

# Šiuolaikiniai migracijos procesai

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## ‘At Home’ in Migration: Construction of Home by Polish and Lithuanian Migrants in the Uk

‘Home,’ our construction of it, where we feel ‘at home,’ how we share and designate it, is a key component of our identity. This idea is further developed by Blunt and Varley (2004) who explain that ‘as a space of belonging and alienation, intimacy and violence, desire and fear, the home is invested with meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships that lie at the heart of human life’ (Blunt and Varley 2004: 3). Some critics argue that only through the experience of leaving home does one come to feel a true sense of belonging. As Kateb puts it, in order to realize where your ‘home’ is it is necessary to become to some degree estranged and alienated from it (in Rapport and Dawson 1998: 9). In the context of migration, the word ‘home’ is often used to describe the migrants’ society of origin, even in those cases when they seem to have made a new home in their country of settlement. Mobile people usually develop an attachment to a specific place which they call home and which provides them with identity (Olwig 1997: 35). In this way, despite their ‘deterritorialization’ through migration, migrants still have a place where they ‘touch down’ (Olwig 1997: 23).

### 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: HOME AND MIGRATION

#### *1.1. Home as House*

Researchers in different disciplines in social sciences and humanities have put a lot of effort into understanding the nature of people’s relationship with a place and the factors that make them feel at home in one place but not another (Proshansky et al. 1983; Rapoport 1982; Shumaker & Taylor 1983). First of all, home may be understood as a physical structure in which we are housed. Economic, sociological, and political aspects of housing are studied by researchers in housing studies (see the journal *Housing Studies*). Their main interest lies in housing policy (how government decisions influence housing provision), the economics of housing (cost and quality of housing), and housing design (forms that houses take in different societies and cultures) (Blunt and Dowling 2006: 6). The latter aspect is well researched and documented by Paul Oliver

(1987), who studied forms of houses around the world. The main idea of Oliver's book is that people in different cultures shape their home environment in different ways.

Special attention in the literature on home design is devoted to suburban houses. The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the changing nature of the relationship between production and reproduction of labour in Britain. Production areas concentrated in the central parts of the city, while reproduction activities moved to the suburbs (Mackenzie and Rose 1983). With the rapid development in motorization and roads' infrastructure, and supply of specialised services into the suburbs, it became possible to combine these two distant areas. Dolores Hayden (2003) is another researcher in the area of suburbs who studied the design of suburban houses in America which, according to her, represent gendered spaces. The design of suburban houses includes a lounge, a separate kitchen, and a laundry. The activities taking place in these spaces (child supervision, cooking, cleaning) are most often carried out by women, unless a household is wealthy enough to employ a domestic worker. Therefore, until the 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban houses were a workplace for women and a place of relaxation for men. Women were also less likely to own a car and were therefore less mobile than men. Similarly, they also had more troubles providing childcare in the suburban area which had no community facilities at that time. Hence, in most cases women were bound to be full-time housewives in the home that officially belonged to their husbands (Hayden 2003).

The gendered interpretation of housing is also discussed in the work of Ruth Fincher (2004), who bases her views on interviews conducted with housing developers. She found that developers make a distinction between high-rise buildings which are

suitable for people without families and suburban homes which are places for families (suburban residences were also studied by Chow 2003 and Hayden 2003). Fincher's findings indicate that proximity to nature makes suburban homes a good location for raising children, relaxing from work, and making a home. As Blunt and Dowling (2006) note, this particular type of house, located away from the city, symbolises a socio-spatial separation of the spheres of home and work (101). Similarly, it also serves as an indicator of status and class, as this type of housing is often seen as embodying middle-class cultural values (Gurney 1999). It has to be pointed out, however, that only heterosexual families could be imagined living in a suburban home (Costello and Hodge 1999).

Given the importance of having a house in the suburbs of the city, it is necessary to discuss the meaning of homeownership in general. Homeownership is related to factors such as economic and life cycle status and the length of community residence that may be associated with social attachments (Blum & Kingston 1984: 162). For example, owning a house is considered the main element of the American way of life. In the American culture homeownership is viewed as a reward or a right possessed by those citizens who follow the economic rules (Blum & Kingston 1984: 159). With regard to the English language, it is 'homeownership' and not 'houseownership' that describes the state of having a house, implying that ownership is linked to home (Blunt and Dowling 2006). Therefore it is often believed that homeowners are better at making a home than tenants are (for the importance of homeownership, see Rakoff 1977).

Homeownership by itself, however, may not make people feel at home. Hence some researchers such as the anthropologist Da-

niel Miller (1998) focus on the cultural practices that create a home from a house. Miller stresses the importance of objects and things in the house because through them we construct social reality and thus home as well: 'It is the material culture within our home that appears as both our appropriation of the larger world and often as the representation of that world within our private domain' (Miller 2001: 1). Things in the house are important because they reflect ideas about gender, class, sexuality, family, and nation (see Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Lenski 1966). Objects, according to Miller (2001), carry cultural meaning and symbolize identity. He goes into details describing processes of accommodation and appropriation by which a home is personalised, and shows that creating a home is an active process. Nevertheless, the material culture of a house does not guarantee a sense of home. Therefore, it is necessary to address other aspects of making a home, such as lived experience and emotions.

### *1.2. Home as Lived Experience and Emotions*

As Nikos Papastergiadis puts it, 'The ideal home is not just a house which offers shelter... Apart from this physical protection and market value, a home is a place where personal and social meaning are grounded' (in Al-Ali & Koser 2002: 7). In the same line of thinking Roberta Rubenstein (2001) argues that a home is '[n]ot merely a physical or a geographical location but always an emotional space' (2001:1). A similar opinion is expressed by Easthope (2004:136), according to whom 'home is the fusion of a feeling 'at home', sense of comfort, belonging, with a particular place'. Even Witold Rybczynski (1987), whose main concern is with architectural inscriptions of the idea of home, states that 'to speak of domesticity is to describe a set of felt emotions,

not a single attribute. Domesticity has to do with family, intimacy, and a devotion to the home, as well as with a sense of the house as embodying... these sentiments' (1987: 75) Such domesticity is considered to be homely.

