Marta Moskal 2015. 'When I think home I think family here and there': Translocal and social ideas of home in narratives of migrant children and young people. *Geoforum*, 58, 143-152.

'When I think home I think family here and there': Translocal and social ideas of home in narratives of migrant children and young people

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Abstract

This paper offers theoretically informed empirical insights into migrant children's experiences of mobility and home. Drawing on research into the first-generation children of Polish labour migrants in Scotland, the paper explores the meanings that children attach to home and other specific places. In particular, it focuses on questions of the translocal and social nature of migrant children's sense of place and construction of home. The spoken narratives, subjective maps and drawings analysed here reflect children's multiple and intersecting relationships and identifications, with both their country of origin and the host country, in addition to how their notion of home is grounded in social attachments. Emphasising the continuing importance of 'place' in migrant children and young people's everyday experiences, the research concludes that subjective homemaking practices are just as important as objective educational attainment and other traditional social indicators in providing an understanding of the outcomes of migrant settlement. It also suggests that there is an emerging translocal identity among some young Polish migrants, whose changing understanding of home incorporates images and emotions from both their locality of origin and their current place of residence.

Keywords: migrant children and youth; translocal geographies; sense of place; home; mobility

1. Introduction

Migration and mobility have been increasingly recognised as defining experiences in people's lives (Creswell 2006; Sheller and Urry 2006), challenging our understanding of the idea of home and the way in which we construct new home environments (Nowicka 2007). Ideas about mobility and home are of particular importance in the experiences of children and young people who move from one country to another. In her study into local belonging and the emotional experiences of migrant children in urban neighbourhoods, den Besten (2010: 182) emphasises that a sense of belonging is an important socio-psychological aspect in the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as migrant children, in a recipient society.

Most children's lives are centred in their local neighbourhood. Therefore, the focus of this article is not to question local belonging, but rather how mobility can shape a young migrant's sense of place and influence their homemaking practices in everyday life.

Despite considerable variation in migrant children's and young people's experiences of migration, mobility and transnationalism, all young migrants actively forge places in the world for themselves in various ways: by playing varying roles in family decision making; by making intentional efforts to belong in the host society and in other meaningful local and translocal social contexts; and by consciously adopting practices that facilitate their belonging in social networks (Ní Laoire Carpena-Méndez, White and Tyrrell 2011). The transnational nature of children's and young people's lives has been highlighted in research that explores their agency in forming and maintaining transnational connections and belongings (Haikkola 2011; Mand 2010). Young people develop strategies for creating home and a sense of belonging in ways that fit with the realities of their lives, and as such their home may be here or there, or both, or nowhere, or shifting and contingent (Ní Laoire, Carpena-Méndez, White and Tyrrell 2011: 9). Fog-Olwig (2003) suggests that while

migration origins and destinations may not represent migrant children's primary sites of belonging, they still affect the interconnected spaces of their everyday lives. In other words, migrant children's lives can be embedded in local places as well as in global and transnational spaces. Moreover, their attachments are shaped not just by their migration, but also by their involvement in social situations and by their interactions within their family, school and other institutions and communities.

In general, geographical, anthropological and postcolonial studies describe a sense of place or a home as a set of relationships with both people and things (Amin 2002; Massey 2005; Datta and Brickell 2011). Doreen Massey's essay on the 'Global Sense of Place' stressed a need to embrace the culturally multiple, dynamic and connective aspects of place in a globalizing world (Massey, 1994: 149) Additionally, Seamon (1980) suggested that a sense of place is created through the fusion of time-space routines in a particular place, through many daily interactions with people, and through habitual patterns meeting in both time and space. Human geographers like Massey (1994) and Seamon (1980) have argued that the concepts people associate with locality are, in many instances, interwoven in complex ways with attachments to other places on other temporal and spatial scales. Mobility and belonging should not be seen as mutually exclusive (Gustafson 2009). Place is a dynamic entity, and therefore belonging and home making is a continuing and contextual process that develops from the relationships between people, places and mobility (Fallov, Jorgensen and Knudsen 2013).

Drawing on these developments, this work attempts to view migrant children's and young people's constructions of home in terms of the dynamic process (see also Mand 2010; Sirriyeh 2008). The paper explores the construction of home and a sense of belonging in the experiences of Polish children and young people who are now living in Scotland as a result of

their families' labour migration from Poland. The use of stories, drawings and mental maps help to capture the children's and young people's lives from a translocal perspective. Considering Mendoza and Morén-Alegret's (2013: 765) point that senses of place are constructed in transnational spaces, but are expressed in specific places, it explores how practices performed within a locality have shaped the types of experiences of home that children have in a transnational space. In what ways do transnational relations, which are central to children's ideas of home and belonging, relate to their lives and practices? How is the transnational concept translated in a local context?

Focusing simultaneously on local and global representations and living experiences of children and young people (Aitken 2004), the article aims to contribute to an understanding of the geographical dimensions of migrant childhood and youth. Engaging with Ansell's (2009) discussion of the 'politics of scale' this work attempts to theorise about young people's lives in relation to broader social processes.

