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You've got Starbucks and Coffee Heaven... I Can Do This!

Spaces of Social Adaptation of Highly Skilled Migrants in Warsaw

Aneta Piekut^{*}

This article fills a gap in migratory research in Poland by exploring patterns of social adaptation of intra-EU migrants living temporarily (i.e. up to five years) in Poland. The paper explores the spaces of everyday social practices of people of British, French and German nationality that came to work here or followed a family member and uncovers a family and female perspective on social adaptation of highly skilled elite migrants in Warsaw. It presents original empirical material employing creative research techniques gathered in Warsaw. The study reveals that social adaptation of intra-EU highly skilled migrants is spatially selective and expats develop connections with spaces related to their family life reproduction, such as international schools, expatriate associations and places of leisure and consumption. The article argues that more attention should be paid in future research to intra-EU mobility and the gender imbalance in accessing particular local resources, such as the labour market.

Keywords: highly skilled migration, expatriates, intra-EU mobility, social adaptation, Warsaw, Poland

Introduction

The 1989 uprisings in Central and Eastern Europe triggered political, economic and societal transformations. These transformations led to foreign direct investment and the expansion of transnational corporations into the former Socialist Bloc. Particularly in the 1990s, various executives and experts in Warsaw constituted the 'visible heads' of the 'invisible hand of the market' that structured the transformation of the Polish economy (Rudolph, Hillmann 1998). At that time, Poland was lacking specialists with the appropriate skills and knowledge required by international companies, so the inflow of capital was naturally accompanied by an inflow of brainpower. Contrary to predictions made at the beginning of the systemic transformation in Poland (Igllicka 2000; Rudolph, Hillmann 1998), inflows of specialists from 'developed' countries have not diminished. Because of the concentration of diplomatic posts, international organisations' branch offices and foreign capital, the number of foreign executives and professionals in Warsaw is much higher than in other Polish cities. However, the majority only stay temporarily in Poland, forming expatriate communities.¹

^{*} Interdisciplinary Centre of the Social Sciences, University of Sheffield. Address for correspondence: a.piekut@sheffield.ac.uk.

The two decades since the systemic transformation have brought a considerable amount of research devoted to immigrant adaptation in Poland (see for example edited books: Górny, Grabowska-Lusińska, Lesińska, Okólski 2010; Grzymała-Kazłowska 2008a; Ząbek 2002). However, I argue that not enough attention has been paid to the social performance of the most skilled migrants, such as workers of transnational corporations, foreign diplomats, and various specialists, including foreign engineers, medical doctors and academics, who are present in the Polish labour market (Fihel, Kaczmarczyk, Stefańska 2013). The Polish accession to the European Union (EU) in 2004 and reduction in restrictions on undertaking employment in Poland for citizens of all EU countries in 2007 have both contributed to improvement of the Polish position among other migratory destinations (Okólski 2010). Skilled migration and more flexible forms of mobility are central for EU integration processes and shaping a new map of European migration (King 2002). Considering the intra-EU mobility agenda of ‘free movement’ for citizens of all member states (Directive/2004/38/EC), it is worth studying how mobile EU citizens develop their ordinary lives in other European countries, since this new form of freedom, European freedom, deserves to be explored (Favell 2008: 3).

This article fills a gap in research on migration by exploring patterns of adaptation of intra-EU migrants living temporarily (i.e. up to five years) in Warsaw and working in highly skilled occupations or not currently working, but possessing higher qualifications or education, as specified by the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-88 (OECD 2001).² Particularly, the paper investigates the social adaptation of people of British, French and German nationality living in the Polish capital. It does so by applying a human geography approach to studying processes of social adaptation, i.e. it looks at the spaces and places of everyday social practices. The paper is organised as follows. In the literature review I discuss the spatial dimension of adaptation and its specificity for highly skilled migrants; what places and spaces are important in the lives of expatriates, what they do in these places and with whom. The importance of the spatiality of their adaptation is discussed from the perspective of the different roles that migrants of different genders play in reproduction of these spaces. After setting the research frameworks and questions, I introduce the techniques used to gather empirical material and the usefulness of the creative methods that I applied. The central part of the paper is divided into two parts. In the first part I explore migrants’ perceptions of Warsaw (existing before arrival in the city and confronted with experiences within the first days spent there) and their mental maps of the city. In the second part I unpack the material, emotional and social aspects of the places outside home and the workplace that have proved to be the most important for their social adaptation. In the concluding section I lay out the implications of the study for future migration research in Poland.

Spatiality of adaptation

Place and space are central concepts of human geography and urban sociology.³ Space is assumed to be more abstract, while place is more experienced on an everyday basis. Space might be physical if it encompasses a set of locations, sites, objects, etc., or it might be social if it is a space of lived interactions (Elden 2009). Space is always a product of social practices, so even physical space might be social, and it is not static, but is reproduced in everyday life (Lefebvre 1991). A location becomes a place when it is given a meaning by a person (e.g. it becomes my neighbourhood, my home) or a whole group (e.g. the Parade Square in Warsaw) (Cresswell 2009). Apart from their material and emotional dimensions, places are also locations where social interactions occur. Since spaces and places are socially constructed, through space-making practices people enter into new communities or wider socio-cultural environments, in other words mobilities create spaces and stories – spatial stories (Cresswell, Merriman 2010: 5). Indeed, spatial mobility manifests itself in entering, being in and leaving different places and spaces. International migrants start their movement in one

country, where they have their places of living, social life, leisure, work, education, etc., then they move into different social spaces where they re-establish some of the previous places of everyday life. In the case of highly skilled migrants, who are also a very highly mobile group, these practices of re-creation of social spaces have to be repeated relatively frequently in different socio-cultural contexts. Moreover, their social spaces might span two or more national contexts and become a transnational social space (Faist 2004; Glick Schiller 1999), or if they connect two localities of everyday social practices they become translocal spaces (Brickell, Datta 2011).

The spatial practices of privileged migrants were investigated extensively by Fechter (2007) in her study of expatriate communities in Jakarta. Observing their everyday lives, she revealed how these highly skilled migrants carved out their spaces and produced boundaries performing their daily, routine activities, for example in their housing preferences, means of transport used and specific leisure and consumption activities of choice. Although their international lives were fluid, their local lives were static and fixed in particular places which preserved them from the gaze of the Other. Fechter's (2007) study demonstrates how much the spatial is related to social distance (Bourdieu 1989) – that spatial proximity does not generate social nearness, and social distance can be kept although people might have opportunities to encounter the local population (Simmel 1950[1908]). The social adaptation of highly skilled migrants in Fechter's (2007) study and other studies of expatriate communities has been influenced by racial differences among local and expatriate populations (cf. Hindman 2008; Leonard 2010), but such differences do not apply in the Polish case.⁴ It is worth investigating how people of different socio-cultural background and lifestyles – who are racially 'invisible' – spatially situate their lives in Polish society and local communities in Warsaw.

Previous studies in Warsaw have shown that highly skilled migrants constitute a heterogeneous group in Warsaw with adaptation strategies ranging from settling in and integration to more surface adaptation by employing 'cosmopolitan practices' (Nowicka, Rovisco 2009) on the local and global scale (see the study by Piekut 2009). The crucial role in social adaptation of highly skilled foreign workers living in Warsaw was played by specific types of places, such as expatriate clubs and organisations, international schools and some exclusive leisure places. These findings correspond with research outcomes in other locations. For example, Beaverstock's (2008) study in Singapore, which investigated the transnational aspects of expatriate British clubs in Singapore, or Moore's (2008) study of the role played by a German school in transnational class reproduction. These spaces facilitate networking with expatriates of the same (the school) or dissimilar nationality (the club).

