basement as well and it's a really lovely place'.*

Krzysztof suggested that he was particularly fond of the interior design of the house that had been styled by his friend's fiancé.

Similarly, in Peterborough, Ewa said*:*

> *'Yeah, if I wouldn't buy a house now, I would stay there'.*

This extract suggests that Ewa was satisfied with her current housing and was only moving into another form of housing because she was in the process of becoming a homeowner by buying a different home with her partner at the time of the interview. In addition, Artek said:

> *'Yeah. Yes! because I'm living with my partner and it's nice, I am happy… I don't need a big house, I am happy when I have got this house'.*

This suggests that Artek was satisfied with his housing in Peterborough because he felt as though it was a sufficient size for him and his partner to live in and because he felt happy living in that house.

Similarly, Borys also expressed that he was satisfied with his housing because it was sufficient for him and his family and they felt happy living there. He said that he did not want to change his housing until after his children move out later in life and said that he may consider downsizing his housing in approximately twenty years' time. Borys said:

'Yeah I like it…I'm not thinking. If I want to moving, I'm moving. And it's good, you know, everything is good, feeling good. My wife feeling good, and the kids you know…So I not changing, you know? … I'm too old now and it's not thinking about the…yeah, if the kids go out, you know, like in starting to living self, then I maybe changing this to a smaller house or like a bungalow… This is plan for the next twenty years (laughs)'.

In addition, Izabela also provided an example of being satisfied with her housing in Peterborough and said:

'Yeah…I feel warm, that's a small important thing, you need to feel that your home is warm, you know? … And even my husband says maybe we going to move, and sell and move to a different house because we need more space. But I say we raised three kids here and for me it's so sad to leave… because I know the area already, you know? the neighbours and… you never know if you're going to get another house, which neighbour you're going to have you know?...They are different neighbours. So I'm happy where I am now, and I said to my husband if… the daughter is going to go to secondary school and close where (name of child) is going to go, then maybe we can think to go somewhere closer to where they are, but not for now I think, now it's too early to think about it'.

This suggests that Izabela felt satisfied in her current housing, and would feel sad to change her housing because she felt a sense of attachment to the house that she lived in with her partner and her children, as she had witnessed her children growing up in that house and that particular house held sentimental value for her. Additionally, the extract suggests that Izabela felt as though she wanted to remain in her existing housing because she did not want to risk moving elsewhere and having unsatisfactory neighbours. This implies that as well as having a sentimental attachment to her existing housing, Izabela also wanted to remain in her current housing and felt satisfied living there because it was familiar to her and she did not want to risk changing her housing and feeling unsatisfied elsewhere. However, within her extract, Izabela did say that her and her family may eventually choose to move closer to her children's secondary school in the future.

Furthermore, 14% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (15% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough) indicated that they were unsatisfied with their housing at the time of the interviews. A few participants provided details as to why they felt unsatisfied with their housing. For instance, Jedrek shared that he was unsatisfied living in rented accommodation and would have preferred to be paying a mortgage towards the cost of his own future home rather than paying rent. In contrast, Ryszard stated that he felt that his accommodation was unsatisfactory as he felt that the HMO that he was living in was a very small house, and he would have preferred to be living in larger accommodation. Małgorzata also indicated that she was unsatisfied with the size of her current housing and said:

> *'I will need a bigger house because I have three children and only two bedrooms, I need as least a three-bedroom house'.*

This demonstrates that Małgorzata would have also preferred to be living in larger in accommodation and felt as though her housing was unsatisfactory for the needs of her family, so she wanted to upsize her accommodation to improve her living situation. The aspirations that some of the Polish participants had to change their housing are also discussed in further detail in Chapter 8.

Even though 83% of the Polish participants across both localities said that they were satisfied with their current housing at the time of the interview process, 71% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough (78% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough) stated that they had experienced housing issues during their housing pathways in the UK. This could suggest that most of the housing issues that the Polish participants had experienced had been experienced in earlier forms of accommodation, and that over time, as the length of their stay in the UK increased, the living conditions of the Polish participants also improved, resulting in most feeling satisfied with their current accommodation. This theme of progressively finding better housing over time has been recurrent within the experiences of many of the Polish participants, as well aspirations for homeownership.

For example, Janusz said:

> *'Obviously at this point it would be good to try to apply to try to get a house but for now, for this moment it is satisfactory in terms of standard, price, location and convenience to get to work and back'.*

Janusz's example indicates that he was satisfied with his existing rented accommodation but aspired to purchase his own home in the future. Aspirations for homeownership are also discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 related to the future aspirations of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough.

7.5.2 Housing Issues

This subsection presents an analytical discussion of the IPA findings that related to the housing issues that were experienced by the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough; using tables to demonstrate the superordinate and subordinate themes and to show which participants experienced each form of housing issue during their housing pathways; and incorporating interview extracts to illuminate the lived experiences of the Polish participants.

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes
Housing Issues	• Sharing with others and safety concerns • Substandard housing • Subletting and precariousness • Landlord and financial issues

Table 14. The superordinate and subordinate themes related to housing experiences.

As shown in Table 14, the superordinate theme of housing issues consisted of four subordinate themes: sharing with others and safety concerns; substandard housing; subletting and precariousness; and landlord and financial issues. Table 15 indicates which Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough discussed housing issue experiences related to each theme. This indicates that 71% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (78% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough) had experienced housing issues in the UK. This suggests that most of the Polish participants across both localities had experienced housing issues within their housing pathways in the UK, and that housing issues were more common within the experiences of the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough. Table 15 is followed by a discussion of each subordinate theme, using interview extracts to illuminate the lived experiences that the participants had of each theme related to housing issues.

Study Area	Polish Participants	Sharing with others and safety concerns	Substandard housing	Subletting and precariousness	Landlord and financial issues
Luton	Mikolaj				
	Zuzanna				
	Janusz				
	Marcia				
	Andrzej	✔	✔		
	Szymon		✔	✔	
	Dawid				
	Eryk		✔		
	Patrycja	✔			✔
	Krzysztof	✔	✔		✔
	Henryk		✔		
	Ryszard	✔			
	Basile		✔		✔
	Tomasz				
	Jedrek		✔		
	Angelica		✔		
	Stanisław		✔		
	Berta			✔	
	Małgorzata	✔	✔		✔
	Milosz	✔	✔		✔
	Lukasz		✔		✔
	Kasia			✔	
	Celestyna		✔		
	Daria		✔		✔
	Oskar		✔		
	Tymon			✔	
	Marek	✔	✔		
Peterborough	Michal				
	Ewa		✔		✔
	Izabela				
	Grzegorz			✔	✔
	Agnieszka	✔			
	Oliwia	✔			
	Artek				
	Borys				

Table 15. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of housing issues.

<u>Sharing with others and safety concerns</u>

The subordinate theme of sharing with others and safety concerns was discussed by 26% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (26% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough). Multiple Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough discussed negative housing experiences owing to sharing their housing with others, suggesting that social tensions within rented properties had negatively impacted the housing experiences of multiple Polish participants within the two localities. For instance, Krzysztof commented:

'The biggest issue is just to find the right people to live with and er I had a few of those problems myself, so um I used to live with er for example Jamaican people, they're actually very lovely people er but I'm not going to lie they basically used to smoke er pot a lot and the whole house stink, and I had been living there I think only for like maybe two months and I just couldn't handle it anymore… because really it just, it just was really bad so I moved out. But except that, that actual part, they were lovely people… erm I used to live with err my colleagues from work in other accommodation and we just didn't get along, it was err just fighting and err we just basically didn't like each other once we actually started living with each other and it wasn't good. Then I used to live with err loads of students so we used to have a house on um old Bedford Road… and it's a lovely err building and um it was quite big as well I think… it was four bedrooms but it had a massive living room and a really big kitchen and erm we used to live I think there is six of us there… and um to be fair we, we all were students and we just got a long really well so…obviously there was a situation where I used to rent a property well from a landlord myself and I used to try to find some people to live with me and other issue that one of the person didn't want to pay rent… and you know so most of the issues I would say is just with the people'.

This example shared by Krzysztof shows that a lack of compatibility between people who share accommodation can be detrimental to their housing experiences. The extract also indicates that even in circumstances when the people that share accommodation are socially compatible, their habits can at times prove to be major issues for some individuals and can negatively affect their housing experiences. Additionally, within this extract, Krzysztof shared an experience that he had in which one of the people who he had sublet his rented accommodation to had refused to pay their rent. Although Krzysztof legally should not have been subletting his rented accommodation to others, he did, and then found himself in a situation where one of the people who he had sublet the housing to refused to pay any rent

to contribute to Krzysztof's wider rental payment to the landlord who owned the property, creating an unfavourable housing situation for Krzysztof which may have put in him in financial difficulty. Additionally, Andrzej shared his experience of having housing issues owing to sharing accommodation. Andrzej said:

> *'Well I would have to think about it… mmm so probably disputes with the other uhh people I used to live, that was the usual thing someone didn't do dishes and stuff like that but I wouldn't say that was that was an issue. With the landlords most of the time they were quite helpful and friendly so… or at least that was me being lucky I have never had a massive problem with any of the landlords of anywhere that I've stayed'.*

This extract suggests that although Andrzej had positive experiences with most of the landlords who he had rented his accommodation from, he had had some negative housing experiences owing to disputes with other people who he had shared rented accommodation with. The extract suggests that these disputes between Andrzej and the people who he had lived with in his shared, rented accommodation were usually owing to disagreements over cleaning responsibilities within the house.

In addition, Patrycja shared her experiences of housing issues and said:

> *'Erm just with the people which we live together that's it… but I think this is normal if a few people is with a strong character and they start to be like umm they want to put their own words in management of the house… so it's quite hard'.*

This extract suggests that Patrycja viewed her experience of sharing accommodation with others as an issue within her housing because some of the people that she had lived with had strong characters and had attempted to manage the household and the people in it by trying to enforce their own rules within the housing. This suggests that tensions were present between the people who shared the accommodation, and that Patrycja disliked individuals trying to impose household rules on her within the rented accommodation.

Furthermore, Ryszard said:

> *'I can't tell you it's not good, Polish, it's er Polish mind system, do you understand? sorry (laughs) I'm sorry. I can't tell you. (speaks to his brother in Polish)… this is hard situation, it's about the room mates, I want to kill him'.*

This suggests that Ryszard had a particular dislike towards one of the other Polish people that he and his brother were sharing their accommodation with, and he described living with that individual as a 'hard situation', suggesting that Ryszard was finding it difficult to live with that individual and that sharing with them was negatively affecting his housing experience. Within this extract Ryszard suggested that one of the reasons why he disliked sharing with that individual was because of their 'Polish mind system', and it is unclear exactly what Ryszard meant by this, but other Polish participants such as Agnieszka, Patrycja and Marcia also made comments that suggested that they thought that some Polish people have a negative mentality, are jealous, refuse to help other Polish people and heavily consume alcohol, so perhaps these views may have been what Ryszard was inferring. It is assumed that Ryszard was most likely referring to a dislike of the individual's heavy alcohol consumption, as Ryszard also added:

> *'If you want you can come with us and see what's happening ok?…(laughs)…I'll show you my friend…have you ever experienced Sunday with Polish people after the game?...there is your chance…only one look and (laughs) you will know everything'.*

Within this extract Ryszard explained that the researcher was welcome to visit his housing and view the state that his roommate was in after watching a European championship football match between Poland and Switzerland during the afternoon on the day that the interview took place on the 25th of June 2016, two days after the EU referendum occurred. The offer was declined, but it is assumed that Ryszard was implying that his roommate was heavily intoxicated owing to drinking alcohol during the football match. Because of this, it is also assumed that the reason why Ryszard disliked sharing his housing with that individual was likely to be related to the heavy consumption of alcohol.

Furthermore, Agnieszka also shared her negative housing experiences of sharing accommodation in Peterborough. Agnieszka said:

> *'Yeah (laughs) a lot of them. Definitely! Because you know when you…when you're renting a room, especially with the Polish people. Because I know when you're renting the house by the agency, the room, even the room by the agency is completely different, that you can do whatever you want in your room, you can do whatever you want in your house… they don't care, also… all the time, mostly all the time they've got a cleaner who is coming in like twice per week and you don't even have to even bother with cleaning…and when you're renting a room with the Polish people it's completely different. Completely (laughs)… so their imagination about, about yourself is that you should just go into work and coming home for sleep. That's it. You shouldn't be even cooking. Or spending the time in the living room, nothing like that…Err if it's for instance, if you were playing some music, not really loud, just like you know just to listen to some music, they are getting furious. Oh, it's so loud, too loud! turn it off…And the same with the cooking. For instance, we had this situation when we were preparing the food and umm at first we wanted to eat, because it's hot and then wanted to clean the kitchen. So there's such a…our landlady, she's getting furious with that, she was always saying that at first we are supposed to clean the kitchen and then we can eat…And situations like that are every single day'.*

And Agnieszka also added:

> *'For instance, there's a… let's say a three-bedroom house and they get in like two couples for instance and one single person; there are like five people in the house…so yeah… you need to share the bathroom, the kitchen, the dining area. So… but yeah, we've had lots of problems like that'.*

These extracts suggest that similarly to the experience shared by Krzysztof above, Agnieszka's housing issues that were related to sharing accommodation with other people resulted from subletting her housing. Within these extracts, Agnieszka explained that she felt as though she had experienced many housing issues while living in Peterborough, because the Polish people that she had sublet her accommodation from had expected her to be quiet, to clean the kitchen immediately after eating, and to make limited use of the kitchen and other common areas such as the living room. It seems as though the expectations and rules imposed by the people that she shared her accommodation with created a negative

housing experience for Agnieszka. This was similar to the experience shared by Patrycja above, as both Patrycja and Agnieszka disliked that some individuals had tried to impose household rules within their accommodation.

In addition, Marek shared his experience of housing issues related to the subordinate theme of sharing with others and safety concerns. Marek said:

> *'If you live with random people it's hard to keep a house clean because it's... yeah it's quite hard to keep a house clean, so it's also a problem sometimes that the cooker is dirty or the floor is not washed, or not vacuumed'.*

This suggests that Marek had a negative experience of sharing housing because some of the people that he shared his accommodation with did not contribute to cleaning the house, and parts of the housing became dirty and difficult to keep clean. When asked how many people he lived with, Marek said:

> *'With five other people. So we are living six people together, but the house is quite big. It is big...So... we are not gathering in a... little space... we have really a big house, so it's good'.*

This extract indicates that Marek was sharing his accommodation with five other people and felt that the accommodation space that they were renting was satisfactory for their needs. Additionally, when asked if he had ever experienced homelessness, landlord related issues or any difficulties finding housing or obtaining support, Marek said:

> *'No. I was always happy about my landlords…apart from the first situation when I was living with this family and the family appeared to be…like err pathological. Is it a good word? Do you know what I mean?...so only this. I didn't have any other problems. All of my other landlords were ok. Actually they cared, they cared only about the money, but I can't blame them for this. They always treated me fair… I didn't have any problem with them. I was paying, they, they didn't cause any problems and life was going on yeah?... if I had any problem with umm something broken they were repairing that. And that's it, they didn't offer me anything extra…so I cannot say that they were lovely or they weren't lovely. Everything was fair. This is what I can say'.*

And Marek also added:

> *'We lived there only three months because we didn't like the people we lived with… actually it was a family, but they had an issue and something was wrong with them. They were like…like err council estate blokes (laughs)… we didn't feel safe with them… they were drinking too much and didn't work…and they still had money. So we knew that umm they were all stealing or borrowing the money from somewhere… and we, actually we discovered that they were stealing and they were kind of… kind of criminals…so we didn't want to live with them anymore'.*

These extracts suggest that as well having a negative housing experience owing to the people that he was sharing his accommodation with not contributing to cleaning responsibilities, Marek had also previously had a negative housing experience owing to sharing his housing with people who drank alcohol heavily and were engaging in criminal behaviour. Within the extracts above, Marek highlighted that he did not feel safe living with those individuals, indicating that the presence of criminal activity and heavy drinking among the people who he had shared his accommodation with had made him feel uncomfortable and created safety concerns which led him to move out of that housing after a period of three months.

The experiences shared by Marek illustrate the subordinate theme of sharing with others and safety concerns under the superordinate theme of housing issues well, and other Polish participants also discussed housing issues that were related to instances of crime such as identity theft, break-ins, and violence, which had created safety concerns and negatively affected their housing experiences. For example, Berta indicated that her personal details

had been stolen and altered, which was slowing her process of potentially securing access to social housing in Luton. Berta said:

> *'I live in a room and will be in a house if the decision is yes in two weeks, but there is a complication because I have had a problem with hackers and now I have false papers. Some people used my details and gave false information so my case is more complicated'.*

And Berta also added:

> *'I would like a decision yes but I think that somebody, the police need to check what happened with my papers'.*

These extracts indicate that the unlawful behaviour of others who had apparently hacked into Berta's personal information and had stolen and changed her personal details, had resulted in Berta having incorrect documentation and had negatively affected her housing experience by potentially lessening her ability to secure housing in Luton. Berta explained that because her documentation had been altered without her consent, it had complicated and delayed the process of receiving a decision on whether she would be eligible to obtain social housing in Luton. The interview with Berta took place at a PBIC drop-in session at the Luton Irish Forum on Hitchin Road, which provided legal advice to Polish migrants every Saturday from 10am to 3pm, so it is assumed that she was seeking legal advice to help her with her documentation and housing issues.

Additionally, Małgorzata had experienced a housing issue related to the subordinate theme of sharing with others and safety concerns, as well as the subordinate theme of landlord and financial issues, as Małgorzata shared that her landlord's son had broken into her home by force. Małgorzata said:

> *'I was meant to go to Poland with my children and my landlord's son was usually picking up the money, but he was on drugs so he started fighting and smashing windows, so that was a problem with him. He was trying to enter the house by force and this is why he smashed the window and then there was a problem with getting a new one inside and that forced them to change home'.*

This is an appalling example which illustrates dreadful conduct on the part of the landlord for allowing their tenants to be subjected to violent behaviour and for failing to repair the damages caused by the landlords' own son. This example shared by Małgorzata suggests that the inappropriate behaviour and violent actions of her landlord's son had created safety concerns and had negatively impacted her housing experience, which led her to change her housing.

Crime also presented a housing issue for Milosz who shared an odd situation in which he said that his accommodation had been regularly broken into for at least three years prior to the interview, by somebody who Milosz said had checked his possessions, moved them around and had even occasionally taken certain items. He said that he had his suspicions that it was being done by the secret service, or a power that was acting above the law within Luton. Milosz commented:

> *'I don't know how and why, but somebody got a key to my room…to my flat too, private flat 2 years yeah…somebody come into my flat check my stuff yeah?... check my food yeah, its crazy…I asking agency what's happened and they say… we don't know, saying we don't know…but its happened from 3 years, every week…yeah! I am not joking yeah its like crazy like that ah (laughs)… yes every week…sometimes every day er somebody check my stuff… I don't know why… I think I know what's happened but it's a really long story and very crazy story yeah…we don't have 15 minutes for it yeah…but its working like I don't know mafia or…secret service or something like that…but I'm really tired yeah…because it's not fair yeah if somebody looking in your stuff all the time yeah'.*

And Milosz also added:

> *'Mmm I come to your room every week or every day and change everything yeah?...your laptop, your phone...your books, I don't know your t-shirts yeah is dirty or not...yeah very strange...umm sometimes....is missing some stuff yeah... yeah very bad... I don't know who has lon- hands but...it's really crazy...I don't know who has so power yeah...who is so powerful in the town...to do it, to did it yeah...without control of police yeah...or law...but somebody did it'.*

The experience provided by Milosz was certainly unusual, and understandably the regular break-ins appeared to have negatively affected his housing experience in Luton as he also said:

> *'I'm really tired yeah...because it's not fair yeah if somebody looking in your stuff all the time yeah...I come to your room every week or every day and change everything yeah? Your laptop, your phone, your books, I don't know your t-shirts'.*

Understandably he appeared to be despondent regarding the situation and sounded as though he had somewhat given up hope that the issue would be resolved.

In addition, when asked if she had experienced any housing issues in the UK, Oliwia shared her negative experience of herself and her children being victims of xenophobic abuse by her British neighbour. Oliwia said:

> *'Umm we changed our address only... that's my third house in ten years...so it's not a lot...but the house we lived previously. We were there for over seven years nearly eight years... we had an English neighbour who was a racist... a very bad racist. So she had the detention, they call it detention ok. If she would, if I would call the police once again on her she would go to jail... it was that bad... so we had some difficulties (laughs)'.*

And when asked whether the neighbour was racist towards her, Oliwia said:

> *'Yeah and my kids, and my kids…I don't think it was... She's a rac-, she was using this Polish because I'm Polish but I think she's just, she was looking for an excuse too….if that was English people probably she would do the same with them so I don't know if it was racist or not but she was just piercing…I sorted her out with the police and all that…and I just said yeah, now I can move (laughs)'.*

The experience shared by Oliwia suggests that her neighbour was abusive towards her and her children because her neighbour had xenophobic attitudes towards Polish people and wanted to create trouble for Oliwia and her family. The extracts shared by Oliwia indicate that the abusive behaviour of her neighbour towards her and her family negatively impacted her housing experience when she lived in that accommodation. Oliwia resolved the issue by reporting her neighbour to the police and moving into different accommodation with her family.

These instances of crime and safety concerns that were described by the participants above indicate that the housing experiences of some Polish migrants in Luton and Peterborough have been negatively affected by anti-social behaviour, fraud, and misconduct within the localities. These examples support the subordinate theme of sharing with others and safety concerns.

Substandard housing

The most common housing issue that was mentioned by the Polish participants was the subordinate theme of substandard housing, including properties in disrepair or in a poor state of cleanliness, such as properties containing mould or vermin. A total of 49% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (59% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough) discussed issues related to the subordinate theme of substandard housing when discussing their housing experiences. Of those participants, multiple individuals discussed issues related to the presence of mould within their housing.

Andrzej had not lived in housing containing mould himself, but said that when he was searching for a room, he had been shown some very substandard housing that was covered in mould. Andrzej said:

> *'Apart from that err the room quality if you are asking for that in Luton it seriously varies. It can be absolutely rubbish… I have never lived in such a place but I have been shown some places where there was mould everywhere and you wouldn't just step into, through a door just to stay there for more than 5 mins but then most of the places where I have lived with Polish tenants they were of quite good standard and they were always like clean and looked after so'.*

This extract highlights an example of substandard housing containing mould and illustrates that the mould and the condition of the housing was so bad that Andrzej did not want to step through the door or remain inside the property for longer than five minutes, suggesting that the conditions were intolerable. Although Andrzej had only viewed the substandard property that he discussed rather than living within these conditions himself, his example demonstrates that there are substandard properties containing mould in Luton, and other participants in this research shared their own personal experiences of living within substandard housing containing mould.

For example, as well as experiencing substandard housing conditions himself, Lukasz had worked as an interpreter for multiple organisations in Luton including the Red Cross and he explained that he had heard many people complain of substandard conditions and mould within their housing. Lukasz said:

> *'Well only from people told me because I have worked in a couple of places I have worked as an interpreter for a couple of months… and I have worked as um in Red Cross and essentially yeah people complaining of mould of you know places not being kept… and yeah I think the landlords trying to push people out…'.*

This extract suggests that multiple Polish migrants who had spoken to Lukasz while he was working as an interpreter in Luton had shared experiences of living in substandard housing conditions containing mould, and shared experiences of being evicted from their housing. Additionally, Lukasz also provided an interesting account of disrepair, mould and other substandard conditions within his own housing experiences in Luton. Lukasz said:

> *'We arranged it very quickly and it wasn't the greatest place I've ever lived…firstly it was quite small, it was a pub converted into flats. On the first glance it looked nice but um the biggest problem was I think the lack of ventilation in the place and negligence of the landlord actually the repairs in it, which caused mould to actually spread around the bedroom. Plus, being quite small, having like what two windows and the front windows didn't even open because it was on the ground floor so we just overlooked the street, so we couldn't' open the windows fully. No only open the very top kind of tiny windows and the back window and basically it got very condensated. Having no ventilation in the bathroom uh because the radiator broke, the fan broke and it wasn't replaced for about six months, it affected the flat quite badly and I was really happy to actually leave and move somewhere else'.*

This extract highlights that Lukasz had lived in a small flat within a converted pub that was poorly ventilated, in a state of disrepair and contained a lot of condensation and mould, which negatively affected his housing experience within that property. It is clear from the extract that Lukasz understandably disliked living within these substandard housing conditions, and he stated that he was *'really happy to actually leave and move somewhere else'*. The example shared by Lukasz is thought-provoking as not only does it suggest that he was subject to living in these poor conditions because of a hasty decision to secure housing rapidly in Luton, but it also suggests that his landlord was reluctant to carry out repairs in the property, which seemingly led to further issues and exacerbated his living conditions.

Other participants said that they had encountered many examples of substandard housing while they were viewing properties but had not actually rented any low-quality housing themselves. For example, Stanisław said:

> *'I spent like month to find good property…because some property, especially on the Bury park Road that is really bad and its very bad condition…so I try found the best one and I found that one upstairs…which is really nice flat'.*

This extract indicates that Stanisław viewed multiple substandard properties during a one-month period before he found housing that he thought was satisfactory in Luton. This suggests that migrant individuals such as Stanisław that have the luxury of time to conduct a lengthy property search are more likely to be able to reject substandard housing conditions and to continue searching until they locate a satisfactory property. Whereas others such as Lukasz, who secure accommodation in haste, may unfortunately be subject to remain in low quality housing conditions for the duration of their tenancies.

Additionally, Krzysztof shared his experience of living in housing containing substandard conditions and mould. Krzysztof said:

> *'To be fair um well the condition of the house if we are talking about that obviously the first place I lived wasn't the best, it had a bit of mould err in the bathroom and it wasn't like the newest place so it did probably take me a while to get used to it, err but it, it wasn't really like a new house and it wasn't nice…um then err when I try to find different places I was always trying to check if its mouldy…if its err nice so erm I was a bit picky with the houses and the condition after the first place were much much better I would say'.*

This extract demonstrates that Krzysztof felt that the first property that he had lived in within Luton was substandard as he said that it *'wasn't the best'*, *'wasn't the newest place'* and *'wasn't nice',* implying that conditions within the house were unsatisfactory and that the property was quite old. Additionally, Krzysztof explained that there was mould in the bathroom and that it took him a while to get used to living in the property, further highlighting substandard housing conditions, and suggesting that it was difficult for him to adjust to living in these substandard conditions. Krzysztof's negative housing experience was also highlighted by his comment that when he searched for subsequent housing after moving out of that property containing mould, he always tried to check if the new prospective housing contained mould and became *'picky'* regarding the conditions of his subsequent housing choices, suggesting that he did not want to live in similar substandard

conditions again after leaving that property and actively sought better housing conditions. And at the end of the extracts Krzysztof confirmed that the houses that he had lived in since leaving that property containing mould have all been *in 'much better'* condition, suggesting that he had experienced upward residential mobility and that the quality of his housing in Luton had improved over time.

Furthermore, Jedrek shared his experiences of living in substandard housing conditions in Luton. When asked if he had ever experienced any housing issues in Luton, Jedrek said:

> *'Dump…(nods)…I think is a normal (laughs) normal answer…and then ants, mouse…no, it dumps problem it was two places, two houses…umm stockwood…and then Oak Road or the Bury Park you call it…and the ants was most of the Oak Road, the Bury park area…mouse…it was on Oak Road and then on Stockwood…but nothing else no big issues'.*

And when asked for greater detail regarding why he perceived two of the properties that he had lived in in Luton to be substandard, Jedrek said:

> *'The mould…and the smell and…I don't feel comfortable'.*

Within these extracts, Jedrek shared that he had lived in two houses that he had considered to be *'dumps',* owing to substandard conditions within the properties. He also elaborated that these two properties in the Bury Park and the Stockwood Park areas of Luton had contained mould, a foul odour and infestations of ants and mice, which are clearly undesirable conditions to reside in and made him feel uncomfortable to live there.

Milosz also shared his experiences of living in substandard housing conditions containing mould. Milosz said:

> *'Err when you rent a room…you join house with Polish umm alcoholics…yeah is problem… er with conditions er houses here is a big problem with err wet…wet areas…and mushrooms…yeah…on wall…because err landlords…often don't, don't like pay for heating…and heating in winter is only few hours…and that walls wet all the time yeah'.*

And when asked whether he had seen conditions of mould in many properties in Luton, Milosz said:

> *'Yeah, in Luton many…and it's really often problem with landlords yeah…if you, mmm if you rent only one er room yeah?... and er landlord rent that house from agents yeah?... and he want to make money because he had, he has few houses…and its er for business him yeah?... he often don't pay for heating enough'.*

These extracts further imply that there are many properties in Luton that are in a substandard condition, with issues of condensation and mould. Milosz revealed that he had experienced issues with substandard housing conditions and sharing with others in Luton owing to living with Polish alcoholics and living in a property containing condensation and mould. Within these extracts Milosz also suggested that mould can sometimes occur owing to a reluctance by some landlords to heat properties sufficiently and shared that he had experienced his landlord limiting his household heating during the winter to only a few hours per day.

Additionally, Celestyna shared her experience of living in substandard housing conditions with mould, which had affected her health. Celestyna revealed that she had first lived in a four-bedroom terraced house in the Bury Park area of Luton, and later rented a two-bedroom terraced house with a friend on St. Monicas Avenue in the Biscot area of Luton. Subsequently, Celestyna rented a two-bedroom flat with a friend in a private estate called the Larches on Old Bedford Road in Luton which had contained a lot of mould. Celestyna said that her living conditions within that housing made her very ill and forced her to move out of the property after a few months. An image of the Larches private estate obtained using Google Street View on the 18th of August 2022 is shown in Plate 3 for reference.

Plate 3. The Larches private estate on Old Bedford Road, Luton. (Google Street View, 2022).

Celestyna said:

> *'I started to rent a flat on that the Larches...which I got really ill after that and I needed to move out'.*

And Celestyna also commented:

> *'We were really short in there because of the mould and everything...a few months... the whole bathroom and the whole one bedroom was with the mould...err one wall and then it goes to the my bedroom as well'.*

These extracts illustrate the severity of the mould and substandard housing conditions within the flat that Celestyna had previously lived in on the Larches private estate, as Celestyna explained that the entire bathroom and an entire bedroom was covered in mould, and that

the mould had also spread through to the second bedroom where she slept. Shockingly, the conditions of mould were seemingly so bad that they affected Celestyna's health, and so after a few months of living in the substandard conditions, Celestyna moved out into a flat on Crawley Road in Luton (which contained mice), and later moved into a flat in the High Town area of Luton, which was her housing at the time of the interview. These extracts highlight Celestyna's experiences of living within substandard housing conditions in Luton and illustrate that mould is not only an unpleasant visual feature within properties that negatively affects people's experiences of living in housing, but that it can also be detrimental to health and should be regarded as a serious health issue. The fact that so many of the Polish participants shared experiences of living in accommodation containing mould is worrying and supports literature suggestions that migrants are often found to live in low-quality housing (Spencer, *et al.*, 2007; Soaita *et al.*, 2020; Mogilnicka, 2022).

Other participants shared experiences of substandard housing conditions that were related to property that was in a poor state of repair. For instance, Ewa explained that she had experienced a housing issue when her boiler had broken down and her landlord had taken a few days to repair the issue. Additionally, Eryk said that the student accommodation that he had secured online whilst living in Poland appeared to be in a far better condition on the website images than it was in reality when he arrived in Luton. He said that when he arrived in his housing he was met with an array of issues that were in need of repair including broken furniture, heating issues and substandard window seals. Eryk commented:

> *'Actually like a cold draft usually during the winter was going through the window…because it was like wasn't sealed properly, err sometimes the radiator was going crazy sometimes it was very cold and sometimes it was boiling…and the problem is I had like a, a bed right next to the radiator…so sometimes I could put my leg on the radiator…like I'd burn, like yeah they didn't think about it too well but never mind…'.*

And Eryk also added:

> *'I got to see the picture on the website and it looked much better…than actually the accommodation itself…So I was like, yeah even the guy who came to my accommodation he was like oh we like refurnish it and redecorate it. I was like… seriously?...like the whole like uh cupboard was barely keeping like together…in pieces again so I was like my gosh, but it wasn't that bad once I move some of my stuff around it…and pictures, it was much better then'.*

These extracts suggest that Eryk was disappointed with the condition of his housing when he first arrived in Luton, because many items were in disrepair and because the condition of his housing did not match what he was expecting based on the images that he had seen of the accommodation online prior to migrating to the UK. Additionally, the extracts revealed that the poor condition of some items negatively affected Eryk's experience of living within the property, such as the broken seal on the window which resulted in the accommodation being very cold in the winter.

Additionally, Szymon shared his experience of living within substandard, unclean housing conditions. Szymon said:

> *'Umm standard… between one house and next time is very big… I think… England make very big errr what is… (shouts in Poland for translation help from a friend)… mistake…I tell you, if I working from an agency I can take house… we go to Pakistanis, to Hindi and they give me my house, room but this is illegal…I think, because they no pay to England tax…tThey take money to pocket….I now, I have legal because I have… my landlord is legal I have a book, housing book and it's ok. Now I have very clean house, very bad before I had very dirty, very'.*

At the beginning of this extract Szymon highlighted that in his experience conditions varied within housing in Luton. Szymon also explained that he was previously subletting a room within a house from some Pakistani people in Luton and that the sublet housing was in very poor condition compared to the very clean and legally rented housing that he was living in at the time of the interview. This could suggest that legally rented properties may be more likely to be in a good condition, whereas sublet properties may be more likely to be in a

substandard condition. This extract also suggests that Szymon experienced upward residential mobility over time as he was eventually able to move out of the substandard sublet housing into better quality, legally rented accommodation.

In addition, when describing his housing at the time of the interview, Henryk said:

> *'The quality of this house is just awful…it's old and… just old. You know dirty, it needs… I mean it's dirty by the, because it's old you know?... everything needs to be redecorated, but landlord don't have the money and he don't have any… he just don't want to redecorate it…now we planning to move soon'.*

This extract indicates that Henryk disliked his housing conditions and wanted to move into different accommodation because he felt as though his housing was old, dirty and was in need of refurbishment.

Furthermore, when sharing details of her housing experiences in Luton, Daria explained that the second housing that she had lived in within Luton was on William Street in the High Town area, and that within that housing she had a Polish landlord who limited her use of the washing machine, water, lighting, and heating. She also discussed substandard conditions within that housing, explaining that the housing had contained condensation, mould and a large hole in the kitchen wall. For instance, Daria showed the researcher a photo of the hole in the wall in her previous housing and said:

> *'Yeah, this is kitchen…everywhere this is, this is down yeah (implying that the hole was close to the ground)…it's everywhere…this is my second house on William street…this is horrible…and everywhere mould yeah?...it's not nice smell…er water, sometimes water er fall (did an action as if water was trickling down a wall)'.*

Additionally, Marek shared his experience of living in substandard housing conditions and was one of a few participants who said that they had experienced issues with vermin within their housing. Marek said:

> *'I don't know it's value for price. I always rent, apart from, well… it's value for price. If you expect more, you pay more, you get more…if you want to save some money, you take whatever they offer. My room is spacious and I like it. It's not expensive. The house is err old and umm quite neglected, but it's still fine for me because I can save money for something else right now. And I'm happy because I have a spacious room…I know that I could get something better for bigger money, but I prefer spending that money for someone else'.*

In addition, when asked what he was referring to when he said that the house was neglected, Marek said:

> *'Actually everything, because the furniture is old. The furniture is randomly brought from somewhere'.*

And Marek also said:

> *'Actually sometimes we have a problem with rats. In such houses, in terraced houses. Err maybe the rats spread from one house to another by attics or something….but especially during err during winters they appear…maybe… somebody explained to me that it's because it's cold outside so they want to err find a warm shelter… and I live on Cromwell Road. Cromwell Road is close to New Bedford Road and along New Bedford Road there is a river…A small river… so the river is also full of rats and umm maybe this err short distance from the river makes…err causes the problem with rats…actually I don't like rats yeah! laughs)…And we are trying to kill them if only they appear… but in a house when I lived in Poland we don't have problem with rats. Sometimes they appear in umm cellars, in basements, in the basement, but I lived on the first floor, or second floor. One of my flats is on the first and one of my flats is on the second floor. So we don't have a problem in flats with rats'.*

Within these extracts Marek stated that housing is *' value for price'* and said *'if you expect more, you pay more, you get more'* suggesting that those who have higher expectations and can afford to pay more for their housing are more likely to obtain better quality and more

spacious housing, and those who cannot afford to pay more for their housing may be outpriced from better quality and more spacious accommodation and may have to settle for smaller housing with substandard conditions. Marek also said *'If you want to save some money, you take whatever they offer'*, further suggesting that those who cannot afford to pay more for their housing may have to settle for the housing that is available to them, even if it does not match their expectations and contains substandard conditions. Additionally, that statement suggests that for some, settling for smaller, lower quality housing that is more affordable may be an active choice to save more money and spend less on housing as suggested by Soaita *et al*. (2020). Within the extracts, Marek also highlighted that the housing that he lived in on Cromwell Road in Luton contained old furniture, was a neglected property, and sometimes had problems with rats, which Marek thought was owing to the proximity of the property to a river. And Marek said: *'I know that I could get something better for bigger money, but I prefer spending that money for someone else'*. These comments demonstrate that Marek had experienced substandard housing conditions within his housing in Luton and suggest that although he could have afforded to move into better housing, he had made an active decision to remain in that housing, despite it being substandard, because he wanted to save money and preferred to use the money for other purposes rather than to spend it on upgrading his housing standards.

Interestingly, although almost half of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (49%) discussed housing issues related to the subordinate theme of substandard housing such as housing in disrepair or housing containing mould, all of the participants who discussed this theme, other than Ewa in Peterborough were participants in Luton. The fact that 59% of the Polish participants in Luton discussed experiences of substandard housing issues during their housing pathways suggests that substandard housing that is in poor condition with issues of mould, vermin, uncleanliness, or disrepair is a common occurrence in the town and is common within the housing pathways of multiple Polish migrants in Luton. Additionally, the fact that sixteen out of the seventeen Polish participants who discussed experiences of substandard housing in the UK were Polish participants in Luton, and only one was in Peterborough suggests that issues of substandard housing are more prevalent within the housing pathways of Polish migrants in Luton than in Peterborough.

Subletting and precariousness

In total 14% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (15% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough) discussed the subordinate theme of subletting and precariousness when discussing the housing issues that they had experienced in the UK. Four Polish participants in Luton (15%) discussed housing issues related subletting and precariousness. For example, as also discussed above under the theme of substandard housing, Szymon shared details of his experience of subletting properties in Luton. Szymon said:

> *'I have contract, which before I haven't contract (whispers)… I show you in the start I come in…I have house from Pakistanis…I haven't contract… Council tell me you can take housing benefit…But I haven't no'.*

And Szymon also said:

> *'But we can't take from legal from an agency or from a landlord because (they) ask have you contract with your work? I haven't because I work in agency). I can't take my house'.*

These extracts indicate that when Szymon first arrived in Luton, he found employment through an agency and did not have a permanent employment contract. As a result, it appears that he was unable to rent housing through legal, formal channels from an agency or from a landlord, because when he tried to obtain accommodation using these means he was asked for details of his employment contract, which he did not have. Additionally, it appears that Luton Borough Council offered Szymon the possibility to receive housing benefits, although his extract suggests that he was unable to claim the housing benefits. When asked for further details, Szymon confirmed that he could not access housing benefits because he did not have a legal tenancy contract to reside in the accommodation that he was subletting, and was therefore deemed to be ineligible to access housing benefits. Szymon added:

> *'I show, Council give me letter for my landlord. I take this letter and show my landlord and he (makes a ripping gesture as if breaking into +small pieces)… Council speak your landlord come in here…but life is! (shrugs shoulders as if saying but that is life!)'.*

This extract suggests that to obtain housing benefits, Szymon needed to show a legal rental contract to Luton Borough Council, and it seems as though the Council provided Szymon with a letter to provide to his landlord to confirm that he was renting the property legally, but as he was subletting his housing, the person who had unlawfully sublet the housing to him ripped the letter up and refused to help Szymon. Owing to the lack of a legal rental contract, and the fact that the individual who sublet the property to Szymon refused to talk to the Council, Szymon was unable to obtain housing benefits. Szymon explained that he sublet multiple properties in Luton because he was unable to obtain a legal tenancy without proof of an employment contract, and he did not have an employment contract for the agency work that he was employed in at that time. However, at the time of the interview, Szymon was living in legally rented housing, which he said had become possible for him to do because he had started to receive a pension and a disability allowance following an accident at work and was now able to rent accommodation legally. This is highlighted in the following extract:

> *'This house is first where I have contract (talking about his current property)…Why? Because now I have pension credit. I have disability after the accident…yeah and I haven't any problem yeah'.*

Within the extracts shared by Szymon, it is evident that he disliked living in sublet accommodation as he described it as 'very dirty'. Szymon's lived experience highlights the fact that individuals who are employed on an ad hoc, cash-in-hand, or casual basis and do not have a formal employment contract, such as temporary agency workers, and those on zero-hour contracts may be excluded from accessing secure, legally rented accommodation and may be forced to informally sublet housing. This was also highlighted by Ball, Hampton, Kamerade and Richardson (2017), as their report revealed that temporary agency work and zero-hour contracts are strongly linked to issues such as housing problems, and that temporary agency workers and zero-hour contract workers often experience poverty, which

can lead to debt and accommodation issues. The report states that temporary agency work does not offer employees long term prospects of better or permanent jobs and offers workers insecurity rather than flexibility, including an inability to plan financially and limited access to secure housing such as housing with a tenancy agreement or a mortgage (Ball *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, the experience shared by Szymon also highlights that there are eligibility requirements to access benefits, and that individuals must meet those requirements to access public funds and receive financial assistance. This links to the work of Grysel-Fieldsned and Reeve (2007) who found that Polish migrants in Sheffield had restricted access to welfare benefits and that their housing security was dependent upon maintaining their employment.

Furthermore, Grzegorz shared his experiences of subletting housing in Peterborough. Grzegorz said:

'Loads! (laughs)…well… the sub-letting related ones, it's always the same story; the landlord expects you to sleep and go out to work; you're not supposed to have any social life, no friends, no music, no hobbies… so it was always a problem. Because I'm quite a loud person; I have motorbikes, loud music et cetera…so it was like…every few months or so we had to move form one room to another and then the same story over and over again'.

Within the interview Grzegorz revealed that every room that he had rented in Peterborough prior to obtaining a flat with his girlfriend via an agency had been sublet, and he explained that the Polish people who he sublet his housing from usually lived within the properties as well and would regularly ask him to leave their properties at short notice, such as within a one-week notice period. This example demonstrates that as sublet properties are being rented unlawfully, are not formally regulated, and do not have legal rental contracts, the people who sublet the properties are unlikely to follow legal procedures for eviction processes, and informal sublet housing is likely to be more unstable and precarious than formal, legal privately or socially rented accommodation. Therefore, individuals who reside in sublet housing are at greater risk of being evicted at short notice and at a greater risk of homelessness than individuals who formally and legally rent their private or social housing.

In addition, multiple participants shared housing experiences which suggested that they were in a precarious position in the housing market. For example, Berta shared her experience of waiting for a decision on whether she would be able to access social housing and facing difficulties owing to problems with her documentation. Berta said:

> *'I will be getting a house for the first time in 2 weeks, I am still waiting for a decision so I am here today so that they can help me. And now he will write to the court and tell them that I still don't have a letter with my decision, so today I come here to ask him'.*

And when asked whether she was living in a house, Berta said:

> *'No I live in a room and will be in a house if the decision is yes in 2 weeks, but there is a complication because I have had a problem with hackers and now I have false papers. Some people used my details and gave false information so my case is more complicated'.*

Additionally, when asked whether she had experienced any issues with her housing other than the issue with the hackers affecting her documentation, Berta said:

> *'Yes yes, because I would like a decision yes but I think that somebody… the police needs to check what happened with my papers because after 3 months, next time it come to me the same so I said no why again and again something is wrong? So I think that the police have to check it'.*

These extracts suggest that Berta was in an uncertain position regarding her housing, as she was hoping to be successful in obtaining social housing, but was awaiting a decision, and was worried that the decision was being negatively affected by a problem with her documentation, as she said that her personal details had been altered by hackers. Therefore,

Berta was unsure whether she would be successful in obtaining social housing, and was left in an uncertain position, awaiting the outcome of the pending decision.

In addition, Kasia's narrative suggested that she was in a precarious position in the housing market, as she explained that she was being evicted from her housing in Houghton Regis. Kasia said:

> *'Um agency…er they give me the umm letter umm which they I must move…mmm move out you know?... and now I'm a single mum and er they don't give me the reason why and umm I would like um I don' t know how to say er, I don't know which problem they have with me…because I pay rent every month, really I don't know what happened…and really I don't want to move to another area, away from er nice neighbour and they help me a lot… and really I don't want to move'.*

And Kasia also commented:

> *'When I split out with my husband…he… because we renting this house me and his name you know?...and this is the problem when he move out…and agency don't like give me the mmm tenancy agreement under my name…yeah because I work only part-time…and I don't have too much money to rent this house'.*

These extracts suggest that Kasia was being evicted from her housing because when she had originally started living in the property, her husband was named as the person who was officially renting the house. Subsequently, since Kasia and her husband had separated, the agency had informed Kasia that she had to move out because she was not named as the legal tenant. In addition, the agency claimed that they were unable to offer her a tenancy agreement in her own name as she worked part-time, and although she had been paying her rent every month, the agency claimed that she did not earn a sufficient income to be able to rent the house. From these extracts it appears that Kasia was worried about her uncertain position in the housing market and the prospect of facing eviction. Kasia stated that she was a single mother and did not want to move to other housing or to a different area, partly because she had a nice neighbour who assisted her greatly, suggesting that she may have

been worried about moving away from her neighbour as a source of support. It was unclear at the time of the interview whether Kasia and her children would be evicted. Eviction seemed like the most likely outcome for Kasia, however, the interview with Kasia took place at one of the regular PBIC drop-in sessions that occurred at the Luton Irish Forum in Luton that provided legal assistance for Polish individuals, so it is possible that Kasia may have been helped to remain in her housing following the interview.

Furthermore, Tymon was interviewed at the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre in Luton and explained that he had lost his job in construction two years prior to the interview and had since been obtaining money through illicit means by drug dealing and engaging in fraud. Additionally, Tymon explained that he had lost his identification and his accommodation in Luton and had been sofa surfing for two months. When asked about his experience of being homeless, Tymon said:

> *'Err two months…but I have place to sleep, I no living on street, I just coming here because I don't have job nothing yeah'.*

And when asked if he had people to stay with, Tymon said:

> *'Yeah yeah yeah but after two weeks I going to a park'.*

These extracts indicate that Tymon had been sofa surfing and rough sleeping and suggest that Tymon initially stayed with some social ties in Luton for two weeks after becoming homeless, and then later began sleeping in a park in the town. At the time of the interview, Tymon said that he was not sleeping rough and was receiving assistance from the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre to help him to sort out his identification documentation such as his passport so that he would be able to return to Poland and complete a five-year prison sentence for fraud. The experience shared by Tymon highlights his precarious position in the housing market, as although he indicated that he had a place to sleep, it appeared that he had previously been sleeping rough and engaging in sofa surfing, and it did not appear that he was living in stable accommodation. Additionally, Tymon's example highlights the instability and risks associated with undertaking illicit forms of obtaining income.

The experiences discussed within this subsection illustrate that some of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough had experienced housing issues owing to subletting properties within the localities, and some were in a precarious position in the housing market facing housing issues such as eviction, homelessness and potentially being rejected for social housing.

<u>Landlord and financial issues</u>

In total 26% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (26% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) discussed housing issues related to the subordinate theme of landlord and financial issues. Some of these participants claimed that their landlords had restricted their access to services during their tenancies which was detrimental to their housing experiences. For instance, Daria said that her Polish landlord in her first accommodation in Luton had restricted the heating within her housing and her access to the washing machine by only allowing her to wash her clothes once a week. Daria said:

> *'Erm this is Polish landlord yeah?...Polish er this is er Polish landlord, problem its… I don't know, one, one er per week washing machine…only one er wash yeah…one per week… err it's very, very cold its landlord close er…mmm……heat, my god this is er its I don't know it's me life only five months maybe…it's er yeah five months its…it's problem this big problem'.*

And when asked if her landlord had turned her heating off, Daria said:

> *'It's very very expensive house yeah…very nice, very beautiful, is very clean house…very expensive, three er three years before yeah its I don't know is maybe er maybe seven, seventy five pounds every week…this is very expensive, now is sometimes 65 er per week, its everything er no water…no open water, no er no light nothing this is not not not nice'.*

These extracts suggest that Daria was living in conditions with no heating and limited use of water and lighting for a period of approximately five months. This example also

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demonstrates that it is not only British landlords who can present an issue to newly arrived migrants in Luton, and that there are substandard and exploitative Polish landlords as well.

Similarly, Milosz also experienced an issue with his landlord restricting the heating within his accommodation and shared his experience. Milosz said:

> *'Err when you rent a room… you join house with Polish umm alcoholics… yeah is problem… er with conditions er houses here is a big problem with err wet… wet areas… and mushrooms…on wall… because err because err landlords… often don't, don't like pay for heating… and heating in winter is only few hours… and that walls wet all the time yeah'.*

And when asked whether he had seen those sorts of conditions in many places in Luton, Milosz said:

> *'Yeah, in Luton many…and its really often problem with landlords yeah… if you, mmm if you rent only one er room yeah? and er landlord rent that house from agents yeah?... and he want to make money because he had, he has few houses…And its er for business him yeah?...he often don't pay for heating enough'.*

These extracts illustrate that there may be an unwillingness among some landlords to pay heating costs within their rented properties. This could force their tenants to live in unsatisfactory, cold conditions and could be damaging to their health if a lack of appropriate heating provision contributes to the spread of mould within properties. The accounts that the Polish participants shared regarding their experiences of living in substandard accommodation in Luton suggest that more needs to be done to improve the quality of rented accommodation within the town.

In addition, Oskar said that he had experienced housing issues owing to certain letting agencies taking too long to repair items within his accommodation. Lukasz also commented on the long length of time that it had taken his landlord to make repairs. Lukasz said:

> *'It gets very condensated…having no ventilation in the bathroom, uh because the radiator broke, the fan broke and it wasn't replaced for about six months it affected the flat quite badly…and I was really happy to actually leave and move somewhere else…to somewhere modern'.*

Oskar's and Lukasz's examples suggest that delays or refusals for landlords or agencies to make repairs within accommodation can negatively affect housing experiences and can worsen conditions within housing.

Further negative experiences shared by multiple Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough that were related to landlord and financial issues included discussions of expensive administration fees and a lack of willingness by landlords to return their accommodation deposits. For example, when describing housing issues, Lukasz said:

> *'I think the biggest problems err with landlords is they try to get people out when they don't pay rents and this there's there's hardly any understanding of the law…but my landlord everything was done from the law but I think the biggest problem was it is very unclear if the landlord actually pays the deposit money into the deposit scheme…and I think I had a problem and the landlord, when I was moving out from the old flat they were demanding quite a lot of money for the repairs that…that she wanted to do at the end which I didn't really believe she is going to do…it was a bit ridiculous but at the end of the day I noticed that you know whatever confirmation we've got that she's going to put the money in the deposit scheme wasn't actually true…and I used it as a bargaining tool and gained another hundred pounds from the deposit'.*

And when discussing the legal requirement for landlords who rent their properties to tenants on assured shorthold tenancies (as of the 6th of April 2012) to protect a tenant's deposit within a deposit protection scheme and to provide the tenant with prescribed information within 30 days of the start of the tenancy or be liable to face the need to provide the tenant with compensation that amounts to three times the amount of the deposit, Lukasz said:

> *'I didn't know about this until recently that you can do that…claim that compensation but a lot of landlords tell you that they've put stuff in…but then they don't actually do it…and I've seen that in Scotland when I think the last place I lived in, or the last two or three places, when the money wasn't actually in the deposit scheme and it was handled err withdraw of the deposit for the deposit scheme…I've never seen it here and I've lived in, as I say the third place…I think that the place I'm living now hopefully they have put stuff in but I have been contacted by the deposit scheme at least I don't remember being contacted'.*

Within these extracts, Lukasz explained that the landlord of the substandard property that he had rented had tried to withhold his deposit money at the end of his tenancy to pay for repairs, but was eventually persuaded to return £100 of the deposit when Lukasz discovered that the landlord had failed to protect his deposit in a deposit protection scheme, which is a legal requirement. This suggests that not only was Lukasz subjected to living in substandard conditions for the length of his tenancy because of his landlord's reluctance to repair the property, but he was then also expected to fund the repairs when his tenancy had ceased. Furthermore, his account shows that his landlord had failed to abide by the law by failing to protect Lukasz's deposit in a deposit protection scheme and failing to provide Lukasz with the prescribed information relating to the protection of his deposit. Although Lukasz was successful in regaining £100 from his deposit, he would have been entitled to a compensation sum amounting to up to three times the total value of his deposit by law owing to the landlords' misconduct; a sum that he could have claimed had he been aware of his rights and the legal regulations. Lukasz's experience is an excellent example of migrant and tenant exploitation by some landlords that can often go unnoticed by local authorities. His experience also illustrates that a lack of legal knowledge and a lack of knowledge about rights can subject migrants to discriminatory conditions and leave them in a detrimental position. Similar to Lukasz, Krzysztof described his experience of his deposit being withheld by a landlord. Krzysztof said:

> *'When I used to live in Stathmore Avenue with, we still as a student er we rent the place and er the landlord didn't want to give or deposit back even though the place was really um, we actually give it back the way we took it almost, so there were like a few, few things but not major but he said he's not going to give us the deposit back and that was the biggest issue probably with him… so yeah, except that err most of the properties were quite alright, and when I used to rent a place myself the agency was quite good I had a few err problems with the pipes with leaking water but they sorted it out really quickly so…I can't really say anything bad about them'.*

This extract indicates that Krzysztof believed that he had left the property that he had rented in almost the same condition as when he had first moved in, but that despite this, his landlord had wanted to keep his full deposit. In addition, Patrycja also had her deposit withheld by her landlord and said:

> *'My second landlord didn't want to give me deposit…and I didn't know anything about English law, how this looks, I didn't know the language on that level which I know now so… um like I say I didn't know where to go or something, what I should do…so I just end up, I just lost the money that's it but after time I get to know this so I didn't have much problem'.*

This extract shows that Patrycja's landlord kept her full deposit against her wishes, and that Patrycja did not feel able to question or prevent her landlord from keeping her deposit because she had limited English language abilities and no knowledge of UK law at that time. This echoes the suggestion made by The Glasgow Housing Association (2008) that language barriers and a lack of information can place migrants in a vulnerable position within the housing market. These examples suggest that there is a lack of clear guidance within the Polish community in Luton as to their rights in the property market, the way in which deposits should be handled by landlords and how tenants should dispute unjust claims to withhold deposits. Patrycja's example illustrates that newly arrived migrants may particularly benefit from increased guidance regarding their rights, UK laws and where they can obtain assistance, as language barriers and a lack of knowledge about the legal system in the UK may leave migrants subject to discrimination within the housing market and could negatively affect their housing experiences.

Additionally, Basile expressed an issue with the costs involved in securing housing via a letting agent. Basile said that he was required to pay a very expensive administration fee because he was told by his letting agent that he had to pay double the usual amount because he was living with his girlfriend. Apparently, according to the agency in question, if Basile and his partner had been married then it would have cost them less, but as they were an unmarried couple they were expected to pay two separate administration fees to rent one flat together. They were then asked to pay a deposit on top of that cost which meant that it was a lot more expensive to rent the property than the couple had originally expected. This account shared by Basile suggests that certain agency rules may be geared towards making as much profit as possible out of their prospective customers, rather than working in the interest of migrant tenants. It is possible that certain regulations were overlooked to extract more money from the couple, who were assumed to know little about legal regulations in the UK. Again, this implies that there is a lack of knowledge among some Polish migrants in Luton about legal requirements and rights, which may place them in detrimental situations within the housing market. In addition, Basile said:

> *'Our landlord is from er Greece…so its little easier I think…little easier but my friend she had little situation when she wanted to err rent house…four or five bedrooms and er I'm not sure but probably it was English landlord and he said he don't want to rent to Polish people'.*

This extract suggests that some landlords are discriminatory in their selection or rejection of tenants and may base their decision on whether to rent their properties to certain individuals based on their nationalities.

Private landlords are required to carried out right to rent checks on all prospective tenants before a tenancy commences, and Shelter (2022) states that to have the right to rent, prospective tenants must satisfy any of the following points:

- The individual is a British or Irish citizen
- The individual has indefinite leave to remain
- The individual has refugee status or humanitarian protection
- The individual has settled or pre-settled status under the EUSS
- The individual has permission to be in the UK e.g., on a work or a student visa
- The Home Office has granted the individual a time limited right to rent

And Shelter (2022) also states that landlords must not encourage or refuse tenancy applications based on:

- Race, colour or ethnicity
- Nationality or place of birth
- Accent or English language skills
- Length of residency in the UK

However, the extract shared by Basile above suggests that some landlords were practicing unlawful discrimination and were excluding Polish people from renting their properties based on their Polish nationality rather than on whether those individuals met the legal right to rent criteria. This indicates that Polish migrant access to housing and the housing experiences of Polish individuals in the UK may be negatively affected by the presence of discrimination within the housing market.

Similarly, two participants in Peterborough, Ewa and Grzegorz shared experiences of wanting to obtain assistance for their housing issues but feeling as though they were unable to gain assistance. Ewa explained that she had experienced a housing issue when the boiler in their housing broke down, and she had wanted to obtain assistance because the landlord took longer than a week to attempt to fix the problems with the boiler, but she said that she did not know how to obtain any assistance. Ewa said:

> *'We did yeah. We had kind of problems with the boiler…and we were waiting a lot of days for fix it. And we didn't… we heard that he's got like seven days for fix it, but we didn't really know how to sort it and we didn't…we liked the guy who give us this, rent us this house…but we didn't really know how to do it. Maybe because we are Polish and nobody told us'.*

And when asked whether she thought that there was a lack of information available for Polish people on how to obtain assistance with their housing, Ewa said:

> *'Yeah maybe, because I didn't even know where I should ring and ask, what should I do in this kind of situation? I didn't know'.*

The example shared by Ewa suggests that she had a lack of awareness of services that she could approach for assistance with legal and housing issues and felt as though she did not know who to approach for help with her housing in the UK. Similarly, Grzegorz had experienced an issue with his landlord refusing to repay him his deposit, so he raised the issue with Peterborough City Council, but he said that *'no one really cares'* and *'nothing happened really',* suggesting that he was not provided with the assistance or level of care that he had hoped for, and that as a result, he was not able to regain his deposit. Grzegorz said:

> *'No one really cares to be honest…with one of the houses we had a really rough conversation with the landlady and we decided to take it further…so we wanted to go to the Council…basically she said she won't give us our deposit back because we ruined her carpet…and by ruined, she meant that there are some, well, basically wear and tear after a week which was bollocks. But yeah, we decided to go to the Council and take matters further…but nothing happened really'.*

From these examples, it appears that some Polish individuals such as Lukasz, Patrycja, Basile, Ewa and Grzegorz would benefit from further guidance related to the management of their accommodation deposits and their legal rights within the UK housing market.

Clearly substandard housing appears to be the greatest issue that Polish migrants have faced within their accommodation experiences since arriving in Luton. The large number of descriptions given that related to properties that were in a state of disrepair or uncleanliness suggests that improvements need to be made to the quality of rented accommodation within the town to improve local housing experiences. Instances of mould, damp and vermin appeared to be recurring issues regarding the uncleanliness and poor conditions of housing in Luton. The accounts also uncovered that there is often a lack of legal knowledge among Polish migrants in the UK, and particularly among newly arrived migrants who may lack the language skills to understand their rights. In multiple cases the interviewees said that their lack of understanding regarding UK law and their tenant rights had resulted in a loss of funds, as landlords and letting agencies withheld deposits and charged high administration fees. This suggests that some Polish migrants are subjected to exploitation and discrimination within the housing markets in Luton and Peterborough, which has negatively affected their housing experiences. Furthermore, social conflicts and incidences of crime also created housing issues for many of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough, which was detrimental to their housing experiences.