2. The Ongoing Debate over Transnationalism and Translocalism

Within international migration studies, the transnational approach has been gaining momentum since the 1990s. Research in anthropology, sociology and human geography has highlighted how migrants can produce transnational spaces that simultaneously connect them to two or more countries (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Voigt-Graft 2004). Transnational spaces are defined as both a social terrain that reflects migrants' 'bifocality', and a fragmented and diffused geographical reality (Vertovec 2004; Kearney 1995).

Meanwhile, the notion of 'translocality' has increasingly appeared in geographical works on transnationalism (see for example Katz 2001; Tolia-Kelly 2008), taking a human 'agency oriented' approach to transnational migrant experiences (Brickell and Datta 2011: 3). Many scholars now assert the importance of local-local connections during transnational

migration (Appadurai 1995, 1996; Amin 2002; Conradson and McKay 2007; Wessendorf 2010; McKay 2006).

Appadurai's (1995; 1996) notion of 'translocality' describes the ways in which emplaced communities become extended, via the geographical mobility of their inhabitants, across particular sending and destination contexts. The concept recognises that localities remain important as sources of meaning and identity for mobile subjects. Thus, at the level of human experience, the distinctiveness of place is retained rather than eroded by global migration flows (Amin 2002: 385–386).

When exploring the relevance of translocal concepts in a transnational context, it is worth recalling Vertovec's notion of transnationalism, which underlines the fact that migrants can live in social worlds that are stretched between physical places and communities in two or more nation-states (Vertovec 2001: 578). It is therefore possible to view migrant's connections with their communities of origin as being both translocal and transnational in equal measure. Some authors appear not to sense any tension between the use of the term 'translocal' as an occasional alternative to 'transnational'. However, the term 'translocal' can also be used more precisely to imply a distinction between the translocal and the transnational. Many scholars of transnationalism have been particularly focused on the impact of transnational ties on state borders, institutions, citizenship and economic exchange. This way of using transnationalism, implying that it is solely concerned with nationality and not with locality, was noted by White (2011: 14) who also argues that locality is in some contexts more important than ethnicity or nationality, and argued that too much emphasis can be placed on the role of ethnicity and national belonging in the lives of migrants. The place attachment is a significant dimension in migrants' lives, and White (2011) considers that the current interest in transnationalism, which often focuses mainly on national and ethnic identities, can obscure the importance of such translocal attachments.

It therefore seems prudent to employ the term ‘translocalism’ to restore the focus on the translocal when describing the experiences of Polish migrant families and their children in Scotland. People often move from Poland because of specific economic conditions in their home town or village, and they move to specific places abroad where they have friends and family. When abroad they maintain emotional and financial ties with specific places in Poland, to which they frequently return to visit on holiday, and if they return to Poland to live and work, they are likely to settle again in their places of origin (White 2011:12).

The importance of place has also been recognised by some authors giving accounts of transnational mobility while remaining attentive to everyday practices and geographical emplacements (Condradson and Latham 2005). Additionally, focusing on place can reveal multiple migration experiences, diverse social and spatial practices, a variety of personal identities and the complexities associated with migration decision-making (Halfacree 2004). Further, Mendoza and Morén-Alegret (2013: 765) point out that the analytical potential of ‘place’ has been overlooked. Places exist not only as physical entities but also as the composite of people’s different experiences, and places are full of meaning and encompass an existential dimension and an emotional link with the human being. In line with the processes of identity construction, the concept of ‘sense of place’ is built upon everyday experiences and subjective feelings. This concept is analytically powerful since it transforms ‘space’, understood as a generic abstraction, into ‘place’, contextualised through the actions and experiences of individuals (see for example Massey 1994). Thus, places are spaces to which people are attached, in one way or another (Creswell, 2004: 7). One’s sense of place is therefore concerned with feelings about place and places, such as a place where one can feel at home. Place must be seen as a socially constructed and related phenomenon and, as such, may be enriched by studies of migrants’ communities (den Besten 2010: 182).

This paper therefore explores the analytical potential of the inter-related concepts of 'place', 'sense of place' and 'home' in studying migration experiences of children and young people.

3. Migrant Children and Home

Huijsmans (2011) points out that focusing on children as migrants challenges the dominant perception of children as inherently local beings, a concept that underpins much childhood research. Children's involvement in migration upsets the notion of children as innately local beings and clearly illustrates how children's everyday lives are shaped by structures and constraints originating beyond the local scale. By viewing children's agency as a process, Ansell (2009: 199) introduces the notions of subjectivity and subjective mobility to studies of migrant children, and suggests that it is important to examine the nature and limits of children's spaces of perception and action (Ansell 2009: 191). She argues further that 'too often local, concrete and agency are conflated into an acceptable focus for research, in opposition to a global, abstract or structuralist perspective that is viewed with suspicion as too "distant" from real children' (Ansell 2009: 194).