Place has not always been recognised as a significant component of socio-cultural adaptation. For example, in a study in Australia and Indonesia, Colic-Peisker (2010: 483) argued that hyper-mobile expats do not develop attachments with any location, but profession was the main anchor⁵ of their identity-belonging. Other research argued that employing a spatio-temporal approach to the investigation of the everyday social practices of transnational migrants helps to reveal the importance of particular cultural and social capitals in their social performance (Cook 2011). However, the study in Prague focused on a wider, urban area as place and people that were employed. This raises the question of the everyday geographies of highly skilled migrants within the particular urban context. In this study I analysed how the social lives of expatriate communities are localised in Warsaw; what places are important for their everyday practices and what is their specificity in material, emotional and social dimensions. In other words, if and why some places are meaningful locations for the everyday lives of highly skilled intra-EU migrants, and with whom they interact in these places. In what sense could place still matter for people involved in temporary migration?

The gender dimension of expatriate spaces

The workplace is a primary site of expatriate life (Leonard 2010). But it is not necessarily a primary site of expatriate social life (Willis, Yeoh, Fakhri 2002). Previous studies conducted in Warsaw with highly skilled foreign workers of transnational corporations have also demonstrated that the migratory patterns of these migrants are associated with their work experience in the local and international labour markets, but their social lives were to a great extent developed outside the company and thanks to activities performed by their spouses or partners (Piekut 2009). Indeed, the workplace is an important location of adaptation, socialisation and inter-cultural contact, but from the perspective of the entire family and both partners (whom I also consider highly skilled migrants if they have appropriate skills or education), other places play a more vital role for ordinary social activities.

The importance of the wider household context of expatriates' adaptation comes to the fore naturally when we recognise the existing gender dimension of migration and social adaptation processes (Willis et al. 2002). Women adapt differently to the new socio-cultural context than men, and gender relations should not be overlooked in migration studies (Kofman, Raghuram, Merefield 2005). The differences exist among the most privileged migrants too: the majority of highly skilled migrants who are in paid employment are men, and their spouses/partners – who follow them in migration – are women. In the literature the latter are termed a 'migration tail' (Coles, Fechter 2008), 'trailing spouses' (Leonard 2010), 'tied migrants', 'constrained migrants' or 'secondary migrants' (Yeoh, Willis 2005) – all of the designations assume a passive role of highly skilled women in the migratory process (Thang, MacLachlan, Goda 2002) and do not recognise the more complex relations within households regarding mobility decisions and settlement activities (Kofman et al. 2005).

Because of the gender bias among highly skilled migrants regarding their work status, highly skilled male migrants very often perform as professional business managers, while their female spouses or partners act as managers responsible for the social life of the family. The spatial adaptation of highly skilled migrants is then highly gendered, as other scholars acknowledge that without a consideration of the global capitalist city as a space of transnational people flows anchored in specific local urban geographies, much of it still remains gender-blind (Yeoh, Willis 2005: 212). Working male migrants socialise on weekdays at the workplace, hobby clubs and restaurants where they combine business and social activities (Beaverstock 2008), but after work and over the weekend their lives are embedded in other places, such as international schools or social organisations, which prosper thanks to the unpaid and voluntary work of their spouses/partners. Previous studies in Warsaw have concentrated on a male perspective on highly skilled migration (Piekut 2009; Rudolph, Hillmann 1998; Szwąder 2002). This paper uncovers a family and female perspective on social adaptation of highly skilled elite migrants in Warsaw. Specifically, it does so by investigating the role of gender in the spatial dimension of highly skilled migrants' adaptation, and how 'gender geographies of power' (Pessar, Mahler 2003) operate at the local level, i.e. within Warsaw communities.

Studying intra-EU migrants in Warsaw

Obtaining accurate figures on highly skilled intra-EU migration to Poland is difficult, if not impossible. Until 2007, most citizens of European Union countries were obliged to apply for a work permit prior to undertaking employment in Poland, so their occupational level and positions were recorded (for details see Górný, Piekut, Stefańska 2012). Since then, however, all EU citizens have been exempted from the requirement to apply for a work permit, although if they plan to stay in Poland over three months they are obliged to register their stay, which means that some general patterns of EU citizens' immigration regarding their region of

work in Poland, nationality and gender of applicants can be traced. In 2007-2011 approximately 7 000 EU citizens registered a temporary stay in Poland annually, and approximately 1 000 registered a long-term – i.e. over five-year – stay (see Table 1). The most numerous groups came from Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain, and 89 per cent of all EU citizens applied for a temporary stay. Intra-EU migration to Poland is masculinised, and the percentage of women varies from 15-20 per cent (Italy, Greece, Germany) to approximately 40-45 per cent (Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, Czech Republic). Latvia is the only country where women predominate among migrants (almost 60 per cent of applications). In the presented research I focused on the three most numerous groups, namely citizens of Germany, France and the United Kingdom, for whom Warsaw was one of the most important destinations (Office for Foreigners 2004⁶).

Table 1. Applications of EU citizens for temporary and long-term stay in Poland in 2007-2011

Citizenship	Temporary stay ^a			Long-term stay ^b		
	N	%	of whom % women	N	%	of whom % women
France	3 068	7.4	32.5	345	6.6	22.6
Germany	15 737	37.8	16.0	1 465	28.1	22.9
Great Britain	2 887	6.9	25.9	428	8.2	15.7
All applications	41 619	100.0	26.7	5 211	100.0	27.5

^a EU citizens are required to apply in case of a stay longer than three months and shorter than five years in Poland.

^b EU citizens are required to apply in case of a continuous stay longer than five years in Poland.

Source: Office for Foreigners (2011).

This paper is based on 21 in-depth interviews conducted in 2011 and 2012 with migrants originating from Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Additional research material was obtained from interviews with six key informants of each nationality (representatives of social organisations and international schools) and three group meetings organised by a relocation company that planned to open a social club for expatriates in Warsaw – each meeting gathered about 10 English-speaking women. Most of the individual interviews, except four, were conducted in English, transcribed verbatim and coded. The interviewees were found through a snowball method and the key informants constituted six starting points of the whole sample. Among the interviewees, eight people have German citizenship, six – French, five – British, and one person was of dual French-British nationality⁷. The sample is diversified by age (minimum 29, maximum 58 years old), marital status (two thirds are married), year of arrival in Poland (most migrations occurred after 2000) and work status (see Table 2).

The purpose of the study was to capture the influence of mobility and gender for space-creating practices in Warsaw. Most of the interviews were conducted with temporary migrants, e.g. people living in Poland less than five years, who have been involved in international migration before. However, some settled migrants were included as a control group, but reporting their adaptation in detail is beyond the scope of the paper and I focus on the former group. I further recognise that, alongside the division into temporary and settled migration, both groups could be further divided into primary and secondary migration. As a primary migrant I understand a person whose situation led to the joint decision to migrate, and as a secondary migrant – a person who follows a primary migrant. For example, a common case would be one person following a spouse/partner/parent who is offered a job abroad. A comparison of the migration status with the work status of informants reveals a gender imbalance among people who are primary and secondary migrants and those who are in paid employment and do not work, although they used to work before engaging in interna-

tional migration (see Table 3). Most of the female informants are secondary migrants who are not currently in paid employment; however, all of them used to work in their countries of origin. Interestingly, two male secondary migrants, who followed their female partners in migration to Poland, classified themselves as part-time working freelancers.

Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of respondents

Gender	Female 13	Male 8	
Age group	29-39 10	40-44 6	45-58 5
Citizenship	British 5/6	French 6/7	German 8
Arrival year	1990-1999 3	2000-2009 11	2010-2011 7
International migration	First 6	Consecutive 15	
Marital status	Married 14	Partnership 5	Single 2
Spouse/partner citizenship	Polish 4	Fr./UK/Ger. 12	Other 3
Spouse/partner country of residency	Poland 17	Other 1	
Children	Yes 16	No 5	
Child(ren)'s country of residency	Poland 17	Other 0	Poland and other 2
Education	Secondary 3	Tertiary 17	Other 1
Work status	Full-time job 12	Part-time job 2	Not in paid employment 7

Source: own elaboration.

Table 3. Informants by gender and work status

Gender	Female 13		Male 8	
Type of migrant	Primary 6	Secondary 7	Primary 6	Secondary 2
Paid employment in Poland	Yes 6	No 7	Yes 6	Yes 2
Paid employment prior to international migration	Yes 6	Yes 7	Yes 6	Yes 2

Source: own elaboration.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews, ranging from one hour to two and a half hours, were conducted with all participants, and the same interview schedule was followed: migration history, migration to Poland, important places of everyday life, social life in Warsaw, social networks in other countries and migratory plans. The interviews were supplemented with creative techniques which were tailored to enhance exploration of research problems and questions (Mason, Dale 2010; Mason, Davies 2010). Informants were asked to draw a mental map of the places that are important to their everyday lives and activities both in and outside Warsaw (including abroad). The assumption was that while drawing the maps it is easier to recollect and express individual experiences (Spencer 2011). It has been recognised that drawing techniques are related to personal skills and personality (Wheeldon, Faubert 2009), so respondents were shown some example maps. The exercise comprised two parts: first, interviewees were asked to draw the map, describe the drawn places and explain why they were important to them; secondly, they were asked to ascribe people whom they see regularly to these places: family, friends and acquaintances. The mental map exercise was introduced after the introductory questions on migration history and the move to Poland, so interviewees often added some extra notes or marks to the maps throughout the entire interview. In the post-fieldwork phase the maps were analysed alongside the oral/interview material.⁸

Ambivalent perceptions of Warsaw

Space is not static, but it is constantly in the process of being made in social practices and constituted through ‘interrelations’; foremost it is mentally constructed, so each person perceives the same space differently and assigns different meanings to the same space or particular places (Massey 2005: 9). Perceptions matter, because the way people imagine space influences their actions. In this section I first introduce the perceptions of Warsaw – as one urban space – that informants held just before migration, and how the perceptions evolved during the first days of their stay in Poland. In the second section mental maps of significant spaces of adaptation are presented.

In Fechter’s (2007) study of the expatriate community in Jakarta, the city space was perceived as ‘distant’, ‘dirty’, ‘chaotic’ and ‘dangerous’ representing everything that is feared, disapproved and unknown (Fechter 2007: 62). This study in the Polish capital demonstrates that the perceptions of highly skilled intra-EU migrants on the city are between the dichotomy of ‘safe inside’ and ‘dangerous outside’ and are more ambivalent. A duality exists in the informants’ narratives on the city, including its lifestyle and urban space. For example, Bernard⁹ – German executive, primary migrant – notices that although Poland is located closer to Munich (his previous location) than to London, it would be easier for his family to move to the latter city, *because moving to Poland it is the psychological distance (...) [and] in the perception of people Poland is not in the centre of Europe as it is geographically. At the same time Warsaw attracts him as an interesting labour market and place to develop his own professional career and gain valuable cultural capital for his spouse and children.*

The intra-EU migrants’ narratives reveal that Warsaw and Poland in their perceptions is a space between ‘past’ and ‘present’, ‘old’ and ‘new’, ‘distant’, ‘exotic’ places and ‘familiar’, ‘European’ places. Such initial experiences of the city reflect the self-image of Warsaw, which is uncomfortably self-positioned between ‘*polluted*’ East and ‘*mythical*’ West (Bartmański 2012: 151). A German female who was born in German Democratic Republic, Katharina, found her childhood memories in the old-fashioned small shops and markets, but at the same time she was astonished by modern skyscrapers and shopping malls. She summarises her ambivalent impressions:

I really liked the city from the beginning. And I think this might be interesting because I grew up in the eastern part of Germany and something reminded me of my childhood. This is funny because some things, for example these little markets, these kiosks, these Banacha or Hala Mirowska [markets] – this was like in the eighties when I grew up. And I was wondering [surprised] there are still such places here because I thought it was even more Western like in the sense of even more modern. On the other hand, I was very *impressed by, for example Złote Tarasy or the shopping malls because this is even better than Düsseldorf or Cologne... This is something we did not expect...* (F, Ger, 32, sm¹⁰).

Similar West/East or old/new binaries were present in the narratives of other respondents. Anne, a British female, who arrived in Warsaw following her husband with the whole family, reports contrasts in the city architecture as a *striking (...) mixture of old and new* representing the socialist past and values and so much freedom and growth and the future at the same time. Relying on their previous knowledge and initial perceptions based on the external city outlook, informants seemed to be confused as to what approach towards life in Warsaw they should take. On the one hand, as one female French diplomat notices, it is still Europe; however, the ‘still’ denotes her distance and lack of familiarity. On the other hand, this is not Africa, as another woman says. Even without being asked about it, informants brought up the topic of safety, mentioning in their narratives that they felt comfortable and safe in Warsaw, because the crime level is not high as previously assumed (*I’ve been to a lot of worse places than Poland*, as John concludes) and because they can fulfil most of their consumption and lifestyle needs. Hilke:

You have told me you feel safe and comfortable in Warsaw. Why is it so?

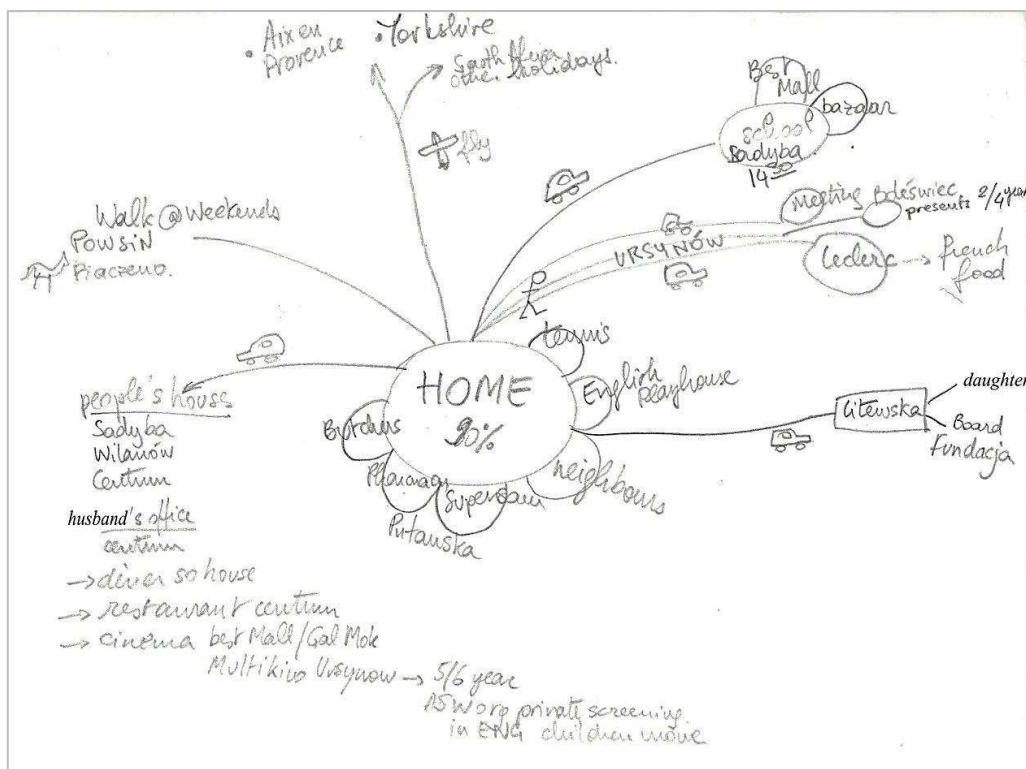
You get everything for life to which you’re used to from Germany which compared to Kosovo is a luxury. I don’t have a feeling there is a lot of crime going on in Warsaw. Because to places I go, I feel safe. Which was not like that in Kosovo, so I might only compare to Kosovo and Germany. While Kosovo is on the lowest level. That is why I feel safe and because I can get everything that I need. I like the food, I like the city and now I have people. This is why I feel comfortable (F, Ger, 32, sm).