But there are many examples of unhomely homes too, for example, home as experienced by the homeless. One meaning of homelessness includes people who have no house and who are forced to sleep in places specially created to house the homeless (see Kellett and Moore 2003). Wolch and Dear (1993) have studied causes of homelessness which can range from domestic violence through economic or political restructuring in the state to natural disasters such as flood. These events often leave people without a roof over their heads. But there are also other meanings of homelessness, not related to having a shelter. For example, children growing up in a children's home or elderly people living in care homes may not feel at home in the houses where they live, even though they have a roof over their heads (Blunt & Dowling 2006: 127). The fact that homelessness is related to the lack of feeling at home is also acknowledged by the United Nations that define this phenomenon as 'a condition of detachment from society characterized by the lack of affiliative bonds...[that] carries implications of belonging nowhere rather than having nowhere to sleep' (UNCHS/Habitat 2000 cited in Blunt & Dowling 2006: 128). As this definition points out, homelessness is not just a lack of shelter, but it is a lack of community ties and hence a lack of belonging (Blunt & Dowling 2006: 128). April Veness (1993) calls this condition an 'unhome,' i.e., trying to make home in a place which cannot be homed (in Blunt & Dowling 2006: 128). Instead, residents of a shelter for the homeless create a sense of belonging in other ways. Some of them describe the shelter as providing them with security, independence and social relations with other people. Others, however, notice that the

shelter accommodation prevents them from feeling at home there due to the temporality aspect of the residence (Kellett and Moore 2003 in Blunt and Dowling 2006: 129).

When addressing home as lived experience, a special attention needs to be devoted to domestic workers who are often migrants and who work and sometimes live in the homes of other people. Geraldine Pratt (2004) discusses experiences of Filipina domestic workers in Canada whose work she sees as racialised and gendered because they are paid less than European domestic workers and because they are viewed as less educated than them. Similarly, Rosie Cox and Rekha Narula (2003) describe home of au-pairs who live with their British host families. Cox and Narula emphasize the importance of rules governing the lives of people living in the house. Rules, according to Cox and Narula reinforce power relations at home and control spaces and behaviour of people residing in the house. Au-pairs who according to their employment contract are to be treated as family members, in reality have to obey many family rules, for example rules related to bringing visitors home or leaving home. Hence the ambiguity as to whether home is public or private for these domestic workers. Domestic and other migrants' feeling at home in a particular place is also related to their identity and a sense of belonging.

### *1.3. Home as Belonging and Identity*

According to many scientists and writers, one's home is where one in the world 'most truly belongs', that is, where a person is rooted (Matthews 2002: 192). Similarly, Relph (1976) claims that 'to have roots in a place is to have secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of one's own position in the order of things, and a significant spiritual and psychological attachment to somewhere in particular' (38). Some people are

rooted in space, society and time, as Terkenli (1995) argues, and therefore they find their home in their immediate working and living environment, as they have not experienced 'nonhome' (Terkenli 1995, 329). This form of rootedness is defined by Yi-Fu (1980) as long dwelling in one place and as 'a state of being made possible by an incuriosity toward the world at large and an intensity toward the flow of time' (Yi-Fu 1980: 4).

This steady type of rootedness, however, does not seem to be characteristic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Instead, one often hears that modern people are rootless. Doreen Massey (1994) criticises the idea that in the era of globalization places, including home, are losing their importance. Instead, she argues that places have a 'geometry of power', as different social groups and different people have a different relationship with a place at different points in time (Massey 1994:3). For example, home can mean different things for men and for women. A place for Massey is created out of different kinds of dynamic social relations stretched over a particular space: 'The view, then, is of space-time as a configuration of social relations within which the specifically spatial may be conceived of as an inherently dynamic simultaneity... Since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification' (1994:3). According to this theory, power relations between people result in dominant identities and dominant meanings of places. For example, a dominant meaning of home includes family, patriarchal relations between men and women, stability as well as homeownership (Blunt & Dowling 2006:256).

For another researcher, Relph (1976), home is 'the foundation of our identity as individuals and as members of a community, the dwelling place of being...it is...an irreplaceable centre of existence' (39). Everything

in the world rotates around home because home provides us with identity and allows us to orient ourselves towards the world (Relph 1976:40). But feminists have a different opinion on this issue. Pratt (1984) is one of those researchers who support the idea of multiple spaces of home. Just as we have multiple identities, claims she, so have we multiple homes. Pratt focuses here on different representations of identity and location. She provides her own example of being white, middle class, Christian-raised, and lesbian and analyses the relationship between each of her separate identities with three particular places in the American South at particular moments in her life: 'Raised to believe that I could be where I wanted and have what I wanted, as a grown woman I thought I could simply claim what I wanted... I had no understanding of the limits that I lived within: nor of how much my memory of a safe space [i.e., home] was to be based on places secured by omission, exclusion or violence, and on my submitting to the limits of that place' (Pratt 1984: 25-26). Similar ideas about multiple homes are expressed in the writings of Lesley Johnson (1996) and Sallie Marston (2000) who point out that construction of home includes multiple social processes (such as caring, relations with neighbours, etc.) and results in multiple identities (of gender, race, class, age, etc.) (on multiple homes see Fortier 2003). Multiple homes and multiple identities are phenomena especially common in migration.