Within studies into migration and transnationalism, a central focus has been placed on migrant ideas and practices of recreating and maintaining home and a concomitant sense of belonging to a place (Ahmed et al.; Fog-Olwig 1997, 2002; Rapport and Dawson 1998), however much of the literature exploring 'home' does so through the perspectives of adult migrants. We know much less about children's perspectives, due to the fact that childhood has been seen as a 'natural' phase of life associated with passivity (with exceptions discussed by, for example, Orellana et al. 2001). The view of children as passive members of families who are socialized into identities has been criticised by the 'new studies of childhood' that recognise instead that children are active agents, both influencing and influenced by wider societal processes (see for example James 1998). Adopting this perspective, the present study

places emphasis on the abilities of young people to create their own identities and meanings of home on multiple scales.

Home can be understood in different ways. The concept of home was established in human geography in the 1970s and 1980s as a uniform space of safety and familiarity, providing a sense of place and belonging in a world (Moor 2000). However, there has been a growth in ambiguous and contradictory analyses of home since that time, and the home is now considered a far more problematic entity across the social sciences (Brickell 2012). One of the main questions addressed in contemporary social research of home is how to consider simultaneously people's experiences of mobility, and their need for certain levels of predictability, continuity and coherence. From a theoretical standpoint, there has been a tendency to conceptualise and approach the notion of home either from the perspective of a sedentary paradigm, or in terms of globalisation and mobility and its concomitant view of the postmodern world with things and people in flux (Appadurai 1991; Clifford 1992, Urry 2000). In this vein, Rapport and Dawson (1998) have argued that it is anachronistic to deal with the routinisation of space and place when dealing with the construction of home and belonging in a migration context. Such arguments seem to operate with the assumptions that movement and mobility are somehow closer to the reality of daily life in the contemporary world, than tales of routines and social practices, which are defined as 'signs of fixity'. I agree with Rapport and Dawson that we should keep our eyes open to the concept of fluidity and movement and to other ways of conceptualising home. However, I will argue that one does not necessarily preclude the other and that both routine and mobility may form a part of belonging and homemaking.

'Home is located in space, but it is not necessarily a fixed space … but space there must be, for home starts by bringing some space under control', argued Mary Douglas (1991: 289). However, she was concerned with the process of bringing the physical space of home

under control. Here I examine how children and young people create a home by bringing some space under control. But that space is understood differently than in Douglas's writing, as here the homes of transnational children extend beyond single localities. Douglas outlined the idea of home as a process occurring in a single place, which is physically 'localisable' but inhabited by 'a virtual community of people' mutually adjusting over time, space and other changing resources of home. The homes of migrant children articulated in the paper are translocal or 'bifocal', but are also inhabited by 'a virtual community' spread, in this case, across national borders. Douglas' (1991) reflections on the idea of home, including the regularity of a home's processes, seem to touch therefore on some universal features of home that could apply to different contexts.

Home can also be understood as a dynamic process of localising social interactions, according to Nowicka (2007), who draws on the work of Georg Simmel who understood society as the sum of interactions that constitute particular social spaces. Holloway and Valentine's (2000) notion of home refers to a privatized domestic space, but the notion that 'children's place is in the home' can also be extended to more abstract notions of home. In this way, home can be routed through complex webs of connections and attachments (Gilroy 1997), or forming an integral part of identities and their relations (Massey 2005: 10). Conradson and McKay (2007) remind us that most transnational migrants continue to feel fidelity and commitment toward family, friends and community in particular locations. A translocality is thus a place whose social relations and localised interactions have been reconfigured on a transnational basis (cf. Faist 2000; Vertovec 1999). This decouples the concept of 'home' from a distinct physical location and instead positions it as a mobile concept in relation to multiple social attachments and belongings.

These developments provide a framework for reconceptualising the ways in which the social attachments and belongings are articulated in children's and young people's lives (Ní

Laoire et al. 2011:158). The idea of migrant children and young people negotiating their transcultural lives (Hoerder, Herbert and Schmitt 2005) captures the complex and processual nature of these individuals' pursuit of a sense of belonging within a dynamic socio-cultural context.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research sample

Drawing upon a qualitative study of Polish families and children in Scotland, this paper analyses the experiences of first-generation migrants' children. It focuses on the views of these Polish children for three main reasons. First, there has been noticeable participation of children in the Polish labour migration following the EU accession in 2004. Therefore, it is not unusual for children to live away from their parents for extended periods or to join their parents who are working abroad. Secondly, the children who move as members of labour migrant families have not often been the subjects of social research. In particular, the first generation of migrant children, as opposed to the second or third generations, are substantially underrepresented (White, Ní Laoire, Tyrrell and Carpena-Méndez 2011). Thirdly, in migration research there has been a common focus on children's integration (or lack of) in the host society (for example, Crul and Vermeulen 2003; Penn and Lambert 2009), rather than their experiences as migrants who are often members of both their host societies and of transnational networks and communities at the same time.

Empirical data collection began by contacting local authorities and selecting schools. The schools have been used as 'gatekeepers' for contacting the Polish migrant families and inviting them to participate in the study. Children, young people, and their parents or carers were informed of the research project through translated leaflets, which outlined their expected participation, and a signed consent form was required. The study involved 41

children, including 18 boys and 23 girls, between the ages of 5 and 17; 27 attended primary school and 14 secondary school. The sampling was of a purposive type and was designed to capture some of the diversity of Polish migrant children's experiences. The study therefore included participants from different backgrounds and types of settlements and involved people living in urban, semi-urban and rural areas.