Contrary to the perceptions of expatriates living in more geographically and culturally distant countries from their countries of origin, expatriates in Warsaw do not perceive the local society as ‘dangerous’, ‘chaotic’ and ‘dirty’, as the ‘outside’ world, but at the same time the city is not ‘European’ in the way they are familiar with and it brings a lot of uncertainty, as one respondent mentioned. Such ambivalent perceptions indicate that highly skilled migrants enter a ‘liminal space’, located in between two other contexts that are recognised fixed points in space-time (Turner 1967: 97). Comparisons of Poland with other countries where respondents used to live (usually postcolonial areas) indicate that they mentally negotiate the status of Warsaw as a space which is at the same time ‘here’ and ‘there’. In this paper I argue that uncertainty and ambiguity are overcome by establishing new places of everyday life, so ‘normalcy’ can be reintroduced. Thus, in this ambivalently perceived urban setting temporary intra-EU migrants recreate their everyday spaces through which they enter into local society and their mobile lives become locally embedded. Some general patterns among the mental maps are observed:

1. Centrality of home. In most mental maps ‘home’ was located in the central part of the drawing, and was in Warsaw. There were two exceptions: one female primary migrant had moved to Warsaw alone, so her emotional home had remained in Great Britain with her husband (see Figure 2); and another single, male primary migrant put his workplace in the central part of the map, explaining that this was the place where he spent most time (I just sleep, cook, eat, watch TV, listen to music, read

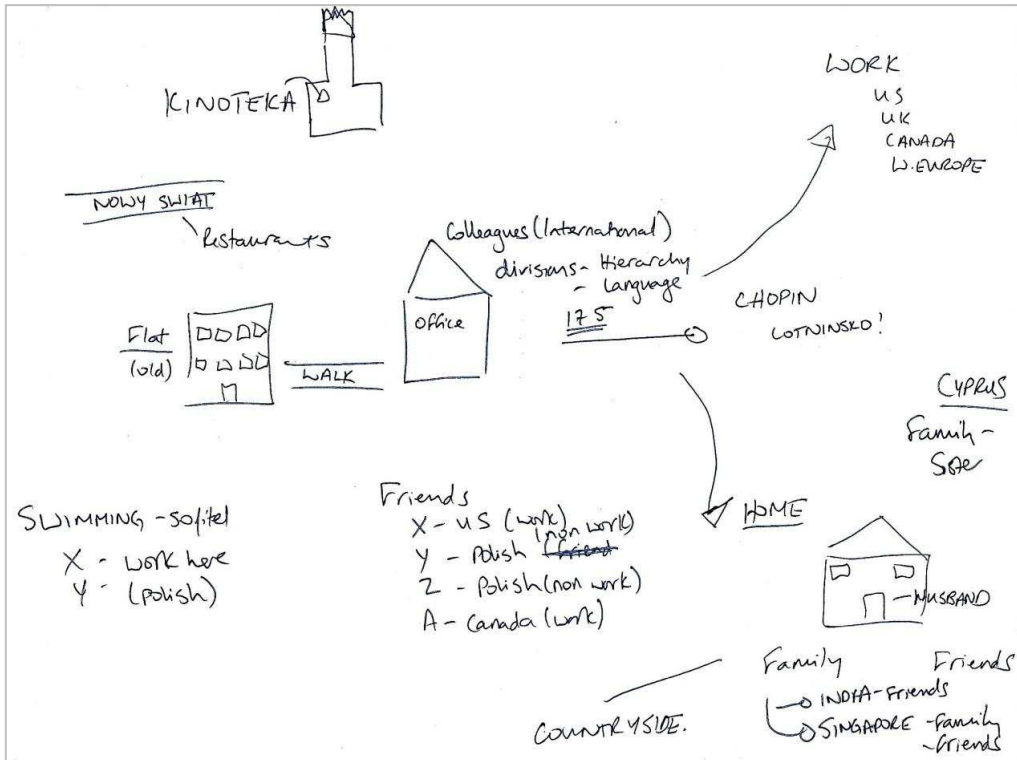
- [there]). The people that moved to Poland with important people and familiar physical objects brought with them a sense of home (Gordon 2008; Wiles 2008). Strategies of re-making home by temporary migrants are beyond the scope of this paper and will be investigated elsewhere.
2. Embeddedness in locality. The maps of secondary migrants are to a greater extent embedded in local communities than the maps of primary migrants. For example, in Rachel's map (Figure 1), her home is surrounded by a set of local services and shops which flourish around the house. The mapping exercise along with expatriate narratives demonstrated that contrary to some opinions, they do not form 'uprooted' transnational cosmopolitan elites (Sklair 2001), but situate their everyday lives locally.
 3. Transnational connections. Connections with places outside Poland were more visible in the mental maps of temporary migrants than among the maps of the settled ones. They included the names of cities or countries where their family and close friends live, so descriptions were more general in comparison to descriptions of specific places in Warsaw. This difference indicates a dissimilar intensity and scope of transnational connections in different national spaces (Faist 2004) – while outside Poland ties are long-term and based on kinship, everyday relations in Poland are built upon frequent interactions and based on mutuality.

Figure 1. Rachel's mental map (British secondary female migrant)



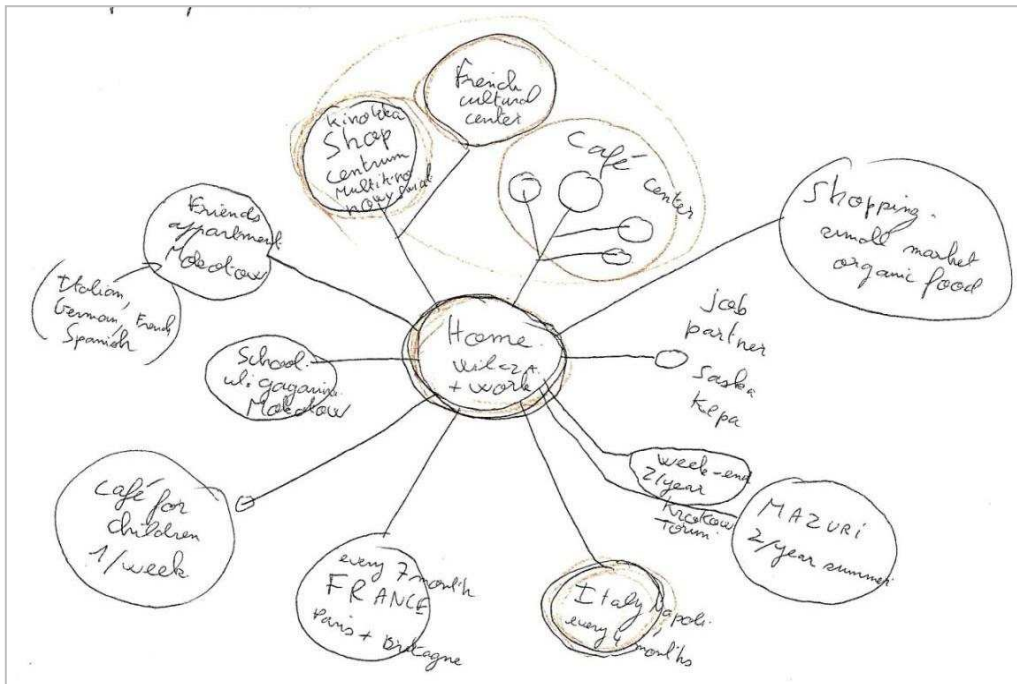
Source: informant's elaboration.