7.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the settlement pathways of the Polish participants in the UK, as well their housing negotiations, their residential locations within Luton and Peterborough, their housing characteristics, and their housing experiences. The findings indicated that for most of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (63%), the localities were both their initial points of settlement in the UK and the places where they had settled long-term. Whereas in contrast, 22% of the Polish participants in Luton and 25% of the Polish participants in Peterborough had lived elsewhere in the UK before migrating to the localities. There was no obvious trend of internal migration from particular areas to Luton or Peterborough apart from some participants that had moved out of London because of expensive living costs within the capital city. 44% of the Polish participants in Luton were living within the High Town area of the town, whereas the Polish participants in Peterborough did not appear to be residentially clustered in any particular area within the city. However, it is possible that the sample sizes that were collected may not have been sufficient to accurately capture residential trends. The findings presented within this chapter also highlighted that 88% of the Polish participants claimed to have found their housing in the UK easily, most were living in flats at the time that the interviews took place (54%), and most were living in rented accommodation (66%). Only 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough were homeowners, but 46% aspired to become homeowners in the future. The most common means through which the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough found their housing in the UK after migrating was via their social networks, by initially staying with friends or family members; by having sources of housing recommended to them by their social ties; or by having their accommodation organised for them by their social ties. The utilisation of social networks in the UK was commonly viewed as a means of making migration easier. Housing negotiations were often carried out via social ties or via the Polish community (such as through Polish shops or through Polish estate agencies), particularly in Luton. The large proportion of participants who relied on social ties and the Polish community for guidance or for an initial place to stay in Luton and Peterborough highlights the importance of social capital on Polish migrant housing negotiations and suggests an early reliance on social and cultural capital for accommodation. There was no evidence to suggest that the Polish participants were living in overcrowded housing and 83% of the participants were satisfied with their housing conditions at the time of the interviews, although 71% said that they had experienced housing issues within their housing pathways in the UK (78% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough). This suggests that

most of the housing issues were experienced during earlier forms of accommodation and that it is likely that the participants have experienced upward residential mobility over time. Housing issues were more common within the housing pathways of the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough and included substandard housing conditions, issues with sharing housing and safety concerns, landlord and financial issues and issues related to subletting and precariousness. The most prevalent issue mentioned by the participants was substandard housing conditions, including mould, vermin and disrepair, which was a lot more common within the housing experiences of the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough (59% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough). The findings presented within this chapter have highlighted a variety of push and pull factors, spatial characteristics and human and structural influences that have affected the residential decision making and housing experiences of the Polish participants within this research. This chapter contributes to the structure-agency dialectic by revealing insights into the human agency used by the Polish participants within their settlement strategies and housing negotiations, and by revealing individual residential preferences and satisfaction levels. In addition, this chapter has provided greater insight into some of the structural elements that have affected the residential choices and housing experiences of the Polish migrants in this research such as housing market conditions, the costs associated with home ownership and renting, landlord and financial issues, substandard housing conditions, the impact of Brexit and the availability and cost of housing. This highlights the interplay between agency and structural influences within the lived experiences of the Polish participants, which can determine what housing and what housing conditions are available to individuals, as well as the quality of their housing experiences. The following chapter presents a discussion of the results related to the future migration and settlement aspirations of the Polish participants in Luton, in Peterborough and in Poland.

CHAPTER 8: Future Migration and Settlement Aspirations: Results and Discussion

8.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the results related to the future migration and settlement aspirations of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough, and a summary of the main findings that emerged from the interviews that were carried out with the Polish participants in Poland that related to their connections and past experiences with the UK, and their propensity to migrate or return to the UK in the future.

8.1 The Future Aspirations of the Polish Participants in the UK

This section presents an analytical discussion of the IPA findings that related to the future migration and settlement aspirations of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough. The superordinate themes that emerged from the Polish participant narratives when discussing future aspirations were future aspirations within the UK and future aspirations outside of the UK. The percentage of participants in Luton, in Peterborough and in both localities that discussed each superordinate theme that related to future aspirations is shown in Figure 28 and the superordinate themes and the corresponding subordinate themes are shown in Table 16.

Figure 28 shows that among the Polish participants in this study, aspirations for residential mobility within the UK were high, particularly among the Polish participants in Luton as 59% indicated that they wanted to change their housing or move elsewhere in the UK. Conversely, 38% of the Polish participants in Peterborough said that they would like to change their housing or move elsewhere in the UK outside of Peterborough, and a greater proportion of the Polish participants in Peterborough (63%) had aspirations to remain in their current residential location than the participants in Luton (26%). This suggests that a greater proportion of the Polish participants in Peterborough wanted to remain in Peterborough or their current residential locations than the participants in Luton, and the Polish participants in Luton had a greater propensity for future movement than the Polish participants in Peterborough.
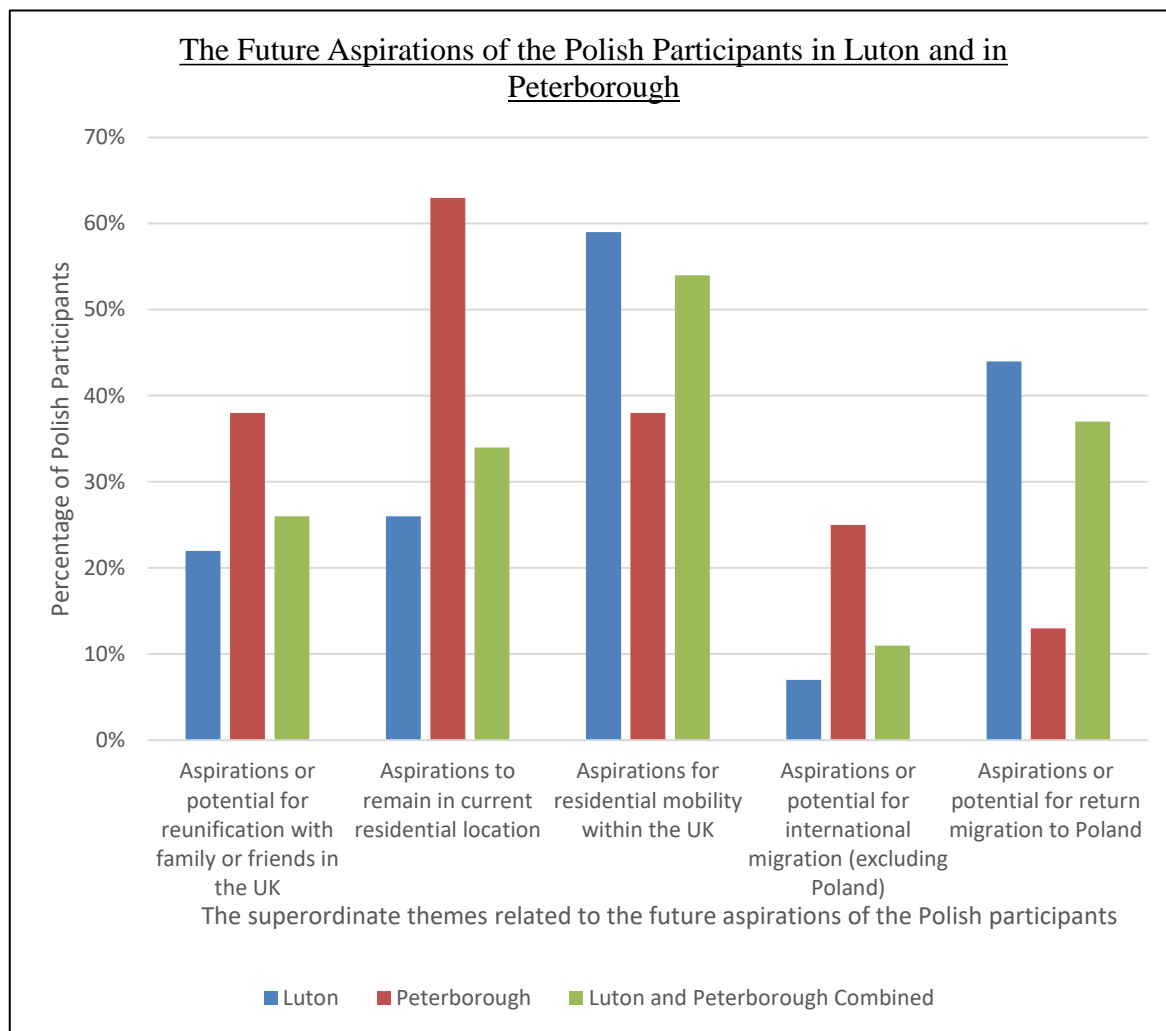
Figure 28. The Percentage of Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough that discussed future aspirations that related to each superordinate theme.

Additionally, a greater proportion of the Polish participants in Luton (44%) indicated that they had potential aspirations for return migration to Poland than the Polish participants in Peterborough (13%), suggesting that the propensity for return migration was greater among the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough. In addition, only 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough said that they had potential future aspirations for international migration outside of Poland (7% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough). This suggests that aspirations to migrate abroad to other countries excluding Poland were low among the Polish participants in this research, and that most of the Polish participants across both localities indicated that they would prefer to remain in the UK. Combining the figures for how many Polish participants wanted to remain within their current housing in the UK with how many participants aspired for residential mobility within the UK suggests that 89% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough aspired to remain living within the UK (85% in Luton and 100% in Peterborough). These findings suggest that the Polish participants in this study were most likely following the bumblebee orientation described by

Trąbka and Pustulka (2020), as most appeared to have strong aspirations to remain in the UK rather than to return to Poland or to migrate elsewhere.

Interestingly, although social ties appear to have strongly influenced the settlement location choices and housing negotiations of the Polish participants in this study, only 26% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough said that they had aspirations for their friends or family members in Poland to join them in the UK or that there was potential for them do so (22% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough). This suggests that in general, levels of potential reunification with friends and family in the UK were likely to be low among the Polish participants in this research across both localities and could suggest a lack of desire for their social ties to migrate to the UK.

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes
Future Aspirations Within the UK	• Aspirations for reunification with friends and family in the UK • Aspirations to remain in current residential location • Aspirations for residential mobility within the UK
Future Aspirations Outside of the UK	• Aspirations or potential to return to Poland • Aspirations or potential for international migration (excluding Poland)

Table 16. The superordinate and subordinate themes related to the future aspirations of the Polish Participants in the UK.

Each superordinate theme and the corresponding subordinate themes shown in Table 16 are discussed below in subsection 8.1.1 and subsection 8.1.2, using Table 17 and Table 18 to demonstrate which participants discussed each theme, and including interview transcript extracts from a selection of participants to illuminate each theme and the lived experiences of the Polish participants..

8.1.1 Future Aspirations Within the UK

This subsection discusses the results that the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough shared in relation to the superordinate theme of future aspirations within the UK.

Study Area	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes ✔ =Yes N/A = not applicable or question not asked		
		Aspirations or potential for reunification with friends and family in the UK	Aspirations to remain in current residential location	Aspirations for residential mobility within the UK
Luton	Mikolaj	✔		✔
	Zuzanna		✔	
	Janusz	✔		✔
	Marcia			✔
	Andrzej	✔		✔
	Szymon		✔	
	Dawid			✔
	Eryk	✔		✔
	Patrycja			✔
	Krzysztof		N/A	✔
	Henryk	N/A		✔
	Ryszard			✔
	Basile	N/A		
	Tomasz		✔	
	Jedrek			✔
	Angelica		✔	
	Stanisław	N/A		
	Berta	✔		✔
	Małgorzata			✔
	Milosz			✔
	Lukasz			✔
	Kasia		✔	
	Celestyna	N/A		✔
	Daria	✔	✔	
	Oskar		✔	
	Tymon	N/A		
	Marek			
Peterborough	Michal	✔	✔	
	Ewa	✔	✔	
	Izabela		✔	
	Grzegorz			✔
	Agnieszka	✔		✔
	Oliwia			✔
	Artek		✔	
	Borys		✔	

Table 17. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of future aspirations within the UK.

Aspirations or Potential for Reunification with Friends and Family in the UK

Only 26% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (22% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough) shared that they had aspirations for their friends or relatives to migrate from Poland to join them in the UK or said that there was potential for reunification to take place. For instance, Eryk said:

> *'I am really hoping that my girlfriend will come here after studies so we can plan the future together.*
> *We'll see'.*

His girlfriend was studying physiotherapy at a university in Poland and Eryk had originally migrated to Luton to attend to University of Bedfordshire. Eryk said that he had originally only planned to migrate to Luton on a short-term basis but was losing the motivation to return to Poland over time and hoped that his girlfriend would eventually join in him in the UK.

Similarly, Michal said that he would like his ex-wife and his children to join him in Peterborough. Michal said:

> *'Yes. Yes all the time yeah…so I've got a very good relationship with my ex-wife…we call each other every few days…so we can say that, I can say that we are friends so…and my, I've got two kids yeah?… my daughter, she's got an English boyfriend and now she's in Stockport…and my son is 15 so he's still err in Poland…and every two or three months he came here, my friends from Poland visit me as well'.*

And when asked if he hoped that any of his family would move to the UK permanently, Michal said:

> *'Mmm as I said that is very complicated…I know that my ex-wife is thinking about it so…but, I mean, what I said she's PhD…she's a dietician yeah?...and she worked at the university, the Jagiellonian University in the medical part…and now err she's got a, maybe not a problem but at work she has like a redundancy coming so…but... and she said one time that maybe she wants to find a job here…her English is good, it's better, it's much much better than mine because she's got a lesson with the students. English…so I don't know maybe if she said one time that she wants to find a job and move here so…I never say, never say never yeah?'.*

These extracts suggest that Michal aspired for his ex-wife and children to join him in the UK, in Peterborough. His daughter was already living in Stockport in the UK, and Michal's ex-wife and son were living in Poland at the time of the interview. Michal's son and some of Michal's friends from Poland visited him in the UK every couple of months, but Michal hoped that his ex-wife and son would migrate to join him in the UK. From Michal's extract it is evident that he maintained a friendship and a good relationship with his ex-wife despite their separation, and that he hoped that she would eventually decide to migrate to the UK, as she had indicated to him that she was considering moving to the UK after becoming redundant from her job at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków in Poland.

In addition, when Berta was asked if she had any aspirations for her family or friends to migrate to join her in the UK, Berta said:

> *'Yes, family. My adult children…yes yes, my older son he is there, he is living there'.*

This extract indicates that Berta had aspirations for reunification with her children, and particularly hoped that her eldest son may decide to migrate from Poland to join her in the UK.

Similarly, Daria commented:

> *'I don't know maybe my son, maybe I don't know (laughs) England is good, know is good money for Polish people you know, it's sometimes decision one day…is today me leave Poland, it's next day live England yes. This is life, life is brutal (laughs)'.*

Daria's example demonstrates that deciding to migrate to the UK can sometimes be a very rapid process, so although she wanted her son to join her in the UK, she was unsure of whether he would decide to do so as there were no definite plans for that to happen at the time of the interview.

Similarly, Agnieszka shared that she would like her social ties to migrate to join her in Peterborough, but that she did not think that would happen. Agnieszka said:

> *'I don't think that any of them will. Maybe in the future but… no one is so. But yeah that would be cool'.*

And when asked if there was any reason why she thought that her social ties would not decide to migrate to the UK, Agnieszka said:

> *'Some of them, they finished a really good school so they will have a future basically everywhere, in Poland, in the UK, in Germany so like a really good technical school. And some of them are like really family guys (laughs)…so a friend of mine been with us like two years ago I believe, just for the summertime and he said that even after those two months, he was missing his family so much that he couldn't live abroad…but we will see, I'm still young, my friends are still young so we will see what will happen in the next few years…they're still, some of them are still studying so…'.*

These extracts suggest that although Agnieszka thought that it would be *'cool'* if her social ties in Poland decided to migrate to join her in the UK, she discussed reunification as though

it was unlikely, and was only a future possibility that would not occur in the short-term. Within the second extract, Agnieszka explained that some of her friends may decide to migrate to the UK after finishing their studies in Poland, but that they may decide to remain in Poland or migrate elsewhere such as Germany instead. Agnieszka also explained that one of her friends would not be able to migrate abroad because he had previously spent the summer in the UK visiting Agnieszka and experienced homesickness as he missed his family in Poland. This highlights the fact that being at a distance from loved ones can have an emotional toll on individuals and may create negative migration experiences or discourage individuals from engaging in international migration.

In addition, Oskar indicated that his family regularly visited him in England but said that they would only come to join him on a temporary basis and would not have any plans to migrate to the UK permanently. He said:

> *'Sometimes er fly to England my family yeah…my parents for the holiday…just for the visit'.*

Similarly, Dawid also said that his friends and family members may join him in the UK, but only to visit and not to remain in the UK permanently. Dawid said:

> *'(Shakes head)… just for holiday… seven years ago come my sister, but she live in Birmingham now yeah… but this is seven years ago'.*

This extract suggests that none of his family members or friends have migrated to join him in the UK since his sister migrated to the UK seven years ago, and that if any of his social ties in Poland did decide to come to the UK, it would most likely only be for a holiday rather than for a permanent stay.

Other participants expressed that they had some family members or friends who may wish to join them in the UK, meaning that reunification was possible, but also expressed feelings that they would prefer them not to come to UK. For instance, Janusz said:

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> *'I wouldn't mind. I have some members of family considering it but I would much rather have them stay back at home to be honest. I visit them quite frequently so…and with the technology and Skype and messengers it is fairly easy to not get too, too homesick'.*

His example indicates that the benefits of technology and instant communication allowed him to contact his loved ones in Poland regularly and that he was able to physically visit them in Poland frequently as well, so he did not have a longing for them to join him in the UK. It appears that Janusz may have even preferred for his family members to remain in Poland so that he would have an opportunity to visit them in Poland regularly and maintain his transnational connections.

Similarly, Mikolaj said that he would like his friends or family members to join him from Poland, but then also countered his comment by saying:

> *'Too many is not good as well'.*

And when asked why he thought too many Polish people migrating to the UK would be a problem, Mikolaj said:

> *'Because I don't know, I'm seriously scared about this referendum so I don't know, English people I don't know how looking on my friends, how be later so…'.*

This comment indicates that the uncertainty surrounding Brexit had led some Polish migrant individuals such as Mikolaj to feel fearful about how they would be treated in the UK following the referendum result. It appears that Mikolaj wanted his social ties to join him in the UK, but simultaneously did not want too many Polish people to migrate to the area in fear that the Polish community would become too visible and would potentially be viewed negatively by British people and become a target for negative treatment. Sadly, Mikolaj's apparent concerns at the time of the interview prior to the referendum were confirmed shortly

afterwards by the rise in hate crimes towards EU migrants following the referendum result (Devine, 2018; Rzepnikowska, 2019; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). It is very unfortunate that Polish individuals and Polish communities that have been intertwined throughout Britain's history and have been such a large part of Britain's population for decades may have felt unwelcome and fearful within British society owing to the decision for Brexit. Unfortunately, these feelings of fear and uncertainty are unlikely to be exclusive to the Polish population in Britain, as all EU migrant groups within Britain have been affected by Brexit.

Similarly, Ewa indicated that some of her social ties might consider migrating to the UK from Poland, but that everyone was afraid of the potential impact of Brexit. Ewa said:

> *'Mmm… maybe some of them would like to move, but they're a bit afraid of Brexit now…and I don't know their plans…the Brexit changed everything actually…yeah but everybody's panic….I don't want to, because I'm buying a house I want to live here, you know?....and lots of people say to me, oh you'll have to go to Poland and pay for your house in here. I don't think, it doesn't make sense…I'm still a bit, you know… afraid'.*

And when Ewa was asked if she was worried about what might happen with the house that she was buying in Peterborough, Ewa said:

> *'I am a little bit actually, yeah'.*

These extracts suggest that Ewa felt fearful of Brexit herself, felt as though everyone was panicking about the potential implications of Brexit, and thought that it may discourage her social ties from wanting to migrate to the UK, although she stated that she did not know their plans. Within the first extract, Ewa also indicated that she had previously had conversations with some of her social ties regarding the potential impact of Brexit on purchasing and owning a home in the UK, and that she had been warned that if she bought a house in the UK that she may be forced to return to Poland and to continue paying for the house in the UK. This suggests that there was some uncertainty among Ewa and her social ties regarding what the implications of Brexit would be for homeownership, and that the uncertainty had created a sense of fear for Ewa that her housing may be affected by Brexit.

The theme of Brexit related uncertainty was also highlighted by Andrzej, who said:

> *'I've got no influence over that, I've got no power over that so I don't know if they're going to migrate or not. As it stands at the moment we don't know if the UK is going to be in the EU in the next month so it depends how the referendum is going to turn up'.*

His answer implied that he did not know whether any of his friends or family members would migrate to the UK, but that the power could also be out of his and their hands if the outcomes of Brexit negotiations were not in favour of EU migrants remaining in the UK, and if more restrictions were implemented to limit immigration from EU countries to the UK. The seemingly regular and valued visitation practices between Poland and the UK, described by a few participants may also be affected by the end of FoM between the UK and the EU.

In addition, Marek shared that he did not think that any of this friends or family would want to migrate to the UK owing to the impacts of Brexit. Marek said:

> *'I think that they are not going to come to England now because of Brexit…and also the rate of the pound is not as good as it was before. So it's very tempting in the past. We'll see what's going to happen after Brexit. Luckily I have my British passport so… I can… according to law I cannot say that I am an immigrant anymore…because I'm a British citizen…so… yes. So now I'm going to Poland, maybe not going back to Poland. I'm going to Poland (laughs)'.*

Within this extract, Marek suggested that his friends and family members in Poland would be unlikely to have aspirations to migrate to the UK anymore, as the value of the British pound had become less attractive than it used to be and was not as strong of a pull factor for migration as it previously was for Polish nationals. Additionally, Marek suggested that his friends and family members would also be unlikely to have aspirations to migrate to the UK because of the uncertainty that many people felt regarding Brexit at the time of the interview, when Brexit negotiations were still taking place and the implications of Brexit were still unclear. At the end of the extract, Marek explained that he *'luckily'* had a British passport and was no longer considered to be an immigrant as he was now classed as a British citizen. His use of the word *'luckily'* suggests that he felt fortunate that he no longer needed to be concerned about the impacts of Brexit on EU nationals in the UK as he had obtained British

citizenship and now had the same rights as British born individuals in the UK. Conversely, this could also suggest that Marek viewed EU nationals who did not have British citizenship as unfortunate, as they would be more likely to be affected by the implications of Brexit than himself and other EU migrants in the UK who had obtained British citizenship. Marek confirmed that he was a dual Polish and British citizen with a Polish and a British passport as he had gained British citizenship approximately fourteen months prior to the interview. Furthermore, when asked what his reasons were for applying for British citizenship and whether it had anything to do with Brexit, Marek said:

> *'No I wanted to…I wanted to get this umm citizenship and it was not related to Brexit…actually gay marriages to be honest…I decided… I just… I wanted to know that there is a place that I can always come and get married and live happily in a lovely cottage with my husband! (laughs)'.*

Interestingly, this extract suggests that Marek's decision to apply for British citizenship was unrelated to Brexit and was instead a decision based on Marek's desire to be a citizen of a nation where homosexual marriage is permitted and accepted. This extract also infers that Marek did not feel able to satisfy his desire to engage in a homosexual marriage as solely a Polish national in Poland and had opted to apply for British citizenship to guarantee that he would always have a place where he could live and get married. This suggests that Marek's decision to apply for British citizenship was influenced by the political situation in Poland under the PiS government, which openly used homophobic language, did not recognise same-sex marriage and framed homosexuality as a threat to Polish national identity, the economy and the nation's Christian values (O'Dwyer, 2018).

Other participants were clear that they did not have any aspirations for their friends or family members to join them in the UK.

For example, Zuzanna said:

> *'No I don't think that some of my friends from Poland are coming to England. But if you ask me about people generally from Poland who are coming to England I think that more opportunities are closed because there are lots of people. At the moment, I work just with the Polish people, Polish children, no one is coming from the English or different, just the Polish so I think that it is too much'.*

Her comment suggests that she did not know anyone who was intending to migrate from Poland to the UK, but also implied that migration from Poland to the UK in general was slowing. Zuzanna's extract suggests that the labour market in England had become saturated with fewer opportunities for new migrants in the country, which may discourage further immigration from taking place.

In addition, Grzegorz said:

> *'It would be nice to have like, to have a close friend. Err but no… I'd rather not…no…if it's not like my really, really close friend form childhood or something… then no'.*

And when asked if he knew whether any of his social ties were considering migrating to the UK, Grzegorz said that they were not. The example shared by Grzegorz suggested that he would only be interested in reunification with a close friend and had no strong aspirations for his friends or family members to join him in the UK.

Additionally, Ryszard said:

> *'No, my family stay in Poland…er they have a good time now'.*

This extract indicates that Ryszard did not believe that his family members would decide to migrate to the UK in the future because he believed that they were content with their lives in Poland and would not be interested in migrating abroad.

In addition, Jedrek said:

> *'No idea because as soon as I left the Poland in 2007…we got some contact like a year and then after that you know everyone had like private lives so…most of the contact was stopped so basically now in a while, most of the friends I see them like not often…but maybe … they can't say oh I'd want to come join to you, no one said to that…since I'm living, while I've been living here no one say that'.*

This extract suggests that Jedrek was not aware of whether his family or friends had any intentions to migrate to the UK in the future, as he felt as though he had gradually had less contact with his social ties in Poland over time since migrating to the UK and had now little to no contact with them. Within this extract, Jedrek also inferred that it would be unlikely for any of his friends in Poland to want to join him in the UK as he explained that none of them had expressed any interest in doing so since he had migrated to the UK.

Interestingly, Tomasz said:

> *'I think everyone who wanted to migrate here from my family is already here, my sister lives here with her husband and son and I think that's it from my close family'.*

This suggests that only a few members of Tomasz's family had a desire to migrate to the UK, and that those individuals had already migrated, whereas others preferred to remain in Poland. It would be interesting to know the reasons why some people, from the same location and familial background, feel more inclined to migrate than others. Some of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough provided examples which contributed to answering this question, such as Lukasz, Patrycja, Marcia, Izabela and Oliwia.

Lukasz said:

> *'Hoping it? no, I know they won't and I don't really encourage them to, because most of my family…yeah they're all, my parents, my aunts and uncles, my cousins they already have a life there so it's…yeah but I don't encourage people from my family'.*

Similarly, Patrycja commented:

> *'Not really, they've got their own lives, their own careers…another girl which is actually my good friend in Poland she, she used to be here and she doesn't like it so she back to Poland. Maybe she will come to visit but not to stay'.*

And when asked why her friend had decided to move back to Poland Patrycja said:

> *'I think it's all about mentality, erm you mentally if you are a strong person. Because here you miss you family'.*

These examples suggest that many Polish friends and family members choose to remain in Poland because they feel established there and would not want to leave their lives, careers and loved ones in Poland to move abroad or to migrate to the UK. Furthermore, Patrycja's response in particular highlights that migrating to another country is not always an easy feat and can be emotionally difficult for individuals. This was also highlighted by Szymon who indicated that he would not encourage his friends or family members in Poland to migrate to the UK, because living in the UK is harder than many Polish people in Poland say that it is and maintaining finances in the UK is very difficult. Szymon said:

> *'No…no I don't speaking because I think sometimes people.. I mean Polish, Polish people come to Poland, go to Poland and speaking… painting very beautiful oh beautiful! But real is not. You must go here, must work, must look what you buy. No many must, you think about money! No people (makes a whining voice). No here must very hard work…I am too old, but when I was younger I want to come here when I had finished fighting, 54 years younger. I go to school, first time go school learn because my ambition is… from Poland I have school'.*

And additionally, Szymon said:

> *'Mmm no… economic is one.. money is very hard, you must think about money…if you have £100 you must think I have £100 not a thousand…you must'.*

These extracts suggest that Szymon would not encourage or have aspirations for his social ties in Poland to join him in the UK because he believed that life in the UK was not as easy or as great as many people in Poland suggested, and that in reality it is necessary to work hard and to be very careful with finances in the UK to have a good quality of life.

Marcia also provided an interesting response by commenting:

> *'I don't have any friends so to speak that would be that close that they would be migrating to me. Um at the same time I have offered it to my mother, umm but she doesn't really want to so I'm not going to put pressure on it. However, she knows that if ever the situation in Poland were to get, I don't know, to an unbearable state she can always come here and stay with me'.*

This example indicated that although Marcia's mother remained in Poland and had no aspirations to migrate, she knew that it was possible if she changed her mind and decided

that she wanted to migrate. This suggests that some friends and family members of migrants in the UK who remain in Poland may view FoM rights within the EU and their friends and relatives who are abroad as a form of safety net, in that they are aware that if their lives in Poland become unsatisfactory (for example, if they dislike policies and living conditions under the Polish government), then they have someone else and somewhere else in another country that they could go to improve their situation if necessary. These emotional safety-nets that may have existed between friends and family members in Poland and migrants in the UK may have now been impacted by Brexit, as there is no longer FoM between the UK and the EU. However, Polish citizens can still exercise FoM within the EU to and from EU member states, so it may be that some peoples' desired safety-net locations may have shifted from the UK to elsewhere in the EU owing to Brexit.

In addition, Izabela shared her views on whether her friends or family members would migrate to join her in the UK. Izabela said:

> *'Err no... my sisters have very good work, very good jobs in Poland. Their husbands have very good jobs in Poland. They have bigger houses…one of my sisters, she have seven rooms; the second she have four…is big houses and… they afford to live there, you know?...with peaceful, and they have money to enjoy themselves, oh I'm going to save that and pay the bills so that…they're not even think to, you know, to go somewhere else…only me that I… (Laughs) fly!'.*

And when asked why she thought that she was the only person in her family that had decided to migrate abroad, Izabela said:

> *'Yeah, maybe I was…maybe I'm different from you know, from all of them yeah. I have my character, I am not scared…and I like to take the risk…so that is different between me and my sisters'.*

These extracts suggest that Izabela did not have aspirations for her family members to join her in the UK and did not believe that her sisters would consider migrating to the UK, as she

believed that they were satisfied with their employment, housing and income in Poland. This suggests that her sisters were satisfied in Poland and were not experiencing push factors that would lead them to consider migrating to the UK or elsewhere, and therefore it was most likely that they would choose to remain in Poland. Interestingly, within the second extract Izabela shared that she thought that she was the only person in her family that migrated abroad because she was less scared to take risks than her family members and had a more daring personality. This is an interesting insight into how Izabela reflected on her own character, but also highlights that migration is a risk-taking process, as the consequences of making a decision to migrate abroad can be unknown and there is a degree of uncertainty regarding whether the migration will be beneficial and successful or detrimental and unsuccessful. Therefore, the extract provided by Izabela is suggestive that individuals need to have a somewhat brave personality to consider taking such a risk to migrate abroad.

In addition, when asked if she hoped that any of her friends or family would migrate to join her in the UK, Oliwia said:

'No…they don't want'.

And when asked if she knew why her friends and family members did not want to migrate to the UK, Oliwia said:

'I don't know to be honest... I've got a lot of my fam-, I've got loads of my friends and family in England anyway…but those who are still there, I think they got good, enough good jobs and all those lives there. They don't leave it…and no it's not really worth it isn't it? To come here and start from the beginning, it would be difficult I think…because the pound isn't as strong as it was before…that's the main thing'.

The example shared by Oliwia suggests that she did not believe that any of her friends or family members in Poland would want to migrate to the UK or migrate elsewhere as they were satisfied with their quality of life and their employment in Poland. Interestingly, Oliwia said *'it's not really worth it isn't it?'*, this is again suggestive that migration is a risk and that

individuals need to consider whether it would be worth it for them to undertake that risk. This echoes Neo-classical migration theory that suggests that individuals use rational thought and reason to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of potential movement and will only decide to migrate if their analysis indicates that the movement will have a net positive outcome (Massey *et al.*, 1993). Oliwia explained that she did not believe that it would be worth it for her family to take the risk to migrate to the UK, because they were already satisfied with their lives in Poland. Additionally, Oliwia believed that they would experience a difficult quality of life if they did choose to migrate to the UK, as the value of the pound had decreased and they would have to *'start from the beginning'*, suggesting that they would initially be subjected to a low quality of life in the UK after migrating and would then have to work their way up to obtain better conditions over time. Therefore, it appears that Oliwia did not think that her family members would choose to migrate from Poland to the UK, as she did not think that the cost-benefit analysis of them migrating to the UK would result in a net positive outcome, and she believed that they were satisfied and better off remaining in Poland. The extract shared by Oliwia also revealed that Oliwia already had lots of friends and family members in England who had migrated from Poland to the UK, suggesting that reunification had already taken place with many of her social ties prior to the interview.

In addition, Krzysztof shared his perspective on whether he aspired for his friends or family members to migrate to join him in the UK. Krzysztof said:

> *'I'm pretty sure there will be more Polish people coming down here but um well definitely not, no one from my family…so they, they are actually quite happy staying in Poland. Err but yeah I know that every year there, there is Polish people coming in looking for a job and yeah they will be moving in. Also there is umm quite a large group like myself of people coming to study here…and err they, they usually the plan is, my plan was just to come here, finish university and go back to Poland and obviously once you actually finish you actually don't want to back because you, you actually like the place…so probably there will be a large group of people doing the same thing'.*

And when asked whether he thought that the University of Bedfordshire was one of the main attractions in Luton for Polish people, Krzysztof said:

> *'No the main attraction will be, would be looking for job…so erm yeah money opportunity really…so we obviously do earn more money here than in Poland. Err outside the university it is a group of people but it's not really that big of a group…so um I know erm I still have, I'm still friends with lots of people who came here to university, err some of them they came directly from err basically Poland, err I got few people who actually their parents moved in and they actually moved with their parents…like when they were like err young teenagers and…because they've been living here for already long years…they decided to you know go to uni, so it is a mix but umm the university umm we used to, we used to do the Polish um, um like a Polish group at the University. I know um there was a large group of Polish people studying here, that group doesn't work anymore but I know there is still a large group of err Polish at for example University of Bedfordshire'.*

These extracts suggest that similarly to the views shared by other Polish participants above, Krzysztof also believed that his social ties in Poland were satisfied with their quality of life in Poland and were unlikely to decide to migrate to the UK in the future. In addition, within these examples, Krzysztof suggested that although it was unlikely that his own social ties in Poland would decide to migrate to join him in Luton, he thought that migration from Poland to Luton would continue as people would continue to seek economic opportunities and many Polish migrants choose to study at the University of Bedfordshire in Luton.

Additionally, Artek said that it was unlikely that any of his family or friends would decide to migrate to the UK and said that it would be more likely that they would decide to migrate to Germany instead, because Germany is closer to Poland and offered affordable accommodation and similar salaries to the UK. In addition, the value of the British pound had become less attractive than it previously was around 2004.

For example, Artek said:

> *'Err I think so yeah, people ask me can they coming here. But on the moment it's the economic situation in Poland and we live close to Germany and it's the best price paid to them in Germany and we are close in home'.*

And Artek said:

> *'Maybe this is the better because the pay in Poland…Germany is the best, better in pay…but Germany pay similar to in the UK, but where is the closest to home?…you know, for example if you go to work one hundred kilometres, is the better one than one thousand three hundred kilometres in here'.*

Within these extracts and during the interview, Artek suggested that although his friends and family members had previously asked him whether they could join him in the UK, Artek thought that this had become less likely over time and that it would be more likely that his social ties in Poland would choose to migrate to Germany instead. Additionally, Artek said:

> *'My friend bought a house in East Germany, close to Poland, because it's cheaper than a Poland house…and he lives in Germany, working in Poland'.*

And Artek added:

> *'Because all…all… Eastern Germany people moved to the West…and they leave their house and their town and the city, so it's it is there just only fifty per cent of all houses they're free…and the government will give you, if you live, and the refurbishment and everything…and is paid to you cheap rent, all the kids you have doesn't matter, all bonus for family and live in Poland'.*

These extracts suggest that housing is relatively cheap in the east of Germany in comparison to in Poland, and that owing to the close proximity of east Germany to Poland, some Polish nationals including one of Artek's friends were choosing to purchase houses in Germany to live in and were then travelling to Poland to work. Artek confirmed that he believed that the relatively closer distance and more affordable house prices in Germany than in UK would act as stronger pull factors and would be likely to result in greater levels of migration from Poland to Germany rather than from Poland to the UK. In addition, the former German influence, language and history in areas of western Poland that border Germany, such as in Szczecin where Artek had migrated from in Poland, may affect the choices for some Polish migrants to migrate to Germany. For instance, Artek explained that when he was living in Szczecin, he had learned German and Russian but had not learned English before migrating to the UK.

Artek believed that migrating to Germany would now be a more attractive option for Polish individuals in Poland than migrating to the UK, and when asked whether he thought that this was owing to Brexit, money, distance or other factors, Artek said:

> *'Distance is the first, but that problem is not a problem because the flight is two hours yeah? it's the problem: people need to make the decision, you know? Leaving the family. First time when we is coming here before…before United European…Before Poland go to United Europe, before 2004, is the pound is the high trader to the Polish złoty…now is not very well…you know'.*

This extract suggests that Artek believed that distance was a key factor considered by individuals when making migration decisions, and that although the UK is only approximately a two hour flight away from Poland, Germany is closer, the housing in Germany is more affordable, and the value of the British pound has become less attractive over time, which Artek believed would result in it being more likely for his social ties to choose to migrate to Germany instead of the UK in the future. Additionally, within this extract Artek said: *'It's the problem: people need to make the decision, you know? Leaving the family'.* This quotation highlights that making a decision to migrate abroad is a difficult decision for individuals, particularly if moving to another country would result in leaving loved ones behind in the place of origin.

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Aspirations to remain in the current residential location

A total of 34% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (26% in Luton and 63% in Peterborough) indicated that they would like to remain in their current residential location and had no immediate aspirations to move elsewhere at the time that the interviews took place. Their reasons for wanting to remain in their current residential locations varied, but the most common themes within the responses were feelings of embeddedness owing to connections to the place, and feelings of reluctance for change. Some Polish participants only provided brief indications of their desires to remain in the localities such as Zuzanna who said:

'No at the moment I stay'.

And Daria who responded:

'Now is stay'.

And Angelica said:

'Well for now stay in Luton'.

Angelica confirmed that she had no immediate plans to move elsewhere and said that she would be staying in Luton *'for now'* and was *'not sure'* if she would move anywhere else in the future.

In addition, multiple Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough implied that they wanted to remain in their current residential location because of a form of connection to the place. For instance, Oskar said:

'I want to stay in Luton because I want see with my kids'.

This extract demonstrates that his decision to remain in the area was largely owing to the presence of his children in the town who lived in Luton with his ex-wife. He indicated that he would want to live wherever they were living because he wanted to be able to spend time with them, so at the time of interviewing he wanted to stay in Luton to be near to his family. Similarly, Tomasz also shared his aspiration to remain in Luton owing to the connections that he had formed within the town, he said:

> *'I'm happy where I am now, I think I just make some connections with the area so I'd rather stay here'.*

Tomasz appeared to have many ties to the town through his family connections and job roles, including the presence of his sister in the area and his involvement in the local Polish community group in Luton. It appeared that owing to these attachments, Tomasz felt anchored and embedded in Luton, satisfied with living in the High Town area and had no intentions to move elsewhere (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022).

Similarly, Kasia also discussed her connections to the place as factors that had led her to aspire to remain living in Houghton Regis in Bedfordshire. Kasia said:

> *'No, I mean I find a job, my kids have er school, I have a lot of friends who help me know… and you know I would like stay in here…in Houghton'.*

Within this extract Kasia suggested that she felt connected to Houghton Regis owing to her nearby employment as a warehouse operative in a Superdrug warehouse, her children's places at a local school and the presence of social ties within the area, who provide Kasia with support. For Kasia, these aspects appeared to have increased her sense of embeddedness with the local area and appeared to have resulted in her desire to remain in Houghton Regis indefinitely (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022).

In addition, as well as some participants wanting to remain within their current residential location owing to connections to the place, Izabela provided an example of wanting to remain within her current housing because of her connections with the house itself. For example, when discussing her level of satisfaction with her current property, Izabela said:

> *'My husband says maybe we going to move, and sell and move to a different house because we need more space. But I say we raised three kids here and for me it's so sad to leave… because I know the area already, you know? the neighbours and… you never know if you're going to get another house, which neighbour you're going to have you know?...They are different neighbours. So I'm happy where I am now, and I said to my husband if… the daughter is going to go to secondary school and close where (name of child) is going to go, then maybe we can think to go somewhere closer to where they are, but not for now I think, now it's too early to think about it'.*

This extract suggests that Izabela felt attached to her housing as she had experienced her children growing up in that house and the house held sentimental value for her. Additionally, the extract suggests that Izabela felt as though she wanted to remain in her existing housing because it was familiar to her and she did not want to risk changing her housing, having different neighbours, and feeling unsatisfied elsewhere. The example shared by Izabela suggests that she wanted to remain within her current housing and her current residential location both because of her connections to her housing and because her feelings of reluctance for change. Izabela said that she and her family may eventually choose to move house to move closer to her children's secondary school in the future, but she indicated that she had no plans to change her housing or to move to another location in the near future. For example, in addition to the extract shared above, when asked whether she would like to move to another type of housing in the UK, Izabela said:

> *'Err… I'm not thinking yet about that…maybe in the future yes. But now… I'd like to stay where I am…because new house is, you know, you need to invest more money. And umm now we concentrate about the shop, to grow the business…so I don't want, it's too much already on my, you know, err my head (laughs) with the kids and the business…yeah'.*

This extract suggests that as well as feeling attached to her current housing and reluctant to change her housing owing to the risk of being unsatisfied elsewhere, Izabela also wanted to remain within her current housing and residential location because she wanted to concentrate on investing in the growth of her business in Peterborough and avoid any extra financial pressure or stress that could be caused by moving house. Izabela owned and managed a shoe shop business in Peterborough and had aspirations to expand her business further. In another part of the interview, Izabela said:

> *'What I really want to do is design my own shoes…so that is what I would like to do, is not only sell but also design…and it's like you, everybody have a talent and I want that talent to be used…like, you know what I mean? So I will wait for that… to that moment that we're going to have enough money to invest and rent the warehouse so that we can, you know, start our production!…(laughs)…and it's good because from the beginning I have dreams'.*

This suggests that Izabela had a long-term aspiration to expand her business and design and sell her own shoes within her business in Peterborough in the future and felt as though she would prefer to invest her money into efforts to fulfil that aspiration rather than using the money to change her housing or to move elsewhere.

In addition, Ewa indicated that she would like to remain in Peterborough and had no plans to move elsewhere because she was in the process of buying a house in Peterborough and had established social connections within the city.

When asked whether she would like to remain in Peterborough or move to another area, Ewa said:

> *'Well we'll stay here'.*

And when asked why she thought that she would stay in Peterborough and whether it was because she was in the process of buying a house or for other reasons, Ewa said:

> *'Buying a house as well but…it's a big move to go to another country and I've already made some friends, and I don't want to do it again. I feel…ok in here and I want to stay here…because of the people I already met, yeah'.*

These extracts suggest that Ewa wanted to remain living in Peterborough because of her sense of attachment to the place, owing to the friendships that she had formed within the city and her decision to buy a house in the area. Within her extract, Ewa also highlighted that deciding to migrate abroad is a significant life change for individuals, as Ewa said: *'It's a big move to go to another country'*, suggesting that Ewa felt reluctant to undertake another significant life change by migrating abroad again, and preferred to remain in Peterborough.

In contrast, Szymon said that he intended to stay in Luton for the rest of his life because his English language limitations would make it difficult for him to move elsewhere. He said that his lack of English skills had created barriers for him in life, and in love, and that he would like to better his English and form a relationship with an English-speaking woman who could help him to improve his language skills. Szymon had only lived in Luton since arriving in the UK and said that he felt that his language skills were too limited to move to another area, indicating that if he did move elsewhere then he would have to become accustomed to another place and another local dialect. Szymon said:

> *'I have airport and I have work. I no looking later… I am lazy (laughs)'.*

And when asked whether he meant that he did not want to look for anywhere else to live in the UK other than Luton, Szymon said:

> *'(Nods) Yeah because you see I have barrier with language yeah….when I go I must looking new place, new house, new people and in Luton speak a slang that I know yeah…outside new and London is new slang, I think that is just my barrier in language yeah… I have here friends and I am speaking'.*

The experience shared by Szymon suggests that some migrant individuals may feel as though they are unable to move elsewhere because of certain limiting factors such as language difficulties. Szymon appeared to view Luton as place of familiarity which he did not want to leave in fear of struggling to adjust elsewhere. It seemed that he was content to remain in Luton and planned to continue trying to improve his English language skills. This suggests that Szymon wanted to remain within his current location owing to language difficulties, familiarity with the place and reluctance for change.

Similarly, Borys also expressed a reluctance for change and a desire to remain in Peterborough. Borys said:

> *'I like it…I'm not thinking. If I want to moving, I'm moving. And it's good, you know, everything is good, feeling good. My wife feeling good, and the kids you know…so I not changing, you know?... I'm too old now and it's not thinking about the…yeah, if the kids go out, you know, like in starting to living self, then I maybe changing this to a smaller house or like a bungalow….this is plan for the next twenty years (laughs)…sixty-two is a good time'.*

And when asked whether he planned to remain in Peterborough, Borys said:

'If… if government like…say you must go out, you know like we must leave this country, so I think I stay in Peterborough… I'm not planning drastic changes. You know what I mean?... Just… if you are not must, I will not do it. I'm not lazy just only… why changing what is…everything functioning good? why changing? It's stupid, you know?'.

These extracts indicate that Borys felt reluctant to change his residential location and planned to remain living in Peterborough and in the UK unless he was forced to leave by the UK government. The extracts suggested that Borys planned to downsize his housing and move into a smaller form of housing such as a bungalow approximately twenty years later. But Borys indicated that he had no immediate plans to alter his housing or residential location because he felt as though he and his family were happy living where they were and felt reluctant to change anything when they were already satisfied. These feelings were also emphasised within the following extract shared by Borys:

'My motto is, why changing if something is working good? Why changing?...sometimes if you're changing it will be worse, but sometimes will be better…if it's working good, and you are satisfied, why are you changing?'.

This extract again suggests that Borys felt reluctant to make life changes such as altering his housing, employment, or residential location because he already felt satisfied at that time, and because the outcomes of change are not guaranteed to be positive. Therefore Borys felt reluctant to risk experiencing negative outcomes as a result of changing aspects that he was already satisfied with.

Additionally, Artek indicated that he wanted to remain within his current flat in his current location in St. Ives in the short-term, for at least one year, and would be reluctant to make any residential changes until after Brexit had occurred and the impacts of Brexit were more evident. Artek said:

> *'At the moment I'm still waiting, I'm still waiting what will be happening after Brexit…one year absolutely we will stay in the flat…and then I'll make the decision what we'll be doing after Brexit'.*

And when asked how he thought that Brexit might impact him, Artek said:

> *'No! At the moment, everybody don't know!...this is my opinion, that everybody, don't know what will be happen after Brexit. And can? will we Brexit? We know about Article 50…next year…after Referendum, we need to move. England need to move… but everybody don't know what's happening…do you know?...(laughs) …this is very funny because I am…err the Polish Ambassador in Warsaw organised a meeting with the Polish Community Group in London in UK, this is from the Warsaw guys meeting in the UK…and I'm involved in these events and four or five times in London and Birmingham and every time, talking about the same…people don't know what really…everybody don't know!...It's I think the government is not ready…look since the last month three Ministers go out because they don't know what we're doing…if you know, please let me know (laughs)'.*

Additionally, when asked what he thought about applying for British citizenship or settled status, Artek said:

> *'It's this at the moment still waiting…just only this…only this moment on the houses, because the prices been up, down, and we don't know, but we are still waiting'.*

These extracts suggest that at the time of the interview Artek had a perception that the future of life in the UK and the impact of Brexit on the UK housing market was unknown by most people, including the UK government, and that he was waiting to see what the outcomes of Brexit would be before making any decisions about changing his housing. Although it appeared that Artek was unsure about whether he would change his housing in the future, and that it would depend on the outcomes of Brexit, in another part of the interview Artek highlighted that he wanted to remain in the St. Ives and Cambridgeshire area indefinitely owing to his connections to the area. Artek said:

> *'Yeah…no, no. I stay in St Ives and err…this area, Cambridgeshire… because I am like this place and I have lots of good friends and I am in contact with the Town Council in Peterborough, Cambridge, Huntingdon and St Ives'.*

This extract suggests that Artek aspired to remain within his current residential location in St. Ives because he felt embedded in the place owing to his social connections and his work related contacts with local Councils in Peterborough, Cambridge, Huntingdon and St Ives, which he utilised to organise Polish events within the area (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022).

In addition, Michal suggested that he was content to remain in Peterborough because he was satisfied with his employment in a Tesco distribution centre in the city. However, in contrast to the other Polish participants in this study Michal implied that although he did not have any plans to move elsewhere, he did not have any particularly strong connections to living in Peterborough and would not have any problem with moving elsewhere if he was required to move elsewhere by his employer. Michal said:

> *'So I've got a good job… and I think if my company decides to send me somewhere else I not will be cry for Peterborough…if my company has to decide to move me somewhere else I not will be cry for Peterborough yeah?...Yes, it's no problem for me to move yeah'.*

This extract suggests that Michal did not feel attached to Peterborough as a place to live and had no plans to move elsewhere before he retired, but would be content to move elsewhere if his employer required him to, because he was satisfied with his employment and would be willing to move elsewhere to continue his employment in another location if he was required to do so. This suggests that Michal was not particularly anchored or embedded in Peterborough (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022), and may have had what Trąbka and Pustulka (2020) describe as a butterfly-like orientation, as Michal appeared to feel able to easily move elsewhere if needed.

Aspirations for residential mobility within the UK

In total, 46% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (48% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough) discussed aspirations for residential mobility within the UK, which included some aspirations to change their housing as well as some aspirations to move to other areas within the UK. Additionally, 46% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (56% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough) said that they aspired to become homeowners in the future, indicating that aspirations for homeownership were high among the Polish participants in this research. However, some of the participants who had aspirations for homeownership felt that their chances to own homes in the UK could be negatively impacted by the EU referendum result.

For example, Andrzej said that he and his girlfriend were considering buying a flat or a house in Luton or in a small town or village somewhere in between Luton and Cambridge, with good transport links to London. He said that his choice of where to move to would depend on housing market changes, employment, and the outcome of the referendum. Andrzej implied that he would prefer to buy property outside of Luton, but said that he may decide to stay in the area if Luton offered better prospects in terms of increasing property values over time. He added that the location of his employment would also be an important factor in deciding where to settle and mentioned his concerns regarding Brexit. Andrzej said:

> *'As it stands at the moment we don't know if the UK is going to being the EU in the next month, so it depends how the referendum is going to turn up. If UK going to leave, that's going to be interesting how many people are going to stay. And it's going to be interesting if we going to be able to buy houses over here if we are not going to be able to stay over here, which might be difficult as well'.*

Mikolaj also expressed his concerns about the referendum and how it could impact his ability to purchase property in the UK. Mikolaj said:

> *'Yes I need a driveway, I've got a couple cars and I need it, I moving I have to moving from the area because I don't have a place for cars so…yes maybe. I don't know now is you know was referendum…I don't know what will happen next, I want buy normal house'.*

Mikolaj also said that he would like to stay in the UK permanently but added:

> *'But if I don't have a choice I am back Poland'.*

These accounts provided by Andrzej and Mikolaj illustrate the uncertainty that had arisen among Polish migrant individuals in the UK as a result of the EU referendum. They also demonstrate that concerns over the security of EU migrant rights within the UK were present before the referendum took place, so some individuals may have delayed their plans to purchase property until the impacts of Brexit became clearer. If this assumption is correct, then the referendum decision may have slowed the residential mobility of EU migrants within the UK. Although, in contrast, it is possible that some EU migrants may have attempted to purchase property in the UK to try and secure their potential futures in the UK, but evidence of this remains to be researched.

When describing where in the UK the participants might choose to move to in the future, most of the Polish participants in Luton mentioned places that were within nearby surrounding areas of Luton such as Milton Keynes, Bedford, Hemel Hempstead and Stevenage. For instance, Jedrek said:

> *'Bedford I prefer I don't know why Bedford…yeah because it's quite a young town and it's not that expensive, and it's nice because it's going river through the town so that's why I like it'.*

Indicating that he would prefer to move to Bedford. Similarly, Mikolaj said that he would prefer to move to Milton Keynes. Whereas Janusz said:

> *'I am just in in the process of getting my driving license so as soon as I get that then I will be happy to stay within the area but just anywhere outside Luton. Maybe like Hitchin, St Albans or Hemel Hempstead. Maybe Stevenage that sort of areas yeah'.*

Similarly, Marcia said:

> *'I would hope to move to a different area in the future so if I were to buy property in Luton it would be to probably put myself on the property ladder and then re-mortgage it as a buy to let and then move to lets say Harpenden, St Albans or Milton Keynes'.*

This was an interesting response as Marcia indicated that she would like to move out of Luton into the surrounding area, but that she would consider purchasing property in Luton for financial gain and buy-to-let potential. This demonstrated that Marcia had knowledge of the UK housing market and had considered ways to get herself onto the property ladder and to negotiate the housing market for her own economic benefit. She also added that her reasons for wanting to move out of Luton were because she did not enjoy living in the town and because she felt that there was a lack of social vitality in the area. For instance, Marcia said:

> *'I also don't feel that there is much happening here, I feel you know…even going out or nightlife or theatre of whatever, there is more opportunities and there is more happening in bigger towns. I don't really see that level of engagement in Luton and if it is it's always the same so it's always the annual carnival or it's the charity thing that we run in January'.*

This example reflects Lee's model of intervening obstacles (Lee, 1996) and indicates that the lack of opportunities for social engagement in Luton was acting a push factor that was encouraging Marcia to want to move to another location containing pull factors in the form of increased social opportunities; whilst housing market conditions and property prices could act as intervening obstacles, forcing her to purchase property in Luton to get onto the property ladder. Marcia also added that it would be convenient to remain in an area that is close to Luton Airport, but that she did not want to purchase a property under the flight path because of the noise. Others also mentioned aspirations for residential mobility that could be affected by intervening obstacles. For instance, Małgorzata said:

> *'Oh my dream is maybe St Albans but the houses over there are much more expensive than one here and we cannot even talk about London. Those houses are really expensive! Really'.*

Małgorzata also commented that she would prefer to go back to Poland but that the economic conditions there were unsuitable to support her family. This example indicates that economic limitations and high property prices can restrict individuals such as Małgorzata from being able to live in their desired locations. Similarly, Patrycja responded:

> *'I wish to move to London but if not I can stay in Luton but not in town centre, close to the town centre er like I said maybe Stopsley and areas where is nicer'.*

This extract suggests that Patrycja understood that she may be unable to move to London even though she would like to, again indicating economic restrictions on mobility desires. However, her response also revealed information about her secondary desired location options and indicated that she would like to move out of Luton town centre and into Stopsley, which is a smaller, more rural ward in northeast Luton.

In contrast, Celestyna's response implied that she aspired to move to the neighbouring town of Dunstable. Celestyna said that she would like to move to Dunstable because it was closer to her workplace, but she said that she was unsure if the move would be permanent because it would be dependent on whether she was successful in obtaining British citizenship. Celestyna said:

> *'I want to move to Dunstable soon…months… I don't know what time, when exactly…but err because we don't have any more like err tenancy agreement we just because we've lived that and he said that when we need to, we want to move out we just need to let him know before'.*

This extract suggests that Celestyna had already fulfilled the terms of her tenancy agreement and had been told that she could leave her housing and move elsewhere whenever she wanted to, providing that she provided notice. This extract also suggests that Celestyna intended to engage in residential mobility soon by planning to move out of Luton and into Dunstable within a few months of the interview. Additionally, when asked if she was hoping to move elsewhere in the future or whether she thought that she would remain in Dunstable after moving there, Celestyna said:

> *'Not sure…not sure, depends if I will get my British passport or not…well actually I applied like six months ago already…but we still don't know the answer and I don't know what's going on'.*

And when asked whether she might return to Poland if she was unsuccessful in obtaining British citizenship, Celestyna said:

> *'No for sure no…(shakes head)…no…there would be more difficulties with travelling'.*

These extracts suggest that Celestyna had no aspirations to return to Poland if she was unsuccessful in obtaining British citizenship, as she felt that she would experience

difficulties travelling between Poland and the UK following Brexit without having British citizenship. Additionally, in another part of the interview, Celestyna stated that she would not want to return to Poland permanently as she had become accustomed to living in the UK, she had lived in the UK for over a decade and would only want to return to Poland for temporary holidays. Celestyna said that she had applied for British citizenship six months prior to the referendum but had not heard whether her application had been accepted at the time of the interview. Her response is another indication of how Brexit related factors may have impacted the residential mobility choices of some EU migrant individuals in the UK (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021).

Additionally, when Celestyna was asked whether she would like to change her housing in the future, she said:

> *'No still a flat but we want a flat with a garden for the dog because we don't have a garden at the moment'.*

This suggests that Celestyna felt satisfied living in a flat and had no aspirations to upsize her housing by moving into a house instead of a flat, but she did have desires to move into a flat with a garden as she would prefer to have a garden for her dog.

Some of the other Polish participants in Luton had aspirations to move further away from Luton and the surrounding areas to move to destinations further north in England. For instance, Eryk wanted to attend another university in the UK and said that his preference would be to go to Nottingham because he had heard that it is cheaper to live in northern areas of the UK. He also mentioned Sherwood Forest and Nottingham castle, suggesting that he was curious about the history and attractive features of the area.

Similarly, Lukasz had aspirations to move north to Manchester but indicated that his partners' preferences and Brexit may alter his future destination plans. Lukasz said:

> *'Well it all depends doesn't it…I probably would prefer the north a bit more…yeah maybe Manchester, but it all depends on my partner as well. She would really like to move abroad like Germany, but I don't speak any (laughs), I speak a little bit of German so I don't think I would have any prospects of actually getting a job in Germany. But you never know um at the end of the day… umm yeah, I could probably, if it's UK I would probably want to move back to Scotland (Glasgow) or move up north like Manchester and stuff, but if there's going to be the exit from EU…if I haven't, don't have anything kind of planned I probably would move back to Scotland'.*

Lukasz said that he had previously visited Manchester and thought that it was an interesting and vibrant place with a lot of greenery and parks to visit which appealed to him as a place to live. He also said that he had previously lived in Glasgow for four years and had really enjoyed residing there because there were many social events. He described the areas surrounding Glasgow as beautiful and described the city as *'really interesting'* with *'very interesting people'*. Lukasz also had a few existing friends there. Therefore, in contrast to Eryk who appeared to favour moving to a northern location owing to a cheaper cost of living, Lukasz wanted to move to Manchester or Glasgow primarily for social opportunities. However, both participants described attractive physical features of the destination landscapes as factors that had influenced their aspirations to move to those areas, indicating that their residential mobility decisions were influenced by environmental features as well as economic and social factors.

When asked if he would like to stay in Luton or whether he hoped to move to another area in the future, Henryk said:

> *'I hope to move to another area…er, to Bristol…and er Cornwall…I have some friends there…also it's really really nice town Bristol and Cornwall we was last weekend in Cornwall it was so beautiful there…it's like an Italy'.*

This extract suggests that Henryk had aspirations to leave Luton and to engage in internal residential mobility to live in another part of the UK in the future. Henryk shared that he

would like to live in Bristol or Cornwall in the future, because he had some social ties there and because he had visited those places before and found them visually appealing. Henryk decided to migrate to the UK and to live in Luton specifically because of the existing presence of his friends, and from this extract it appears that his decisions to move elsewhere in the UK would also be influenced by the presence of friends, suggesting that social ties were particularly strong pull factors within Henryk's movement decisions.