4.2. Data collection

The studies were conducted using a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967), designed to help researchers elicit and analyse qualitative data to identify important categories in the material, with the aim of generating ideas and theory 'grounded' in the data. This approach is particularly appropriate for research in areas that are under-theorized, in this case allowing themes and ideas to emerge from the children's accounts and descriptions of their drawings and activities. The research questions were open-ended and exploratory.

The research data were collected through individual narrative interviews as well as by collecting drawings and subjective maps. The methodological choice made here is driven by a desire to allow the voices of children and young people to speak through the research, by using child-centred research approaches (Flutter and Ruddock 2004, Macbeath et al. 2003). Children are thus encouraged to communicate in ways in which they are comfortable, for example, by drawing pictures, drawing mental maps or mapping their social networks, or through storytelling during the interview process (Moskal 2010). Telling stories is far from unusual in everyday conversation, and it is apparently no more unusual for interviewees to respond to questions with narratives if they are given some room to speak (Mishle, 1986: 69). Narrative is often synonymous with 'story' (Larsson & Sjöblom 2009: 274) and narrative interviews can elicit relevant information with an emphasis on the production of meaning by the informant, and they respect an individual's capacity to make sense of his or her own situation (Czarniawska 2004).

Narrative accounts are also considered a good strategy for giving voice to minorities or groups that experience discrimination (Mishele 1995; Josselson and Lieblich 1995; Riessman, 2002; 2003). However, although Riessman shared the goal of giving voice to unheard groups, she encouraged researchers to be cautious, emphasising that ‘we cannot give voice, but we do hear voices that we record and interpret’ (2002: 220). Narrative approaches, including the one adopted in this project, have particular appeal to research with children and young people. Emerging scholarship bringing narrative methods to bear on the question of migrant children's voices can already be noted, such as in Adams’s (2009) study based on the stories told by some young migrants about their recent arrival as asylum seekers in Britain; Archambault’s (2012) research exploring how the process of home-making is experienced in the everyday lives of refugee children settling with their parents in Norway; or Tymczuk’s (2013) analyses of how Ukrainian children and youth conceptualize migration, homeland and being abroad in the context of societal, economic and political change. These works readily combine the ‘new orthodoxy’ of childhood studies, in which ‘the child's voice’ is recognised and valued, with an interpretive paradigm that recognises the partial and situated quality of research knowledge (Reeves 2007).

The data used in this research study were collected from in-depth interviews, all of which were audio-recorded. The interviews were conducted mainly in a storytelling format in which the young participants were asked to narrate the experiences of their migration and new life in Scotland in detail and to discuss their subjective feelings. An interview guide was used, but participants were not asked a standard set of questions, so that they could freely narrate their stories in their own way. The interviews were conducted in Polish, the home language of all the participants. The questions asked were experience-based, for example: ‘Please describe your experiences and feelings on the first day at a new school’, and participants were encouraged to tell their stories in their own words. Additionally,

participants were afforded sufficient time and flexibility to complete their stories in an atmosphere in which they felt safe and respected, and the interviewers did not try to offer interpretations to the participants (Chase 1995).

Additionally, the drawings and map-making add to the narrative interviews by increasing the element of children's creative engagement and activating their imagination (Anning and Ring, 2004). Several studies (e.g. Harrison, Clark and Ungerer 2007) have used drawings to capture children's knowledge and experience, however this approach has been relatively scarce in migration research (with the exceptions of van Blerk and Ansell 2006; Mitchell 2006; den Basten 2010). Mental maps have been used, for example by Olga den Besten (2008) to describe the local, urban experience of children in order to map out the fears and dislikes of migrant children in Berlin and Paris.

In order to map the varied childhood experiences as well as the organization and meaning of migrant childhood, children were asked to draw maps of places where they spend their time. We did not ask participants to focus on particular localities. Children drew maps from memory that helped to delineate their spatial awareness, the locations of their activities and their sense of belonging in a particular place. Participants sometimes had difficulty constructing their maps, usually because of a lack of spatial concepts. Perspective, symbolization and other standard map qualities were very rarely observed. The mental maps produced a wide diversity of images in terms of the number of elements included and the perspective taken.

In a second technique, children were asked to draw a tree with roots and then to draw or write beside the roots the things that they were attached to. Letting the children create more than one drawing was a way to allow them to express multiple ideas about themselves; however, some children chose to make only one drawing or were tired after the first drawing. Younger children sometimes did not understand the idea of the thematic drawings or deviated

somewhat from the instructions (e.g. drawing a tree with some significant things around it), or they asked for another sheet of paper to draw something quite different—whatever they felt inspired to draw.

Drawings are not a substitute for children's voices, and the absence, muting or fragmentation of children's explanations of their images means that researchers need to be particularly cautious about over-interpreting the images. Therefore, I emphasise the use of the maps and drawings as catalysts for further oral narratives, in order to properly interpret the images. However, children are not accustomed to interviews, so the structure of the interviews depended on the particular child and his or her age. Therefore, for individual interviews with children as young as five or six years old, the drawings were essential to provide a point of reference and to enable communication (Author 2010).