Figure 2. Victoria's mental map (British primary female migrant)



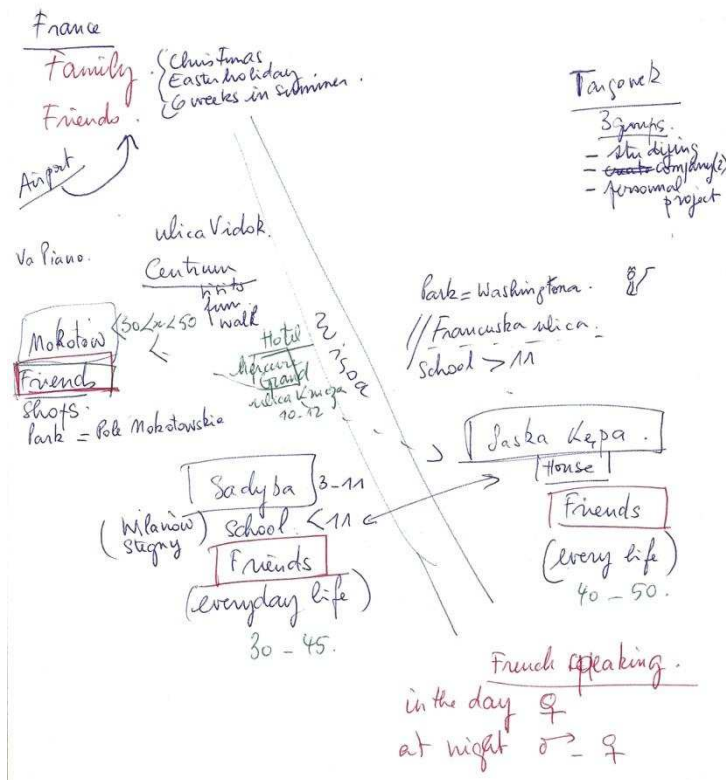
Source: informant's elaboration.

Figure 3. Dominique's mental map (French secondary male migrant)



Source: informant's elaboration.

Figure 4. Viviane's mental map (French secondary female migrant)



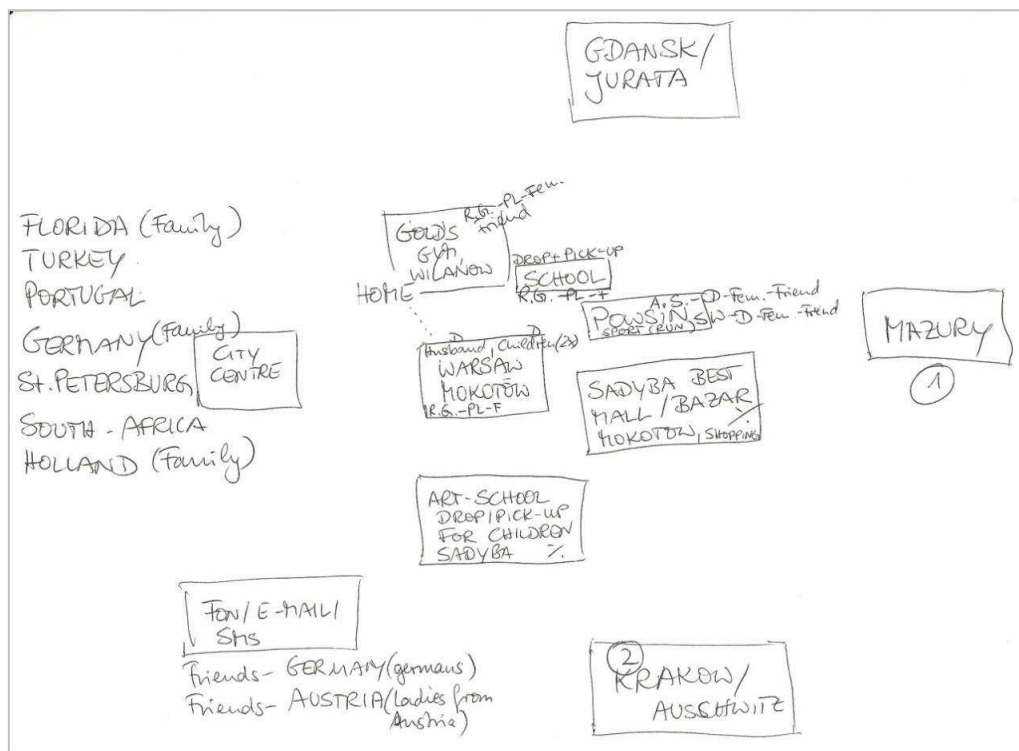
Source: informant's elaboration.

4. Places of adaptation in Warsaw. There are more similarities among the maps of temporary migrants than among those of settled migrants. The latter are more diversified in terms of the location included, and the former have more overlaps. The places (i.e. locations with meaning) that appear in most maps of temporary migrants are: own workplace or spouse's/partner's workplace; other expatriates' homes (see Figure 1 – 'People's houses', and Figure 6 – 'Breakfasts with mums'), international schools and around-school activities (see Figures 1, 3-6) and spaces of consumption, such as cafés (see the cluster of cafés in Figure 3), restaurants and shopping malls (e.g. multiple shopping malls in Figure 7).
5. Gendered spaces. Gender differences in the mental map are strongly related to the work status of the informants. Most of the secondary migrants are women who are not in paid employment, thus their everyday, significant places are more tightly connected to the activities performed around the household, e.g. shopping, or the places are related to duties looking after children, e.g. involvement in the lives of international schools. Women secondary migrants therefore socialise among themselves during the daytime, and in the evening in gender mixed groups (see note in Figure 4).
6. Functional zones. As with other cities, expatriates in Warsaw mentally carve the city up into different functional zones (Leonard 2010: 116). The city centre is a space for business meetings, the residential function is played by neighbouring Mokotów (especially the Sadyba neighbourhood, where

the British, French and German international schools are located) and prestigious Wilanów districts, family leisure time is spent in southern Warsaw, e.g. Wilanów, or in suburban Konstancin-Jeziorna and Powsin, with hobby clubs and green areas for sport available (see e.g. Figure 4).

In the next section I will provide a material, emotional and social description of social organisations, international schools and spaces of leisure and consumption in Warsaw. I will investigate whether these places form an ‘expatriate bubble’ in the Polish capital, as has been noted in other cities (Fechter 2007; Peixoto 2001), or whether intra-EU migrants’ embedding patterns are closer to the ‘partial exit’ strategy employed by people who combine their mobility with local rootedness (Andreotti, le Gales, Fuentes 2013).

