

Transnational intergenerationalities: Cultural learning in Polish migrant families and its implications for pedagogy

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Abstract

In this qualitative study, we examine the impact of family migration on intergenerational learning, especially in relation to the transmission of cultural values and practices. Drawing on data collected through in-depth case studies with migrant Polish children and their parents, we explore the influence of intergenerationality on children's cultural practices, values and sense of identity and the significant forms of learning which take place within transnational families. Prompted by the diverse influences on their cultural learning after migration- from statutory services, community organisations, media, peers and family across two countries- children's beliefs about the cultural values they should adopt are constantly under pressure and transformation. Using a sociocultural approach, we examine migrant children's and their parents' positions, and describe these as convergent or divergent in terms of cultural values and practices. We highlight the key role of children's agency in the processes of intergenerational learning and relations and argue that transnational intergenerationalities need to be understood as re-configured by the new spatiality of family migration and require a more complex relational analysis, in order to inform inclusive practices in schools and community-based initiatives.

Abstract in Spanish

En este estudio cualitativo, se analiza el impacto de la migración en el aprendizaje intergeneracional en familias, especialmente en relación con la transmisión de los valores y las prácticas culturales. Basándose en los datos recogidos de estudios detallados con niños Polacos inmigrantes y sus padres, se explora la influencia de la intergeneracionalidad en las prácticas culturales, valores y el sentido de identidad de los niños y las formas de aprendizaje más importantes que tienen lugar dentro de las familias transnacionales. Impulsados por las diversas influencias en su aprendizaje cultural después de su migración- de servicios públicos, organizaciones comunitarias, medios de comunicación, los compañeros y sus familias transnacionales- las creencias de los niños acerca de los valores culturales que deben adoptar están constantemente bajo presión y transformación. Utilizando una teoría sociocultural, examinamos las posiciones de los niños inmigrantes y de sus padres, y describimos estos como convergente o divergente en relación con los valores y prácticas culturales. Destacamos el papel clave del control de los niños en los procesos de aprendizaje y las relaciones intergeneracionales. También sostenemos que las relaciones intergeneracionales transnacionales deben entenderse como transformadas por el nuevo espacio de la migración familiar y requieren de un análisis relacional más complejo, con el fin de informar prácticas inclusivas en las escuelas y otros ámbitos sociales.

Introduction: Intergenerational relationships and migrant families

Migration ranks now as one of the most important factors in global change. Increasing number of families are separated by borders and find themselves at the crossroads of national and ethnic influences (Castles and Miler, 2013). Appadurai (1990) defined the central problem of modern day migration as the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization. Modern subjectivities are produced at the conjuncture of transported ideas, values, life styles which migrants bring from their homeland and those of the communities they migrate to. Moving beyond national territories, cultures are thus the result of dynamic social processes, where individuals and communities interact in 'contested terrains' (Yuval-Davis, 2011), reflecting the fluidity and interconnectedness of today's 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000). Yuval-Davis (2011) has warned against an essentialist, universalistic view of culture 'as having a specific, fixed inventory of symbols, ways of behaviour and artefacts which coherently and unproblematically constitute cultures of specific national and ethnic collectivities' (2011:115). In this paper, we adopt an understanding of culture as complex, discontinuous and multi-sited, which transcends borders and static ideas of locality (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992). The premise of discontinuity forms thus the starting point from which we examine the impact of family migration and separation on intergenerational relationships and migrant children's individual experiences of 'culture'.

Social theorists (Moghaddam, 2003; Chaudhary, 2008) have claimed that the formative social conditions for personhood are substantially different in the globalised, postmodern societies. Individuals experience themselves and the collective identities around them in subjective ways, and these experiences are central to the construction of their identity narratives. In relation to children, the importance of family relations has been widely recognised as crucial to their development and learning, with emphasis on parents' and grandparents' roles (Attias-Donfut and Segalen, 2002; Kenner *et al.*, 2007). Research on the transmission of cultural practices has thus mainly focussed on adults' roles as 'funds of knowledge' (Moll *et al.*, 1982), despite calls for a much needed conceptual shift to a holistic

analysis which considers children as potential agents of social change. Notable exceptions are studies on the role of siblings (Gregory, 2001; Volk and de Acosta, 2004). Intergenerationality has been proven a useful framework of analysis when examining the everyday practices within families (Hopkins *et al.*, 2010; Tarrant, 2010 and others). Around the world, intergenerational relationships are reshaped nowadays by factors such as unprecedented migration trends, the 'pace of life' in global times, the impact of new technologies and increased longevity (Lloyd, 2008). While the family itself is perceived as the primary agent for transferring the values, behaviours and artefacts to future generations (Hanks *et al.*, 2004), in the case of migrant families, transnationalism affects the perception of connectedness between members and roles within families (Orellana, 2009; Parrenas, 2005). Vanderbeck (2007) highlights the importance of a shared space in facilitating opportunities for intergenerational exchanges. It follows that migration impacts on children's individual experiences of 'culture' and cultural identity, which is key to their acculturation.