4.3. Data analysis

One of the best sources of information regarding young migrants is the children themselves (Thompson 1999). Engel (2005) suggests that, increasingly, children's narratives are explored for the insight that they offer into children's experience of their worlds. Narrative research processes grant children the opportunity to narrate for themselves and to articulate perceptions, emotions and viewpoints that are latent or of which the children may not be fully conscious.

It was hoped that the participants' own narratives would illuminate underlying themes that have helped to shape the interpretation of their experience and the meaning that they have constructed from the experience of mobility between Scotland and Poland, and that they would provide another perspective in understanding newly migrated young persons. Narrative analysis postulates that the actual meaning of any particular experience to a person depends entirely on how it is interpreted by that person (Cortazzi 1993; Riessman 2003). By listening to their narratives, we come into contact with our participants as people engaged in

the process of interpreting themselves (Josselson and Lieblich 1995). Therefore, if we wish to seek a deeper understanding of the life experiences of migrant children and young people, we must listen to their own stories (Lam and Chan 2007). The contents and themes of each individual's story reveal a meaning to the storyteller. Although not all the participants shared all of the identified themes, due to diversity in age and experiences, a thread of common themes runs through the different stories; those themes are presented in this article.

The child-centred methods characterised above help to reveal how children and young people subjectively experience mobility and construct a sense of home while resettling. The stories and 'spatial narratives' (Mendoza 2006) help us to look at and simultaneously interpret the local and the global experiences of participants.

5. Results and discussion

The results of these analyses are discussed under three main themes, which emerged from the data analysis itself. The first presents children's transnational connections and their view of the family and personal relationships as altered by migration. The second examines how the children and young people 'bring some space under control' (Douglas 1991) in the process of the production of locality (Appadurai1996). The third theme looks at children's translocal identity and their imagination of 'here' and 'there'. We conclude with a discussion of children's processes of adaptation and their use of transnational spaces, in international mobility.

5.1. Transnational connections

By moving between Poland and Scotland, the children and young people of this study have been familiar with the transnational social milieu created by them and their parents, linking their society of residence with their society of origin. Frequently, the Polish migrants who work in the UK do not intend to settle permanently in their host destination and plan to

return home to Poland in the future. They keep in touch with friends and families, living between two social spaces.

Further, it was found to be common for a parent or both parents to migrate to Scotland and leave their children behind in the care of relatives or family friends. The children portrayed their own migration as that undertaken by the household, usually in response to one or a number of factors. The most common reason was a new job or a transfer of employment. In these cases, usually the father, but quite often the mother or both parents, were portrayed as having found a job and having taken the family to live nearer to the new workplace. Frequently the job seeker moved alone, leaving the family behind. Then, after the parent or parents have achieved some degree of stability, the children followed.

> "My dad came here three years ago, my mum two years ago, I have been here one year and my sister was born here. So for my dad it is the fourth year here, for my mum the third, for me the second. My sister was born here and is now one year and a couple months old. After my mum and dad left to go abroad I lived one year in Poland with my grandparents." (Vicky, aged 10)

All the participants had been involved in some kind of family reunion, although in many cases some close relatives had remained behind in Poland. The contexts of why the migration is taking place and the status of the people involved continue to shape children's experiences after they have arrived in their destination communities. Most of the young participants seemed to be socialised in the extended family that plays a central role in Polish culture (Moskal and Tyrell 2015). Staying within communities with relatives or friends from origin communities can provide a protective element for children, helping them to settle into unknown environments. Marc, aged eight, described his local liaisons with his family:

"Sometimes I go also to my grandma, she lives two blocks away from us; I can go on my own. Mum sends me there sometimes to borrow some eggs and other things. Grandma

went to Scotland before us; followed by our uncles and cousin and then I arrived with my parents. We have been living here four years already and Grandma five years."

Polish friends and family seemed to compensate for the fact that some young participants had very limited contact with the local non-Polish population. Children and young people emphasise their belonging and emotional connections to family and co-ethnics (others of the same ethnicity) but they may also feel disconnected from their family or co-ethnics (Wessendorf 2007). Retaining connections with family and friends back home in their country of origin is an important aspect to a migrant's negotiation of their belonging.

Family is crucial in the children's and young people's constructions of home and belonging, regardless of whether they refer to the family back in their country of origin, the family in their current place of residence, or in both places.

"I placed in the roots of my tree all the important people: in Poland my father, brother and grandma and granddad and in Scotland my mum. I wouldn't place any objects because the people are more important that the things. There are also my friends there in Poland and in Scotland", said Ralph, aged 11, when describing his 'tree of attachment' drawing (Fig. 1). Asked 'what he imagines when he thinks about home' Ralph responded: "When I think *home* I think *family* here and in Poland".

Migration disrupts family life and creates tensions and conflicts among family members. For some children in the study, separation and reunification during the migration process shaped and mediated their identities and their belonging within the Scottish context (see also author at al. 2014). For instance, Ralph misses his grandparents in Poland more than ever since he has moved to Scotland. They looked after him for three years when his mother, who is divorced from his father, worked and lived abroad. The grandparents visit him and his mum once a year now, but Ralph admits that it is not enough. He shows them around the neighbourhood when they visit (Fig.2), and when they are in Poland Ralph calls them

regularly, every day. He also stays in touch with his father and older brother via Skype and visits them during summer holiday.