#### *1.4. Home in Migration*

The concept of home is especially complex in the context of migration. Migration involves crossing many boundaries: between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the known and the unknown, the homeland and 'the away-from-home land' (Westin in Runblom 2000: 38). Thus, as Cohen notes, it is possible to feel at home in one place but simulta-

neously experience social exclusion (Cohen 1997). The experience of home in migration is among others explored by Edmund Bunkše (2004), a Latvian immigrant to the US who describes feelings related to coming back to native Latvia which he was forced to leave during WWII (in Blunt & Dowling 2006). As a victim of exile Bunkše realized the meaning of home and homelessness very early in his life. He came back to Latvia when it was occupied by the Soviet Union, but in spite of this Bunkše managed to experience unforgettable feeling of being at home there. Even constant surveillance did not disturb his positive emotions. Using the method of autobiography Bunkše explores such fundamental concepts as home, road, place, and landscape in the light of his own experiences in the world. Later he and his colleague humanist geographers were criticised for romanticising home and isolating it from society (Blunt and Dowling 2006). This gap was filled by other geographers (especially feminists) who based their theory of home on the idea that people of different social groups, different genders and age can experience home differently. For example, in his research on community and neighbourhood attachment Sampson (1988) indicates that attachment to a particular place (home) tends to increase with age, regardless of length of residence.

Whatever the criticism, in his writings Bunkše manages to skillfully present the problematic nature of transnational migrant's home. Lives of transnational migrants are often described in literature in terms of 'routes' and 'roots' (Clifford 1997; Gilroy 1993). Transnational migrant's identity is not rooted in one place but is based on two or more places due to transnational linkages. Both concepts ('roots' and 'routes') are related, for, according to Hall, stories of fixed origins and stories of mobility exist alongside each other, and both can be related to the influence of globalization (in Al-Ali & Koser 2002: 25). Other re-

searchers (Guest & Lee 1983; Hunter 1974; Goudy 1982; Hummon 1992) show that with time of residence attachment to a particular place becomes stronger. This is so because we are what Terkenli calls 'creatures of habit who [with time] appropriate a place and context as home' (Terkenli 1995: 325).

John Western (1992) shows how Barbadian Londoners create home. Being a migrant himself Western shares his experiences of home: "home for me is, or was a certain house on a certain Margate street; then, the Isle of Thanet; then, my county Kent; then, my country England – depending on the context. ...Having come to live half my life away from Britain, however, 'home' for me is no longer unproblematic: it is as likely to be 'Syracuse, New York,' as 'England. It depends on the context, is no longer a straightforward matter of scale, of telescoping, but an admission of uncertainty and ambiguity.' (256 cited in Blunt and Dowling 2006:202) In this context it is useful to refer to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) who invent another pair of concepts: 'homing of diaspora' and 'diasporising of home'. These two short phrases express the essence of diasporic existence: on one hand, 'home' and especially nostalgia for home left behind is infused into the very notion of diaspora; on the other hand, diasporas take their 'home' with them when they travel and reconstruct 'home' in the new environment. Even when staying in another country, migrants can influence the events in their homeland in a variety of ways, from engagement in homeland politics (see Axel 2001, Carter 2005, Ostergaard-Nielson 2002; Ellis and Khan 2002) to financial transfers and investment in homeland (Adamson 2002; Van Hear 2002).

Adapting to a new place does not however free migrants from 'homing desire' (Brah 1996:16). As Brah writes, 'the concept of diaspora offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins while taking account of a homing de-

sire, as distinct from a desire for a 'homeland' (Brah: 1996:16). What makes these concepts different is the probability of return. It is interesting to note that the English word 'nostalgia' is rooted in the ancient Greek word 'nostos' meaning 'return home' (Terkenli 1995: 328). Homesickness is also often the main factor that makes people return to their homeland (see Thomson 2005; Hammerton and Thomson 2005). Unfortunately, one can only return to the spatial location of home, not to its temporal location. By returning home migrants return to their origins which provide the basis for their identity. Our origins (or roots) provide us with the feeling of security in the world of intermixing cultures, traditions, and beliefs.

Connections with the country of origins are sustained more easily by new communication technologies such as the Internet. Blunt and Dowling (2006) pose a question: 'To what extent can cyberspace be interpreted as a new home-space, providing a virtual space of belonging and identification?' (207) Jordan (1999) supports the idea of cyberspace as a place which is completely different from all other places in the world. First of all we cannot enter this place with our bodies. Secondly, it is a space of unlimited possibilities in which we can be anything or anyone we want: 'The loss of a physical body... combined with an intimate relationship with knowledge, creates the belief that what it means to be human is different in cyberspace and that this realisation changes what it means to be human anywhere' (Jordan 1999:31). Hence Jordan creates a concept of 'cyberpower' (1999:208). The direct impact of the Internet onto people (children) was studied by Holloway and Valentine (2001). The impact of the Internet onto diasporic communities was researched by Staeheli et al (2002) who explored the role of internet in the political mobilization of diasporas. These studies confirm the fact that Internet con-

nection expands the space of home as people living all around the world can easily meet in cyberspace. Blunt and Dowling (2006) present examples of how the Internet facilitates the creation of new Transnational communities through the creation of websites such as [www.anglo-indians.com](http://www.anglo-indians.com) (2006: 207). Similarly, Ella Shohat states that cyberspace is ‘an embattled space for becoming ‘at home’ in the world’ (1999: 224 in Blunt & Dowling: 208). Later she adds that ‘in Americas, as the homeland of diverse indigeneous people who became refugees in their own homeland, the new media are used to recuperate the symbolic space of Pindorama, Land of the Condor and Turtle Island. Such virtual spaces come to stand for an imaginary homeland’ (23 in Blunt and Dowling 2006: 208).

Having in mind the theoretical discussion reviewed above, I will now proceed with the empirical analysis of ‘home’ as perceived and experienced by Polish and Lithuanian migrants in the UK. I undertake to show that these migrants create home on the basis of a synthesis of material and imaginative, emotional, and symbolic elements discussed in the literature reviewed above.

## 2. MAIN QUESTIONS

The following analysis of the data serves as background information for my wider doctoral research. The main focus of this preliminary analysis is on two main questions, ‘What does home mean to Polish and Lithuanian migrants in the UK?’ and ‘What makes them feel at home at one place and not another?’ The places in question here are Poland, Lithuania, and the UK. In analyzing what meanings are attached to the concept of home by these migrants, I argue that their construction of home depends on an interplay of a number of personal, economic, political, and cultural factors.