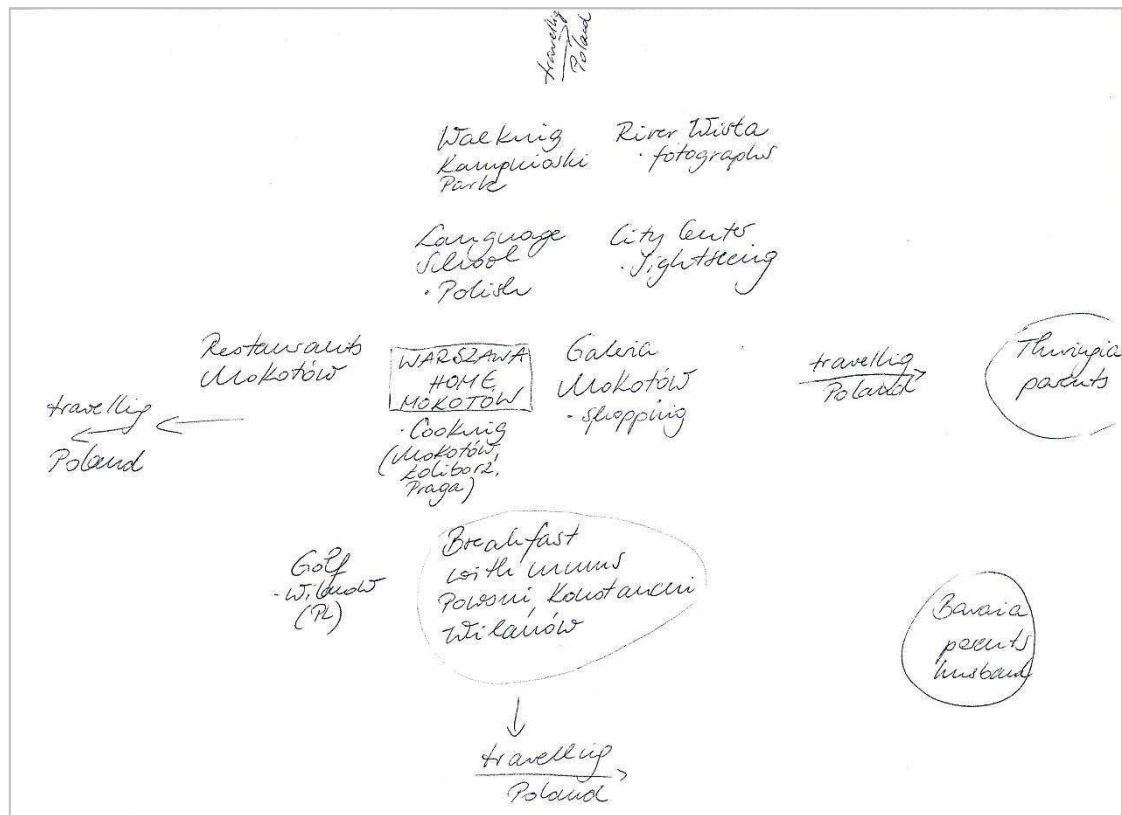
Figure 5. Helga’s mental map (German secondary female migrant)



Source: informant’s elaboration.

Spaces of adaptation

The initial perceptions on Warsaw and Polish society need to be reworked during the adaptation process. Gradually, the urban space becomes more familiar, local attachments are developed and highly skilled migrants ‘become emplaced’ (Mulholland, Ryan 2013). However, I argue that, rather than being linear, from no inclusion to a complete inclusion into the fabric of the local society, the adaptation is spatially selective, and these migrants enter the new society through selected meaningful locations that constitute the specific social space of intra-EU highly skilled migrants in Warsaw.

Figure 6. Katharina's mental map (German secondary female migrant)

Source: informant's elaboration.

International schools – spaces with 'adaptation packages'

The location of international schools is pivotal to the (temporary) settlement process, and intra-EU migrants often decide upon their residential area in Warsaw depending on where the school is located. Sometimes the decision to move with the family to a given city even depends on the availability of a good-quality international school, and this is a plus in the case of Warsaw (Piekut 2009). International schools – British, French, German or American – were, after homes, one of the most significant places on the mental maps of respondents who lived in Warsaw with children. These schools play an important role in the adaptation process of highly skilled migrants in Warsaw and serve as institutions which facilitate the socio-cultural adaptation of expatriate families. While companies provide expats with 'expatriate packages', which mainly consist of financial support during the relocation and settlement phase (Peixoto 2001; Rudolph, Hillmann 1998), schools offer information on local life, services, customs, etc. – in other words 'insider knowledge' (Fischer, Holm, Malmberg, Straubhaar 2000). The school reduces the acculturative stress, which is psychological and emotional reactions associated with changes in socio-cultural environment (Berry 1997). Bernard summarises how the American international school supported his family in the first days after arrival:

This international school is extremely well organised. You get there, you have these parent organisations. (...) We called the school because we agreed already which school we wanted to take and you can contact them... There was somebody that would meet with us and they will have full guidelines of what you need to know, from where is the supermarket to hairdresser, to where you can do sports. (...) The com-

munity in the school takes this first pressure out. Because you come at the beginning and everything circles around the kids anyway because you want them to settle in and that takes a lot of your time and (...) you need to start building your own relationships with people (M, Ger, 41, pm).

International schools are important spaces of socialisation for children and of social life for adults. These functions are not extraordinary, and the same roles are played by school for parents of various nationalities and other types of migrants. In the case of highly skilled migrants, their migration is not perpetuated within migration networks, so the school becomes the first place where they can meet other people and socialise. Schools are open to children of various nationalities, including Polish; consequently, in most of them there are some pupils of Polish background. This would suggest that the school is a good place to interact and socialise with Polish parents; however, the narratives demonstrate that this is not the case. Helga, a German secondary migrant engaged in school activity, underlines that most of her close friends in Warsaw are women of similar migration status who she has met through school, but they are not Polish:

The people you meet, you meet mostly women or men?

Women.

Women. Is it because of the school?

Of course, of course. And I am quite active at school, so I am class representative or class friend, so I am organising all these feasts and [things] for the sale, or organising the Carnival, the Christmas Fair or Halloween Party, cinema movie night. And somebody has to do (...) And these are not done by the Polish ladies, of course (F, Ger, 29, sm).

Stories shared by other women support Helga's remark – expatriate parents do not socialise with Polish ones, because their lifestyle is different. Polish parents are not involved in organising school events, and because of work obligations do not have time to socialise after dropping their children off to school in the morning, e.g. to have a coffee (see next section) or to do sport together. Helga adds that all these ladies [at the gym are] non-working moms. Most are from foreign countries and I think Poles are having their exercises in the afternoon hours after working. Being a temporary migrant in Poland and operating outside the local labour market conditions the way that non-working women enter into Polish society. On the one hand, gender and work status influence access to specific socio-cultural resources (Pessar, Mahler 2003). On the other hand, their temporary migratory situation strengthens preference for such resources, i.e. socialisation with people whose family needs are like theirs, because these networks and international schools replace the socialisation zones for children that are naturally present in their countries. For adults, the school is a starting point for other spaces where they can socialise.