Ryszard also stated that he aspired to move out of Luton and out of the UK in the future, because of his extremely racist views towards other ethnicities and negative perceptions of multiculturalism in Luton and in the UK. Racist words have been removed from the following extract to avoid offence to the reader, however Ryszard said:

> *'No no no no moving to another area…like I said here is a lot of Muslims, a lot of Black people and it's not for me…it's a fucking ****** fucking country er I have... that's racist… only, I know it's not correct. I know but what I can do, what to do, what to do?'.*

This extract clearly shows that Ryszard was racist and wanted to move out of Luton, and out of the UK to move away from multicultural areas.

In addition, Berta shared that she had aspirations to move to a larger city such as London, Manchester or Nottingham, as she said:

> *'Um in the future I have hope move in bigger city…. London, Manchester, maybe umm my middle son lived in…my middle son was two years ago in UK, in Nottingham. So yes I would like to choose a bigger city'.*

This extract suggests that Berta had considered moving to Nottingham in the future because her son had previously lived there two years prior to the interview.

Milosz also shared his aspirations for residential mobility within the UK and said that he would like to live in a village and move into a house with a garden for his dogs. Milosz said:

> *'Mmm the best will be for me now living in village… far away…but I don't have money for it'.*

And Milosz also said:

> *'Yes of course…how I told you, a village…far away yeah from people, because its enough for me'.*

And when asked what type of housing he would search for, Milosz said:

> *'If I can?....house, single house yeah with garden…because I like dogs!... yeah dogs need a garden yeah?'.*

These extracts suggest that Milosz had aspirations to move into a house that would provide garden space for his pet dogs, and had aspirations to move into a quiet, rural area. The extracts provided by Milosz suggested that he wanted to live in a fairly secluded rural area, in a settlement with a low population as he felt as though he had had enough of living in close proximity to lots of other people in Luton.

Similarly, Grzegorz shared that he wanted to move out of his rented flat in Peterborough to purchase a house in the countryside, in the St. Neots area of Cambridgeshire. Grzegorz said:

> *'Yeah, yeah, I'm looking to get a mortgage and find some house in the countryside (laughs)…like the St Neots area…but any…any countryside will do'.*

And when asked whether there was anything that drew him to aspire to live in St. Neots in particular, Grzegorz said:

> *'I was just passing by and I thought oh it's a nice place (laughs)'.*

These extracts suggest that Grzegorz had aspirations to become a homeowner in the future and believed that he would like to live in a rural area such as St. Neots in the countryside.

Similarly, Agnieszka also shared that she aspired to become a homeowner and change her housing in the future. Agnieszka said:

> *'We're planning to buy a house definitely, with a garden, so that's for sure…but to be honest we are really happy with that flat, so probably we will be staying here until we know we're going to buy something…so we're not going to change it'.*

And when asked whether she aspired to stay in Peterborough in the future or whether she hoped to move to another area, Agnieszka said:

> *'I would like to move to some… small city or smaller than Peterborough or for instance a small village….just something, no yeah we still don't know…probably something around Peterborough…a quiet place…relax in the garden'.*

Agnieszka explained that she was planning on moving out of Peterborough and into a different location, in a small village, or a small urban area on the outskirts of Peterborough when she was ready to buy a house, and she shared that she wanted to live in a quiet place where she could relax in her garden.

Similarly, Oliwia also shared that she eventually wanted to move to a quiet area on the outskirts of Peterborough. Oliwia had bought a house in Peterborough three months prior to

the interview and confirmed that as she had only recently purchased the house, she planned to remain living there for approximately five or ten years, until her children were older and able to travel to school by themselves before moving to another house in another area outside of Peterborough. Oliwia said:

> *'Err in this house or city? House, we probably will move to another house in the future. And the city probably we'll move somewhere as well…maybe when the kids are older. I would just like to stay in the countryside or somewhere. We were looking for a house away from Peterborough in some villages around but because of the kids in the schools I didn't want to make troubles for them to change the schools or their friends…so we just decided to stay here. Until the kids are big enough to travel to schools on their own'.*

And when asked if she wanted to move to a particular area in the countryside surrounding Peterborough, Oliwia said:

> *'As long as it is a quiet, small community without many people and all those cars'.*

This extract suggests that Oliwia was hoping to move into a small, quiet, village community with low traffic and a small population on the outskirts of Peterborough in the countryside.

The extracts discussed within this subsection indicate that many of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough had aspirations to engage in residential mobility within the UK, with many suggesting that they aspired to change their housing and move to quieter, smaller, and more rural locations on the outskirts of Luton or Peterborough.

8.1.2 Future Aspirations Outside of the UK

This subsection discusses the results that the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough shared in relation to the superordinate theme of future aspirations outside of the UK.

Study Area	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes ✔=Yes N/A = Not applicable or not asked.	
		Aspirations or potential for international migration (excluding Poland)	Aspirations or potential to return to Poland
Luton	Mikolaj		
	Zuzanna		✔
	Janusz		✔
	Marcia		
	Andrzej	✔	
	Szymon		
	Dawid		✔
	Eryk		✔
	Patrycja		
	Krzysztof	N/A	N/A
	Henryk		
	Ryszard		✔
	Basile		✔
	Tomasz		
	Jedrek		✔
	Angelica		
	Stanisław		✔
	Berta		
	Małgorzata		✔
	Milosz		
	Lukasz	✔	
	Kasia		
	Celestyna		
	Daria		
	Oskar		✔
	Tymon		✔
	Marek		✔
Peterborough	Michal	✔	✔
	Ewa		
	Izabela		
	Grzegorz		
	Agnieszka		
	Oliwia		
	Artek		
	Borys	✔	

Table 18. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of future aspirations outside of the UK.

Aspirations or Potential for International Migration (Excluding Poland)

Only 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough (7% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) discussed potential aspirations for international migration (excluding Poland) in the future. For example, Andrzej said that he would prefer to remain living in the UK but indicated that he thought that potential negative outcomes of Brexit may force him to consider moving to another country such as Canada. Andrzej commented:

> *'As it's ten years I am quite settled over here, I am not sure I am going to be moving out unless this situation [Brexit] is going to make me move…if we are going to be limited with renting, buying and working over here, we might, I would consider moving somewhere else to a different country'.*

Andrzej said that he would not consider returning to Poland within the next four years after the interview because of the PiS government in Poland and said that if he did move abroad then it would be to another English-speaking country such as Canada. Andrzej added that he had considered Canada as a possible destination because Canada has good weather conditions and plenty of snow that would enable him to fulfil his love of snowboarding.

Similarly, although Borys expressed that he would prefer to remain in Peterborough and remain living within the UK, Borys said that he had engaged in conversations with his wife and children about the potential to move to Canada in the future. Borys said:

> *'Well…I speaking with my wife, about the moving to Canada…. my wife say no. My daughter: no. My son: yes…yeah, it's me and my son is no problem moving, you know, somewhere…and then my wife…don't want to moving and starting again you know? It's another one-way ticket, you know? You never know what will happen when we're there'.*

This extract suggests that although Borys preferred to remain in the UK, Borys and his family had discussed the possibility of moving to Canada in the future if they needed to and Borys and his son were ok with the prospect of migrating to Canada, but his wife was against the idea. It appears that his wife did not want to migrate to Canada in the future because it would be *'another one-way ticket'*, implying that it would be another significant long-term life change for their family and that she did not want to experience another large life change by migrating abroad again. In addition, it appears that his wife was against the idea of migrating to Canada because '*you never know what will happen when we're there'*, suggesting that she was fearful of the uncertain outcomes and potentially negative implications of migrating abroad, which could be detrimental to the stability and quality of life that their family had already obtained in Peterborough and in the UK.

Additionally, Lukasz described the potential for him to move to Germany in the future, as although he had some reservations about moving there, his partner aspired to move to Germany and Lukasz explained that it was possible that they may eventually decide to migrate there together. Lukasz said:

> *'Probably would hope to move with time… maybe in a year or two…well it all depends doesn't it… it probably would prefer the North a bit more…yeah maybe Manchester, but it all depends, it all depends on my partner as well she would really like to move abroad like Germany… but I don't speak any… (laughs) ger… I speak a little bit of German so I don't think I would have any prospects of actually getting a job in Germany..but you never know um at the end of the day umm yeah I could probably if, if its UK I would probably want to move back to Scotland…or move up North like Manchester and stuff but if there's going to be the exit…from EU… if I haven't, done have anything kind of planned I probably would move back to Scotland…Glasgow'.*

And when Lukasz was asked if there were any particular reasons why he might choose to live in Manchester and Glasgow in the future, he said:

> *'I've been in Manchester and I liked it, I thought it was quite a vibrant and interesting place…and there's a lot to do… there's a lot of greenery, there's a lot of parks and other stuff places you can go and I've lived in Glasgow for four years and I really enjoyed my time there, there's a lot of things going on I like to go to concerts…things happening and here you have to travel to London, but Glasgow was…I felt really comfortable in that place although people say it's quite rough but in my view I knew that city quite well… I have travelled quite a lot and I knew the surrounding areas… it can be really beautiful outside Glasgow and Glasgow is really interesting as well, people are very interesting...plus I still, I think I still might have some friends there (laughs)'.*

These extracts suggest that Lukasz would prefer to remain within the UK and to move to Manchester or Glasgow in the future, because he had visited Manchester before and thought that it was a 'vibrant and interesting place' with many parks and things to do; and because he had previously lived in Glasgow for four years, enjoyed his experience of living there, had some existing friends there, was familiar with the city and felt comfortable there, and there were many activities and events occurring in Glasgow.

In addition, Michal shared that he may move to Spain or return to live in Poland in the future. Michal said:

> *'I think that I will stay until retirement here…and after that maybe I'm back to Poland or maybe I will move to Spain'.*

And when asked why he was thinking of moving to Spain in particular, Michal said:

> *'Oh it is a lovely country. Lovely weather…I'm sure that you have been in Spain?...so you should not be surprised that I picked Spain yeah?... my daughter was on the Erasmus program. You know what is Erasmus?...So she was studying in Valencia…and I was a few times there so...And I lived in just a normal flat because we, I rent the flat in Airbnb you know?...yeah so it was a just normal flat, two weeks and beautiful!...yeah they live the lifestyle that after nine o'clock pm so you know, brilliant.'.*

These extracts suggest that Michal intended to remain living in the UK until he retired from his job in a Tesco distribution centre, and that once he retired, he planned to either return to live in Poland or migrate to Spain. The extracts suggest that Michal was considering moving to Spain when he retired because he had previously visited Valencia in Spain while his daughter was studying abroad there, and he had enjoyed his experience there. Michal also indicated that he liked Spain owing to the *'lovely weather'* and the *'brilliant'* lifestyle that people have in Spain, including being active in the evenings *'after nine o'clock pm'*.

For Andrzej and Lukasz international migration appeared to be a possibility, but with a low likelihood, as Andrzej said that he would prefer to remain living in the UK if possible and would only consider moving to another English-speaking country such as Canada if he was forced to leave the UK owing to negative consequences of Brexit; and Lukasz stated that he would prefer to remain in the UK and move further north to Manchester or Glasgow if possible and would only move to Germany if his partner chose to migrate there. Therefore, both Andrzej and Lukasz implied that they would prefer to remain in the UK if possible, and although international migration in the future was possible, the likelihood of them deciding to migrate abroad in the future was low. Similarly, Borys suggested that it was possible that he and his family might consider migrating to Canada in the future, but he explained that his wife was against the idea and he confirmed that he would prefer to remain in Peterborough and stay in the UK if possible, suggesting that the likelihood of him migrating to Canada in the future was low. In contrast, it appeared that there was a greater likelihood that Michal would engage in international migration in the future as he planned to remain in the UK until he retired and then planned to either move to Spain or return to Poland.

Aspirations or potential to return to Poland

The Polish participants provided a range of different responses towards the prospect of returning to Poland in the future. A total of 37% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough shared aspirations to return to Poland in the future (44% in Luton and (one participant) 13% in Peterborough).

Four of the Polish participants in Luton (15%) explained that they were migrating back to Poland shortly after their interviews took place. For instance, Stanisław explained that he and his partner were moving back to Poland with their son because they wanted him to attend a Polish school. In contrast, Basile was moving back to Poland with his girlfriend because

they wanted to get married and start their married life together in Poland. Whereas Tymon was migrating back to Poland as soon as he was able to obtain new identification documents using assistance from NOAH Enterprise, as he wanted to return to Poland to complete a prison sentence for fraud. Additionally, Marek said that he was going to be returning to live in Poland a few months after the interview took place for different reasons. Marek said:

> *'Sometimes I'm tired and I'm getting old and I would like to live on my own…so sometimes I'm…I'm… I'm thinking about going back to Poland in July… I would like to live on my own with my…in my… own flat…so I can say that I am happy for living like this… now. But err this is not what I would like to do all of my life'.*

Marek was a 33-year-old at the time of the interview but described himself as 'getting old' and feeling as though he was becoming 'tired' of his current living situation in Luton. This suggested that Marek felt as though he was becoming increasingly displeased and too mature to continue sharing his accommodation with others indefinitely and was thinking about returning to Poland so that he could live in his own flat alone. He said that he was happy 'living like this… now' but said that it was 'not what I would like to do all of my life', suggesting that he was content in his housing, but intended to make a change to live independently in his own accommodation in Poland eventually, as he would not want to share his housing with others indefinitely.

Marek also emphasised his intention to change his housing and to return to Poland by saying:

> *'Yes…but I would like to go to Poland. Yes, I would like to move to another house….I'm happy to…I'm happy with what I've got but…I'm also happy to move somewhere else'.*

This again suggests that although Marek was relatively content with his accommodation in Luton, he did not want to live in shared accommodation indefinitely and had intentions to change his housing and to return to Poland.

During the interview, Marek explained that prior to migrating to the UK he lived in a large one-bedroom flat in an old market square in Świdnica in Poland with his mother and his grandmother, and that his grandmother had also owned a separate flat in that area that Marek was soon going to inherit following his grandmothers' recent death. Marek said:

> *'The flat that I lived in in Poland, it was…let's say it's one bedroom but it's a huge room! It's a massive one bedroom…In an old umm… old house in the Market Square….so the location is very good. My neighbours are nice… and yes'.*

And when asked who he had lived with in Poland, Marek said:

> *'With my mother…and my grandmother, And my grandmother also had a separate flat…and my grandmother passed away recently…so I will inherit the house, the flat, after her…so I will have my own… property, my own flat'.*

These extracts indicate that at the time of the interview Marek was in the process of inheriting a flat in Poland following the death of his grandmother and was therefore soon going to become a homeowner in his place of origin in Poland. This change in circumstance appeared to have acted as a pull factor that had led Marek to consider return migration, as migrating back to his place of origin in Poland would enable him to be a homeowner, to live alone and to support his mother in Poland. For instance, when asked whether he was hoping to return to the flat that he was in the process of inheriting, Marek said:

> *'Yes I would like to, I would like to live in the flat where my grandmother lived…but… I don't know maybe I would come back to England later on. I don't know. I am going there to… to relax…to do something err something different…to break some routine and to, to think what I really want to do…Also for my family reasons because my mother doesn't have anybody else…after my grandmother's loss…so I would like to spend some time with my mother'.*

And when asked whether his reasoning for returning to Poland had anything to do with Brexit, Marek said:

> *'No…it was a coincidence (laughs)'.*

These extracts indicate that Marek had many reasons for deciding to return to Poland, but that Brexit was not a factor that influenced his decision for return migration. Instead, the extracts shared by Marek suggest that he wanted to return to Poland to become a homeowner, to live alone, to support his grieving mother after the death of his grandmother, to have some time to relax and consider his future plans, and to change his daily routine. Within one of his extracts above Marek said: *'I don't know maybe I would come back to England later on'*, suggesting that Marek viewed his plan to return to Poland as being potentially temporary and that there was potential for Marek to return to live in the UK again in the future.

Some of the other Polish participants who had aspirations to return to Poland were hopeful that they would be able to return in the future but had no immediate plans to do so. For example, Janusz commented:

> *'Hopefully yes, I am not one of those people that say that there is nothing to come back to because there is, but I don't think that I am ready just yet'.*

And when asked what his decision to move back to Poland would depend on, Janusz said:

> *'I believe when it gets to the point when I can go back home and live on the same level as I'm living here now, that would pretty much be the time that I would be happy to move back, or even if the standard of living would be slightly worse I would still be happy to move back at some point… but yeah not in the next few years'.*

This extract suggests that Janusz felt as though he was enjoying a better quality of life in the UK and was possibly waiting to return to Poland until conditions there improved, so that he could enjoy a similar quality of life in Poland. The extract also suggests that although Janusz

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had aspirations to return to live in Poland eventually, he appeared to have no immediate plans to do so and viewed return migration as a future possibility, but not as a plan that would occur within the next few years. Similarly, Dawid said:

> *'Definitely…(nods)… mmm but maybe after 30 years, 40 years (laughs)'.*

This extract demonstrates that like Janusz, Dawid also shared an aspiration to return to live in Poland in the future, but said that he would consider migrating back to Poland after another 30-40 years, suggesting that Dawid viewed return migration as a very long-term future aspiration, and was not considering migrating to Poland in the short-term.

In addition, Michal shared that he may move to Spain or return to live in Poland in the future, but that these were long-term future plans following his retirement and would not occur in the short-term. Michal said:

> *'I think that I will stay until retirement here…and after that maybe I'm back to Poland or maybe I will move to Spain'.*

This extract suggests that Michal planned to stay in the UK for the foreseeable future, until he retired from his employment in Peterborough, and that when he retired he believed that he would engage in international migration, either back to Poland or to Spain. Therefore, for Michal, return migration was viewed as a possibility in his long-term future after retirement, and was not an immediate plan or a definite aspiration that he intended to fulfil.

In contrast, Ryszard provided reasons for aspiring to return to Poland containing nationalistic undertones and racist language. Racist words have been removed from the following extract to avoid offence to the reader, however Ryszard said:

> *'Of course, why not? It's a beautiful country without these *******'.*

This response suggests that Ryszard was dissatisfied with the ethnic diversity of the population in Luton and in the UK and felt as though he would prefer to live in Poland where most people were White and Catholic. He also appeared to glorify Poland by referring to the nation as a *'beautiful country'*, which could convey nationalistic connotations and suggests that he viewed Poland, and Poland's population as superior to the UK and the diverse UK population.

Other Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough stated that they may migrate back to Poland in the future, but that their decision to do so would be dependent on certain conditions such as the possible negative implications of Brexit for Polish people living in the UK, the availability of employment opportunities, their partners' desires, and whether their children decided to move to Poland. Some participants stated that if their children moved to Poland, they would follow them. For example, Zuzanna said:

> *'Now it is on my children, what my children what to do. If my children want to go back to Poland then I will go back with them…if my children want to stay here then probably I will stay here. But at the moment my children say that England is home. For now'.*

The experience shared by Zuzanna could suggest that conceptions of identity and belonging among younger members of a family could alter the mobility decisions of their migrant parents in some cases. Parents traditionally want to make their children happy and do what they consider to be best for them, so in this instance, it appears that Zuzanna had largely given her children control over the decision of return migration based on their satisfaction and desires. This theme was also mentioned by Angelica, who wanted to remain in the UK because she thought that her children were happier attending a Catholic school in Britain than they would be attending a school in Poland.

Similarly, Oskar shared that he may return to Poland if his ex-wife and children decided to migrate to Poland. Oskar said:

> *'I cannot… its er at this moment mmm not like that its…. mmm… if she come back to the Poland with the kids maybe I come back yeah…it's like that. If she stay in the Luton I stay in the Luton…at the moment I cannot fly to the Poland or driving because I have sick'.*

This extract suggests that Oskar was unable to travel abroad or to return to Poland at the time of the interview because he was experiencing some health issues. However, the extract also indicates that Oskar would only consider migrating back to Poland if his ex-wife chose to return to Poland with their children. Therefore, the potential for Oskar to return to Poland or to engage in any other future movement plans would be dependent on where his children were living, as Oskar wanted to live wherever they were.

Additionally, Eryk said:

> *'With every year I am losing the temptation to go back to Poland actually…Because you know once I got the job over here…and I started earning the sterling…I call it the British pound right?…I started to realise that actually what is most about the money and you know it's pretty sad but it's true and yeah but as I say I am really hoping that my girlfriend will come here after studies…so we can make a, plan the future together. We'll see'.*

This extract suggests that the potential for Eryk to return to Poland depended on whether his girlfriend in Poland would be willing to join him in the UK after she finished her studies in Poland, or whether she would want him to return to join her in Poland. It appears that Eryk had initially intended to migrate to the UK temporarily, but that after obtaining employment at a Polish restaurant in Luton and earning a good income in the UK, he was *'losing the temptation to go back to Poland'*. This suggests that although Eryk's girlfriend was probably expecting him to eventually return to Poland, as that was Eryk's initial plan, Eryk's feelings had changed into desires to remain in the UK over time and he was hoping that his girlfriend would choose to join him in the UK after her studies instead. For this reason, it appears that Eryk's potential for return migration to Poland would be dependent on the outcome of a future discussion about migration and living arrangements with his girlfriend.

Other participants indicated that they would prefer to stay in the UK, but that they might move back to Poland or move elsewhere depending on the impact of Brexit. For instance, when asked if he had any aspirations to return to live in Poland, Mikolaj said:

> *'I would like to stay here yeah…but if I don't have a choice I am back Poland'.*

And when asked whether he had any idea how the referendum would affect him, Mikolaj said:

> *'Not really, I am just scared…because it's too early, nobody knows about this…politics, immigrants, nobody we just have a look in the future…just waiting for you know…'.*

Mikolaj then preceded to act out the notion of noose tightening around his neck and made a sound as if he was dying. He then added:

> *'I feel like that but I don't know what will happen'.*

His response and choice of action could be viewed as a harrowing metaphor for the perceived process of Brexit having the potential to tighten immigration restrictions and negatively impact the lives of EU migrants in the UK. These extracts also highlight Mikolaj's perception of Brexit as an unknown situation that had created uncertainty and placed EU migrants in a state of waiting while Brexit negotiations ultimately determined their rights and futures in the UK. These Brexit related insecurities and feelings of being in-limbo awaiting the consequences of Brexit link to the cocoon orientation discussed by Trąbka & Pustulka (2020) and Kilkey and Ryan's (2021) classification of Brexit as an unsettling event.

Similarly, Milosz said that he would probably stay in the UK, but that he was unsure about the potential impact of the referendum result. Milosz also mentioned political issues in

Poland as a possible intervening obstacle that could prevent him from returning to Poland. He said:

> *'I think stay…I don't know it will be possible back to Poland or not because we have a very strange situation in politics situation yeah? And nobody knows will be still EU or not, will be still peace in Poland or will be civil war? It's no joke, it's a really unknown future at the moment. It's er Eastern Europe, it's a little bit different, different stories it's a little bit different place in the world'.*

Furthermore, when asked if he thought that the UK referendum would affect his migration and settlement plans, Milosz said:

> *'I think it doesn't matter for me because I am here six years, if somebody is here permanent resident I think English don't kick out in just one day because you're working here, you pay taxes here yeah? You can put er application for citizenship yeah…I do it yeah in future because I want I'd, I stay here, better way is got citizenship. You have full rights, you are not only one of immigrants you are citizen of that country'.*

His responses indicated that he did not feel able to return to Poland owing to political tensions and the looming possibility of civil war in Poland, but his response could be interpreted as suggesting that return migration may be a possibility if he had to leave the UK and if conditions in Poland became safer. Milosz also shared that he intended to apply for British citizenship following the referendum so that he could remain in the UK and enjoy the same rights as UK nationals. His response expressed a desire to integrate into British society and lose the status of being *'only'* an immigrant, suggesting that he would feel more accepted and secure in UK society after gaining citizenship.

In addition, Henryk said:

> *'Don't know I can't say now…I can't say now…after last referendum I don't know now… but I rather to stay here'.*

This extract suggests that Henryk preferred to stay in the UK if possible, but that at the time of the interview he was feeling uncertain about his potential future in the UK following the EU referendum and the decision for Brexit.

Similarly, when asked whether she had any aspirations to return to Poland or if she intended to stay in the UK, Kasia said:

> *'Um I will like stay forever… but I don't know what's er happen in the future (laughs)'.*

And when asked whether she was referring to the EU referendum, Kasia said:

> *'Yeah (laughs) but I came here before 2012 but maybe will be ok for me'.*

These extracts suggest that Kasia would prefer to stay in the UK, but that similarly to Henryk and others, Kasia was feeling uncertain about her potential to remain in the UK following the EU referendum and the decision for Brexit. Kasia was hopeful that she would be able to remain living in the UK, as she had been living in the UK for over four years at the time of the EU referendum, but she remained uncertain about her potential future in the UK at the time of the interview.

Additionally, as also discussed under the subordinate theme of aspirations for international migration (outside of Poland), Andrzej shared his views on return migration to Poland and the impacts of Brexit and said:

> *'As it's ten years I am quite settled over here, I am not sure I am going to be moving out unless this situation is going to make me move'.*

And when asked if he was referring to the EU referendum, Andrzej said:

> *'Pretty much. If we are going to be limited with renting, buying and working over here we might, I would consider probably moving somewhere else to a different country'.*

Additionally, when asked whether he thought that he would move back to Poland or migrate somewhere else if that did occur, Andrzej said:

> *'Not with the current government in Poland…for the next four years with the current government I am not going back'.*

Within these extracts, Andrzej explained that he did not intend to leave the UK as he had lived in the UK for ten years and felt settled. He stated that if he was forced to leave the UK owing to negative impacts of Brexit, then he would move to another English-speaking country such as Canada rather than return to Poland, owing to his dislike of the PiS government in Poland. In addition, his reluctance to return to Poland was also likely to have been influenced in part by the fact that if he returned to Poland he would have had to fulfil his obligation to take part in national service and may have also faced consequences for previously avoiding national service by migrating to the UK. The extracts shared by Andrzej indicate that at the time of the interview Andrzej was uncertain about how Brexit might impact his ability to remain in the UK and how Brexit might impact the ability for Polish migrants to access employment and housing in the UK. Andrzej stated that if Polish migrants were limited from accessing housing and employment in the UK then he would consider migrating abroad (but not to Poland).

In addition, Grzegorz in Peterborough shared his views on return migration to Poland. Grzegorz said:

> *'No, no, I will either stay here or go somewhere else…but probably… I won't come back…some other country, perhaps, I don't know. It depends on Brexit! (laughs)'.*

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This suggests that Grzegorz felt as though he would either remain in the UK or move to another country in the future, but that he had no aspirations to return to Poland. He suggested that his future plans would be dependent on the consequences of Brexit. When asked whether he felt as though his plans or his experience of living in the UK had changed since the decision for Brexit, Grzegorz said:

> *'Umm I have to really now prepare for the worst and hope for the best…umm… if it comes to the worst I will just move somewhere else. Like Ireland, the Netherlands or somewhere… but I like to hope that it's going to turn out to be even better. I have a sort of vision but… obviously I'm not a politician or anything like it…so I don't know what's going to happen but I have a few visions on it…the way I think… if Brexit, when Brexit comes into place, and if there will be no more migrants allowed to come in, technically less people coming in could mean that there will be more possibilities inside but it's just my opinion'.*

And Grzegorz added:

> *'Quite a lot of people are leaving already because they…they are scared and they don't know what's going to happen, so…obviously it means less people'.*

These extracts suggest that Grzegorz was preparing himself to potentially be forced to leave the UK owing to Brexit, but also had hope that Brexit may reduce further immigration to the UK and reduce competition for opportunities to enable existing migrants and British nationals in the UK to access opportunities more easily. Additionally, Grzegorz suggested that he was aware that many Polish people were choosing to leave the UK because of the uncertainty created by the decision for Brexit and because of fear regarding how Brexit might impact Polish people if they remained in the UK after Brexit. Additionally, when asked whether he had any plans to apply for British citizenship or for settled status, Grzegorz said:

> *'Umm hmm I was planning to apply for a permanent resident thingy, but then I found out you don't need that. Well as long as…as long as Britain's in the EU, you've automatically got permanent residency…and then whether you've got it on paper or not, once Brexit comes in, it won't matter anyway so…but I am thinking of applying for a full citizenship but not, not just yet… but I bet they've just been bombarded with…applications, so I'm just going to give them some time (laughs)'.*

Within this extract, Grzegorz suggested that he had previously considered applying for permanent residency in the UK but then discovered that he would not need to apply for permanent residency and would automatically obtain permanent residency in the UK as an EU citizen when Brexit occurred, so he did not believe that he needed to do anything to be able to remain in the UK permanently. However, Grzegorz was unfortunately mistaken as in 2019 the UK government launched the EUSS which meant that following the decision for Brexit, EU citizens and their family members who were living in the UK were required to apply to the EUSS by the 30[th] of June 2021 to maintain their right to live and work in the UK, and if they failed to apply to the scheme by the deadline then they would lose their legal status in the UK by the 1[st] of July 2021 (Migration Observatory, 2021). Some late applications were being considered if people had reasonable grounds for failing to submit an application by the deadline, but it was unclear how long late applications would continue to be considered and what criteria was considered to be 'reasonable grounds' for missing the deadline. Under the EUSS, EU citizens could be granted settled status or pre-settled status. Settled status meant that an EU citizen could remain in the UK indefinitely if they had been continually living in the UK for five years, and pre-settled status meant that an EU citizen would have limited right to remain in the UK if they arrived in the UK by the 31[st] of December 2020 but had not yet been continuously living in the UK for five years. Pre-settled status enabled EU citizens to stay in the UK until they reached the five-year threshold, and then they would be eligible to apply for settled status. But failure to have applied for either pre-settled status or settled status under the EUSS scheme by the deadline of the 30[th] of June 2021 would have resulted in any EU citizens who did not apply losing their legal status in the UK as of the 1[st] of July 2021 (Migration Observatory, 2021). Therefore, Grzegorz was incorrect in thinking that EU citizens in the UK would automatically be granted permanent

residency in the UK following Brexit, and when the researcher explained the EUSS to him, Grzegorz said that he was unaware that it existed and commented:

> *'I don't listen to the news, I don't watch the news; So I sleep better…the problem is, it's the government, they can do whatever they want pretty much so they can guarantee the thing that you just said, but next year, oh no sorry, we don't it and (clicks as if it disappears)…so you never know what's going to happen'.*

The experience shared by Grzegorz suggests that he was unaware of the EUSS and was avoiding coverage of the news to maintain his peace of mind. This suggests that there was a lack of awareness of the EUSS among some Polish migrants in the UK such as Grzegorz regarding what was necessary for them to do to secure and maintain their right to remain in the UK following Brexit. In addition, it appears that Grzegorz's avoidance of news coverage was common during Brexit negotiations, as a Guardian article claimed that a third of Britons were avoiding the news owing to Brexit frustration, Brexit fatigue and the negative impact that the news coverage of Brexit was having on their mood (Waterson, 2019). The article suggested that remain voters were particularly affected, and it is therefore likely that some EU migrants in the UK such as Grzegorz may have felt equally emotionally affected by the Brexit coverage. Additionally, the extract above suggests that Grzegorz felt distrustful of government promises and felt as though there was perpetual uncertainty as he believed that government guarantees were liable to change and the future was unknown. Grzegorz's narrative suggested that he would prefer to remain in the UK, but that he felt that his future in the UK was uncertain owing to the decision for Brexit, and that as a result he needed to *'prepare for the worst'* and the possibility of needing to move to another country in the future.

The extracts shared by Mikolaj, Milosz, Henryk, Kasia, Andrzej and Grzegorz above indicate that some of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough had shared feelings that their future plans were uncertain owing to the uncertainty created by the decision for Brexit. Many of these participants indicated that they would prefer to remain living in the UK but thought that they may be forced to leave and return to Poland or move elsewhere owing to the potential impact of Brexit. This is again suggestive of the cocoon orientation discussed by Trąbka & Pustulka (2020) and the classification of Brexit as an unsettling event with the potential to disrupt migration and settlement plans (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021).

Additionally, Izabela shared her perspective that she knew many Polish people who had lived in the UK for many years, who had been selling their housing in the UK and migrating back to Poland between the EU referendum on the 23rd of June 2016 and the official Brexit date on the 31st of January 2020. When asked if she knew of anyone who had decided to migrate and return to Poland, Izabela said:

> *'Yeah some because summer is coming and they say as well all of my friends are going back…to Poland after this Brexit, because what they think is that the houses are going to go down after Brexit…so they cannot sell'.*

And when asked whether they were trying to sell their properties before Brexit occurred, Izabela said:

> *'Before yeah, and then go back…and I'm surprised because some of them they have stayed very long, like me for example…I don't know why. For me it's… if you… if you are here like me then there is no point to go back because your life and your family is here…and err… if they have their houses here, they want to sell and want to come back there. But I don't really know what the… why, why too many people are thinking like that…like push the situation like, ok…you don't want to stay anymore…yeah some of them are thinking like err… they do not feel like they're…err like people want them…like Polish, yeah like you know what I mean, they do not feel welcome anymore here…after this Brexit yeah…everybody has different thoughts'.*

These extracts suggest that some members of the Polish community in Peterborough who had been living in the area for many years felt unwelcome in the UK following the EU referendum result and were selling their housing and businesses in the UK to return to Poland. Izabela suggested that there was a belief that property prices would decrease after Brexit, and that some Polish individuals in the Peterborough area were trying to sell their properties in the UK prior to Brexit to avoid the possibility of the value of their housing decreasing after Brexit and potentially being unable to sell their properties in the UK

following Brexit. In addition, Izabela shared her view that some Polish migrants have utilised the money that they have saved from working in the UK to build housing in Poland and were now choosing to return to Poland to live in the houses that they had built. For instance, Izabela shared an anecdote about the experience of one of her Polish friends:

> *'I have a friend that she works in like the north in a hospital. And she have a house here, she have a house in Poland and she sell that house and they're going to move I think next week'.*

When asked whether she knew why they had decided to return to Poland, Izabela said:

> *'Err… they miss Poland, I think, that's why they're moving…and maybe it's a different situation because they have their own house there, that they built and you know…so they want to start… a new life…they have two small kids there'.*

And when asked whether her friends had built their housing in Poland while they were still living in the UK and had used the money that they had earned in the UK to build the housing, Izabela said yes, and added:

> *'Because if you exchange, it's pounds is low now if you want exchange…then yeah, before it was very strong, you can actually, yeah, build quick if you save money, then you can build…especially when…everything that you want for the house is maybe three times cheaper than here…it's like in Nigeria when my husband said, oh my gosh, with this money he can build three houses…because the paints, and everything like that, you know, and this like you have on the floor…if you calculate, everything is cheaper….the nice quality, but it's cheaper than here…and people who actually built here the painters they charge plenty of money, then in Poland you pay them a little and they're going to do good work because everybody needs money'.*

These extracts only provide anecdotal evidence but suggest that some Polish migrants in the UK have utilised the money that they have earned in the UK to build their own housing in

Poland, and that some Polish migrant individuals were now choosing to return to live in Poland within the houses that they had built, so that they could live in their own housing and start new lives in Poland.

Other Polish participants indicated that returning to Poland would be dependent on financial factors. For instance, Małgorzata said:

> *I would prefer to go back to Poland but the problem is the money. In Poland you don't earn that much money and to feed your own family there is really impossible in the way that I earned'.*

This response suggests that although Małgorzata wanted to return to Poland, she felt unable to do so because the economic conditions and her financial salary in Poland were insufficient to support her family. Similarly, when asked if he would move back to Poland, Jedrek said:

> *'I'm not sure…it's quite a difficult question to decide now because you can't decide that from day to day…you need to have some saved money yeah to go back if there's anything or something goes wrong when you're there so you can have some money if not, and also you cannot you know, I am close all the I call contacts in here and I go back because you never know what is happening, maybe someday you need to come back and you're going to be by yourself if you're not going to have good relation here so…everyone not going to be happy to help you'.*

Jedrek's response suggested that he had considered returning to Poland in the future, but that he had some doubts about returning. He suggested that people who do move back to Poland need to have financial savings to support themselves in case life in Poland fails to meet their needs and expectations. Jedrek also said that return migrants should attempt to maintain their relationships with the people that they know in the UK so that they can return to the UK again if necessary and still maintain access to assistance and their social networks. His response indicates a desire to return to Poland but also demonstrates recognition that return migration can be difficult and disappointing at times, so it is beneficial to plan ahead and prepare for the possibility of unfulfilled expectations.

Other respondents were more explicit in saying that they did not want to return to Poland. For instance, Celestyna said that she would only return to Poland for temporary visits and would not consider moving back permanently. Celestyna said:

> *'No not, not for living like that, for holiday yes…I just like get used to it here I am here more than ten years already'.*

This extract suggests that Celestyna had no aspirations to return to Poland permanently and was only interested in returning to Poland for short-term, temporary visits.

Additionally, Marcia had a strong opinion that she would not return to live in Poland and commented:

> *'No no no, I don't want to… I, you know I like going there to visit my mother, I buy pretty dresses there, I enjoy the sun because its 45 odd degrees in the summer umm but I don't feel that there is a future for me there. I would like an English-speaking job, umm I would something that if anything would cater to my education or whatever and it's just, it's difficult. It's absolutely difficult to find a job like that employment'.*

Marcia also provided an example regarding her mother who spoke three languages and had an undergraduate degree in nursing. Marcia said:

> *'My mother is a nurse by degree and she makes more money as a cleaner in Poland, so she's not happy'.*

This extract indicates that the economic situation and the labour market in Poland was unsuitable for her mother to earn enough money in a desired employment role that reflected her university qualifications.

Marcia also added:

> *'Yes and partially for their bureaucracy, I feel that moving there would be kind of limiting my freedom'.*

This comment was thought to be in reference to the lack of women's rights in Poland over fertility decisions, as she went on to mention contraception and abortion restrictions and said that she was not claiming whether abortion was right or wrong but that she believed that people should have the choice to decide what they want to do. Marcia added:

> *'I feel that they infringe upon not only women's rights but people's rights and I just… I cannot imagine being in such a state'.*

She also said that there was a lack of general social care in Poland, that she found atrocious. Her answer quite passionately demonstrated her beliefs on social care and women's rights and displayed severe dissatisfaction with the government and the health and social care system in Poland, which had clearly influenced her decision to refrain from return migration.

Like Marcia, Patrycja felt that she would experience difficulties re-accessing the labour market in Poland if she returned. Patrycja said:

> *'I don't think so that I move back to Poland, but um I'm going to stay in England. I have got some more plans for the career, for the development myself and everything is er in England. And I am not sure if I will, can find myself in Poland, yeah even in career, employment whatever so no'.*

Her response suggests that she felt embedded in the UK labour market and had plans to develop her career that would require her to remain in England. She appeared to feel unable to obtain the same opportunities within the Polish labour market and therefore expressed that she would prefer to remain in the UK.

Angelica's decision to avoid return migration to Poland was influenced by her children and their educational experiences. She said:

> *'I'm not planning to move back to Poland…it's like I couldn't imagine my two daughters in Polish school in Poland it's, it's like two realities totally different…it's a multicultural erm school it's the children with the teaching, the way they teaching…yes, well I can give you an example at school I can't imagine Polish kids in Poland when they and have er end of year, exit of school year, the kids here er they crying it's like just um unbelievable. In Poland, they just running away straight away (laughs)'.*

Her extract suggests that she felt that her children would receive a better education in the UK and would be more likely to enjoy school in the UK than they would in Poland. She also appeared to like that British schools were more multicultural than schools in Poland, which suggests that she thought that enabling her children to meet and interact with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds would be beneficial for her children.

She then spoke of the way that UK teachers teach children and have fun with them and said that these are little things, but that they make a big difference to educational experiences. Her comments demonstrated that the perceived needs and satisfaction levels of her children influenced her perceptions of return migration, as she thought that her children would have a better experience of education in the UK than in Poland and was therefore *'not planning to move back to Poland'.*

In addition, Lukasz provided a response that indicated that he no longer felt a sense of belonging to Poland. He said:

> *'No Poland is a closed chapter for me I wouldn't want to move there… I think there is quite a lot of reasons. I haven't lived there for ten years, I feel comfortable going there, I think being away in a different place mentally I would have to readjust. It would just be too hard. I think finding a job would be quite difficult. I'm not saying that it wouldn't be possible to look at specific things that might be, I would probably need to move to a completely different area, a different city but I think it, mentally would be really tough…and I don't really have anything back in Poland apart from some family and I don't consider that, you know all of my friends they, they don't live there so…I think I have made one life, basically most of my adult life has been here so…not in Poland I think I've lived only in Poland until 22 and yeah I don't think there's anything else for me there'.*

This extract suggests that Lukasz felt as though as he had very limited remaining emotional and social connections to Poland and instead felt established and adjusted to living in the UK. His diminishing sense of connectedness to Poland and his perception that returning and readjusting to Poland would be mentally difficult appear to have influenced his decision to refrain from return migration.

Instead, his sense of belonging appeared to have shifted over time as he had become older and gradually more anchored and embedded in UK society (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Ryan, 2022). His narrative implied that he felt more integrated and accustomed to life in Britain than life in Poland, and that he therefore did not feel a desire to return to Poland.

Additionally, when discussing her initial migration experience and her reasons for not wanting to return to Poland, Izabela said:

> *'It was tough because it was for something, something new and away from family. I was crying almost every night, from the beginning I was feeling alone here and you know? and you don't have that food that you eat here, you have different food…so it's everything you miss! but now we have here family and if you're going to ask me if I want to go to Poland, I'm not going to say yes, you know?...and it's here, it's my life is here, it's, you know? I can go, we're going to holiday, and have some fun in Poland…but… if I'm going to be single now then definitely I will go and live there…but because my husband… it's no place me and him together in Poland, because he…I don't think so he's going to find himself in Poland…he loves Poland, he loves the food, he loves the people…but work and communication, it's not all the places have, you need to go to live in a bigger town like Kraków, or Warsaw, you know? to actually find the work that you speak only English, you don't speak Polish so it's hard'.*

The beginning of this extract highlights the emotional toll that migrating to another country can have on some individuals such as Izabela, who was initially *'crying almost every night'* and *'feeling alone'* when she first arrived in Peterborough after migrating to the UK. Additionally, Izabela explained that she initially missed everything in Poland, suggesting that she felt quite isolated and homesick after migrating to the UK. Although, the remainder of the extract above suggests that Izabela had since developed a sense that her life and her family were now in the UK and she no longer had desires to return to Poland permanently, and only intended to visit Poland for holidays or to travel during her retirement. The experience shared by Izabela suggested that although she initially felt homesick in the UK after migrating from Poland, over time Izabela had gradually become embedded in UK society and had developed a new life in Peterborough, and therefore no longer experienced feelings of homesickness or desires to return to live in Poland. In addition, within the extract shared by Izabela above she explained that her husband did not speak Polish and would struggle to work, communicate, and adjust to living in Poland, which was an additional reason why Izabela did not have an aspiration to migrate to Poland in the future. Although Izabela expressed that she did not want to return to live in Poland permanently, she shared that her husband owned two properties in Nigeria and that they were considering buying a property together in Poland as well so that they would be able to travel to both locations in the future for holidays and during their retirement.

Izabela said:

> *'We're thinking about that with my husband…to have a place that we can go for holidays and stay there. And we need to sleep in my parents' house or my sister's house, we'd just have our own. And if we're not going to be in Poland, we're just going to rent and you know? Save that money for education for my son if he soon go to college, then it's very expensive…so we just want to prepare, yeah…because if you calculate, twenty thousand pounds you're going to buy a nice house in Poland close to the beach…so it's not…here you need to have that for a deposit if you're buying a house, you know?'.*

And Izabela also said:

> *'Yes no, we're going to rent and what we think we're going to rent and maybe for retire, we're going to have some place to travel and stay…because my husband has two properties in Nigeria…then…yeah, we want to have one in Poland, so if we travel to Nigeria we're going to have one house and you know? and you never know, the kids are going to decide; they're going to have something'.*

Within these extracts Izabela indicated that herself, her husband, and their children intended to utilise the property that they were planning to purchase in Poland as somewhere where they could stay while visiting their family in Poland. Additionally, Izabela explained that they intended to rent the property out when they were not using it so that they could save additional money to cover their son's future tuition fees. This suggests that Izabela and her husband were considering purchasing a property in Poland for their own personal use for travel purposes and as a potential investment opportunity to gain further income to put towards their son's education costs.

Other Polish participants indicated that they would like to remain in the UK permanently and had no aspirations to return to Poland.

For instance, Szymon said:

> *'I think that will be for end of my life'.*

And when asked if he meant that he intended to stay in Luton, Szymon said:

> *'(Nods) Maybe! I look for woman and if wants to go outside I go yeah!..but I don't think about it I'm too old…I want look for a woman who will help me learn to speak English…She must think that my English is not very good… I sometimes meet with woman 'oh you no speak English, oh sorry (looks disheartened as if language has prevented him from having relationships in the past)'.*

The example shared by Szymon suggested that he intended to remain in Luton for the rest of his life and hoped to meet a woman to share his life with in Luton, although he appeared to feel limited from forming romantic relationships owing to his limited English language abilities.

In addition, when asked if he had aspirations to return to Poland, Tomasz said:

> *'I'm happy where I am now, I think I just make some connections with the area…so I'd rather stay here'.*

This extract indicates that Tomasz had no aspirations to return to Poland and intended to remain in Luton because he felt embedded to the area owing to the social connections that he had formed there over time.

Additionally, Berta, Celestyna and Daria expressed that they all intended to remain living in the UK in the future and had no aspirations to return to Poland or migrate abroad elsewhere.

For instance, Berta said:

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> *'No I want to stay here forever'.*

Celestyna said:

> *'No not, not for living like that, for holiday yes…I just like get used to it here I am here more than ten years already'.*

And Daria said:

> *'Now is stay'.*

These extracts suggest that Berta, Celestyna and Daria all had long-term aspirations to remain in the UK and did not have any aspirations to return to Poland. The extract shared by Celestyna suggested that she wanted to remain in the UK because she had lived in the UK for over a decade and felt that she had become accustomed to life in the UK and would only consider returning to Poland for short-term visits.

In addition, Ewa shared that she would prefer to remain in Peterborough and was in the process of purchasing a house in Peterborough, but was fearful that her right to remain in the UK and her property purchase may be affected by the impact of Brexit. Furthermore, Ewa said that she did not want to return to Poland in the future, and when Ewa was asked whether there were any particular reasons why she would not want to return to Poland, Ewa said:

> *'No… I just like to be here. I like it'.*

Ewa's narrative suggested that she had no particular reasons for not wanting to return to Poland, other than the fact that she enjoyed living in Peterborough, did not want to undertake

another significant life change by migrating abroad again, and wanted to maintain the social connections that she had established in Peterborough since she had migrated to the UK. This suggests that Ewa felt embedded in UK society and in the Peterborough area specifically and had no aspirations to move elsewhere or to return to Poland. Instead, Ewa intended to complete her purchase of a house in Peterborough and remain in the UK indefinitely, providing that she was able to do so and was not negatively affected or forced to leave the UK owing to Brexit.

During the interview with Agnieszka, she indicated that she had initially intended to migrate to the UK temporarily for economic reasons, but had later decided to stay in the UK because she felt as though she had gained a sense of independence and was able to live freely in the UK without the influence or judgement of family members that she had experienced while living in Poland. Agnieszka confirmed that her increased sense of freedom in the UK compared to her previous experience of living in Poland was one of the reasons why she would not want to return to live in Poland again. When asked if there were any other reasons why she did not want to return, Agnieszka added:

> *'Just I think… I think just that and I'm not really a fan of Polish mentality as well to be honest…the majority of Polish people… I don't want to sound bad because I'm Polish as well so, yeah, but are like really… jealous and they don't want to change themselves, they just complain about. So for instance they've got a really bad job and they're not thinking about improving their qualifications; they just sit in and complain about how shit the life is. Yeah, also they're moaning all the time…they don't know how to cope with each other. So yeah, they're...yeah, it's so… a strange nation, Polish people (laughs). As I said, I'm not feeling as a part of that Polish community there'.*

This extract suggests that Agnieszka felt as though she was different from many other Polish people and did not identify with the jealous, negative and somewhat idle mindset that she believed that some other Polish people had. Therefore, it appeared that she felt quite disconnected and did not feel like a part of the Polish community. This suggests that as well as preferring her sense of independence and freedom in the UK, Agnieszka also did not want to return to live in Poland because she did not feel as though she belonged or identified with other Polish people or the Polish community.

Additionally, when Oliwia was asked whether she aspired to return to Poland in the future, Oliwia commented:

> *'I don't think so, but I won't say that I would never do that because I don't know what future shows…but for now I'm not thinking about it. at all'.*

And when asked for further information about why she did not have an aspiration to return to Poland, Oliwia said:

> *'Err because of the kids mainly…they've got school here…I think they've got more chances for a good future here, for better jobs and all that so I think that's the main reason. But also there is, I can't imagine myself living in Poland now and seeing the people...struggling now when we are going on holidays is not that easy…and nearly all of my family, my closest family is here so… I would be alone there, in my own country I would be alone so that's another thing'.*

These extracts suggest that Oliwia felt as though she could not say for definite that she would never return to live in Poland again, because she could not be sure what the future would hold, but she had no plans to return to Poland in the future and it appeared more likely that she would choose to remain in the UK. Oliwia explained that she had no aspirations to return to Poland because her children were enrolled in British schools and she believed that her children would have greater opportunities to find better jobs and to have a good future in the UK than they would have in Poland. In addition, Oliwia said that she could not imagine herself living in Poland anymore and said that it was not easy for her to see people struggling in Poland when she returned to visit her family. When Oliwia was asked for further details regarding her observation that people in Poland were struggling, she said:

> *'Because I'm from a big city, so I can see struggles with life yeah? with money and all that… I think... I don't know what I could do in Poland... to get a good job and good money…we used to... I wouldn't say easy life but it's easier than it was in Poland so... I don't know if we could have the same level of life back home'.*

This extract suggests that Oliwia believed that there were better employment and income prospects in the UK than there were in Poland and that life in Poland was relatively harder than life in the UK. Oliwia indicated that she could not imagine herself returning to live in Poland with her family because she would not want them to have to struggle and she was unsure whether they would be able to have the same quality of life in Poland as they had in the UK. For these reasons, Oliwia had no aspirations to return to live in Poland and it appeared more likely that she would choose to remain in the UK indefinitely.

Furthermore, Artek shared his views on return migration and explained that at the time of the interview, he was not experiencing sufficient push or pull factors to make him consider returning to Poland. Artek said:

> *'I not have a good pressure at the moment when I will go to. I like here, I work here, I have got friends, but if somebody said to me, I don't like you staying here, you go out, I move. It's not Poland, but at the moment I'm here'.*

And when asked whether he meant that he would only move out of the UK if he was forced to move and that he would prefer to stay in the UK if possible, Artek said:

> *'Yeah, exactly, yeah…Yes. In Poland we say is the where is your house…where is your heart…at the moment is here'.*

These extracts suggest that Artek had no aspirations to return to live in Poland and felt as though he would prefer to remain in the UK because he had developed social connections and a sense of emotional attachment and belonging to the UK. Artek explained that he was

satisfied living in the UK, and that he had a job and social ties in Cambridgeshire, suggesting that he felt anchored and embedded in the UK. Additionally, Artek indicated that he would only leave the UK if he was forced to do so and that at the time of the interview he did not feel as though there were any particular factors pushing him to leave to the UK or pulling him to move elsewhere. Artek expressed that he felt as though his heart was in the UK, and that he would prefer to remain in the UK permanently if possible.

Borys was also asked if he had any aspirations to return to Poland and shared his view that he would only return to Poland if he was forced to do so, and that even in that circumstance he may decide to move to Canada instead. Borys said:

> *'Well if I must, you know…just if I must…so I back… err not exactly…maybe then go to Canada, you know? This is…fifty:fifty…no it's not a consideration that I move to Poland, no go back to Poland… I'm changing country when my country was in a very hard situation, you know?...then I'm feeling like my country not give me nothing…so this is my country. I was living with parents, my parents you know…my brother…and the relationship there emotional…is like zero'.*

Within this extract, Borys explained that he had no plans to return to live in Poland in the future and was not considering doing so. Borys confirmed that he felt as though he had no emotional relationship or connection with Poland because he felt as though Poland did not offer him any help when he had previously experienced financial hardship and had struggled to support his family in Poland before migrating to the UK. He added:

> *'I'm very patriotic but not patriotic on the emigration place'.*

This suggests that he felt very proud of his Polish identity but did not feel a strong sense of connectedness with Poland itself, as he had felt disappointed with the lack of support and the lack of opportunities that were available to help him and his family there during their previous time of need. It appears that Borys felt that he had experienced a very difficult living situation in Poland prior to migrating to the UK and now had no interest in returning

to Poland in the future, even though he said that Poland had improved over time and was now '*much, much better*', as he felt as though Poland did not offer him any support when he and his family needed assistance. In addition, Borys said:

> '*Well… last year, we see like the community little bit dropping down, there was a lot of people…moving…yeah, after the referendum, they're moving to Poland…it's like a decision… like ok I'm moving back to Poland. It's not next year, it's two, three weeks, selling everything! And the bag….it's umm the situation is…it's nobody know what's happen after thirty-one March 2019… nobody knows! nobody knows nothing! It doesn't matter if the…cold Brexit or agreed Brexit, it doesn't matter, nobody knows what's happen*'.

And when asked whether he believed that some Polish people were returning to Poland owing to the uncertainty associated with Brexit, Borys said:

> '*Yeah and economic Poland is much, much, much better…then I think, oh I'm back to Poland. Hmm what are they doing there? I don't know…because living half years of my life I'm living here…so it's very hard… moving there…then I think, well I don't know what other professions starting, and I'm too old to go back to my profession you know? Or the… it will remind everything, you know?*'.

These extracts suggest that Borys believed that there was a lot of uncertainty associated with the decision for Brexit and the potential impacts of Brexit, and that feelings of uncertainty following the EU referendum result were driving some Polish migrants to make sudden decisions to sell up in the UK, to pack their bags and to return to Poland. Borys suggested that he had witnessed the Polish community in Peterborough becoming smaller since the EU referendum result. Borys also suggested that as well as Brexit uncertainty acting as a push factor driving some people to migrate out of the UK, the improved economic situation in Poland was acting as a pull factor driving some Polish migrants to choose to return to Poland. Borys explained that the improved economic situation in Poland had led him to previously consider return migration to Poland himself, but that he had decided against it as he had spent half of his life living in the UK, he thought that it would be a very difficult life change to return to Poland again, and he believed that he would find it difficult to re-enter the labour market and find a career in Poland. Borys also thought that returning to live in Poland may

remind him of the hardship that he had experienced there in the past. Additionally, when asked whether these were the main reasons why he would not want to return to Poland, Borys said:

> *'Err… no, my close family is still living here, just only friends you know, like, not close family friends, just colleague friends…just…because I'm working in the Polish Saturday School…with my wife as well…err… so we see like how many teachers with whole family, their like their families was mixing like English husband, Polish wife, they're having kids, they're selling house and they move to Poland'.*

This extract suggests that the main reason why Borys would not want to return to Poland in the future was because his close family, friends and colleagues were all living in the UK, suggesting that the presence of his social network in the UK was the main factor that had influenced him to remain and settle in the UK rather than considering moving elsewhere or returning to Poland. In addition, within this extract, Borys suggested that some of the Polish teachers that he and his wife knew from the Polish Saturday School in Peterborough had decided to sell their homes and return to Poland. Borys also highlighted that some of these Polish teachers were married to British partners and were returning to live in Poland with their British partners. Borys said:

> *'I have few friends who live in Poland now. And it's…you know, then it's for the hard for the English. Six, seven months and they're starting to, not fluently speaking Polish, but just understanding and…slowly speaking'.*

This indicates that the British partners of his Polish friends who had migrated to Poland together following the EU referendum were slowly starting to understand and speak Polish after living in Poland for approximately six months, suggesting that it was challenging for them to adjust to learning a new language but that they were gradually improving their

language skills. Finally, when asked whether he thought that returning to Poland would ever be an option for him and his family, Borys said:

> *'It's not an option because my daughter is only at secondary school, so back to Poland would be hard understanding a new school…for example, first language for my daughter is English…well they're speaking both languages you know writing and reading…and not exactly it's like Polish language is only learning in the school. We are in the home we're speaking both languages'.*

And Borys also later added:

> *'You know I'll never be like my son and daughter speaking English, my son it's his first language; all my…err and my daughter the same it's her first language …and they're fluent (swoosh), they're speaking like that, you know?'.*

These extracts suggest that Borys believed that return migration was not an option for him and his family in the future, because although his children were able to communicate in both English and in Polish, Borys believed that his daughter would struggle to read and write at a Polish secondary school as schools teach solely in Polish in Poland and his daughter's first language is English. This suggests that Borys would also not want to return to live in Poland because he thought that it could be detrimental to his daughter's education and schooling experience.

8.2 The Future Aspirations of the Polish Participants in Poland

This section presents a summary of the main findings that emerged from the IPA analysis of the interviews that were carried out with the Polish participants in four different localities in Poland (in Szczecin, Wrocław, Warsaw and Kraków). The full interpretative and analytical discussion of these results along with extracts from the participant interviews can be viewed in Appendix XIII if desired. This section presents the key findings related to the perceptions, experiences and connections that the Polish participants in Poland had with the UK, including whether they had any aspirations to migrate or return to the UK in the future. The superordinate themes that emerged from the IPA of the interview data that was collected from the Polish participants in Poland were: connections and past experiences in the UK; and the propensity to migrate to the UK. These superordinate themes and the corresponding subordinate themes are presented in Table 19 below.

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate Themes
Connections and Past Experiences in the UK	• Had social ties in the UK • Had visited the UK on a short-term basis • Had previously lived in the UK
Propensity to Migrate to the UK	• Potential aspirations to migrate to the UK • No aspirations to migrate to the UK

Table 19. The superordinate and subordinate themes related to the future aspirations of the Polish Participants in Poland.

This section is split into two subsections. Subsection 8.2.1 presents the main findings related to the superordinate theme of connections and past experiences in the UK and the associated subordinate themes shown in Table 19. Subsection 8.2.2 then presents the main findings that related to the superordinate theme of propensity to migrate to the UK and the associated subordinate themes shown in Table 19.

8.2.1 Connections and Past Experiences in the UK

This subsection provides a summary of the results that the Polish participants in Poland shared in relation to the superordinate theme of connections and past experiences in the UK.

Interview Location	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes		
		Had social ties in the UK	Had visited the UK on a short-term basis before	Had previously lived in the UK
Szczecin	Aleksandra	✓		
Police (near Szczecin)	Krystyna	✓	✓	✓
Police (near Szczecin)	Bartek	✓		✓
Wrocław	Wiktoria	✓	✓	
Warsaw	Ania	✓	✓	
Warsaw	Casimir	✓		✓
Kraków	Beata	✓	✓	
Kraków	Liljana	✓	✓	
Kraków	Natasza	✓		
Kraków	Alicja	✓	✓	

Table 20. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of connections and past experiences in the UK.

The participants that discussed each subordinate theme that related to the superordinate theme of connections and past experiences in the UK are displayed in Table 20. The analysis of the interviews revealed that although most of the Polish participants in Poland appeared to have at least one social tie living in the UK, their contact with these social ties appeared to be limited or non-existent, apart from Wiktoria and Casimir who appeared to contact their social ties more frequently. It also seemed as though most of the contact that the participants in Poland had with their social ties in the UK took place online through email, or via apps

such as Facebook or WhatsApp. Although Wiktoria and Casimir had also met up with their social ties face to face a few times during visits.

The analysis also revealed that multiple Polish participants that were interviewed in Poland (60%) had previously visited the UK on a short-term, temporary basis to travel and visit places, to visit social ties, or to access educational resources, but had not previously migrated to live in the UK long-term. In contrast, three of the Polish participants that were interviewed in Poland - Krystyna, Casimir and Bartek (30%) had previously lived in the UK in Radlett, Harpenden, and Wheathampstead in Hertfordshire; in London; and in Worksop in Nottinghamshire and in Creswell in Derbyshire respectively. And they had since returned to live in Poland again owing to a relationship breakdown (Krystyna); because of financial struggles living in London (Casimir); and because of familial loss of employment, debt and difficulties affording rent (Bartek). Their reasons for migrating to the UK, their experiences within the UK and their reasons for returning to Poland varied; further highlighting distinctions within different individual lived experiences and the importance of not assuming that all Polish migrant experiences in the UK are equal.