The reconfigured spaces of intergenerational exchanges points to the importance of re-examining the multi-sited contexts in which children learn about languages, behaviours and identities, through participation in communities and practices that make up their lives transnationally. Cultures operate beyond defined geographical territories and are under continual change, with differentiations between individuals in how they position themselves in relation to various collectivities (Yuval-Davis, 2011). There is currently little research on how intergenerational relations are being changed due to family migration and transnationalism. Previous research has already showed that, after migration, children become cultural experts more rapidly than adults (Kenner *et al.*, 2007; Orellana, 2009), highlighting major discrepancies between the traditional roles that adults played before migration and those available to them post-migration. Reduced social networks or limited ability to speak or read the new language affect adults' ability to maintain 'expert' roles (Phua *et al.*, 2008), as is their potentially more limited knowledge about the new social systems (Gadsen and Simmons, 1996; Yoshida *et al.*, 2008). In the case of ethnic minority children, developing a cultural identity under the influence of one or more cultural groups transcends

the formal and informal spaces and involves them in constant processes of negotiating expectations in a battleground of (mainly adult) influences. Anthias (2008) has put forward the concept of 'translocational positionality', which considers location as 'a social space which is produced within contextual, spatial, temporal and hierarchical relations around the "intersections" of social divisions and identities of class, ethnicity and gender (among others)' (2008: 9). Research needs thus to consider the multiple intersections between the various groups that children are members of (family, school, friendship groups, community), rather than examine these in isolation.

This paper aims to look at the processes of intergenerational learning in the families of new Polish migrants to Scotland. More specifically, we were interested in shedding more light on the processes through which intergenerational relationships develop after migration, to facilitate children's acculturation in their destination country, while also preserving cultural links with the homeland. By exploring the various influences in children's environments on their cultural identities, beliefs and practices, the study aimed to understand the sociocultural contexts in which children's informal learning was embedded and examine the extent to which educators can capitalise on learning that children do at home and transnationally. Recent literature on managing the challenges of cultural diversity and multiculturalism refers to the concept of 'integration' as a two-way process, but this is often perceived by individuals as much closer to assimilation (Wetherell, 2009). While some authors have looked at integration as acquisition of citizens' rights (Castles and Miller, 2013), others have identified certain domains and 'indicators' of integration (Ager and Strang, 2008), arguing that the focus should be on the process itself, not its measurable variables. Integration as a process is both influenced by normative rules and a result of individual capacities, choices, and motives. In relation to children, integration has often been defined in terms of their linguistic competence in the host language, their cross-ethnic social networks, adoption of new cultural values and ability to participate actively in the host society (Chuang and Moreno, 2011). Sayad (2004) however argues that integration should be the *result* rather than the *requisite* for the involvement of individuals in the political, economic and social life Migrants

should see themselves as members with full rights and access to opportunities in the society they are asked to integrate in first, in which case integration would be a natural 'side effect'.

Using a sociocultural approach to study intergenerational learning

Previous frameworks for understanding children's socialisation emphasised the unidirectional impact that adults have on the 'developing child' and often reduced learning to a mechanical process of transmission of knowledge, independent of any specific social and cultural environments (Jenks, 2005). Recent sociocultural theories of learning (Rogoff, 2003) combine elements of developmental and cognitive psychology with those of cultural and social anthropology, to provide a different framework for exploring children's 'becoming' and learning. As Rogoff (2003) puts it, 'individual and cultural processes are mutually constituting rather than defined separately' (2003:51). This implies an active role of children in intergenerational exchanges, by using symbolic and material cultural tools in the transformative process through which they learn. Learning is thus an inherently social and cultural process and the complex relationship between culture and cognition is solved by positioning individuals both as involved in and creators of social interactions.