Expatriate social organisations – spaces without location

Social organisations do not have fixed locations, and female secondary migrants meet on a rotation basis in their private houses. Discussions during group meetings organised by one of the local relocation companies that considered setting up such a place (called 'Expat Place') revealed that women and their families would be interested in becoming members of such a club, if it was located in proximity to the international schools and if its employers understood their family and lifestyle needs. Currently, no professionally managed place specifically tailored to the needs of expatriates exists in Warsaw, so secondary migrant women meet in other comfortable zones – their own houses. The most common groups among expatriate female migrants are: 'American Friends of Warsaw' (150 family members), 'Varsovie Accueil' (210 families), 'International

Women Group' (200 individual members) and 'Mums and Tots' (400 individuals). They are managed online and particular activities – framed around interests or children age groups – are coordinated by different women. Rachel explains how they are organised:

There is an association called Mums and Tots. It's for English speaking [people] (...) it's free and it's an online group. And they meet at everybody's houses (...) each week it's at a different person's house. And it's just a playgroup. Mothers get together, have a coffee and the children play. (...) For each group you have a coordinator who organises whose house it's going to be at and they are responsible for communicating it by e-mail to the whole association (F, Brit/Fr, 37, sm).

Social organisation space does not have a fixed place for meetings, but it is constantly recreated in routine everyday interactions and is imagined as a common space by many migrants. Löw's (2008) conceptualisation of the duality of space is useful here. Space is dual because it is recreated in concurrent processes of spacing and synthesis: spacing occurs when people position themselves in relation to other people and synthesis when people through perceptions connect these relations into one space (Löw 2008). Intra-EU migrants position themselves in relation to other temporary migrants of similar family and societal needs and speaking the same language, whom they perceptually include in the social space of these organisations. This space is also relational, since every woman perceives and synthesises it differently. Polish people are not present in this social space – are they met in any public places?

Cafes and shopping centres – non-places?

Apart from homes and international schools, intra-EU migrants indicated shopping centres and cafés as locations which are important, because visiting them organises their daily routine. These types of places are sometimes termed as non-places, which are transient, passed daily by many people, places that people are not emotionally connected with, because they do not belong to anyone (Augé 2010). Shopping centres and chain cafés or restaurants have a similar appearance throughout Europe and the world, so expatriates find strips of 'familiarity' there in this ambivalent, liminal urban space; they are fixed points that are recognised by them. Mobility changes place-making practices, and people are more likely to form attachments to 'types of places', not to any particular place (Milligan 1998: 29). This change could be recognised in Anne's reflections on her pre-migration visit to Warsaw, when she came over to check out the city's flavour:

You've got Starbucks and Coffee Heaven, and bars and restaurants. And I thought 'Ok. I can do this, this is nice' (F, Brit, 41, sm).

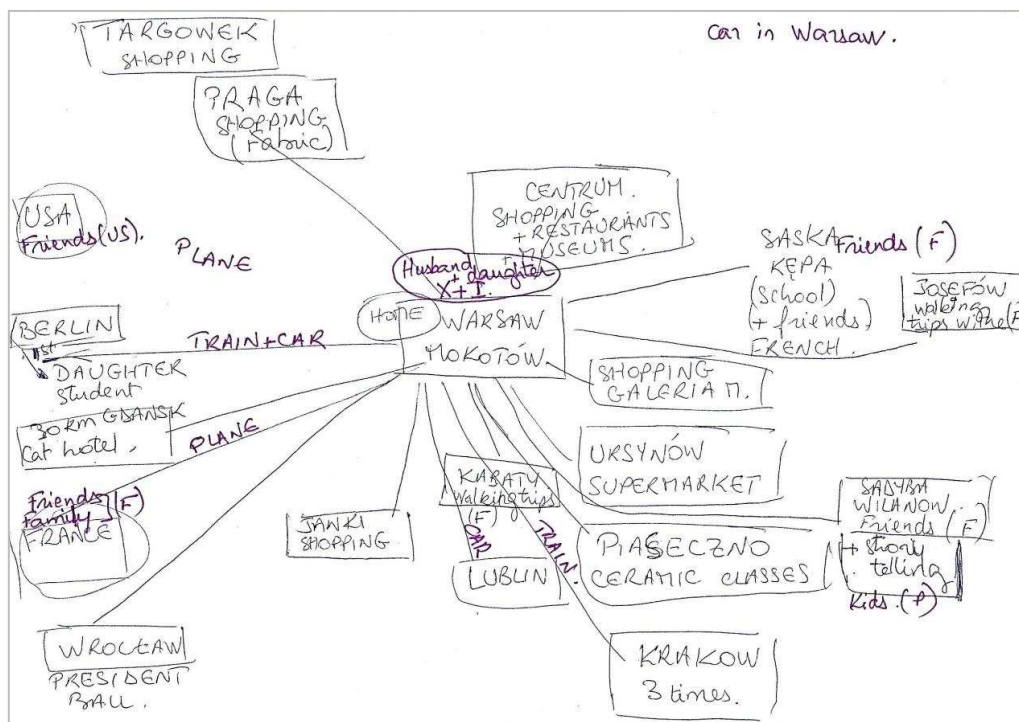
Cafés and restaurants were also indicated as important places of socialisation with other temporary migrants. Coffee with other mums after dropping children off at school is a weekly ritual for some women. A male respondent, Dominique, also meets other expatriate friends and their families in a favourite café every Saturday (Figure 3). Over coffee, relationships initiated at school can be developed and tightened. Cafés also serve as spaces where mobile (internationally and during daily activities) people can stop, relax and reflect. Helen, a primary multiple migrant, explains her emotional connection with some of Warsaw's coffee places: I love quiet places in the afternoon, the smell of a cake and the tea, a place warm and peaceful like a library. Frequently visited public spaces are given meaning, so for these migrants non-places become places. Similar revision processes are observed in the case of shopping malls, which are visited by thousands of people dai-

ly, but temporary migrants usually put two or three shopping places as important locations in their mental maps. Katharina started drawing her map with the Galeria Mokotów shopping centre, commenting:

This is funny because the first thing that comes to my mind is Galeria Mokotów, because this is the place where we buy food and that's it. Where is it? To the south or to the north? (F, Ger, 32, sm).

Although she is not certain where the shopping centre is located in the city, the place has meaning, because her family buys food there. Some people placed a few markets, shopping centres or malls on their maps, since expatriates need to visit all of them in order to compose meals that are familiar for them. Another female respondent admits that she does not feel comfortable inviting friends home for dinner when she cannot find suitable products for a meal (F, Fr., 44, sm).

Figure 7. Bernadette's mental map (French secondary female migrant)



Source: informant's elaboration.

Like cafés, shopping places are significant places for migrants, because through shopping practices previous family life can be reproduced: food habits, tastes and smells are kept the same. Hindman (2008) sees this as 'hyper-nationalisation' of shopping practices, because expatriates put more effort than before the move into preparation of proper meals or celebration of national holidays with traditional cuisine. I would rather argue that visiting cafés and shopping places helps highly skilled migrants to connect their previous lives with their lives in Warsaw; these places are meaningful, because they bring familiarity and comfort in the mobile lives of expatriate families.

The importance of place in temporary adaptation process

This research on intra-EU highly skilled migrants in Warsaw exposed the importance of spatiality in immigrant adaptation processes in Poland. It demonstrated that adaptation processes are not linear, ranging from assimilation or integration to segregation or separation (cf. the integration models developed in Berry 1997). Patterns of adaptation observed among highly skilled migrants in Warsaw reveal that in some spaces they are integrated with and in others separated from the local society – for example, they interact with Polish people through their own or their spouse's/partner's workplace, through voluntary work in NGOs, in selected shops, services and restaurants, but separately in private houses while meeting with other members of expatriate organisations. Highly skilled migrants prefer to shop and spend leisure time in places where they can communicate in English or their native language. Anne enjoys spending time at the gym, because she is able to understand and be understood, and therefore gets a feeling of being in her place; Hilke uses local services where she can speak English too, for example the grocery shop, laundry, beauty salon. However, these places were not included in the mental maps as often as the three types of spaces described above.