8.2.2 Propensity to Migrate to the UK

This subsection provides a summary of the results that the Polish participants in Poland shared in relation to the superordinate theme of propensity of migrate to the UK.

The participants that discussed each subordinate theme that related to the superordinate theme of propensity to migrate to the UK are displayed in Table 21. A total of 40% of the Polish participants in Poland (four participants) indicated that they may potentially migrate to the UK in the future, but these responses were tentative, and most of these participants indicated that if they did decide to go to the UK in the future it would most likely only be for a temporary visit.

Interview Location	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes	
		May potentially migrate to the UK in the future	Does not have aspirations to migrate to the UK
Szczecin	Aleksandra	✓	
Police (near Szczecin)	Krystyna	✓	
Police (near Szczecin)	Bartek		✓
Wrocław	Wiktoria		✓
Warsaw	Ania		✓
Warsaw	Casimir		✓
Kraków	Beata		✓
Kraków	Liljana	✓	
Kraków	Natasza	✓	
Kraków	Alicja		✓

Table 21. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of propensity to migrate to the UK.

Aleksandra, Liljana and Natasza had never visited the UK before and all suggested that they viewed the UK in a positive light and would love to visit the UK in the future. However, their extracts suggested that they only intended to visit the UK on a temporary basis rather than to migrate and settle in the UK long-term. In contrast, six of the Polish participants in Poland (60%) said that they had no aspirations to migrate to the UK, which was mostly owing to feelings of contentment in Poland and a lack of desire for change.

Additionally, Krystyna, Bartek and Casimir had previously lived in the UK before returning to Poland, and shared different perspectives on the prospect of returning to the UK in the future. Krystyna shared that she sometimes regretted her decision to return to Poland, because it was easier for her to afford the cost of living in the UK than it was for her to afford the cost of living in Poland, as she had a lower income in Poland than what she had previously earned in the UK. Additionally, Krystyna said that the governance of the PiS party in Poland had at times made her wish that she had remained living in the UK instead

of returning to Poland. In particular, Krystyna expressed her concern that the conservative PiS party in Poland would bring back national service and would conscript her sons into the Polish army. However, Krystyna hoped that her sons would be able to avoid that eventuality if necessary as they were both Polish and British nationals and would be able to return to the UK to avoid national service in Poland if needed. Krystyna suggested that she would be open to returning to live in the UK again in the future and that she would consider joining her sons if they decided to migrate to live in the UK again. However, it appeared that her propensity to migrate to the UK was tentative and dependent on whether her sons would choose to return to live in the UK again. Bartek also shared that he had experienced some feelings of regret since leaving the UK to return to Poland, such as a regret that he was not able to achieve his A level qualifications before returning to Poland. When he returned to Poland, Bartek initially had strong desires to return to the UK again, but his desires to return to the UK had since decreased over time and at the time of the interview Bartek did not intend to return to live in the UK again, and had aspirations to travel to work or study in other English speaking countries such as the United States of America or the Netherlands instead. In contrast Casimir did not indicate any feelings of regret related to his decision to return to Poland. Casimir had previously lived in London for fifteen years and indicated that he would not want to return to live in the UK again owing to a reluctance to relive the emotional and financial struggles that he had experienced while previously living in the UK. The detailed extracts shared by Casimir suggested that he had no desire to return to live in the UK again because of the struggles that he had experienced while trying to improve his income, housing, and quality of life in London when he had previously lived in the UK. Additionally, Casimir suggested that the high cost of living in London and the uncertain consequences of Brexit had resulted in the UK becoming a less attractive migration and settlement destination for Polish nationals, particularly when compared to other countries such as Germany which Casimir said was a comparatively more attractive destination in terms of income, cost of living and quality of life. These results suggest that there was a low propensity for the Polish participants in Poland to migrate to the UK in the future and that aspirations to migrate to the UK were low among the Polish participants in Poland.

8.3 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results related to the future migration and settlement aspirations of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough and has provided a summary of the main findings from the interviews that were carried out with the Polish participants in Poland. The results indicated that among the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough, aspirations for residential mobility within the UK were high (54% in total, 59% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough). Most of the Polish participants in Peterborough indicated that they wanted to remain living within Peterborough (63%), whereas only 26% of the Polish participants in Luton indicated that they wanted to remain living in Luton, suggesting that the Polish participants in Luton had a greater propensity for further movement.

89% of the Polish participants indicated that they wanted to remain living in the UK in the future (85% in Luton and 100% in Peterborough). This was mostly owing to feelings of embeddedness (including attachments to housing, places, friends and jobs within the UK) and owing to a greater sense of belonging in the UK than in Poland. Many of the Polish participants had lived in the UK for a long period of time and had developed greater connections in the UK than in Poland. Many also indicated that they were waiting to see what would happen as a result of Brexit and would not choose to move back to Poland unless they were forced to return owing to the impacts of Brexit. Multiple participants indicated that they felt uncertain about the potential impacts of Brexit on their future rights in the UK, such as their right to remain in the UK and their right to access housing. Multiple participants also discussed their reasons for not wanting to return to live in Poland, which included negative perceptions of Polish mentality; not wanting to return to Poland under the PiS government; feelings that their freedoms would be limited in Poland if they returned; perceptions that it would be difficult to readjust to life in Poland again and to re-enter the labour market in Poland in a position that would match their qualifications and level of experience; a belief that Poland would not be able to offer them the same quality of life or the same level of income as what they had in the UK; and perceptions that their children would find it difficult to learn in a Polish school as English was their first language. In contrast, other participants were considering returning to Poland or migrating elsewhere owing to Brexit uncertainty and the potential for Brexit to force them to move; plans to retire abroad; plans to return to Poland if conditions there improved and became comparable to conditions and the quality of life within the UK; a desire for their children to attend a Polish school; and a desire to migrate to Poland if their children ever decided to move there. Other

individuals planned to return to Poland to live in an inherited property in Poland; to complete a prison sentence in Poland; and because of a racist dislike of living in a multicultural society in the UK. More participants in Luton had potential aspirations to return to Poland (44%) than the participants in Peterborough (13%), and aspirations to move to other countries outside of the UK or Poland was low (11%). Furthermore, only 26% of the Polish participants (22% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough) had aspirations for their friends or family members in Poland to join them in the UK in the future or said that there was potential for them to do so. Aspirations for reunification were low owing to perceptions that friends and family members in Poland were content with their lives in Poland; perceptions that those who wanted to migrate to the UK already had; diminished contact and closeness with social ties in Poland over time; and concerns about how their social ties would be treated in the UK following Brexit if they did decide to migrate to the UK from Poland.

Additionally, the interviews that were carried out with the Polish participants in Poland revealed that all of the participants had at least one social tie within the UK, but that their contact with them was limited or non-existent, and those who did maintain contact with them did so via email, WhatsApp or Facebook. 60% of the participants in Poland (6 participants) had previously visited the UK on a short-term, temporary basis to travel, to visit social ties or to access books for university. Whereas only 30% (3 participants) had previously lived in the UK (one participant had lived in Radlett, Harpenden and Wheathampstead within Hertfordshire, one participant had lived in London, and the other participant had lived in Worksop in Nottinghamshire and in Creswell in Derbyshire). These participants had subsequently returned to Poland for differing reasons including a relationship breakdown; financial difficulties and a poor quality of life in London; and parental employment loss, debt and struggles to afford rental costs in the UK. 40% of the participants in Poland (4 participants) indicated that they might migrate to the UK in the future, but all of those responses were tentative and most said that if they did decide to move to the UK in the future that it would be on a short-term, temporary basis. In contrast, 60% of the participants in Poland (6 participants) indicated that they had no aspirations to migrate to the UK in the future, which was mostly because they felt content with their lives in Poland and had no desire for change.

This chapter has contributed original insights into the future migration and settlement aspirations of Polish migrant individuals in Luton and Peterborough, and of a selection of Polish nationals in Poland. The findings presented within this chapter contribute real-life

examples of the way in which human agency and structural factors within both the country of origin and destination influence the experiences and aspirations of individuals. For example, the importance of human agency can be viewed within individual desires to remain, move elsewhere or to change their housing; within their individual preferences, satisfaction levels and views concerning Luton, Peterborough, the UK and Poland; and within feelings of embeddedness, belonging and connection in contrast to feelings of disconnection, unbelonging and uncertainty within different spatial contexts. Whereas the influence of structural factors is evident within discussions of the potential impact of Brexit; conditions in the UK and in Poland; the impact of the government; and the impact of labour market and housing market constraints such as the availability and cost of housing which could restrict the ability for individuals to alter their housing conditions, to change residential location or to achieve future aspirations for home ownership.

The subsequent chapter, Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by providing a closing discussion of the main research findings; the original, empirical and methodological contributions of this thesis; and a reflection on some of the limitations and wider implications that are associated with this research.

CHAPTER 9: Conclusion

9.0 An Overview of the Thesis

This thesis has aimed to provide a critical evaluation of the housing experiences and future aspirations of Polish nationals in the UK since 2004, using a phenomenological approach that allowed an exploration of the lived experiences and views that a selection of Polish nationals both in the UK and in Poland had towards migration and settlement following the decision for Brexit.

To achieve this aim, this research focused on fulfilling three objectives. This involved examining the migration and settlement pathways of a selection of Polish migrants within the case study localities of Luton and Peterborough in the UK. This study also critically assessed the lived housing experiences of 35 Polish migrants living in Luton and Peterborough to evaluate the challenges that Polish individuals experience in the UK housing market. In addition, this research has sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the future migration and settlement aspirations of a selection of Polish individuals in the UK and in Poland, including the factors that influence return migration decisions. The aim and objectives of this study were achieved by focusing on addressing the following three research questions:

- What factors influence Polish migratory decisions and settlement trajectories in the UK?
- What challenges do Polish migrant individuals experience in the housing market in Luton and in Peterborough?
- What are the future migration and settlement aspirations of a selection of Polish nationals in the UK and in Poland?

Figure 29 presents the main research findings that address the research questions.

Main Research Findings

Research Question 1: What factors influence Polish migratory decisions and settlement trajectories in the UK?

- Migration decision-making is complex and short-term migration plans often evolve into long-term or permanent settlement.
- Most Polish participants were motivated to migrate to the UK owing to desires for self-improvement, travel, or an improved quality of life.
- Social ties strongly influence choice of settlement location in the UK and provide important support to newly arrived migrants.
- Most Polish participants found their accommodation easily and relied on social capital to negotiate the housing market.

Research Question 2: What challenges do Polish migrant individuals experience in the housing market in Luton and in Peterborough?

- Changing housing market conditions are negatively affecting Polish migrant housing experiences and access to housing.
- Housing experiences tend to improve over time but issues are commonly present within Polish migrant housing pathways in Luton and Peterborough.

Research Question 3: What are the future migration and settlement aspirations of a selection of Polish Nationals in the UK and in Poland?

- Aspirations for residential mobility within the UK and homeownership were high.
- Most Polish participants intended to remain in the UK despite the decision for Brexit, but many were concerned by the potential impacts of Brexit.
- Aspirations to migrate or return to the UK were low among the Polish participants in Poland.

Figure 29. The main research findings that address the research questions.

The following section (9.1) is structured using these research questions and presents a discussion of the main research findings that address each research question in relation to existing literature, and highlights the key empirical contributions made by this research.

9.1 Main Empirical Findings and Conclusions

Research Question 1: What factors influence Polish migratory decisions and settlement trajectories in the UK?

Migration decision-making is complex and short-term migration plans often evolve into long-term or permanent settlement.

The interview narratives highlighted the complexity of migration decisions and demonstrated that a range of factors influenced the Polish participant's choices to engage in international migration, indicating that the use of the term economic migrant may be too simplistic to encompass the variety of factors that have motivated Polish migrants to migrate to the UK since EU enlargement in 2004. The results also highlighted that although some motivating factors were common and shared by multiple participants, there were also some motivating factors that were unique to particular individuals based on their own personal needs, desires and experiences. In addition, the results indicated that initial migration plans are often transient and can evolve into longer-term stays depending on how an individuals' satisfaction levels and experiences change within particular locations over time. For some participants, migrating to the UK was planned to be on a temporary, short-term basis to travel or to earn some money before returning to Poland to fund their studies, to buy a car or to start a business, but most of these individuals have since found that their initial short-term stays have evolved into long-term and potentially permanent stays in the UK. For others, migrating to the UK in search of employment and better financial prospects was viewed as a more substantial and potential long-term life change to escape financial hardship in Poland and to improve their quality of life.

According to literature that emerged shortly after 2004, most European migrants from A8 countries initially viewed their migratory movements as temporary or circular movements rather than as long-term or permanent movements (Eade, Drinkwater & Garapich, 2006; Engbersen and Snel 2011; Collett, 2013). This may have been the case in the first few years following 2004, as many migrants initially only intend to stay in their host countries for a short period of time. But over time peoples' needs and wants change, and more recent studies have uncovered a trend of Polish migrants pushing back the goal posts of their decisions to move back to Poland, or eventually deciding to remain permanently within their migration destinations (Ryan, 2015; Ryan, 2018). The results of this research support recent extant

literature on the migration and settlement aspirations of Polish migrants in the UK such as Ryan (2018) and Grzymala-Kazlowska and Ryan (2022), which suggest that although Polish migrants in the UK may initially have liquid, temporary migration plans, these plans may evolve into decisions to settle in the UK long-term or permanently as Polish migrants create footholds in migration destinations, develop an 'anchored' life and develop attachments that embed them within their migration destination locations and reduce the likelihood of them wanting to relocate again. This appeared to be the case for most of the Polish participants in this research, but a few participants had immediate plans to return Poland and others hoped to return to Poland or to potentially move elsewhere later in life.

Most Polish participants were motivated to migrate to the UK owing to desires for self-improvement, travel, or an improved quality of life.

Desires for self-improvement, travel, or an improved quality of life were the most prevalent factors that influenced the migratory decisions of the Polish participants to migrate from Poland to the UK. The superordinate theme of self-improvement, travel and improved quality of life included the subordinate themes: escaping personal difficulties in Poland; seeking a change, opportunities, or a better life; to study or learn; or to travel and visit the UK. The personal difficulties discussed varied in nature as some participants had migrated to the UK owing to social difficulties in Poland including marital and familial issues, whereas others migrated owing to difficulties with their education or financial situations. Additionally, one participant migrated to the UK to avoid being drafted into the Polish army and another participant had chosen to migrate to the UK to delay having to serve a five-year prison sentence in Poland. Many of the participants shared that they had felt unsatisfied or unfulfilled in Poland and had wanted to migrate to the UK to make a change or to take a break from their lives in Poland in search of a better quality of life and improved opportunities in the UK. Additionally, some participants had migrated to the UK to study at a UK university, and it appeared that the University of Bedfordshire had played a role in encouraging some Polish individuals to migrate to the UK to study in Luton.

Economic factors were equally as significant migration motivations as desires for self-improvement, travel, or an improved quality of life among the participants in Peterborough. This differed in Luton, suggesting that economic factors may have been less important factors among the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough in their migration decision making processes. Discussions related to economic push and pull factors indicated

that many participants had chosen to migrate to the UK for the opportunity to search for a new job and to earn and save money in the UK, but also often reflected financial difficulties in Poland such as unemployment or difficulties supporting themselves and their families, and multiple participants discussed a comparatively worse quality of life in Poland than what was perceived to be available for them in the UK.

These findings suggest that most of the participants in this study were motivated to migrate from Poland to the UK to escape personal difficulties in Poland, to seek a life change or better opportunities, to study or learn or to travel and visit the UK. These socio-cultural aspects appeared to be more significant factors within the migratory decisions of the Polish participants in this research than economic factors, highlighting the importance of not overshadowing socio-cultural factors with a focus on economic factors as suggested by Halfacree (2004) and Silvey and Lawson (1999). Trevena *et al*. (2013) found that most of their participants had migrated to the UK in search of economic opportunities, and economic factors were clearly significant migration motivations among the participants in this research as well – particularly in Peterborough. However, it appears that socio-cultural desires for self-improvement, travel or an improved quality of life were the most significant factors that influenced the Polish participants in this study to migrate to the UK. This supports the suggestion made by Benson & O'Reilly (2009) that individuals are frequently motivated to move from one location to another to change their everyday existence and to improve their quality of life.

Social ties strongly influence choice of settlement location in the UK and provide important support to newly arrived migrants.

The thesis results suggest that social ties have a low level of influence over international migration decisions compared to other influences on migration from Poland to the UK such as desires for self-improvement, travel or an improved quality of life and economic push and pull factors, but in contrast social ties appear to have held a much greater level of significance when the Polish participants were deciding on settlement locations within the UK. A total of 83% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough discussed social migration and settlement motivations as factors that had influenced their decisions to move to Luton and Peterborough. This suggests that social migration and settlement motivations were the strongest influences on the settlement location decisions of the Polish participants in this research. Settlement choices were also influenced by attractive features of the localities (such

as London Luton Airport and the University of Bedfordshire in Luton, and employment opportunities in Peterborough), but social ties and social motivations were the most prevalent factors that influenced the participants' selection of Luton and Peterborough as settlement destinations in the UK. The narratives revealed that many of the Polish participants had chosen to migrate and settle in Luton or Peterborough specifically because they already had friends, family ties or romantic partners within those locations, or because they had been invited or encouraged to move there by their social ties. The narratives also revealed the influence that romantic relationships can have on migration and settlement decisions as people often take their partners desires and needs into consideration in decision-making processes and the break-down of social relationships as well as the formation of new social relationships can influence individuals to change their housing and settlement locations. These examples offered an additional nuanced insight into the strong influence of human agency and social connections on the settlement choices and mobility patterns of the Polish participants in the UK.

The results also highlighted that social networks not only act as pull factors which can influence migration and settlement decision making processes but can also act as important support mechanisms within migration destinations, particularly while migrants initially adjust to living in a new country. For instance, the narratives suggested that some Polish migrants choose to settle in locations where they already know social ties living within the area, or choose to settle in locations that have large Polish populations so that they will have greater access to support and can ask other Polish people for assistance if they cannot initially speak English themselves. Living within the same settlement location as Polish social ties may also be viewed as a strategy to overcome potential dangers; adjust to a new language; adjust to a new location; and to improve the likelihood of having a successful and positive migration experience. This supports existing suggestions in the literature that migrants may settle within in a particular residential area close to their social ties and cluster close to other members of the same migrant group for mutual support, to help them to settle into their new surroundings faster among familiar languages, cultures and traditions (Knox & Pinch, 2006; Parutis, 2011; Schaffner & Treude, 2014). The Polish participants in this research also commonly utilised their social networks for support negotiating the housing markets within Luton and Peterborough, which is discussed in further detail below.

Most Polish participants found their accommodation easily and relied on social capital to negotiate the housing market.

In total, 86% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough said that they had found housing easily after migrating and first arriving in the UK. The most common means through which the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough found their accommodation after migrating to the UK was through their social networks, either by initially staying with friends or family members (49%); receiving recommended sources of housing from social ties (11%); or having friends or partners who organised accommodation on their behalf (9%). These results highlight the importance of social capital within the Polish participants' housing negotiations and suggest an early reliance on social ties for accommodation. The fact that 83% of the Polish participants in the UK had social motivations for choosing Luton or Peterborough as settlement locations could imply that many of the Polish participants expected their friends and relatives to allow them to stay with them and to act as a source of assistance upon their arrival in the UK. The results indicate that an early reliance on social capital was common among many of the participants and suggest that the utilisation of social networks in the UK was viewed as a means of making migration and settlement processes and adjusting to life in the UK easier. Similarly, some participants in Luton searched for accommodation by seeking out connections to the existing Polish community in the area, such as Polish shops, which again highlights the importance of social and cultural capital and social networks in Polish migrant housing negotiations. In addition, in some circumstances, the employers of the participants had facilitated their accommodation arrangements on their behalf, and 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough said that they had found their housing online when they first arrived in the UK. These findings are consistent with existing literature studies such as Gryszel-Fieldsned & Reeve (2007), Parutis (2011), Murdie (2003), Glasgow Housing Association (2008), Trevena *et al*. (2013) and Soaita *et al*. (2020), which suggest that Polish migrants often choose to stay with social ties initially after arriving in a migration destination to help them to adjust to their new surroundings and commonly utilise their Polish social networks to organise their housing arrangements, and for housing, employment and linguistic support. In addition, as suggested by Kozlowska (2010), it is possible that Polish migrant decisions to seek housing assistance from social ties rather than relying on assistance from landlords, letting agencies and local and national support services may be a social legacy of communism, when Polish citizens were wary of state-led organisations and preferred to be resourceful by supporting themselves and obtaining assistance within their own social networks (Kozlowska, 2010).

Research Question 2: What challenges do Polish migrant individuals experience in the housing market in Luton and in Peterborough?

Changing housing market conditions are negatively affecting Polish migrant housing experiences and access to housing.

The results suggested that finding accommodation is generally quite easy for Polish individuals, providing that they can meet certain conditions in relation to their employment and wealth, but not all individuals are able to meet those conditions, which can make the experience of finding accommodation more difficult for some. For instance, migrants often must hold a position in the UK labour market and provide proof of employment and proof of funds before they are able to access rented accommodation, which could slow down the process of finding housing and make it more difficult for newcomers to find accommodation. Additionally, if Polish migrants require access to social welfare support, there are eligibility requirements to access benefits, and individuals must meet these requirements to access public funds and receive financial assistance. A lack of secure employment in the UK and restricted access to welfare benefits can also lead to homelessness. The results highlighted that it can be difficult for migrants to access financial assistance or temporary or emergency accommodation when in need, particularly when individuals have limited English language abilities and lack sufficient documentation to prove their eligibility requirements. In addition, migrants with limited English language abilities, who may not have a job when they first arrive in the UK and may not have enough funds to immediately pay a deposit to secure housing may find the experience of finding accommodation to be extra challenging. This supports the findings of Glasgow Housing Association (2008), Fozdar and Hartley (2014) and Soaita *et al*. (2020) which suggest that most migrants face similar problems to non-migrant, low-income households within a population, but with added disadvantages associated with language barriers and a lack of knowledge of legal rights or how to navigate housing systems (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Soaita *et al*., 2020).

In addition, 14% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough commented that they felt that it had become harder to find housing over time, suggesting that the housing market may be changing and negatively affecting migrant accessibility to property. Rising property costs and the high demand for housing are likely to have exacerbated the process of finding housing and this could out-price Polish migrant individuals from desired positions in the housing market. Finney and Harries (2015) highlighted that the effects of the UK housing

crisis are not spread evenly among all social groups; some groups are experiencing a higher-than-average reliance upon private renting. In this research, 83% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough were privately renting their accommodation and 54% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough were living in a flat at the time of interviewing. A greater proportion of the Polish participants in Peterborough (38%) were homeowners than the Polish participants in Luton (4%), but in both localities, homeownership among the Polish participants was less common than private renting. These results indicate that the Polish participants in this study were heavily reliant on private renting, particularly in Luton. Existing research has suggested that most migrants find accommodation in the private sector during their first five years in the UK, and then in the longer-term may move into owner-occupied housing (Myles & Hou, 2004; Robinson *et al.*, 2007; Glasgow Housing Association, 2008; Nygaard, 2011; Perry, 2012). Therefore, the fact that most of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough had lived in the UK for more than a decade and most were still living in privately rented accommodation even though aspirations for homeownership were high (46%) could suggest that changing housing market conditions may have made it more difficult for the Polish participants to become homeowners in the UK, particularly in Luton. This suggestion was also supported by the findings of the interviews with the housing experts in Luton and Peterborough who suggested that rapidly increasing property prices, and high mortgage and deposit costs may outprice some individuals from being able to get onto the property ladder (Whittaker, 2017). The housing experts also highlighted that high rental costs, high deposit costs and a lack of affordable housing options in Luton and Peterborough could also put renters in a vulnerable position within the housing market, at greater risk of living in precarious housing, and at greater risk of experiencing homelessness, particularly migrants who have restricted access to welfare benefits. This was highlighted during the housing expert interviews and is also consistent with the findings of Grysel-Fieldsned and Reeve (2007) who found that post-accession Polish housing in Sheffield was often characterised by insecurity (particularly in early forms of accommodation in the UK), as Polish migrants had restricted access to welfare benefits and their housing security was dependent upon keeping their employment. These findings add to existing knowledge of the challenges faced by Polish migrants within the UK housing market and suggest that changing housing market conditions are negatively affecting Polish migrant access to housing and their housing experiences.

Housing experiences tend to improve over time but issues are commonly present within Polish migrant housing pathways in Luton and Peterborough.

This research adds increased understanding and greater insight into the post-2004, pre-Brexit housing experiences of a selection of Polish migrants in the UK within the specific local contexts of Luton and Peterborough. The results indicated that most of the Polish participants in both localities felt satisfied with their current living conditions and their accommodation at the time of the interviews (83%). However, 71% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (78% in Luton and 50% in Peterborough) stated that they had experienced housing issues during their housing pathways in the UK. This could suggest that most of the housing issues that the Polish participants had experienced had been experienced in earlier forms of accommodation, and that over time, as the length of their stay in the UK increased, the living conditions of the Polish participants also improved to result in most feeling satisfied with their current accommodation. Multiple Polish participants suggested that their housing conditions had progressively improved, suggesting a trend of upward residential mobility over time. This was also supported by high aspirations for homeownership. The results also indicated that none of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough were living in overcrowded conditions. This contrasts with the suggestion within the literature that migrants often tend to live in overcrowded housing (Spencer *et al*., 2007), and could also be an indication of upward residential mobility over time. For example, Soaita *et al*. (2020) suggest that as migrants become increasingly embedded within their migration destinations, settle for longer periods of time and obtain more stable forms of employment, they are more likely to be willing to spend more money to improve their housing conditions and would therefore be less likely to tolerate living in overcrowded housing over time.

The most common housing issue that was mentioned by the Polish respondents was the subordinate theme of substandard housing, including properties in disrepair or in a poor state of cleanliness, such as properties containing mould or vermin. A total of 49% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (59% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough discussed issues related to the subordinate theme of substandard housing, suggesting that substandard housing was a common occurrence and was a more prevalent issue within the housing pathways of the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough. Multiple individuals discussed issues related to the presence of mould within their housing, which had created unsatisfactory living conditions and health concerns for some individuals. The large number of participant accounts that related to properties that were in a state of disrepair or

uncleanliness in Luton, with issues of mould, damp and vermin suggests that improvements need to be made to the quality of rented accommodation within the town to improve local housing experiences and the quality of tenant living conditions in the town. The results indicated that Polish individuals that have the luxury of time to conduct a lengthy property search are more likely to be able to reject substandard housing conditions and to continue searching for accommodation until they locate a satisfactory property. Whereas those who need to secure accommodation in haste may settle for substandard housing and be subject to remain in low quality living conditions for the duration of their tenancies. Those who cannot afford to pay more for their housing may be outpriced from better quality and more spacious accommodation options and will have to settle for housing that is available to them within their budget, even if it does not match their expectations and contains substandard conditions. For some participants, settling for smaller or lower quality housing that is more affordable may be an active choice in order to save more money and to spend less on accommodation, as suggested by Parutis (2011). In addition, sublet properties may be more likely to be in a substandard condition than legally rented properties. Individuals who are employed on an ad hoc, cash-in-hand or casual basis and do not have a formal employment contract, such as temporary agency workers, and those on zero hours contracts may be excluded from accessing secure, legally rented accommodation and may be forced to informally sublet housing. As sublet properties are not formally regulated and do not have legal rental contracts, the people who sublet properties to tenants will be unlikely to follow legal procedures for eviction processes, and informal sublet housing is likely to be more unstable and precarious than formal, legal private or socially rented accommodation. Therefore, individuals who reside in sublet housing are at greater risk of being evicted at short notice and at a greater risk of homelessness than individuals who formally and legally rent their housing. Multiple participants shared housing experiences which suggested that they were in a precarious position in the housing market, facing housing issues such as eviction, homelessness and potentially being rejected for social housing.

The results also suggested that there is often a lack of legal knowledge about housing rights among Polish migrant individuals in the UK, and particularly among newly arrived migrants who may lack the language skills to understand rights and regulations. In multiple cases the interviewees said that their lack of understanding regarding UK law and their tenant rights had resulted in the loss of funds, as landlords and letting agencies withheld deposits and charged high administration fees. In addition, some of the participants claimed that their landlords had restricted their access to amenities such as heating during their tenancies which

had a detrimental effect on their housing experiences. This suggests that some Polish migrants are subjected to forms of exploitation and discrimination within the housing market in Luton and Peterborough, which negatively affects their housing experiences. Multiple Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough also discussed negative housing experiences owing to sharing their housing with others, suggesting that social tensions within rented properties had negatively impacted the housing experiences of multiple Polish participants within the two localities.

It is well known that migrants have long experienced challenges such as discrimination, xenophobia, and housing issues within UK society (Pooley & Turnbull, 2005; Lukes, de Noronha & Finney, 2019). In addition, Mogilnicka (2022) highlighted that post-accession Polish migrants in the UK have been exploited in the labour market and subjected to substandard housing conditions (Mogilnicka, 2022). Other academics such as Myles and Hou (2004); Perry (2008); Glasglow Housing Association (2008); Murdie and Texeira (2011) and Soaita *et al.* (2020) have revealed that migrants commonly initially settle in disadvantaged migrant enclaves and are more likely to accept living in substandard housing conditions than non-migrants within a population, particularly shortly after arriving in a new destination. Then, as migrants become increasingly embedded in their migration destinations and obtain more stable forms of employment and income, they are more likely to be willing and able to spend more money to improve their housing conditions and are more likely to be able to rent or purchase homes in more affluent neighbourhoods (Myles & Hou, 2004; Soaita *et al*., 2020). Although it is not surprising to find housing issues present within the housing pathways of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough, and although most of the Polish participants appear to have experienced upward residential mobility over time, the fact that such a high proportion of the Polish participants in Luton had experienced substandard housing issues (59%) suggests that there may be issues satisfying the need to provide appropriate housing for migrants in Luton and that there is a need to raise property standards and improve the quality of rented accommodation in Luton (Myles & Hou, 2004; Murdie & Teixera, 2011).

Research Question 3: What are the future migration and settlement aspirations of a selection of Polish Nationals in the UK and in Poland?

Aspirations for residential mobility within the UK and homeownership were high.

This research contributes new insight into the under researched long-term intentions and internal mobility plans of post-accession Polish migrants in the UK (Trevena *et al*., 2013). Among the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough aspirations for residential mobility within the UK were high (54%), particularly among the Polish participants in Luton, as 59% of the Polish participants in Luton indicated that they wanted to change their housing or move elsewhere in the UK outside of Luton. In contrast, 38% of the Polish participants in Peterborough indicated that they had aspirations to change their housing or move elsewhere within the UK. The finding that a greater proportion of the Polish participants in Luton had aspirations to change their housing or to move elsewhere within the UK than the Polish participants in Peterborough may be owing to the higher proportion of participants living in privately rented accommodation in Luton than in Peterborough, where more participants owned their housing. For instance, Boyle (1993) suggested that those living in the private-rented sector have a higher propensity to later migrate to other areas than those living in owner-occupied or social housing, and private renters are more residentially mobile than council housing tenants or homeowners. Furthermore, the fact that aspirations for residential mobility were higher among the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough, and more of the participants in Peterborough indicated that they would prefer to remain within their current residential location in the future could suggest that the Polish participants in Luton were not as deeply embedded within the local society as the Polish participants in Peterborough and had a greater propensity to dis-embed from the locality and to engage in further internal movements (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Ryan, 2022)

Many of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough had aspirations to change their housing or to move to quieter, smaller and more rural locations on the outskirts of the localities. Some participants in Luton indicated that they would like to move to places such as Milton Keynes, Bedford, Hemel Hempstead, and Stevenage. Other participants in Luton had aspirations to move to destinations further away in England such as Nottingham, Manchester, Cornwall or Bristol. Whereas some of the participants in Peterborough indicated that they would like to move to places in the countryside surrounding Peterborough and St Neots in Cambridgeshire. In contrast to the findings of Trevena et al. (2013) which

suggested that the Polish participants in their study had primarily engaged in internal movements owing to economic reasons, and had a greater propensity to engage in internal mobility if they had utilised recruitment agencies to migrate to the UK and if they did not have any children in the UK, the Polish participants in this study indicated that they primarily wanted to engage in internal residential mobility in order to move into smaller, quieter areas in more rural locations on the outskirts of Luton and Peterborough. This could suggest a trend among the Polish participants in this research to aspire to engage in counter-urbanisation, as some aspired to switch their urban lifestyles in Luton and Peterborough for a quieter and more rural way of life in peripheral areas (Harvey, 2000; Halfacree, 2004).

Trevena *et al*. (2013) found that the propensity for Polish migrants in the UK to engage in internal migration was greatest initially after migrating to the UK and then decreased over time, as once individuals had secured stable forms of accommodation and employment and stronger connections to a location, they were less likely to relocate again (Trevena *et al*., 2013). The findings of this research align with this suggestion, as most of the Polish participants in this study had lived in the UK for over a decade, most had only lived in Luton or Peterborough since they had arrived in the UK and 34% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (26% in Luton and 63% in Peterborough) indicated that they would like to remain within their current residential location and had no immediate aspirations to move elsewhere at the time that the interviews took place. Their reasons for wanting to remain in their current residential locations varied, but the most common themes within the responses were feelings of embeddedness owing to connections to the place, and feelings of reluctance for change, in accordance with the findings of Trevena *et al*. (2013). And one participant shared that he felt unable to move elsewhere because of language limitations and potential difficulties adjusting to a new location. However, in general, the results of this research indicated that a greater proportion of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough aspired for residential mobility (54%) than to remain within their current residential locations (34%).

In addition, 56% of the Polish participants in Luton and 50% of the Polish participants in Peterborough said that they aspired to become homeowners in the future, indicating that aspirations for homeownership were high among the Polish participants in this research. Previous research has suggested that migrants typically initially share their accommodation with other people of the same nationality, as was the case with most of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough in this research, and then later migrants are thought to move into

larger forms of affordable rented housing near to social ties within the community, and some will subsequently purchase housing within the area (Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Soaita *et al*., 2020). High aspirations for homeownership among the Polish participants in this study could be an indication that many of the Polish participants have experienced upward residential mobility over time and aspire to eventually purchase their own housing in the UK (Murdie, 2003; Myles & Hou, 2004; Soaita, *et al*., 2020). In addition, this finding suggests that many of the Polish participants in this study felt sufficiently anchored and embedded within UK society to aspire to remain within the UK long-term and to aspire to purchase property within the UK (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Ryan, 2022). However, some of the interviewees who aspired for homeownership were concerned that their potential to own a home in the UK could be negatively impacted by the EU referendum result, illustrating the uncertainty that was associated with the decision for Brexit (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021).

Most Polish participants intended to remain in the UK despite the decision for Brexit, but many were concerned by the potential impacts of Brexit.

A greater proportion of the Polish participants in Luton 44% indicated that they had aspirations for return migration to Poland than the Polish participants in Peterborough (13%), suggesting that the propensity for return migration was greater among the Polish participants in Luton than in Peterborough. This suggests that aspirations to return to Poland were low among the Polish participants in this research and that most of the Polish participants across both localities indicated that they would prefer to remain in the UK. Four of the Polish participants in Luton (15%) were migrating back to Poland shortly after their interviews took place. Further Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough stated that they may move back to Poland in the future, but that their decision to do so would be dependent on factors such as the possible negative implications of Brexit for Polish people living in the UK; the availability of employment opportunities; their partners' desires; and whether their children would decide to move to Poland, as some interviewees stated that if their children moved to Poland, they would follow them. Other participants indicated that they would prefer to stay in the UK, but that they might move back to Poland or move elsewhere depending on the impact of Brexit. Other respondents explicitly said that they had no intentions of returning to live in Poland again. Their reasons varied. Some said that they would only return to Poland for short visits, some were opposed to the PiS government in Poland; and multiple participants indicated that they did not feel as though there was a future for them in Poland. Some participants indicated that they no longer felt a sense of belonging to Poland; that they

thought that it would be mentally difficult to readjust to living in Poland again; and that they felt as though they had become less connected to Poland and more accustomed and attached to life in the UK over time. Others felt that returning to Poland would limit their freedoms and rights; some did not want to impact their children's education by returning to Poland; and others believed that they would have difficulties re-entering the labour market at a sufficient level in Poland that would align with their experience and educational qualifications. In addition, multiple Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough shared feelings that their future plans were uncertain owing to the uncertainty created by the decision for Brexit. Many of these participants indicated that they would prefer to remain living in the UK but thought that they may be forced to leave and return to Poland or move elsewhere owing to the potential impact of Brexit. The uncertainty surrounding Brexit had led some of the Polish participants to feel fearful about how Polish people would be treated in the UK following the referendum result. For example, Mikolaj wanted his family and friends to join him in the UK, but simultaneously did not want too many Polish people to migrate to the area in fear that the Polish community would become too visible and would potentially become a target for negative treatment within UK society following Brexit. Additionally, some participants indicated that they felt uncertain about the potential implications of Brexit on Polish homeownership in the UK.

The findings of this research contribute further knowledge to limited existing studies of the settling practices, spatial mobility and long-term intentions of Polish migrants in the UK by providing greater insight into the internal and international mobility aspirations and settlement aspirations of post-accession Polish migrants in Luton and Peterborough around the time of the EU referendum and prior to the enactment of Brexit (Trevena *et al*., 2013; Piętka-Nykaza & McGhee, 2017; McGhee *et al*., 2017; Ryan, 2018). The research findings suggest that the Polish participants in this study were most like the bumblebees described by Trąbka and Pustulka (2020), as most appeared to be deeply embedded in UK society with strong social networks and stronger aspirations to remain in the UK rather than to return to Poland or migrate elsewhere. But it also appeared that multiple participants were experiencing aspects of the cocoon orientation with Brexit related anxiety and insecurities about whether they would be able to remain living in the UK unaffected or whether they would be subjected to less rights or forced to migrate elsewhere. It appeared that many of the participants hoped that they would be able to remain in the UK but in accordance with the findings of McGhee *et al*. (2017), many of the Polish participants felt uncertain about what Brexit would mean for their futures and their rights (particularly their rights to housing

and homeownership) and were to some extent in limbo waiting to see what would happen. Rather than being either a bumblebee or a cocoon, it appears that many of the participants in this research were a combination of the two and perhaps could be better likened to bumblebees hibernating during a turbulent period, as most of the participants were deeply embedded in the UK and had strong aspirations to remain in the UK if possible, but many also felt uncertain about the EU referendum and what the decision for Brexit would mean for their future in the UK; and so they were waiting to see whether they would be able to remain unaffected and continue living and working in the UK as normal, or whether they would be affected by Brexit and forced to move elsewhere. Lulle *et al*. (2018), Kilkey and Ryan (2021) and Grzymala-Kazlowska and Ryan (2022) highlighted that Brexit is an unsettling event that has had the potential to disrupt the migration and settlement plans of migrant individuals by restricting the potential for liquid mobility and challenging migrant processes of anchoring and embedding in UK society. Grzymala-Kazlowska and Ryan (2022) suggested that unsettling events such as Brexit have the potential to reverse or alter embedding and anchoring processes for Polish migrants in the UK, which may cause Polish individuals to un-anchor and dis-embed from the UK and relocate to Poland or another country. There is no doubt that Brexit had created feelings of uncertainty among the Polish participants in this research, but most did not suggest that they were dis-embedding from UK society or considering moving elsewhere. Most of the participants in this research had strong aspirations to remain in the UK unless they were forced to move elsewhere, suggesting that most of the participants had established strong anchors within UK society over time and were deeply embedded in the UK with low aspirations to relocate abroad or to return to Poland. Jancewicz *et al*. (2020) suggested that Brexit was unlikely to have a strong impact on Polish immigrant incentives to remain in the UK unless the economic situation and the labour market deteriorated in the UK. Based on the findings of this research, this suggestion seemed likely, as most participants hoped to remain in the UK despite the vote for Brexit. However, the results also indicated that the Polish participants in this research were more concerned about the potential impact of Brexit on their right to remain in the UK and on their rights to access housing and to become homeowners in the UK than they were about the potential impact of Brexit on the labour market.

Aspirations to migrate to the UK were low among the Polish participants in Poland.

Multiple Polish participants that were interviewed in Poland (60%) had previously visited the UK on a short-term, temporary basis to travel, to visit places, to visit social ties and to access educational resources, but had not migrated to the UK to live there long-term. In

contrast, three of the Polish participants that were interviewed in Poland (30%) had previously lived in the UK long-term (in Hertfordshire; in London; and in Nottingham and Derbyshire). Their reasons for migrating to the UK, their experiences within the UK and their reasons for returning to Poland varied; further highlighting distinctions within different individual lived experiences and the importance of not assuming that all Polish migrant experiences in the UK are equal. Their reasons for returning included: a relationship breakdown; financial struggles living in London; and familial loss of employment, debt and difficulties affording rent. In total, 40% of the Polish participants in Poland indicated that they may potentially migrate to the UK in the future, but all of these responses were tentative, and most of these participants indicated that if they did decide to migrate to the UK in the future it would most likely only be for a temporary visit rather than a long-term stay. In contrast 60% of the Polish participants in Poland said that they had no aspirations to migrate to the UK, which was mostly owing to contentment in Poland and a lack of desire for change. Additionally, one participant Casimir who had previously lived in London for fifteen years indicated that he would not want to return to live in the UK again owing to a reluctance to relive the emotional and financial struggles that he had experienced whilst previously living in the UK.

These findings suggest that aspirations to migrate to the UK were low among the Polish participants in Poland. This could be interpreted as evidence of reduced EU immigration to the UK and decreased aspirations for Polish nationals to migrate to the UK following the EU referendum result in 2016 (Sumption & Walsh, 2022b). However, rather than mentioning the potential impacts of Brexit as reasons for the low likelihood of them choosing to migrate to the UK, most of the participants in Poland indicated that they had low or no aspirations to migrate to the UK because they were content with their lives in Poland and had little desire for change. The long-term impact that the UK leaving the EU will have on migration from Poland to the UK remains to be seen, but in the short-term it appears that net EU immigration to the UK reduced following the EU referendum, the enactment of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Polish participants in Poland in this study appeared to have a very low propensity for migration to the UK.

The main empirical findings and conclusions presented within this section contribute original insights into the migration motivations, housing strategies, settlement choices and the future migration and settlement aspirations of a selection of Polish nationals in the UK and in Poland. This has revealed real-life, original examples of the interplay between human

agency and structural factors within the lived experiences of the research participants and within the wider contexts in which they are situated in the UK and in Poland, and has demonstrated that human agency and socio-cultural aspects are of great importance within Polish migrant movement and settlement decisions and should be considered alongside wider economic, social and political structural influences in migration research.

9.2 Limitations of the Research

As with all forms of research, this research has some limitations that must be acknowledged. Some of the limitations associated with the research design such as the use of semi-structured interviews as data collection methods are discussed within Chapter 4, and this section will discuss some broader limitations that could be associated with this research.

First, it is important to acknowledge that the data that are presented and interpreted in this research is only one set of many possible representations of the topic, and that the findings cannot be generalised to wider populations. However, as this research is qualitative and focused on individual lived experiences, this research has made no claim of representativeness and instead views the lack of generalisability as a strength, claiming value in illuminating the lived experiences of a selection of Polish individuals.

A further limitation may have resulted from the impact of language. For instance, although an effort was made to advertise the research in both Polish and English (to encourage Polish individuals with and without English language abilities to take part and to avoid excluding any participants on the basis of a language barrier), only one out of the 45 Polish participants could not speak English and completed the interview with the researcher with the assistance of an interpreter. Therefore, 98% of the Polish participants in this research could speak English at a sufficiently proficient level to complete an interview with the researcher, and non-English speaking Polish individuals were under-represented in this research. This could have influenced the results as Polish individuals who do have the ability to speak English may be more likely to be educated to higher level, to have lived in the UK for a longer period of time, and to have access to higher-paying forms of employment in the UK than non-English speaking Polish individuals. Therefore, interviews with a greater number of non-English speaking Polish individuals may have revealed very different lived experiences from the experienced that were shared during the interviews with the English-speaking Polish participants. Perhaps a greater number of non-English speaking Polish participants could

have been recruited using purposive sampling if the researcher was able to speak Polish, but it appears that the Polish posters that were used to advertise the research had little impact on the recruitment of non-English speaking Polish individuals, which led to an underrepresentation of non-English speaking Polish participants in this research.

Furthermore, there were some interesting topics that arose from the research that could have been explored further to develop greater understanding. For example, this research has provided valuable insight into the migration and housing experiences of the Polish participants in this study, which included an examination of their settlement pathways to show the localities that the participants had lived in over time since migrating to the UK, but more information could have been gathered to determine the housing pathways of the participants within Luton and Peterborough over time. This would have revealed greater insight into the residential mobility patterns of the Polish participants within the case study areas and may have provided further evidence to support the suggestions that most of the Polish participants in the UK had experienced upward residential mobility over time, and that Polish migrants are likely to have become less clustered and increasingly spatially dispersed throughout the localities over time. In addition, Polish migrant experiences of homelessness were touched upon during this research but could have been explored further if the researcher had been able to gain access to further Polish individuals who had experienced or were engaging in sofa sleeping or rough sleeping within the localities. For example, the housing expert interviews with LHE9 and LH10 who worked at the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre suggested that homeless Polish migrants in Luton tend to be more entrenched in homelessness, and harder to assist out of homelessness than more recently arrived homeless EU migrants such as Romanians. It would have been interesting to obtain the experiences of further homeless Polish migrants and further housing experts to explore the reasoning behind this, and how homeless Polish migrant individuals make sense of their experiences, but it was not possible within the constraints of this research.

This section has acknowledged some of the limitations associated with this research. These limitations were justified given the time and budget constraints of the study and could be considered to develop and improve future research in this area.

9.3 Research Contributions

Having discussed the main research findings and conclusions within this chapter, as well as some limitations associated with the research, this thesis can now conclude by highlighting the original contributions made by this research. Table 22 summarises the key original contributions made by this thesis, which are then discussed in further detail below.

• This thesis contributes to existing literature on the long-term housing, migration and settlement experiences of A8 economic migrants in the UK, which is a little explored area in existing migration research.
• This thesis provides an increased understanding of the views and experiences of post-accession Polish migrants in the UK before and after the decision for Brexit and provides an insight into their propensity for movement following the EU referendum result.
• This research extends current knowledge on the housing experiences, household characteristics, settlement patterns and long-term aspirations of Polish individuals living within Luton and Peterborough, which could assist housing practitioners within the localities to have a better understanding of local Polish residents and identify key housing issues and strategies for improvement.
• This thesis contributes to migration research by acting as a useful example of a transnational, holistic study that combines micro-level, meso-level and macro-level aspects, and the triangulation of multiple different participant perspectives, to reveal original insights, and to demonstrate real-life examples of the dynamics between human agency and structural factors within the lived experiences of the participants and within the wider contexts in which they are situated. This research has delivered a methodologically bold and innovative research design, by carrying out multi-perspectival and multi-sited, transnational research on a relatively large sample of Polish participants and housing expert participants in Luton and Peterborough, and with a selection of Polish nationals in Poland.
• This thesis demonstrates that IPA can be a useful analytic technique for migration research and can be utilised alongside other forms of analysis such as content analysis, to effectively present descriptive data alongside detailed interpretations provided by IPA analysis.
• This research provides an example of how IPA research with an unconventionally large total sample size can be effectively implemented in comparative, multi-perspectival, multi-sited and transnational research.
• This thesis provides recommendations for future research.

Table 22. Key original research contributions

The original research presented in this thesis has illuminated the lived migration and housing experiences and the future movement and settlement aspirations of 35 Polish migrant individuals within the comparative UK case study localities of Luton and Peterborough. This

research has also explored the perceptions of 14 housing expert participants to gain greater insight into the housing market challenges that contextually frame the housing experiences that were shared by the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough. Additionally, this research has examined the views and movement aspirations of ten Polish nationals across four cities in Poland following the decision for Brexit. This has never been attempted before on this scale.

This research has examined the lived experiences that Polish migrants have of engaging with the housing market in two case study localities in the UK prior to Brexit and adds to current knowledge regarding the relationship between migrant housing experiences and the housing market in UK localities. This thesis also contributes to existing literature on the long-term housing, migration and settlement experiences of A8 economic migrants in the UK, which is a little explored area in existing migration research. In addition, this research provides an increased understanding of the views and experiences of post-accession Polish migrants in the UK before and after the decision for Brexit and provides an insight into their propensity for movement following the EU referendum result.

Additionally, no research has previously been undertaken that seeks to provide knowledge and guidance to housing practitioners in Luton and Peterborough regarding their Polish migrant populations. The findings of this research extend current knowledge on the housing experiences of A8 migrants in Luton, in Peterborough and in the UK, and could provide Luton Borough Council and Peterborough City Council with a better understanding of the household characteristics, housing experiences, settlement patterns and long-term aspirations of Polish individuals living within the localities. This enhanced local knowledge could aid policy makers, planners, and housing practitioners to gain a better understanding of the housing experiences of Polish residents within the localities. Moreover, by revealing the main housing challenges that Polish migrant individuals have faced since their arrival in the localities, the research results could help local practitioners to identify and prioritise key housing issues that need to be addressed, so that funding can be targeted to the most important improvement strategies within the localities. For example, the results of this research have indicated that substandard housing conditions in Luton urgently need to be addressed to improve housing experiences and residential satisfaction levels in the area, and both Luton and Peterborough require greater affordable and social housing provision to improve the quality of life and social welfare for local residents.

In addition to the key empirical findings, conclusions and contributions shared within section 9.1 and discussed above, this thesis also contributes to the wider field of migration research by acting as a useful example of a transnational, holistic study that combines micro-level, meso-level and macro-level elements as well as multiple different participant perspectives on the same phenomenon, to reveal interesting themes and insights, and to demonstrate real-life examples of the interplay between human agency and structural factors within the lives of the participants and within the wider contexts in which they are situated.

The findings of this research have demonstrated that human agency and socio-cultural aspects are of great significance within the migration motivations, housing negotiations, settlement choices and future movement and settlement aspirations of Polish nationals in the UK and in Poland, and should be considered alongside structural factors in migration research. This contribution will be of interest to other migration researchers who seek to move beyond the traditional theoretical dichotomy between studies that focus either on human agency based micro-level migration research or on structural macro-level migration research. The lived experiences that were shared by the Polish participants and their insights into their individual migration motivations; settlement pathways; residential choices; strategies used to negotiate the housing market; housing experiences; and future migration and settlement aspirations provide real lived examples of migrant human agency and the way in which individual agency is influenced by structural factors within places of origin and destination. The insights into the individual lived experiences of the Polish migrant participants also contrast with the more structural, outsider perspectives on migration, housing market conditions and migrant housing experiences that were shared by the housing expert participants in this research. Gathering and analysing views and experiences from several different participant groups has enabled the triangulation of multiple different perspectives on the same research phenomenon. This has enhanced the reliability of common insights that were shared by multiple participants and has also revealed interesting distinct cases and insights into how the structure-agency dialectic has acted within real migrant lived experiences. This highlights the importance of considering both human agency and structural factors within migration research, as well as the need for holistic migration studies that incorporate a combination of micro-level, meso-level and macro-level elements. This research adds to micro-level studies of migration, by bringing the lived experiences, views, and migration and settlement aspirations of Polish migrant individuals to the forefront of the study. This study has also analysed these micro-level individual experiences within the meso-level contexts of Luton and Peterborough and within the macro-level context of wider

economic, social and political structural influences in the UK and in Poland to provide a holistic and transnational perspective, and to uncover a range of push and pull factors that affect Polish housing, migration and settlement experiences. This approach has demonstrated the value of combining micro-level, meso-level and macro-level aspects within migration research and contrasts with traditional micro-level or macro-level studies which focus on either human agency and individual experiences or on wider structural aspects respectively. This approach has added to the originality and the conceptual value of this thesis and could usefully be applied to other examples of migration research.

This research also provides novel methodological contributions. This research has delivered a methodologically bold and innovative research design, by carrying out multi-perspectival and multi-sited, transnational research on a relatively large sample of Polish participants and housing expert participants in Luton and Peterborough, and with a selection of Polish nationals in Poland. Additionally, this research has utilised a novel combination of content analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis to analyse the interview narratives that were collected. By partitioning the large total sample of 59 participants into smaller comparative samples (of 27 Polish participants in Luton, eight Polish participants in Peterborough, ten housing experts in Luton, four housing experts in Peterborough and ten Polish participants in Poland), the researcher was able to successfully carry out in-depth content analysis and IPA on an atypically large amount of participants, to provide information from multiple perspectives and to illuminate the lived experiences of Polish individuals in two comparative sites in the UK in and four cities in Poland. Implementing this approach has enabled greater insight into how the Polish participants have made sense of their lived experiences of migrating to the UK and interacting with the UK housing market in Luton and Peterborough, and contributes new understandings of the housing challenges faced by Polish migrant individuals in the UK since 2004, as well as greater insight into the movement and settlement aspirations of a selection of Polish nationals before and following the EU referendum result. Therefore, the methodological design has enabled the research questions to be addressed and the aim of the research to be realised. This research demonstrates that IPA can be utilised in conjunction with other forms of analysis such as content analysis to effectively present descriptive data alongside the rich, detailed interpretations provided by IPA analysis. This research also demonstrates that IPA can be a useful analytic technique for migration related research and provides an example of how IPA research with an unconventionally large total sample size can be effectively implemented in comparative, multi-perspectival, multi-sited and transnational research.

Completing this research has also contributed recommendations for future research on this topic. The scope of this research could be expanded in further studies to compare the findings of this research, which focused on the migration, housing and settlement experiences of Polish migrant individuals, with the experiences of other A8 migrants and individuals from more recently arrived migrant groups such as Romanians and Bulgarians within the case study localities. It would also be interesting to compare the experiences gathered within this research with the housing experiences of Polish migrants in other UK localities with large Polish populations to compare the findings of this research in Luton and Peterborough with Polish migrant housing experiences in other localities. Another interesting avenue of further study would be to carry out further interviews with some of the Polish participants from this research to see whether their future aspirations are realised and to see whether Brexit or the Covid-19 pandemic had any effect on their migration and settlement plans. In addition, future research could usefully explore Polish migrant experiences of sofa surfing and rough sleeping within the localities, to build on the current understanding of Polish migrant experiences of homelessness within the UK and the means to provide effective assistance. Following this research, further research is also needed to study the impact of English language abilities on Polish migrant housing experiences in the UK and to compare the lived housing experiences of English-speaking Polish individuals with the experiences of non-English speaking Polish individuals in the UK.

This section concludes this thesis and contends that this research has made numerous original empirical, practical, and methodological contributions that extend current understanding and could be utilised to improve migrant housing experiences and to develop further research.

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Appendix I. Risk Assessment

Ref No:	
Date:	21/11/15
Review Date:	

ACTIVITY INFORMATION	
Name of Assessor/ Contact details	Name: Dr Richard Southern Email address: r.l.v.southern@herts.ac.uk Ext no: 3491
Title of Activity	Distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews
Location of Activity	Luton, Central Bedfordshire
Description of Activity	Distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews with the general adult population of Luton.
Personnel Involved	-Myself, I will be the interviewer (Postgraduate Student) -Members of the adult population in Luton (mostly Polish residents but also other local residents and local housing experts).

TYPES OF HAZARD LIKELY TO BE ENCOUNTERED		
☐ Animal Allergens ☐ Biological Agents (see COSHH) ☐ Chemical Compounds (see CoSHH) ☐ Compressed/liquefied gases ☐ Computers ☐ Electricity ☐ Falling Objects ☐ Farm Machinery ☐ Fire ☐ Glassware Handling	☐ Hand Tools ☐ Ionising Radiation ☐ Office Equipment ☐ Laboratory Equipment ☐ Ladders ☐ Manual Handling ☐ Non-ionising Radiation ☐ Hot or cold extremes ☐ Repetitive Handling ☐ Severe Weather	☐ Sharps ☐ Slips/trips/falls ☐ Stress ☐ Travel ☐ Vacuum systems ☐ Pressure systems ☐ Vehicles ☐ Violence, physical or verbal abuse ☐ Workshop Machinery
The above is not an exhaustive list – all other hazards should be listed here.		

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HAZARD ASSESSMENT						
Severity of Consequences	Factor	Risk Classification				
No or minor injury/ health disorder Minor Damage or Loss Insignificant Environmental Impact Group 1 Biological agents	1	Trivial (1)	Trivial (2)	Trivial (3)	Trivial (4)	Tolerable (5)
Injury or Health Disorder – resulting in absence up to 3 days Moderate Damage or Loss Moderate Environmental Impact Group 2 Biological agents	2	Trivial (2)	Trivial (4)	Tolerable (6)	Tolerable (8)	Moderate (10)
Injury or Health Disorder – resulting in absence over 3 days Substantial Damage or Loss Serious Environmental Impact Group 3 Biological agents	3	Trivial (3)	Tolerable (6)	Moderate (9)	Moderate (12)	Substantial (15)
Long Term Injury or Sickness – resulting in permanent incapacity Extensive Damage or Loss Major Long Term Environmental Impact	4	Trivial (4)	Tolerable (8)	Moderate (12)	Substantial (16)	Intolerable (20)
Death Serious Structural Damage Environmental Catastrophe Group 4 Biological agents	5	Tolerable (5)	Moderate (10)	Substantial (15)	Intolerable (20)	Intolerable (25)
Note on Risk Classification: 1-4 Trivial 5-7 Tolerable 8-12 Moderate 13-16 Substantial >20 Intolerable	→ Likelihood	1 Almost Impossible	2 Unlikely – possible exposure every 1-3 years	3 Harm is possible	4 Harm is likely to occur	5 Harm will occur or is very likely to occur.

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ASSESSMENT OF RISK CLASSIFICATION			
Hazard	Likelihood Score	Severity Score	Risk Classification
-Slips/Trips/Falls	1	2	Trivial
-Stress	1	2	Trivial
-Vehicles	1	2	Trivial
-Violence, physical or verbal abuse	1	2	Trivial

EFFECT OF RISK CLASSIFICATION	
Risk Classification	Action
Trivial	No further action required. Activity can begin.
Tolerable	No additional controls required. Current controls must be maintained and monitored.
Moderate	Reduce risks if cost effective. Implement new controls over an agreed period.
Substantial	Activity cannot begin without major risk reduction.
Intolerable	Activity must not begin.

RISK CONTROL MEASURES
Is the local code of practice or local rules adequate to control the risks identified? **Yes**/No If no, list all additional measures required.
Yes. Additional Measures:

HEALTH SURVEILLANCE ISSUES	
Persons at Special Risk	
Health Surveillance Measures (including symptoms and signs of exposure)	
Exclusions	

		SIGNATURES		
	Staff/PhD student/MSc student/Undergraduate	Name (Print)	Signature	Date
Assessor	MSc student	ALEXANDRA BUCKLAND-STUBBS	A. Buckland-Stubbs	21/11/15
Supervisor (if Assessor is a student)	Staff	Dr. Richard Southern	Richard Southern	21/11/15
Local Health and Safety Advisor	Staff	DR. PETER COATES	P Coates	21/11/15

Appendix II. Ethics Approval Notification

University of Hertfordshire UH

HEALTH, SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY ECDA

ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION

TO	Alexandra Buckland-Stubbs
CC	Dr Richard Southern
FROM	Dr Simon Trainis, Health, Science, Engineering & Technology ECDA Chair.
DATE	09/09/2019

Protocol number: **aLMS/PGR/UH/02260(2)**

Title of study: The Lived Housing Experiences and Future Aspirations of Polish Migrants in the UK: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Study.

Your application to modify and extend the existing protocol as detailed below has been accepted and approved by the ECDA for your School and includes work undertaken for this study by the named additional workers below:

no additional workers named

Modification: Detailed in EC2.

General conditions of approval:

Ethics approval has been granted subject to the standard conditions below:

Original protocol: Any conditions relating to the original protocol approval remain and must be complied with.

Permissions: Any necessary permissions for the use of premises/location and accessing participants for your study must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection commencing. Failure to obtain adequate permissions may be considered a breach of this protocol.

External communications: Ensure you quote the UH protocol number and the name of the approving Committee on all paperwork, including recruitment advertisements/online requests, for this study.