The young people's accounts display a treatment of 'space as the product of interrelations, as constituted through interactions' and 'space as the sphere of coexisting heterogeneity and multiplicity'. Home is understood as a set of connections, and the density of those connections makes some things more familiar (Massey 2005: 9–11; 123–125).

There was a sense of connection with the home country that exists in reality (Internet conversations, phone calls, more or less frequent visits to and from the country of origin) but also in the imaginary realm. 'I drew the phone to call my family in Poland and a computer to talk to them', said ten-year-old Vicky to describe her drawing (fig. 3), and she explained further:

> 'I have got four cousins and grandma and granddad and three aunts and three uncles and many friends in Poland. We call often grandparents and I talk with my friends on Skype and there is one friend from Poland who went to Ireland and I contact her by Skype too'.

The material objects – phone, computer, present on Vicky picture, were not unique as many participants drew the same objects under their trees of attachment or inside of their houses on the mental maps. For example in his house Mathew, eight years old, drew himself next to the computer with a person and phone on the screen (Fig 4). These are 'material and imaginative' aspects of these representations, which show that communication, social relations always stretched beyond their localised presence. The very coexistence of closeness and remoteness is what makes the position of migrant children and their families problematic at all times. Spatial proximity is involved in terms of the immediacy of family members and friends, but at the same time home involves spatial distance. Children defined homes by the inclusion of various elements (people) but also by what or rather who was absent.

On one hand, the children's images and stories suggested that they saw migration as something that moved them away from their extended family and friends. Adam, aged 11, said during the interview: "Here, I frequently go to the shop and I buy things to not be bored; in Poland I was not allowed to buy things because they were too expensive, but I had friends and cousins to play with".

On the other hand, the participants demonstrated an ability to consciously shift their self-representation and become active and strategic in establishing social networks, whether with other Poles, other migrants or their Scottish peers. For example, Margaret, aged 15, gave an account of her intersecting relations, which defined her belonging and identifications on a transnational scale. She talked about her family, comprising grandparents and cousins, friends, football teammates and her trainer, who remain in Poland, and with whom she could call or chat electronically with. Together these constitute her parallel life, compared to her local context filled with interactions with family members, friends and new football teammates in Scotland. As they have experienced these transnational relations coupled with the presence of co-ethnic peer groups, migrant children and young people have developed different kinds of local attachments to either the Scottish location in which they live, or their Polish region of origin.

Children's stories seem to destabilise the dualism of the global and local (using Massey's idea) as the transnational social spaces in which they live continue to shape their social relations, cultural practices and identifications.

5.2. Children's production of locality

The localities are imagined, produced, and maintained against social, material and environmental ground (Appadurai 1996). As the children move to a new social and physical space, their adjustment to this new environment depends on the number and quality of their

interactions, ‘localised rituals’ to organise their power over the places (Appadurai 1996: 184-185).

Children’s place construction is complex and changes over time. Some children’s accounts show that they ‘are imagining space in process’ (Massey 2005: 11).

Ralph, aged eleven, described how he familiarised himself with the new location in the following way:

> “First, the flight was a big thing for me because I flew for the first time and I saw Scotland from above: there was so much green everywhere and then the groups of buildings and I liked it. I have never been on an island where people can live. Then I have seen two-level buses for the first time. The city looked big at the beginning but later it began to get smaller and smaller for me. I have started to think that Scotland is my country that I also love.”

Ralph’s narrative provides evidence of the importance of time, as Ralph becomes used to his new place. The temporal process of migration fits with Massey’s understanding of home as a set of connections. Entering new spaces, the children I researched embarked upon the process of turning the unknown into the known, by turning spaces into places. The process of transforming spaces into places was effected through, for example, bodily routine, by moving in and through the same spaces over time, creating personal paths, nodes, districts and landmarks, and the practices of naming and comparing, and essentially creating a mental map of a locality in which they live (Fig.2).

Ralph reports on building routines in his new country: “After arrival I did not know the language but I wanted to do things and I began by going to the shop to buy eggs, I said something ‘funny’ in the shop because we all laughed at home when I reported back to my mum and her boyfriend. Then I went eventually to the shop to buy other things again and again.” Through the gradual reconstruction of everyday routines, space was increasingly

appropriated. The everyday routes and routines in the local area allow gradual appropriation of the surrounding space and its transformation into known places. As Ralph moved through the temporal and spatial routines of his everyday life in the new city, he gradually learnt to be attached to its particular features and to build a sense of connection.

Lynch (1960) claimed that most often our perceptions of locality are not sustained, but are fragmentary and mixed with other concerns. His claim resonates with the migrant children's images of the localities they were in. For example, Kate, aged nine, drew a subjective map (Fig. 5) representing one street, along which she placed her house and school in Edinburgh next to her home, garden and playground in the Polish town that she came from. Kate's everyday routines and practices marked a way for her to bridge the gap between past and present, and between here and there. Kate's map illustrated this particular sense of connection and a sense of temporary belonging. This is something Ahmed (2000) calls 'the lived experience of being at home', in which 'being at home suggests that the subject and space leak into each other, inhabit each other' (Ahmed 2000: 89). Kate has bridged two notions of home: the lived experience of a locality, and the imagined, remembered place of origin. Through school, playground, house, and shop, the children are establishing recognised daily routines.