## 3. DATA

The data for this analysis comes from the research project ‘Changing Status, Changing Lives? The Socio-Economic Impact of EU Accession on Low Wage Migrant Labour in the UK’ carried out by the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford (see Anderson et al 2006). This paper is based on in-depth (semi-structured) interviews conducted between April 2004 and January 2005 with 26 Polish migrants and 20 Lithuanian migrants in the UK working in 4 sectors: construction, hospitality, agriculture, and au-pairs (see Table 1 below).

*Table 1: Respondents by sector of occupation*

	Polish	Lithuanian
construction	8	7
hospitality	8	3
agriculture	7	6
Au-pairs	3	4

*Table 2. Respondents by age*

	Polish	Lithuanian
Aged 18-29	20	16
Aged 30-42	6	4
Total:	26	20

*Table 3: Respondents by gender*

	Polish	Lithuanian
Men	17	11
Women	9	9

The age of the respondents is between 18 to 42 (see Table 2 above). The maximum length of stay in the UK is 6 years. The analysis focuses on the migrants’ responses stimulated by the question ‘Do you feel at home in the

UK?’ To support my argument I also included other questions such as ‘Why did you come to the UK?’ or ‘Do you plan to stay in the UK?’ In order to explore why notions of home vary, I considered migrants’ characteristics (time spent in the UK, with/out partners, education, work at home and in the UK); migrants’ age, and their reasons for leaving the home country. In addition, I let myself include my own insights about Polish and Lithuanian migrants in the UK, based on the fact that I am one of them, being born in Poland, educated in Lithuania, and currently residing in the UK.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. *Social Status*

One of the main characteristics of migrants that I wanted to look at with regard to the main question of this paper was the variations in social status caused by migration. First of all, migrants may claim status as individuals and as members of families, communities, and other collectivities (Turner in Goldring 1998, 172). Thus one’s status may depend on personal accomplishments, education, occupation, or wealth; family reputation, connections, and resources; and groups of which one is a member. However, definitions of social status vary from one country to another and thus migrants can experience social mobility when moving from their country of origin to the destination country due to different elements according to which social status is measured in these countries. Sometimes it is enough to be rich to enjoy high social status, in other instances it is necessary to be educated. Studies show that in a society where education is the main requirement for social mobility, the level of education may be positively related to territorial movement (Day & Landis 1945, 200). For instance, poorly educated youth must often remain at home

because of lack of financial resources or lack of information about opportunities available in other countries (Day & Landis 1945, 207). Highly-educated people, on the other hand, have access to more information about other places and more resources to migrate. Many professionals go to richer countries after completing their studies at home, but others who complete their studies abroad often fail to go back to their country of origin. It is estimated that more than 70 % foreign-born PhDs remain in the US and take the citizenship (Stalker 2000, 109). Not all educated migrants, however, successfully use their skills in high status occupations. My expectation here was that a decline in social status resulting from migration would encourage negative feelings towards the country of residence, while a similar or higher status would help migrants create a new home abroad.

In fact, all the sectors considered in the interviews represented lower status. These were jobs in agriculture, hospitality, construction, and the au-pair sector. An initial expectation here would be that migrants who feel a rapid change in status should be those who prior to coming to the UK worked in high positions and/or were university graduates. Indeed, one reason for migrating for both Poles and Lithuanians younger than 30 was that they had just finished studies and were not sure what they had to do with themselves next. Thus they decided to go abroad. Some of the respondents had started university and then took a gap year to go abroad and earn money in order to be able to pay their fees. Most of these students studied agriculture and came to the UK farms via student exchange programmes. However, they did not feel any major change in their status because, first of all, they had not worked in their countries of origin at all, and their stay in the UK was very much temporary and goal-oriented, the goal being earning money for further studies. Being university graduates, on the other hand,

migrants were more conscious of the fact that their status in the UK was much lower than it should be considering their education. To illustrate this I will cite one 30-year-old Polish woman, a university graduate who worked in the UK as a waitress:

A: ....In Poland I never did this kind of work. Because in Poland I would be an intellectual worker and here I'm a physical worker in some sense. So first of all I had to change my attitude. Second, when working I noticed that I count more on experience than on knowledge. Once I had a greater respect for knowledge and was a more intellectual person. It's the result of the hours I work, of course, and lack of time for developing my intellectual skills. let's say... (iw45p01)

It is interesting to note that this young woman admitted that she had to change in order to adapt to life in the UK. She had to change her attitude to herself and to the job that she was doing because in Poland she considered herself an intellectual and so could not imagine herself working in a restaurant. In order to come to terms with these status discrepancies she had to distance herself from the kind of person she was in Poland and take on a new role of a waitress in London. Blumer (1969), a sociologist researching the area of social roles, views human society as consisting of acting units and acting people. According to him, all activity in society comes from such acting units which are to be viewed as taking on the role of others and using interpretation (Blumer 1969, 186-7). Similarly, migrants take on new roles when they arrive in the destination country and distance themselves from their pre-migratory 'self'.