Invasive procedures: If your research involves invasive procedures you are required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form, and copies of your completed consent paperwork to this ECDA once your study is complete.

Submission: Students must include this Approval Notification with their submission.

Validity:

This approval is valid:

From: 09/12/2019

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
('ETHICS COMMITTEE')

FORM EC6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

The Housing Experiences and Future Aspirations of Polish Migrants in the UK

Introduction
You are being invited to take part in a study. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand the research that is being done and what your involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask about anything that is not clear or for any further information that you would like to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. The University's regulations governing the conduct of studies involving human participants can be accessed via this link:

http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/secreg/upr/RE01.htm

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of this study?
This is an assessed research project that is being carried out as a part of PhD course in the Biological and Environmental Sciences department of the University of Hertfordshire.

Do I have to take part?
It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Agreeing to join the study does not mean that you have to complete it. You are free to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason.

Are there any age or other restrictions that may prevent me from participating?
All participants must be over 18.

How long will my part in the study take?
If you decide to take part in this study, you will be involved in an interview which will take approximately 45 minutes.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you choose to take part in the study, the student will ask you a series of interview questions. The interview will be voice recorded and will remain completely anonymous.

What are the possible disadvantages, risks or side effects of taking part?
Some participants may feel uncomfortable answering questions that involve personal details and their life experiences. If this is the case then you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and if you experience any discomfort answering questions then I may be able to find a professional leaflet or some support to help you if necessary.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
We hope that this research will uncover more information about the housing experiences and future intentions of local Polish people, which could then be used to better inform the local council so that policy makers and planners can try to adapt and better meet the needs of the local Polish population.

How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
All interviews will remain completely anonymous. Your anonymity is ensured and you do not have to give your name or address. Only I (Alexandra Buckland – Stubbs) will have access to the personal data collected within this study. It will be collected by me and stored on my password protected personal computer. I will not share personal information with others. It will only be used for data analysis to draw wider conclusions about the housing experiences and future intentions of Polish migrants living in Luton and Peterborough which will be presented in my research project.

What will happen to the data collected within this study?
The data will be securely stored on my password protected personal computer and on a separate hard drive so that I can still access the data in the event that my personal computer stops functioning properly. Only I will have access to my personal computer and the hard drive so no other person will see the data until it has undergone data analysis and is presented in my study.

The data collected within this study will be retained until the end of the examination process and after I have completed data analysis and finished working with the data, I will destroy it. The personal data collected within this study will be destroyed after the final examination process.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by:
The University of Hertfordshire Health and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority

The UH protocol number is LMS/PGR/UH/02260(1)

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please get in touch with me by phone or by email:
Mobile: 07952480091
Email: alex.bstubbs@hotmail.co.uk

Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University's Secretary and Registrar.

Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to taking part in this study.

Appendix IV. Participant Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

FORM EC3
CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

I, the undersigned *[please give your name here, in BLOCK CAPITALS]*

....
....
of *[please give contact details here, sufficient to enable the investigator to get in touch with you, such as a postal or email address]*

....

hereby freely agree to take part in the study entitled:

The Housing Experiences and Future Aspirations of Polish Migrants in the UK

1 I confirm that I have been given a Participant Information Sheet (a copy of which is attached to this form) giving particulars of the study, including its aim(s), methods and design, the names and contact details of key people and, as appropriate, the risks and potential benefits, and any plans for follow-up studies that might involve further approaches to participants. I have been given details of my involvement in the study. I have been told that in the event of any significant change to the aim(s) or design of the study I will be informed, and asked to renew my consent to participate in it.

2 I have been assured that I may withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage or having to give a reason.

3 In giving my consent to participate in this study, I understand that voice recording will take place.

4 I have been given information about the risks of my suffering harm or adverse effects. I have been told about the aftercare and support that will be offered to me in the event of this happening, and I have been assured that all such aftercare or support would be provided at no cost to myself.

5 I have been told how information relating to me (data obtained in the course of the study, and data provided by me about myself) will be handled: how it will be kept secure, who will have access to it, and how it will or may be used.

6 I understand that if there is any revelation of unlawful activity or any indication of circumstances that would or has put others at risk, the University may refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.

7 I have been told that I may at some time in the future be contacted again in connection with this or another study.

Signature of participant...Date..............................

Signature of (principal)
investigator...Date..............................

Name of (principal) investigator *[in BLOCK CAPITALS please]*

ALEXANDRA BUCKLAND - STUBBS

..../

Form EC3 – 4 February 2015

Appendix V. Advertisements Used for Polish Participant Recruitment

Will you help me with my research?

Hi, are you a Polish person living in Luton? If so then I could really use your help!

My name is Alexandra Buckland – Stubbs, I am a PhD student at the University of Hertfordshire and my research is focused on the housing experiences and future intentions of Polish residents living in the UK.

To carry out my research I would really like to talk with Polish people in Luton to hear your views and experiences of living in the UK.

To do this I would like to carry out interviews which will only last around 20 minutes and will be completely anonymous. The only requirements to take part are that you must be over 18 and be a Polish resident in Luton.

Please let me know if you would be willing to help me out with my study, I would really appreciate it! And please feel free to ask me if you would like any further information.

My contact details are:
Email: alex.bstubbs@hotmail.co.uk
Twitter: @AlexStubbs92

I look forward to hearing from you!
Best Wishes,
Alexandra

UH Protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/02260(1)

Pomożesz mi w moich badaniach?

Witaj.
Jesteś polskim rezydentem mieszkającym w Luton?
Nazywam się Alexandra Buckland – Stubbs, studiuję na Uniwersytecie Hertfordshire i potrzebuję Waszej pomocy. Moje badania koncentrują się na doświadczeniach mieszkaniowych a także planach na przyszłość Polaków mieszkających w Luton. Będzie dla mnie bardzo pomocne, jeśli będę mogła na ten temat porozmawiać z niektórymi z Państwa. Przeprowadzenie ankiety trwać będzie około 20 minut i oczywiście będzie całkowicie anonimowe.

Aby móc wziąć udział w badaniu należy mieć ukończone 18 lat i być polskim rezydentem w Luton.
Jeśli jesteś w stanie mi pomóc będę naprawdę wdzięczna. Jeśli chcesz o coś zapytać lub potrzebujesz dodatkowych informacji napisz do mnie.

Email: alex.bstubbs@hotmail.co.uk
Twitter: @AlexStubbs92

Do usłyszenia,
Pozdrawiam

- Alexandra

UH Protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/02260(1)

Will you help me with my research?

Hi, are you a Polish person living in Peterborough? If so then I could really use your help!

My name is Alexandra Buckland – Stubbs, I am a PhD student at the University of Hertfordshire and my research is focused on the housing experiences and future intentions of Polish residents living in the UK.

To carry out my research I would really like to talk with Polish people in Peterborough to hear your views and experiences of living in the UK.

To do this I would like to carry out interviews which will only last around 20 minutes and will be completely anonymous. The only requirements to take part are that you must be over 18 and be a Polish resident in Peterborough.

Please let me know if you would be willing to help me out with my study, I would really appreciate it! And please feel free to ask me if you would like any further information.

My contact details are:
Email: alex.bstubbs@hotmail.co.uk
Twitter: @AlexStubbs92

I look forward to hearing from you!
Best Wishes,
Alexandra

UH Protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/02260(1)

Pomożesz mi w moich badaniach?

Witaj.
Jesteś polskim rezydentem mieszkającym w Peterborough?
Nazywam się Alexandra Buckland – Stubbs, studiuję na Uniwersytecie Hertfordshire i potrzebuję Waszej pomocy. Moje badania koncentrują się na doświadczeniach mieszkaniowych a także planach na przyszłość Polaków mieszkających w Peterborough. Będzie dla mnie bardzo pomocne, jeśli będę mogła na ten temat porozmawiać z niektórymi z Państwa. Przeprowadzenie ankiety trwać będzie około 20 minut i oczywiście będzie całkowicie anonimowe.

Aby móc wziąć udział w badaniu należy mieć ukończone 18 lat i być polskim rezydentem w Peterborough.
Jeśli jesteś w stanie mi pomóc będę naprawdę wdzięczna. Jeśli chcesz o coś zapytać lub potrzebujesz dodatkowych informacji napisz do mnie.

Email: alex.bstubbs@hotmail.co.uk
Twitter: @AlexStubbs92

Do usłyszenia,
Pozdrawiam

- Alexandra

UH Protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/02260(1)

Will you help me with my research?

Hi, are you a Polish and over 18? If so then I could really use your help!

My name is Alexandra Buckland – Stubbs, I am a PhD student at the University of Hertfordshire and my research is focused on the housing experiences and future aspirations of Polish people in the UK and in Poland.

To carry out my research I would really like to interview some Polish people to hear your views, experiences and plans for the future. The interviews will only last around 20 minutes and will be completely anonymous.

Please let me know if you would be willing to help me with my study, I would really appreciate it! And please feel free to ask me if you would like any further information.

My contact details are:
Email: alex.bstubbs@hotmail.co.uk
Twitter: @AlexStubbs92

I look forward to hearing from you!
Best Wishes,
Alexandra

UH Protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/02260(2)

Appendix VI. The Aide-memoir for the Polish Participant Interviews in Luton and Peterborough

Gender, Age, Occupation, Educational background (If you don't mind me asking, how old are you? What is your current occupation? have you ever been to University? / what is the highest level qualification that you have?)

1.) Were you born in the UK or have you migrated here from Poland? - which part of Poland did you migrate from? Which voivodeship? - when did you first arrive in the UK? (What year)

2.) If you don't mind me asking why did you move to the UK?

3.) Have you lived elsewhere in the UK before moving to Luton/Peterborough? - List & why did you decide to move from place to place?

4.) Why did you decide to move to Luton/Peterborough? - Are you satisfied with Luton/Peterborough as a place to live? - Could you tell me positives and negatives of living here?

5.) When you arrived in the UK/Luton/Peterborough how easy was it to sort out your housing? <u>WHY</u>? - How did you find your accommodation? - What were your housing expectations before you came here? Did your expectations match the reality?

6.) Have you experienced any housing issues since arriving in the UK? (i.e homelessness, landlord issues, trouble accessing housing, lack of support).

7.) What area of Luton/Peterborough do you currently live in? - Do many other Polish people live in that area? - Is living near to other Polish residents important to you? <u>WHY?</u>

8.) What type of housing do you currently live in? (i.e. terraced, semi-detached, detached, flat/apartment, retirement home). - Do you rent or own your property? - Are you satisfied with your current housing? - What type of housing did you live in when you were living in Poland?

9.) Would you like to move to another type of housing? (<u>if no why not, if yes what if anything is stopping you?</u>)

10.) How many bedrooms does your current property have? - How many people share each of these rooms? - Are these people friends, relatives, partners or other people? -Why do you choose to share your housing with others?

11.) Do you hope that more Polish friends or relatives will migrate to join you in the UK in the future?

12.) Would you like to stay in Luton/Peterborough or do you hope to move to another area in the future? If yes, where? (another area in the UK or elsewhere). And WHY? - Do you think that you will ever move back to Poland?

13.) Do you believe that Polish residents are well integrated with the rest of the population in Luton/Peterborough? - Do people from different cultural backgrounds get on well in the community? - Are Polish people treated equally to other social groups in the community?

14.) Do you have contact with other Polish residents in Luton/Peterborough? How many/often? Is this important?

- Do you socialise with people of other nationalities as well as Polish people? How many/often?

15.) Are there any services for the Polish community in Luton/Peterborough? - Can you list them? - Have you made use of them?

16.) What could be done to improve the housing experiences of migrants in Luton/Peterborough?

17.) What are your feelings about Brexit? Has Brexit changed your future plans at all? Have you obtained British citizenship / are you considering doing so? Have you or will you apply for settled status in the UK? Do you think that Brexit could alter your housing plans?

18.) Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your experiences of living in the UK?

Appendix VII. The Aide-memoir for the Housing Expert Interviews in Luton and Peterborough

Note the gender, age, ethnicity and occupation of the participants

1.) What would you say are the main housing issues in Luton/Peterborough?

2.) In your opinion what needs to be done to improve the housing issues in Luton/Peterborough?

3.) What are your personal views on migration and how it affects housing in Luton/Peterborough?

4.) In your opinion is the housing stock in Luton/Peterborough large enough to sustain the current population? Could it sustain further migration?

5.) Do you anticipate a change in the demand for housing as a result of Brexit? Do you think that Brexit will affect house prices?

6.) Is homelessness a big issue in Luton/Peterborough?

7.) What proportion of homeless people in Luton/Peterborough would you say are migrants? And approximately how many do you think are Polish?

8.) What do you think are the main expectations of housing that migrants have when they come to the UK? Do you think that expectations differ between different migrant groups?

9.) Are migrants heavily reliant on renting in Luton/Peterborough? If yes, do you believe that most live in rented housing by choice or because they are excluded from other types of housing in some way? E.g. owing to relatively low incomes or high house prices?

10.) Do particular migrant groups tend to be concentrated in particular areas in Luton/Peterborough? Or is the population relatively mixed throughout the town/city? Is there a certain area with a high concentration of Polish residents?

11.) Are there any schemes or services in place to help migrants to find housing or support them with any issues that they may face in Luton/Peterborough? If so, what are they?

12.) Do you have any statistics or information related to the housing stock in Luton/Peterborough or migrant housing needs that you might be able to give me?

Appendix VIII. The Aide-memoir for the Polish Participant Interviews in Poland

1.) If you don't mind me asking, how old are you?

2.) What is your current occupation?

3.) What is the highest level of qualification that you have received? / your highest education level?

4.) Were you born in Poland? If so, where were you born?

5.) Which part of Poland do you live in now?   (name of the village/town/city and Voivodeship)

6.) What do you like about where you live? What do you dislike about where you live?

7.) Have you ever lived anywhere else in Poland? If so, where? when? and why did you move?

8.) Have you ever lived abroad?

9.) Have you ever lived in the UK? **(If no, go to question 10. If yes, go to question 11).**

10.) Have you ever considered moving to the UK? If yes – Why? and why haven't you moved there?   If no - why haven't you considered it?   **(Continue to question 26).**

11.)   When did you migrate to the UK and how long did you live there?

12.)   Why did you migrate to the UK? How easy was the migration process and what was involved?

13.)   Where did you live in the UK? And why did you choose to live there?

14.)   Did you only live in one place in the UK? If not, where else did you live and why did you decide to move from place to place?

15.)   What were the positives and negatives of where you lived in the UK? Did you like living there?

16.)   When you arrived in the UK, could you explain how you sorted your accommodation out'? Was this easy? Why?

17.)   In the UK was your accommodation provided by your employment?

18.)   What type of housing did you live in when you were living in the UK?

19.)   What were your expectations before you came to the UK? Did your expectations match the reality? Why?

20.)   Have you experienced any housing issues in the UK? (i.e homelessness, landlord issues, trouble accessing housing, lack of support). What was that like for you? What happened?

21.)   What type of housing did you live in when you were living in the UK? Why did you choose that type of housing?

22.)   Did you save up money in the UK to invest in Polish property? If so, was this a planned strategy or was it accidental?

23.)   Why did you return to Poland? And when did you return?

24.)   Since returning to Poland from the UK, have you been able to purchase a property to rent to others or a second home? (Either in Poland or abroad). Was this because of the money that you had gained in the UK?

25.)   What were your expectations of returning to Poland? Were your expectations met?

26.)   What type of housing do you currently live in?

27.)   Do you rent or own your property?

28.)   Are you satisfied with your current housing? Why/why not?

29.)   Would you like to move to another type of housing? (if no why not, if yes what if anything is stopping you?)

30.)   How many bedrooms does your current property have?

31.)   How many people do you share your property with? Are they your friends, relatives, partners or other people? Why do you choose to share your housing with others?

32.)   Have you ever experienced any housing issues in Poland? Could you tell me more about them please?

33.)   How easy is it to access to housing market in Poland? Is it more difficult now than it was in the past?

34.)   Will you gain property through inheritance in the future? If yes, has this impacted your housing decisions or housing plans?

35.)   Do any of your family or friends live in the UK?
If yes, do you still see each other and contact each other? If yes, how? and how often? If not, why not?

36.)   Do you intend to remain in Poland or do you have aspirations to live somewhere else in the future? If yes, where? And when?

37.)   Do you have a desire to move to the UK in the future? If yes, why? And when would you like to move there?

38.) What are your views on the UK? And how have you formed these views? What do you think about Polish migration to the UK in general? Do you know anyone who has migrated? what have they heard about their experience?

39.) What are your views on other cultures, races and religions?

40.) What do you think about Brexit? Has it had any impact on your migration or housing choices? Will it impact you or your family or friends? Has it had an impact on your future movement plans?

41.) What are your thoughts about politics in Poland at the moment?
Has the level of bureaucracy linked to inheritance increased under the new government?

42.) What, if anything, do you think could be done to improve the housing experiences of Polish migrants in the UK?

Appendix IX. Interview Details

Study Area	Participant Type	Participant Name	Date of Interview	Location where the interview took place	Participant Recruitment Method
Luton	Housing Expert (Estate Agent)	LHE1	17/05/16	In a house in Cowper Street, Luton, LU1 3RZ	Introduced via a mutual contact
Luton	Housing Expert (Estate Agent)	LHE2	18/05/16	In a house in Cowper Street, Luton, LU1 3RZ	Introduced via a mutual contact
Luton	Housing Expert (Estate Agent)	LHE3	17/05/16	In a house in Cowper Street, Luton, LU1 3RZ	Introduced via a mutual contact
Luton	Housing Expert (Luton Borough Council)	LHE4	15/03/16	In a house in Cowper Street, Luton, LU1 3RZ	Introduced via a mutual contact/ contacted by email
Luton	Housing Expert (Luton Borough Council)	LHE5	30/06/16	In a house in Cowper Street, Luton, LU1 3RZ	Snowballing/contacted by email
Luton	Housing Expert (Housing Association)	LHE6	19/04/16	Interview was carried out via a phone call	Contacted by email
Luton	Housing Expert (Housing Association)	LHE7	13/04/16	In an office on Wellington Street Luton, LU1 5AF	Contacted by email
Luton	Housing Expert (Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish Church in Dunstable)	LHE8	22/05/16	In Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish Church, 17 Victoria St, Dunstable LU6 3AZ	Approached in person
Luton	Housing Expert (NOAH Enterprise Charity)	LHE9	27/03/18	NOAH enterprise Welfare Centre, 141 Park Street, Luton LU1 3HG	Contacted by email
Luton	Housing Expert (NOAH Enterprise Charity)	LHE10	25/07/18	NOAH enterprise Welfare Centre, 141 Park Street, Luton LU1 3HG	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Tomasz	07/03/16	In the Polonia Community group office, Dallow Road, Luton LU1 1LY	Contacted by email

Luton	Polish Migrant	Marcia	16/05/16	At the University of Bedfordshire, Vicarage St, Luton LU1 3JU	Responded to an advertisement posted on Facebook
Luton	Polish Migrant	Andrzej	18/05/16	At the University of Bedfordshire, Vicarage St, Luton LU1 3JU	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Berta	20/05/16	In the Luton Irish Forum, 102 Hitchin Rd, Luton LU2 0ES	Approached in person
Luton	Polish Migrant	Małgorzata	20/05/16	In the Luton Irish Forum, 102 Hitchin Rd, Luton LU2 0ES	Approached in person
Luton	Polish Migrant	Milosz	20/05/16	In the Luton Irish Forum, 102 Hitchin Rd, Luton LU2 0ES	Approached in person
Luton	Polish Migrant	Szymon	22/05/16	Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish Church, 17 Victoria St, Dunstable LU6 3AZ	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Janusz	24/05/16	At the University of Bedfordshire, Vicarage St, Luton LU1 3JU	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Patrycja	24/05/16	In a house in Cowper Street, Luton, LU1 3RZ	Responded to an advertisement on a Polish forum
Luton	Polish Migrant	Dawid	28/05/16	Gospoda Polish restaurant, 28 Chapel St, Luton LU1 2SE	Responded to an advertisement posted on Facebook
Luton	Polish Migrant	Eryk	28/05/16	Gospoda Polish restaurant, 28 Chapel St, Luton LU1 2SE	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Zuzanna	03/06/16	Interview was carried out via a phone call	Responded to an advertisement for the research
Luton	Polish Migrant	Daria	04/06/16	In a Polish shop on High Town Road, Luton	Approached in person
Luton	Polish Migrant	Lukasz	09/06/16	In an office on Dunstable Rd, Luton LU4 8JL	Contacted by email
Luton	Polish Migrant	Krzysztof	23/06/16	At the University of Bedfordshire, Vicarage St, Luton LU1 3JU	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Henryk	25/06/16	In a Polish shop on High Town Road, Luton	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Ryszard	25/06/16	In a Polish shop on High Town Road, Luton	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Kasia	25/06/16	In the Luton Irish Forum, 102 Hitchin Rd, Luton LU2 0ES	Approached in person
Luton	Polish Migrant	Mikolaj	26/06/16	In a Polish shop on High Town Road, Luton	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Stanisław	26/06/16	In a Polish shop on High Town Road, Luton	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Celestyna	26/06/16	In a Polish shop on High Town Road, Luton	Snowballing

Luton	Polish Migrant	Oskar	26/06/16	In a Polish shop on High Town Road, Luton	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Angelica	02/07/16	In the Luton Irish Forum, 102 Hitchin Rd, Luton LU2 0ES	Approached in person
Luton	Polish Migrant	Basile	03/07/16	In a Polish shop on High Town Road, Luton	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Jedrek	03/07/16	In a Polish shop on High Town Road, Luton	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Tymon	25/07/18	NOAH enterprise Welfare Centre, 141 Park Street, Luton LU1 3HG	Snowballing
Luton	Polish Migrant	Marek	03/03/19	Gospoda Polish restaurant, 28 Chapel St, Luton LU1 2SE	Snowballing
Peterborough	Housing Expert (Housing Association)	PHE1	24/10/17	In the Housing Association office	Contacted via email
Peterborough	Housing Expert (Peterborough Soup Kitchen Charity)	PHE2	20/01/18	In a building utilised by the Peterborough Soup Kitchen Charity	Contacted via email
Peterborough	Housing Expert (Estate Agent)	PHE3	01/08/18	In an estate agency in Peterborough City Centre	Approached in person
Peterborough	Housing Expert (Estate Agent)	PHE4	01/08/18	In an estate agency in Peterborough City Centre	Approached in person
Peterborough	Polish Migrant	Michal	18/05/17	The Pastroudis Bar and Café, The Bull Hotel, Westgate, Peterborough PE1 1RB.	Responded to an advertisement on a Polish forum
Peterborough	Polish Migrant	Ewa	18/05/17	The Pastroudis Bar and Café, The Bull Hotel, Westgate, Peterborough PE1 1RB.	Responded to an advertisement on a Polish forum

Peterborough	Polish Migrant	Grzegorz	04/07/17	The Pastroudis Bar and Café, The Bull Hotel, Westgate, Peterborough PE1 1RB	Responded to an advertisement on a Polish forum
Peterborough	Polish Migrant	Izabela	15/08/17	In a shop on Lincoln Road, Peterborough	Approached in person
Peterborough	Polish Migrant	Agnieszka	15/08/17	The Pastroudis Bar and Café, The Bull Hotel, Westgate, Peterborough PE1 1RB.	Responded to an advertisement on a Polish forum/ Snowballing
Peterborough	Polish Migrant	Oliwia	10/01/18	In a café/restaurant in the Planet Ice Arena, 1 Mallard Rd, Peterborough PE3 8YN	Snowballing
Peterborough	Polish Migrant	Artek	03/08/18	The Pastroudis Bar and Café, The Bull Hotel, Westgate, Peterborough PE1 1RB.	Snowballing
Peterborough	Polish Migrant	Borys	24/10/18	The Pastroudis Bar and Café, The Bull Hotel, Westgate, Peterborough PE1 1RB.	Snowballing
Poland (Szczecin)	Polish National	Aleksandra	07/03/19	Lobby of a hotel in Szczecin	Approached in person
Poland (Police near Szczecin)	Polish National	Krystyna	08/03/19	Café in Police	Introduced via a mutual contact
Poland (Police near Szczecin)	Polish National	Bartek	08/03/19	Café in Police	Snowballing
Poland (Wrocław)	Polish National	Wiktoria	10/03/19	Café in Wrocław	Facebook
Poland (Warsaw)	Polish National	Ania	12/03/19	Café in Warsaw	Facebook
Poland (Warsaw)	Polish National	Casimir	12/03/19	Café in Warsaw	Facebook
Poland (Kraków)	Polish National	Alicja	15/03/19	Jagiellonian University in Kraków	Snowballing
Poland (Kraków)	Polish National	Beata	15/03/19	Jagiellonian University in Kraków	Introduced via a mutual contact
Poland (Kraków)	Polish National	Natasza	15/03/19	Café in Kraków	Snowballing
Poland (Kraków)	Polish National	Liljana	16/03/19	Café in Kraków	Snowballing

Table 23. A table of the interview details for each Participant.

Housing Market Issues in Luton and Peterborough
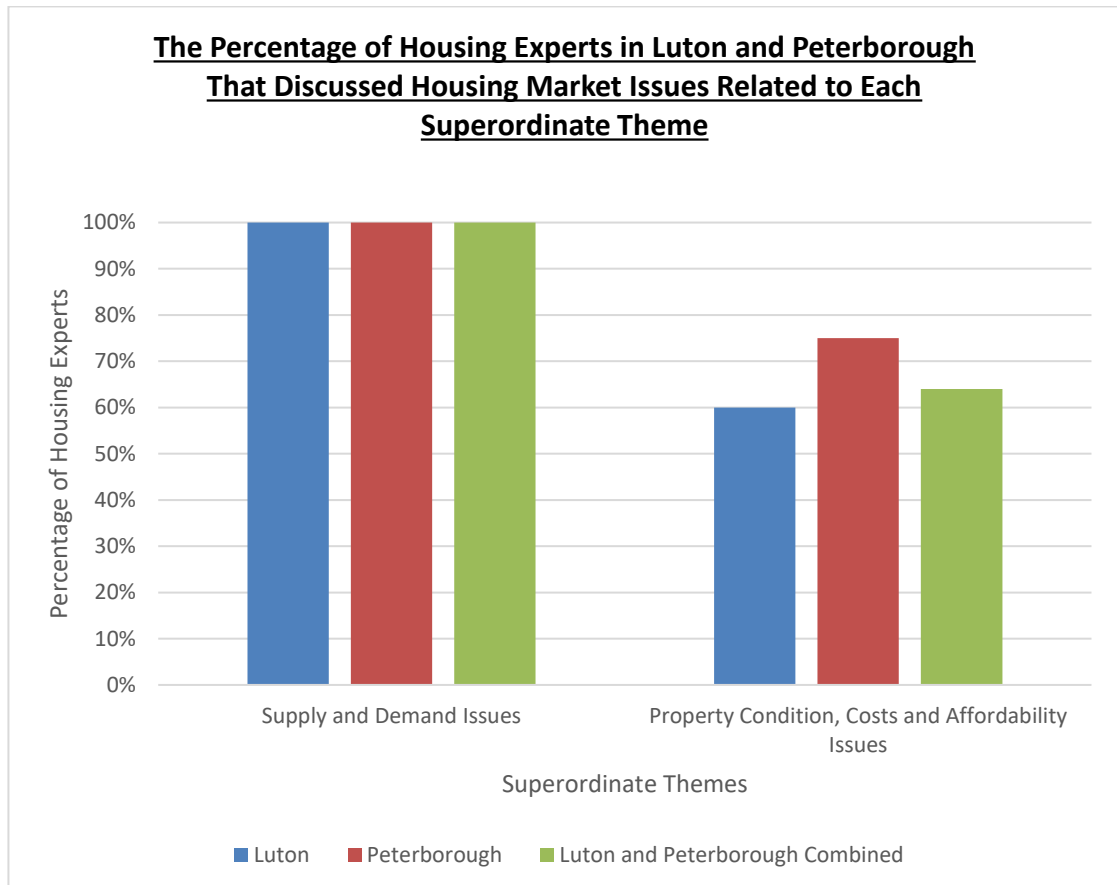
Figure 30. The percentage of housing experts in Luton and Peterborough that discussed housing market issues that related to each superordinate theme.

The main superordinate theme regarding housing market issues that emerged from the housing expert interviews in Luton and in Peterborough was supply and demand issues. This was a common theme among all of the housing experts across both localities, indicating that a mismatch between the quantity of available suitable housing and population demands for housing is a severe issue in both Luton and Peterborough. Within this superordinate theme, the subordinate themes that were discussed by the housing experts included: a shortage of suitable housing; population demands and international migration pressures; and the impact of internal migration, developers, and distance from London. The other superordinate theme that emerged from the housing expert interviews regarding housing market issues in Luton and Peterborough was property condition, costs and affordability issues (discussed by 64% of the housing experts in Luton and Peterborough, representing 60% of the housing experts in Luton and 75% of the housing experts in Peterborough). From this, it is evident that supply

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and demand issues were the most widely discussed themes relating to housing market issues among the housing experts in Luton and Peterborough, followed by property condition, costs and affordability issues. These superordinate themes are shown in Figure 30 and Table 24 and the corresponding subordinate themes can be seen in Table 24 below.

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Themes
Supply and Demand Issues	• A shortage of suitable housing • Population demands and international migration pressures • The impact of internal migration, developers, and distance from London
Property Condition, Costs and Affordability Issues	• Property condition issues • Costs and affordability issues

Table 24. The superordinate and subordinate themes related to housing market issues in Luton and Peterborough.

Each of the superordinate themes and the corresponding subordinate themes shown in Table 24 will be discussed below, using Table 25 and 26 to show which housing expert participants discussed each theme and including extracts from a range of the housing expert interviews to demonstrate their views and the interpretations made to illuminate each theme.

Study Area	Housing Experts	Subordinate Themes		
		A shortage of suitable housing	Population demands and international migration pressures	The impact of internal migration, developers, and distance from London
Luton	LHE1	✔		
	LHE2	✔	✔	✔
	LHE3	✔	✔	
	LHE4	✔	✔	✔
	LHE5	✔	✔	✔
	LHE6	✔	✔	
	LHE7	✔	✔	✔
	LHE8	✔	✔	✔
	LHE9	✔	✔	
	LHE10	✔		✔
Peterborough	PHE1	✔	✔	
	PHE2	✔	✔	
	PHE3	✔		
	PHE4		✔	

Table 25. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of supply and demand issues.

A Shortage of Suitable Housing

Table 25 shows that 93% of the housing experts in Luton and Peterborough (100% in Luton and 75% in Peterborough) discussed housing market issues related to the subordinate theme

of a shortage of suitable housing, implying that a lack of suitable housing is a prominent housing market issue across the two localities, particularly in Luton. Within the narratives, it became clear that the main form of housing shortage that was discussed by the housing experts in the two localities was a shortage of social housing, including temporary and emergency accommodation. In Luton, the housing expert narratives suggested that there was a shortage of houses that were large enough to accommodate families, a shortage of social housing and a shortage of affordable housing for both renters and buyers. This differed in Peterborough, as the shortage of housing in Peterborough's housing market appeared to be less broad owing to ongoing construction and development in the area (which was limited in Luton). Therefore, the shortage of suitable housing in Peterborough discussed by the housing experts was mainly in reference to a lack of social housing rather than to a shortage of suitable housing in general. Whereas in Luton, the housing expert narratives portrayed a severe shortage of multiple forms of housing including social housing, homes that are of a suitable size for families and affordable housing.

For instance, in Luton, housing expert LHE4 said:

'There is a huge demand and very little supply'

Similarly, housing expert LHE5 commented:

'An imbalance between demand, supply, condition and affordability I think are the main barriers'.

These extracts demonstrate the superordinate theme of supply and demand issues and link to various subordinate themes within this section related to a shortage of suitable housing, population demands, property condition issues and costs and affordability issues. Additionally, in the extract below, housing expert LHE2 discussed a shortage of suitable housing in Luton for both renters and buyers and highlighted that population pressures including internal migration from London to Luton has created a surge in demand that has driven up property prices in the town. LHE2 said:

> *'Main housing issues, probably…shortage of new builds… I just think there's a natural shortage of property really… you know obviously the town is having a big influx of people coming from especially London, so therefore there is you know a big demand and a big surge in demand for property for rental and for purchase. See which is why one of the reasons why house prices have umm soared over the last couple of years or so, I think just you know really mainly a shortage of both like I say rental and residential property at the moment'.*

This extract includes examples of all of the subordinate themes that fall under the superordinate theme of supply and demand issues shown in Table 24 and conveys an imbalance between the amount of housing available, the demand for housing and the cost of housing in Luton as also suggested by housing experts LHE4 and LHE5 in their extracts above. From the quotation provided by LHE2 it can be inferred that there is lack of suitable housing for both renters and buyers in Luton, implying that there is a widespread shortage of different forms of housing within the housing market in the town.

Similarly, housing expert LHE6 suggested that there was a shortage of housing across the board in Luton, implying that the town has a shortage of all forms of housing, particularly social housing and affordable housing for renters. She said:

> *'We need to have more housing! Whether that be social, whether that be affordable or private renting and I mean AFFORDABLE private renting, or whether that be more temporary accommodation… there needs to be more accommodation across the board in all areas to try and alleviate some of the pressures'.*

It can be inferred from the extract provided by LHE6 that there is a need to alleviate pressures in all sectors of the housing market in Luton by providing more accommodation to meet the high demand for housing; and her emphasis on the word affordable suggests that high housing costs are a significant issue and that there is a need to increase the affordability of

housing within the town, which also aligns with the subordinate theme of costs and affordability issues.

Furthermore, LHE6 mentioned a need for more social and temporary housing, and in accordance with her, most of the other references to a shortage of suitable housing that were made by the housing experts in both Luton and Peterborough were related to a shortage of social housing. For example, housing expert LHE7 highlighted the severity of unmet population demands for social housing in Luton. LHE7 said:

> *'I can give you figures from LBC, Luton Borough Council actually. They have got 12,000 people on the waiting list currently. They have approximately 7,800 houses or flats which are completely full... Where we are concerned, Luton Community Lettings, we have about 544 properties, they are all completely full and our waiting list is closed'.*

Her example demonstrates that the social housing shortage in Luton spans across both the local Council social housing stock as well as the social housing stock held by local housing associations and indicates that there is such a high population demand for social housing that waiting lists at both Luton Borough Council and the Housing Association where she worked (Luton Community Lettings) were completely full or closed at the time that the interview took place. Additionally, LHE7 stated that although there were many flats in Luton, there was an enormous shortage of two and three bedroom properties in the town which supports the suggestion that there is a shortage of housing that is of a suitable size for families in Luton.

Similarly, to the comments made by LHE7 regarding a shortage of social housing in Luton, housing expert LHE10 said:

> *'Even when we are calling with an English person they are saying that there is no houses, no places. No houses. We need still to build more houses because it's no no no houses'.*

This quotation implies that LHE10 had attempted to phone organisations to try and find housing for people who had visited the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre in Luton in need of accommodation. However, her extract suggests that she has often been told that there are no housing places available, owing to the shortage of social and emergency housing in Luton. This extract also highlights that there are both migrant individuals and non-migrant individuals who visit the NOAH Enterprise charity who are in need of emergency or temporary accommodation and that both groups are often unable to obtain any accommodation, demonstrating that there is a lack of social, temporary and emergency housing available to support people in need in Luton. If individuals are unable to obtain any emergency or temporary accommodation then they are likely to be forced to sleep rough or to become sofa surfers, exacerbating levels of homelessness. Barriers to access housing and financial barriers to access support are key issues facing the migrant homeless population in Great Britain (Boobis, Jacob & Sanders, 2019).

Similarly, PHE1 said that she thought that the main housing issue in Peterborough was a severe lack of housing, particularly social housing. PHE1 added:

> *I had a resident I spoke to yesterday who was trying to apply for rehousing because she had issues with domestic violence with her ex-partner and was told to come back in a years' time because they closed the waiting list basically apart from really, really urgent cases'.*

This quotation echoes similar views regarding social housing shortages shared by some of the housing experts in Luton above, and indicates that there is a similar lack of social housing available to help people in need in Peterborough and that waiting lists to obtain social accommodation were closed at the time of the interview with PHE1 unless cases were deemed to be extremely urgent. Additionally, the extract provided by PHE1 implied that the shortage of social housing was so severe that even cases involving domestic violence issues were not being deemed to be serious enough to access what little social housing stock remained available in Peterborough at that time.

Expert PHE2 from Peterborough Soup Kitchen also highlighted the difficulty involved in enabling people in need to access emergency accommodation in Peterborough and

highlighted that it can be difficult for people to access the necessary information to try and obtain emergency housing. PHE2 said:

> *'I think for the people that are coming to the soup kitchen van, the level of information that's available to them, particularly in emergency situations seems to be a problem. And we've addressed that with signposting and on occasions we can phone up for referrals. So probably information available to the clients. And for us it's… it's not something that we do as part of our remit for the charity in terms of finding people who are homeless accommodation. We are primarily there to be that first point of contact in terms of food and drink'.*

This extract indicates that although Peterborough Soup Kitchen is primarily a charity that supplies free food and drink to people in need, the charity often sees clients that are in need of emergency accommodation and who lack the information needed to try and obtain accommodation themselves. The extract also highlights the importance for Peterborough Soup Kitchen and other organisations to signpost information so that people in need can easily access services to try to obtain emergency accommodation when needed. However, the issue appears to be more complex than a lack of information available to people in need, as expert PHE2 explained that even when services can be accessed, there are often constraints on the availability of assistance and accommodation. For example, when asked if he thought that there was a shortage of housing, expert PHE2 said:

> *'I think there's definitely… they have a referral system and the emergency side of it where, you know, I had three umm ladies who said that they were rough sleeping, they couldn't find any accommodation. The emergency side of it is very difficult. And that has to be done during the day. You need to go to a certain location, you need to register with them and then phone in and then they'll try and find places around for the person that's involved'.*

This extract indicates that there are various stages and potential barriers involved in the process of attempting to access emergency accommodation. Firstly, an individual needs to know who to approach and where to go to try to access emergency accommodation, and if that information is not signposted or easily accessible to the individual (for example if it is not available in their language), then they will not be able to attempt to find any emergency accommodation. Secondly, once the individual knows what to do to access emergency accommodation, they need to contact the emergency housing providers during the day, within set hours, and they need to register themselves before a search will be carried out by the provider to try to find them an accommodation place, and even then there is no guarantee that the individual will be deemed to be eligible to access emergency accommodation or that a place will be available for them.

Similarly, housing expert LHE8 said:

> *'There are a few shelters err where you pay a nominal sum for a room in the evening, it's not an all-day affair it's sort of for evening. But with that price erm you have, to qualify for that accommodation… You have to be erm on benefits and receive so much and you can apply for housing and then you can get this, and the accommodation in these sheltered or temporary accommodation… or night shelters as they are called is obviously limited for a period of time'.*

This again provides an indication that individuals have to qualify for temporary or emergency housing places and can also only access those places for a limited period of time.

Housing expert PHE2 confirmed that in emergency situations it can take time to find people accommodation and that sometimes it is not possible. He elaborated on this with an anecdote from his experience of assisting people to try and find emergency accommodation:

> *'There's not always the place. When we had these three ladies that came. There was one place available that had gone half an hour beforehand. So, this was probably about eight o'clock at night so yeah they just had to sleep rough that night'.*

This extract highlights that it is not always possible for people in need to access emergency accommodation, and when housing places are not available, individuals who are in need are forced to sleep rough. PHE2 confirmed that it is difficult for him and for the charity staff to see people in need being rejected for accommodation and needing to sleep rough, but that they are limited in the help that they can provide as although they attempt to help individuals by signposting sources of accommodation assistance and making phone calls on behalf of some individuals to try to help them to access accommodation, they are not able to provide any financial help to individuals owing to strict rules followed by the charity staff. This is highlighted in the extract shared by PHE2 below:

> *'We have very strict rules about carrying money and what we can and can't do, because that puts us into a sort of compromising position so, umm yeah we just have to, you know, we helped making the phone calls because some of them English wasn't their first language, so we made the phone calls for them but they weren't, unfortunately there was nowhere available for them'.*

As well as revealing the assistance that Peterborough Soup Kitchen offers to people in need to try to help them to access accommodation when necessary, this extract also highlights that some of the people who approach Peterborough Soup Kitchen for assistance do not speak English as a first language and require help from others to try and obtain accommodation, as they would not be able to access information regarding emergency accommodation or contact accommodation providers directly themselves. This suggests that language barriers are an added barrier for some individuals in addition to needing to know information about who to contact, when they can be contacted and needing to register with a housing provider to request a search for emergency accommodation, which implies that migrants without the ability to speak English fluently may find the process of obtaining emergency accommodation even more difficult than English speakers and may be in a disadvantaged position when needing to attempt to access emergency accommodation.

Furthermore, PHE3 discussed the challenges faced by those in receipt of housing benefits when trying to access accommodation and implied that there was a lack of rented accommodation available for tenants in Peterborough. PHE3 said:

> *'I think on a rent a side I don't think there's enough, umm there's enough out there for the tenants at the minute. Um and if there is well I think that the other issue is people being on benefits and not being able to pick anything up. Or landlords shying away from it'.*

This extract provided by PHE3 suggests that it is difficult for people who are in receipt of benefits to access accommodation as there is a shortage of available rental accommodation in Peterborough and because some landlords choose to avoid accepting individuals as tenants in their properties if they are in receipt of benefits. PHE3 later suggested that providing individuals who are on benefits with some form of guarantee to support them may enable them to be viewed as more appealing prospective tenants to landlords so that they could access private rented accommodation easier.

Additionally, when discussing the housing market in Peterborough, housing expert PHE3 commented:

> *'There's always stuff being built. Over in Hampton they're building loads and all over Peterborough… for the next few years there is a lot of development going on everywhere so I don't think it's going to be an issue'.*

This extract suggests that there is a high level of ongoing construction and development in the city which PHE3 believes will be sufficient to sustain the current population and future immigration to the area. The high level of construction and development in Peterborough was also mentioned by PHE1 who said:

> *'There's an awful lot of development going on… I think Peterborough since I, I moved in when I was 10 so I've been here an awful long time… and umm it's been a permanent building site in Peterborough (laughs)… where they've developed all the areas… there was a slowdown when the economy went… they really slowed down the building here which was great, but you had sort of like half-finished developments that were sort of like stopped for a couple of years… um before they restarted it, but yeah it's a permanent building site Peterborough (laughs)'.*

This extract demonstrates that there has been long-term development in Peterborough and suggests that construction has been ongoing in the city for decades, creating more housing developments over time. Whereas, in Luton, the housing experts implied that there are restrictions on construction and development which prevent the town from building a sufficient amount of housing to sustain the rate of population growth and increasing population demands for housing. Various housing expert narratives in Luton implied that restrictions and regulations had impacted the supply of housing, particularly right to buy regulations and construction and planning restrictions in Luton. For instance, LHE5 said:

> *'One of the challenges that we've got is in Luton is that we're landlocked in terms of the boroughs boundaries and obviously it's extremely difficult if not impossible to access building land outside of the geographical constraints of the borough'.*

This extract highlights that there is a lack of building land available within Luton and that as Luton can only build properties within its own geographical boundaries, it is constrained from accessing any building land in neighbouring areas by geographical and political boundaries. This was also discussed by housing expert LHE7 who added:

> *'The planning regs have been relaxed however we need to be able to build on the outskirts of Luton. And Luton borders Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire County Council are very very difficult about planning laws'.*

This extract also highlights that planning regulations and building constraints that prevent Luton from building properties on the outskirts of the town in neighbouring areas, particularly in Hertfordshire, have exacerbated the shortage of housing in Luton. LHE7 said that several property developments had been proposed in the outskirts of Luton in areas bordering Hertfordshire, but that these proposals were being continuously denied. However, she was aware of the Cheyne Capital hedge fund that was in the process of building 400 new properties to be used as social housing in Luton. She said that examples of hedge funds building social housing were previously unheard of and speculated that Luton Borough Council would plan to rent the new units on twenty-year leases in a bid to provide more affordable housing. Additionally, Cheyne Capital is a London based institution and represents an example of capital city investment in the local area. The institutions' investment in social housing in Luton comes at a time when there is a severe lack of affordable housing in the town; which bears the brunt of London's surplus population, so it makes sense for capital city based organisations to invest in social housing to alleviate housing market pressures in Luton and to attempt to sustain the capitals own requirements.

Additionally, housing expert LHE9, who worked at the NOAH Enterprise Charity in Luton said:

> *'We're living in a capitalist society which has got market demands on it and that is going to impact the cost of living in anywhere if the market dictates that certain people are priced out then that's what happens… what is interesting to me is for example the north of the country there is just a plethora of housing options available and people who have become homeless just walk into a local authority property and there is no lack of housing… Whether that has directly reduced sleeping, I think it is to a certain extent, it is tackling rough sleeping, but in the south that just isn't an option so… you could argue that building is a solution, but you're talking about… catching up when you're miles behind on the level of… need. And you're talking about an urban population where isn't that much building opportunities'.*

This extract again indicates that there is a shortage of suitable housing to meet population demands in the town and highlights that there is an insufficient amount of affordable housing available to reduce and prevent rough sleeping and homelessness. The extract indicates that the town is *'miles behind'* other regions such as areas in the north of England in terms of the amount of property development in the town and the level of available housing that it can provide. LHE9 suggests that there are not many building opportunities available in Luton, highlighting construction restraints which restrict further forms of housing from being built in the town and reduce the town's ability to ameliorate its severe housing shortage and population demands. Additionally, LHE9 discussed his frustration at wastage within the housing market in Luton, as he said that there are vacant properties and vacant pieces of land in Luton that are not being used to house people because the owners are holding onto them and are choosing not to develop them or sell them. LHE9 said:

> *'We've also got frustrating situations where people are sitting on land and not doing anything with it, so you've got in Luton particularly student accommodation owners, not the university, private developers… sitting on huge um empty um… flats err blocks of flats and not doing anything with them… And people like the homeless around them…and just refusing to work with the local authority to get people into them, so you've got wastage in the system as well which is… frustrating. Um so I think politically if there could be put pressure on to reduce the unoccupied buildings that are already here and already suitable then that would be a sensible thing to do. Um I think that the government should consider matching the local housing allowance rate to the market rate, that's going to be expensive obviously. Without doing that they risk just excluding vulnerable people and… you know pushing people out of where they are… connected in that form of society so it's just going to… potentially it's going to push people North'.*

This extract indicates that unoccupied and undeveloped vacant land and vacant buildings are unused opportunities to reduce the shortage of housing in Luton and could be better utilised to enable the Council and housing associations to house people in need. Similarly, housing expert LHE2 believed that the Council could attempt to ameliorate Luton's housing issues by buying up vacant and derelict properties, renovating them and then re-releasing them for sale. LHE2 said:

> *'There's quite, I would say probably more so in the town centre there's quite a lot of um neglected, vacant properties… um some derelict properties that you know the Council could then go into, looking to buying up and obviously fixing up and putting back out for either sale or, or for rent… umm certainly um allowing um parcels of land to be um for new builds to come on so I always think there's with bureaucracy, bureaucracy and people you know Councils and that taking a lot longer for decisions for planning etc. etc. umm you know for releasing more land available for new builds'.*

The extract provided by LHE2 above indicates that there are many vacant properties in Luton, particularly in the town centre that could be restored and put to better use to help to reduce the shortage of suitable housing in Luton and to sustain the growing need for accommodation in the town, but that bureaucracy, delayed planning decisions and a lack of land released for new builds can restrict these changes from taking place.

Furthermore, LHE5, LHE7 and PHE1 discussed right to buy regulations as a factor that had exacerbated the shortage of social housing within the localities. For example, when discussing current pressures on the social housing sector, housing expert LHE7 said:

> *'It doesn't help that the government have extended the right to buy from Councils to housing associations so some of our tenants will have the right to buy their properties. Now we're looking for more properties, we don't really want to sell our properties but we have no choice if people want to buy them or we would have to compensate them. Umm we're finding that tenants that move into properties stay there for years and years and years so there is not a turnover. There is a significant problem in Luton'.*

This alludes to the recent implementation of right to buy regulations that enable social housing tenants to become able to purchase their socially rented homes at a discounted rate (Eardley, 2022). Not only did LHE7 imply that this had reduced residential mobility and housing turnover in the town, but she explained that it had led to a reduction in the social

housing stock as the Council and local housing associations are forced to sell their socially rented properties to their tenants. Luton's severe deficit in its social housing stock has increased pressures on housing providers to supply more accommodation to people in need and has contributed to a lack of affordable housing in the town.

Furthermore, LHE1 and LHE4 suggested that housing issues in Luton could be reduced by encouraging more landlords. They did not elaborate on how and why encouraging landlords would alleviate housing pressures in the town, but it is assumed that they were referring to Luton Borough Council's guaranteed rent scheme which enables the Council to work with local landlords to provide more socially rented housing for people in need. The guaranteed rent scheme is a private sector leasing strategy in which the local Council provides landlords with incentives to encourage them to lease their properties to the Council, which then in turn uses the property to supplement the local social housing stock and provide temporary housing to people in need (Lunn, 2014). The scheme provides the Council with an opportunity to increase its housing stock. However, as institutions in London are attempting to do the same, competition is high, so LHE4 suggested that it is crucial that Luton Borough Council offers highly attractive incentives to local landlords. The Council encourages landlords to join the scheme by offering them guaranteed year-round rental income, even when the property is vacant, which is an inviting prospect as it removes any landlord concerns over rent arrears or possible eviction fees (Lunn, 2014). In contrast, despite LHE4 stating that the Council should attempt to encourage more landlords, LHE1 added that government legislation appeared to be doing the opposite. The government has now made it a requirement for all landlords to conduct immigration checks on prospective tenants and landlords must also adhere to deposit protection regulations. The government has also increased taxes for landlords, and these seemingly tighter regulations aimed at landlords may discourage rather than encourage more landlords as recommended by the housing experts.

These extracts demonstrate the superordinate theme of supply and demand issues and are examples of the subordinate theme of a shortage of suitable housing. The extracts included within this section highlight that there is a severe shortage of social housing in both Luton and Peterborough and that in both localities, people in need of temporary or emergency accommodation, or those who are on benefits face difficulties accessing housing. Additionally, non-English speakers need to overcome the additional challenge of navigating a language barrier to attempt to access assistance and emergency or temporary accommodation, which may put them in an increased disadvantaged position when

attempting to seek housing assistance. Furthermore, although Peterborough appears to mainly be affected by a shortage of social housing rather than a shortage of housing in general owing to long-term construction and development, Luton appears to be affected by a shortage of multiple forms of housing and has not been able to construct new forms of accommodation at a similarly sufficient rate as Peterborough to reduce demand pressures, owing to planning and construction restrictions in Luton. Additionally, Luton has some unoccupied vacant land and unused properties that could be better utilised to ameliorate the severe housing shortage within the town.

The interpretations of the superordinate theme of a lack of suitable housing described above using extracts from the housing expert narratives was also supported by the housing expert responses when they were asked whether or not the housing stock in Luton or Peterborough was large enough to support the current population, as 80% of the housing experts in Luton said that the housing stock in Luton was not large enough to sustain the current population in the town, one housing expert in Luton said that it would only be possible if further construction took place and the other housing expert in Luton was not asked that particular question; in contrast, 50% of the housing experts in Peterborough said that they did think that the housing stock in Peterborough was large enough to sustain the current population, one housing expert said that the housing stock was not large enough and one housing expert was not sure enough to provide an answer.

These results indicate that Luton's housing stock is in need of further construction and repurposing of vacant and unused land and properties to better accommodate for the large demand for housing in the area, both presently and in the event of future migration streams or an increased birth rate, which the housing experts in Luton suggested will require a relaxation of planning regulations and decreased construction limitations. Whereas in Peterborough, the housing stock appeared to be large enough to sustain the current population, and most of the housing experts suggested that the housing stock would be large enough to sustain future population growth providing that construction continued to take place at a sustained rate to provide enough housing to meet population demands in Peterborough.

Population demands and international migration pressures

A total of 78% of the housing experts in Luton and Peterborough (80% in Luton and 75% in Peterborough) discussed housing market issues related to the subordinate theme of population demands and international pressures (as shown on Table 25).

Some of these population demands are discussed in the section related to a shortage of suitable housing above, as some of the extracts discussed within that section highlighted high population demands and closed waiting lists for social housing as well as difficulties providing temporary and emergency accommodation for those who are in need. Additionally, the housing expert discussions of high population demands and accommodation shortages in the locations often encompassed immigration related pressures. There was a common perception among many of the housing experts in Luton that migration negatively impacts housing (60%). The housing expert narratives that contained discussions of a negative relationship between migration and the housing market were related to various aspects such as: an excessively large population and saturated population demands for limited housing stock; difficulties planning for housing and public services to meet increased population pressures; a perceived retrospective need to have implemented a stricter immigration system in the past to reduce contemporary housing pressures; and the difficulties faced by vulnerable and homeless EU migrants in the UK as a result of funding cuts. For example, when asked for their views concerning how migration affected housing, Housing expert LHE5 provided an interesting example by stating:

> *I'm reticent to say without firm figures but certainly there's been a lot of inward immigration, it's put pressure on the housing stock and its made long-term strategic capital planning problematic for the authority'.*

And LHE5 also added:

> *'It's very difficult to plan, to plan for services when you don't have firm data in terms of incoming and outgoing and I think you know probably it's a problem that affects housing, but I think it's probably more of an issue for colleagues in education in terms of modelling numbers of school places that are required'.*

LHE5's second extract highlights the importance of increasing the understanding and knowledge of local migrant groups, their settlement patterns and their propensity for movement in order to assist local authority planning capabilities, which this research has aimed to contribute to by researching the lived experiences and future aspirations of Polish migrants in Luton and in Peterborough. Additionally, his first extract demonstrates that he believes that migration pressures and population expansion in Luton are not only putting a strain the housing market but are also creating implications for future planning within the town.

Housing experts LHE3 and LHE4 also commented on the pressures that immigration has exerted on property demands in Luton. For instance, housing expert LHE4 said:

> *'I don't really have a personal view on that really I just think that as with anything, whether it's immigrants or whoever that might be that moves into a town that it just saturates an already high demand property area so it just means that there is less to go around'*

This extract indicates that LHE4 believes that immigration is exacerbating population pressures and the high demand for housing in the town, depleting the availability of the already limited housing stock. Similarly, LHE3 said*:*

'It's just too many people per house. There are not enough houses for the amount of people that are coming here… we have a lot of migrants come here because there is already a lot settled, so a lot of them then will carry on and they'll come to Luton because we are close to London etc. because of the prices, they still can get to London etc. for work if they needed to… it's a tough one really because I do deal with sales more and sales yeah we've sold a lot to the Polish, Eastern Europeans, they're good buyers and they're good people but I suppose housing in general yeah there is just too many now. It's just gone past the point where we can cope with the amount of people coming into the country… and coming to Luton with the amount of housing. Like I said I don't even know the Council people but from what they've said, the few people that I have spoken to at the Council, they've said that they don't have enough houses to give people so'.

This extract demonstrates that LHE3 does not believe that the housing stock in Luton is large enough to sustain further immigration, and that he does not think that the town can cope with the amount people who want to live in Luton. His comments also suggest that he believes that the presence of numerous migrant communities in Luton attracts more migrants to the location. This conveys the suggestion made by Gross & Schmitt (2003) that the presence of similar cultural groups or a foreign-born population in a location can influence the migration decisions of individuals to move to that area, and suggests that continued immigration is negatively impacting the housing market by increasing housing demand and population pressures on the limited housing stock in Luton.

In contrast, housing expert LHE2, an estate agency manager in the Luton, said that the UK should have adopted the Australian points-based system years ago in order to reduce current immigration pressures on housing. He said that had that system been implemented in the past, then the UK would not have experienced as many issues as it has over the last fifteen to twenty years. LHE2 said:

> *'We have an open border policy which brings a large influx of people and a large demand for housing and we can't build property quick enough to supply the demand'.*

His views exhibit a degree of resentment towards the shortcomings of government attempts to manage migration and highlight an inability to construct and supply enough housing to sustain Luton's growing population, owing to construction restrictions such as building regulations and a lack of available land for new builds. Similarly, housing expert LHE10 said:

> *'As well like I say like we are putting now in like a migrant control as well, that would help as well because like I say at that time at the start anyone can come from any country and say I want to live and work in the UK'.*

This suggests that LHE10 also shared the view that immigration control is beneficial for managing the impact of population pressures on the housing market. Additionally, housing expert LHE10 discussed a negative relationship between immigration and the housing market, whereby some EU migrants who were at risk of becoming homeless or had become homeless already were finding it difficult to obtain assistance because of funding cuts following. LHE10 said:

> *'(Deep sigh). At the moment this is a big challenge to be honest with you… because, I don't know if that's because they well UK leaving the Union… that they cut all the fundings, all the fundings, so the majority of guys who is homeless doesn't have any funds…yes so it's very difficult find something for them'.*

Although LHE10 did not specify which funding cuts she was referring to, she had clearly experienced difficulties enabling EU migrants in need to access public funds for social housing or homelessness assistance since the decision for Brexit. It is assumed that the funding cuts that LHE10 discussed within this extract refer to the government's no

recourse to public funds (NRPF) policy and the way in which this policy has affected EU migrants' rights to access benefits, social housing and homelessness assistance in the UK (Jacob, 2021).

On the 1st of January 2021 the UK left the EU and since that date all non-British nationals (excluding Irish citizens) who arrive in the UK are able to apply for an immigration status under the points based immigration system in the UK, and unless they are exempt or until they are able to obtain indefinite leave to remain (usually after five years of continuous residence in the UK) they will usually have NRPF and will therefore not be eligible to access social housing or homelessness assistance.

Therefore, most EU migrants who have arrived in the UK since the 1st of January 2021 will not be eligible to access social housing or homelessness assistance in the UK unless they are exempt from certain eligibility requirements or until they are granted indefinite leave to remain. However, the interview with LHE10 took place in March 2018 and therefore she was not referring to the experiences of EU migrants who have arrived in the UK since the 1st of January 2021 and was instead assumed to have been referring to challenges faced by EU migrants who were living in the UK prior to the 31st of December 2020. The rights of EEA citizens and their relatives who were lawful residents or frontier workers in the UK had their rights protected under the withdrawal agreement prior to 11pm on the 31st of December 2020, which included their right to access social housing and homelessness assistance.

However, to maintain these protections and their right to access public funds and social assistance, those EEA citizens and their relatives needed to apply to the EUSS prior to the 30th of June 2021 to continue living lawfully in the UK and continue being eligible to access public funds. If they had applied for the EUSS prior to that deadline and were granted either pre-settled or settled status, then they would have been eligible to equal access to social housing and homelessness assistance in line with British citizens providing that they met the eligibility requirements under provisions in government regulations.

However, those who were eligible to apply to the EUSS but failed to do so before the 30th of June 2021 deadline, who do not have a different form of immigration status and do not have reasonable grounds for missing the deadline to apply to the EUSS would be considered as being subject to immigration control, would have NRPF and would not be eligible to access social housing or homelessness assistance in the UK. It is thought that in March 2018 when

the interview with LHE10 took place (a year prior to the opening of the EUSS), that the challenges associated with obtaining funding and homelessness assistance for migrants that she referred to within her extract may have resulted from difficulties faced by individuals when trying to obtain proof of eligibility to access public funds prior to the implementation of the EUSS and the new immigration system.