The children adapt to new situations and new places very quickly, and at first they may not refer to their previous location. This is visible in ten-year-old Sarah's narrative. She lives with her father and her one-year younger sister. She seems to be well settled in her new place of residence, and her subjective map and narrative show a variety of local activities, which make her life in Scotland interesting and busy. However, in her further narrative accounts, a more complex picture of Sarah's sense of belonging emerges when she imagines her summer holiday:

> "I go to Poland for the summer. I stay there with my mum. I also go to the Baltic and see my grandma and my cousin. We go to the forest together to pick up mushrooms. I am really looking forward to going".

Sarah's places are connected and disconnected through emotional belonging and home-making practices. Going back to the home country during the school holiday to stay with her mum and spend time with relatives becomes a process of building new routines and meanings for Sarah. This example shows a figuration of routines, which become adopted or entangled together with meaning-making and with other social and material figurations.

The routines, such as phone calls, daily Internet conversations, and holidays in Poland generate varying intensities of attachment to and detachment from particular localities, and the sense of belonging that emerges in the process. These practices challenge conventional dichotomies of stasis and mobility, local and global, real and imagined (see Massey 2005). Home is not simply a single private domestic space or a national space, neither it is simply an abstract and deterritorised space of interactions. Home develops very often across national borders, but the home process involves a concrete site of social relations and practices, material objects and daily routines (see also Ni Laoire at al 2010).

5.3. Translocal identity

Most of the children studied here indicated that their place of origin is important to them. They have a remembrance of a specific location and often create an imaginary meaning for that place. Some of the drawings clearly displayed the children's ideas and concerns about their translocal experiences and practices. Kate's map (for example, see fig. 5 again) evidences that children are able to imagine translocal life, as opposed to a transnational life. The similarities she perceives between her Polish and Scottish places of residence constitute a powerful translocal tie and do much to make her feel at home when she is abroad. This type of evidence emphasises the importance of different sites of belonging, connected with the

various spheres of life that children encounter (Olwig, 2003). Children's lives are not necessarily statically attached to their physical experience of space, because they can imagine distant places and the process of moving between places (van Blerk and Ansell 2006).

The awareness that people and places 'back home' were changing while they were not there was unsettling for some children. (see also Moskal and Tyrrell 2015). Young participants commented on the difficulty of making new friends and some made the distinction between having friends and just knowing people or having classmates. Sarah, aged 10, said, "I do not have friends here, but I have colleagues at school. In Poland I have friends but maybe I do not have them anymore." She also commented on her deteriorating ability to speak the Polish language, which makes her feel afraid that she will lose her good relations with people living in Poland.

Children's imagination of going home to the old, familiar things and people can be abstract, as they acknowledge that things may have changed and that people may have moved on. They do not forget, but perhaps they can open themselves up more easily than adults to acknowledging other parallel and independent stories (Massey 2005: 124–125). Margaret, aged 15, attending a city secondary school, remarked, "When I am here I feel like going back to Poland; when I am in Poland I want to come back here". She also acknowledged the changes: "The friends from my football team are not the same with me as they used to be because I am not there playing with them". Julia, aged 17, Margaret's older sister, added a similar reflection on change: "People change; my friends that I have been together with in Poland now turn away from me".

Some migrant children had developed a strong sense of belonging and attachment to the Scottish locality in which they now live. Important transformations occur through the school that is grounding them in the reality of a certain location. Ralph, aged 11, commented:

> “I know that I would like to finish school here and university. And I would like to come back to Poland for holidays but not to stay for the rest of my life. I like living here very much, and I do not feel like going back to Poland. I do not know why—perhaps because of the school, as I did not like school in Poland.”

Also, Vicky, aged ten, declared: “I would prefer to stay in Scotland”. However, at the same time she took the initiative to go to Polish Saturday school and persuaded her parents that she wanted to go. This could be seen as the ‘local’ expression of Vicky’s transnational belonging.

Children often made references to, and comparisons with, their previous situations in Poland or imagined how it would be to be in Poland. For instance, sixteen-year-old Paula, imagined herself coming back to Poland after she grows up and finishes school in Scotland, and said: “I draw a home, in Poland, not a real one but a home I dream about, spacious with my husband and children, in the future.” Her Polish schoolmate Agatha, 16 years old, expressed her nostalgia for her home in Poland, which was large enough to accommodate everyone and was always occupied by people: “My home in Poland was never empty, there was always my grandma or granddad or uncle there, and I had a dog there too.”

When questioned about coming back to their home country, many Polish migrants, including children, want to return to the places that they left. The sense of belonging to the Polish social sphere in both Scotland and Poland led to a desire to relocate to their place of origin. “I could go to the college in Scotland and if I would be a good student I could get a prize and come back to Poland with the money to buy a house and to study”, said Adam, aged nine, about his possible future plans.