One key concept in examining children's learning within families is that of 'scaffolding' (Vygotsky, 1978), a form of cognitive support provided by the most experienced individual in the interaction. This has also been defined as 'help which will enable a learner to accomplish a task which they would not have been quite able to manage on their own' (Maybin *et al.*, 1992: 188). This definition adopts a binary model of expert-adult and novice-child. Rogoff's work showed how children across cultures adopt an active role in learning about cultural activities and 'guided participation is jointly managed by children and their companions in ways that facilitate children's growing skills' (1990: viii). Children are active creators of their development, often able to influence adults' learning. Aarsand (2007) showed, for example, how knowledge asymmetries in relation to technology become an opportunity for children to scaffold their grandparents' learning, but also to keep some activities as 'non-adult spaces'. The roles of expert-novice are thus interchangeable. The 'synergy' leading to mutual benefits

for the actors involved has been documented in sibling relationships (Gregory, 2001) and in grandparents-children relationships in Bangladeshi families (Kenner *et al.*, 2007).

Moll *et al.* (1992) also talked about the knowledge and skills being transmitted within a social matrix, where social networks function on the basis of trust, which facilitates exchanges of information and skills. Their concept of *funds of knowledge*, defined as 'historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for the household or individual functioning and well-being' (1992: 133), is key to examining what resources families draw upon after migration, in order to learn about new cultural behaviours and norms. Individuals' use of 'cultural tools' (Rogoff, 2003), such as language or technology, has also a considerable importance in identifying the processes through which intergenerational learning is reshaped post-migration. The transnational cultural space challenges the ways in which the older generations can make use of experiences from their past in the process of cultural transmission. Adults will rely on values and memories from their past, through the so-called process of 'prolepsis' (Cole, 1996), which can often be in tension with the cultural values children are exposed to post-migration. By cultural values, we understand those norms, traditions, rituals and beliefs which individuals may associate with a specific ethnicity or nation. Anthias (2011) stresses however that although migrants are often assumed to 'carry' with them their 'culture', their gender, class and inter-generational differences are key aspects of individuals' changing cultural identity. Children's experiences of having to manage intergenerational tensions and how they navigate the cultural maps of two or more cultures have yet to be explored in depth.

The study focus and methodology

This research was conducted with newly migrated Polish families in Scotland, and sought to examine closely the intergenerational exchanges around cultural transmission and how children's cultural identities were shaped by these. We were interested in the processes through which children and adults mediate each other's access to the new culture, while also maintaining the cultural values and practices of their homeland and the extent to which learning interactions were co-constructed. Given the significance of space for

intergenerational exchanges, mentioned above, we also wanted to identify the places in which cultural beliefs, values and identities are formed. One other aim was to clarify how the roles of 'expert' and 'novice' were negotiated in these intergenerational processes and identify any intergenerational tensions. By identifying the key characteristics of such learning exchanges, we wanted to provide new knowledge more widely on how families learn together, especially when separated by distance, and what is the role of children's agency in the process.

Since the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, Scotland, where this study took place, saw an unprecedented rise in the number of Eastern European migrant families arriving to seek employment. The vast majority of these have been Polish, following a strong history of Polish migration since the Second World War (White, 2011). After 2004, when Poland joined the European Union, the number of Poles migrating to the UK rose by almost half a million in less than three years (White, 2011). The increased opportunities for settlement offered by the EU membership meant that many decided for the first time to bring children over or have children after migrating. Currently, Poles are the biggest white ethnic minority in Scotland's schools (Scottish Government, 2013).

This study draws on data collected with 18 Polish families with children, of which 14 had one child and 4 had two children. The ages of the 22 children interviewed ranged from 7 to 14, and, at the time, they had been in Scotland for between 1 and 5 years. Families were recruited through mainstream schools in three locations (urban, semi-urban and rural) and a Polish Saturday school, and they came from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and migration histories. While some migrated from rural areas in Poland (n=6), the others came from small towns or cities in Poland (n=16). In terms of qualifications, about half of the parents interviewed had degrees, while the others were educated to A-levels or equivalent qualifications (one parent had no qualifications). All families were visited at home between September 2011- February 2012, for in-depth interviews with the children and parents, and all interviews were conducted in Polish by the second author. We asked for 'at least one

parent' to take part, and in most cases (n=16), mothers volunteered. Three fathers took part with their partners and in two families fathers were interviewed.