Very often migrants are aware of the negative effect of migration on their status but they still choose to migrate to a country where they would initially work in low-wage jobs, but where they believe they will eventually increase

their status (Stalker 2000, 24-25). With education or experience they hope to get better-paid jobs and be able to afford high-standard lives as do local people. This was the case with one 27-year-old Polish male construction worker who graduated from the university in Poland with a diploma in economics and came here:

A: First I came here as a student together with my friend. I noticed then that I can earn money here quite easily and much better money than in Poland. So I went back to Poland to finish my studies and came to the UK again. I chose UK because I knew English and because it was easy to get legalized here, to start a business. I didn't want to work illegally. Before that I worked in Norway and in France, so I thought that things would be similar here in the UK. But it's actually better here than anywhere else, in terms of money. (iw18)

In the beginning this young man worked in London as a construction worker but he had a bigger plan which kept him going. As soon as he had enough capital he set up his own construction company and invited his friends from Poland to come and work for him in London. So they did and this is how the man turned from an average labourer into an employer. He did not do physical work any more but worked in an organization with clients. His business was growing and expanding and soon he could afford his own house. In the future he said he would move into the property business: he would buy, renovate, and sell houses. This would prove the theory that highly-educated people have access to more information about potential destinations and are better positioned to take advantage of economic opportunities in the receiving country (stronger pull factors) (Day & Landis 1945, 207). And so this Polish migrant did not have a reason not to feel at home in the UK because he felt that his social status was equal to that of the local British people.

In this context it is useful to refer to the theory of relative deprivation by W. G. Run-ciman (1966). Relative deprivation is a sense of inequality resulting from a comparison with some reference group. The choice of this group is crucial. This theory would explain why the deprived or oppressed often accept their conditions, for if their reference groups are equally oppressed and poor, there is little sense of deprivation. Similarly, it is important whether migrants compare themselves against their co-nationals living in the immigration country, their co-nationals in the home country, or the host society. Most often migrants would like to live in the way that members of the host society do and therefore they feel deprived living in a rented accommodation and doing low-paid jobs. Thus migrants from the new accession countries can feel deprived if they compare themselves against members of the English society. On the other hand, they can view themselves as being quite well off if, for example, their comparison group consists of migrants from beyond the EU or from African countries. Or they may live in the community where the standards of living are similar for all members, which makes them accept their position. If their reference group is the community in the home country, they may like showing their superiority to them by doing things that non-migrants cannot afford, i.e., demonstrating their buying practices.

Another interesting finding is that the way people feel about their social status (and so about the place) is related to their expectations. Among the Lithuanian migrants, there were 5 teachers who came to the UK as au-pairs. They liked living in London, even though their status here clearly decreased. But it must be added that au-pairs like agricultural workers knew about the jobs that they were going to do in the UK before coming here. Thus they did not have higher expectations than those stated in their contracts. Researchers of migration often use a

value –expectancy framework to analyse motives for migration (De Jong & Fawcett 1981). According to Pedraza, men are usually motivated by employment and expected financial profit, while women move to create or to reunite with their families (Pedraza 1991). If their expectations are met, they feel good in the immigration country.

The earlier mentioned Lithuanian au-pairs felt at home in the UK because their expectations with regard to migration were related to learning English, traveling, and getting experience. And they did not relate their journey to the UK to their status in any way. Even after 1 May 2004, when they were able to leave the host families and were free to find another job, some of them did not do this, as for example this 27-year-old Lithuanian female au-pair:

A: I came as an au pair and my plan was not to make any changes until this autumn. I knew what I came for, what I am doing, and I didn't think of any changes. I have several friends with whom I came here (they are also au pairs). They started looking for new jobs after 1 May and they had quite a lot of anxiety. Whereas I didn't have any plans to change my occupation, so I lived without major disturbances. (iwo6lito5)

Expectations about the life that one is going to find in the destination country are not always grounded and may be even completely different from the actual living conditions elsewhere. This may cause a great number of people with valuable human capital to make the journey. For example, among the Lithuanian migrants there was a former web designer who came to the UK to work as a waitress because she was bored with routine in Lithuania. But soon after coming here she noticed that everything was not the way she had expected and so she started feeling homesick. She left the UK never to come back, as she said, because in Lithuania she was a different person: she had her circle of friends, she had her bo-

yfriend, and she had a well-established professional life. In the UK she was deprived of all of these things. She expected life to be easier in the UK from what she had heard from her friends and aunt, but found that in order to earn money here one had to sacrifice a lot, including human relations and dignity. This was not the life that she would choose to live.

Migrants' expectations are important because they determine the way that they view their position in society. For example, one Lithuanian migrant was a student in his country but took a gap year to come to the UK and earn money for further studies. He expected to accomplish his mission during 6 months and go back to Lithuania. Unfortunately, he had no luck with job searching in London and did not manage to earn what he planned because he had only temporary jobs which lasted for a maximum of 7 days, and for many days he did not have any job at all. He also had to stay in the UK much longer than he expected and go back to Lithuania with less money than he initially planned. Thus it is not surprising that his feelings about the UK were negative. In terms of status, having no job is definitely much worse in some cases than having a low-paid low-skilled job.

But in the same way migration can also be related to increasing one's social status if a person was unemployed in his country of origin and managed to find a job and a source of income in the immigration country. Among the respondents there were quite a few people who either lost their job in Poland or Lithuania or whose business collapsed and so they felt a great pressure of finding another source of income, especially if they had dependents. For example, there was one Lithuanian man who could not find a job in Lithuania among other things because he did not have any training, but after coming to the UK he became a construction worker. In this way he increased his status twice: not only did he get a job but he also got a profession.

In brief, most migrants who declared feeling at home in the UK were construction workers. Most of them had similar jobs in their own country but worked for little money. Here, although they still worked hard, they earned a decent amount of money, which made them feel good about the place, and increased their status because they could afford more. This applies to all workers regardless of how much time they spent in the UK: wealth helped them to reach social standards. Another group of migrants who felt good in the immigration country were au-pairs. As they admitted, they came to the UK because they were bored with what they had back home and looked for an interesting way to spend a couple of years of their lives. They might have had a poorly paid job or a well-paid job, but decided to leave everything and try something new. In addition to allowing them to escape routine, travelling also provided them with an opportunity to learn English and to get experience, which, as some of them noted, could open them new doors to a better career prospects in their home country. It is necessary to add that these women were younger than 30 years old. This shows the capacity of young people to take sudden decisions not worrying about risk, if the life that they lead at home does not fulfil their aspirations.