LHE10 expanded on her experience of trying to obtain assistance for people in need through her work at the NOAH Enterprise Charity and shared her perspective on the difficulties and changes that Polish migrants have faced in the UK over time. LHE10 said:

'When they open the borders 2004-2005 it was very easy to come here and think about good life yes?... And lots of people came here because they said oh it's easy. At the time in Poland the economic and financial situation was very tough… so lots of young people like me or a little bit younger or older than me was thinking ok I've got a chance I will come here and I will start my life again… but now… we can see that the life here is getting tougher and tougher… the salary which now they are paying to everyone to work, not only English and Polish, it's like low… because at the moment as well Poland change, because it's over ten, twelve years where that's happened and the economic situation in Poland has changed and the money, because to be honest with you, I don't know how people told you but first year when they opened the borders 2004-2005… people been coming as an economic because they want the money yes?... And lots of people came and had their money because the pay was good then. When you calculate English money to Polish money yes? The salaries was huge… So at that time, the money that you sent to Poland was huge, the money which you had for yourself here it was ok to stay and you know pay your pay bills, have rent, even save something yes? And still send something to Poland yes?... Now unfortunately that situation changed and the money, the salaries here are getting less and less so lots of guys cannot even afford like rent… And buying you know food or shopping or even like transport costs. It's getting more difficult yeah?... um lots as well they came here because they thought oh in Poland I've got a tough life yes?... some of them will have to be as well honest from my perspective they kind of run off from home country because there was like problems with love, problems with drugs or problems with alcohol so they think if they're going to change the place where they are staying yes?... with who they are staying, that maybe probably can help you. Yes? And trust me, with a few of these guys who coming here that's worked perfectly for 5,6,7 years… But suddenly, because like I say, they lost home, or they lost job yes…Their addiction like alcohol, drugs comes back… And they start again gain their addiction back so their struggles start again. And being in a different country that's not your mother country is more scary and more difficult to get help… So even access to a GP is more difficult now yes? Access to hospital, access to an in resolution or detox or something like that is very difficult to get them yes. No, no funds for that. So these guys… are struggling. They, they kind of in a closed game because like I say if you ask them would you like to come back to Poland? They say no… And when I ask them why you not want to come back to Poland – because oh (Participants name) I am ashamed because I came here to earn money, to have money and now you see I don't have any money so I cannot just go back to Poland to my family and say no money or anything. So it's like pride and shame as well… And they, lots of them are saying (participants name) I'm sure that I'm going to come back to normal stage so I can again go back to work and save the money.

And LHE10 added:

But it's very very tough… From this organisation we've got I would say maybe 50-60 Polish guys, yes. Not only guys buy ladies as well, a few only ladies. And to be honest with you so far from November until now only 2 guys that have broken the circle. They been like came here all totally like on drugs or on alcohol yes? And for the first time for a few weeks you could do nothing with them, they be like drunk or on drugs constantly yes?... But… suddenly they, they think you know what I've got this kind of… life… enough enough I have to do something, and only two of them achieved what they want. Now they are living in accommodation… private accommodation, they are back to work. They're working… they are back on their feet and they are happy again… And they are saying to me (Participants name) I don't know what's happened to me but at that time I just had to go through that stage because that made me stronger even… to, to, to see the change in me that needs to change…. so, so, so they so… so they done that, but so far it's only two of them… the rest of them are still battling. Battling the addiction, the problem. As well what I am finding difficult with these guys is, I don't know how their mind is set up, but they… some of them they prefer work only like illegal… where you paying by cash… and it's like 20-50 quid per day, per week, it's enough for them. Which we know that for £50 per week you are not going to rent a room you know… You are not able to support yourself. So, so that's the difficulty and now, like I say, it's very even even now when we want calling with them to job centre to establish that person came at this time and they working this and this place can we apply for job seekers allowance for example… any kind of benefits, it's like well you have to prove that they arrived that that time… at this date, so even the proving that they arrived actually in 2005 or 2006 is difficult. Because when the gate was, the borders was opened nobody say to us you have to have proof that you entered on this day… like keep the tickets or something like that… So lots of guys didn't bother to have any kind of tickets, but yes they remember the year, they remember the month but they, like I say I don't have the tickets… when the first time when I come here… because nobody been thinking about that! so, so proof, even in proof that they've been working in this country now it's very very difficult… yes, since Brexit yes. The rules changed so every kind of help to get here is like more and more difficult…at the beginning even you have got like employers who say ok you don't have a national insurance number but you have a passport, I will book you for a national appointment yes you can work with me, I'm going to give you everything. Now it's like first question, do you have your passport? Do you have a national insurance number?... if no, I'm sorry I cannot help you'.

Within these substantial extracts, LHE10 begins by describing her perspective on migration from Poland to the UK after EU accession in 2004. She described how the difficult economic and financial situation in Poland was taking its toll on Polish citizens and was a push factor that motivated many Polish nationals to migrate to the UK in 2004 and the few years that followed. LHE10 explained that life in the UK was viewed as very easy compared to the tough economic situation faced by many in Poland at that time, and that once Poland joined the EU in 2004 and Polish citizens gained the right to FoM within the EU and the right to live and work in the UK, many decided to leave Poland and migrate to the UK in search of what they thought would be an easier life, a higher salary and a chance to start new lives in the UK. LHE10 explained that at the time of EU accession in 2004 the value of the pound was very high and attractive compared to its equivalent in Polish currency (złoty) and the Euro, so Polish nationals had an opportunity to earn significantly higher salaries in the UK than what was available for them in Poland. This was an attractive economic pull factor that motivated many to migrate from Poland to the UK for economic reasons. LHE10 said that the higher salaries in the UK were often enough for Polish migrants in the UK to be able to support themselves and sustain their own lives (by paying for rent, bills, food and transport, etc.), to save money for themselves, and in some cases to be able to send money back to Poland for their loved ones as well. But LHE10 explained that over time the lucrative financial situation in the UK and economic motivations for migrating from Poland to the UK have changed, as salaries have not risen at a sufficient rate in line with the increasing costs of housing, bills, food, shopping and transport and it is now a lot harder for Polish migrants in the UK as well as other members of the general population to sustain themselves. Additionally, LHE10 mentioned that the value of the British pound is now less attractive in relation to the value of Polish currency than it once was, as the value of the British pound has decreased in recent years, and over time as Poland has financially recovered the value of the Polish złoty has increased. Over time this has minimised the difference in value between UK and Polish currency and decreased the attractiveness of the earning potential in the UK as a motivating factor to migrate from Poland to the UK.

LHE10 also explained that many of the Polish migrants that she had had experiences with at the NOAH Enterprise charity in Luton had also migrated to the UK to remove themselves from difficult personal problems that they had experienced in Poland (such as personal difficulties with relationships, alcohol or drugs) in order to start new lives in a new place and change their circumstances to avoid the people, behaviours or substances that had a negative effect on their lives in Poland. LHE10 explained that this strategy had worked for many of

the Polish migrants that she had met at NOAH Enterprise for many years, but that some of them had eventually found themselves in a difficult personal and financial situation again very rapidly after losing their jobs or their accommodation and had struggled to obtain assistance to help them to escape these difficult circumstances. As a result, LHE10 said that some of them had reverted to their previous addiction struggles. LHE10 also shared that some migrants are fearful to seek assistance from the social care systems within their migration destinations, suggesting that some migrant individuals may feel discouraged from attempting to access assistance. Additionally, LHE10 also explained that migrants that do seek help can often face difficulties accessing health services such as GP appointments, hospitals and detox and rehabilitation centres owing to a lack of available funding for migrants, which LHE10 explained had become even more limited following the decision for Brexit.

Additionally, LHE10 implies that the difficulties faced by migrants in need to obtain these healthcare services or any assistance to recover from rough sleeping and unemployment can leave some migrants struggling to support themselves and struggling to escape their addictions. She explained that she has worked with approximately 50-60 Polish migrants in need who were mostly men and that only two of them have been able to overcome their addictions, escape their difficult personal circumstances and move back into rented accommodation and find a job so that they are able to support themselves again. She explained that the remaining 48-58 Polish migrants that she has worked with at NOAH Enterprise who needed assistance were continuing to battle their addictions at the time of the interview, that some of them would only engage in cash-paid illegal forms of unemployment rather than trying to find legitimate work and that some did not want to accept any assistance to return to Poland because they felt ashamed. LHE10 explained that some Polish migrants who were unemployed, rough sleeping or facing difficult personal circumstances would refuse assistance to return to Poland because they felt ashamed that they had migrated to the UK, have had an unsuccessful migration experience and have not earned enough money to support themselves or their families, and LHE10 explained that they would feel a sense of lost pride and shame if they had to return to Poland without being able to bring anything back and having to explain that their migration experience did not go as planned and had ended negatively. Psychological feelings of shame associated with return migration have also been researched by other scholars such as McKay (2021) and Mostowska (2014).

Finally LHE10 described the difficulties that some of these struggling Polish migrants had faced when trying to obtain benefits such as job seekers allowance, as they needed to prove certain information such as the date that they arrived in the UK and how long they had been living and working in the UK in order to be classed as eligible to access public funds and assistance and some of them struggled to obtain or provide sufficient information to prove eligibility and access assistance. It is believed that it was these difficulties proving eligibility to access public funds that LHE10 was referring to when she described difficulties enabling homeless Polish migrants to obtain assistance owing to a lack of funds, as if migrants were unable to provide a sufficient amount of information to prove their eligibility for public assistance then they will have been unable to access public funds to assist them. In the final few sentences of the subsequent longer extract provided by LHE10 above, she explained that in order to access public funds and assistance for homelessness and or addictions, migrants need to prove when they arrived in the UK, where they have been working and for how long and that this can be very difficult for some migrants to provide, especially those who may not have a passport or a national insurance number, those who did not sign up for the workers registration scheme and those who may not have a reliable record of their date of arrival in the UK (as most EU migrants were not aware that it would be necessary for them to keep documentation or records of their date of arrival in the UK at the time that they migrated to the UK when the UK was a part of the EU and FoM still applied to the UK prior to Brexit). LHE10 explained that these more stringent eligibility requirements have come into place since the decision for Brexit and have made it increasingly harder for EU migrants in need such as the Polish migrants that she has tried to help at NOAH Enterprise to access any public funds and obtain assistance to help them out of difficult situations.

These extracts provided by LHE10, suggest that it has become increasingly difficult to be a Polish migrant in the UK over time, both for those who continue to live and work in the UK and have experienced rising living costs over time and for those who have unfortunately found themselves losing their employment roles, losing their accommodation or struggling to overcome personal difficulties and addictions, who will now find it increasingly more difficult to prove their eligibility to access sources of assistance and public funds. As a result, vulnerable Polish migrants will now find it even harder to access assistance and to improve their quality of life in the UK if and when circumstances become difficult.

Similarly, in Luton, LHE7 had concerns about vulnerable migrants in Luton and suggested that recently implemented right to rent regulations requiring landlords to carry out immigration checks on all of their tenants was placing undocumented migrants in a vulnerable situation with an inability to find housing. LHE7 said:

> *'A proportion of them live in shared accommodation and also quite a few of them are not legal in this country. Landlords are now going to have to check their legal status. Where are those people going to go? Where ARE they going to go? Because you cannot get housing for people who haven't got legal status and realistically what the home office do it that they fail people. I wouldn't like to know or see what the percentage is that they send back but believe me the percentage is really small, so they fail people and then leave them to wander around and do their own thing. Where are they going to be housed? Because you CANNOT get housing for love nor money for them. So that is another issue in Luton and that is quite a big issue in Luton'.*

This extract indicates that LHE7 believes that more should be done to help vulnerable undocumented migrants within the town, who cannot legally rent and are often rendered homeless because of a lack of available housing and government requirements for landlords to carry out immigration checks on their tenants.

In contrast with these viewpoints, some of the housing experts felt that migration had a positive impact on housing in Luton. For example, housing expert LHE1 said:

> *'We've had a lot of Eastern Europeans coming into Luton generally, you shouldn't generalise but they've been really really good tenants and maintained the properties so er yeah very positive I would say'.*

This demonstrates that LHE1 had a positive opinion of Eastern European migrants in the town because he has had positive experiences of renting properties to individuals of Eastern European origin. Similarly, LHE3 said:

> *'We've sold a lot to the Polish… Eastern Europeans…they're good buyers and they're good people but I suppose housing in general yeah there is just too many now. It's just gone past the point where we can cope with the amount of people coming into the country'.*

Again, this example provides evidence that LHE3 has had positive experiences with Eastern Europeans in the town and regarded them as pleasant people, but did not believe that there was enough housing available to sustain the number of migrants coming to the town. Furthermore, his quotation also suggests that a relatively large number of Polish migrants are purchasing property in Luton. There are no official statistics specifically regarding the amount of Polish homeownership in Luton, however, the idea that Polish migrants are purchasing homes in the UK is likely as Myles and Hou (2004) highlighted that migrants are likely to experience spatial assimilation over time and move out of more deprived, ethnically diverse locations to purchase homes in wealthier, majority White areas as they become more successful and integrated into the destination society. Furthermore, a national newspaper stated that Polish migrants strive to get onto the property ladder and reported that a Connells Estate Agent Survey found that one in five property purchasers in the UK were of Polish origin in 2007 (Daily Mail, 2007). Furthermore, although research in the years directly following EU accession in 2004 frequently framed migration from Eastern Europe as transient and circulatory, more recent research has revealed that demonstrated that many Polish migrants that have resided in the UK long-term have undergone a process of embeddedness, laying down roots in the UK and investing in their desires to settle in the UK permanently (Ryan, 2018; White, 2017).

LHE3 said that there were not enough houses to support the large population in Luton and described a conversation that he had recently had with someone who assists in Council house provision. He said:

> *'She has people who live in England and are from Luton and they come here and say I was born in Luton and you can't house me and all these people are coming from abroad and they're all housed'.*

This example implies that there are not enough properties available to meet the demand for accommodation in Luton and reveals disquiet among members of the existing population towards migrants. It appears that members of the local population who originate from Luton and other parts of the UK feel as though migrants are taking their positions in the housing market, which reframes the more familiar unsubstantiated public discourse of migrants 'taking jobs' and restricting UK-born residents from accessing the labour market. Negative perceptions and feelings of blame towards migrants can undermine efforts to encourage integration and cohesion in diverse communities and can lead to increases in hate crimes.

The Impact of Internal Migration, Developers and Distance from London

A total of 43% of the housing experts in Luton and Peterborough (60% in Luton and 0% in Peterborough) discussed the theme of the impact of internal migration, developers and distance from London when discussing housing market issues in the locations. Although this theme was not discussed by any of the housing experts in Peterborough, it was discussed by six of the housing experts in Luton and their narratives revealed the impact that internal migration from elsewhere in the UK (particularly London) to Luton has had on the housing market in the town, as well as the impact that Luton's proximity to London and role as a relatively cheaper commuter town has had on the supply and demand of housing in Luton. Additionally, the housing experts discussed developers buying up properties in Luton and how it has exacerbated the housing shortage within the town.

Many of the housing experts commented on the impact that internal migration from London and the closeness of Luton to the capital city was having on the town. For instance, housing expert LHE2 commented:

> *'The large influx of people from London has created a large demand for housing'.*

This suggests that Luton's geographical proximity to London and its common use as a residential area for commuters and people wishing to move out of the capital is exacerbating pressures on the local housing market. This theme of London having detrimental impacts upon the housing market in Luton was recurrent among a few of the housing experts and some of the responses were related to issues caused by what expert 4 described as the *'London effect'.* LHE4 commented:

> *'The market is very saturated with lots of other boroughs outside of Luton that are coming in'*
> and said: *'the other issue we have is affordable housing because again this London effect has inflated the market'.*

This extract suggests that the town's close proximity to London has created an issue by increasing local property costs, which has lowered the availability of affordable housing in town. Furthermore, housing expert LHE10 also mentioned the impact of people moving from London to Luton on the availability of housing in Luton. LHE10 said:

> *'I don't know where you live but I can see
> because I'm living in Dunstable yes. And now I
> can see that from a few years the Dunstable area
> lots of people from London are coming and
> buying the houses. As well because London is
> getting so expensive yes, for even an English
> person if they want to buy a house they are
> moving you know further from London. So yeah
> so as well it's just, if probably London be cheaper
> lots of people be didn't move to Dunstable, Luton
> and you know these guys probably… I'm not
> saying that it's a fault but it's like you see what's
> going on because London is getting so expensive.
> People are moving there from, from you know this
> kind of Luton, Dunstable area to afford places'.*

This extract highlights her experience of witnessing an increasing number of people moving out of London and into surrounding areas such as Luton where she worked, and in Dunstable where she lived. This implies that internal migration from London to the Luton and Dunstable area is creating increased demand and competition for accommodation and is reducing the housing stock available for the population in the town.

Additionally, LHE7 also mentioned the impact of London, but referred more specifically to the impact of London developers buying up property in Luton (presumably to take advantage of the high buy to let potential in the town). LHE7 said:

> *'What you are getting in Luton now is that a lot of
> London landlords are buying up rental properties
> in Luton and the rents are going up. A lot of
> London property developers are buying up old
> office blocks and making them into studio
> apartments'.*

LHE7 also explained:

> *'You've got London Boroughs who are trying to move people out of London because they don't want to pay the housing benefit in London and they've got a housing shortage. They're offering landlords inducements of like 4,000 pounds to lease their properties to them which is also pushing rents up so you've got a whole gambit of problems going on in Luton'.*

These extracts imply that the housing market in Luton is being substantially altered by the influence of London. It appears that Luton is being used an area to absorb surplus people from London in a bid to reduce benefit expenditures and reduce housing pressures in the capital. Increased investment from London developers and the increasing demand of a rising population in Luton has caused property prices to increase substantially in recent years, creating a lack of affordable housing and high competition for accommodation.

All of these interview extracts highlight the impact that Luton's proximity to London, internal migration into the town and developers buying up property has had on the housing market and the availability of housing in the town. The narratives have revealed that these factors have led to increased house prices, a lack of affordable housing, high competition for housing and a limited housing supply in Luton which has exacerbated supply and demand issues in the town.

Property Condition, Costs and Affordability Issues

Study Area	Housing Experts	Subordinate Themes	
		Property Condition Issues	Costs and Affordability Issues
Luton	LHE1		
	LHE2		✔
	LHE3		
	LHE4	✔	✔
	LHE5	✔	✔
	LHE6		
	LHE7		✔
	LHE8	✔	✔
	LHE9		✔
	LHE10		
Peterborough	PHE1		✔
	PHE2		
	PHE3		✔
	PHE4		✔

Table 26. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of property condition, costs and affordability issues.

Property Condition Issues

Table 26 indicates that 21% of the housing experts in Luton and Peterborough (30% in Luton and 0% in Peterborough) discussed housing market issues related to the subordinate theme of property condition issues. These discussions encompassed conversations related to the quality of rental accommodation in Luton and the standard of living.

For instance, Table 26 shows that housing experts LHE4, LHE5 and LHE8 discussed points that aligned with the subordinate theme of property condition issues and implied that there were issues related to the condition of properties in Luton. LHE5 said:

This extract suggests that the quality of housing in Luton is not always reflected in the price of the accommodation. Perhaps landlords and other property providers feel less of a need to improve the standard of living within their properties as the high demand and competition for housing in the town contributes to ensured rental incomes regardless of property condition.

Additionally, housing expert LHE8 who is Polish and has assisted many Polish migrants with their housing in the Luton and Dunstable area through her voluntary work at the NOAH Enterprise Welfare Centre and the Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish church in Dunstable, provided an insight into some of the substandard housing conditions that she had seen or heard about from Polish migrants in the area. LHE8 said:

> *'Some of the housing I've been into my god! … oh I couldn't, it would turn your hair grey. You know one toilet between about ten people… And you can imagine that those who come in in a drunken state miss the toilet seat… Miss the thing and it's all on the floor with the stench on there… and the kitchen where if they burn something, they leave it there they don't wash up after themselves… and someone else says well err I'm not cooking in this stench… so they, they clean it up and they say sometimes they feel that the landlords are very good but err many of the people complain about err heating… they're living in damp conditions, they've got children, they've children have developed chest infections or whatever and the landlord just couldn't care a toss… I've been there it's rotten, there's mildew on the walls… there's things leaking and they're not very forthcoming the landlords in repairing… And maintenance of the property… So a lot of them resort to doing it themselves… which is against the tenancy… But at least it does improve their situation. They've got no option'.*

This extract suggests that LHE8 has witnessed multiple forms of housing condition issues including uncleanliness caused by other renters within a property; lack of heating; damp; mould and leaks. These examples suggest that property condition issues exist in the Luton and Dunstable area and have been present within the lived experiences of some of the Polish migrants that LHE8 has assisted within the area. Her extract also suggests that poor property

standards and substandard living conditions within properties are exacerbated by the reluctance of some landlords to maintain their properties and make repairs.

LHE4 implied that the Council should continue to work with landlords and encourage landlords to engage with the Council's Luton Lets initiative to help drive up the standard of properties in Luton and ensure that they are suitable for the community. LHE4 said:

> *'The flip side of that is to drive up the standard of properties in Luton, so if we can achieve that, because landlords don't always come on board with us, as long as we can say that we have had an impact on how the standard of their properties has been brought up then again we will have achieved two things really'.*

This extract suggests that LHE4 is aware that there are substandard conditions within some rental properties in Luton that need to be improved, and within his role as a social lettings manager working on Luton Borough Council's guaranteed rent scheme called Luton Lets, he aims to encourage more landlords to take part in the initiative in order to encourage them to improve the standard of their properties, as well as enabling the Council to utilise the landlord owned properties to provide socially rented housing for people in need.

The extracts provided within this section are examples of the subordinate theme of property condition issues and indicate that there are properties in Luton that are substandard and create poor quality living conditions for the people who live in them. The housing experts implied that the poor condition of some properties in Luton is not reflected in the high cost of accommodation in the town, and that some landlords in Luton are reluctant to make improvements to their rental properties, so it is beneficial for the Council to work with local landlords to encourage them to drive up the standard of their properties and to improve the quality of the living and housing conditions for their tenants.

Costs and Affordability Issues

A total of 64% of the housing experts in Luton and Peterborough (60% in Luton and 75% in Peterborough) discussed the subordinate theme of costs and affordability issues when discussing housing market issues in the two localities. In Luton most of these housing expert

discussions related to costs and affordability issues were related to very high property prices that had been escalating rapidly and an inflated, saturated housing market with an extreme shortage of affordable housing. The housing expert discussions in Luton also included discussions of London authorities moving some of their homeless populations into the Luton area as one of the causes of house price inflation in the town; as well as mentioning Luton's need to predominately build on brownfield sites as a factor that limits more affordable housing from being developed. The Luton housing experts also discussed increasing property demands escalating the cost of living in the town, exacerbating housing and care costs faced by elderly people, and increasing homelessness caused by a lack of affordable housing in the town. Contrastingly in Peterborough, when discussing topics related to the subordinate theme of costs and affordability issues, the housing experts discussed difficulties faced by individuals who are trying to purchase housing and get onto the property ladder; as well as a lack of funding available to build a sense of community and improve social aspects in the city.

In Luton, multiple housing experts discussed high prices, an inflated market and a lack of affordable housing in the town. For instance, housing expert LHE2 said:

> *'There is you know a big demand and a big surge in demand for umm property for rental and for, umm purchase… which is why one of the reasons why house prices have umm soared over the last couple of years or so'.*

This extract implies that an increasing demand for rented and owned accommodation in Luton has driven up housing costs in recent years. Additionally, LHE7 discussed rapidly increasing housing costs in the town. LHE7 said:

> *'The market has gone up 17%, the housing market for selling in the last year in Luton so that has gone up substantially. You've got London Boroughs who are trying to move people out of London because they don't want to pay the housing benefit in London and they've got a housing shortage, they're offering landlords inducements of like 4,000 pounds to lease their properties to them which is also pushing rents up'.*

LHE7 also later said:

> *'You need more affordable housing, there isn't enough and it doesn't help that the government have extended the right to buy from Councils to housing associations so some of our tenants will have the right to buy their properties'.*

And similarly, housing expert LHE4 said:

> *'Also the other issue we have is affordable housing because again this London effect has inflated the market'.*

These extracts mutually highlight high property costs in Luton and indicate that there is a need for more affordable housing in the town. The first extract provided by LHE7 above also provides an indication that some London authorities are offering landlords in Luton financial incentives in addition to rental costs to lease their properties so that they are able to move individuals in need of housing benefits out of London and into accommodation in Luton. LHE7 explains that this process and the inducements that are being offered to landlords in Luton in order to rent their properties are driving up rental costs in the town and are further limiting the amount of available and affordable rented accommodation in Luton. This was also discussed by housing expert LHE5 who said that London authorities were moving some of their homeless people into housing in Luton and Essex. He suggested that this has been a housing market issue in Luton, but that the issue is improving as he believes that London authorities are now looking elsewhere to house their homeless populations owing to the inflation of property prices in Luton. For example, LHE5 said:

> *'I think it's becoming less of a problem because I think in the property market in Luton the prices have inflated to a point where Luton is less attractive to London authorities… and we've probably reached saturation point'*

This extract again indicates that house prices have become inflated in Luton and indicates that LHE5 believes that Luton has reached a saturation point where there are not enough properties available to meet population demands, particularly in terms of demands for affordable housing. For instance, LHE5 also commented:

'We've got an extreme housing shortage within the town, well there's an extreme shortage of affordable housing'.

And LHE5 also said:

'Main problems: condition, cost, influx of households from outside the area to more affordable housing, general condition of the housing stock, extreme difficulties in developing, we're basically developing brownfield sites and on brownfield sites its more and more difficult through the planning regulations to insist on a section 106 agreement where the developers are obliged to provide a percentage of affordable housing'.

These extracts suggest that Luton has an extreme shortage of affordable housing, as also suggested by many of the other housing experts in Luton. Within his comments, LHE5 implies that Luton tends to be restricted to building new housing developments on brownfield sites, and he explains that this exacerbates the shortage of affordable housing in the town as it is more difficult to impose planning regulations to insist on developers being obliged to create a percentage of affordable housing within their developments on brownfield sites. Therefore, as most building in Luton is limited to brownfield sites, less affordable housing construction can be requested, which has exacerbated the shortage of affordable housing in the town.

Housing expert LHE9 also discussed high property prices and a high cost of living in Luton, which can differ from what individuals can afford to pay, especially those who are unemployed or are dependent on housing benefits. LHE9 said:

> *'It's a relatively small landlocked town and there's um increasing demand which is escalating the cost of living here significantly and for those who are out of work and reliant on housing benefit the local housing allowance isn't keeping pace with the, cost of renting so there is a massive gap between but what somebody who's unemployed can afford to live and what it costs to live in Luton'.*

And LHE9 also later said:

> *'We're living in a capitalist society which has got market demands on it and that is going to impact the cost of living in anywhere if the market dictates that certain people are priced out then that's what happens'.*

These extracts indicate that high housing costs and a high cost of living in Luton can outprice some individuals from accessing and being able to afford to live in housing. Similarly, LHE8 said:

> *'I also work with the homeless at err NOAH.. Welfare centre in Park street... and many of the homeless there have become homeless because there isn't accommodation which is affordable... in Luton'.*

This extract demonstrates that LHE8 has experience of working with individuals who have become homeless as a direct result of a lack of affordable housing in Luton, indicating that a shortage of affordable housing is having severe consequences on some individuals and leaving them unable to afford any form of accommodation. This aligns with the comment made by LHE9 above that high house prices outprice some individuals from being able to access or remain in housing in Luton. Furthermore, housing expert LHE8 said that some Polish migrants in Luton, particularly families are often unable to afford the housing that they desire (for example a house with a garden, or a house that is large enough for their family size) and have to remain in their existing housing because there is high competition

for rented accommodation for families in Luton, house prices are too high for them to afford to upsize or change their housing and there is a lack of affordable housing that is of a suitable quality in Luton. LHE8 also said:

'Now with the living wage you're guaranteed… at least a decent wage so you can buy decent rental accommodation, so from that point of view erm that's how they survived… so anything as long as they had a roof. Erm at one time at the beginning we had people sleeping on the, community hall here… on the stage because there just wasn't enough… anywhere to live and rather than leave them outside in the rain we said right well you can bed down for the night here but you can't because we've got an event the next day… And we've got the things on there. But it- it's been hard but I think people that who have come and committed to living here have got themselves homes… They've got jobs, they're paying for it. And this bit about benefit, benefit is not that easy to get… As a community worker working with the homeless um there are rules and regulations even for families and as I say they do not get benefit, they don't want benefit, they want to earn a proper wage… to get a proper standard of living'.

This extract covers multiple points related to the subordinate theme of cost and affordability and the housing experiences of Polish migrants in the Luton and Dunstable area. For example, within the first few sentences of the extract, LHE8 discusses some of the challenges faced by Polish migrants during what she refers to as 'the beginning', which the researcher has assumed refers to the time when Poland became an EU member state in 2004. LHE8 explained that during this time Polish migrants in Luton survived by accepting any housing available in order to put a roof over their heads.

This implies that Polish migrants were experiencing difficulties accessing accommodation when they first arrived in the UK, so Polish migrants had to accept whatever shelter was available and affordable at the time. The use of the term 'survived' further implies that Polish migrants in Luton were living through hardship and difficult circumstances that needed to be overcome to achieve a decent quality of life and to continue living in the UK. This was supported by further comments within the extract as LHE8 said 'it's been hard' and shared her experience of providing temporary emergency accommodation for homeless Polish migrants in the Parish community hall in Dunstable during that time. In the first sentence of the extract, LHE8 highlighted that the national living wage now better enables workers to receive an acceptable wage so that they can afford to obtain sufficient rental accommodation.

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This suggests that low wages and a lack of affordable housing opportunities were contributing factors that led to some Polish migrants being unable to access housing during that period. Her extract implies that there have been improvements to Polish migrant wages and access to work and housing in Luton over time, but also suggests that some Polish migrant workers previously did not receive sufficient wages to enable them to access adequate accommodation. LHE8 suggested that low wages, and a lack of available and affordable housing had contributed to some Polish migrants finding themselves homeless after arrival in the UK and explained that she had previously allowed some homeless Polish migrants to temporarily sleep on the stage of the Polish Parish community hall in Dunstable to provide them with shelter and prevent them from having to sleep rough outside in poor weather conditions.

Plate 4. The stage within the Polish Parish Community Hall linked to the Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish church on Victoria Street in Dunstable (PolskiClub Dunstable Facebook Page, 2016).

Plate 4 is an image of the stage in the Polish Parish Community Hall linked to the Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish church on Victoria Street in Dunstable, taken from the Polskiclub Dunstable Facebook page. The image was posted on Facebook in June 2016, six days before the EU referendum and twelve years after the period circa 2004 when it is presumed that LHE8 experienced the need to provide temporary emergency accommodation to some homeless Polish migrants on the stage. Within the extract LHE8 suggested that over time

Polish migrants who have committed to living in Luton long-term have generally managed to obtain employment and secure housing, which implies that the living conditions and financial circumstances of Polish migrants in Luton have improved over time, but her reflections highlight some of the difficulties that were experienced by some Polish migrants when they first arrived in the UK in the period after 2004, including challenges accessing housing, a lack of available suitable and affordable housing and in some cases homelessness. Additionally, towards the end of the extract, LHE8 mentioned that it is not easy for Polish migrants to access benefits to assist them as they need to meet specific requirements to be classed as eligible to receive public funds. Although LHE8 implies that from her experience most Polish migrants do not want to receive any benefits and would much rather be able to support themselves with a decent wage and a good standard of living, an inability to obtain financial assistance in times of need could disadvantage vulnerable Polish migrants who experience personal, financial and housing difficulties, and could potentially lead to an inability to afford rent or mortgage payments, eviction and homelessness.

In addition, following the extract discussed above, LHE8 subsequently said:

> *'And some of them who have, just some who have very strong links back with Poland, once they earn enough there, they will build their place in Poland. Because it's cheaper to build here than it is there… and they go back. And they go back… they just want to raise their standard of living. Others have committed themselves to here and they're quite happy. They've bought the houses because the money they would be paying for rental they could be paying off a mortgage… but then again catch 22… you've got the mortgage… you've got to have a permanent address, you should have lived in such a place there… you should be earning this much and this much. You've got to have so much for the deposit which they save erm… if they sell property in Poland they can get a deposit and then they get a house here… it's the same problems that I think the English people have here as well. Err but the Polish with the language problem I think those who don't speak English well, they have difficulty in err understanding. And therefore some of them are ripped off and they don't always understand what they're signing… and they've got to sign it now… they can't take it away to get someone to translate that'.*

This extract again covers multiple topics related to costs and affordability issues, most notably examples of some financial decisions and strategies used by Polish migrants to fund

their housing desires and needs in the UK and Poland, and some of the factors that can limit the viability of those strategies. For example, LHE8 describes differing approaches taken by different Polish individuals depending on whether or not they choose to return to Poland or to commit to living in the UK permanently. LHE8 explained that some Polish migrants who have strong ties to Poland and wish to return to Poland rather than remaining in the UK may decide to use the savings that they have gained in the UK and return to Poland to use the money to build a home there and settle permanently in their own housing in Poland. On the other hand, LHE8 explains that other Polish migrants who are committed to remaining in the UK permanently will either be renting or owning property and reveals some of the challenges associated with these options. For instance, in order to buy a property the majority of people will need to obtain a mortgage, and in order to be eligible to obtain a mortgage and become a homeowner individuals will need to have saved up enough money for a deposit, they need to have an address in the UK, a sufficient income and they need to have been employed within their job role for a sufficient amount of time. LHE8 also explained that some Polish migrants who choose to purchase homes and remain in the UK permanently sometimes choose to sell their properties in Poland in order to use the funds gained to purchase housing in the UK. Furthermore LHE8 highlighted that language barriers can also create issues as Polish migrants with limited English language skills can experience difficulty understanding and are not always able to obtain language assistance within necessary timeframes, so sometimes individuals will sign documentation without fully understanding their rights or what they are agreeing to, which can lead to some individuals being ripped off financially and put at a disadvantage in the housing market owing to their language barriers.

Additionally, in a later part of the interview LHE8 also spoke about her role as a chairperson of the Polish ex combatants' association and discussed her experiences of working with Polish pensioners, many of whom had health conditions such as dementia and Parkinson's. She explained that she acted as a source of assistance and support for these individuals and that many elderly Polish people in Bedfordshire were scared about potentially losing their homes in order to cover the costs of social and residential care.

LHE8 said:

> *'That's another thing for housing erm older people now who are living alone because their husbands have died… Or their wives have died. Their children have moved away or live far away… And they've got to the point where they can't look after themselves… And they really need to go into residential care… which means… you've got to… sell your house off… and write it off to the Council… Or they always want to leave something for their children… And finding a place to live in residential care costs eight hundred pounds err fifty a week… But through the Council, if social services direct you and depending upon your means or whatever your situation it can be as low as £100 if you're in a rented accommodation… But err they'll end up paying £400 - £500 a week… It's a lot of money. And eventually the whole of the value of their house will go… whereas someone would prefer to live in their house… And have care from social services. Someone to pop in and bring some meals on wheels and so we offer a support network as well'.*

LHE8 also said:

> *'We try and do a support network system within the community… for the elderly. But many of them are terrified of losing… their home. They want to stay in their home as long as they can. But if they can't, the cost of going into residential care is so astronomical… and not many are happy with that residential care… There are some wonderful homes and I've visited many enough either entertaining their pensioners over there English or whatever nationality or visiting them and it is hard… They feel isolated… and it's, it's, it's not good and they, they, they feel that they've got, they're leaving nothing to the family'.*

These extracts highlight that residential and social care costs are often very expensive, and that elderly people who need social care are often scared to lose their housing because they would prefer to stay at home at long as possible and receive care within their own homes, but those that cannot look after themselves or be cared for by their loved ones must move into a residential care home and are often forced to sell their homes in order to cover the expensive costs of their care. There is a sense here that these elderly Polish individuals are being torn away from their housing to cover the high costs of their social and residential care, and that those with families will be unable to leave their housing or the assets related

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to the sale of their housing to their children or relatives to inherit because they will have been forced to sell their homes to use the proceeds to cover the expensive costs of their care. LHE8 also said that Asian families tend to live with multiple generations in one household are more likely to provide care to elderly members of their families within their homes, and she said that this is also often the case with Polish families in Poland, but that elderly Polish individuals in Luton often do not live with other family members and are unable to receive the same level of care from relatives within their homes, and so often need to move into expensive residential care when they are unable to look after themselves.

Although this research is primarily focused on more recently arrived Polish migrants in the UK post 2004, these extracts provided by LHE8 highlight important housing issues faced by older generations of Polish migrants in the UK (who are more likely to have migrated to the UK following the Second World War), and these issues are also likely to be key housing and financial issues faced by more recent Polish arrivals and younger generations of Polish migrants in the UK as they get older if they choose to remain in the UK permanently.

The housing expert discussions related to the subordinate theme of costs and affordability issues in Luton were related high and rapidly increasing property prices, an inflated and saturated housing market and an extreme shortage of affordable housing. LHE8 also discussed housing and care costs faced by elderly people, and migrant homelessness caused by a lack of affordable housing in the town. In contrast, the housing experts in Peterborough discussed different costs and affordability issues such as challenges faced by individuals trying to get onto the property ladder and a lack of available funding to make social and community improvements.

For example, PHE4 and PHE1 provided extracts related to costs and affordability issues in Peterborough. PHE4 provided quotes which highlighted that inflated house prices in Peterborough and high competition for cheaper properties in need of refurbishment among first time buyers and landlords have made it difficult for people to get onto the property ladder and obtain mortgages. For example, PHE4 said:

> *'House prices are quite high for the area, not in general, and so some people are struggling to get on the market'.*

And PHE4 also said:

> *'First time buyers and landlords are after the same properties so a lot of people are going for ones that need work doing to them and then yeah obviously people can struggle with mortgages…there's a lot of down valuation going on so when people are trying to get mortgages they are struggling because house prices are going above what the surveyors think'.*

These extracts highlight some of the difficulties faced by first time buyers when attempting to get onto the housing market in Peterborough and indicate that it can be difficult for people to obtain a mortgage, because house prices are sometimes valued so high that they exceed the amount that mortgage surveyors believe that the properties are worth.

Finally, PHE1 discussed the subordinate theme of costs and affordability issues in relation to a lack of funding available in Peterborough to make social and community improvements. PHE1 said:

> *'I think it's a very difficult one, a lot of it's about building communities and making an effort and there's just no money now to be able to do that. Umm people you know with a lot of umm, people that that that their family structure and their networks are very fragmented and people are becoming more socially isolated… It's quite difficult to build up that sense of community now'.*

This extract implies that owing to lack of funding and a lack of effort to improve social and community aspects in Peterborough, members of the population are becoming socially isolated, with fragmented social relations and little sense of community. Although these points are not directly related to housing market issues in Peterborough, they highlight some wider social issues within the city which may affect Polish migrant perceptions and experiences of living in Peterborough.

Appendix XI. Polish Participant Demographic Information Table

Luton	Gender	Age	Occupation	Country of Birth	Place of origin in Poland	City Town or Village	Voivodeship	Part of Poland (N, E, S, W)	Year of arrival in UK	Settlement Pathway in the UK
Mikolaj	Male	35	Warehouse Operative	Poland	Hrubieszow	Town	Lublin	Southeast	2005	Only Luton
Zuzanna	Female	29	Childminder	Poland	Poznan	City	Greater Poland	West	2007	Leicester --> Luton
Janusz	Male	29	Cabin Crew	Poland	Wroclaw	City	Lower Silesian	Southwest	2007	Luton --> St Albans --> Luton
Marta	Female	27	Research Administrator	Poland	Wroclaw	City	Lower Silesian	Southwest	2007	Only Luton
Andrzej	Male	30	Forklift Driver	Poland	Kobno	Town	Podlasie	Northeast	2005/2006	Luton -->Salisbury--> Watford --> Luton
Szymon	Male	64	Retired	Poland	Jarocin	Town	Greater Poland	Central	2005	Only Luton
David	Male	31	Restaurant Owner	Poland	Ruziane-Nida	Town	Warmian-Masurian	Northeast	2008	Only Luton
Erik	Male	22	Restaurant Waiter	Poland	Sopot	Town	Pomeranian	North	2013	Only Luton
Patrycja	Female	29	Cashier/Customer Advisor in a Polish Money Transfer Company and worked as an Office Cleaner	Poland	Stalowa Wola	City	Subcarpathian	Southeast	2008	Harlow -->Newcastle --> Luton
Krzysztof	Male	30	Business Development Manager	Poland	Zamosc	City	Lublin	Southeast	2005	Only Luton
Henryk	Male	21	Vauxhall Operative	Poland	Bydgoszcz	City	Kuyavian-Pomeranian	North	2015	Only Luton
Ryszard	Male	27	Vauxhall Operative	Poland	Bydgoszcz	City	Kuyavian-Pomeranian	North	2015	Only Luton
Basile	Male	26	Warehouse Operative	Poland	Warsaw	City	Masovian	East-central	2013	Only Luton
Tomasz	Male	38	Pushback Driver at Luton airport, ran a Limited Company and was the Chairman of a Polish organisation in Luton	Poland	Lublin	City	Lublin	Southeast	2007	Luton --> London --> Luton
Jedrek	Male	28	Ramp Agent at Luton Airport	Poland	Welple	Village	Kuyavian-Pomeranian	North-central	2007	Only Luton
Angelica	Female	36	Warehouse Operative	Poland	Szczecin	City	West Pomeranian	Northwest	-	Birmingham --> London --> Luton
Stanislaw	Male	33	Carpenter	Poland	Hutisko (near Katowice)	Village	Silesian	South	2006	Only Luton
Bera	Female	44	Unemployed	Poland	Ostroleka	City	Masovian	Northeast	2014	Only Luton
Malgorzata	Female	32	Housewife (previously a nurse)	Poland	Kielce	City	Swietokrzyskie	South-central	-	Only Luton
Milosz	Male	43	Warehouse Operative	Poland	Czestochowa	City	Silesian	South	2000	Only Luton
Lukasz	Male	31	Red Cross Case Coordinator	Poland	Pila	Town	Greater Poland Voivodeship	Northwest	2006	Edinburgh --> Glasgow --> Aberdeen --> Luton
Kasia	Female	35	Superdrug Warehouse Operative	Poland	Pionki	Town	Masovian	Central	2006	Luton... --> Houghton Regis
Celestyna	Female	32	Human Resources Coordinator	Poland	Olsztyn	City	Warmian-Masurian	North	2005/2006	Only Luton
Daria	Female	40	Polish shop worker (2 days per week) and a Driver for a Polish cleaning company (5 days per week)	Poland	Warsaw	City	Masovian	East-central	-	Luton --> Streatley
Oskar	Male	36	Unemployed (Sick/off work)	Poland	Kielce	City	Swietokrzyskie	South-central	2007/2008	Only Luton
Tymon	Male	-	Unemployed / Homeless (previously worked in jobs for very low wages and engaged in fraud)	Poland	-	City	-	-	2013	Sheffield --> Luton
Marek	Male	33	General assistant in a shop, taught Polish as a foreign language online and in Luton and worked as a Polish language teacher in a Polish Saturday school	Poland	Swidnica	City	Lower Silesian	Southwest	2006	Only Luton

Peterborough	Gender	Age	Occupation	Country of Birth	Place of origin in Poland	City Town or Village	Voivodeship	Part of Poland (N, E, S, W)	Year of arrival in UK	Settlement Pathway in the UK
Michal	Male	51	Coordinator in a Tesco Distribution Centre	Poland	Krakow	City	Lesser Poland	South	2005	Only Peterborough
Ewa	Female	24	Insurance Claim Consultant	Poland	Katowice	City	Silesian	South	2014/2015	Only Peterborough
Izabela	Female	35	Shop Owner	Poland	Darlowo	Town	West Pomeranian	Northwest	2003	Only Peterborough
Grzegorz	Male	27	Transport Clerk	Poland	Tomaszow Lubelski	City	Lublin	Southeast	2011	Taunton, Somerset --> Poland --> Peterborough
Agnieszka	Female	24	Train Station Supervisor	Poland	Tomaszow Lubelski	City	Lublin	Southeast	2012	Only Peterborough
Olivia	Female	31	Financial Advisor	Poland	Katowice	City	Silesian	South	2008	Only Peterborough
Arek	Male	42	Insurance Advisor	Poland	Szczecin	City	West Pomeranian	Northwest	2004	Only Peterborough
Borys	Male	42	Block Machine Operator	Poland	Grsiw	Town	Pomeranian	North	2001	London-->Poland-->London-->Peterborough

Poland	Gender	Age	Occupation	Country of Birth	Location of interview in Poland	City Town or Village	Voivodeship	Part of Poland (N, E, S, W)	Year of migration to the UK (if applicable)	Year of return migration to Poland (if applicable)
Aleksandra	Female	57	Hotel Receptionist	Poland	Szczecin	City	West Pomeranian	Northwest	-	-
Bartek	Male	20	Student (sixth form level equivalent)	Poland	Police (near Szczecin)	City	West Pomeranian	Northwest	2006	2016
Krystyna	Female	52	Secondary School Teacher	Poland	Police (near Szczecin)	Town	West Pomeranian	Northwest	2004	2012
Wiktoria	Female	45	English Teacher	Poland	Wroclaw	City	Lower Silesian	Southwest	-	-
Ania	Female	39	Ran an online business dedicated to assisting international families living in Poland.	Poland	Warsaw	City	Masovian	East-central	-	-
Casimir	Male	44	Photographer	Poland	Warsaw	City	Masovian	East-central	2000 and 2007	2007 and 2015
Beata	Female	45	University Lecturer	Poland	Krakow	City	Lesser Poland	South	-	-
Alicja	Female	46	University Lecturer	Poland	Krakow	City	Lesser Poland	South	-	-
Natasza	Female	26	Customer Service Agent on Helpline for a Parcel Transportation Company	Poland	Krakow	City	Lesser Poland	South	-	-
Liljana	Female	29	PhD student	Poland	Krakow	City	Lesser Poland	South	-	-

Table 27. A table of the demographic information related to the Polish participants.

Appendix XII. The Full Discussion of the Demographic Information of the Polish Participants
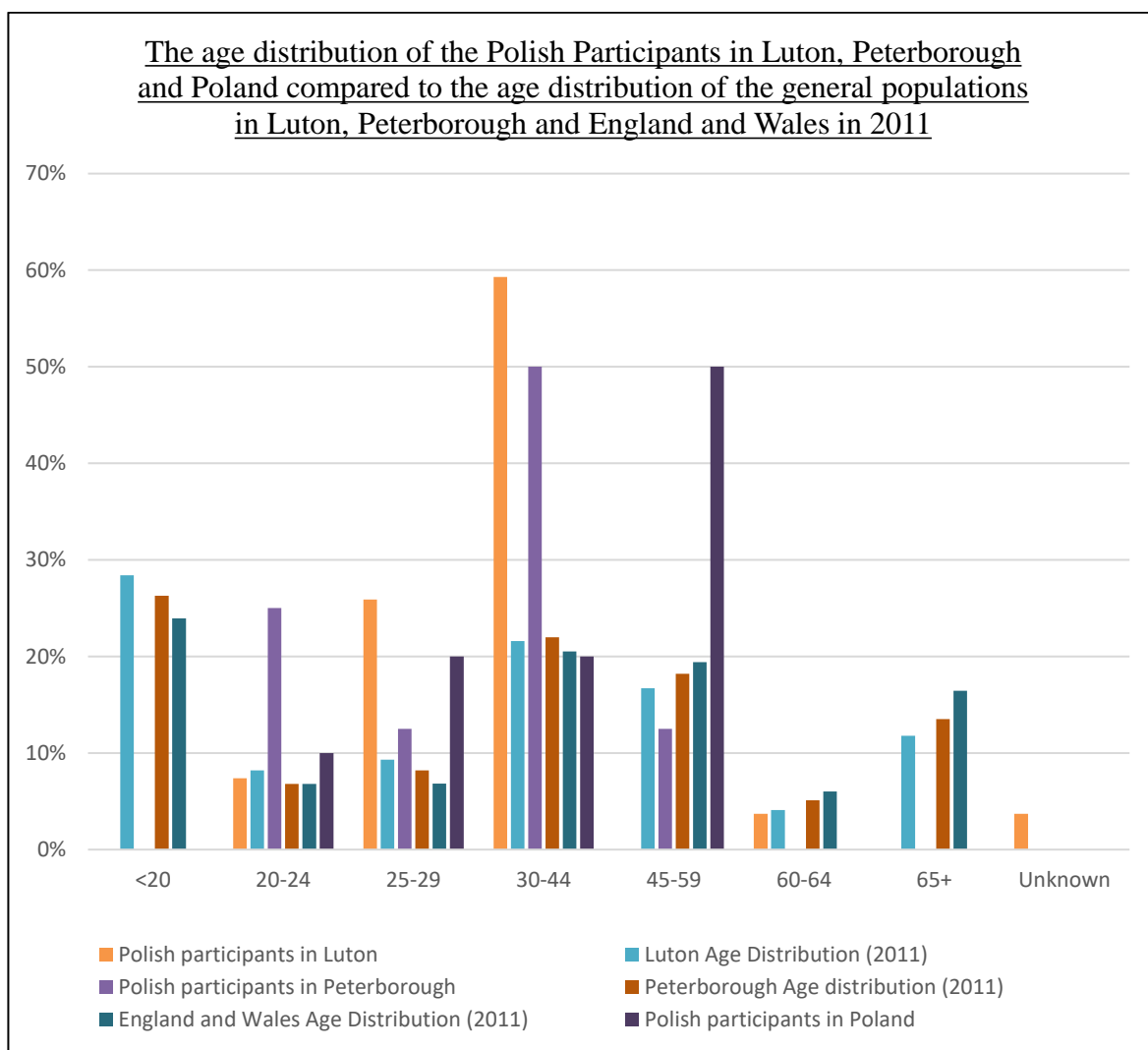
Age

Figure 31. The age distribution of the Polish Participants in Luton, Peterborough and Poland compared to the age distribution of the general populations in Luton, Peterborough and England and Wales in 2011 (Business intelligence, 2016).

Figure 31 provides a representation of the age range of the Polish interview participants in Luton and in Peterborough compared to the age distribution in the Luton, Peterborough, and UK populations. In terms of age distribution, it is evident from Figure 31 that most of the Polish participants in Luton (59%) and in Peterborough (50%) were aged between thirty and forty-four. This is significantly higher than the average amount of people who are estimated to be within that age group in the Luton population (22%), in the Peterborough population

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(22%) and in the average England and Wales population (21%) according to 2011 census data (Business Intelligence, 2016). The large proportion of Polish research participants within this age-group could be explained by literature indications that most A8 Polish migrants were in their twenties when they arrived in the UK following EU accession in 2004. As 18 years have passed since A8 accession, it is likely that the majority of Polish people who arrived in the UK in the immediate post-EU accession years would now be in their 30s or 40s, which is consistent with the age distribution of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough as most were aged between thirty and forty-four years old. This may also suggest why there is a lower representation of Polish participants compared to the Luton, Peterborough and UK averages within the older age categories. Additionally, the fact that 26% of the Polish participants in Luton and 13% of the Polish participants in Peterborough were aged twenty-five to twenty-nine years old and 7% of the Polish participants in Luton and 25% of the Polish participants in Peterborough were aged twenty to twenty-four suggests that migration from Poland to the UK has been continuing since 2004. The under-representation of Polish participants within the under twenty age category in Luton and in Peterborough is owing to the fact that all interviewees were required to be over the age of 18 as a condition of taking part in the research. Similarly, there was an under-representation of Polish participants within the sixty-five and over age category, which may be coincidental or it may be owing to the sampling methods used as perhaps the advertisements distributed online and in the windows of Polish shops in Luton and in Peterborough were less accessible to Polish people of older age groups than people of younger age groups. In contrast, the majority of the Polish interviewees in Poland (50%) were aged 45-59, representing an older demographic of Polish participants than most of the Polish participants that were interviewed in Luton and in Peterborough.
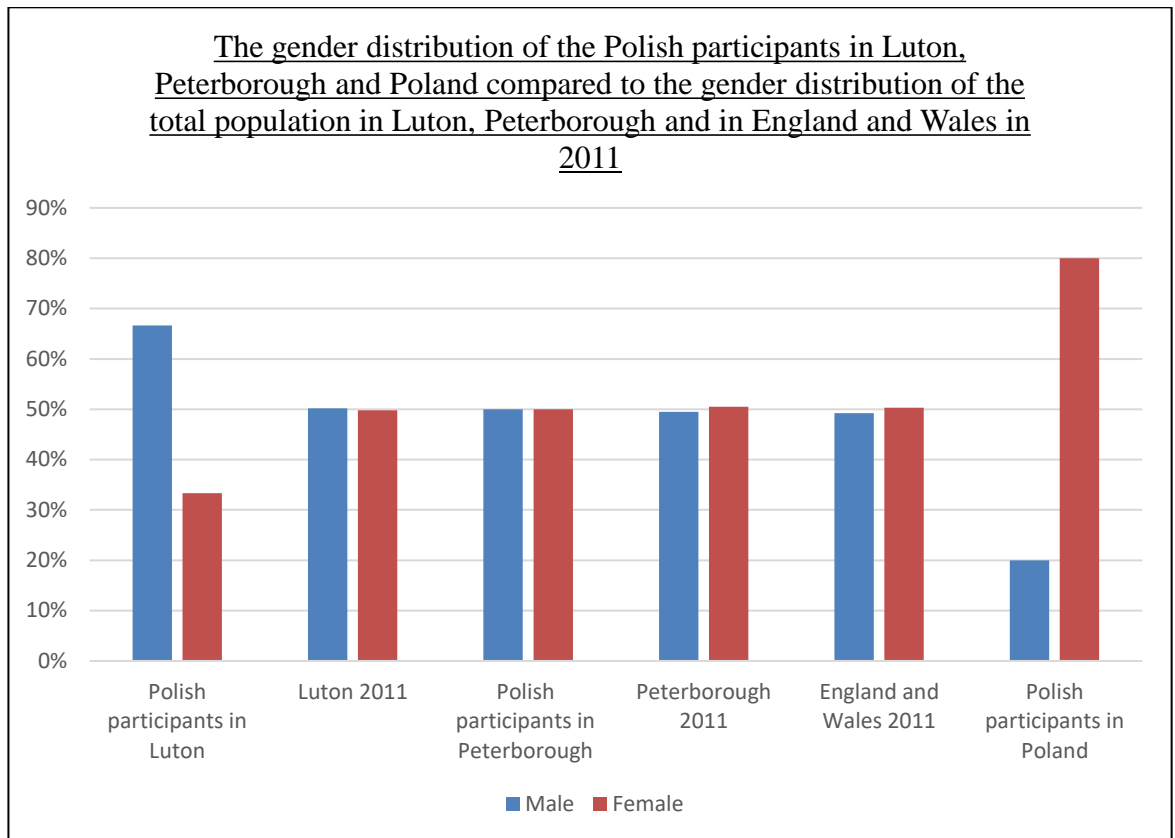
Figure 32. The gender distribution of the Polish participants in Luton, Peterborough and Poland compared to the gender distribution of the total population in Luton, Peterborough and in England and Wales in 2011.

Although an effort was made to interview a similar proportion of male and female participants, the distribution of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough that identified to a particular gender differed in the two localities, as shown in Figure 32. In Peterborough 50% of the Polish participants were male and 50% were female, while in Luton 67% of the Polish participants were male and 33% were female. The larger representation of males in the sample of Polish participants in Luton may reflect the suggestion in the literature that the majority of Polish migrants that have come to the UK are male. On the other hand, it may be coincidental that more males responded to the purposive sampling in Luton and were introduced to the researcher via the process of snowballing than female Polish migrants. It is believed that more males were interviewed in Luton than females owing to the snowballing that took place during the purposive sampling of the interview participants. The researcher built a good level of rapport with two Polish women in the community who took part in the research themselves and assisted the researcher to obtain further Polish participants for the study. Coincidentally, many of the participants that they

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introduced the researcher to in Luton were male. The researcher was aware that a larger number of interviews were being accepted with men than with women but felt that it was necessary to seize the opportunity to interview those who were willing to take part in the research during the process of data collection to try and collect a range of experiences. For instance, the researcher built a rapport with a Polish lady (Daria) who was working in a Polish shop in the High Town area of Luton. She was very welcoming and after taking the time to complete an interview with the researcher herself, she told the researcher that she knew other Polish people in Luton who could take part in the research. Daria began making calls and within 15-20 mins someone else came into the shop to be interviewed and as soon as the researcher had finished that interview, someone else was waiting to be interviewed, and this continued and became one of the most fruitful days of interview data collection. The researcher remained in contact with Daria and returned to the Polish shop on another occasion as she had recruited further participants on behalf of the researcher. She was extremely helpful and in total introduced the researcher to eight Polish participants in Luton, seven of which were male. Similarly, the researcher met a Polish lady (Marcia) who worked as a research administrator at the University of Bedfordshire in Luton. She was also very friendly and helpful and after taking part in an interview with the researcher herself, she offered to introduce the researcher to some of her Polish friends who were also willing to take part in the research. Because of her assistance, the researcher was able to interview four of her friends, who all happened to be male. The researcher was very grateful that these Polish women offered assistance with recruiting other Polish people in Luton, and this snowballing effect proved to be the most effective form of participant recruitment for the research, most likely because people tend to be more trusting of someone that they knew introducing the research to them rather than a stranger approaching them or reading advertisements posted online or in Polish shop windows. It just so happened that most of the participants who were introduced to the researcher via this snowballing process in Luton were male, which the researcher believes has skewed the gender distribution of the Polish participants in Luton and resulted in 67% of the Polish participants in Luton being male and 33% being female.

Similarly, in Poland, there was also an unbalanced gender distribution of the Polish participants as 80% of the Polish participants in Poland were female and 20% were male. The interviews in Poland were carried out in four different cities (Szczecin, Wrocław, Warsaw and Kraków). In Szczecin, two females and one male participant were interviewed. In Wrocław the researcher was only able to organise one interview which was with a female

participant. In Warsaw one female and one male participant were interviewed. And in Kraków, four interviews were carried out with Polish participants, who were all female.

The greater proportion of female Polish participants than male Polish participants in Poland could be indicative of the fact that there are more females than males in Poland's total population as the estimated sex ratio of the total population in Poland in 2022 was 0.94, meaning that there are approximately 94 males per 100 females within Poland's population (CIA World Factbook, 2022). On the other hand, I believe that more females than males were interviewed in Poland primarily owing to the snowballing process that took place during the recruitment of Polish interview participants. More specifically, I believe that this was owing to the snowballing process that occurred within the location of Kraków. I began my visit to Poland in the town of Szczecin where I interviewed one female participant, and two further participants (one male and one female) in the nearby town of Police. I subsequently travelled to Wrocław and I found it quite difficult to recruit interview participants apart from one female participant. I then travelled to Warsaw where I successfully recruited two participants (one male and one female). At this stage I had interviewed four women and two men in Poland, which had already created an unbalanced gender distribution among the participants in Poland, but this was exacerbated when I subsequently travelled to Kraków, as once again I found it difficult to recruit Polish participants to take part in an interview apart from one kind lady who worked as an academic teacher at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and she offered to introduce me to three further participants. One of the participants that she introduced me to also worked as an academic teacher at the university, and the other two participants were students at the university, and all of them happened to be female. Although I aimed to interview a similar proportion of males and females in all of the locations that I visited in Poland, I had found it quite difficult to find people who were willing to take part in the research in Poland, and when that first participant in Kraków offered to introduce me to other Polish people who would be willing to take part in an interview to help with the research, I chose to take the opportunity to interview them despite the gender unbalance to try to collect as many different Polish participant experiences as possible. It was coincidental that all of the participants that were introduced to me via this snowballing process were female rather than being male or a mixture of both genders, and I believe that this is the main reason for the uneven gender distribution among the Polish participants in Poland.