We were mindful of the particularly challenging ethical issues of interviewing children in their homes (Bushin, 2007; Sime, 2008; 2015, forthcoming), including the key role that adults play as gatekeepers and children's limited control over domestic spaces. During the visits, the process was explained and then children were asked if they wanted to be interviewed individually or with other family members. The visits varied in duration from one to two hours and we took the cues from the children in terms of length and format. Although we used pictures to represent activities we wanted to ask children about, they had a choice in terms of using these or just discussing freely the activities they were engaged in. Like Grewal and Ritchie (2006), we were aware of the importance of ethnic and language matching, and the interviewer was a native speaker of Polish, allowing for a more 'insider' perspective on the views expressed. All interviews were recorded and then translated into English at transcription stage. Once collected, the data was analysed thematically, using a technique advocated by Boyatzis (1998). Initially, an overview thematic grid was produced to map out the descriptive summaries of the issues emerging from the data. This enabled a range of common key themes to develop across the data set, identifying similarities and differences in interpretations and understandings of children and parents. Relevant sections of the transcripts were then assigned appropriate thematic codes and refined sub-categories emerged. The emerging themes were then connected with the theoretical concepts which informed the research. Since this study is based on an interpretivist paradigm, transferability of the thematic findings to all migrant families is neither possible nor the aim of the study.

Findings

From the families we worked with, it became clear that children's cultural identities, practices and knowledge about the cultures in which they were operating were shaped by a range of influences, including family members in Scotland and those left behind, old and new peers, media and institutions such as schools and diaspora organisations. These were complex

processes of negotiating cultural values and practices between children and adults. While children and adults were often in agreement in terms of values, practices and expected behaviours, there were also divergences between generations. In this section, we aim to provide evidence on the considerable impact that migration has on children's opportunities to interact with significant adults in the family, including grandparents. We examine first the practices identified in relation to the learning of the new culture and then move on to explore the practices linked to the maintenance of the homeland culture in the next section and illustrate the findings from our analysis with material from interviews.

Convergence and divergence in learning about the new culture

Children's learning about the new culture was not a linear process of acceptance and adoption of new cultural practices, but a far more complex process in which their agency was highly significant. As tensions between the new culture and the Polish culture were manifest in their everyday lives, children had to engage in a continuous process of acceptance or resistance. These tensions led to convergent and divergent practices.

Convergent practices and values in learning about the new culture

Children and their parents often shared an understanding that they had to adapt to the new culture, learn the language and integrate in the social structures in place. As one parent put it, *'we are here now, and we have to learn the Scottish ways of doing things'* (Paulina, mother). One clear example of convergent practices and values was in relation to schooling. Children and parents placed a high importance on 'doing well' at school, acknowledging this not only as a pathway to success later in life, but also as a sign of integration. In one family, Kamil, 10, showed us the medals he got since living in Scotland:

Kamil: This is a bag with my different medals that I won here [in Scotland]. This one is from school, I got it because I did well in a test, this is from the taekwondo competition, this is from a football competition, this is from the music band and this is from nursery...and I have the cup which I won at football. I have a certificate as well.

Kamil's mum: It's important to get these things, to do well.

Parents were often learning the new language through children's homework and becoming receptive to cultural influences through their children's schooling. In one of the visits we conducted, Romek, father to Kuba, 3, explained the efforts all adults in the family were making to ensure that Kuba, who was born in Scotland, would learn Polish, and how in turn, the boy was teaching his mother English:

I teach him the colours and numbers in Polish, because I decided it will be good for him, no matter what we do in future [stay in Scotland or return to Poland]. So he knows the words for colours in English and now he learns them in Polish. At the nursery, he is learning a lot of English. My wife speaks only a little bit of English, so she learns with him. He'll come home and say words in English and she'll say, what's that, and he'll tell her in Polish.

For both mother and child, this was a complex learning experience. Kuba seemed to acquire far more than just socialisation into what it means to attend nursery and the English language, as his learning at nursery provided him with significant cultural capital for entering school. He was also able to facilitate his mother's access to English, in explaining to her meanings by using his knowledge of both languages and making presuppositions about his mother's knowledge in each language, through a clear process of prolepsis. For Kuba's mother, this was not only a learning experience of the new language, but also a realisation that Kuba was rapidly becoming a language 'expert'. As the main family member to have direct contact with native English speakers on a daily basis, he would mostly likely become responsible for transmitting this knowledge to his parents.