#### *4.2. Homeownership*

In the previous section I have discussed status in relation to education and occupation. But status (and so attachment to a place) may also depend on acquiring certain material things, as, for example, buying a house. The decision to invest in property raises several important issues. A residential investment by an immigrant family is often viewed as similar to investment in the host country's language in that it shows the family's commitment to a particular community and the beginning of their integration into the host country's cultu-

re and society (Ethnic, 2). Acquiring property in the country of origin, on the other hand, can be interpreted as a sign of creating a myth of return or as a form of business investment. Whether in the immigration or in the home country, spending practices offer migrants the possibility of social mobility within their local community.

In the interviews conducted for this project the property issue was mostly brought forward by male migrants from both Poland and Lithuania. The respondents confessed that they were prevented from feeling at home in the UK by the enormously high prices of houses. They doubted if they would ever be able to afford their own house. Rented accommodation, on the other hand, reminded them that they were here only temporarily. This point of view was made clear by one 26-year-old Polish woman working in hospitality:

**Q: Do you feel at home in this country?**

A: No.

**Q: Why?**

A: ... Even though I feel good here, don't feel at home. This feeling is difficult to describe, a sense of feeling at home. Maybe if I lived in a smaller town... It's difficult to feel at home in London. This place is different from all other places. There are many people, many cultures in here and they all intermingle. Maybe if I lived in the countryside, had my own tree, my own house, my own well, my own stone, maybe then I would feel at home there in some 6 months, but not here. Even more so because we live in rented accommodation, so we live temporarily, we don't get rooted. (iw35polo1)

Rented accommodation is seen here as disturbing the process of getting emotionally attached to the place of residence. Therefore migrants aim to buy their own flat or house whenever possible.

Some of them decide to buy property in their country of origin. Nowadays migrants often take mortgages in their countries of origin on the basis of declaring their income in the UK. This investment in their homeland provides migrants with a certain level of security in case their plans of establishing themselves in the immigration country go wrong and they decide to go back. This would suggest that migrants who take mortgages in the home country plan to return one day. In any case, buying property is a good way of investing in their own country, which demonstrates what Cohen calls 'a collective commitment to one's country of origin' (Cohen 1997: 106). Contribution to the maintenance or even idealization of the real or imaginative family home is one of the common features of diasporas (Cohen 1997: 106). Other migrants want to buy property in the immigration country if they can afford it. The drawback is that if one decides to buy his/her own accommodation here in the UK, one may come to feel under pressure to settle down in this country, and in most cases migrants have not made up their minds about this yet. As most of them said, if the economic situation in their homeland improved, they would pack up and go to live and work there. On the other hand, because buying a home requires a relationship with a bank, homeownership proves a certain level of adaptation of the family into the host country's financial system and so into the host country in general.

In brief, homeownership is, as the interviews suggest, a very important element of creating 'home'. It is interesting to note that property figured mostly in the answers of male migrants. This would support Roger Andersson's theory that men and women have different references to homeland: men refer more to physical objects and women more to persons (a study from Northern Sweden by Roger Andersson in Runblom 2000,12). Similarly, when talking about home, male respondents whose inter-

views have been used for this analysis often mention money, house, and comfort, while women in the same context tend to refer to family, partners, and emotional factors.

### 4.3. Rootedness

However, socio-economic well-being does not guarantee a feeling of being at home, as home also has a symbolic meaning. It is also a private space related to cultural values and ideas. This was mentioned by one 30-year-old Polish waitress:

A: ...the language is a big barrier [to feeling at home in the UK] because we will be foreigners till the end of our lives because we will never be able to get rid of our accent. Or our cultural awareness. Because we have different meanings, we celebrate different festivals. Of course we adapt in some way or another, that is, we give up some of the customs. This is related, for example, to our work, when we have to work during Easter, for example, and we are not able to celebrate our festivals...

**Q: Would you like to settle here?**

A: No

**Q: Why?**

A: Because I'm emotionally tied to my family and the people who are in Poland. ...Because I simply have roots... (iw45polo1)

This woman makes it clear that it is her different cultural background and different native language that prevents her from feeling at home in the UK. All these values make her rooted in Poland. This and similar answers received from the respondents would contradict the idea often found in the literature that migrants have no roots (Berger 1973; Chambers 1994), that they live between the country of origin which they have lost and the country

of immigration into which they cannot completely integrate (Chambers 1994). My respondents possessed a sense of roots even though in some cases they admitted that they created a new home in the immigration country.

### 4.4. Family

Migrants' rootedness in a particular place is often the result of the presence of their family there. The word family in old Chinese means 'people in the house' and stresses the connection between home and family (Terkentli 1995, 326). As one 28-year-old Polish male construction worker explained:

**Q: Do you feel more or less "at home" in the UK?**

A: I will never feel here like at home. My home is my wife. (iw41pol)

Many male and female respondents expressed similar opinions that their home is wherever their family is, unlike those migrants who did not have any family left in their country of origin and so were able to feel 'at home everywhere,' as one male Lithuanian respondent noted. This brings up the issue of whether migrants' parents are still alive.

Thanks to modern technologies of transport and communication, migrants are able to keep transnational ties with their family in the country of origin. The same means allow migrants to send remittances home and in this way demonstrate commitment to their family and home. Frequent remittances may indicate a close association and identification with the home community, as well as a higher probability of return (Papademetriou and DiMarzio 1986). It is interesting to note that a substantial proportion of those sending money claim to be sending it not for their family but for their own return home.

But remittances and other forms of transnational contacts often stop when migrants

bring their families to the immigration country because then they stop orienting themselves towards the country of origin and start constructing a new home in the country of residence. Similarly, if single migrants come to the UK and meet their partners here, their determination to return home becomes weaker and they start planning their new home abroad. As one 20-year-old Polish female au-pair said:

**Q: Do you feel here like at home?**

A: I feel good here, I like the atmosphere here and the general conditions, I have friends here, I have a close male friend and this probably also makes me want to be here, it holds me here. (iw07polo5)

This and other examples show that migration often expands the concept of family to include significant others such as friends, partners, and people one lives with, who, in the absence of one's real family members, have considerable influence upon an individual's life and well-being.