The occupational distribution of the Polish participants in Luton, Peterborough and Poland
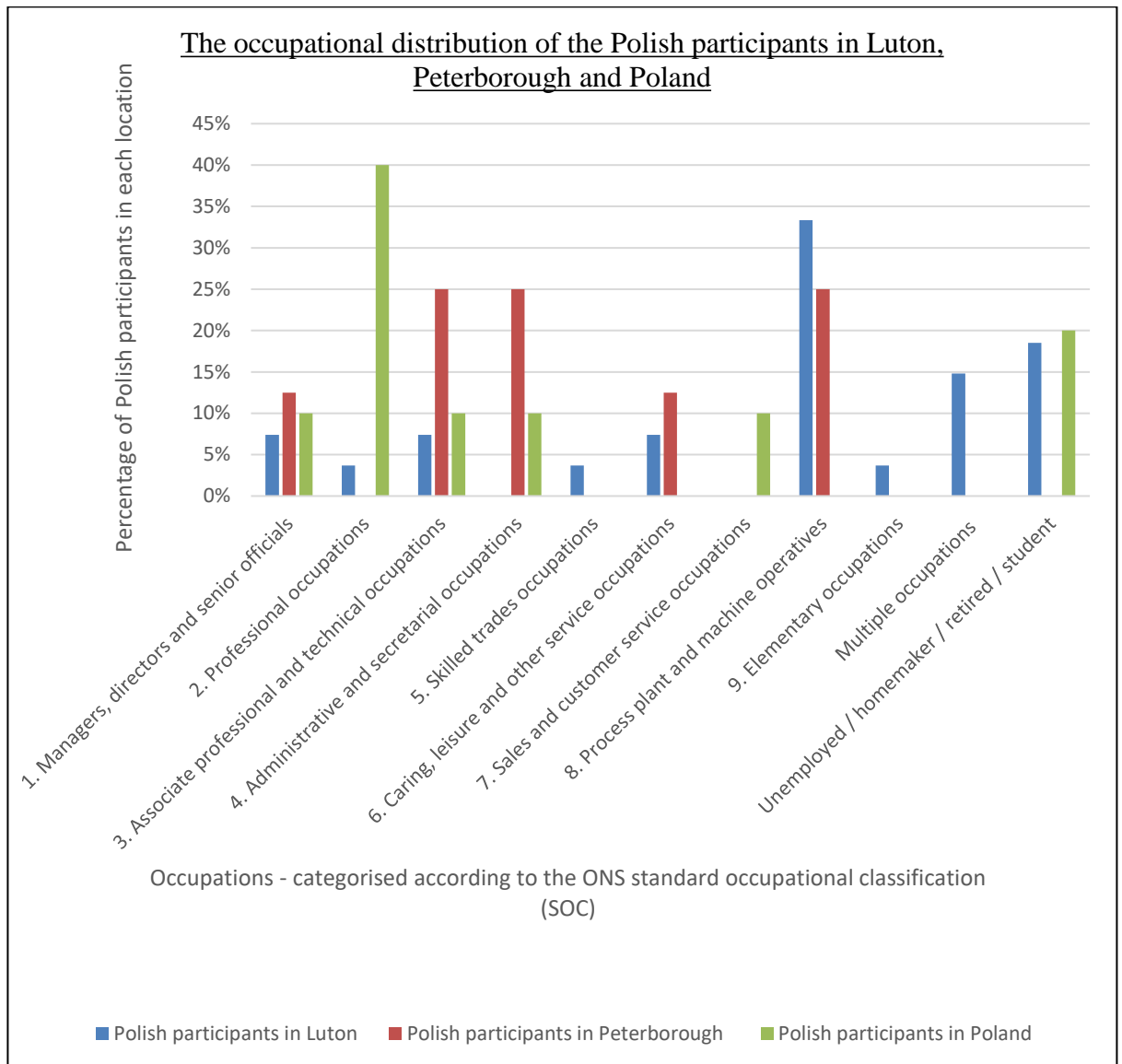
Figure 33. The occupational distribution of the Polish interview respondents in Luton, Peterborough and Poland (created by categorising the occupations of the Polish participants according to the ONS standard occupational classification (SOC) hierarchy).

Figure 33 indicates that most of the Polish Interviewees in Luton were employed in SOC level 8 or SOC level 9 occupations (37%). These categories refer to process, plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations respectively. This includes employment in warehouses, cleaning and other menial level jobs. As mentioned in the profile of Luton, the town's main industries have traditionally been related to the manufacturing and motor trade. This could explain the large percentage of Polish respondents working within this sector. However, Luton Borough Council indicated that the town had since shifted its focus towards the service sector; finance and insurance; information technology and aerospace and

engineering related industries (Luton Borough Council, 2012c). This suggests that although manufacturing and warehouse jobs are still widespread in Luton, higher skilled jobs in other sectors are evolving to become the town's main industries. Taking that into account, the fact that most Polish respondents were found to be working in low-skilled jobs within warehouses could suggest that many Polish workers may be excluded from higher-skilled, higher-salary jobs in the town's labour market, despite their education levels as suggested by Drinkwater, Eade & Garapich (2006) and Trevena (2014). The interviewees in Luton were not asked about their qualifications or level of education as this was unfortunately overlooked during the research planning process of the interview questions, so concrete inferences cannot be made as to whether or not the majority of participants in Luton were working below their skill levels. The absence of educational data was rectified by asking interviewees about their education levels during the data collection in Peterborough and Poland. It is unfortunate that this data is not available for the Polish participants in Luton, however, 28% of the participants in Luton did mention that they had attended University, and 42% of those participants were working in SOC level 8 or SOC level 9 employment categories according to the ONS SOC hierarchy, suggesting that there could be a degree of imbalance between the skill levels and obtained employment of the Polish interviewees in Luton. A further participant said that he had obtained qualifications at college to become a dental technician, and that he aspired to work in the dentistry industry in the UK, but at the time of interviewing he was employed as a warehouse operative in Luton. Another participant who did not mention university explicitly mentioned that he and his fiancé had previously had good jobs working in the banking industry in Poland, but that when they first came to the UK they gained employment in McDonalds to allow them to meet the conditions of the worker's registration scheme, open a bank account and find housing. He said that he initially found it difficult to find a job because he had limited English skills when he arrived in the UK, but at the time of interviewing he had three jobs: A ramp agent at Luton airport, the manager of a limited company and the chairman of the Polish Community Group in Luton. This suggests that despite his initial difficulty in finding employment and his experience of taking on low-skilled work, he had managed to achieve a degree of upward mobility in the labour market over time. Positive upward mobility in the UK labour market is also inferred by the 7% of the Polish participants in Luton and 13% of the Polish participants in Peterborough who were working in roles within the SOC1 category (representing managers, directors and senior officials), indicating that there are opportunities for Polish people to reach higher level positions within the labour market in Luton. Although most of the Polish participants in Luton were employed in sectors within SOC level 8 (33%),

Figure 33 illustrates that there were Polish respondents working across the range of all SOC categories apart from SOC 7. This indicates that although the greatest proportion of Polish respondents appear to be working in the category 'process, plant or machine operative jobs', there are a proportion of Polish people working within most sectors of the labour market in Luton. Furthermore, 19% of the respondents in Luton were on sick leave from work, unemployed or retired.

In Peterborough, two of the eight Polish participants worked in the SOC level 8 employment category in process, plant and machine operative roles (25%), a further 25% were employed in sectors within SOC level 4 in administrative and secretarial occupations and a further 25% were employed within roles that fall within the SOC level 3 category which relates to associate professional and technical occupations. Most of the Polish participants in Peterborough worked within these three occupational categories. Additionally, one Polish participant in Peterborough (13%) worked within the SOC level 1 occupational category (managers, directors and senior officials) and one participant (13%) worked in SOC level 6 (caring, leisure and other service occupations). There are some similarities between the occupational distribution of Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough, most noticeably that a large proportion of the Polish participants in both localities were working in SOC level 8 occupations in process, plant and machine operative roles (33% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough).

However, some differences are also evident. For example, whereas in Luton the Polish participants were employed across all of the SOC categories indicating that they worked across the labour market in Luton, in Peterborough none of the participants worked within SOC level 2, level 5, level 7 or level 9 occupations, and none of the participants in Peterborough had multiple occupations or were classed as being unemployed, a homemaker, a student or retired. Additionally, in Peterborough a greater proportion of the participants were employed in SOC level 1 occupations (managers, directors and senior officials) and in SOC level 3 occupations (associate professional and technical occupations) than the Polish participants in Luton. 13% of the Polish participants in Peterborough and 7% of the Polish participants in Luton were employed in SOC level 1 occupations, and 25% of the Polish participants in Peterborough and 7% of the Polish participants in Luton were employed in SOC level 3 occupations. These differences could be interpreted to suggest that Polish migrants in Peterborough may tend to work in managerial, senior, professional and technical roles, whereas in Luton it appears to be more common for Polish migrants to work within

process, plant and machine operative roles and elementary occupations. However, the occupations of the Polish migrants within this study should not be generalised and are not representative of the entire Polish migrant populations within these localities, so it is important to view the occupations of the Polish participants within this research at an idiographic level. The occupations held by each of the participants within this research will have shaped their own personal views and experiences within the localities, and the employment data presented within this section provides useful contextual information to assist the reader and the researcher to interpret the experiences of the Polish migrant participants within this study. In addition, the differences in the proportions of Polish participants that were employed within different SOC level categories in Luton and in Peterborough will have been affected by the fact that a greater number of Polish participants were interviewed in Luton (twenty-seven) than in Peterborough (eight), which has resulted in a larger percentage number being attributed per participant in Peterborough (where one participant represents 13%) than in Luton (where one participant represents 3%). Furthermore, as more Polish participants were interviewed in Luton than in Peterborough, there was greater opportunity for the Polish participants in Luton to be employed and present across the full range of SOC level occupations than in Peterborough, which may explain the under representation of the Polish migrant participants in Peterborough in some of the occupational categories.

In Poland, 40% of the participants worked in SOC level 2 occupations (professional occupations). Of these four participants, two worked as academic teachers at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, one worked as an English teacher at a University in Wrocław and the other participant worked as a secondary school teacher near Szczecin in Poland. Additionally, 20% of the participants in Poland were students, one of which was a sixth form level student in the town of Police near Szczecin in Poland and the other was a PhD student at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. As a result, 60% of the participants in Poland were teachers or students, which the researcher believes could have been a result of teachers and students being more understanding and sympathetic towards helping the researcher with the research. The researcher also believes that this was a result of snowballing as one of the academic teachers at the Jagiellonian university introduced the researcher to the other academic teacher and a PhD student at that university, as well as one of her previous students who was working in a SOC level 7 occupation (sales and customer service occupations) at the time of the interview working on the customer service helpline for a parcel transportation company. Additionally, through snowballing, the secondary school teacher who worked near

Szczecin in Poland introduced the researcher to the participant who was a sixth form level student. This demonstrates how the large proportion of Polish participants in Poland who were employed as teachers or were students was influenced by snowballing during the participant recruitment process.

In addition, one participant in Poland (10%) was employed within SOC level 4 (administrative and secretarial occupations) as a hotel receptionist in Szczecin and was recruited in person via purposive sampling as the researcher was staying within the hotel where the participant was working as a receptionist. A participant in Warsaw in Poland (10%) was employed in a SOC level 3 occupation (associate, professional and technical occupations) as a photographer and another participant Poland (10%) who was interviewed in Warsaw was employed in a SOC level 1 occupation as she ran her own online business which was dedicated to assisting international families living in Poland. This shows that the Polish participants in Poland were employed in a range of different occupational levels across the labour market in Poland. However, in contrast to the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough which had a high proportion of participants working within SOC level 8 occupations, in Poland none of the participants were employed in process, plant and machine operative roles. In addition, none of the Polish participants in Poland worked within skilled trades occupations or caring, leisure and other service occupations.

Place of origin in Poland

This section will present and discuss the data that was collected and analysed regarding the places of origin where the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough had migrated from in Poland. Table 28 displays the data that was collected from each participant in Luton and in Peterborough regarding their place of origin in Poland, the voivodeship in Poland where their place of origin was located and whether their place of origin was a village, a town or a city. The data presented in Table 28 indicates that most of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough (69% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough combined, representing 67% in Luton and 75% in Peterborough) lived in cities in Poland prior to migrating to the UK. A further 26% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough combined (representing 26% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) had lived in towns in Poland prior to migrating to the UK and 6% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough combined (representing 7% in Luton and 0% in Peterborough) were living in villages in Poland prior to migrating to the UK. This suggests that that majority of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough who took part in this research originated from urban areas in Poland and could suggest that urban areas in Poland act as dominant sending areas of Polish migrants to Luton and Peterborough, but further evidence would be required to substantiate that claim as the sample size gathered for the purposed of this research would not be sufficient in order to extrapolate the findings and apply them to entire Polish population in Luton, in Peterborough or in the UK. Only 6% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough combined originated from villages in Poland, and that 6% consisted of only two participants in Luton who had migrated to Luton from the villages of Wielgie and Bydgoszcz in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship. This implies that rural migration flows from villages in Poland to Luton existed among the participants in Luton, and were most common from the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, but did not exist among the Polish participants in Peterborough and appeared to be far less common among the Polish participants in this research than movements from urban areas in Poland to the UK.

	Polish participants	Place of origin in Poland	City Town or Village	Voivodeship
Polish participants in Luton	Mikolaj	Hnubieszow	Town	Lublin
	Zuzanna	Poznan	City	Greater Poland
	Janusz	Wrocław	City	Lower Silesia
	Marcia	Wrocław	City	Lower Silesia
	Andrzej	Kolno	Town	Podlasie
	Szymon	Jarocin	Town	Greater Poland
	Dawid	Ruciane-Nida	Town	Warmia-Masuria
	Eryk	Sopot	Town	Pomerania
	Patrycja	Stalowa Wola	City	Subcarpathia
	Krzystof	Zamość	City	Lublin
	Henryk	Bydgoszcz	City	Kuyavian-Pomerania
	Ryszard	Bydgoszcz	City	Kuyavian-Pomerania
	Basile	Warsaw	City	Masovia/Mazovia
	Tomasz	Lublin	City	Lublin
	Jedrek	Wielgie	Village	Kuyavian-Pomerania
	Angelica	Szczecin	City	West Pomerania
	Stanisław	Hucisko (near Katowice)	Village	Silesia
	Berta	Ostroleka	City	Masovia
	Małgorzata	Kielce	City	Świętokrzyskie
	Milosz	Częstochowa	City	Silesia
	Lukasz	Pila	Town	Greater Poland
	Kasia	Pionki	Town	Masovia/Mazovia
	Celestyna	Olsztyn	City	Warmia-Masuria
	Daria	Warsaw	City	Masovia/Mazovia
	Oskar	Kielce	City	Świętokrzyskie
	Tymon	Kraków	City	Lesser Poland
	Marek	Świdnica	City	Lower Silesia
Polish participants in Peterborough	Michal	Kraków	City	Lesser Poland
	Ewa	Katowice	City	Silesia
	Izabela	Darlowo	Town	West Pomerania
	Grzegorz	Tomaszow Lubelski	City	Lublin
	Agnieszka	Tomaszow Lubelski	City	Lublin
	Oliwia	Katowice	City	Silesia
	Artek	Szczecin	City	West Pomerania
	Borys	Gniew	Town	Pomerania

Table 28. The places where each of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough migrated from in Poland, which Voivodeship they migrated from and whether they had migrated from a village, a town or a city.

The data shown in Table 28 regarding the places where the Polish participants in this research had originated from in Poland prior to migrating to the UK was used to create Figure 34 below and display the data visually on a map. The colour red depicts the places where the

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Polish participants in Luton originated from in Poland and the colour purple depicts where the Polish participants in Peterborough originated from Poland.
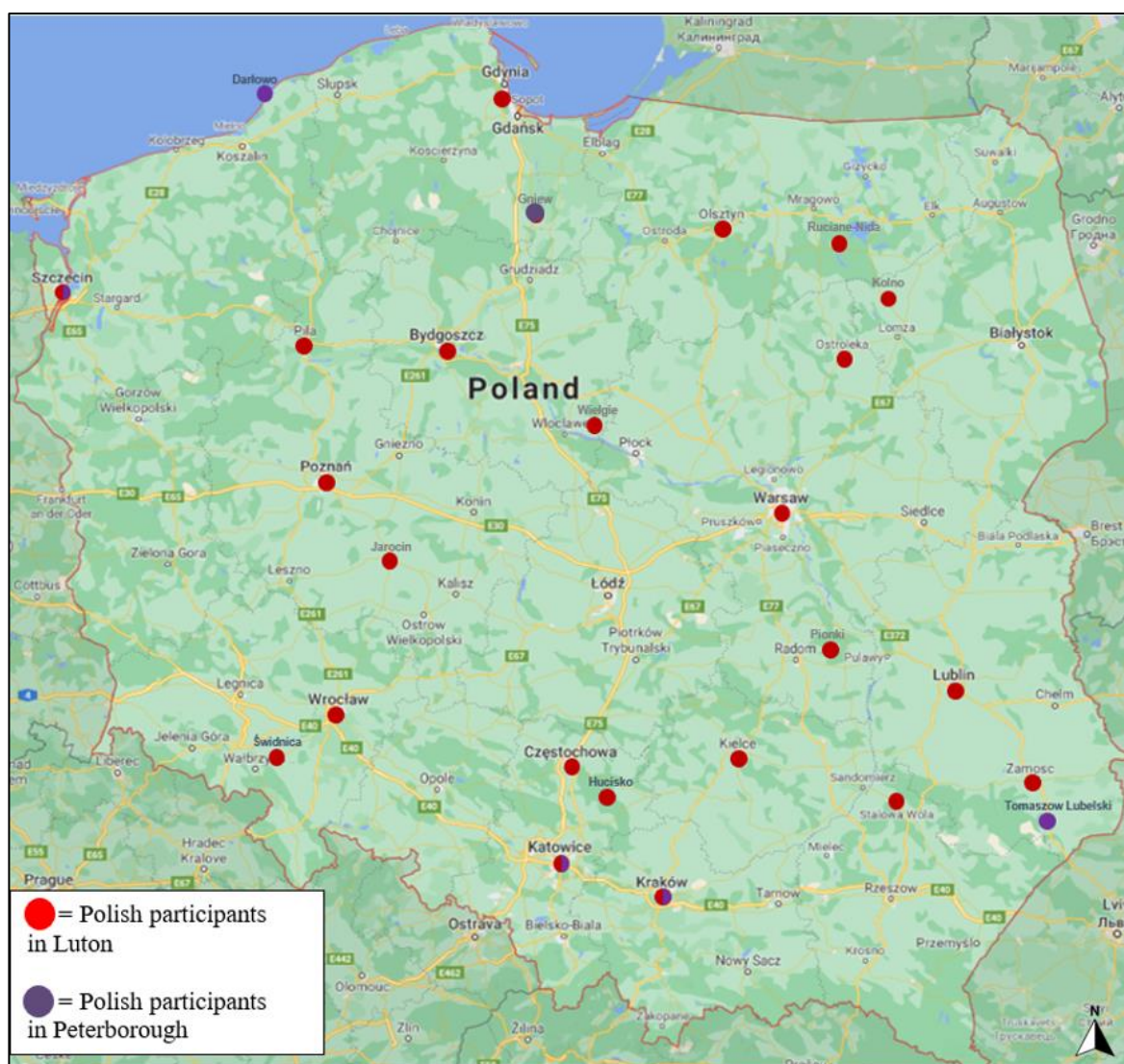

Figure 34. The locations where the Polish respondents in Luton and in Peterborough originated from in Poland before migrating to the UK (adapted from Google Maps, 2022b).

Table 28 and Figure 34 illustrate that the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough originated from a variety of different locations across Poland rather than being from a select few common places of origin. In particular, the places of origin of the Polish participants in Luton were scattered across Poland, whereas there was a more evident pattern that most of the Polish participants in Peterborough appear to have originated from places in the south and southeast of Poland as well as from the northwest. Głebocki & Rogacki (2002) studied the presence of regional economic disparities in Poland and concluded that eastern voivodeships generally suffered from below national average levels of industrial restructuring, agricultural production and export activity compared to more prosperous Western regions of Poland.

Figure 35 shows the percentage of the Polish participants in Luton, in Peterborough and in Luton and Peterborough combined who originated from each voivodeship in Poland and displays the regional economic differences that were presented by Głębocki & Rogacki (2002). Figure 35 shows that the most common voivodeship where the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough originated from in Poland was the voivodeship of Lublin, where 14% of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough combined originated from (11% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough). A study carried out by Rydzewski (2013) using data from 2010-2013 stated that the Lublin region had one of the highest levels of internal and international migration in Poland, and that 29.7% of the 583 people who left the Lublin province in 2011 migrated to the United Kingdom. This may explain why Lublin appeared to be a relatively common place of origin in Poland among the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough in this research. Rydzewski (2013) explained that most of those who were choosing to leave Lublin and move elsewhere were doing so in search of employment (over 75%) and that others were leaving the region owing to family reasons. This suggests that there was a shortage of economic opportunities for people in Lublin between 2010 and 2013, and that this may have been a key push factor for migration out of Lublin to the UK during this period. Lublin is located in eastern Poland in one of the regions that Głębocki & Rogacki (2002) described as being a region of regression. Low levels of economic development and agricultural recession in the east in regions such as Lublin could have been a contributing factor in explaining why many of the Polish respondents in Luton and in Peterborough had originated from Eastern Poland.
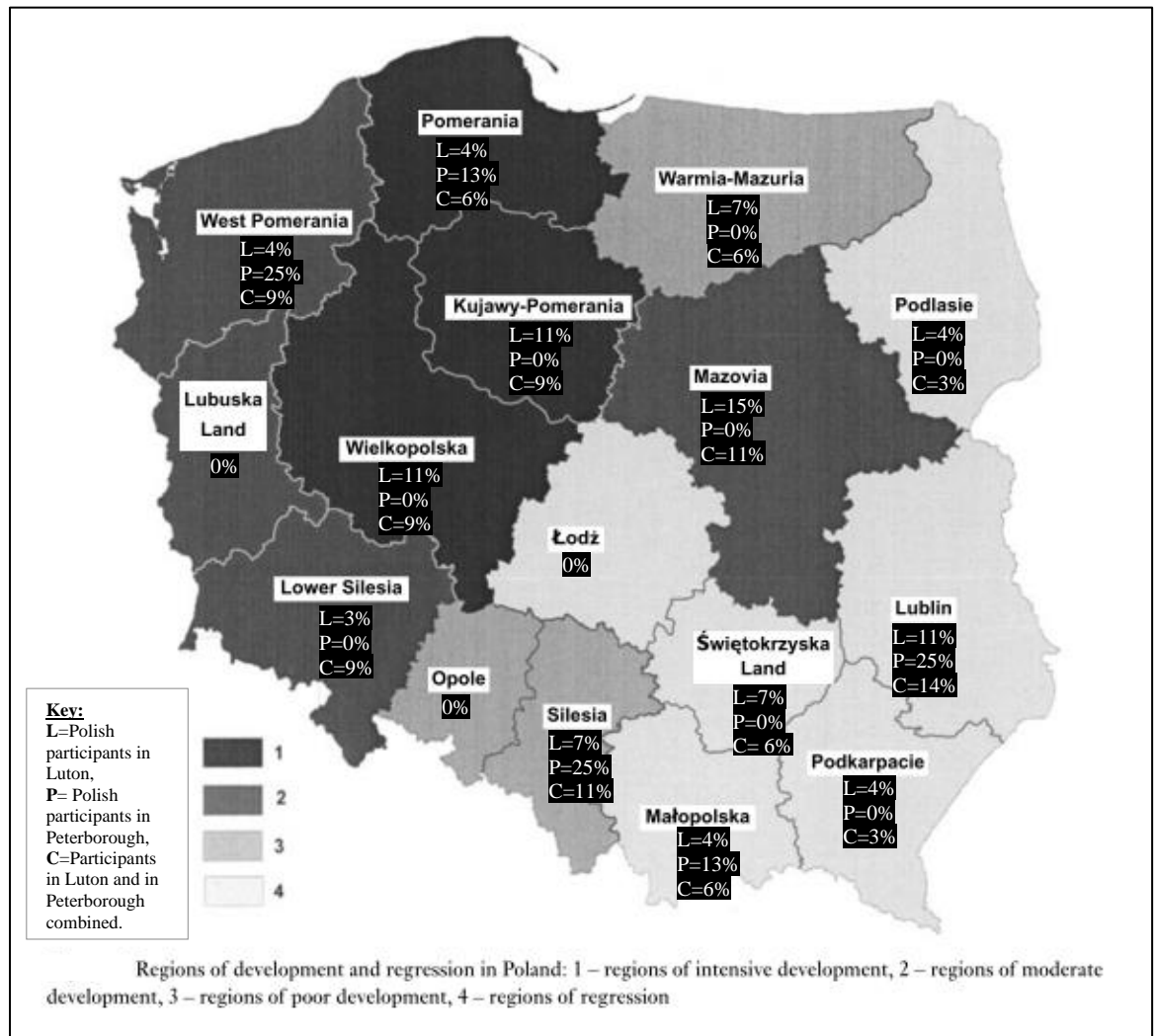
Figure 35. The percentage of Polish respondents in Luton and in Peterborough combined who had originated from each voivodeship in Poland, adapted from a figure in Głebocki & Rogacki (2002), showing the level of economic development/decline in each region.

However, when studying Figure 35 it is evident that although most of the respondents originated from eastern Poland, the respondents have migrated from a variety of different voivodeships across Poland and not all of these regions have suffered from economic decline. In fact, when the origins of the participants are viewed in terms of their voivodeships, the effects of regional economic disparities do not appear to have created a significant trend in the migration patterns of the Polish participants in Luton or Peterborough.

Additionally, 11% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (15% in Luton and 0% in Peterborough) originated from the Mazovia voivodeship and 9% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (11% in Luton and 0% in Peterborough) originated from Wielkopolska (Greater Poland). Mazovia was a common place of origin of the Polish migrant participants in Luton as it contained the capital city of Warsaw. Additionally,

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Wielkopolska was described as an emerging zone of international migration by White (2010), owing to an apparent culture of outward migration from the area in times of declining employment opportunities (White, 2011), which could explain why this voivodeship was a relatively well represented place of origin among the Polish respondents in Luton.

By merging the data presented in Table 28 with the map of regional economic differences in Poland presented by Głębocki & Rogacki (2002) visually in Figure 35 it is evident that 32% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (30% in Luton and 38% in Peterborough) originated from areas that Głębocki & Rogacki (2002) described as being regions of regression, and a further 17% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (14% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) originated areas of poor economic development. In contrast, 29% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (22% in Luton and 25% in Peterborough) originated from areas described by Głębocki & Rogacki (2002) as being regions of moderate development, and 24% of the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough (26% in Luton and 13% in Peterborough) originated from areas described as being regions of intensive development, which were comparatively more economic prosperous areas. A greater proportion of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough combined originated from regions of regression than other regions in Poland, but the differences were not significant enough to suggest a significant trend, and instead the data indicated that Polish migrants in Luton and in Peterborough have originated from a wide range of voivodeships and a range of different regional economic backgrounds. This suggests that although economic conditions may have played a role in the migratory decisions of the Polish participants within this research, other factors are also likely to have contributed to the international movements of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough; which is further supported by the data presented in the sections regarding the migration motivations of the individual Polish participants in this research.
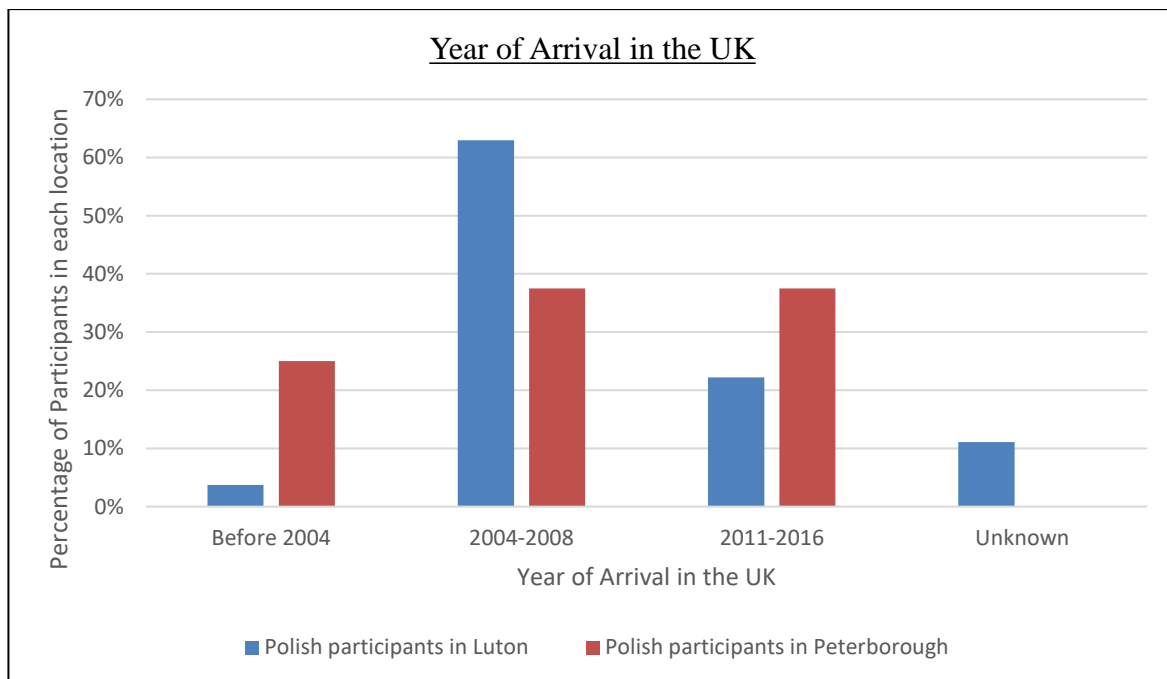
Year of Arrival in the UK

Figure 36. A graph to show the year of arrival in the UK for the Polish participants in Luton and Peterborough

Figure 36 shows that 63% of the Polish respondents in Luton (17 participants) arrived in the UK between 2004 and 2008 and from the data is it clear that most of these participants arrived in the UK in 2007 (19%) and in 2006 (15%). Additionally, 22% of the Polish participants in Luton (six participants) arrived in the UK between 2011 and 2016, 4% (one participant) arrived in the UK before 2004 and three participants in Luton (11%) did not share their year of arrival in the UK. In contrast, 25% of the Polish participants in Peterborough (two participants) arrived in the UK before 2004, 38% (three participants) arrived in the UK between 2004 and 2008 and another 38% (three participants) arrived in the UK between 2011 and 2016. This indicates that most of the Polish participants within this study arrived in the UK between 2004 and 2016.

Appendix XIII. The Full Discussion of the Results from the Polish Participant Interviews in Poland

Connections and Past Experiences in the UK

Interview Location	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes		
		Had social ties in the UK	Had visited the UK on a short-term basis before	Had previously lived in the UK
Szczecin	Aleksandra	✓		
Police (near Szczecin)	Krystyna	✓	✓	✓
Police (near Szczecin)	Bartek	✓		✓
Wrocław	Wiktoria	✓	✓	
Warsaw	Ania	✓	✓	
Warsaw	Casimir	✓		✓
Kraków	Beata	✓	✓	
Kraków	Liljana	✓	✓	
Kraków	Natasza	✓		
Kraków	Alicja	✓	✓	

Table 29. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of connections and past experiences in the UK.

The participants that discussed each subordinate theme that related to the superordinate theme of connections and past experiences in the UK are displayed in Table 29.

Had social ties in the UK

The analysis of the interview transcripts with the Polish participants in Poland revealed that all of the participants appeared to have at least one social tie in the UK. For instance, when the participants were asked whether they had any friends or family living in the UK, Wiktoria said:

> *'Yeah. I've got loads of friends living there…would be more than ten. More than ten…a lot yes'.*

This suggests that Wiktoria had many social ties living in the UK. It seemed as though Wiktoria had the largest amount of UK based social ties out of the Polish participants in Poland, as most of the other participants appeared to only know between one and three people who lived in the UK. For instance, Liljana said:

> *'I remembered that I have one cousin (laughs)…that's living in the UK…because… of the work!'.*

Similarly, Aleksandra said:

> *'Yes, I have one…but I have not…spoke with him I think, five or six years ago last time. Yes he's …a doctor and working in one of London's hospitals'.*

And Ania said:

> *'Umm not close family. I know of some relatives who moved there…but not close family but this is I think kind of... err typical like, typical like I don't know they were 19 or 20 something and they moved there to find a job and... err they started a family there…and they like I, I understand they like it because living in Poland, they wouldn't be able to find a job…I think that's their point…but I don't know many details because I don't speak to them directly I just know from my aunt, of my aunt you know…and I have some friends. Err I have a friend who used to work for the Polish Embassy in London…and then she met her husband there, Polish by the way (laughs), but they, recently moved back to Poland'.*

These extracts suggest that Liljana, Aleksandra and Ania all had a small number of social ties who were living in the UK. Similarly, other participants in Poland indicated that they

had some family members or friends in the UK, but from their responses it appeared that they were distant rather than close social ties and that some participants were a little unsure about where their social ties were living. For example, when asked if he had any family or friends living in the UK, Bartek said:

> *'None of my family. Umm the friends that we made in the UK they stayed…I think… We didn't keep in touch…Oh yeah, my father's friend err who helped my father move to the UK, he has stayed in the UK'.*

Similarly, Beata said:

> *'I have friends in England'.*

And in a different part of the interview, Beata said:

> *'Err family. I mean it's a distant family yes but there's a err husband of my cousin… Err yeah he lives in... but actually I think he lives in Ireland…it's just I'm not sure in which part, but yeah he lives somewhere there'.*

These extracts suggest that Bartek and Beata knew a small number of social contacts in the UK but that their contact with them was limited and that they were not sure exactly where they were living at the time of the interview. Additionally, Alicja, Krystyna, Natasza and Casimir also shared that they had some social ties who were living in the UK. Initially, Alicja and Krystyna both shared that they had friends in the UK, but did not have any family members. For instance, Alicja said:

> *'Friends yes but family no… my partner have err family but in Ireland not in UK'.*

And Krystyna said:

> *'Err not family, friends yes'.*

However, in a later part of the interview, Krystyna said:

> *'Oh I have a cousin there, I forgot as well…yeah seriously, but we are not really much in touch. But she made a very good career I think…she's an artist, she's an artist but she also takes some photographs and recently, again from social media, I know she was in some filming crew in Ethiopia… yeah so as I said this friend of mine. Another one I used to work with she's an English teacher…strangely she's Polish but she is an English teacher. Yeah. And umm who else? this cousin of mine'.*

This extract suggests that Krystyna had some friends and a cousin living in the UK, and indicated that she had limited contact with her cousin. Interestingly, although all of the Polish participants in Poland suggested that they had at least one social tie in the UK, most said that they had limited contact with those social ties or had no contact with them at all. For example, when asked about the contact that she had with her friends in the UK, Alicja said:

> *'Err on Facebook…mmm once a month maybe…so not very frequent, but not... It's not like once in two years or something'.*

Similarly, Aleksandra explained that she had lost contact with her friend who was living in London five years prior to the interview, and when asked how she used to contact him, Aleksandra said:

> *'Just mail you know. Sometimes, yes it's err during the holidays'.*

This suggests that the contact that Aleksandra previously had with her social tie in London was in the form of postal mail and usually only took place during holidays, suggesting that their contact was infrequent and had stopped completely approximately five years prior to the interview.

Similarly Beata, Natasza and Krystyna also explained that they had infrequent contact with their social ties in the UK. For instance, Beata said:

> *'Well we have contact really really rarely…mmm from time to time. I, well I get in touch from time to time with my cousin…so the wife of this person but not with him'.*

And Natasza said:

> *'Err yes I have, just err writing e-mails to each other…but it's funny we never met in person. Err he was born in Poland but then she, oh I'm sorry he!... he moved into the UK…err for now it's like one e-mail for a few months'.*

These extracts suggest that both Beata and Natasza have limited contact with their social ties in the UK as Beata describes her contact with her cousin as 'really, really rarely' and Natasza suggested that her and her social tie in the UK usually only contact each other by email once every few months, suggesting that they do not contact each other often. Similarly, when asked about her contact with her social ties in the UK Krystyna said:

> *'Umm... rarely…Oh I'm just too busy…too busy. But every now and then, and I mean it's not that we don't like each other. You know we are constantly reading on Facebook about each other'.*

This suggests that Krystyna had rare, infrequent contact with her friends in the UK and mostly communicated with them and maintained contact with them via Facebook. Wiktoria

also explained that she maintained her contact with her social ties in the UK via Facebook, but in contrast to the experience shared by Krystyna, it appeared that Wiktoria had more frequent contact with her social ties in the UK using Facebook and had also met up with her social ties face to face in the UK multiple times. Wiktoria said:

> *'Well you know Facebook makes life so much easier. So basically you feel like they are here (laughs)… and… yeah, but they come over. They are usually Polish girls married to English guys…so sometimes they come as family, sometimes they come to visit their parents here and so…but the kids are British already. So…It's mainly through Facebook at the moment, unless I go over. But then I don't want to bother anyone and I stay at a hotel (laughs)…and we just meet for coffee'.*

Casimir shared a similar experience to Wiktoria but appeared to primarily maintain contact with his social ties in the UK online and via WhatsApp and had met up with his social ties face-to-face when they had visited Warsaw. Casimir said:

> *'Yeah…mostly…like, you know, internet, WhatsApp, all these communicators…and sometimes coming to visit Warsaw so we catch up here…since I left I haven't been in actually in London. I would like to go back for a couple of days just to revisit'.*

Casimir explained that he maintained contact with his social ties in the UK approximately two times per month and added:

> *'It depends, sometimes you make a call and you last for one hour, sometimes you'll just tap a few texts and that's it'.*

This suggests that his contact with his social ties who live in the UK varies between short text message conversations over WhatsApp, long phone calls and face-to-visits with them in Warsaw when his friends have travelled to Poland.

In contrast, Ania, Liljana and Bartek indicated that they did not have any contact with their social ties in the UK.

The extracts shared above indicate that although most of the Polish participants in Poland appeared to have at least one social tie living in the UK, their contact with these social ties tended to be limited or non-existent, apart from Wiktoria and Casimir who appeared to contact their social ties more frequently. It also seems that most of the contact that the participants in Poland had with their social ties in the UK took place online via email, or via apps such as Facebook or WhatsApp, although Wiktoria and Casimir had also met up with their social ties face to face a few times during visits.

Had visited the UK on a short-term basis before

Six of the Polish participants in Poland (60%) had previously visited the UK on a short-term basis, for one or more temporary visits prior to their interviews. For example, Ania said:

> *'I have been to London... twice…to visit as a tourist'.*

And Alicja shared that she had previously spent one month travelling in the UK and had visited London, Edinburgh, Canterbury and Southampton. Alicja added:

> *'Once I had a summer school there…and it was umm... oh my god... I don't remember the name. Cork university, no. not Cork. mmm I must think about the name of this University…and then I was in London, it was SOAS. And in Canterbury at the university there is a department about the war and propaganda started something…and I visited my friends who lived in, in UK'.*

This extract suggests that as well as spending time visiting friends who were living in different areas of the UK, Alicja also spent some time at UK universities such as SOAS university in London and a university in Canterbury (presumably the University of Kent which has a centre for the history of war, media and society) participating in a summer school and educational activities.

Similarly, Beata and Liljana also indicated that they had visited the UK on a short-term basis to access educational materials. For instance, Liljana said that she had visited for the UK for one day to shop for books that were related to her university studies in Poland. Liljana said:

> *'I was in London just for two, one day actually'.*

And later added:

> *'(Laughs). I went there. I know how it can… be…I know how it sounds, but I went there only for shopping!..because it was cheaper for me to get err like cheap tickets. Plane tickets. And buy books there than to… err…order them yeah and pay for the shipping…[university books]… connected with archaeology and Mayan stuff…you have there a lot of nice bookstores!'.*

This suggests that Liljana chose to visit the UK because it was cheaper for her to purchase a cheap plane ticket to visit London and purchase her university books related to archaeology and Mayan history and then fly back to Poland than it would have been to have purchased the same books in Poland rather than in the UK. This suggests that she only chose to visit the UK to obtain educational materials at a lower cost, rather than to visit particular sites, people or locations. Similarly, Beata also shared that she had spent some time in the UK during the completion of her PhD for educational and research purposes. When discussing her short-term visits to the UK between 1992 and 2000, Beata said:

> *'It was like three months the longest period yeah…err when I was a student…that was mainly during holiday times…yeah... student and then PhD student. When I did my PhD it stopped because I didn't have (laughs) you know so much time any longer…err it was, it was 90s…It was between umm I would say nineteen ninety-two to 2000…what I did was actually it continues every year for holidays I went to the UK…for two, two or three months at the time'.*

And when asked why she chose to visit the UK multiple times for two or three months at a time, Beata said:

> *'I mean for the first time it was because I wanted to learn English and I just, I thought you know it was the best way to you know to learn it…but then I made friends with lots of people there and it was just you know a great place to go for holidays'.*

And when she was asked which locations she visited in the UK and why she chose to visit those particular locations, Beata said:

> *'Err that was London and I went there just partly for holidays partly when I was doing my PhD because I went to the British Library to do, to do the research…and when I went just for holidays it was North of England, Cumbria and Scotland'.*

And added:

> *'Well it was, actually it was accidental. I wanted some place to err to do some work and actually (name) introduced me to some people living in Cumbria…I said okay we have, we know these people and they need someone to help err with like householding…they ran a small hotel so I said ok…this is what I'm going to like and I went there'.*

These extracts shared by Beata suggest that she initially decided to travel to the UK for a short holiday to learn English and later returned to the UK for further short holidays to travel to different locations and to do some research at the British Library in London during the completion of her PhD research , which she completed in Poland. The extracts also indicate that an existing social tie that Beata had in the UK had introduced her to some people who had an employment opportunity in Cumbria, and so Beata had travelled to work in a small hotel in Cumbria temporarily during one of her visits to the UK.

Additionally, Beata shared some details about her ease of travelling to the UK and living there for two to three months at a time. She said:

> *'I mean at the beginning it was difficult because of the language, that was number one. Number two, it was during the time when we didn't have an easy way of travelling to England because of the visas…and the invitations and all the stuff. So that was difficult. But in terms of kind of... finding myself in a strange place it was alright. I mean the people were friendly, I didn't have this kind of difficulty to, to adjust myself'.*

This extract suggests that during the time when Beata travelled to the UK, between 1992 and 2000, which was prior to Poland's accession into the EU in 2004, she had to obtain a visa and provide details of where she would be staying and what she should be doing in the UK in order to travel to England. This highlights the fact that travel between the UK and Poland was more bureaucratic before Poland joined the EU and gained access to FoM between EU member states within the Schengen area. And now that the UK has left the EU, this also

highlights the fact that movement between Poland and the UK will now be bureaucratic, and harder again as visas and further information will now be needed to travel between the UK and Poland again. Furthermore, the extract shared by Beata above suggests that she had limited English language abilities when she first began travelling to the UK, which she initially found difficult, but she also said that she met friendly people and did not experience difficulties adjusting to staying in the UK, suggesting that she felt comfortable and content during her time staying in England. Similarly, when she was asked about what she considered to positive and negative aspects of her experience of staying in the UK, Beata said:

> *'Positives and negatives... I don't know! it was it was so exciting. Yeah well I was so excited and everything was so new...that I would say it was everything was positive. And because of the contrast between the situation here and the UK, the UK seemed to be like a perfect place to live...almost a perfect place to live. Umm because of the language, that was I would say the most difficult thing again, right...but otherwise. I think it was alright...I mean the difficult thing also was you know when I went to London for the first time with the Metro and everything, it was a bit chaotic for the first time...but after a couple of days it was fine, manageable'.*

This extract highlights how exciting Beata found her experience of travelling to the UK, and seeing people, places, processes and objects that were new and different from what she had experienced in Poland. Beata expanded on what she meant by *'the contrast between the situation here and the UK'* and added:

> *'Err that was the time when Poland actually err started to develop, right after the communist regime. So we didn't have access to all the things that were easily available in the UK...And umm...I would say that the easiness, easiness of getting, you know things, like access to the library or you know going to the shop and think actually everything you need or even more...It was kind of difficult. Umm the word difficulties is not a good word. I mean it was kind of confusing... right? you, you just couldn't, I sometimes couldn't understand that. You just go to the library you say ok I'm a student I want to do this and this and they say ok no problem and you didn't have any, you didn't have to present any kind of documents and stamps and everything, right?...so, this was, as I'm saying it was not difficult, it was just different...it was kind of experience of you know a different reality'.*

This suggests that Beata had viewed her experience of accessing facilities and resources and living in Poland to be harder and bureaucratic compared to her experience of accessing items and utilising facilities in the UK. She said that everything was new and exciting in the UK compared to what she was used to experiencing in Poland, and said that *'the UK seemed to be like a perfect place to live'.* This again reflects the suggestions made by some of the other Polish participants within this study that many Polish people had a very positive, rose-tinted view of what it would be like to live in the UK, and how easy it would be to live and work in the UK compared to in Poland.

Beata was also asked about her housing in the UK and how she sorted out her accommodation. She said that when she lived in London, she stayed in a house with a garden and a bed and breakfast a couple of times. And when she stayed in Cumbria, she stayed in a very nice cottage. And when discussing how she found her housing in the UK, Beata said:

> *'That was easy because err well I have friends in England specifically (name) and the family and they helped me...so first couple of nights I remember my first visit, first visit in the UK I stayed with them and that helped me to move to, to Scotland to umm to Cumbria....and I stayed with the people there. So it was... I mean it was not difficult at all...it was kind of ready for me'.*

This suggests that similarly to many of the Polish participants in Luton and in Peterborough who had lived in the UK long-term, Beata had also negotiated her initial form of housing in the UK by utilising her connections with existing social ties in the UK and staying with them temporarily before moving into another form of accommodation.

Additionally, Wiktoria also shared her experience of temporarily visiting the UK and explained that she had previously lived on a rural farm in *'Blairgowrie'* in Scotland (approximately 19 miles northwest of Dundee) for three months in 1997. Wiktoria said that she worked on the farm picking strawberries and raspberries and shared some details regarding her experience of living there:

> *'Oh well I was a student, it was a job experience. It was visiting Scotland and It was when I was at university so…learning the language… but perhaps Scotland wasn't the best choice actually! (laughs). It was very rural. People spoke a strange kind of language!... I had problems when I got back to university. They just asked me where did you get that [accent] from? (laughs)… it was very… but a great experience!'.*

Wiktoria also shared some information regarding her experience of travelling to the UK and said:

> *'Well, it was actually a holiday experience really. There was a company called Concordia and they basically looked for students from all over Europe and then so there were people from France, there were from Poland, from Lithuania from… I mean, all over the place really'.*

Wiktoria explained that Concordia was a type of university organisation that provided short-term holiday trips for students across Europe and had organised her visit and her accommodation for her in Scotland. Wiktoria explained that she stayed in a caravan during her three months visit to Blairgowrie and said that there were no creature comforts within her accommodation but that it was satisfactory for her at the time as a twenty-five old student. Additionally, when discussing her journey to Scotland, Wiktoria added:

> *'Well I remember that at the time, stupidly I remember that we travelled by bus! (laughs)… and actually it was like from here it was like 24 hours and this was wonderful because you got on the bus and then you started reading your book and then you woke up and it was Calais (laughs)… and this was nice. And then there was this ferry crossing. And then, and then there was the channel tunnel and it got very easy'.*

Wiktoria explained that the bus that she took to Scotland departed from the bus station directly opposite the railway station in Wrocław in Poland where she lived and then drove to Calais in France, boarded a ferry to the UK and drove to Victoria in London, where Wiktoria then needed to change onto another bus which transported her north into Scotland. And Wiktoria explained that her journey from Wrocław in Poland to Blairgowrie in Scotland by bus took approximately 24 hours to complete.

Additionally, Wiktoria was asked about what she considered to be positives and negatives aspects of where she stayed in Blairgowrie at the time of her first visit to the UK, and Wiktoria said:

> *'Well actually I just think of only positive things…like my experience was extremely positive'.*

Furthermore, Wiktoria said:

> *'The people were nice…actually everything was a very positive experience…and all the other stays, and I suppose that I must have lived there for five years altogether…counting all these months…and so I didn't have any... If I had lived there you know kind of like, you know trying to get a job or something perhaps I could have said something more…but from my perspective everything was like wow!'.*

And Wiktoria also added:

> *'My experience is like when you are a tourist and you have money to spend everywhere is great, but if you start to, trying to earn money then this is where real problems start'.*

These extracts suggest that Wiktoria felt as though she had had very positive experiences during her multiple short visits to the UK, but felt as though her experiences as a temporary visitor and tourist in the UK would have been easier and with less problems than the experiences of someone who had moved to live and work in the UK long-term. Similarly, when Wiktoria was asked whether she had ever experiences any housing issues in the UK, she said:

> *'No, personally I haven't had any experience…but I have a lot of friends who have; and it's a completely different story when you come to look for a job…it's like…the first problem they experienced was to find something they could afford… to start with…then like depending on whether they spoke English or good English, this was a problem depending on whether they were joining some family. This was different as well, so actually coming there, for a couple of people who came there and they had to start from scratch like looking for a place…it was quite a bad experience…usually it was like they tried to join somebody who was already there. So they shared a tiny little room for a couple of weeks and then they tried to move on…and I would say that this was… the norm'.*

Interestingly within this extract Wiktoria explained that although she did not experience any housing issues herself during her time staying in the UK, she believed that this was not the norm and was only the case because she was only staying in the UK temporarily rather than living and working in the UK long-term. Wiktoria suggested that based on anecdotal experiences that she had heard from her social ties who have lived in the UK long-term, it has been common for them to experience difficulties obtaining affordable housing and to rely on existing social ties within the local to share their living spaces initially before being able to move into their own forms of accommodation in the UK. This suggestion is also reminiscent of many of the experiences that were shared by the participants in Luton and in Peterborough and again emphasises the suggestions that migrants who live in the UK long-

term are more likely to experience housing issues and difficulties in the UK than short-term visitors.

Additionally, Wiktoria explained that her time living in Scotland was always intended to be a temporary visit for a three month period only, as she needed to return to Poland after three months to complete her university studies in Poland. Wiktoria said that her three months stay in Scotland was her longest stay in the UK, but that she had also subsequently returned to the UK every one to two years to visit friends and to maintain her English language abilities as she worked as an English teacher in Wrocław and felt that it was essential to maintain her English language skills for her work.

The extracts shared within this section indicate that multiple Polish participants that were interviewed in Poland (60%) had previously visited the UK on a short-term, temporary basis but had not migrated to the UK to live there long-term. In contrast, three of the Polish participants that were interviewed in Poland (30%) had previously lived in the UK long-term and had since returned to live in Poland again. Their experiences are discussed in further detail below.

<u>Had previously lived in the UK</u>

30% of the Polish participants that were interviewed in Poland (Krystyna, Bartek and Casimir) had previously lived in the UK long-term before eventually returning to Poland. Their reasons for migrating to the UK, their experiences within the UK and their reasons for returning to Poland varied; further highlighting distinctions within different individual lived experiences and the importance of not assuming that all Polish migrant experiences in the UK are equal.

At the time of the interview, Krystyna was working as a teacher and was living in the town of Police in the Szczecin agglomeration in northwest Poland. She had previously migrated to the UK from Poland in 2004 and lived in Hertfordshire in the UK for eight years before returning to Poland in 2012. When Krystyna was asked why she chose to migrate to the UK, she said:

> *'It's actually a story for a book!...Do you want to know it?...No I was actually, I left to umm I went to Hungary because umm my boyfriend lived there…I left everything for him, so I left my job and everything…err so when we broke up I... didn't have anywhere to go. I mean I couldn't, I didn't have my job here anymore…and I didn't want to stud- because usually in Poland at school you always, not like in England when you can start in march or halfway through in the second term, you always start in September…so I was looking for a job. So this is why I decided to go to England'.*

This extract suggests that Krystyna decided to migrate to the UK because her relationship with her boyfriend in Hungary had ended, she did not have a job and was not able to begin studying in Poland at that time, and so it seems like she felt as though she had no commitments and nowhere to go, and decided to look for a job in England. Krystyna explained that she could have found a job in Poland if she would have been willing to wait for a few months, but she did not want to wait and she had friends who were already living in the UK who told her to *'just come and see'* so she decided to migrate to England in search of employment in the UK instead.

When she was asked about her experience of the process of migrating to the UK, Krystyna said:

> *'Oh very easy…I just went there. And previously we joined in May 2004 we joined the EU… I applied for a job and I got it straightaway'.*

And when asked whether she planned for her migration in advance, she said:

> *'I... at this time, I think now since I've had children not anymore, but I was very adventurous person…so I was literally, I took you know umm a phone, a credit card and a few clothes that's all'.*

This extract suggests that Krystyna had not prepared for her migration to the UK in advance other than arranging her travel plans and she had migrated with very little personal possessions. She explained travelled to the UK by plane from Berlin to London Luton Airport and then she initially lived in Radlett in Hertfordshire because her friends were living there. She stayed with her friends in their housing for approximately three weeks after she first arrived in England, before moving into a shared rented house. Krystyna said she had chosen to move to Radlett in Hertfordshire because the presence of her friends made her initial experience in the UK easier because they provided her with temporary accommodation. For instance, Krystyna said:

> *'Radlett because my friend was there…so I had a, you know an easier start'.*

And Krystyna added:

> *'I could stay at their place…for quite a time. And they also knew people so I could easily find a place to stay'.*

These extracts mirror the initial experiences shared by many of the Polish participants that were interviewed in Luton and in Peterborough who has also felt that the presence of their social ties within the localities had made their experiences of migrating to the UK easier and had provided them with a source of informal, temporary accommodation while they adjusted to living in the UK and obtained their own subsequent form of accommodation in the UK. Krystyna explained that after staying with her friends in Radlett for three weeks, she had seen an advertisement for a shared rented three-bedroom town house in the window of a local English shop and later moved into that house with some other friends. She said that she had found her housing relatively easily because her older age made her an attractive

prospective tenant and because prior to May 2004 there was less of a high demand and less competition for rented accommodation. Krystyna said:

> *'Err because it was in 2004, it was before May so umm still it wasn't that busy…not full yet… and I think in some way I was a umm attractive person to live with, in a sense that I was older, so everyone would know that, you know they never expected from me I don't know any wild parties whatsoever'.*

The use of the words 'not full yet' suggests that Krystyna believed that prior to EU Accession in May 2004, housing was more widely available as there were less migrants living in the UK and there was less competition for available housing spaces. This also suggests that Krystyna thought that the UK housing market had become busier and increasingly saturated over time since 2004. Additionally, this extract suggests that Krystyna believed that she had found her housing in the UK relatively easily owing to her being an older adult with less of a perceived likelihood to party and create noise and mess than younger people, which Krystyna believed made her a more attractive potential tenant to those who were renting properties at that time. Furthermore, when asked if she had ever experiences any housing issues in the UK, Krystyna said:

> *'In the first accommodation, in there, there were rats… and the landlord was, he was very you know money orientated…and he wouldn't invest in this house, it would be only just to get money…And! himself!... he actually, umm apparently on paper, he was still living there as well…although he stayed somewhere else because he wanted his children to go to the school, a good school in Radlett, although he didn't live in Radlett himself… I think he left, err he was living in... what's the name of the, the near little town next by- err Borehamwood'.*

This extract suggests that the first form of rented accommodation that Krystyna had lived in in Radlett in Hertfordshire in the UK had contained vermin, and was in need of some financial investment by the landlord to improve the condition of the property. Krystyna indicated that the landlord was reluctant to spend money to improve the condition of the

house and was also falsely claiming to be living in the house himself with his children so that they would be classed as being in the catchment area of a good local school in Radlett. The housing issues experienced by Krystyna, particularly the presence of vermin and the reluctance of some landlords to spend money to improve the condition of their rented accommodation, were also reflected within many of the experiences shared by the Polish migrant participants in Luton and in Peterborough. Additionally, Krystyna only discussed housing issues in reference to her first form of rented accommodation in the UK and did not mention any housing issues in her subsequent forms of housing in the UK, suggesting that she experienced upward residential mobility and lived in better housing conditions over time. Krystyna said that she had chosen to move into the shared house *'because of money'* suggesting that she had made the decision to live in shared accommodation because it was more affordable for her than non-shared housing options. After moving out of the shared house where she experienced some housing issues, Krystyna subsequently rented a flat in Radlett by herself because she said that it was *'relatively cheap'*. Krystyna explained that she would have been able to afford a house for the same amount of money in the neighbouring town of Borehamwood, but she chose to remain in Radlett because she liked the area, even though she could only afford to rent a flat there. Krystyna later moved to Harpenden with her partner and eventually after starting a family together they both moved to Wheathampstead with their two children. She had lived in rented accommodation in three different localities in Hertfordshire in the UK (in Radlett, in Harpenden and in Wheathampstead), and she said that she had never experienced any difficulties accessing housing or felt as though she had a lack of support with her housing. Krystyna said:

> *'Umm... no because I didn't need any, so I didn't need anyone, you know it was all private…I was looking for advertisements in newspapers…And I think my profession helped me in you know, getting as a teacher you know you get recommendations quite easy I would say'.*

This extract suggests that Krystyna had predominately found her rented accommodation in the UK through housing advertisements in newspapers and shop windows and she thought that her job as a teacher in the UK had made it easier for her obtain housing.

Krystyna explained that after she had migrated, lived in Hertfordshire for many years and had started a family with a British partner in the UK, she intended to remain in the UK

permanently. However, her plans changed when she separated from her British partner in the UK and she had decided that the best thing for her to do would be to return to live in Poland with her two children. When discussing her decision to return to live in Poland, Krystyna said:

> *'Umm well because my you know private situation, that I broke up with my partner…so I thought it would be the best solution to move back…umm eight years later, 2012'.*

Interestingly, Krystyna shared that she had saved up money while she was living and working in the UK that she was able to put towards purchasing a house in Poland when she returned to live in Poland again. Krystyna said:

> *'Umm not, not the… I could pay the half with the saved money…but if, if, I mean the living, my circumstances and personal situation were different, I would be able to…to pay for it with my savings'.*

And when asked about what her expectations of returning to Poland were, Krystyna said:

> *'Umm… well I lived here almost all my life so… I knew what to expect…so I knew that I can pay only for a flat, although I was hoping err that I could buy a little more….and so… yes, yes I could buy as, as, so if I made this decision a year before I probably would be able to buy, to buy a better place….you know for this money… because err the flats and houses became more expensive in this time…and now I wouldn't be able even, you know I contributed half with my savings…now it would be only a quarter'.*

These extracts suggest that Krystyna knew that she would only be able to afford to buy a flat in Poland after she returned rather than a house, as house prices in Poland had increased over time, and the amount of money that she had saved up whilst living and working in the UK was only sufficient to cover half of the cost of purchasing a flat in Poland at that time. The experience shared by Krystyna provides an example of how some Polish individuals have been able to utilise some of the income that they have gained while living and working in

the UK to become homeowners and purchase property in Poland after engaging in returning migration.

Bartek was a twenty-year old Polish man who like Krystyna was also living in the town of Police in the Szczecin agglomeration in northwest Poland. He could not recall the exact date when he had migrated to the UK, but he believed that it was during the Autumn of 2006, and he had lived in the UK for almost ten years before returning to Poland in early 2016. When he was asked why he had migrated to the UK, Bartek said:

> *'Umm my father had… had emigrated over to the UK, because he was looking for job opportunities. And at the time here in Poland we didn't really have many opportunities. Umm… I mean, I'm sure there were opportunities but my parents…umm I mean, I wouldn't say they're unskilled. My father does have…he's had some form of education, but it's definitely secondary level…so…he's quite uneducated in that sense. And there were jobs available. I think he asked a friend that had actually went over to the UK…yeah and so he contacted his friend and he went over, he flew over to the UK…after a few months my mother wanted to join him'.*

This extract suggests that Bartek's father had decided to migrate to the UK from Poland in search of employment as there were limited employment opportunities in Poland at the time and there were greater employment opportunities available in the UK. It also appears that his father had chosen to migrate to the UK rather than elsewhere because he had a social tie who was already living in the UK Bartek's father initially migrated to the UK alone by plane and joined his friend who was living in Worksop in Nottinghamshire. Then a few months later, Bartek, his brother and his mother joined his father in Worksop, where they all shared accommodation temporarily with Bartek's father's friend. Bartek said that the process of migrating to the UK was fairly easy for him because he was young and was not involved in any of the planning that was involved in order to migrate, he just travelled to the UK along with his mother and brother and joined his father in the UK. However, Bartek said that he found his living situation difficult during his initial two weeks in the UK when he and his

family had shared accommodation temporarily with his father's friend in Worksop. For instance, Bartek said:

> *'I mean err the first two weeks when we were at my father's friends' house, I guess. That was a bit stressful…because it was a new place… I didn't really know anyone. I wasn't going to school. I wasn't at home, umm it was a different area for me. And the area, it's not just the house, the area around was completely different…There were definitely some key differences which have been a bit unsettling. I mean I was curious but it wasn't homely at, at first…also the temporary living situation, well we didn't have like proper beds; we had air mattresses. And that was, you know it's not nice, to sleep, to sleep on the floor'.*

And Bartek also added:

> *'Well it was me, my brother, umm my mother and my father…ad I'm not…I don't know, I have no idea how many else…umm they definitely ran like umm an illegal scheme there, you know…they were sub-letting, I'm pretty sure.. so we were in a single room…Yeah you can imagine my mother was really dismayed by that. She really did regret coming over to the UK. Umm she thought that my father was more prepared. So…so yeah. She did resent him for that. For a while'.*

These extracts suggest that both Bartek and his mother felt uncertain and dissatisfied with their initial accommodation when they first arrived in the UK. It appears that Bartek felt anxious by the new, different and unknown people and surroundings in the UK. He described the experience as *'unsettling'* and said that it *'wasn't homely'* suggesting that he felt detached from the sense of comfort and familiarity that he had previously had where he had grown up in Poland and now felt as though he was living in an unknown and uncertain situation.