In another family, Romek's mother, Bianca, talked with amusement about her son being the only Polish boy in the school who was playing the bagpipes. The family had attended several music events at school and got a letter sent home from the music teacher to encourage Romek's musical talent:

Romek: I told my mum to buy me a kilt. We learnt about it at school, each family or clan have different colours to represent them.

Bianca: It's funny, because he is the only Polish child who plays traditional Scottish music. His music teacher sent us a letter saying that Romek is great, and we should buy real bagpipes. We were thinking about buying him a kilt, and bagpipes. Romek got very excited, but when I checked the prices, it is all very expensive, about £1000.

Romek: I've been in two competitions already. I tried twice to win, first time, I didn't, but I won the second time, when I played 'Scotland the brave'.

There was a strong sense that Romek's interest in music was shaped by his family, with both his mother and grandmother being accomplished musicians. That being said, the fact that Romek played the bagpipes, rather than more traditionally Polish instruments, showed how Scottish cultural values, as mediated by the school and his peers, have had a clear impact on his interest in music and Scotland's culture. In this case, the mother was clearly supportive of Romek's efforts.

All parents interviewed acknowledged their children's position as 'experts' in the majority language and examples of children mediating parents' access to information, local services or activities were numerous. Parents talked with a sense of pride about their children's achievements in terms of learning English and understanding 'how things work' in the new country. From instances when children acted as everyday interpreters for their parents, to roles that carried significant responsibilities, such as reading official letters or helping parents complete job applications, children's positioning as language 'experts' challenged adults' traditional roles as 'funds of knowledge'. Dorota explained how her son was regularly acting as an interpreter for her husband:

My husband's level of English is the lowest in my family, so sometimes when they go together to the shop, my husband starts talking in English and Viktor helps him with words. And then many times, Viktor translates for my husband, as he doesn't understand the people in the shop. And once my son asked him to write an email to his teacher saying that he won't come to the football class because it was raining, so my husband asked my son to write it on a piece of paper so he could copy it.

Divergent practices and values in learning about the new culture

Knowing the majority language is key to children's ability to engage in learning and other social activities. While all families seemed to agree on the importance of learning English now that they were living in Scotland, there was a marked distinction in terms of the importance that different parents attached to maintaining their homeland language. Kasia, a mother of two, expressed disbelief that some Polish parents would be willing to abandon their homeland language and impair their children's ability to interact with their families:

We always speak Polish at home, but I have many [Polish] friends who speak English to their children. They say they want their children to know a bit of English before they start school. Which is funny, because they [the parents] usually don't know English well, so I can't imagine how they can teach their children? And then their child will go to Poland to see the grandparents and won't be able to speak to them, which is kind of sad.

Children and parents sometimes differed in their satisfaction with the school system in Scotland. While children were generally happy with their schools, emphasising the less rigid format of the school day, with less homework, less strict teachers and more choice, parents often saw the same characteristics as a sign of a less effective education. Some parents also talked about their frustration at not being able to support children's learning because of their lack of knowledge about the education system or limited language skills, which did not allow them to have engage with schools in a meaningful way. One of the mothers talks about 'a friend', who felt unable to help her child with homework:

I have a friend, her daughter is now 13, and before they came here four years ago, her daughter used to go to school in Poland. And there, she knew how to help her daughter with homework, she knew the questions in the homework, but here, she doesn't. She says she feels so embarrassed because she can't help her daughter and her English is not good enough.(Ludmila, mother)

This often made children sensitive to their parents' inability to help and frustration and made them adapt to the situation, often by becoming self-sufficient or adopting the 'expert' role themselves. In the interview with Agatha's mother above, after she talks about 'her friend' being unable to help her child with homework, Agatha, age 8, intervenes:

Agatha: But I don't ask you for help with homework.

Mother: No, you don't, it's true. You learn a lot from school. Plus I work, so I don't have much time to help you.

Agatha: At school, we learn songs and poems, letters, and English... and sometimes my mum would ask me to translate things for her and that's fine, I don't mind.

Agatha is clearly adopting considerable agency in the processes of managing her schooling and protecting her mother's feelings, and this is substantially influenced by her experiences and interactions in different places (e.g. school, home) and through learning about what would be customary practices of parental engagement.

Being socialised in two cultures, that of the Scottish school and friendships and that of the Polish home, often meant that children were exposed to conflicting values and some talked about the challenging process of managing and negotiating identities and choosing between cultural affiliations depending on circumstances. Zuzanna, 12, explained how she used her Scottish accent at school and how she 'felt' a different identity, at home:

I learnt to speak with a Scottish accent quite quickly. My friends like that, although they'd sometimes make fun of my accent or how I say things. I'd say I'm more Scottish at school, and more Polish at home.