#### 4.5. *Nostalgia*

However, if family members (especially spouses and children) are left in the country of origin, longing for these people often results in unbearable homesickness which makes migrants go back. This feeling was mentioned by one 48-year-old Lithuanian male construction worker who explained his plans to return home:

**Q: Would you like to stay here permanently?**

A: No way. I feel homesick. I miss Lithuanian people. You cannot take your native people with you. Local people are different. Lithuanians still have spiritual values. While here people's key value seems to be money. (iwo8lit)

Human spirituality, according to this migrant worker, could be found only in Lithuania because in the UK everybody was concerned only about material well-being. This example also shows that, as noted by Cox, it is not just place that makes 'our' country different from 'theirs'; we tend to differentiate ourselves from others in ways that are flattering to us (Cox 2002:174). Therefore we miss our people and our home which were so familiar to us. As, for example, one 25-year-old Polish male construction worker, a former IT specialist, remarked:

**Q: Do you feel at home in the UK?**

A: Never. I see all this in a completely different light, you know. Sometimes there are moments in my life here that everything seems to be normal here, you know? That these streets are normal... but in reality I think I see everything here in a strange way. I don't think about things around me – all of them look grey to me. I have fun here, have a good time, but I can't say that this is my playground. You know, in Poland, in my own native town I know every pavement, every street – in general, the whole town, every centimeter of it is close to me. And here? Here it's simply ok: there are streets, zebras, pavements, some buildings, shops, but all these things are not dear to my heart. (iw44polo3)

This is the case of which Rapport and Dawson write that sometimes home can be recognized as an abstract ideal, in a longing for a nostalgic past or a utopian future (Rapport and Dawson in Al-Ali & Koser 2002, 7). This Otherness experienced by migrants in the immigration country weakens the foundations of their identity and so they look for the ways to restore their true self. One of the ways to achieve this is to return to one's origins and life in which one once participated.

It is also interesting to mention that nostalgia for home does not figure in the answers of

members of national minorities. Among the Lithuanian respondents there were 2 representatives of the Russian national minority in Lithuania. Although one of them was 25, the other a 38 year-old man, both of them came here with the intention to stay here for good. Both of them were construction workers. The older 38-year-old migrant believed that 'one's fatherland is where one feels good':

**Q: Do you feel more or less "at home" in the UK?**

A: I feel very good. The homeland is where you feel good. The world became so small that it doesn't matter where you live. The national borders are losing their importance. I don't know why Lithuanians like to complain – they come here, get good money, but nevertheless criticize the country.

**Q: Would you like to stay here for good?**

A: Yes, we will try to get the citizenship. (iw58lit)

The younger Lithuanian Russian migrant also wanted to settle down in the UK. He left his studies in Lithuania in order to come here and was happy being able to lead a relatively comfortable life. His only complaint was that he could not find work as a jeweller. But being optimistic, he hoped that with time this would change. It might be that in order to escape the role of a Russian in Lithuania, members of the Russian minority group, like two men quoted above, may decide to migrate to another, more diverse and 'tolerant' country like the UK. Hence, it might be easier for these individuals to create a home in the multicultural society of London where they successfully blend with other ethnic groups and do not feel 'different' or 'estranged'.

#### 4.6. *The EU Accession*

Finally, I would like to comment on how the EU accession influenced the process of making a home by Polish and Lithuanian migrants in the UK. The major change the EU accession brought into the lives of Polish and Lithuanian migrants was the possibility to move freely between the UK and their country of origin. Before May 2004 they were afraid to leave this country because there was always the probability of not being allowed to come back. As Zygmunt Bauman argues, 'if locked from outside, if getting out is a distant prospect or not a feasible prospect at all, the home turns into jail' (in Matthews 2002, 194). This limitation was experienced by many friends and relatives of the migrants and in order to avoid similar experience, many of the respondents stayed in the UK and did not cross the border until they became EU citizens. Once the border was opened, a considerable number of migrants went to visit their families and friends in their home countries in the summer of 2004.

Open borders and cheap flights help to maintain relationship with migrants' countries of origin and their roots by frequent return visits. According to Simone Weil, as more and more people identify themselves according to origins, as if in an attempt at 'deterritorialization', their return home may be interpreted as some form of 're-territorialization': a relationship between people and place (in Runblom 2000, 96). The concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization were originally created by Deleuze and Guattari (1972) and quickly became used by others. In a wider sense, deterritorialization refers to the modern condition of globalization when the bond between culture and territory is weakened through transnational movements. In this context, migrants leaving their country of origin are regarded as detaching their social and cultural practices from their home

country, a relationship which can be restored by coming back 'home' (see Tomlinson 1999). For many East European migrants reterritorialization was possible only after they became EU citizens. As one 25-year-old Polish waitress put it, only after 1 May 2004 did she start to feel well in the UK because she was allowed to visit her country and come back whenever she wanted:

**Q: Do you feel more or less "at home" in the UK?**

A: Definitely, it is related to the fact that I don't feel anymore like I have to be here, but it is my choice. Before [the EU accession] I was afraid to leave the country in case they wouldn't let me back in. Also I feel more confident at work, because I know that if I don't like something I can always change my job without any problems. Also I can visit Poland whenever I want to. (Olka)

This freedom of choice provided the woman with a psychological relief that let her see life in the UK from a new perspective. As Terkenli argues, when the world becomes increasingly interconnected and interdependent, concepts of home increasingly 'shed their spatial character to become contingent on flows of information, exchange of ideas, long-distance connections, and proliferation of lifestyles' (Terkenli 1995, 324).