Additionally, from the extract above it appears that Bartek's mother had expected Bartek's father to have prepared and secured better quality accommodation in the UK before she arrived to join him in the UK with their sons. It seems that Bartek's mother was disappointed and *'dismayed'* with the quality of their initial housing arrangements when they first arrived in the UK, as the family initially shared a single room together and slept on air mattresses

on the floor. Bartek explained that his father's friend had sublet them a room in his house temporarily for two weeks, and Bartek described their shared sleeping situation in the single room as *'not nice'* and *'stressful'*, suggesting that he felt equally dismayed by their initial living arrangements. In addition, the extracts above also suggest that Bartek felt anxious about needing to attend a new school in the UK, which he later described as a *'very scary'* experience. He said:

> *'I can imagine I was err slightly curious but also I wasn't sure how I was going to go to school err not knowing the language. It was, it was stressful. I was definitely anticipating going to school and having to deal with problems'.*

When discussing his experience of attending a school in the UK, Bartek said:

> *'It turned out…it did turn out in a positive way'.*

And Bartek added:

> *'Well I've met new people. I didn't…I made one friend…yeah umm it was definitely more difficult for me because at the time when we just moved, I didn't know a word of English…so I'm really thankful for the primary school that I went to. They really taught me through, through getting my, getting around. And they taught me how to speak English'.*

These experiences shared by Bartek highlight the anxiety and concern that he felt when he first arrived in the UK, in unknown surroundings and with a need to attend a British school without any ability to speak the English language.

After residing with Bartek's father's friend temporarily for two weeks, Bartek and his family moved out into a rented house on their own in the former mining village of Creswell in Derbyshire. When describing this rented house, Bartek said *'I guess it must have been cheapest or it was the one available at the time'* suggesting that his parents were likely to have chosen to rent that particular house because it was affordable and available at that time.

Subsequently, Bartek suggested that his family were later able to purchase a larger semi-detached Council house elsewhere in the village of Creswell in Derbyshire. For example, Bartek said:

> *'We did move. Not very far though. But it was still within Creswell…but I think my father bought the council housing and there was a company that was working in partnership with the Council so we did get a place. It was a bit more expensive but it was semi-detached, so it was a bit better. We had a bigger garden. And we also had a driveway so that was an improvement'.*

This extract indicates that Bartek and his family had experienced upward residential mobility in the UK over time, as after initially sharing a single room and sleeping on air mattresses in his father's friend's accommodation in Worksop for two weeks, Bartek and his family moved into their own rented house in Creswell, and later purchased a semi-detached Council house within the same village.

Interestingly, Bartek revealed that when he migrated to the UK with his mother, his mother had continued to pay rent on the accommodation that they had previously lived in in Poland to ensure that they would have a backup option if their experience of migrating to the UK was unsuccessful and could return to live in Poland again. For instance, Bartek said:

> *'My mother wasn't sure if you know… she wanted a plan B, that if something were to go wrong that we wouldn't end up homeless…but eventually she did give that up and we just stayed, err we weren't sending money over anymore'.*

This suggests that Bartek's mother had planned for both positive and negative potential migration eventualities and was willing to spend extra money to maintain their rented accommodation in Poland so that their family could have a contingency plan in the event that their migration experience was unsuccessful and if they faced homelessness in the UK. Bartek explained that the rented accommodation in Poland that his mother continued to pay rent for after they migrated to the UK was a dilapidated apartment within a housing block, which was eventually claimed and sold off by the city condition because of its poor condition.

In another part of the interview, Bartek discussed the positives and negatives of his experience of living in the UK and said:

> *'Umm…the positives, I would say that I've learned another language, that's always a positive…and, and umm… well we were pretty poor err before we moved, umm over here in Poland. My mother had…she wasn't very responsible with money. My father had a drinking problem… at the time, so yeah we were pretty poor…in the UK, my father got a job as a welder…I mean it paid the bills. Yeah so we have improved our quality of life in the UK. And, the negatives. No family, none at all. There were friends but…you can't always rely on friends…we didn't have family in the UK…it was just us'.*

This extract indicates that Bartek felt positive that migrating to the UK had enabled him to learn the English language and had enabled his family to improve their quality of life. It appears that prior to migrating to the UK, his family were quite 'poor' as Bartek's parents had experienced financial difficulties owing to his father's alcohol problem and his mother's lack of responsibility with money. The extract shared by Bartek suggests that his family's financial situation and quality of life subsequently improved after they migrated as his father was able to obtain employment as a welder in the UK.

Although Bartek appeared to indicate that his quality of life had improved as a result of migrating to the UK, Bartek also shared some negative aspects of his migration experience including feelings of isolation and depression. For instance, in the extract above, Bartek suggested that he did not feel as though he had many people who he could rely on in the UK as he was only there with his mother, his father and his brother and did not have any other family members in the UK. Additionally, Bartek explained that he felt isolated in the UK because of his parent's limited English language abilities. Bartek said that his father had made some English friends at work and could speak some English, but made no attempt to interact with those people outside of his working hours, and his mother could understand limited English but had made no effort to learn or speak English herself. Bartek explained that this 'language barrier' and his parents reluctance to engage with English people and to make an effort to improve their English language abilities had *'really made us isolated to the Polish community'*. Bartek said that his family mostly only socialised with other Polish people in the UK, which he said he regretted and increased his sense of isolation in the UK.

Additionally, it seems as though living in a rural village location in the UK also increased Bartek's feelings of isolation. For instance, he said:

> *'It was depressing…. I lived in a village which wasn't connected well to other places… and it was pretty expensive to move around as well. Over here actually being a student, err I have free transport err within Szczecin and Police…I think that's really a positive thing…in the UK umm I had to pay for a bus and going around, getting around, it wasn't easy. Umm there wasn't a good service. I mean it was really meant for cars… and I didn't have a car… I wasn't going to ask my dad to err give me a lift as well, because…because he worked hard…and he was tired…yeah and other than that, it was just isolated'.*

This extract suggests that Bartek's feelings of isolation in the UK were exacerbated by the cost of public transport in the UK and his residential location in the village of Creswell, which had limited transport connectivity to other locations. Additionally, this extract further highlights Bartek's desire to have had other family members in the UK who he could have relied on for assistance in addition to his older brother and his parents.

Bartek explained that at the time of the EU referendum in the UK his mother was working because his father had lost his job as a welder in the UK and was finding it difficult to find new employment. Bartek explained that he and his family would have been eligible to be granted settled status if they had remained in the UK, and he said that he did *'consider applying for citizenship'* but that he did not apply as his family returned to Poland. When discussing why he had returned to Poland, Bartek said:

> *'Well my father had lost his job in the UK, and it really took a toll on his mental state. And he ended up going back to Poland, and my mother was kind of left without…. well no… she had a job but my mother is pretty reckless with money so err she ended up making a debt…she worked in a workhouse'.*

And Bartek also added:

> *'We couldn't continue living there…yeah, she couldn't afford the rent. So err we ended up umm…returning….at the time, well…our domestic situation wasn't very great. So I was actually looking forward to umm returning, back to Poland, because I knew that err with my family's support we could start anew'.*

Bartek's experience suggests that both his reasoning behind his migration to the UK and the reasoning behind his return migration to Poland were influenced by the financial situation and the employment status of his parents. The extracts shared above suggest that Bartek's return migration to Poland was triggered by a series of events that occurred within this migration experience in the UK. When Bartek's father lost his job as a welder in the UK, he struggled to find another source of employment and struggled to cope with the situation mentally, so he returned to live in Poland. Then as a result of his father's loss of employment, and his decision to return to Poland, his mother began working in a factory in the UK, but she became in debt and eventually could not afford to pay their rent. Therefore, owing to their employment and financial struggles in the UK, including their inability to afford their rent, Bartek and his mother also returned to Poland. After returning to live in Poland, Bartek explained that he and his parents had moved into his grandmother's house in the town of Police. His parents had chosen to move in with his grandmother instead of renting their own accommodation as his grandmother had a lot of space with two separate houses on her land, they all wanted to help to look after his grandmother, and his father was also likely to inherit the property in the future.

Within the extract above, Bartek suggested that he had felt relieved to be able to return to Poland, because he knew that his family's financial situation and quality of life would be improved with the support of his family in Poland. In addition, when discussing his return migration experience, Bartek said:

> *'I guess err it's pretty common. Umm my situation is quite common among Polish immigrants…but the way we've returned is…a bit different. It wasn't anything to do with Brexit. It was just our situation at the time…my father losing his job, and it was really stressful'.*

Within this extract Bartek highlighted that although he and his family had returned to Poland following the EU referendum, during a time when other Polish migrants may have returned to live in Poland owing to the decision for Brexit, in contrast Bartek had returned to Poland owing to his family's difficult financial situation and his father's loss of employment in the UK.

In contrast to Krystyna and Bartek who resided in Police in northwest Poland, Casimir was a 44 year old photographer who lived in the Mokotów district of Warsaw and had previously migrated to the UK twice. Casimir had first migrated to the UK in 2000 and lived in London until 2007 when he became redundant and returned to Poland. He then lived in Poland for a few months before he decided to return to the UK again in 2007, and he then lived in London for another eight years before ultimately returning to Poland again in 2015.

Casimir shared that he had attempted to move out of his parent's house where he had grown up in the small town of Puławy approximately 120km northeast of Warsaw multiple times when he was in his early twenties to try and live in Warsaw, but he said that his attempts had failed and he did not like living in the Warsaw in the 1990s. Casimir explained that he hated the city of Warsaw in the 1990's and experienced a lot of anxiety while he was living there at the time because it was dark, scary and he felt like he always needed to be cautious and looking over his shoulder because people were targeting non-local individuals in some parts of the city and Casimir had been mugged and had his wallet stolen from him a few times. Casimir explained that Warsaw had since become a much nicer and more welcoming place over time, but said that he had hated the way that the city was during the 1990's.

Casimir shared that it was during this time period that he had started to consider migrating to the UK. He said:

> *'Umm I wanted to go to London because my friend was giving me a headache about it. Like how great it is, in the nineties…and also I wanted to learn English which… I was failing to learn in Poland. And it wasn't the same when you're not forced to speak….so… I was saving up to go there, for the first attempt, because I didn't know how much money I'm going to need and how many times I will have to go there, and if they are going to let me. That was 2000, when Poland wasn't a part of the EU, so it was all this difficult time to come. And my friend from Brussels met me in my home town and he asked me what I'm doing, what's my plan and I say like oh I'm doing this, and he said well you're never going to save here. Come with me, he's got a building company there and I worked for a couple of months with him in Brussels, you save up, and then you go to London, that's why I went to Brussels. So I saved up money err for the beginning and a few months later I move to London…And I didn't know for how long. I thought it was going to be a year, then one year passed; second year, five, ten, fifteen…hey time to come back'.*

This extract shows that during the 1990's Casimir had formed a desire to migrate to the UK because he was unhappy living in Warsaw, he wanted to learn English and one of his social ties in the UK had been repeatedly telling him how great his experience of living in London was, which influenced Casimir to want to join him in London as well. Additionally, this extract reveals that Casimir had attempted to save up some money before moving to the UK, by working in Poland and working with his friend in a construction company in Belgium for a few months in 1999 to prepare for his migration to the UK in 2000. It appears that Casimir attempted to save up enough money prior to migrating to sustain him *'for the beginning'* of his time living in London, and once he felt that he had saved up enough money, he migrated to the UK in May 2000. Casimir explained that there not many cheap flights in Europe at that time, but he had migrated to the UK by plane from Warsaw to Heathrow Airport in London.

When he was asked why he chose to migrate to London rather than another location, Casimir said:

> *'I don't know, I just…London for me was a fascinating place before I knew it, even that I'm going to go there. What you read and hear about it. I mean British music, you know… I grew up on it… I have friends there already established so I know that I can count on them…especially one err from my hometown…so it was an obvious choice for me…I don't know, I didn't even think about it that, oh maybe Manchester or maybe Birmingham or maybe, I don't know some other town…it was such an obvious reason the choice for me, I don't know why. It's just go there, London. Ok London'.*

This extract suggests that Casimir had not considered migrating to any other location in the UK, and had only wanted to live in London. It appears that his desire to live in London was primarily owing to the presence of his social ties within the capital city, and the potential support that they could offer him in the UK, as he believed that he would be able to rely on his social ties for assistance if necessary. Additionally, it seems as though Casimir was attracted to London by what he had heard and read about the city, including the British music industry, the architecture and the diverse population. For example, Casimir said:

> *'Obviously there's so much history here of music and even when you don't come to the UK you know that this music came from the UK, one of the best bands, and one of the oldest things….and he was like you know telling you about this architecture, streets, the museums and stuff like that. It's like you have to see, the atmosphere there… the people are amazing, meeting from people from all over the world - and it was true!...we were meeting people from all over the world. So I was happy. Every day I met someone from this exotic country which you wouldn't normally do…and you don't have to get a passport and travel the world, you just go to London and you'll meet whole world there. So it was exciting'.*

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In addition, when Casimir was asked about his expectations before he migrated to the UK, he said:

> *'I didn't have much. I was young. Stupid. Naïve. Crazy. Like hungry for adventure. So I said whatever it throws me, life, I'm going to take it so… I just wanted experience; I was twenty-something so…you don't have much expectation. You're happy with whatever you have at that time…there was less pressure I think, on twenty years old than now I think'.*

Within this extract Casimir reflected on his expectations before migrating to the UK and described them as stupid, naïve and crazy, suggesting that the reality of his experience living in London was more difficult that he had originally expected. Within this extract Casimir indicated that he did not have many expectations when he migrated to the UK because he was young and naïve, and instead was mostly just excited to experience an adventure abroad and to accept whatever circumstances he found himself in in the UK.

As Casimir migrated to the UK in 2000, prior to Poland's accession into the EU in 2004, he explained that he had needed to obtain a visa to migrate to the UK. And as he did not have access to the internet at that time, he had searched in a newspaper in Poland for language classes in London, so that he could sign up and become eligible for a student visa to travel to the UK. When discussing his process of migrating to the UK, Casimir said:

'Well I knew that I needed a kind of student visa there or a working visa. I could come as a tourist that probably wouldn't be any problem so…but I knew that from my experience or from what I heard that they may not let me in for some reason and they don't have to tell why…so...so I remember I purchased a Language School, here actually, not far from here on the street (laughs). In London, Soho…Err for two weeks. I remember I had a friend. She was Polish but she had a British passport. And I speak to her if she will confirm me in case they call err from the you know the airport, if I'm staying with her because I said I'm going to stay with her…then, so I give her address. My friend was already there so he picked me up from the airport and he helped me find the accommodation, first accommodation. And he helped me find the first job actually…it was in his hotel when he worked as a chef, and I was… it was called Linen porter. So whatever this means for you now! (laughs)…it sounds better than it is (laughs). And that was my first job and then I go to…I used my obviously English School, and it was nice, but I didn't continue because it was too expensive and then I find a locally cheaper one…So I went to the cheaper one…And all my process was different because like, you couldn't work and study at the same time, to get the working…err study visa you have to study in the day which means you work in the day, so my trick was, and most of the people was doing, you buy the school for the visa but then I was buying a second school just to learn a language, so I paid double…So I contributed to London a lot!'.

This extract indicates that Casimir received assistance from his Polish social ties in the UK in order to migrate and to initially adjust to living in the UK. For instance, it seems that Casimir had utilised the address of one of his friends in the UK as the location where he would be staying in the UK on his visa application. Additionally, it appears that after arriving in the UK, another one of Casimir's friends who was already living in London had picked him up from Heathrow Airport and had assisted him to find his form of accommodation in the UK. Casimir explained that when he first arrived in the UK he was working during the mornings and afternoons and attended language classes in the evenings. His study visa required him to study during the day, but Casimir wanted to work in the UK as well as learning English, so instead he decided to pay for two different sets of language classes, one during the day which he did not attend and had only purchased to satisfy the requirements of his visa, and one in the evening which he attended after working during the day.

When discussing the assistance that his friend in London had provided to help him to find his first form of accommodation in the UK, Casimir said:

> *'Yes. Because you know the Polish people know each other at that time and then there was this empty bed, so ok, ok, I could afford only this, so why not? I just, I just paid for the bed. But that was a short time like three or four months and then I moved out because it was…no, you can't live there'.*

Within the extract above, Casimir explained that his Polish friend in London knew other Polish people living in the city and had found someone who had a spare bed available for Casimir to rent. Casimir said that he could only afford to rent a bed in a shared room within a shared house when he first arrived in the UK and shared that there were ten people living in three or four rooms within that first house that he lived in in London. He said that he did not know anyone else that he lived with prior to moving in and he only lived in that accommodation for three or four months because *'you can't live there'*, suggesting that it was not a suitable long-term place to stay. Additionally, when discussing his experience of living within his first accommodation in the UK, Casimir said:

> *'It was…if I had to do it now: never. I would come back to my parents…I'd rather live with my parents; crazy parents, but I would rather live with them…but then well obviously you have to manage as best as you can. And you have to imagine that ok everybody is going to start around 7 or 8 o'clock. So if you want to use the bathroom. What time you have to wake up? There is only one bathroom. Oh ok. So some people were taking showers in the evening so they can jump quickly in the morning and go to work. So you are managing like this'.*

This extract suggests that Casimir had found it difficult to live in his first accommodation in London because there were many people sharing and competing to use the same household facilities at the same time. In a later part of the interview Casimir revealed that his first form of accommodation in the UK was a bed within a rented three-bedroom flat in the Southfields area of Wimbledon in London which he shared with ten other people. He said that he would

never choose to live in shared circumstances again but that at that time he had attempted to manage and try to make the best of the situation. Casimir was also asked whether he had expected to be living in shared housing conditions in the UK prior to migrating to the UK from Poland, and he said:

> *'Yes, I was mentally prepared…I knew that I can't complain…I knew I can't really, you know, be fussy about it. Because… I didn't know how much time I have to find a new place or a new job or something like that…So I was taking whatever I was given at the beginning and then, ok I got my feet on the ground, then I can manage on my own…And my goal was to learn first English. To be independent. So I don't need anyone's' help…and I knew that if I'm going to be better with my English, I'm going to get a better job so'.*

This extract suggests that prior to migrating to the UK from Poland, Casimir had attempted to mentally prepare himself for some of the potential challenges that he thought that he may face once he arrived in the UK. For example, it appears that Casimir has tried to prepare himself for the possibility of needing to obtain and change his housing and employment rapidly. He said that he had accepted whatever work and accommodation he could get when he first arrived in the UK, and had initially received support from his social ties to adjust to living in the UK. And once he felt as though he had his *'feet on the ground'* and felt as though he had adjusted to live in the UK, he was able to support himself and manage his own employment and accommodation changes.

When Casimir was asked about the positives and negatives of his experience of living in the UK, Casimir shared detailed information related to his housing and working experiences in the UK over time. He said:

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'Wow! How long do you have? (laughs). Well. Let's put it this way. For the first four years…I moved… fifteen times in London…quite a lot. So the experience wasn't pleasant when err you're thinking from now, like from this point of view, with the perspective of time…but when I was there, I was twenty-six; I didn't care that I sleep with twenty people in the same flat! I mean it wasn't twenty, it was ten…it was three bedrooms or something. Then gradually I knew that this is going to be, so I need to suck it up. I need to bite my teeth and go through it, save money and move forward…so as I start saving, I moved with my Italian friend. Because I want to speak English everyday, not speak Polish, because I was living with Polish people. So I quite quickly after three months I was motivated and kind of determined to do this. I rented a room because we could afford only room, err with my Italian friend. Then umm a couple of months or a year later we could afford to have our own rooms. So gradually helping out and getting better jobs and more savings. I got…for one year I had three jobs; I was exhausted…I didn't have a day off at all for one year…I don't know how I did it. But I was young and probably stupid so I could do it. And I worked on a small salary! when I came I made two pounds eighty an hour…This is what we're paying in 2000…and it was a disgusting salary but I survived. I paid school, I paid two schools with this. It was err London was cheaper than now. And… and more affordable even to having a job in a coffee shop or whatever you wanted…even… and by the end of it, I used to have a good job, I worked in a corporation, a nice environment, an office and I still was struggling. And I still was living in the room. Because most of the people are living in a room in London because there's no point to hire a flat. I don't know, you have to have at least 100K a year to be comfortably paying this kind of money for the renting of your own apartment, like a studio even…so that's, that's crazy. Now I hear from my friends that it's like, £900-£1000 per room which is crazy…Err so gradually, my experience changed from… like I was excited with not having money but because I was learning a lot of things…but then I started getting more money and everything started getting more…you know, like umm you get used to it…and then you, you wanted more. Like always you wanted more comfort. And I said ok, I can't afford living on my own so I have to share it, I have to share a flat. So…err… so that's why my experience. And I left. One of the reasons why I left was because of this, it was a struggle to have a quality life. I was tired of travelling three hours a day. Err I was exhausted by nine o'clock to just go to work. Like most of the Londoners; it wasn't only me. It's like I'm not complaining but there's 70 percent of people who work there it's just like this…and that's why you're already in the train and people are angry, and you're feeling this energy like people are tired, no one, everybody ignores you…so it's like umm the quality of life. So this was so annoying because another part of living there was so amazing! That you have access to this art, to this err…you know, opportunities there! It's so much…but sometimes you think like, ok… you can do this, but how much money do I have to have to actually use this? So how many things/times we can go to free museum, you know? And err so you have to like choose, ok, I'm old enough to you know move out and maybe living in some quiet country or somewhere where the quality of life is better'.

This extract revealed that Casimir had lived in fifteen different forms of rented accommodation within his first four years of living in London. It appears that Casimir was not satisfied in many of his early forms of accommodation in the UK and described the experience as unpleasant. Although Casimir did not enjoy the experience of sharing a

bedroom with multiple other people when he first arrived in the UK, he said that he had accepted it because he was only twenty-six and he could not afford to live in different accommodation at that time. For example, in the extract above, Casimir said:

> *'Gradually I knew that this is going to be, so I need to suck it up. I need to bite my teeth and go through it, save money and move forward'.*

This suggests that Casimir had accepted his need to share a room with other people and to live in unsatisfactory housing conditions as something that he needed to tolerate and experience, until he was able to learn enough English to be able to obtain a better job and earn a higher income so that he would be able to move into his own room. Casimir explained that he then started to develop his English language skills, and work in multiple employment roles so that he could save up money. And eventually Casimir said that he was able to move out of the three-bedroom flat that he had shared with ten other people and was able to rent a room with an Italian friend instead. Interestingly, within the extract above Casimir said that each time he was able to earn enough money to move into larger, or better quality housing, he would get used to his new accommodation and then he would always feel a desire to live in better conditions with more comfort. And Casimir said:

> *'One of the reasons why I left was because of this, it was a struggle to have a quality life'.*

Casimir said that he had held many employment roles in London. His first job in the UK was as a linen porter for £2.80 per hour in a hotel in London where his friend was working as a chef. And Casimir said that he had been *'climbing my way up the ladder'* and had subsequently worked a cleaner, a bar man, a shop salesperson, an administrator in a telecom company, a logistical operator and a production manager. Casimir said that he quite quickly established himself and was working within a corporation in the city of London by the end of 2003, suggesting that he had experienced upward employment mobility over time. It appears that Casimir's ability to find better paid forms of employment over time contributed to him experiencing upward residential mobility over time as well, as he was gradually able to afford more comfortable forms of accommodation in London. For example, Casimir said:

> *'I was renting, then I moved to the better place. I was living on my own then and there was these places called bedsits so it was like kind of err you have a little bit like a mini studio or something like that. So you're still sharing something but not many things…and then… then my friend also bought a house and he said, I want you can help me pay my mortgage so I can rent you cheaply a room…and for me it will be…I cut the cost of travel because it was like Zone 5…and I said ok, I don't mind and it was a nice environment, it was quiet there…and it was…I feel like home…Err I don't share with strangers. So why not? And I lived there for ten years, for the rest of it…And so…so it was nice'.*

This extract demonstrates that Casimir had changed his housing multiple times during his experience of living in London and had been able to move into better quality housing over time. Casimir explained that he had first begun living in Wimbledon in London, and had later moved to other properties in Putney, Bayswater, Notting Hill and Ealing Broadway. He then subsequently began renting a room in a friend's house in Ruislip Gardens and lived there for ten years before returning to Poland. Casimir described that accommodation as being nice, quiet and homely, and indicated that he had preferred living there than in his previous forms of accommodation because he did not have to share his housing with strangers and was able to live with his friend. The housing experiences shared by Casimir suggest that he had experienced upward residential mobility over time in London in terms of improvements to the quality of his housing, but that he had always only been able to afford to rent rooms in London rather than larger forms of accommodation because of high housing and rental costs in the capital.

Casimir said that when he was living in London, he had often considered buying a flat there. However, Casimir said that had decided against purchasing a flat in London because he was not sure if his employment was sufficient to maintain mortgage payments and he was concerned about the stress and pressure that may have resulted from committing to a mortgage. For example, he said:

> *'I wasn't sure if I have a good, enough good job for this, if I'm going to survive and the stress with this…what if I lose the job, what's going to happen? Who's going to pay the mortgage?...because we wanted to buy this for the rent so we can split/split and make a business contract'.*

And Casimir added:

> *'I wasn't making enough to, to make this move comfortably…I knew that I'm going to be under such a stress and pressure that even though I'm going to feel depressed in work, I know I can't say no, because I have to pay the bills. And I don't want to have this commitment…I want to have this freedom that I'm going to move from other work and maybe have a couple of months off and do something else. Because you know… if you have these bills to pay, you have to be'.*

These extracts suggest that although Casimir had considered attempting to become a homeowner in the UK, he had decided not to because he had concerns that he was not financially stable enough to be able to pay for mortgage payments and bills, and he did not want to experience the extra stress or pressure that would be involved in order to meet those added financial responsibilities each month.

In addition, Casimir shared that while he was living in the UK he visited Poland around twice a year, to go on holidays and to visit his family, demonstrating his maintenance of transnational ties. Casimir explained that this process was a lot easier after EU accession in 2004, but that prior to that, he had experienced a lot of anxiety about travel between UK and Poland in case he would not be allowed to re-enter the UK after he left. For instance, Casimir said:

This extract highlights some of the difficulties that were associated with travel between Poland and the UK before Poland joined the EU in 2004 and before Polish Nationals were eligible to participate in the FoM to live and work in other EU member states without the need to apply for a visa. Casimir's experience suggests that prior to 2004 he found the process of travelling between the UK and Poland to be stressful and worrying, because he was concerned that he might not be allowed to return to the UK if he left the UK to travel to Poland for a short-term visit. Because of this fear, Casimir said that each time he returned to Poland to visit prior to 2004 he would begin to feel stressed about his return journey and would prepare a lot of documentation to support his eligibility to return to the UK again. Casimir said that he had experienced these stresses and travel concerns each time that he travelled back to Poland between 2000 and 2004, until Poland became a member of the EU and FoM began between Poland and the UK. However, interestingly, now that the UK has left the EU owing to Brexit, FoM between the UK and EU member states has now ended, which could reinstate similar travel difficulties and feelings of stress for individuals who choose to travel between the UK and Poland.

Additionally, when discussing his travel between the UK and Poland, Casimir said:

> *'When I was…each time I was visiting Poland and flying back to London, I was feeling so relieved, and happiness and when I was walking like after the flight on the streets of London I was like, oh this is my home….I feel like I'm at home. This is me. And then, and I never thought that it's going to be the day when I say, I want to move'.*

This extract demonstrates that Casimir felt relieved and happy each time he returned to London after visiting Poland temporarily between 2000 and 2007, because he felt at home in London and could not imagine wanting to live anywhere else. This suggests that Casimir felt a sense of belonging in London and felt safe and comfortable in the capital city, because he had lived there for many years.

Although Casimir indicated above that he did not previously think that he would ever want to move out of London, Casimir had since returned to live in Poland. When discussing return migration, Casimir explained that since he had first migrated to the UK in 2000, he had returned to live in Poland twice. He had first lived in the UK between 2000 and 2007 and had then returned to live in Poland for a few months before deciding to return to the UK again later in 2007. Casimir shared his reasoning for first returning to Poland in 2007 below:

> *'Oh that was 2007/8, so it was the crisis came….I lost my job…it was kind of a good redundancy because I worked for this company for five years…and they gave me a good leaving package….so, it was a kind of redundancy, was… obviously they were making a lot of people redundant. And I knew, I smelled that If I'm going to wait longer… I may not get this package. Because companies are very generous to the first ones. But after it's like, ok, it's too much. And I knew what was happening, is happening recession and stuff like that so. I spoke to them, I gave them a number, obviously I knew I'm not going to get this but I could get higher, you know, and they matched the offer which I liked…so they paid me quite well and I decided to move out and get my chances in Poland, but it wasn't a success at that time'.*

This extract demonstrates that Casimir had decided to return to Poland in 2007 because he had become redundant as a result of the GEC, and he had chosen to return to Poland with the money that he had gained from his redundancy exit page. Within this extract Casimir also revealed that he did not perceive his return migration to Poland at that time to be successful, suggesting that had not occurred as Casimir had expected. During the interview Casimir explained that he had initially felt excited to be leaving the UK and to be returning to Poland to start a new chapter of his life there, but that when it became close to his leaving date, he had experienced a panic attack owing to the realisation that his journey back to Poland was not only going to be a short-term visit and that he was going to be moving back to Poland indefinitely. For example, Casimir said:

> *'I was actually, I had an anxiety attack and panic attack before I flew…I had a leaving party and err for 24 hours my heart was pumping like crazy. I went up in the hospital but the guy said everything is fine, you're just under a lot of stress…do you have anything? I said yeah, I'm leaving. So it hit me that I'm leaving… I was like excited for a week, like I'm leaving, I'm leaving, but it actually got to my head that I'm actually leaving, it's not holiday…So I was really…it was really stressful… and for the first two weeks [in Poland] I couldn't sleep. I was packing my bag in the middle of the night and I'm going back, mum, I said mum I'm going back, I'm going back, I'm going back…but after I calmed down, I got used to it'.*

The extract above indicates that Casimir felt very stressed and anxious regarding his decision to return to Poland in 2007 and highlights the strong emotional impact that migratory decision making can have. In addition, the extract above suggests that Casimir did not feel emotionally ready to leave the UK permanently and that after he had returned to Poland, he had experienced feelings of regret and desires to return to London again. Furthermore, when discussing his experience after he had returned to Poland in 2007, Casimir said:

> *'I wasn't I think mentally prepared. I was struggling so much…mentally, like I couldn't adopt the new life here….I had a lot of cash to start something but I didn't know how…because everything I seen here was not what I wanted, you know? Like I missed my life in the UK…I missed my life from London, everything was so, like, efficient and even the doctors appointments, you know, like everything annoys you. So everything goes like... why are the people are so narrow-minded? Why are people like this so…and it was 2007, Poland was completely different, Warsaw was completely different than now'.*

This extract suggests that Casimir did not feel mentally prepared for his return migration to Poland in 2007 and had struggled to adapt to living in Poland again. Casimir explained that he had felt financially prepared to return, because he had returned with some money from his redundancy exit package, and he had expected to be able to use the money to start a new successful life in Poland. However, when he had begun living in Poland again, he had no plan for how to use the money effectively, he felt dissatisfied with his new life and new surroundings in Poland and he missed his old life in London. Casimir struggled to adapt and feel satisfied in Poland, so after living there for a few months, he made the decision to return to the UK to live in London again. Casimir then remained living in London for another eight years before he decided to return to live in Poland again in 2015. And Casimir said that when he had engaged in return migration to Poland for the second time in 2015, he had felt better mentally prepared than he had previously felt when he had returned for the first time in 2007.

Casimir suggested that he had ultimately decided to leave London to return to Poland in 2015 because he had felt as though he was only surviving in London rather than thriving, and was struggling to improve his quality of life in London any further with his income. He suggested that he felt as though he was *'hitting a wall'* and was unable to obtain a higher paid salary in London, and that without a higher income, he would not be able to live a good quality of life in the city. For example, Casimir said:

> *'Well I guess I wasn't really…seeing any future there at the moment…like I was hitting the wall that I don't know if I can make more money….and with this salary I can't live like this in London. Because we're just slaves there basically. Just surviving from one to one. Ok, I can save up a little bit and go to nice holiday on the discount to Spain, but still I'm living in the…whatever I'm living, you know, it's not the quality life and err… and you know the world changed; everybody go IT and I didn't like this kind of thing so…you know you're doing this and you're making lots of money or you're doing something else and you're not making enough money…so I said ok so maybe I'll do something else but after I'm going to live in some nicer place and cheaper and enjoy still life'.*

Within this extract Casimir also suggested that one of the reasons why he had decided to return to Poland in 2015 was the rise in information and technology jobs at that time, because he said that he was not interested in working within that field, and was not able to earn a high enough salary within other employment sectors in London. When discussing his second return migration to Poland in 2015, Casimir said:

> *'So…there was…now it's different completely because I prepared myself since 2000 maybe…'13 or something like that…so it took me a few years…and when I start thinking about it. So I wasn't like, ok, I'll jump on the plane now. No it was many reasons. Ok, I'll stay here a bit longer. Ok, I'll…oh another couple of hundred pounds would be nice on the account so I stayed twelve months more…so there was always something and I was always thinking, ok, am I ready, am I not and…when it came to the right time, I moved out…and there was no regret, it was nice, it was, it was a good feeling'.*

Within this extract Casimir suggests that his second return migration to Poland in 2015 was different and more successful than his first attempt at return migration to Poland in 2007, because he had not been ready or mentally prepared the first time, whereas he had prepared and had waited until he felt ready to leave before engaging in return migration for the second time. Casimir said that he had been mentally preparing himself to return to Poland for two years between 2013 and 2015 before he felt ready to leave London and return to Poland. And as he felt ready and prepared to return on that occasion, he felt positive about his decision

and enjoyed the experience rather than experiencing feelings of stress and regret. And in a later part of the interview, Casimir said:

I was making less money than in UK but I have a better quality life in Warsaw'.

This extract suggests that although Casimir had previously earned a greater income when he was living in London than he was able to earn after he had returned to Poland in 2015, he felt that he was able to live a better quality of life after returning to live in Warsaw.

Propensity to Migrate to the UK

Interview Location	Polish Participants	Subordinate Themes	
		May potentially migrate to the UK in the future	Does not have aspirations to migrate to the UK
Szczecin	Aleksandra	✓	
Police (near Szczecin)	Krystyna	✓	
Police (near Szczecin)	Bartek		✓
Wrocław	Wiktoria		✓
Warsaw	Ania		✓
Warsaw	Casimir		✓
Kraków	Beata		✓
Kraków	Liljana	✓	
Kraków	Natasza	✓	
Kraków	Alicja		✓

Table 30. The participants that discussed the subordinate themes relating to the superordinate theme of propensity to migrate to the UK.

The participants that discussed each subordinate theme that related to the superordinate theme of propensity to migrate to the UK are displayed in Table 30. 40% of the Polish participants in Poland (four participants) indicated that they may potentially migrate to the UK in the future, but all of these responses were tentative, and most of these participants indicated that if they did decide to migrate to the UK in the future it would most likely only be for a temporary visit. In contrast 60% of the Polish participants in Poland (six participants) said that they had no aspirations to migrate to the UK, which was mostly owing to contentment in Poland and a lack of desire for change. Additionally, one participant Casimir who had previously lived in London for fifteen years indicated that he would not want to return to live in the UK again owing to a reluctance to relive the emotional and financial struggles that he had experienced whilst previously living in the UK.

Aleksandra, Liljana and Natasza had never visited the UK before and all of them suggested that they viewed the UK in a positive light and would love to visit the UK in the future. For instance, when Aleksandra was asked if she had ever been to the UK, she said:

'Unfortunately, no…no. It's a pity, I'm going to do it but (shrugs and laughs)….yes, of course, yes of course, it's a fantastic culture and…this language…and yeah'.

And when Aleksandra was asked if she had ever considered migrating to the UK, she said:

'No, because I have a family. My son and my grandkids and I have to help them so it's not possible to, to leave…maybe…we'll see…yes, if I, if I you know I am not alone so if I moving, why not!'

This extract suggests that Aleksandra had not considered migrating to the UK in the past because she was needed in Poland to help her son to look after her grandchildren. However, when she was asked if she would consider moving to the UK in the future, Aleksandra said:

> *'Maybe, why not? But first I'm going to visit the UK'.*

And she added:

> *'The Police are my favourite (laughs) band so…and Sting and many, many, Queen and many others and…London is this mix of culture…I've heard a lot about it, you know… And the villages also you know, the country is beautiful so…'.*

These extracts suggest that although Aleksandra had not previously considered migrating to the UK owing to her need to look after her grandchildren, she appeared to be open to the idea of migrating to the UK in the future when she was no longer required to help with childcare. The extracts also indicate that Aleksandra was fond of UK music and culture and thought that the UK countryside was beautiful, suggesting that she would like to travel to the UK in the future. It appears there was potential for Aleksandra to consider migrating to the UK in the future, but her propensity to migrate appeared to be tentative and dependent on her family's need for her to provide childcare to her grandchildren. In addition, within the extracts above Aleksandra indicated that she would also want to visit the UK temporarily prior to considering migrating to the UK on a longer-term basis, further suggesting that her propensity to migrate to the UK was tentative and dependent on her experience in the UK during a short-term visit.

Similarly, when Natasza was asked if she had ever visited the UK before she said:

> *'No but I really want to, to go to the UK'.*

And when Natasza was asked if she had ever considered migrating to the UK, she said:

> *'Yes a lot (laughs)…err but for now I'm staying here, err because I don't really know from now what I want to do in my life. So for now I'm just staying here…and I also think about moving to Iceland'.*

These extracts indicate that like Aleksandra, Natasza had also never previously visited the UK, but had expressed an interest in possibly migrating to the UK in the future. When she was asked what interested her about the possibility of migrating to the UK or Iceland in the future, Natasza said:

> *'Probably, umm I want to learn English well (laughs)… umm and I want to find a fine job, because in Poland I can find a job but the earnings are just small'.*

This extract suggests that Natasza had considered migrating abroad because she wanted to further develop her English language abilities and had a desire to earn a larger income than what was available in Poland. However, although Natasza expressed these desires to migrate abroad, Natasza said that she intended to remain in Poland at the time of the interview, suggesting that her considerations to migrate abroad to the UK or Iceland were tentative and were future possibilities rather than current aspirations or plans. This was further suggested when Natasza discussed her plan to buy a flat in Kraków within the next few years following the interview. For instance, Natasza said:

> *'Yes still in Kraków. I think it's my home (laughs) and I will stay here…even if I want to, I don't know live in another country for a while…but I think I'll always come back here'.*

This suggests that Natasza felt a sense of attachment to Kraków and thought that she would always eventually return to live in Kraków to settle there permanently even if she did choose to live abroad temporarily for a while in the future. In addition, Natasza said:

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> *'I just probably want to travel and it's not only the
> UK but the other countries also I want to visit…
> but for now, I can't handle it (laughs)... it's just,
> it's just the money for now'.*

This further suggests that Natasza had desires to travel and visit other countries such as the UK and Iceland in the future, but that these potential travels were more likely to be in the form of short-term visits rather than long-term or permanent migratory movements.

Similarly, Liljana shared that she would like to migrate to the UK for a short-term, temporary stay, for approximately one month, before moving to another European capital city. For instance, when she was asked if she would consider migrating to the UK in the future, Liljana said:

> *'Yes. I would like to, because I was in London just
> for two, one day actually..and I fall in love…
> immediately with the city. So I would like to be
> there, umm be there for a while…err like, for one
> month I had an internship in Prague…and then I
> was living in Berlin for two months….and I
> imagine that…it's my…actually it's my dream to
> live for one month in every capital of every
> European country…so London was definitely on
> my list... but now with this Brexit it can be…
> (laughs), a bit difficult. We will see'.*

This extract suggests that Liljana would like to return to the UK again because she had enjoyed her previous experience of visiting London for one day. However, from her extract it appears that Liljana would only intend to migrate to the UK temporarily, so that she could experience what it would be like to live there for one month, rather than intending to migrate to the UK long-term or permanently. In addition, as well as only intending to migrate to visit the UK for a short period of time, Liljana also indicated that her plans to travel to the UK for a one- month period may be impacted by Brexit. This suggests that her plan to migrate to the UK was tentative and was likely to only be temporary if it did occur in the future.

In contrast to the Polish participants discussed above who had not had any experience in the UK, the remaining Polish participants that were interviewed in Poland had either previously

visited the UK on a short-term basis or had lived in the UK previously before eventually retuning to Poland. The perspectives that these participants had towards the possibility of them migrating to the UK in the future is discussed below.

When Wiktoria was asked whether she had ever considered migrating to the UK, she said:

'Not seriously no… No. Actually, I seriously considered moving to Munich… Germany. Yes I did seriously consider that but for now I haven't done it yet'.

This extract shows that Wiktoria had not had any serious aspirations to migrate to the UK but had considered potentially migrating to Munich in Germany. When Wiktoria was asked why she had not *'seriously considered'* migrating to the UK, she added:

'Why? Well you know just before because it was university. So actually you just think you have to finish your course and then I got married… and then my child was born and then I got divorced and then I met my German husband and so it was…so that's just…it just never happened!... that's why'.

This extract suggests that Wiktoria thought about the potential to migrate to the UK in the past when she was a student, but that these thoughts never became serious considerations as she then began her university studies in Poland and later got married and started a family in Poland. Therefore, she had become more deeply embedded in her life in Wrocław in Poland and her distant previous thoughts about the possibility of migrating to the UK were never realised. Subsequently, she had divorced the father of her child and later remarried a German man. Wiktoria explained that her German husband was living in Munich in Germany at the time of the interview while she was living in Wrocław in Poland. Wiktoria also shared that she had seriously considered migrating to Germany to join her husband in Munich, but that she had not moved there yet owing to her ex-husband's visiting rights and desires to have contact with their son. When discussing her considerations to migrate to Munich, Wiktoria said:

> *'I just thought perhaps it would be easier but then… problems with the father. And so he doesn't have the… the, the, the consent, the custody?... the custody of the child, so the child stays with me. But still he has a say… visiting and just deciding... so within, within this country I can move freely but with moving abroad not, so that's why…so now I'm waiting until he's 18!'.*

This suggests that although Wiktoria had aspirations to migrate to join her husband in Munich in Germany, she had planned to wait to migrate until her son became aged 18, to comply with her ex-husband's visitation rights and to ensure that her ex-husband would still be able to have contact with their son in Poland. Although Wiktoria suggested that it was likely that she would migrate to Germany in the future, it did not appear that Wiktoria had any desire or a propensity to migrate to the UK in the future.

In addition, Alicja explained that when she was a student she had considered migrating to the UK temporarily for a short-term job, which she suggested was a very common aspiration for students in Poland. However, Alicja said that she had not considered migrating to the UK permanently, and she when she was asked why, Alicja said:

> *'Umm... I don't know because, because here I have a good opportunity to work at the university and my language skill is not enough to have a work that I would like to have in the UK so'.*

This suggests that Alicja has not considered migrating to the UK for a long period of time or permanently because she felt content with her employment role as a lecturer at the Jagiellonian university in Kraków, and because she did think that her English language abilities were sufficient to obtain the level of employment that she would want to have in the UK. Additionally, when she was asked whether she had any desire to migrate to the UK in the future, Alicja said:

> *'Not really (laughs)… the weather is not good there (laughs)… but maybe if they... but I know the Universities are quite, quite err closed err for foreigners…for long time positions. I think there is opportunities to go there for one year like postdoc or something like this… but not to stay there…and I'm not a person who likes to err move from one place to another. I prefer to stay somewhere. Even if it's just the Poland'.*

This extract further suggests that Alicja did not have aspirations to migrate to the UK because she did not believe that there were sufficient long-term employment opportunities available for migrant workers within UK universities. Additionally, Alicja suggested that she disliked frequently relocating to new places and would prefer to remain in one place. And Alicja indicated that she was content where she was currently living and working in Kraków.

Similarly, Ania also suggested that she had no aspirations to migrate to the UK as she felt as though she had a stable life and a good job where she was currently living in Warsaw and was not experiencing any push factors that would incentivise her to consider migrating abroad. Ania said:

> *'No I don't have such intentions…I would like to stay in Poland…mmm maybe one reason is that I don't have a reason to move (laughs)…I mean we both have nice, good jobs here and well to move abroad we would have to have err some future incentive or reason and we don't so…and as I said I like a stable life (laughs)…yeah I love to travel abroad and I really love spending time with international people. People and learning from them…that's why I (laughs), I agreed to the meet with you, because I always learn something from other perspectives…but to, to live abroad, if I'm not like kind of forced by some circumstances then I don't consider it'.*

Similarly, Beata also shared that intended to remain in Poland because she was currently satisfied with her employment and where she was living in Kraków. For example, Beata said:

> *'Mmm no I think I'll remain in Poland. Well this is what I think, but we'll see. We will see what happens…I like it here, I've got a job that I like. Err well as I'm saying I have a kid and err well I'm a single mother. But the father of my kid lives here…so it's also you know kind of err difficult'.*

This extract suggests that Beata also felt as though she was somewhat tied to Kraków and that her mobility options were presently limited owing to her being a single mother with a child, as the child's father was also living in Kraków and needed to have regular contact with their son. When Beata was asked whether the presence of her ex-partner in Kraków was influencing her to remain in that location, Beata said:

> *'I mean it's not, it's definitely not the main reason. It's one of the reasons… right? but this is, I mean this is the same as with moving the house. I think that when my kid is bigger then the situation would change… and I might say one day ok, why not? … when he's able to you know manage his contact with his father'.*

This extract suggests that Beata would be unlikely to consider moving elsewhere within Poland or to migrate abroad until her son was old enough to be able to manage his contact with his father himself. From the extracts shared by Beata above, it seems as though Beata had not ruled out the possibility of migrating or moving elsewhere in the future as she used phrases such as '*We'll see. We will see what happens'* and *'I might say one day ok why not?'*. However, at the time of the interview Beata was satisfied with her residential location and employment in Kraków and said that she thought that she would remain in Poland. In another part of the interview Beata shared that she had previously considered migrating to the UK when she was a student. She said:

> *'Well I, I really I, well I should say I wanted to, wanted-umm, It's too strong. But I thought about moving to the UK when I was a student and then a PhD student. Because I liked there, especially the place in the North. It was just something I really really like… but it was kind of you know dreaming, right? because it was a holiday place, it didn't' have all the responsibilities…so it was fine, and now I'm not sure if I really wanted to move there. Because the place here is not so much different from what you've got in the UK'.*

This extract suggests that after she had spent some time visiting London, Cumbria and parts of Scotland in the UK temporarily during the time that she was a student in Poland, she had considered migrating to the UK as she had enjoyed her experiences of visiting the UK. However, within this extract Beata described her previous considerations to migrate to the UK as *'dreaming'*, as they were based on her positive short-term holiday experiences in the UK, without any responsibilities. This suggests that on reflection, Beata believed that her previous desires to migrate to the UK based on her holiday experiences were unrealistic, and that her experience of living in the UK would have been different if she had migrated to the UK long-term and had greater responsibilities. Beata explained that although she had considered migrating to the UK when she was a student, she was then offered a place on a PhD course in Kraków and decided to remain in Poland to complete her PhD instead. And subsequently she acquired a job at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and decided to remain in Poland indefinitely.

Whereas the Polish participants discussed above had either never visited the UK, or had only visited the UK for short-term stays, Krystyna, Bartek and Casimir had previously lived in the UK before returning to live in Poland, and shared different perspectives on the prospect of migrating to the UK in the future.

Krystyna had previously lived in the UK for eight years before returning to Poland, and during the interview she shared that she sometimes wished that she had stayed in the UK.

Krystyna said:

> *'Even now I sometimes think maybe I shouldn't have returned'.*

And when she was asked why she sometimes regrets her decision to return to Poland, Krystyna said:

> *'I think it's the manners… you know there is, when you sometimes speak to people you think ugh where am I?... it's sometimes I have an impression that I'm among umm football supporters you know? Only… and, and of course I think generally living here is much more difficult you know comparing how much I earned in England and how much I am earning now…so this and... but, I mean it's only changed in the last... four years when we got the new government… because when I was coming back and we had this umm other party governing, it was you know, I felt totally different…now once they won. And they said, now we have this PIS...so they are very conservative… very backwards really…so umm this annoys me a lot and I'm sometimes worried because I've got two sons and they are also kind of military orientated…. but they double nationality so'.*

This extract suggests that Krystyna sometimes regrets her decision to return to Poland with her two children, because it was easier for her to afford the cost of living in the UK with the higher income that she previously earned in the UK than it was for her to afford the cost of living in Poland with her current earnings that were less than what she had earned in the UK. Additionally, Krystyna said the poor manners of some people in Poland and the governance of the PiS party in Poland had at times made her wish that she had remained living in the UK instead of returning to Poland. In particular, Krystyna expressed her concern that the conservative PiS party in Poland would bring back national service and would conscript her sons into the Polish army. However, Krystyna hoped that her sons would be able to avoid that eventuality if necessary as they were both Polish and British nationals and would be able to return to the UK to avoid national service in Poland if needed.

When Krystyna was asked if she had any aspirations to migrate to the UK, she said:

> *'If my children decided to go to England, both of them, and they would like me to go with them, I would…but it's you know'.*

And Krystyna added:

> *'I might because I'm not... you know, I never... I might. I don't mind changing places and living in different places…but at the moment I wouldn't do it, because of the children. Because I don't want them to move every few years…it would be too difficult for them'.*

The views and experiences shared by Krystyna above suggest that she would be open to returning to live in the UK again in the future and that she would consider joining her sons if they decided to migrate to live in the UK again. However, it appeared that her propensity to migrate to the UK was tentative and dependent on whether or not her sons ever decided that they would want to return to live in the UK again.

Similar to Krystyna, Bartek also shared that he had experienced some feelings of regret since leaving the UK to return to Poland, such as a regret that he was not able to achieve his A level qualifications before returning to Poland. Bartek shared that after he had returned to Poland from the UK in 2016, he had a strong desire to move back to the UK again, but he said that his aspiration to return to the UK had since decreased over time. For example, when he was asked what his expectations were when he was returning to Poland, Bartek said:

> *'Umm I expected to… to actually… umm stop going to school…And I was going to travel to Denmark because my brother worked there. And he was making quite good money as well. ..and my plan was to save up some money and actually go back to the UK'.*

This extract suggests that after returning to Poland, Bartek intended to cease attending school and intended to travel to work and live with his older brother in Denmark so that he would be able to save up enough money to return to the UK. This suggests that Bartek initially did not want to remain in Poland after returning to Poland from the UK, and had a strong desire to return to the UK again. However, when he was asked whether he still aspired to return to live in the UK, Bartek said:

> *'I used to. Not, not anymore really… I think that I really do want to see other places…so I did actually think about umm… you know it's just a thought, but I think that I would like to see Australia…yeah see about moving there. It's warm, I don't like cold!... and I thought about going to the States as well… because there's plenty of job opportunities in the States… Yeah and there's also a strong chemical industry in America…and that's why I'm currently studying as well'.*

This extract suggests that although Bartek initially had strong intentions to return to the UK, his desires to return to the UK had decreased over time and had been replaced by desires to travel and experience life in other locations such as the United States of America. Additionally Bartek shared that he had considered the possibility of studying abroad in the Netherlands in the future. He said:

> *'If I do end up getting the international qualification, I might actually consider studying abroad…I've actually thought of going to Holland, err to the Netherlands…it's a nice place. I want to see more places…I want to travel a bit as well'.*

And in another part of the interview, Bartek said:

> *'I would prefer to live in an English speaking country. I think it would be easier for me… however I do want to learn foreign languages'.*

The extracts shared by Bartek above suggest that at the time of the interview he did not intend to return to live in the UK again, and had aspirations to travel to work or study in other English speaking countries such as the United States of America or the Netherlands instead.

Like Krystyna and Bartek, Casimir had also previously lived in the UK and had since returned to live in Poland. However, in contrast Casimir did not indicate any feelings of regret related to his decision to return to Poland and shared that he had no aspirations to return to live in the UK again in the future. He said:

> *'No. No…my girlfriend's tempted, but she's never lived there and it was kind of like, you know, her teenager dream. Like Australian people love London…And I say to her, look if you want to go, go, but on your own. I'm not going there…Err unless I will make lots of money. And even so, I wouldn't stay there for long…because I can't come back to the struggle…not even financially like, just…it was exhausting mentally, you know?. The overcrowded city, the underground, everywhere is so difficult to get, and so what you have this few beautiful moments? but… no….I would love to visit more often. I would love to have more money to be like, oh I'll jump on a plane and go for a weekend…because I love London. I miss it a lot. I just want to go, all the streets, walking on foot and see again… So for this reason yes, I would love to always come back to London…but not living there'.*

This extract suggests that although Casimir had feelings of nostalgia towards London, and said that he missed the city and would love to be able to visit it again, he had no desires to return to live in the UK long-term. Casimir's choice of words within this extract portray his experience of living in London for a total of nine years as a series of beautiful moments and fond memories overshadowed by tiring travel and commuting experiences, over-crowdedness and financial struggles within the city. It appears that although he enjoyed aspects of his previous experience of living in London, he would not want to return to live there again because he did not want to relive and re-experience the financial and emotional struggles that he had felt when he had previously lived in London.

Casimir also reinforced those views within the following extract:

> *'It's crazy expensive, everybody say, even here, like no I wouldn't live there anymore…even like last Saturday I met people who studied there and they said no. No, it's crazy…no, for this reason I wouldn't back. I wouldn't back and err, and it's overloaded. I used to live in Ruislip Garden…and when I…2004…err there is the stop White City…and until Ruislip Garden it was empty…in 2004. In 2015 I barely have a seat in my stop, which was the before last one….not to mention that in 2004 I paid £104 for travelcard. In 2015 I mean £240 or 30, something like that…So double. My salary didn't double…which if it did double, I would stay probably a bit longer…so that's the craziest thing…and people are tired. And quality. equality is so big, it's big a big difference'.*

This suggests that Casimir believed that the high-cost of living in London had resulted in the capital city becoming a less attractive residential location over time. Furthermore, this extract shows that one of the factors that had influenced Casimir to return to Poland was the disparity between income growth and the rising cost of living in London, which made it more difficult for him to improve his quality of life in the UK. For example, Casimir said that the cost of a travelcard to enable him to commute to work in London had doubled between 2004 and 2015, but that his income had remained the same, resulting in him needing to spend a greater proportion of his income on travel costs each year.

In addition, when Casimir was asked about his views on the UK, he said:

'I don't know, I have a lot of friends there. I miss it, I have a… it's going to be always in my heart, London. It's…I always say that like I walk around the streets of London, especially the one I spent the most time, I said this is where I grew up. So London is going to be forever in my heart. I'm so grateful for all the experiences and the people I met! I mean, I wouldn't…be able to meet these people anywhere else, I think. I'm lucky for the people. I'm a sucker for like interesting stories…And stuff like that so I'm, I'm so happy. But in terms of what's happening now, the Brexit thing. No one knows! It's like I stopped even listening to the TV because it's all lies and everybody is saying, own rights. I know that whatever happens, it's always the people with the lowest salaries that are going to suffer. The rich people won't suffer ever. So being there, like my friend which she, like now, finished accountancy, she's doing another study for this to get more even qualification and her salary way up. She was thinking to move closer to work but then she found out that the cheapest room is £700. She said, Ok, I'm staying where I'm staying because I lived here for the last ten years, and it's cheap….It's not the best but she, like I say, are you considering to buy, I say no, and I say I will advise you to not buy now because if happen Brexit, everything can collapse. Or maybe… after Brexit it will be cheap, you don't know…so don't plan anything, movement, maybe invest in a different country just to have the stability. Because at the moment, like…I don't know, some people say they may not have medicine if the Brexit happens…Which is crazy. Or people expect riots because people will try to be looting the supermarkets for the food so… I don't know actually, I don't know if the government knows what they're doing. I don't know how people feel comfortable about it and confident. I know they're still undecided but the clock is ticking…and no one knows. I don't know where is the stage now. So in terms of this like… anyone asking me, do you want to go to London? No, and I don't think anyone who I know has a positive opinion in terms of an economical reason why I should go to London. It's mostly I'm hearing like, ok, probably I'll wait to see if there is Brexit happens and see what happens next…if not, I'm wrapping up and going somewhere else….yeah, or people living back in London and for long time and they think, yeah ok, I have an offer from Germany, maybe I will move there because it's cheaper…err and the quality of life is better and they will pay me an even better salary, so…so I don't know. No one knows. It's very difficult to say what opinion I have. I mean, I know I wouldn't pack my bag now to go back to London….because in 2000 I had £500 in my pocket. I don't think £5,000 would be enough now to start something new'.

This extract provides further evidence that Casimir had nostalgic views towards London and felt grateful for the time that he had spent living in the UK, the experiences that he had had and the people who he had met in London. Although Casimir had migrated to the UK when

he was twenty-six years old, he described London as the place where he grew up, suggesting that he viewed his migration experience in the UK as a pivotal stage of development in his life. Additionally, within this extract Casimir discussed some of his thoughts on Brexit and indicated that he had advised a friend in the UK to avoid purchasing housing in the UK in case of a potential housing market crash and a reduction in house prices owing to Brexit. Casimir also discussed the uncertainty that he associated with Brexit at that time, as Brexit negotiations and Brexit decisions were still being made at the time of the interview with Casimir in 2019 and the consequences of Brexit were still unclear. Casimir indicated that he felt as though no one knew what the implications of Brexit would be, and that he did not have confidence in the UK government's ability to manage Brexit. Additionally, towards the end of the extract above, Casimir said that from his experience, he did not know anyone in Poland who wanted to migrate to the UK for economic reasons, as the decision for Brexit had created uncertainty about the potential economic benefits of migrating to the UK. In addition, Casimir indicated that most of the Polish people that he knew in the UK who he had spoken to about Brexit had said that they were planning to wait and see whether Brexit occurred and what the consequences of Brexit would be, and then they would decide whether to remain in the UK or to migrate someone else. Casimir suggested that Brexit had had made the UK a less attractive potential migration destination and a less attractive long-term settlement location for Polish nationals compared to other locations such as Germany, which now offered Polish nationals higher salaries, a cheaper cost of living and a better quality of life than the UK.

Additionally, Casimir said:

> *'I know there is no big boom that people say, oh we're going to London! No. It's like I know people now going to London to have fun. I know people who can afford that. I know people who are travelling for the weekend, staying in the best hotels, and having so much fun and spending money because they have amazing businesses here…And they can do this. So they're not going there for work anymore, they're going to have fun'.*

This extract again suggests that from Casimir's experience, London had become a less attractive migration destination for Polish nationals over time. And he said that knew more

Polish people who were choosing to travel to London for short-term leisure visits than Polish people who were choosing to migrate to London to live and work within the capital city.

From the extracts shared by Casimir above, it appears that he had no desire to return to live in the UK himself because of the struggles that he had experienced while trying to improve his income, housing and quality of life in London when he had previously lived in the UK. Additionally, Casimir suggested that the high-cost of living in London and the uncertain consequences of Brexit had resulted in the UK becoming a less attractive migration and settlement destination for Polish nationals, particularly when compared to other countries such as Germany which Casimir said was a comparatively more attractive destination in terms of income, cost of living and quality of life.