Parents were explicit about certain undesirable behaviours in their children's friends, such as alcohol consumption, extravagant clothing or makeup, or disruptive behaviours at school:

A lot of the young girls are wearing makeup, drink or do drugs, and when I compare my Wiktoria [to them], she looks and behaves totally different. They don't look right

as these behaviours are not appropriate for this age and I wouldn't let her mix with these young people. (Berta, parent)

Some of the children interviewed stated that their parents' values were key to their choice of friends, and how there were sometimes tensions between wanting to 'fit in' and adopt practices which would make them popular at school and respecting their families' values (see also Sime and Fox, 2014 b).

Convergence and divergence in maintaining the native culture

Convergent practices and values in maintaining the native culture

Data from parents revealed the high importance that newly migrated Poles gave to children's learning of their parents' language and culture. All families we visited spoke Polish in the home, and engaged in other activities to stimulate their children's learning of the native language, such as watching TV in Polish via satellite, listening to the radio, encouraging children to read online news. Marek's mother, for example, talked about the range of activities her son engaged in online and offline, all in Polish:

He watches SpongeBob [cartoon character], but he doesn't like it in English, so we get it dubbed in Polish on TV. He plays computer games as well, all in Polish, but I tend to restrict his access to computer games because he would play all the time. So I find him crosswords, books, all online in Polish, I prefer something he can learn from.

Outside the home, families would also find opportunities for their children to interact with Polish speakers and learn about the Polish culture:

You meet a lot of Polish people, you can buy Polish food, we go to the Polish church and the [Polish] Saturday school, so it is not difficult to teach Agatha about Poland and Polish customs. You can even get the Polish newspapers.

Given the affordability of travel, many children said they visited relatives in Poland once or twice a year, often timing visits to coincide with family events (weddings, Holy Communion),

festive holidays (Easter, Christmas) or children's holidays from school. These visits were not only an opportunity to just catch up with family and friends, but also for children to get to know the country and its cultural sites:

Agnieszka: Every time we go to Poland, we stay in my grandparents' house.... I often help my grandmother in the garden. Here, we don't have a garden like in Poland.

Researcher: So your grandmother teaches you about gardening. I see... What other things do you do together?

Agnieszka: We go walking together and we talk about life here and there or we play cards. My grandfather taught me some games. And we go to my uncle, and my cousin Kasia. This year, we went to Gdansk as well.

Agnieszka's mother: Yes, I want to show Agnieszka a little bit of Poland, so she can remember it.

Agnieszka's mother, like other mothers interviewed, talked about the importance of familiarising her daughter with the Polish culture and history and of maintaining family values and customs. Other studies have reported the tendency of Polish mothers to become home makers after migration and concentrate on bringing up the children and transmitting their native cultural values (Lopez-Rodriguez, 2010; White, 2011). This is often justified by mothers' developing language skills in English and limited access to suitable employment.

Online contact with relatives left behind was another key feature of family life post-migration. While patterns of contact differed across families, from daily to weekly, the main purpose of the online interactions was seen as keeping in touch and maintaining the emotional bond, for children's and grandparents' benefit. In many families, grandparents left behind connected to the internet for the first time after grandchildren had migrated and for the sole purpose of maintaining a more 'real' contact than afforded via phone lines. These technology-mediated interactions often involved children as key brokers of knowledge about the new culture. While grandparents used these opportunities to remind children of Polish traditions, read them stories, poems or songs, children told their grandparents about their activities at school or things they have learnt about the new culture. These included discussions around

'different' ways of doing things, such as cultural and religious celebrations, customs and behaviours. One of the girls, Antonia, explains what she talks about with her grandmother when on Skype:

My grandma always asks me what it's like living here, and I say, it's different, some things are better, some things are worse. So I show her the school uniform, tell her about the weather here, and when we celebrated St Andrew's Day at school, I told her about that. And then she tells me what things are like back home. And we speak in Polish, which is good for me.

These cultural experiences, some real and others virtual, allow children to function in two cultural systems: both in the new culture, through schooling, engagement with local services and local friendships, and also by experiencing the culture left behind by their family, through the use of the Polish language and observance of traditions and customs kept alive by their parents and grandparents. In this context, learning about the 'native' culture happens through children's engagement in family activities, observance of cultural practices and learning by 'osmosis' and some deliberate participation in activities meant to ensure the transmission of cultural values.