It was not only long-distance travelling but also existence inside the UK that raised fear among the migrants before Poland and Lithuania entered the EU. The migrants admitted that even the view of a policeman on a street petrified them because it reminded them of the danger of being deported, as one 39-year-old Polish male hospitality worker put it:

A: I feel much better now [after the EU accession]. Before, when we saw the police, it made us anxious, whereas now we feel confident. Having legal status made all the change. (o2)

After 1 May this danger disappeared because Poles and Lithuanians were allowed to work in the UK without restrictions. They felt that they had the right to live and work here as EU citizens. As EU citizens they also increased their status in the UK and were provided with an opportunity to look for better jobs which could not be accessed by them previously. All of these factors had a positive effect on the migrants' lives in the UK. Even though they admitted that they were still seen here as cheap labour, they felt better living here after than before the accession. Finally, their dreams of getting a better job, of setting their own company or entering a university in the UK could become true. It is a fact that the EU accession increased the number of those wishing to go abroad. Many of the respondents admitted having helped or encouraged their friends and family to come to the UK. The question remains, however, how many of those who leave will ever go back to their countries of origin. Most of the respondents admitted that they would like to go back to their country of origin. Most of the migrants interviewed here claimed that they planned to return home eventually. The only worrying thing here is that they did not know when that would happen. A typical answer would be this one, given by 25-year-old Polish waitress:

**Q: Would you like to stay here permanently?**

A: No! I am planning to stay here until I save enough money to be able to go back (iw44polo1)

However, it has to be said that a declaration of not planning or wishing to stay and the actual view on this issue may not coincide. I am suspicious about the credibility of the responses because in my opinion the migrants would run a risk of presenting themselves as betraying their homeland if they declared their plans of not returning there. This, of course, they would like to avoid.

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

I hope that this analysis of the meaning of home among Polish and Lithuanian migrants in the UK will contribute to the general discussion on how a sense of home is constructed in migration. The insights provided by the above analysis suggest a number of lessons for our understanding of the migrant home.

First of all, this introductory analysis contributes to the literature that challenges the placelessness of modern migrants. The Polish and Lithuanian migrants whose responses were analysed here reported their affiliation either with the home country or, in a few cases, with the host country. It is usually the homeland which, in Westwood and Phizacklea's words, offers people 'a cartography of belonging,' although with time spent in the immigration country the meaning and experience of homeland changes (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000: 29). The new environment starts to acquire the qualities of home. Only a couple of the respondents reported not being able to feel at home anywhere at all because of having no family left.

Furthermore, this brief analysis indicates that migrants feeling most at home in the UK (most often expressing positive opinions about life in the UK) were national minority individuals, unskilled workers, and construction workers. It is necessary to note that construction workers were among those earning the best money. Another group of people who were happy with their life in the UK were those who had no formal qualifications in their country of origin, despite which they managed to live a decent life in the UK, but not in Poland or Lithuania. Also, a couple of Baltic Russian respondents seemed to be among those who came to the UK with an intention to settle down here because, as one of them said, 'home is where one feels good'

(although no generalizations should be made here due to a very small sample).

At the same time, the study shows that home might have different meanings for different types of migrants. The preliminary findings suggest that perceptions on home differed with regard to gender and education. In many cases men associated home with homeownership and financial gains, while women stressed family and emotional attachment. As migrants' experiences show, migration often expands the concept of family to include significant others such as friends, partners, and people one lives with, who, in the absence of one's real family members, have considerable influence upon an individual's life and well-being. In the same line of thinking, highly educated migrants related the feeling at home with a relevant social status which could be reached by getting an appropriate job. Less-educated people did not focus on status but on financial gains resulting from the movement.

Regardless of which type of migrant they represented, the respondents unanimously agreed that their lives have changed after the EU enlargement. The main advantage of the EU accession mentioned by them was free travel between the UK and the country of origin. Before May 2004 they were afraid to leave this country because there was always a probability of not being allowed to come back. Being EU citizens they have the right to freely live and work in Britain, which increased their self-esteem and quality of life.

Despite these interesting insights, my data used for this analysis do not allow me to answer a number of interesting questions. First of all, I relied here only on a few migrant characteristics to explore their affiliation with home, while it might be that construction of home depends also on other characteristics which were not identified here, such as age. Second, the sample was too small to make hypotheses and genera-

lize about all Polish and Lithuanian migrants. Third, the sample included only people working in low-wage sectors, and it would be interesting to see whether businessmen, managers, and other professionals construct a sense of home in a similar way. And finally, my data used for the above analysis does not reflect differences between migrants and non-migrants with respect to their meaning

of home. It remains to be seen how these and other questions will be appropriately addressed in my primary data and doctoral thesis. Thanks to the fact that migration studies is a very diverse area, there is always scope for new research. Therefore my doctoral project seeks to both complement existing literature and forge an original contribution to the debates on home in migration.

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PARUTIS Violetta

## „NAMŲ“ KŪRIMAS MIGRACIJOJE: LENKAI IR LIETUVIAI MIGRANTAI JUNG TINĖJE KARALYSTĖJE

Namai, jų kūrimas, tai, kur mes jaučiamės namie, su kuo mes jais dalijamės ir kaip mes savo namus žymime – visi šie elementai neabejotinai daro įtaką mūsų identitetui. Šis straipsnis analizuoja, kaip namai kuriami migracijoje ir ką jie reiškia patiems migrantams. Tai platesnio doktorantūros projekto tema. Šis straipsnis parašytas reimiantis 46 išsamiais pokalbiais su pastaraisiais metais į Jungtinę Karalystę atvy-

kusiais lietuvių ir lenkų migrantais. Straipsnio išvados parodo, kad namų kūrimo procesas migracijos sąlygomis susijęs su simboline ir materialine namų sąvokomis. Šiame straipsnyje analizuojami tik kai kurie namų kūrime dalyvaujantys elementai: socialinis statusas, nekilnojamojo turto nuosavybė, priklausymas tam tikrai bendruomenei, šeima, gimtojo krašto ilgesys ir Europos pilietybė.