Most of the young participants tended to feel that for the time being, especially for finishing schooling, they were likely to remain in Scotland. “I will come back to Poland for sure when I finish school”, declared nine-year-old Nicky. It frequently seemed to be the case

that the family discussed return as a real possibility. Marc, eight years old, reported: “It is possible that we will come back to Poland when I am 18 years old—my mum says.” The majority of parents, however, would leave to their children to decide where they want to live in the future.

Having housing in each locality clearly created dual local identities. Having their own flat or house in Poland gave them the special sense of going home to a particular place in Poland, when they return on holiday. Children were often aware of the parents’ decision to return to Poland in the future, frequently to their home locality, after the children finish school or after they have retired. Factors such as the parents’ nostalgia for the homeland and a desire to return, or intensive contact with relatives in Poland have shaped such local attachments (Wessendorf 2010). Experiences within the family in both Scotland and Poland and with the neighborhoods in each place are among the important factors that contribute to creating and sustaining networks with co-ethnics, and to sustaining a sense of Polishness.

6. Conclusions

This article focuses on children’s perspectives in understanding ideas and practices of home among transnational families in Scotland. The narratives, drawings and maps collected from children of Polish labour migrants help to illustrate the processes of migrant children and young people as they build a sense of home and belonging. Emphasis is put on the analysis of the practices of migrant children in specific context and places, with the specific objective of trying to capture the complexity of place construction, its change over time and its relevance to a comprehensive understanding of the migration process.

The study also demonstrates the predominantly social nature of immigrant children’s sense of belonging. It shows Polish migrant children’s constructions of home as a process embedded in social relations. Children and young people emphasise their belonging and their

emotional connections to family and co-ethnics, but some of them feel simultaneously disconnected from their family or co-ethnics (Wessendorf 2007). Their sense of home and of belonging involves both geographical and temporal proximity and absence.

One of the main questions addressed in this research in the context of home is how to mediate between the experiences of mobility and the simultaneous need for certain levels of predictability, continuity and coherence. The stories and drawings of migrant children and young people help to capture how these parties translate the transnational in local context. They show that the most of the children do keep in mind their previous locations and attribute meanings to those locations. The study also shows that 'homes' extend beyond single localities because they involve transnational networks. Patterns emerged in how the children structured their belonging, mostly investing in hybrid 'bifocal' practices. These evolving patterns of belonging are influenced by the strength of connections to members of the extended family in the country of origin, based on regular routines of communications via the Internet or phone, and the frequency of return visits to the country of origin and visits to relatives. Focusing on the spatial aspects of children's construction of home and on their sense of belonging, the present study highlights the mobile and translocal nature of children's and young people's lives. Home is a relatively open space; constructed out of movement, communication, and social relations which always stretch beyond (Massey 1992: 14; 2005).

The paper shows that the views of migrant children and young people are relevant and informative to the intellectual developments in human geography and migration studies. Research into the experiences of migrant children and young people offers ample scope for connecting childhood studies to contemporary geographical and interdisciplinary debates on transnationalism and translocalism, as well as mobility. Further research is needed to fully explore the impact of migration on the relationships that children and young people have with their families.

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Figures and Captions

Fig. 1 Ralph’s tree of attachment: In the roots from the left side: Scotland – Mum; Poland – Dad, Brother, Grandma, Grandpa; Poland – fiends; Scotland – fiends; two homes.

Fig.2. Ralph’s local map with the school; his house; skate park; playground and shop.

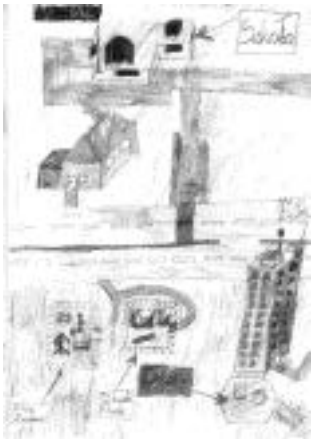

Fig.3. Vicky's tree of attachment: In the roots from the left side: phone; computer; family; family in Poland (grandma and grandpa, cousins, uncles); friends in Poland; television.

Fig.4. Matthew's inside of his house.

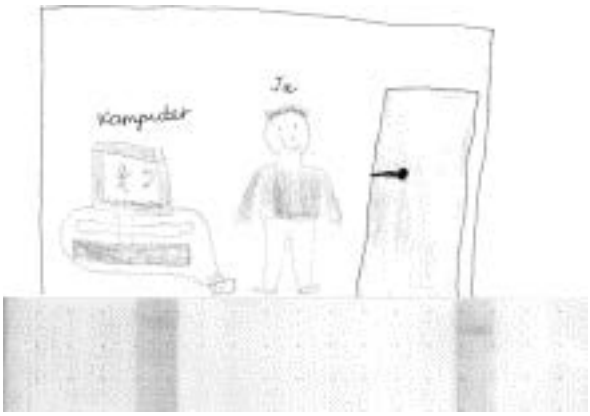

Fig.5. Kate's mental map: Along the street from the left: school in Edinburgh; house in Poland; garden in Poland; playground in Poland.

Szkoła
w Edenbawnie
Dom w Polsce
w Polsce
Pracownia
w Polsce