Divergent practices and values in maintaining the native culture

There were however some accounts of explicit conflict between children and their parents/grandparents and between parents and grandparents. Although we did not interview grandparents, parents acknowledged the intergenerational tensions in relation to children's upbringing. Grandparents left behind often put pressure on parents, to ensure that children spoke Polish well and were familiar with the cultural customs. They often expressed disappointment at not being able to do these things themselves, as opportunities for interaction were limited to fleeting family visits or chats via phone or Skype. Kasia's mother told of her parents' disappointment at their decision to migrate:

In Poland, I was working and my husband was working, and Kasia was most of time in nursery or with her grandparents. She'd do lots of things with her grandparents, so

when we told them we were coming here, you can imagine their reaction. My mum didn't talk to me for a few days and I don't think she has forgiven me yet.

Some accounts of explicit conflict between parents and children regarded the effort needed on children's part to engage in activities related to maintaining their native language and culture, such as attending church or Saturday complementary schools. Children differed in how strongly they felt about the need to maintain an advanced knowledge of Polish now that they were living in another country. One of the boys, Michael, talked about confrontations with his dad when he wanted to play football rather than attend Saturday school. Similarly, Marta said that it was mainly her parents' wishes for her to go to the Polish school:

My dad talks a lot about Poland, especially about Polish history, how there was a war in Poland and all that. And I go to the Polish school on Saturdays, my dad says it's important for me to learn about the Polish culture and history. (Marta, 8)

This is reflective of what Portes and Rumbaut (2001) called dissonant, consonant and selective acculturation, when family members vary in their readiness to embrace the new culture. While in some cases children learn the language and adapt to the new culture very quickly, parents do not adapt at the same pace (*dissonant acculturation*), and in other cases children and parents embrace the new culture and abandon the old one at the same pace (*consonant acculturation*). The former is more likely to create intergenerational conflict, as adults and children in the family disagree on the moral grounds of leaving one's culture behind. Most of the families in our study adopted a selective acculturation approach, where their links with the co-ethnic community and the sustained transnational relations allowed parents and children both to maintain aspects of the native culture, including the language, and to gradually embrace elements of the new culture.

Discussion

Within the research described, there is evidence of more significant changes in families' intergenerational activities, relationships and roles after migration than has previously been accounted for. Separation brought by migration is inherently challenging for the traditional

roles within the family. Structural changes that families go through are accompanied by cultural changes brought about by the processes of acculturation and integration into the new society and these can often lead to intergenerational tensions. Lüscher and Pillemer (1998) used the 'intergenerational ambivalence' construct to explore how individuals may feel towards others in their family, after migration. In our study, children expressed some ambivalence towards the sometimes contradictory norms and values of their parents and grandparents and those of the new culture. We also got a sense of the ambivalence that parents felt in relation to their children's acculturation, wanting them to succeed in their adaptation, but also to maintain the traditional values and identity. Findings have also showed how traditional family learning relationships and roles of 'expert-novice' become more reciprocal when a family migrates, with increased agency on children's part.

Migration does not mean however the disintegration of family ties and findings from this study showed the great lengths that migrants go to in order to keep in touch with family members left behind and maintain cultural practices (see also Sime and Fox, 2014 b). Children talked very fondly of their relationships with their grandparents and about their regret of having to live separated. The emotional support they received, often mediated by technology or phone calls, was key to their stability and confidence in coping with the new environment. They also expressed strong feelings of belonging to both cultures, that of their families' homeland, as mediated by their contact with their grandparents and parents, and that of their new country, as mainly mediated by school and local friendships. This description of the strong transnational bonds highlighted children's awareness of the importance of the values learnt from their distant relatives and how these were part of their cultural identity and ethnicity.

There is no doubt from the evidence presented above that migrant children acquire an enhanced role in the nuclear family after migration, often due to their enhanced linguistic competence in English. This often positions them as 'experts' in the family and confers them a certain advantage over their parents, especially if the parents' linguistic competence is still developing. In these situations, children can often have the main role in familiarising their

parents and grandparents with the new culture and mediating their access to opportunities (see Sime and Fox, 2014 a). This position can lead children to increased ambivalence towards their parents' homeland language, culture and identity, which may explain parents' and grandparents' insistence that children engage in cultural activities which allow them to maintain their native values. Loyalty conflicts often occurred when children saw these demands as too time-consuming, boring or irrelevant. Anthias (2011) sees these manifestations of intergenerational struggles as adults' attempts to maintain control over young people's future. In our research, children were aware that the two cultures were both significant to their lives, although their ideas about their cultural identities were clearly unsettled through migration. Most saw their ethnic identity as Polish, justifying this through their families' origin, although they talked about aspects of the Scottish culture which were starting to influence them.