The study corresponds with other research on highly skilled elite or upper-middle-class people in Europe, whose mobility challenges their mode of participation in particular communities. A study of residential attachments of mobile middle-class residents in British cities revealed that *individuals attach their 'chosen' residential location*, so they tell stories that indicate how their arrival and subsequent settlement is appropriate to their sense of themselves (Savage, Bagnall, Longhurst 2005: 29). The authors termed this 'elective belonging' stressing that mobility changes one's relationship with a place and becomes temporarily 'chosen' and not spatially 'fixed'. Inspired by this study, other research demonstrated that the most common adaptation strategy among upper-middle-class workers in Paris, Madrid, Milan and Lyon was 'mobile rootedness', i.e. remaining internationally mobile, but still locally rooted (Andreotti et al. 2013). This study in Warsaw confirms the importance of rootedness for mobility, but also indicates that the 'roots' are not put down evenly in an urban space or a residential area.

Expatriates in Warsaw do not separate their everyday lives from local society in every aspect, but selectively. Polish people are less welcome in international schools and expatriate organisations usually run by female migrants who are not in paid employment. For example, Helga disapproves of the fact that Polish pupils speak in their native language, not in English, in the playground. The schools are open to Polish children and there are opportunities to meet Polish parents, but different work status and degrees of engagement in school activities do not support the development of friendships with Poles. Social organisations are directed to foreign people and their families, so naturally Poles are absent there, but if an expat club is created somewhere in Warsaw a shared preference among female migrants is that it should be exclusively 'expatriate'. Both activities – school and expat organisations – evolve around children's upbringing, primary socialisation and education. While during 'local-specific' activities, such as work, shopping, leisure and hobby activities, intra-EU migrants mix with Polish people, they prefer to remain in a cycle of people of similar migratory status and lifestyle during activities that will have a 'long-term' effect on their children's social and cultural capital. Reproduction of family lifestyle and culture is preserved from ordinary interactions with the local community, and in this respect expatriates are able to reproduce their privileged social status and transmit cultural and social advantages to their children (Bourdieu, Passeron 2000[1977]). Fluidity of their migratory and residential statuses does not lead to fluidity in terms of socio-cultural performance or disconnection from previous life. The reproduction that takes place in these spaces brings a sense of intergenerational stability in the mobile lives of intra-EU highly skilled migrants. An emotional bond with selected places in Warsaw links past and future experiences of hyper-mobile people; however, the experiences are not 'glued' to these places, but these locations represent 'past and potential attachments', i.e. organise immigrants' experiences and transmit the memories and expectations shared by a family (Milligan 1998: 12-16).

Conclusions

This paper investigated whether and how social lives of expatriate communities are localised in Warsaw. It presents original research material employing creative research techniques that enabled a better understanding of the importance of particular everyday places for highly skilled migrants and their families in Warsaw. The accounts provided by intra-EU highly skilled migrants demonstrate that they are not ‘free floating’ nomads living their lives constantly on the move (cf. Colic-Peisker 2010). Hyper-mobility still requires embeddedness in local spaces. However, the stories provided by British, French and German intra-EU migrants in Warsaw indicate the temporality and spatiality of their embeddedness in this urban space. The sense of a spatial belonging and connectivity with a place is not fixed, but ‘chosen’/‘elective’ (Savage et al. 2005). In the case of highly skilled mobile migrants in Warsaw, ‘elective belonging’ to a residential location is developed by recreating significant places within the Warsaw urban space, and except for being ‘elective’ in terms of residential area, it is also ‘spatially selective’ within this area. In other words, expats do not develop the same connections with the whole local community. This adaptive approach is related to the ‘betweenness’ of the Warsaw context in relation to other (perceptively) fixed social contexts – because intra-EU migrants mentally negotiate the status of Warsaw as a space between familiar Western Europe and socio-culturally distant places, they enter the local society in a fragmented way.

The most significant places outside the workplace and home were international schools, social organisations – which do not have fixed locations – and leisure and consumption places (specifically cafés and shopping centres). Intra-EU migrants socialising in any of these places automatically enter into another place – thus, these places together constitute a social space of interactions and mutual support (Bourdieu 1989). Nonetheless, the international schools, which support expatriates with specific ‘adaptation packages’ constitute a focal point in this social space. Highly skilled migrants who are parents follow these places of adaptation, but those who are not parents or who arrived in Poland without children tend to socialise within different expatriate circles. These places matter, because they play a significant role in the reproduction of family life, primary socialisation and transmission of intergenerational cultural capital – they provide spaces of connection of ‘past and potential’ (Milligan 1998). The importance of such spaces becomes more pivotal in the lives of migrants whose stay is temporary and who frequently change their residential location between different national contexts.

Gender plays a significant role in the spatial dimension of highly skilled intra-EU migrants’ adaptation; however, it strongly intersects with migration type and work status. The patterns of adaptation described above are more common among female secondary migrants who are not in paid employment. Although all employment restrictions for EU citizens were annulled in Poland more than five years ago (in 2007), most highly skilled intra-EU migrants that move to Poland are men, and among female migrants the majority do not continue employment in Poland. Consequently, the European ‘freedom of movement’ agenda couples with gender imbalance and family life reproduction laid upon female secondary migrants – this raises a further question: is highly skilled intra-EU migration strengthening or reintroducing ‘traditional’ gender division among spouses/partners in families, as has been observed in studies outside Europe (Coles 2008)? More attention should be paid in future research to intra-EU mobility, transformation of family roles and real opportunities to access local labour markets for both spouses/partners.

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Notes

¹ I define expatriates as people who have been sent by an institution/company to work in another country (Cambridge 2007) and who are in a privileged situation in the labour market because of their education level or professional qualifications (Leonard 2010). In this paper I use the following terms interchangeably: expatriates, expats, intra-EU migrants and highly skilled migrants.

² A highly skilled person is a person with tertiary-level education completed or not formally qualified in this way, but who has been employed in occupation where such qualifications are normally required (OECD 2001: 13).

³ I recognise the sociological definition of social space which is the system of relations between people that presents itself in the form of agents endowed with different properties that are systematically linked among themselves (Bourdieu 1989). For the purpose of this paper I develop a more geographical notion of a space.

⁴ Highly skilled immigrants might be of a different race from Polish people, the majority of whom are white. However, intra-EU migrants that arrive in Poland are also predominantly white, and among the interviewees from two studies with expatriates I have never encountered other races; respondents also confirmed the whiteness of this group in Poland.

⁵ The ‘anchoring-integration’ concept has been introduced in Polish migration studies by Grzymała-Kazłowska (2008b).

⁶ Statistical data at the lower aggregation levels are available for 2004. Among 14 000 temporary migrants living in Warsaw, French people constituted 9 per cent, Germans – 5 per cent and British people – 5 per cent. Of 5 300 settled migrants the figures were 7 per cent, 4 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively (Office for Foreigners 2004).

⁷ None of the respondents had Polish background one or two generations back. One of the respondents’ great-grandfather was Polish, but this fact was not related to her migration to Poland.

⁸ In the analysis of the maps special attention was paid to the following issues: which place was drawn first, what places were included in a map, the type of places (private/public, local/international), what people were ascribed to places by age, gender, migration status, nationality.

⁹ For all respondents, pseudonyms are used.

¹⁰ Information in brackets: gender – female or male; nationality – British, French, German; age in years; migration type – primary migrant or secondary migrant.

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