The findings also highlight the diversity of the spaces in which children's learning about cultural values and practices are shifted away from the home. As migrant children exert their agency as 'cultural experts', and the places in which they develop and re-enact cultural practices expand, their choices in relation to cultural practices are often unavailable to their parents. Transnationalism and transnational practices bring about a reconfiguration of spaces in which children develop their cultural identities and allow them more flexibility in adopting these identities depending on the culture they need to interact in. Some authors have talked about a 'cultural competence' factor (Vertovec, 2009:73), where, similar to switching between languages in bilingualism, individuals learn different cultural practices and switch between these as and when required. The empirical evidence from our study demonstrates that migrant children become competent in navigating different sites of cultural engagement and that increasingly, the role of intergenerational relations in children's development of cultural values and practices needs to be seen as multi-sited and in constant flow.

Conclusion and implications for pedagogy

This study has revealed the complex nature of cultural learning that migrant children are exposed to and of the spaces in which this learning is taking place. While migrant children may be active agents in the processes of family acculturation, the challenges to family dynamics brought by migration should not be underestimated by educators. In Scotland, where this study took place, the newly implemented Curriculum for Excellence (2010) aims to ensure that all young people become 'successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors'. Under these four dimensions, it emphasises the importance of supporting children's learning and personal development through an acknowledgment of the significant learning that children do outside school and a direct involvement of parents as partners in learning. In the same context, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 emphasises the key role that schools have in maximising the potential of bilingual learners, although a more recent review (HMIE, 2009) has found that despite some evidence of good practice in meeting the needs of newly-arrived migrant children, teachers lack the confidence in working with bilingual learners and weaknesses still exist in supporting their achievement and getting them accustomed quickly to the education system.

Practitioners working with migrant children need to be aware of the complex changes in family roles and relationships that children experience. Children's multiple competences in the new language and culture, often mediated by their schooling, may mean that their position as 'cultural experts' in the home has added pressures and may challenge traditional roles and hierarchies. Equally, children may bring to the school a wealth of knowledge and experience originating in their families' culture, but which may be different from the knowledge required and valued at school. These cultural discontinuities may lead to children becoming culturally marginalised and isolated. To address this gap, educators need to create opportunities for children to develop strategies of navigating the two cultures and negotiate family roles in a positive way. Schools also need to identify opportunities for parents to take a more active role in the school life through family programmes, support

groups or parent-led activities, to allow them opportunities to familiarise themselves with the curriculum and also to immerse themselves in the new culture through multi-cultural networks of support.

The study findings have significant policy implications for supporting the successful integration of migrant families. Given the challenges migrant parents are faced with in terms of their knowledge and confidence in supporting their children's education and access to local services, pathways to service access should be simplified and made available to newly arrived families in their own language. Similarly, efforts should be made to support families to connect with diaspora groups and non-migrant, settled populations. As migrant families' networks of support will in most cases change substantially after migration, policies need to ensure that adults without the language skills to enter the job market have opportunities to engage in other ways within communities. Such interventions may include locally provided language classes, support groups, clear information on entitlements to free childcare and other financial assistance, training on applying for jobs and an obligation from statutory services to make information available in other languages.

As the number of migrant children continues to grow, their voices and experiences must be included in decisions made at local and national levels in social interventions, planning of education and other services and public policy. This study has highlighted the complexity of migrant children's family relationships and their strengths and challenges in overcoming transnational barriers to family relationships. Services working with newly migrated parents must find ways of helping them understand the structure of the education system their children must access and identify meaningful ways of engaging them in their children's education. Finding ways to capitalise on migrant children's vast cultural resources and identifying opportunities for them to succeed academically and feel included require skilled educators, with an increased awareness of the diverse learning populations and ability to provide a culturally-sensitive curriculum. Given the fact that more and more families are separated by borders in the modern world, school and other services need to continue to

support migrant citizens and broaden the horizons of public policy when it comes to conceptualising families.

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